

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story was written, in April 2024, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of women staff and female patients associated with the Fleming Memorial Children's Hospital, Jesmond, Northumberland.

Margaret Scott

Margaret Scott was amongst some of the pioneering members of The Queen's Nurses; she lived and worked during the end of Queen Victoria's reign. Despite the monarch's lack of support for women's rights, her financial donation created the Queen's Nursing Institute in 1889. It unwittingly enabled many women to carve out a career for themselves and was no longer necessary for them to rely on men, marriage or benevolence for their day to day lives. Prior to the women's Suffrage movement, a career in nursing gave stability and independence and became recognised as a respectable choice of employment for females in the workplace.

Margaret was born in Edinburgh on the 29 June 1867¹ - barely 10 years after the gruesome Crimean War which saw Florence Nightingale shining her light on the severe lack of medical care for the wounded soldiers on the battlefield. Many were inspired by her movement and with the opening of numerous new training colleges, enrolment soared, and jobs were created for thousands of young ladies in society. Margaret was one of these women. The census of 1881 shows that she is already nursing at the age of only 16².

By the age of 25, the 1891 England Census³ for Newcastle upon Tyne shows that Margaret Scott is a nurse in The Fleming Children's Hospital. Before 1919, formal qualifications were not always necessary, and many women trained in hospitals without them. It appears that this may also have been the case for Margaret as shown in her training record on the Roll of Queen's Nurses¹. This also shows that Margaret trained at The Royal Hospital in Glasgow from 1892-1896 and acquired her Queen's Nursing Certificate in 1898. This was a prestigious recognition and one of the first to be recognised as a legitimate and respected qualification in nursing.

Margaret then sought work in Clapham, London as a midwife for some time¹ and reappears in the 1901 English Census⁴ whilst living and working in Tunbridge Wells. It is interesting to note that she is listed as nursing on her "own account", so this may have been a voluntary role.

Unfortunately, I can find no more definite evidence of Margaret's work or life. Her career shows that she worked extensively around the country so it is possible that she may have moved or gotten married and retired. We can only hope she had a long and fulfilling life.

Sources:

- 1 Roll of Queen's Nurses on Ancestry.com.au
- 2 1881 England Census on Ancestry.com.au
- 3 1891 England Census on Ancestry.com.au
- 4 1901 England Census on Ancestry.com.au

By Shelly Matthews