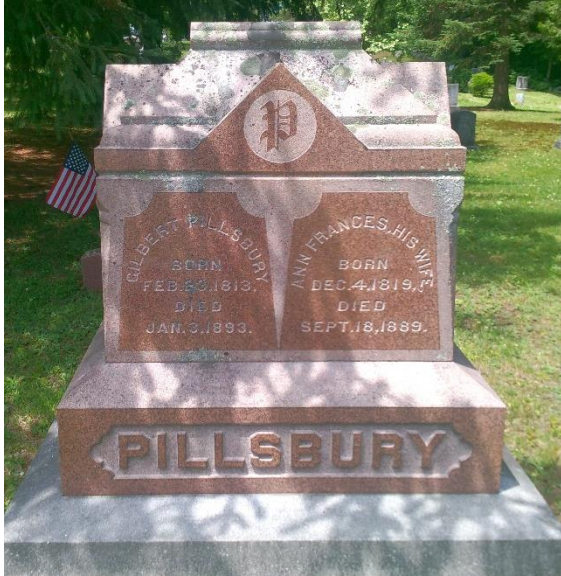


# MRS. ANTOINETTE FRANCES PILLSBURY (nee ANN RAY)



## 1819-1889

Born Dec. 4, 1819 in Ludlow, Hampden, MA

Died: Sep. 18, 1889 in Abington, Plymouth, MA

Appointment(s):

New England Freedmen's Aid Society (NEFAS)  
Lawton Plantation – Hilton Head, SC  
1862-1864

American Missionary Association (AMA)  
Mitchelville – Hilton Head, SC  
Mar. 1864

Main Street School Principal  
Charleston, SC  
Jul. 1865

American Union  
Matron - Col. Shaw Orphanage & Asylum  
Charleston, SC  
Dec. 1866

Ann was born December 4, 1819 in Ludlow, Hampden County, Massachusetts to Daniel Ray (1793-1854) and Phila Frost (1788-1849) who also had a son, George W. Ray. In 1837, Ann was a student at Wesleyan Academy Seminary for girls. Ann Frances Ray married Gilbert Pillsbury (1813-1893) on November 12, 1841 in Ludlow.

Mr. and Mrs. Pillsbury were appointed as teachers to Hilton Head by the New England Freedman's Aid Society shortly after it was established in 1862 but were reappointed in 1863 by the American Union as teachers on Hilton Head.<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Pillsbury taught the freedmen at Lawton Plantation on Hilton Head Island 1862-64 under the sponsorship of the Barnard branch of the Freedmen's Aid Society before being appointed by the American Missionary Association as a teacher at Mitchelville in March

<sup>1</sup> "New England Freedman's Association, "Teachers Sent to South Carolina 1862-63": List of Teachers, Appoint, Locations, Home Addresses".  
<http://www.drbronsontours.com/bronsonnorthamptonsschoolatMitchelljan1865.html>.

- New England Freedmen's Aid Society. *The Freedmen's Record*, Boston, Mass: Vol I, No 2 Feb 1865  
"List of Teachers in Hilton Head, SC".

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1864.<sup>2</sup> After her service at Mitchellville, she transferred again to Charleston in July 1865 to be with her husband, Superintendent Gilbert Pillsbury.<sup>3</sup> While in South Carolina, Ann began signing correspondence as Antoinette F. Pillsbury. In a letter dated September 24, 1864, Antoinette described the settlement of Mitchelville built for the hundreds of former slaves from the nearby plantations.<sup>4</sup> She also praised Lymus Anders and the role the former slave played in its construction.

...This post is the great gateway of Freedom; and poor destitute fugitives from American oppression come in from every possible quarter. To furnish them shelter and safety, a "city of refuge" has been built (called Mitchell), over the marsh, about one mile" distant from Hilton Head. Here is a population of from twelve to fifteen hundred, living, in houses or huts. It is a fine place for teaching and other missionary effort. A colored man named Lymas Anders has succeeded in raising a church and school-house in one. The building is about twenty feet by forty. At present there is no floor, but he is about putting down one and will put in a few glass windows. If an addition of twenty feet square could be made at the end or side for the accommodation of teachers (to live in), it would be an excellent position for a school. Teachers cannot walk from the Head or the nearest plantation in the heat and rain...Now is there not some town which will take this matter in hand, build the addition and send a teacher? The expense of a teachers' room has been computed at about \$250.

Perhaps I should say more of Mr. Anders, who erected the house as it stands. He reads and writes. Has a library worth about \$100, and is very gentlemanly and unassuming. He came from Key West, was a slave and has served as a soldier. He is truly worthy of encouragement...

Respectfully,

A.F. Pillsbury  
(AMA Archives).

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Vol I, No 3 March 21, 1865, p 31-32 (letter announcing transfer to Mitchelville).

<sup>3</sup> Opcit, Vol I, Nos 5,6,7,8,12 (May-Dec, 1865: "List of Teachers in Charleston, SC")

<sup>4</sup> Dougherty, Kevin and Robert Pauly, Jr. American Nation-Building: Case Studies from Reconstruction to Afghanistan.

Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co Oct 2017 Princeton University Firestone Library Call # JZ6300, D682017. p 146.

