

QUARTERLY NEWS
MARY BAKER EDDY MUSEUM
and Historic Sites



VOL. 13, NO. 2

PUBLISHED BY LONGYEAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SUMMER 1976

EMMA C. SHIPMAN, C.S.B.

Emma C. Shipman was one of the pioneer workers in Christian Science. Miss Shipman has left a record of her life as a Christian Scientist from her thirteenth year when a member of her family was healed. Her memoirs, completed in 1935, recapture something of the happiness and unselfed energy among the many early and devoted followers who supported Mary Baker Eddy's great work in establishing the Christian Science movement.

In reviewing Miss Shipman's background and heritage we find that her forebears were religious people of English and Scottish-English descent who had helped to build their various communities in New Hampshire and Vermont. Emma's paternal grandfather, the Reverend Isaiah Hatch Shipman, wrote on the flyleaf of his Cruden's Concordance, "I believe the Bible is the inspired word of God. Oh, for a key to unlock these Scriptures!" After his passing his wife and five of his six children found Christian Science, which so wonderfully unlocks the Bible.

For many years Mrs. Emily Shipman Wells, a daughter of Reverend Shipman, had been a semi-invalid. In 1884, a traveling saleswoman stopped in Lisbon, New Hampshire and spoke to her of the healing power of Christian Science. She recommended asking Miss Julia Bartlett, a Christian Science practitioner in Boston, to help her. With much difficulty Mrs. Wells traveled with her husband to Boston where she was completely healed within two weeks. She was able to enjoy going to concerts and



Miss Emma C. Shipman

shopping, which she had not been able to do for years. When news of Mrs. Wells' healing reached her brother's family in Montpelier, Vermont, his wife, Nell, sought help in Christian Science for the removal of a plaster cast from her shoulder which she had been condemned to wear permanently. The healing came quickly, and later Nell Keith Shipman, as well as another of Emma's aunts, Mrs. Mary E. Dillingham, had class instruction with Mrs. Eddy.

Not far from Lisbon was Lyman, New Hampshire, where Mr. and Mrs. Ira O. Knapp lived with their family. Mrs. Knapp, too, was an invalid and when news of Mrs. Wells' healing reached them, Mr. Knapp investigated and arranged for a practitioner to come from Boston. Mrs. Knapp was healed of her long-standing illness and Mr. Knapp of a slight indisposition. Four years later when Mrs. Eddy was en route to visit the Knapps at Lyman, she called on Emma Shipman's aunts at nearby Lisbon.

During this time Emma Shipman lived in Danville, Vermont, near St. Johnsbury, more than a hundred miles from her aunts who had just been healed by Christian Science. Within a few short years thirteen-year-old Emma had lost five loved members of the family, including her mother and a sister just older than herself.

Her father, James F. Shipman, was a farmer, as were most early settlers in New Hampshire and Vermont. He had won respect in his community for his ability and judgment, and when a gift of 1000 acres of farming land was left to support a local hospital, the town authorities asked him if he would manage the farm. He sold his own farm and undertook the project which he managed successfully and profitably for the benefit of the

Quarterly News Summer 1976

© Longyear Foundation 1976 Vol. 13, No. 2

Subscription, \$5.00 Annually

(Includes Activities at Longyear)

Sent without charge to Members of Longyear

hospital. Emma's sister, Dr. Julia Mary Shipman, a distinguished teacher, lecturer, geographer and world traveler, said of their father, "He was a man much in demand."

Emma first heard of Christian Science from her aunt Chris, Mrs. C. C. Moore of Lisbon, who consoled the young girl after her sister Nellie passed on. She took Emma on her knee and explained to her that God does not send sickness, that He is Love and a good God. This gave her fresh hope.

Not long after this, Emma's aunt Nell came to Danville to visit at Emma's house. On the day of her arrival, Mr. Shipman's hand had been caught in the cogwheel of a machine and one finger was badly mangled. Only the absence of the doctor from town prevented the amputation of the finger that day. Mrs. Shipman treated her brother-in-law in Christian Science and his finger was healed, leaving only a small scar. Some time later he was healed of Bright's disease and of asthma.

