

ELLEN 'NELLIE' HOWARD WINSOR



Born: Aug. 29, 1840 in Kingston, Plymouth Co., MA

Died: Apr. 30, 1915 in Providence, RI

Appointment(s):

New England Freedmen's Aid Society (NEFAS)

Port Royal, SC

Beaufort, SC

Mar. 1862

Pope Plantation – Hilton Head, SC

1863

1840-1915

Ellen Winsor was born August 29, 1840 in Kingston, Plymouth, Massachusetts to Capt. William Delano Winsor (1804-1879) and Hannah Howard (1805-1884). 'Nellie' as she was known to family and friends, was a schoolteacher in Boston, Massachusetts. That experience set her up with some of the skills she would need in her next position. Nellie was with the first group of teachers, known as the 'Gideonites' who were appointed by the New England Freedman's Association after it was established in February 1862.¹ She was sponsored by the Boston Freedmen's Society and first sent to Port Royal, South Carolina arriving on March 3, 1862. Susan Walker, Assistant to Secretary Chase of the Treasury, was put in charge of 'Nellie' Winsor because of her youth. Upon arrival the two of them were invited to Solomon Peck's house for dinner when he boarded their ship to collect his own daughter Ellen who had come to help him with the freedmen.²

Ellen and Susan Walker were first stationed on St. Helena's Island.

¹ "New England Freedman's Association. "Teachers Sent to South Carolina 1862-.63" <http://www.drbronsontours.com/bronsonnorthamptonsschoolatMitchellian1865.html>

- Walker, Susan & Henry Noble Sherwood. "Journal of Miss Susan Walker, March 3rd to June 6th" in *Quarterly Publication of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio*, Vol 7, no 1. p 48.

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=coo.31924093830135&view=1up&seq=65>.

² Ibid

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However, on Monday, March 17, 1862, they both were transported to Beaufort where Ellen would teach in Solomon Peck's school and Ms. Walker would teach freed women how to do laundry for the troops while continuing to send Sec. Chase reports on the conditions and needs of the freedmen.³ Snodgrass relates how on October 26, 1862, "C. Forten, E. Murray and *social worker* Nellie Winsor organized an expedition of Quaker educators to recently captured Confederate territory. "They sailed to the Sea Islands south of Charleston; off the coast of South Carolina then under control of 10,000 Union forces, at St Helena Island, accessed by rowboat or ferry, C. Forten and Laura Matilda Towne, a teacher and homeopath, held class for two years at the Oaks, a confiscated plantation of 500 acres." (Snodgrass p 259).⁴ Snodgrass calls Winsor a co-founder of the Port Royal school in 1863 with Ellen Murray (Snodgrass, p 155).⁵

While stationed in Beaufort, Ellen met and married her first husband Josiah Fairfield (1833-1865), a plantation owner on May 7, 1863 on St. Helena Island. He was lost at sea in 1865.⁶ Shortly after Josiah's death, Miss Winsor was transferred to Hilton Head Island for a short time.⁷ As an experienced teacher, Ellen seemed interested in curriculum and teaching methods. One of the methods that teachers used in drilling the children on history and current affairs from an abolitionist viewpoint was to pose scripted questions with expected responses. Ellen's questions went as follows: 1. Where were slaves first brought to this country? A. Virginia. 2. When? A.1620. 3. Who brought them? A. Dutchmen. 4. Who came the same year to Plymouth, Massachusetts? A. Pilgrims.⁸

She returned north early 1866 where she worked as the Administrator of the Home for Little Wanderers.⁹ In 1866, while in Massachusetts, she married her second husband, Josiah Nelson Cushing (1840-1905) who was a missionary candidate at Newton Theological Institution.¹⁰ In 1867, the couple went to Rangoon, Myanmar (Burma) and established a mission station at Shan State in Toungoo. They began translating the Gospels into the Shan tribal language and created the first English-Shan

³ Walker, p 49.

⁴ Snodgrass, Mary Ellen. Civil War Era and Reconstruction: An Encyclopedia of Social, Political, Cultural and Economic History, p 259. NY: Routledge Pub. March 2012018. <https://book.google.com/books?isbn=1317457919>. accessed 27 Oct 2018.

⁵ Ibid, p 155.

⁶ Kurian, George Thomas and Mark A. Lamport.eds. Encyclopedia of Christianity in the United States, Vol 5, p 674. Cincinnati, OH: Press of Jennings and Graham 1912. Reprint: Rowman & Littlefield, Nov 10, 2106.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Snodgrass

⁶ Kurlan, p 675.

¹⁰ Hoadley, Frank T. and Benjamin Brown. "Ellen Winsor Cushing: Educator with a World Vision" in Baptists Who Dared. Valley Forge, PA; Judson Press, 1980, p 69.. Accessed Apr 2019 at Meredith College, Raleigh, NC: Carlyle Campbell Library General Collection, Call #286.09H65

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dictionary.¹¹ From 1877-1890, the couple ran two missions at Toungoo and Bhamo, Burma. On a home leave in 1886, Ellen worked as the Field Secretary for the Philadelphia Baptist Missionary Union and in 1892, she opened the Baptist Training School for Christian Work to train women as missionaries as there was a real need for more women in the field.¹² That school would be renamed the Ellen Cushing Jr. College in 1970 but then closed in 1980. She worked with the new training academy while her husband went to Rangoon, Burma as the Pastor of the new Baptist church there and Principal of Rangoon Baptist College.¹³ While on his last furlough to the United States visiting his wife in 1905, he died. After a long absence from Burma, Ellen returned to Rangoon as a widow and spent three years there completing the Gospel translations. Mrs. Ellen Howard (Winsor) Fairfield Cushing died on April 30, 1915 in Providence, Rhode Island but was buried in Oak Grove Cemetery, plot 469 in Plymouth, Massachusetts.¹⁴

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Findagrave. Ellen Winsor Cushing. Memorial ID:46506266 created 10 Jan 2010 by Mayflower Pilgrim 332. Photo of tombstone added 14 Oct 2014 by Joan Ellis Pullis.
<https://www.findagrav.com/memorial/46506266>.