

MARGARET BURKE



Abt. 1840 - 1907

Born: Abt. 1840

Died: Feb. 5, 1907 in Pittsfield, MA

Appointment(s):

American Missionary Association
(AMA)

Lawton Plantation – Hilton Head, SC
Feb. 1865

Seabrook Plantation – Hilton Head, SC
Apr. 1865

Mitchelville Middle School – Hilton Head, SC
1866 – Nov. 1867

In the 1850 US Census, Miss Burke was living in Pittsfield, Berkshire Co., Massachusetts in the home of Thomas B. Strong, a 68-yr old lawyer. By February 1865, she was a teacher in Pittsfield, but was unhappy about disruptive male teachers who she thought were living ‘ungentlemanly’ in the same building with female teachers. She wrote a letter in February 1865 to the Superintendent stating that “our accommodation and the improper conduct of the men who live in the house have made it impossible for me to stay any longer. But it is hoped our leaving may be the means of making the place more desirable for other teachers”¹. When the administrators refused to require the men to move out, she decided to seek a position elsewhere. She was appointed by the American Missionary Association as a teacher to the freedmen of South Carolina and arrived in Hilton Head in February 1865².

Margaret was first assigned to Lawton Plantation where she spent the winter of that year assisting Miss Eliza Hill of the U.S. Freedmen’s Bureau³. However, she

¹ American Missionary Association Archives, New Orleans, LA: Tulane University, Amistad Research Center, Item # H5552: [Letter Feb 1865 to Rev S.S. Jocelyn from Hilton Head, SC].

² American Missionary Association Archives. New Orleans, LA: Tulane University, Amistad Research Center Item # H5553: (March 1865 *Teacher’s Monthly Report [TMR]*), and Item # H6587: Apr 1867 *Teacher’s Monthly Report*.

³ Smith, Janel Janiczek, From A Northern Home to a Southern School: Cultural Imperialists or Just Stubborn Yankees, pp 172,362-364. Statesboro, GA: Georgia Southern University, Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies,

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remained there less than two months and asked for a transfer to Seabrook Plantation where she joined Miss J. Tucker.⁴ Margaret gave the reasons for her request in a letter that she wrote in March of 1865 while she was visiting Elliott Plantation.⁵ In 1866, Margaret transferred again to Mitchelville Intermediate School from where she filed a Teacher's Monthly Report (TMR) in April 1867.⁶

Margaret wrote a letter in November 1867 to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn at American Missionary Association Headquarters requesting a transfer to Florida with her friend Annie Wilkins.⁷ Their request was not honored. In the 1870 US Census, Margaret was working as a teacher in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, residing in the Burbank House run by Abraham Burke. In 1880, she was still a teacher living in a Pittsfield hotel and by 1900 she was a boarder in the Pittsfield home of Patrick Mahar. Margaret died February 5, 1907 in the Pittsfield, Massachusetts Home of Mercy from shock caused by a complete fracture of her left femur and is buried in the Pittsfield Cemetery in the Pontoosuc Hills Section⁸. The inscription on her tombstone reads: "a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God a great prize."

electronic theses and dissertations 2013, accessed Sep 12, 2018.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Burke, Margaret. American Missionary Association Archives. New Orleans, LA: Tulane University, Amistad Research Center Item # H5553: March 1865 *Teacher's Monthly Report [TMR]*, and Item # H6587: Apr 1867 *Teacher's Monthly Report [TMR]*.

-Dougherty, Kevin and Robert Pauly, Jr. *American Nation Building: Case Studies From Reconstruction to Afghanistan*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, Pub. Oct 2017, p 135.

⁶ American Missionary Association. *American Missionary*, Vol XI, No 4, "Teacher's List 1866-67" and *Teacher's Monthly Report [TMR]*. New York: April 1867, p 74. <http://www.drbronsontours.com/bronsonteachersreportmargaretburkeapril1867.html>.

⁷ Martin, Josephine W, ed. . "Dear Sister": Letters Written on Hilton Head Island 1867. Beaufort, SC: Beaufort Book Co ,Inc, 1977. [letters by teacher Eliza Ann Summers]. -Smith, p 363-364.

⁸ Findagrave.com Memorial ID #131180203 created 10 Jun 2014 by Bscapin <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/13118023>