

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story was written in August 2023 as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of women who enrolled in the first two cohorts [1908 & 1909] of Trainee Teachers at the Cheshire Country Training College, Crewe [CCTCC]

Clarice May Eaton's Story

Clarice May Eaton was born on 24 March 1892 and baptised on 21 April 1892. Her father, William Henry Eaton was a labourer, originally from Liverpool. Her mother was Mary Jane Marsh, originally from Ardwick in Lancashire. Clarice was the last of three children born to the couple – sister Emma Jane was born in 1884 and brother William in 1888.

The children were all baptised at Witton-cum-Twambrooks Parish Church, as was Ruby Winifred Stagg, just a couple of months after Clarice. Ruby is another of the young women who is a subject of research on this 'Few Forgotten Women Friday'. The families likely knew each other.

Tragedy was to strike Clarice's family when her father, William Henry Eaton, died on 29 September 1894, when Clarice was just two and a half years old. Her mother married again in 1897, when Clarice was five years old. Her new husband was Arthur Swain, a bachelor from Sandbach, Cheshire, who worked as a clerk.

Clarice attended Witton Elementary School and she and Ruby Winifred Stagg followed the same path, gaining a three year Junior County Scholarship to The High School for Girls at Northwich, awarded by Cheshire County Council in September 1905. They both started at the school on 19 September 1905.

It appears that Clarice, like Ruby, was awarded another year of fees being covered under the 'Bursar System' in 1908 – this had only been introduced in 1907 and meant that she intended to become a teacher by attending school until she was about 17 or 18 and then proceeding to Teacher Training College. The Bursar System replaced the Pupil Teacher system. The record also noted that Clarice had passed The Oxford Senior Local Examination in 1909 and she left The High School on 28 July 1909, heading for 2 years at Cheshire County Training College, Crewe from 15 September 1909. I wonder were Clarice and Ruby friends, or were they rivals?!

In 1901 Clarice and her family lived at 137 Victoria Road in Northwich, a red brick terrace house with a bay window and attractive façade. By 1911 they had moved up the road to number 32 - a handsome, recently-built red brick semi-detached property with a lovely bay window and small front garden enclosed by railings, and a nicely tiled path to the front door. In the 1911 Census Clarice is a

student at Cheshire County Training College, Crewe and is living with her parents and brother William, who works as a shipwright.

The 1921 census shows very similar information, with the family still living at the same address. William is listed as a ship's carpenter and Clarice is now in an elementary school teacher employed by Cheshire County Council and in a teaching post at Egerton Church of England School in Knutsford, Cheshire. We have no idea when she started this job as no newspaper report of her appointment could be found online.

Clarice's brother William married in the summer of 1921 and in July 1923 Clarice married Samuel Thomas Woolley, who had been born in Brereton, Cheshire and now lived at Moss Bridge, Elton, Sandbach with his widowed mother and younger brother. His father had died when Samuel was 11 years old. Samuel worked as a manager in Jackson Brothers Coal business in Sandbach.

Clarice and Samuel's only child, Marion Elizabeth Woolley, was born in December 1928 in Congleton, Cheshire. In 1929 the family was living in 30 Marsh Green Road, Elworth, Sandbach, according to the 21st anniversary book published by Cheshire County Training College. Clarice was made a life member of the 'Old Students Association' as part of their 21st Anniversary Awards. By 1939, the family is in Bradwall Road, Sandbach and, of course, Clarice is a stay-at-home mother. Once she married, she would have had to resign from teaching. Samuel is a coal merchant and the Head ARP Warden.

Little more could be found about Clarice. We know that her mother died in 1937, her daughter married in 1953 and went on to have four children, and her

husband Samuel passed away in 1955 at the age of 63. Clarice died on 25 March 1962, at the Royal Infirmary, Worcester. She had been living at 39 Wells Road, Malvern, Worcester. Perhaps that's where her daughter and family lived at that time. Clarice was 70 years old when she died.

Sources:

- *CCTCC Student Registers [1908-1935]: CCTCC Archives, Unpublished data, under the care of the Family History Society of Cheshire, Crewe*
- *1908-1929, Souvenir of the 21st Anniversary, CCTCC, Unpublished data, under the care of the Family History Society of Cheshire, Crewe*
- *'Old Students Association. Coming of Age Magazine, May 18th 1929', part of the CCTCC Collection at the Family History Society Society, Crewe*
- *ancestry.co.uk*
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- *England and Wales Census 1871 – 1921*
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- *Newspapers.com*

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