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Lymas Anders responded on October 19, 1864 to the AMA about Mrs. Pillsbury's letter:

I feel very grateful for your interest in this object of teaching our poor people. The school-house which I have built by subscriptions from the white and colored people has cost nearly \$350. The colored have given \$94, and the Thirty-second colored troops from Pennsylvania paid \$87.35. I have now floored it, and I am going to put in six glass windows. I thank you very much for your willingness to build an addition for teachers to live in. I wish, if it was possible, that the two teachers might be here soon. I will divide a room in the church or school-building on the end where they could live till their own house is finished. If the ladies can come soon, they will be sheltered and have a simple home. Mr. Pillsbury will write more particulars. Accept my thanks and regards.

Yours truly,  
Lymas A Anders<sup>5</sup>

In a follow-up letter on November 12, 1864, Mrs. Pillsbury described the simple church at Mitchelville that Lymus Anders built. After Lymus added a floor, windows and benches to the church, the teachers were able to use the church as a classroom. Mrs. Pillsbury reported that the teachers had arrived and were staying with her and her husband until their teachers' room was finished. Now that the teachers' accommodations were almost finished, Mrs. Pillsbury continued to request more financial support from her sponsors, the Barnard Freedmen's Aid Society and the Dorchester chapter of the New England Freedmen's Aid Society in order for Mr. Anders to finish the church and work on his own home.

I am satisfied with the thought that Massachusetts has built the first home for teachers in that poor city. It stands fifteen feet from the church, as, upon mature deliberation, we thought best to have them separate... And now a few words in favor of finishing Lymas Anders's church. As I have before said, he was a slave till the war; served in the army till last March; has expended all his means and time in building this church. He has now begun his own house, as he is paying five dollars per month for rent.

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<sup>5</sup> New England Freedmen's Aid Society. *The Freedmen's Record*, Boston, Mass: Vol I, No 1 Jan 1865, p 14.

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His health is poor, - not strong enough for hard labor; but what is better, he preaches to this people acceptably. His church has no windows or seats; but he has procured the lumber, and yesterday we consulted the carpenter. He will build the seats for twenty-three, and put in two glass windows for sixteen dollars. Mr. Anders has drawn upon this people who are really poor, for as much as possible at present. I do not see how the building can be made comfortable for a long time without this additional gift. I cannot express to you how happy we all are in contemplating this hearty and ready aid, and the consequent blessing to this dear people. The time since my first application to you for this purpose has been only seven weeks, and the ladies will commence teaching tomorrow, 14th, and move into their new house on the 16th.

Very cordially yours,  
Antoinette F Pillsbury <sup>6</sup>(AMA Archives, 1865).

Antoinette Pillsbury was on the American Missionary Association's list of teachers in January 1865 as both a teacher and the Matron of Mitchelville.<sup>7</sup> In that position, she gave instructions in March to Miss Breck and Miss Lillie to cut out shirts, dresses and pants from cloth that Mr. Blake had brought from New England for the contraband.<sup>8</sup> She also had requested that Miss Elizabeth Hill join them in this work, from Lawton Plantation, about 10 miles away on Hilton Head Island. She informed AMA Secretary Stevenson in a letter dated March 7, 1865 from Mitchelville that Mrs. Morse joined her group in sewing clothing and making up packages both for the contraband in Mitchelville and at Lawton Plantation. She also informed Mr. Redpath in a letter dated March 9, 1865 that Elizabeth Botume had declared herself ready, whenever the order came through, to transfer to Edisto Island to teach the hundreds of freedmen who had flooded the island.<sup>9</sup>

When Mrs. Pillsbury and her husband transferred to Charleston in 1866, they were both sponsored by the American Union as teachers and Mrs. Pillsbury served as the Principal of Main Street School in Jasper Court.<sup>10</sup> By December of the same year,

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Opcit.

<sup>8</sup> American Missionary Association. *The American Missionary*. P 118..

<sup>9</sup> Pillsbury, A.F. American Missionary Association Archives. New Orleans, LA: Tulane University, Amistad Research Center. Letter Mar 9, 1865 from Mitchelville.

<sup>10</sup> American Missionary Association. *The American Missionary*, Vol XIX, No 3, March 1866, p 118.

- New England Freedmen's Aid Society. *The Freedmen's Record* (formerly Freedmen's Journal), Boston, Mass:

Vol I, No 1. (January 1866), pp 63-64.

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Gilbert Pillsbury was the Superintendent of the Col. Shaw Orphanage and Asylum and Mrs. Pillsbury was the Matron of the orphanage.<sup>11</sup> They were assisted by Miss Jane Coolie who had been transferred from Hilton Head in December 1866 to become Assistant Matron at the Shaw Orphanage. In 1872, Mrs. Pillsbury transferred \$409 from her Freedmen's Bank account held from September 7, 1869 - September 5, 1872 to a bank in New York.<sup>12</sup> Antoinette Ray Pillsbury died September 18, 1889 in Abington, Plymouth, Massachusetts and is buried in Henniker Cemetery in Merrimac County, New Hampshire.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. Vol 2, no 1 (January 1867).

<sup>12</sup> National Archives and Records Administration. M816, 27 rolls. "Registers of Signatures of Depositors in Branches of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, 1864-1875". Washington, D.C. also available on ancestry.com

<sup>13</sup> Findagrave.com Memorial ID #147777409 created 12 Jun 2015 by Rick Weaver. Tombstone photo added 1 Jul 2015 by Sue Fetzer.  
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/147777409>