

ANNIE R. WILKINS



**Seabrook Plantation main house
as seen from wharf ca 1860**

<https://www.loc.gov/item/2010651637/>

Born: Abt. 1845 in Boston, MA

Died: 1922

Appointment(s):

American Missionary Association
(AMA)

Seabrook Plantation

Hilton Head, SC

Jan. 1866 – May 1867

Matron - Teacher's Home

Mitchelville

May 1867 – May 1868

Mitchelville & Darien, GA

May 1868 – May 1869

Albany, GA

Late 1869 - 1860

Annie R. Wilkins was born about 1845 in Boston, Suffolk Co., Massachusetts to Samuel Carter Williams (1811-1899) and Clara Boynton Hobson (1814-1893). She lived with her parents until 1900. She received an appointment from the American Missionary Association and arrived in Hilton Head, South Carolina in January 1866 and was assigned to Seabrook Plantation where she and co-teacher Charlotte M. Keith lived in the plantation's 'mansion'.¹ The word 'mansion' does not describe the plantation owner's home since it was vandalized and stripped by Union troops and freedmen and in total disrepair. Annie described her horror in a letter to the AMA on January 19, 1866 when she described her new home as "filthy dirty."² She remained at Seabrook

¹ Smith, Janel Janiczek, From A Northern Home to a Southern School: Cultural Imperialists or Just Stubborn Yankees, pp 166,172,181,276,364,454-457. 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
- American Missionary Association. *American Missionary*, Vol XI, No 4, Teacher's List 1866-67. New York: April 1867.

² Campo, Rachel; Michael Trinkley and Debi Hacker. "The Plantation Landscape: Slaves and Freedmen

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until May 1867 when Annie replaced Mrs. Ellen Seymour as Matron of the Teachers' Home in Mitchelville³ Annie also began teaching at Mitchelville before May 1868.⁴ In May 1868, she became the first AMA teacher to be sent to Darien, Georgia.⁵ From that time on, Annie travelled frequently between Seabrook Plantation on Hilton Head and Mitchelville as well as both Brunswick and Darien, Georgia.⁶ Finally, in late 1869, she transferred once again to Albany, Georgia where she remained through 1870⁷. She was one of the teachers who moved from school to school to meet the greatest need.

In a letter dated March 8, 1867, printed in her book of letters to her sister Eliza Ann Summers, she describes a sailing outing from Hilton Head to Bay Point on Phillips Island which was located opposite Fort Walker on Hilton Head, with Mr. Wright, Mr. Beers, Mr. Noyes & Mr. Clarey as well as 8 other teachers, including Annie R. Wilkins.⁸ Mr. Noyes took them to visit 3 women who taught at Bay Point, one of whom was Martha Ann Clary. In a letter to Mr. Smith of the American Missionary Association in New York dated November 18, 1867 from Mitchelville freedmen's village, Annie requested to be reassigned to Florida with her friend Margaret Burke: "Received a letter from Miss Burke saying she had asked you to send us together to Florida. I would like to be with her very much and hope you let us go together."⁹ The AMA often requested female teachers to travel between schools in pairs for their safety and companionship. But it appears that her request in this case was denied. In a letter dated December 17, 1867 from Hilton Head to Mr. Smith, she informed him that she had needed to start charging a fee for tuition: "...Every cent I have been able to raise is harder work than the teaching. Perhaps next month I shall not be able to raise as much."¹⁰ Annie was still located on Hilton Head Island early in 1868, since she sent her 'Teacher's Monthly

at Seabrook Plantation, Hilton Head Island, SC". Chicora Foundation Research Series 34. Columbia, SC.

Chicora Foundation, Columbia, SC, p33..

³ Martin Josephine W, ed. Dear Sister: Letters Written from Hilton Head 1871. [Letters written by Eliza Ann Summers to her sister from Hilton Head while she was teaching freedmen], pp 76,110..

⁴ Dougherty, Kevin and Robert Pauly, Jr. American Nation-Building: Case Studies from Reconstruction to Afghanistan. Jefferson, NCD: McFarland Co, Oct 2017, p 139.

⁵ Campo, Rachel, p 33.

⁶ Smith, pp 161 & 276.

⁷ Snodgrass, Mary Ellen. The Civil War Era and Reconstruction: An Encyclopedia of Social, Political and Cultural Influences. Armonk, NY:M.E. Sharpe, 2011. University of South Carolina, Bluffton.

Call #: E468S65.2011, p 181.

⁸ Martin, Josephine W, ed. p39..

⁹ Wilkins, Annie R. American Missionary Association Archives. New Orleans, LA: Tulane University, Amistad Research Center. Item #H6812: [Letter Nov 18, 1867 from Bluffton, SC to Mr Smith].

¹⁰ ----- Item #H6848: Letter Dec 17, 1867 from Bluffton, SC to Mr Smith

----- Item #H6897: [Letter Jan 7, 1868 from Bluffton, SC, to Mr Smith incl "Teacher's Monthly Report" [TMR],

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Report' from Seabrook Plantation on January 7, 1868 as well as a letter describing the many conversions to Christianity of her adult students.¹¹

She was sent to Darien, Georgia in May 1868 as one of the first AMA teachers to be assigned there.¹² In Darien, Annie taught about 80 day students, a large group of adults in the evenings and all ages at a Sabbath school. She continued to travel between Mitchellville, Hilton Head, and Darien and Brunswick, Georgia until May 1869.¹³ Annie stayed in the South over the hot summers and continued to offer instruction to the freedmen's children. She was one of the teachers like Margaret Burke, who accepted positions in several locations in order to remain teaching in the South. She finally accepted a new position in Albany, Georgia for the 1869-1870 school year before returning home.¹⁴

¹¹ -----Item #H6897: [Letter Jan 7, 1868 to Mr Smith; "Teacher's Monthly Reports" *[TMR]*,

¹² Campo, p 33.

¹³ Smith, pp 276-278 & 454,457.

¹⁴ Wilkins, Annie R. American Missionary Association Archives. New Orleans, LA: Tulane University , Amistad Research Center. Item # 21490: [Letter 23 Apr 1869 from Darien, GA to E.P. Smith]