

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story was written, in September 2024, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of pupils at the Royal Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb Poor (later The Royal School for the Deaf), Margate, Kent and The West of England Institution for the Deaf and Dumb, Exeter, Devon

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Nellie Florence Terry 's Story

Sources : *Censuses 19, Birth, Marriage and Death Records; Electoral Rolls (Sutton, Surrey); Royal Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb Poor Admissions and Leavers Records, UK Military Pensions Records.*

Nellie Florence Terry (1891-1964) was born to Sarah Rebecca (née Foulger) and Frederick Howard Terry on 3 September 1891 in Sutton, Surrey. She was baptised at St Barnabas, Sutton on 6 December that year. Nellie was the fourth of what were to be 8 children born to Sarah and Frederick: seven girls, one of whom (E.S) appears to have died in infancy and a boy. Nellie's father was

originally from Ipswich and his occupation is listed as a Plumber, Gas and Hot Water Fitter in multiple official records.

Nellie was admitted to the Old Kent Road site of the Royal Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb Poor aged seven, on 9 January 1899 and according to the Admissions record, was sent to Margate Asylum on 8 August 1900. She remained a pupil at Margate until 1907.

Her Admissions record notes that her condition, 'at first examination' and 'apparent intellect' were 'Very Fair'. In this and later records it's noted that her deafness was first noticed at 2 years, 3 months of age; that she was Frederick and Sarah's only deaf child and that her parents were not related. Records also note that she had fallen downstairs at eighteen months of age. However the fact that Nellie had suffered measles in the past, *may* give a clue as to the cause of her deafness.

While the 1901 census records Nellie as a student at Margate Asylum, her parents were listed at their home address, 81 Clarence Terrace, Sutton with Nellie's siblings: May Frederica (13yrs), George Frederick Foulger (11yrs), Daisy Elizabeth (7yrs), Ettie Kathleen (4yrs) and Dorothy Violet (2 yrs). Her older sister (E.S Terry) is not present in the household at the time the census was taken and I have not been able to locate her, hence my guess that she had died sometime between 1891 and 1901.

On examination in November 1900, Nellie was found to be making 'Fair Progress', studying Language, Scripture, Articulation, Lip Reading, Arithmetic, Writing and Sewing. She seems to have had some periods of absence in the 1901 school year, but by the time she left Margate in 1907 aged 15, was placed second in the First Silent (Second Division) class. She scores highly in Lip Reading, General Knowledge and Dressmaking, her conduct is 'Excellent' and she is able

to sign her full name clearly. Her 'intellectual capability' is described as 'Feeble and nervous, but does her best'.

The 1911 census records 19 year old Nellie living at 81 Clarence Road (not Terrace as in 1901) with her parents, her brother George (21yrs), her sister Dorothy (12yrs) and a new, youngest sibling, Bessie Kate Lilly (9yrs). Frederick's occupation is still listed as Plumber, Gas and Hot Water Fitter and George is now working as a Plumber's Assistant. Sutton at this time was a fast-growing town, its location on the London to Brighton turnpike road having already established it as an important link and the arrival of the railways in 1847 leading to rapid population growth into the 1900s.

In March 1913, Nellie's brother George, still in the plumbing trade, married Daisy Stent in Froyle, Southampton and on 1 July 1913 the couple had a child, Frederick James Foulger Terry. George enlisted as a Private in the Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment at the outbreak of World War 1. He died of wounds on the Western Front on 31 January 1916.

The 1921 census records Nellie living at 13 Collingwood Road, with her parents and two younger sisters. The youngest, Bessie, is recorded as a Motor Driver at a local Coach Works. She was to go on to marry a fellow Motor Driver, Victor Joyce Fowle in 1928. One year later, on 7 February 1931, Nellie herself married, aged 39, a labourer named Archibald Ronald Campbell (aged 40). The 1939 Register records the couple living at 12 Walton Avenue, Sutton with Archibald now working as a painter and decorator. Nellie predeceases her husband, dying aged 72, in Surrey in early 1964.