

# MARTHA HALE CLARY



Born: 24 Jul. 1839 Conway, Franklin Co., MA

Died: 5 Oct. 1912 Ladies' Island, Beaufort Co., SC

## Appointment(s):

American Missionary Association (AMA)  
St. Helena Island & Ladies' Island, SC  
Autumn 1862

Beaufort, Beaufort Co., SC  
Jun. 1863

Hilton Head – Mitchelville Primary School  
Nov. 1865

Phillips Island, SC – Bay Point Plantation  
Apr. 1867

Beaufort, SC  
May 1869

Presbyterian Committee on Missions to the Freedmen  
Scotia Seminary, NC  
1873-1887.

## 1839-1912

Martha was born July 24, 1839 in Conway, Franklin Co., Massachusetts to John Clary (1802 - 1879) and his second wife, Clara Hawley Moulton (1806-1886). Her father was a teacher, Representative to the Massachusetts State Legislature and a Deacon in the Congregational Church<sup>1</sup>. From 1850 - 1865, according to the US Census, she was living as a single woman in Conway with her parents, working as a common school teacher, having graduated from Westfield State Normal School in 1857. Her sister had also been a teacher, working in Mt. Holyoke College and in Pretoria, South Africa where she died August 3, 1878.<sup>2</sup> Martha left Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in spring 1862, just one year before graduation, in order to accept an appointment from the American Missionary Association.<sup>3</sup> By June 1863, Martha was appointed by the

<sup>1</sup> Martha Hale Clary Papers, Alumni Collection, College Archives. Mount Holyoke College, Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> Butchart, Ronald E. "Mission Matters: Mount Holyoke, Oberlin and the Schooling of Southern Blacks, 1861-1917". *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol 42, No1, Spring 2002, pp1-17. <https://www.jstor.org/Stable73218165>.

<sup>3</sup> Clary, Martha Hale. *Martha Hale Clary papers*, Alumni Collection, College Archives, Mount Holyoke College.

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AMA to teach the freedmen on Hilton Head Island, but was assigned to Ladies and St. Helena's Islands in South Carolina upon arrival.<sup>4</sup> She was still teaching in Beaufort in the fall of 1863 under Brig. General Rufus Saxton, Military Governor of the Department of the South.<sup>5</sup> In November 1865, she was transferred to Mitchelville Primary School on Hilton Head.<sup>6</sup>

By March 1867, she had transferred to Bay Point Plantation on Phillips Island, according to Eliza Summers in a letter she wrote to her sister about an outing she took.<sup>7</sup> However, Eliza also shows Martha on a list of teachers still on Hilton Head Island as of April 1867 at Mitchelville.<sup>8</sup> Martha wrote about other teachers getting sick and some even dying from the harsh climate, heat and disease in a letter she wrote to the Association on December 7, 1867.<sup>9</sup> Martha also told him that she could not take on the extra responsibility of corresponding with yet another town in New England about her work because "I am in correspondence with three sewing societies, to which I am hardly able to do justice, and I think I owe it to them to refuse anything further."<sup>10</sup> The American Missionary Association list of teachers in 1869 shows Martha as being a teacher back near Beaufort again in May of that year.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> New England Freedman's Association, "Teachers Sent to South Carolina 1862-63".

<https://www.drbronsontours.com>

-American Missionary Association. *Annual Reports of the American Missionary Association and the Proceedings at the Annual Meeting*. New York: American Missionary Association, 1863-1873.

<sup>5</sup> "List of Superintendents and Teachers Under Brig General Rufus Saxton, Military Governor of the Department of the South, June 1863".

<https://www.drbronsontours.com>

<sup>6</sup> American Missionary Association. *American Missionary*, Vol XI, No 4, 'Teacher's List 1866-67'. New York: April 1867 & Vol 50, No 2.

<http://www.drbronsontours.com/bronsonnorthamptonsschoolatMitchelljan1865.html>

- Clary Martha Ann. American Missionary Association Archives. New Orleans, LA: Tulane University, Amistad Research Center. Item # H6536: [Letter Apr 9, 1867 to Rev E.P. Smith from Hilton Head,SC];

-----Item# H6851: [Letter Dec 17, 1867 to Rev E.P. Smith from Beaufort, SC].

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

<sup>7</sup> Martin, Josephine, W. "Dear Sister": *Letters Written on Hilton Head Island 1867*, Beaufort, SC: Beaufort Book Co, 1977, p 39. [letters by teacher Eliza Ann Summers]

- Smith, Janel Janiczek, *From A Northern Home to a Southern School: Cultural Imperialists or Just Stubborn Yankees*, pp 273, 337, 362. Statesboro, GA: Georgia Southern University, Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies, electronic theses and dissertations 2013, accessed Sep 12, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Martin, Josephine, W, p 110.

<sup>9</sup> Clary. Item# H6851: [Letter Dec 17, 1867 to Rev E.P. Smith from Beaufort, SC].

<sup>10</sup> Smith, p 331.

<sup>11</sup> *American Missionary*, Vol XIII, No 5, May 1869, p 100.

<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012370656/cite>.

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In 1870, Martha wrote a letter in which she declared that the freedmen “had learned enough to teach the basics in elementary school”, so she accepted a position with the Presbyterian Mission Society in 1873 as a teacher in a black academy called ‘Scotia Seminary’ in North Carolina to train black teachers.<sup>12</sup> She remained at that school until 1880 when she returned home to Massachusetts. By 1880, Martha was a missionary living with her brother Samuel in Conway. In 1900, she was living as a boarder with the Jacob Whitmarsh family in Northampton, Hampshire Co., Massachusetts.

Martha missed her beloved freedmen and returned in 1911, at an advanced age, to visit Ladies Island where she died on October 5, 1912 in Beaufort County, South Carolina.<sup>13</sup> Her request to be laid to rest next to her beloved friend, Martha Johnson who taught with her in the same schools, was honored as she was buried in the Beaufort Evergreen Cemetery.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Presbyterian Church in the U.S. *Annual Report of the Presbyterian Committee on Missions for Freedmen*. New York: Presbyterian Publishing Committee, 1874.

<sup>13</sup> ,*Springfield Republican*, Springfield, Massachusetts, Thursday, Oct 1912. Obituary, p 18

<sup>14</sup> Findagrave.com Memorial ID #105679418 created 22 Feb 2013 by

Candy Weickhardt Pethe. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/105679418>