

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story was written, in March 2023, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of women who appear in the 1901 census for St. Joseph's Inebriate Reformatory, Ashford, Middlesex and Farmfield Reformatory for Inebriate Women, Horley, Surrey.

Eliza Winifred Springate's Story

Eliza was born in Deptford, Kent, in 1873, the daughter of Thomas and Mary Ann Springate née Barry.ⁱ In 1881, she was living at 21 Acorn Place, Rotherhithe, Surrey with her family; her father was a seaman.ⁱⁱ The family cannot be located in the 1891 census.

On 12 April 1897, Eliza went to Southwark workhouse and was discharged the same day to Champion Hill Infirmary in Southwark.ⁱⁱⁱ The workhouse admissions' register provides the additional information that Eliza was Roman Catholic and a packer in a jam factory. The Hartley's jam factory was in Staple Street at this time. In 1898, Eliza was again admitted to Southwark workhouse.^{iv}

By 1901, Eliza Springate was a patient at St. Joseph's Inebriate Reformatory, Ashford, Middlesex. She was unmarried, aged 28 and unlike some of the women, no occupation was listed for her.^v

In January 1903, an Eliza Springate appeared in court in Liverpool for drunkenness but it is not certain if this was the same person.^{vi}

On 12 June 1905, Eliza was committed to a certified inebriate reformatory for three years by the court at Tower Bridge. She was described as being five foot six inches tall, of proportionate build, with a fair complexion, dark brown hair and grey eyes. Her nose was straight and her face oval and she had a scar under her chin. Eliza was a factory hand employed in Staple Street, Bermondsey. She was said to frequent Lower Road, Rotherhithe. Her photograph appears in the Habitual Criminals' Register.^{vii}

On 25 November 1910, Eliza was committed for a further three years by Tower Bridge court. Her description was the same as it had been five years earlier and another photograph is available in the Habitual Criminals' records. She was still a factory hand in Staple Street. Her haunts were Lower Road and Evelyn Street, Deptford.^{viii}

In the 1911 census, Eliza can be found in the Aylesbury State Reformatory, Buckinghamshire. She was described as a factory hand 'cotton' but is clear from other records that she worked in the Jam factory and it seems that 'cotton' refers to the entry below. Eliza's entry also notes that she was 'feeble minded', so presumably had a learning difficulty.^{ix}

Eliza's death was registered in Camberwell in 1914^x and she was buried in Southwark on 1 January 1915.^{xi}

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Sources

General Register's indexes of birth, marriage and death.

1881 census for 21 Acorn Place, Rotherhithe, Surrey RG11 576 folio 89.

1901 census for St. Joseph's Inebriate Reformatory, Ashford, Middlesex RG13 1171 folio 13.

1911 census for Aylesbury State Reformatory, Buckinghamshire RG 14 7941 Schedule number 9999.

Liverpool Evening Express 07 January 1903 p 8 col b.

12 June 1905 Habitual Drunkard's List MEPO6/79 827.

25 November 1910 Habitual Drunkard's List MEPO6/84.

The Admissions' Registers of Southwark workhouse. Originals at London Metropolitan Archives, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

Deceased on line www.deceasedonline.com.

ⁱ General Register's indexes of death. 1881 census for 21 Acorn Place, Rotherhithe, Surrey RG11 576 folio 89.

ⁱⁱ 1881 census for 21 Acorn Place, Rotherhithe, Surrey RG11 576 folio 89.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Admissions' Registers of Southwark workhouse. Originals at London Metropolitan Archives, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

^{iv} The Admissions' Registers of Southwark workhouse. Originals at London Metropolitan Archives, accessed via www.ancestry.co.uk.

^v 1901 census for St. Joseph's Inebriate Reformatory, Ashford, Middlesex RG13 1171 folio 13.

^{vi} *Liverpool Evening Express* 07 January 1903 p 8 col b.

^{vii} Habitual Drunkard's List MEPO6/79.

^{viii} Habitual Drunkard's List MEPO6/84.

^{ix} 1911 census for Aylesbury State Reformatory, Buckinghamshire RG 14 7941 Schedule number 9999.

^x General Register's indexes of death.

^{xi} Deceased on line www.deceasedonline.com.