

EMMA LOUISE DUVAL-SPEAR, HOME MISSIONARY

By Beveridge Ross Spear

She was a slight little lady, with piercing black eyes, and wavy black hair. She could speak and write English, French and Spanish. Though small, no one could tempt her from doing right or living a Christian life.

Emma Louise Duval was one of five children born to Charles Francis Duval, a Frenchman, who spoke and wrote seven languages, including Chinese. His wife, Lucy Holmes, born in Louisiana, was a relative of Oliver Wendell Holmes. They were married in Virginia City, Nevada.

In 1870, the Duval family moved to Cerro Gordo, a rich mining camp of 3,800 inhabitants. Emma was three years old. She experienced the earthquake of 1872. She saw her mother save a baby brother, pulling him from bed as the adobe wall fell in. She vividly recalled the burning of the Union Mine in 1877.



Emma Louise Duval-Spear, 1888, age 21.

Back in 1852 a boy named Reuben was born in England. He grew up with a passion to go to western America. In his late teens he left home, sailed the Atlantic for a time, then worked his way across-country, from New York to Los Angeles. The gold and glory in Owens Valley was the talk of the town, so Reuben hastened on to Lone Pine, arriving in 1874 at the age of 22.

Here Reuben Cook Spear met Emma Duval. They were married in 1888 at her sister's home, Mrs. W. L. Hunter, on George's Creek, south of Independence.

To Reub and Emma five children were born. George died in infancy. June Hazel arrived in 1891, Beveridge in 1894, Dorothy Hartwell in 1909, and Richard Reuben in 1913.

George and Dorothy are in unknown graves in the cemetery on the old Keeler road, and her father rests in the new cemetery north of town, on highway 395. Emma fell asleep in Christ in Santa Monica in 1939. She rests beside other pioneer relatives in Hollywood Memorial Park. At present Richard lives in Woodland Hills, and Beveridge in Menton, both in California.

Reub and Emma's home stood on the corner, now occupied by Joseph's Market. Lone Pine Creek ran on the north side of the house, where trout fishing was good.

Next to their home on the south, A. C. (Curt) Harvey had his blacksmith and wagon shop, which he moved down from Cerro Gordo. (The first blacksmith shop in the camp). Reuben became his partner, and shortly took over the entire business.

The painting of Lone Pine and Mt. Whitney by Miss O'Hara of Bishop, done about 1887, was obtained by Reuben in 1888, as a wedding present for Emma. It has remained in the family for 87 years.

In 1975 the Inyo-Mono Bank of Lone Pine placed it on permanent display for the people to admire. This is the only oil painting of its kind done in pioneer days of Inyo County. Its setting is Lone Pine, and belongs in the town where the artist did her work.

Soon after marriage Emma took the three eldest children of Frederick Spear, and mothered them until they were old enough to be on their own. Of these three, Katherine (Mrs. Jack Gilmore, now deceased), entered the hotel business in California, and became a millionaire. Mercy married O. C. Johnson of Lone Pine, a cattleman, and Samuel Spear, at one time was sheriff of Inyo County.

Mollie Stevens, daughter of Colonel Stevens, who built the sawmill in Cottonwood Canyon, instructed Emma in music, and inspired her to teach. Emma played the organ well. On occasions entire evenings were spent in the Spear home rehearsing for some musical event, or town celebration. Emma taught music for 50¢ a lesson, and sometimes free.

Before marriage June studied music at the University of the Pacific, San Jose, California. Her silvery voice was a high lyric soprano. After returning home, she gave concerts throughout the valley, and was also an accomplished pianist.

In 1913 she married Raymond W. Spear of Boise, Idaho. They had four children, two boys and two girls. June passed to an untimely grave in 1919. Then Emma took the four children and cared for them seven years. Thus Emma reared three families in her lifetime. In the meantime Myrtle Spear, sister to Bob Larson, came to town and assisted Emma with her burdens.

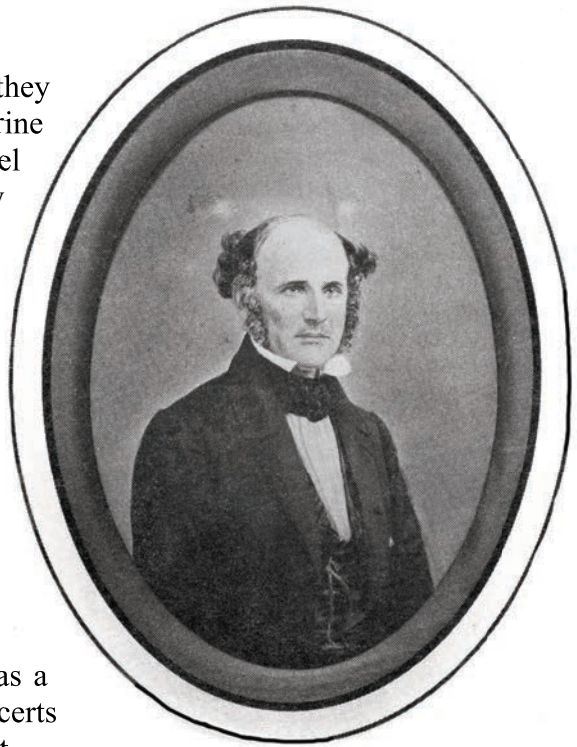
The building presently used for storage back of the Locust Street School in Lone Pine was the original Methodist Church, located one block east on the same street.

In this church, Emma kept a Sunday School going year after year in the absence of a minister. She gathered the children in, and taught them the Bible as best she knew. At this late date, a few are still in Lone Pine, and Independence who attended her classes.

Later Reub bought the Harry Hallock ranch a half mile north of the Pangborn subdivision. While living here Emma became deeply interested in the second coming of Christ, the seventh-day Sabbath, and the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

She was baptized in Owens River by Pastor I. P. Dillon. Because of these convictions she started a church service in her home, and a weekly Sabbath School. While she mothered the grandchildren, she hired a teacher and started a church school on the ranch. Neighbor children attended this day school. These home activities continued from about 1918 to 1925.

This threefold home project of church services, Sabbath School, and the parochial grade school, was the beginning of the Lone Pine Seventh-Day Adventist church now located on the corner of Mt. Whitney Drive and Mountain View Avenue.



Colonel Sherman Stevens
(Photo courtesy of Bob Likes -
From This Mountain)

Out of these early home services came Ronald D. Spear, a missionary to Africa, son of Walter and Myrtle Spear. Myrtle is now teaching Bible in Amarillo, Texas. Still earlier, B. R. Spear, went from Lone Pine as an evangelist to the cities of the Pacific Coast. Later, Richard, recently retired, became night supervisor of the Army Experimental Division of Lockheed Corporation, Burbank, California.

This bicentennial year, the Lone Pine Seventh-Day Adventist Church dedicates a new pulpit in sacred memory of Emma Louise Duval Spear, who in faith started what later became the Lone Pine Adventist Church.