

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.

Ellen Daintree's Story

Ellen Daintree was born in Somersham, Huntingdonshire in 1860. She was the daughter of Robert Daintree and his wife Mary Ekins. Robert and Mary had married in 1846 and Ellen was the sixth of the couple's seven children. In 1861 baby Ellen lived with her family in Somersham. Robert was a farmer of 576 acres employing 20 men and 8 boys and the family also employed a nursemaid and a dairymaid. There are multiple marriages between Ekins and Daintrees so the families were well interlinked.

This affluent family had moved about 17 miles to the west by 1871 and lived at the Manor House in Woolley, Spaldwick. Robert farmed 520 acres, employing 13 men and 5 boys, and there was a housekeeper, a governess and 2 general

servants in the house, for Ellen's mother, Mary had died earlier the same year at the age of 45. Mary herself was also from a prosperous farming family, so one might expect the family to be very rooted in the land, but as we shall see, this was not the case. At the age of 11, Ellen had lost her mother and in 1876 her father married Louisa Hainsworth, whose father farmed in Hitchin and had died the year before the marriage.

Ellen was in London in 1881, she worked at Great Ormand Street Hospital for Sick Children as a Hospital Nurse.

In 1891 she was in Worcester, working as Assistant Matron at the Worcester General Infirmary.

In 1901 she was in Jesmond working as Matron at the Fleming Hospital, where she remained in 1911.

The UK and Ireland Nursing register gives details of her career:

- Great Ormond Street 1879-1885. Probationer then W.C. then Nurse
- Bradford Infirmary 1885-1888 Head Nurse
- Newark Hospital 1888-1890 Staff Nurse
- Worcester Infirmary 1890-1891 Night Superintendent
- Fleming Memorial Hospital 1891 onwards in 1891 Lady Superintendent / Matron.

Ellen does not appear on the 1921 census, because in January 1920, at the age of 60, she emigrated to Australia. She travelled on the S.S. Wiltshire, embarking

at Liverpool, with the intention of landing at Melbourne. Also travelling on her ticket, number 77, was Kathleen Fradgley, age 16. Kathleen was also from a prosperous background. Her father was an accountant, and her parents died in Australia, so it might be that Ellen was accompanying her as a chaperone.

Ellen's older brother Robert died in Maine, USA, her next brother Thomas died in South Africa, her sister Agnes died in Los Angeles and her youngest brother Ernest died in Victoria, Australia (the other children died in infancy) so they all left England, and most in different directions. Ellen herself died in Sydney in 1954 at the age of 94. She is buried at North Ryde, New South Wales. I don't think that Ellen's father's second marriage caused the wish to get away, as Ellen was an executor of Louisa's will – it looks like they all just had itchy feet – or, certainly in Ellen's case, a need for sunshine and a rest after a long and successful career!

Sources

England and Wales Civil Registration Birth Index

England and Wales Census 1861-1911

UK & Ireland Nursing Registers 1898-1968

UK and Ireland Outward Passenger Lists 1890-1960

Australia & New Zealand Find a Grave index