

# MRS. EMMA A. LANE

Appointment:  
Hilton Head Island, SC  
July, 1864 – April, 1865

Mrs. Lane served as a teacher of the freedmen on Hilton Head from July 1864 until April 1865.<sup>1</sup> Shortly after her arrival, Emma wrote a letter, which was published in the *Christian Recorder*, complaining that her class was often interrupted by troops and contrabands moving in and out. In fact, her school had been suspended by William T. Richardson and taken over by the military to house the wounded soldiers of the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment after the courageous, but suicidal charge on Battery Wagner.<sup>2</sup>

On July 28, 1864, she wrote a letter to Mr. George Whipple referring to her young charges as 'specimens' as if they were something to be observed,<sup>3</sup> But by spring, she felt that she had done all she could for the freedmen on Hilton Head Island and wrote a letter dated April 4, 1865 declaring that she was ready to open her own school in Portland, Georgia, but it would be tuition free versus the new trend in South Carolina in the mid-1860s of charging students small fees.<sup>4</sup> Because the Freedmen's Bureau did not have sufficient funds to operate their own schools after they were established by the government, many teachers, including Emma Lane, began charging small fees or tuition. They did not like being in the situation of collecting payments from the freedmen. Miss Lane was one of those teachers who had found it necessary to charge tuition in order to pay for supplies. In the letter she wrote to Mr. Richardson on April 4, 1865, she stated: "I charge five dollars per scholar per term of twelve weeks. Mr. Richardson thought it would not be possible for me to succeed, but I determined to make the effort. So you think I charge too much?"<sup>5</sup> The local Portland Church and Brother Tarber in Georgia gave her permission to use the church for a classroom temporarily, so she moved there and opened a school.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, Janel Janiczek, [From A Northern Home to a Southern School: Cultural Imperialists or Just Stubborn Yankees](#), p 179. Statesboro, GA: Georgia Southern University, Jack N. Averitt College of Graduate Studies, electronic theses and dissertations 2013, <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd/58>, accessed Sept 2, 2018

<sup>2</sup> Richardson, Joe M. [Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association & Southern Blacks, 1861-1890](#). Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1986, p28.

<sup>3</sup> Lane, Emma. American Missionary Association Archives. New Orleans, LA: Tulane University, Amistad Research Center. Item #H5391: [Letter from Hilton Head , SC Jul 28, 1864 to Mr. Whipple];

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, Item #H5558 [Letter from Hilton Head, SC April 4, 1865 to AMA].

<sup>5</sup> Smith, p 281.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.