

This is A Few Forgotten Women Story



This story was written in August 2023 as one of a series resulting from the 'A Few Forgotten Women Friday' collaborative research project, investigating the lives of women who enrolled in the first two cohorts [1908 & 1909] of Trainee Teachers at the Cheshire Country Training College, Crewe [CCTCC]

Bertha Ethel Whalley's Story

Bertha Ethel Whalley was born in the sub-district of Cheshire Castle in Cheshire West on October 14, 1890 to Charles and Bertha Ethel Whalley¹ nee Sudlow.² She appears with her family at five months of age in the 1891 Census as the youngest of three daughters living at 124 Brooke Street, Broughton, Chester. Her father Charles was employed as Railway Inspector. Bertha's sisters were Ida Elizabeth who was four years old and Caroline who was two years old.³

¹Births Cheshire BMD 1890 CAS/72/82.

²Marriages Cheshire BMD 1886 ROC/21/189.

³1891 England Census RG12 2862 Folio 23.

In the 1901 Census, her family had moved to 7 Ivy Terrace, Newton by Chester, Cheshire.⁴ By that time her sister Ida Elizabeth likely had died⁵ and two additional siblings had been added to the family: a sister Mabel who was nine and a ten-month-old brother Harold. Her father Charles was still employed as a Railway Inspector. In this census, Bertha was recorded under her middle name Ethel.

On September 15, 1908 at the age of seventeen just a month prior to her eighteenth birthday, Bertha enrolled to become a teacher at the Cheshire County Training College in Crewe.⁶ The student register names her father Charles Whalley as her Guardian. The family was then living at 7 Ermine Road, Hoole, Chester, Cheshire. She had attended City & County School in Chester prior to her entry to the Training College. She underwent an examination for admission which earned her a Preliminary Certificate in 1908. Her final examination on leaving the Training College was in 1910.

Bertha did take up teaching. The 1911 Census reveals she was employed as an Assistant Teacher with the County Council in Hoole, Chester. She was living as a boarder with Charlie and Elizabeth Allman at 4 Birch Avenue, Brooklands.⁷

Six years later in 1917, she married Frank Bardsley at the Wesley Methodist Church in Chester.⁸ In 1919, she gave birth in the registration district of Nantwich, Cheshire to a boy named Donald Charles Bardsley.⁹

⁴ 1901 England Census RG13 3376 Folio 17, RG13 3376 Folio 18.

⁵ No death record could be located for Ida.

⁶ CCTCC Student Registers [1908-1935]: CCTCC Archives, Unpublished data, under the care of the Family History Society of Cheshire, Crewe.

⁷ 1911 England Census Piece 21572.

⁸ Cheshire BMD 1917 AP1/2/7.

⁹ England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1916-2007, Vol. 8a Page 416.

Bertha, her husband Frank and son Donald Charles were living at 82 Richmond Road in Crewe, Cheshire in the 1921 Census.¹⁰ Bertha, as was tradition upon marriage and motherhood, had given up teaching and took on “Home Duties”. Husband Frank Bardsley was a school teacher at the Higher Elementary School in Crewe.

Another son named Frank Bardsley Jr. was born to Bertha in 1927 in the registration district of Nantwich, Cheshire.¹¹

In the 1939 Register of England and Wales, Bertha and her husband were living at 206 Bedford Street in Crewe.¹² There was one other person in the household whose identity was redacted. It was likely her son Frank who would have been twelve years old. Husband Frank was employed as a Head School Teacher at an elementary school while Bertha was responsible for unpaid domestic duties.

Bertha’s husband Frank died in 1957.¹³ His probate record shows that they were then living at Thomas’s Avenue in Dyserth, Flintshire, Wales.¹⁴

In March of 1958, the Nantwich Chronicle published an article noting a job promotion for former resident Donald C. Bardsley of 206 Bedford Street, Crewe.

¹⁰ 1921 England Census RG15/16996, Schedule 241.

¹¹ England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1916-2007, Vol. 8a Page 504.

¹² 1939 Register England and Wales Register, Schedule 266, Line 43. Note that on Ancestry there is a clear transcription error of the surname Bardsley to Bradley which initially made the family difficult to find.

¹³ England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916-2007, Vol. 8a Page 492.

¹⁴ England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995, 1957 Page 324.

Bertha's son was promoted as a bank official. He was identified as the "elder son" of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Bardsley of Dyserth, North Wales.¹⁵

Again, in April of 1966, Donald Bardsley was recognized by the Nantwich Chronicle for another job promotion. He was identified as the son of the "late Mr. Frank Bardsley, and of Mrs. Ethel Bardsley, formerly of Crewe." It was noted that "Mrs. Bardsley now resides at Dyserth, North Wales."¹⁶

Bertha died July 4, 1975 in Solihull, Warwickshire at the age of eighty-four.¹⁷ Although her death was registered in Warwickshire, her probate record indicates that she had still been a resident of Thomas's Avenue Dyserth, Wales where she was living at the time of her husband Frank's death.¹⁸

¹⁵ Nantwich Chronicle, Saturday March 29, 1958, page 20.

¹⁶ Nantwich Chronicle, Thursday, April 21, 1966, page 7.

¹⁷ England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916-2007, Vol. 34, page 0098.

¹⁸ England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1995, 1975, page 437.