Emma began to read the Christian Science textbook left by her aunt, and was also healed of asthma, which had troubled her since she was seven, and of sick headaches. These were the first healings the young girl witnessed or experienced, and while her grasp of Science was slight, she later wrote that at the time, "I was as absolutely convinced that it is the Truth as I am today."

When ready to enter high school she went to live with her aunts and grandmother at Lisbon and when her studies were completed, she was taken to Boston where she expected to enter Wellesley College in nearby Wellesley. At the time, however, the college still maintained a rule forbidding travel on Sunday, which would have prevented her attending the Christian Science services in Boston. At her aunts' suggestion Emma entered Boston University's College of Liberal Arts. On graduation she became a teacher in the Brookline schools.

Emma's enthusiasm in Christian Science grew during her university experience. She attended the Christian Science services which were held at Chickering Hall and later at Copley Hall on Clarendon Street, not too far from where The Mother Church was being built. Friday eve-



Emma in 1897

ning meetings for readings, discussions and testimonies of healing were held in Steinert Hall.

In September 1893, after withdrawing from the Congregational Church, she joined The Mother Church. That same year she received Primary class instruction. In 1896 she began teaching in The Mother Church Sunday School and gave devoted service in this capacity for nearly fifty years, almost without interruption.

During the 1890's Miss Shipman was continually active in meetings of Christian Scientists. On the night before the dedication of The Mother Church she was on hand with broom and duster to help make the church ready for the next day's services. The new "Pastor" — the Bible and Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures — was announced to the congregation on December 30, 1894. The general impression was that the attention of the audience could not be held merely by reading citations. Rev. Irving C. Tomlinson, who at that time was not a Christian Scientist, is said to have remarked after attending a service in The Mother Church for the first time: "Of course, you will never hold your congregation with just reading from the books." How wrong his statement was he determined for himself after he emerged from orthodox preaching to the inspired practice of Christian Science! Miss Shipman later commented on the "Pastor" thus: "What a heavenly inspiration from

infinite Mind was given our Leader to meet a worldwide need."

Between 1893 and 1898 Miss Shipman spent several summer vacations at the White Mountain House in Fabyan, New Hampshire, which Mrs. Eddy had visited in 1888. The hotel was operated by Mr. and Mrs. Royal D. Rounsevel who were Christian Scientists. Many Scientists visited the hotel during the summer and Christian Science services were held on Sundays in the parlor. Someone suggested that the group build a small church near the hotel for the benefit of summer visitors. Miss Shipman was asked to write Mrs. Eddy to see if she would approve of the proposed project. Mrs. Eddy, responding warmly through her secretary, Calvin Frye, on June 7, 1898 sent a check for \$100 for the building fund.

During the summer of 1898 the little church was ready for dedication and Miss Shipman, as Secretary and Treasurer, sent Mrs. Eddy an invitation written on birch bark to attend the dedication. Mrs. Eddy's reply was read by Miss Shipman at the service and may be found in *The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, pages 184-186. It includes this timely prophecy: "The peace of Love is published, and the sword of the Spirit is drawn; nor will it be sheathed till Truth shall reign triumphant over all the earth."¹

A few months after the dedication of the White Mountain Church, Miss Shipman received a telegram signed with Mrs. Eddy's name bidding her to be at Christian Science Hall in Concord, New Hampshire, on the following day. While she had no idea what the summons was about, she never questioned answering it obediently. When she realized that the invitation was to attend Mrs. Eddy's 1898 class, she was "too astonished to speak. I felt young and unprepared for such a blessing." Her impression of that experience is preserved in the chapter on "Mrs. Eddy as a Teacher" in Judge Smith's *Historical Sketches*. She says in part: "When Mrs. Eddy came into the class, I experienced the feeling I always had on seeing her, of the greatness of the truth she taught and the self-effacement of the teacher."² The class lasted for two days and included two lessons.

