

# MARY S. WAKEMAN



## Appointment(s):

National Freedmen's Relief Association of NY  
Beaufort, SC  
Feb. 1863

Mitchelville – Hilton Head, SC  
Apr. 1866

Greenville, SC  
Jul. 1867

Beaufort, SC  
Oct. 1867

Columbia, SC  
May 1869 – May 1871

Information about Mary S. Wakeman's parentage or early life has not yet been discovered. The only records found are one that shows her as a "Member for Life" of the American Home Missionary Society and some correspondence between her and her brother-in-law about a family scandal.<sup>1</sup> The first record available concerning Miss Wakeman's service as a teacher to the freedmen is her arrival in South Carolina. Mary S. Wakeman arrived with Martha Johnson in February 1863 in Beaufort, SC.<sup>2</sup> She was appointed by the National Freedmen's Relief Association as a teacher to the freedmen under Brig. General Rufus Saxton, Military Governor of the Department of the South.<sup>3</sup> It is unclear as to where she was first assigned, but most likely she taught in the Mission House School in Beaufort with Martha Johnson. Mary taught the primary class in the school and recorded 80 pupils enrolled from February to May 1866.<sup>4</sup>

Martha Johnson wrote a letter to her family on April 11, 1863 stating that Mr. French was planning on sending her and Ms. Wakeman, who had arrived in SC with her,

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<sup>1</sup> American Home Missionary Society. 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report of the AHMS May 1859. *Member of Life*, p 194. - Wakeman, Mary S. *Anti-Slavery Manuscript Collection, 1749-1933*. Cornell University Library, NY.

[Letter Jul 29, 1859 to brother-in-law Marcus Han about scandal involving her husband (Marcus' brother) and her 3 nieces (daughters of her brother-in-law, Wade Hampton II)].  
<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*. Nov 14, 1863. <https://www.nytimes.com/1863/11/14/archives/freedmans-association.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson, Martha. Vermont Historical Society. Montpelier, VT. *Johnson Family Papers*, Vol I, MSA 185. Letters, 1863-1872. [letters to her family about her teaching experience in Beaufort].  
<https://www.vermonthistory.org/researchresearch-resources-online/civil-war-transcriptions/martha-johnson>

<sup>4</sup> National Freedmen's Relief Association. *American Freedman*. Vol 1-2. Feb-May, 1866, p 75. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Library. Call #: 326.805/tm3am/1868v.2.

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to Jacksonville, Florida but considered it unsafe so they were re-assigned.<sup>5</sup> Miss Johnson was transferred in June 1863 to Perryclear Plantation on Port Royal Island and her new co-teacher in the Broomfield School at Perryclear was Martha Clary<sup>6</sup> So it seems that Miss Wakeman remained in Beaufort until her next assignment in 1866 on Hilton Head Island.

By April of 1866, Miss Wakeman was assigned to Mitchelville School in Hilton Head, South Carolina by the NFRA of NY.<sup>7</sup> Her co-teacher was Miss C. M. Hammond and they had 101 pupils with an average attendance of 75 for the months of May and June 1866.<sup>8</sup> Mary Wakeman described their situation:

We have a very large stove, but on some days, all the fire we can make will not keep us comfortable. I have seen children trying to keep back the tears that would come, because of the aching hands and feet, and yet they are all decently clad. Some of the students donated wood for the fire who could not afford tuition.<sup>9</sup>

As of July 1867, Miss Wakeman was transferred to Greenville, SC for the 1867-1868 term where she taught the Primary level and was known as a 'splendid disciplinarian'.<sup>10</sup> Mary's co-teacher in Greenville, Miss E.P. Bennett, wrote that "The school buildings are mere shells. The one Ms. Wakeman and I teach in is not shingled at all and colder than a barn."<sup>11</sup> Note: It is somewhat confusing, though, as to the co-

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<sup>5</sup> Johnson, Martha. Letter Apr 11, 1863.

