

## *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.*

### **Alberta Catherine Green's Story**

Alberta Catherine Green was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1887 in Keinton Manderville, Somerset. She was the daughter of George Green (1852-1918), from Keinton Manderville, and his wife, Sarah Warren who was born in West Camel (1857-1914). George was a stone cutter - Keinton Manderville's main industry was centred around its quarry, remembered today by the Quarry Inn in the village. All Alberta's four grandparents were born in Somerset too. George and Sarah married in 1879, and their first child, who they named Alberta, was born in 1882, and died in 1883. They had a son Frederick, in 1884 and Alberta Catherine was born in 1887. Francis was born in 1890 and Reginald in 1897. Alberta would have been a precious child, and their only daughter. In 1891 George and Sarah lived at 17 Castle Street together with their children Frederick, Alberta and Francis along with George's widowed father James, still employed as a stonecutter at 65.

By the age of 13, Alberta was enrolled at The Grange School of Housewifery, which was at a distance of six or seven miles from home. She was engaged in laundry work, according to the 1901 census. On leaving The Grange, Alberta moved to Croydon, in Surrey, a distance of about 130 miles. Alberta was alone in her family in moving away; her parents and brothers were all born and all died in Somerset.

By 1911, Alberta was living and working as a housemaid at 32, Normanton Road, the home of Jesse Worts Ward, editor and proprietor of the Croydon Advertiser. 76 year old Jesse lived with his wife, Maria, a ladies companion Matilda Harriet Lee, Alberta and Jessie Louie Webb, the cook. On the same day, Sidney Charles Edwards was living with his uncle and aunt about a mile and a half away at 100, Church Road. He was one of 8 children, and his mother had died in childbirth in 1900. His parents were originally from Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. His father, a policeman died of pneumonia in 1902, leaving eight orphaned children.

Sidney worked as a postman, several of his siblings also worked for the GPO , he was a few months younger than Alberta, and he had always lived in Croydon. Maybe they met when he delivered the Wards' letters.

Sidney and Alberta married on 4th August 1913, by which time Alberta was living at 26, Sussex Road. The ceremony took place at the Emmanuel Church and the witnesses were Matilda Kemp and George Spearman.

Olive Dionas Edwards was born six months later on 27th January 1914. Her middle name was chosen to remember Sydney's mother, Dionas Edwards nee Wilcox, who had died when Sydney was 11.

Sidney served in the First World War and was wounded, awarded a Silver War Badge.

In 1921 the family lived at 117, St Peter's Street in Croydon. Sidney continued to work as a postman, and Alberta remained at home with Olive. On 30th December 1922, Alberta had another daughter, Maisie Mary Edwards.

In September 1939 the family still lived in the same house, Sidney was still a postman and Olive worked in the sorting office. Maisie was a comptometer operator, and a note by her entry adds that she was a member of the Civil Defence Service.

Sidney died in 1956 and Alberta continued to live at the family home until her death in 1967 at the age of 79.

### **Croydon Advertiser, Friday January 13<sup>th</sup>, 1967**

#### **A woman of courage**

Before recording a verdict of accidental death on 79 year old Mrs, Alberta Catherine Edwards, of St Peter's Street, Croydon, at an inquest at Sutton on Tuesday, the District Coroner, Miss Mary McHugh, said: "This was a woman of very great courage indeed."

Mrs Edwards died in Mayday Hospital on January 6, five weeks after falling down the stairs at her home and injuring her back.

Mrs Olive Travers, of Mossbank, Wembley, said that the dead woman had been a very independent and strong-willed person although her eyesight was bad.

When she spoke to her at Croydon General Hospital after the accident at her home on December 1, she said she had slipped and fallen down three of four steps.

As she lay on the floor, she tried to dial 999 for help, and then called the operator asking that an ambulance should be called and that the driver should call at the house next door for the key to her house.

**Croydon Advertiser, Friday January 20<sup>th</sup>, 1967**

### **Return Thanks**

The Daughters of the late Mrs Alberta EDWARDS of 117, St Peter's Street, South Croydon, wish to thank all friends and neighbours who have helped her during the past years and for floral tributes and messages of sympathy in their sad loss

### **Sources**

Croydon Advertiser Friday January 13<sup>th</sup>, 1967, Friday January 20<sup>th</sup> 1967

**© Judie McCourt November 2023**