This story is one of a series that relate to women and girls who were associated with The Mount School, York, as pupils, teachers, or other members of staff. This project began in June 2023, as part of the York Festival of ideas.

Dorothy Margaret Cash

Dorothy Margaret Cash was born in Wandsworth, London, on 30th November 1885, to a prominent Quaker couple of the time. Her mother, Margaret Sophia Bright, was second youngest of seven children born to John Bright, a Lancashire mill owner, member of the Temperance Band and Liberal Member of Parliament who had fought against the Corn Laws in the 1840s. Dorothy's father, John Theodore Cash, was also from Lancashire and from a well-to-do farming family.

John Theodore Cash and Margaret Bright married in Torquay, Devon, on 25 August 1881. John Theodore Cash was a qualified doctor who started his education at the Quaker school in York, and then went on to study medicine at the prestigious medical school at Edinburgh University. After undertaking some research work in France and Germany, John Cash returned to England to marry Margaret, and start a family.

The couple's first child, Rowland, was born in July 1883 in London, when his father John Theodore was employed at St Bartholomew's hospital in the capital, in the pharmacology department. Two years later, Dorothy Margaret Cash was born.

In 1887, John Theodore Cash started a new position of Regius Professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics in the medical teaching department at Aberdeen University. The family moved north, and were living at 25 Dee Street in Aberdeen city centre when they had their third child, Ian, in February 1888. The family remained at the Dee Street address on the 1891 census.

Dorothy Margaret Cash enrolled as a pupil at the Mount School in York in January 1900, when she would have been 15. She was following in her mother's footsteps as the 1871 census shows Margaret Sophia Bright as a 15 year old pupil at the Society of Friends Ladies' School in Driffield Terrace, York. After leaving school, Dorothy started a long career as a nurse. On the 1911 census she was listed at the General Lying-In hospital in Lambeth, London and working as a nurse. The General Lying-In Hospital was one of Britain's first maternity hospitals, and opened in 1767. Going to hospital to have your baby was unusual in early 20th century Britain, with around 95% of babies born at home. "Lying-In" refers to the period of bedrest which was thought to be essential for new mothers. Although the concept of women attending other women in childbirth goes back millennia, it was only in 1902 that the profession of Midwifery was formally recognised with the Midwives Act, setting out standard training and certification for women wishing to practice as a midwife. Dorothy Margaret Cash was first enrolled as a midwife in August 1911, when she passed the Central Midwives Board certification.

As a midwife, Dorothy appears not to have been involved in the nursing corps in World War 1. The next trace of her is in January 1915, when she appeared on a passenger list sailing on the SS Arabic from Liverpool to New York with her parents, aged 29. The clerks at Ellis Island in New York recorded details of appearance, so the records show that Dorothy was 5 feet 5 inches tall, and had dark brown hair and brown eyes. Dorothy spent around six weeks in the United States and returned to Liverpool on the SS New York on 14 February, 1915. Dorothy remained in London after the War, and was found on the 1921 census at the St Marylebone Babies' home in Marlborough Place, St John's Wood. Her occupation was simply stated as "officer", so could this indicate a step up in her midwifery career and responsibilities? Dorothy lived the rest of her life in central London, living at various addresses in Kensington and Chelsea through the 1940s and 1950s, before moving to Chiswick in the early 1960s.

Dorothy Margaret Cash died in late 1964 in Kensington, at the age of 78. She never married and had no children.