

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story was written, in November 2023, as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of women who studied at The Grange School of Housewifery in Street, Somerset.

Mary Annie SUMMERS' Story

Mary Annie Summers was born on 26th April 1896 at Ashcott, Somersetⁱ to William Edward Summers, Gamekeeper, born in Wedmore, Somerset, and Emily Summers nee Chapman, born in Ashcott, Somerset. They were married in Ashcott on 31st August 1882ⁱⁱ. Mary Annie's mother registered the birth on 4th June 1896. No baptism for Mary Annie has been found.

24	Twenty sixth April 1896 Ashcott M.D.	Mary Annie	girl	William Edward Summers	Emily Summers formerly Chapman	gamekeeper	Emily Summers	Mother	fourth June 1896	Ernest J. B. Long Registrar
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Within five years of her birth, Mary Annie was living with her family in Inwardleigh, near Okehampton Devonshireⁱⁱⁱ, at No. 2 Gribbleford Cottage. Her siblings Alice, aged 12, Thomas William aged 7 and Ethel aged 1 month, were all born at Ashcott except Ethel, who was born at Inwardleigh, indicating the family had moved there between April 1896 and March 1901. Mary also had

an older sibling called Mabel, aged 4 in 1891, found when the family were living in Stagman Lane, Ashcott^{iv}. Mabel married Henry Quantick in Newton Abbott, Devonshire in 1906^v.

On 17th June 1910, a meeting was held by the Committee of Managers of the School of Housewifery, established in 1897 under the chairmanship of William Clark at the Grange, or Abbey Grange, the former Street House in Street, Somerset, to train girls for domestic service. Courses at the school were originally of 6 months duration but soon extended to one year and by 1904 a few girls were allowed a second year. The school closed in 1916^{vi}.

They awarded a Studentship to Mary Annie Summers of Drayton to attend the school following the summer holidays^{vii}.

By 1911^{viii}, Mary Annie Summers aged 14, was one of 19 pupils mostly from Somerset at The Grange, School of Housewifery under the Headmistress, Louisa Frances Acheson, a single woman of 51 years. Three other staff, all single, teach Laundry and Dressmaking along with Housewifery; included on the staff is a church worker.

At the same time Mary Annie was studying her skills at The Grange, her parents and siblings Thomas and Ethel were living at Drayton, near Taunton^{ix} where they had been living since at least 1910; her sister Mabel was living with husband Henry and their children in Exeter^x, and her sister Alice was a general servant in Exmouth, Devon^{xi}.

By 1921, Mary Annie's brother Thomas had joined the army and was a Lance Corporal serving in Malta^{xii} and her parents, with Mabel's son Henry, had

moved to Trengwainton Carn, Madron, near Penzance in Cornwall where her father was Gamekeeper for Thomas Simon Bolitho on the Trengwainton Estate^{xiii}.

Sadly, Mary Annie Summers never lived to appear on the 1921 census as she died at Trengwainton Carn on 9th July 1920 from Menorrhagia (blood loss) and anaemia lasting for 35 days followed by Syncope (fainting), a condition which, these days, would probably have been eminently treatable. She was only 24 years old.

Age	Date	Event	Sex	Age	Profession	Residence of Informant	Registered	of Registrar
23	9th July 1920	Death	Female	24 years	Commercial Clerk Spinster	W. E. Summers Father In attendance Trengwainton Carn Madron	7th July 1920	W. J. Osborne Registrar

Her death certificate^{xiv} shows that she had been a Commercial Clerk, a position which may have entailed her writing letters, issuing invoices and basic bookkeeping. It would be nice to think that some of these skills may have been introduced to her in her time at The Grange.



Trengwainton Carn

View across the gorse looking south-west from the top of Trengwainton Carn, Madron

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<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/33672> accessed 27 November 2023

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- ⁱ GRO Digital Image Birth Certificate Mary Annie Summers 26 04 1896, Ashcott, Somerset.
- ⁱⁱ Parish Marriage Register, Ascott 1837-1914, Somerset Heritage Centre: Reference D/P/ashc/2/1/9
Ancestry Somerset, England, Marriage Registers, Bonds and Allegations 1754-1914
<https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/60858/> accessed 24 November 2023
- ⁱⁱⁱ England & Wales Census 1901 RG13, Piece 2122, Folio 79, Page 1 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/categories/1901uki/>
accessed 24 November 2023
- ^{iv} England & Wales Census 1891 RG12, Piece 1887, Folio 89, Page 5 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/categories/1891uki/>
accessed 24 November 2023
- ^v England & Wales Civil Registration Marriage Index Henry Quantick and Mabel Summers 1Q1906 Newton Abbott Vol 5b
page 220
- ^{vi} British History Online Parishes: Street, Somerset. A History of the County of Somerset, Vol 9, Glastonbury and Street.
Originally published by Victoria County History 2006. <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/som/vol9/pp165-198#h3-0035>
- ^{vii} Somerset School of Cookery and Housewifery Minute Book, South West Heritage Trust, Somerset Heritage Centre:
Reference C/E/1/146
- ^{viii} England & Wales Census 1911 RG14, Piece 14542
https://www.ancestry.co.uk/imageviewer/collections/2352/images/rg14_14542_0233_04?src=&backlabel=Return&pld=55339267 accessed 24 November 2023
- ^{ix} England & Wales Census 1911 RG14, Piece 14337 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/categories/1911uki/> accessed 24
November 2023
- ^x England & Wales Census 1911 RG14, Piece 12676 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/categories/1911uki/> accessed 24
November 2023
- ^{xi} England & Wales Census 1911 RG14, Piece 12581 <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/categories/1911uki/> accessed 24
November 2023
- ^{xii} England & Wales Census 1921 RG15 Piece 28134, Armed Forces Overseas <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/1921-census>
- ^{xiii} Census 1921 RG15 Piece 11148 <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/1921-census>
- ^{xiv} GRO Digital Image Death Certificate Mary Annie Summers 09 07 1920, Trengwainton Carn, Cornwall