<sup>6</sup> Smith, Janel Janiczek, "From A Northern Home to a Southern School: Cultural Imperialists or Just Stubborn Yankees", p 293. Statesboro, GA: Georgia Southern University, Jack N Averitt College of Graduate Studies, electronic theses and dissertations 2013. <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd/58>, accessed Sep 12, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> National Freedmen's Relief Association. *American Freedman*. Vol 2, no 5 & 6, April-May, 1866, p 367.

<sup>8</sup> National Freedmen's Relief Association of New York. *The National Freedman*, Vol II, No 5 May 1866, No 6 June 1866, pp 157, 181.

[http://www.books.google.com/books?id=QiDVAAMAAJ&pg=PA157&jpg=PA157&dq=Manry+Wakeman+%2B+Mitchelville,+SC&source=bl&ots=UamEDpBuBh&sig=ACfU3U0qgX7Phs9QFOow51ZJYcR\\_ilF60Q&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEw;Cwff87tKahVJRKOKHV1zB01Q6AEwAH0ECAgQAQ#v=onepage&q=Mary%20Wakeman%20%2B%20Mitchelville%20%20SC&f=false](http://www.books.google.com/books?id=QiDVAAMAAJ&pg=PA157&jpg=PA157&dq=Manry+Wakeman+%2B+Mitchelville,+SC&source=bl&ots=UamEDpBuBh&sig=ACfU3U0qgX7Phs9QFOow51ZJYcR_ilF60Q&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEw;Cwff87tKahVJRKOKHV1zB01Q6AEwAH0ECAgQAQ#v=onepage&q=Mary%20Wakeman%20%2B%20Mitchelville%20%20SC&f=false).

<sup>9</sup> Williams, Heather Andrea. "Clothing Themselves in Intelligence: The Freedpeople, Schooling and Norther Teachers, 1861-1871" in *The Journal of African-American History*, Vol 87, New Perspective on African-American Educational History. University of Chicago Press, Autumn 2002, p 376.. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1562471>.

<sup>10</sup> Mary S. *Anti-Slavery Manuscript Collection, 1749-1933*. Collection #4601. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections. Cornell University Library, NY. American Union Commission. Box 25, Folder 20. [Letter Aug 9, 1867 to James Miller McKim]. <https://rmc.library.cornell.edu/EAD/htmldocs/RMM04061.html>.

- Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. General Assembly, Committee on Freedmen, Pittsburgh, PA: James McMillan, pub. *Annual Report of the General Assembly's Committee on Freedmen of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. 1870*, p 16. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89077086965&view=1up&seq=3>

<sup>11</sup> American Union Commission. *American Freedman*, 1866-1869. Vol 2, no 11, Nov 1866, p 368

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teacher of Wakeman in Greenville, because her future co-teacher in Columbia, SC was Jennie Green, who was also teaching in Greenville at the same time as Miss Wakeman. However, it appears that she was back temporarily at least in Beaufort by October of 1867.<sup>12</sup> She taught the Primary level and was known as a 'splendid disciplinarian'. Her co-teacher, Jennie Green, wrote that the "classroom was a sight worth seeing, fifty or sixty little curly heads sitting straight with arms folded, either reciting some general exercises, or a class on the floor reading, with the room so quiet you could hear the ticking of a watch."<sup>13</sup> Under the sponsorship of the Presbyterian Church Committee on Freedmen, Mary Wakeman and Jennie Green next were appointed to a school in Columbia, South Carolina in May 1869 and remained there through at least May 1871.<sup>14</sup>

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[Letter from co-teacher, Miss Miss E.P. Bennett in Greenville, SC Nov 1866].

<http://archive.org/stream/americanfreevol02no11amer/americanfreevol02no11amer.djvu.txt>.

<sup>12</sup> Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association. *Pennsylvania Freedmen's Bulletin*, vol 2, no 4 July 1867 and no 5 Aug 1867, p 301 [Greenville] and no 7 Oct 1867, p 303. [Beaufort, SC]

<https://archive.org/stream/pennsylvaniafree00penn/pennsylvaniafree00penn-djvu.txt>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Opcit.