After her arrival on Sunday morn-

ing Miss Shipman had attended the service in Christian Science Hall led by Ezra Buswell who read from Luke 10, beginning with "After these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also. . ." At the close of the lessons, Mrs. Eddy met all the students in a small room adjoining the Hall where she greeted each one individually. To Emma Shipman she said: "So this is my little Mountain missionary."

In her record of this class, Miss Shipman recalls that Mrs. Eddy talked much about the need for more love in healing, and that she was impressed by Mrs. Eddy's faith in the immortality and vitality of Truth. In this connection Miss Shipman's inspiring comments on the 1898 Class, published in *We Knew Mary Baker Eddy, First Series*, are most rewarding to read.

Soon after this class, Mrs. Eddy sent word to Miss Shipman by James A. Neal, asking her to begin the practice of Christian Science. Her contract with the Brookline Schools did not expire until June, 1899, but she never doubted that she would be able to comply with Mrs. Eddy's request. By March she was able to arrange a substitute for the school, rent an office, and enter the practice of Christian Science. She was listed in *The Christian Science Journal* for almost sixty years.

In the fall of 1900 The Christian Science Board of Directors asked her to take charge of public Christian Science services at Wellesley, mainly for the benefit of Wellesley students. Miss Shipman served as First Reader

and a college girl, Miss Mary V. Little of Memphis, Tennessee, as Second Reader. At Easter time in 1901, Miss Shipman asked the students to write Mrs. Eddy telling her how Christian Science had helped them with their studies and in their daily lives. Mrs. Eddy took time to reply to the "Wellesley 'nine'," as she called them.

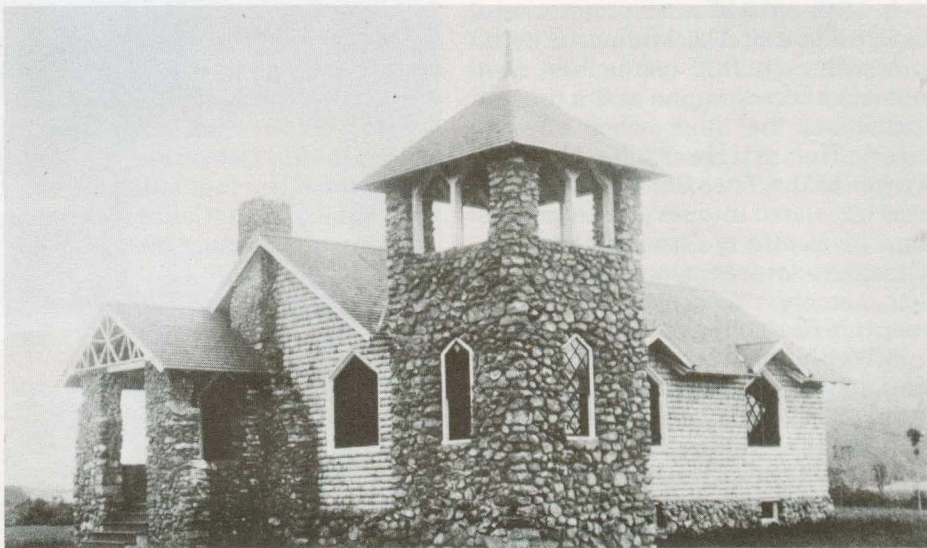
In 1901 Miss Shipman received a letter from Mr. Frye enclosing a card from Mrs. Eddy giving her the opportunity of attending the 1901 Normal class to be taught by Edward A. Kimball. This privilege met the need she felt for greater knowledge in her practice.

Emma Shipman recalled vividly Mrs. Eddy's ringing message from her balcony in 1903 to her many visitors: "Trust in Truth, and have no

other trusts."¹ Another blessing came to her in February, 1904 when she was invited to spend about five days at Pleasant View, seeing Mrs. Eddy every day and sometimes twice a day. She became conscious of the great mother love expressed by Mrs. Eddy toward her household, and flowing on beyond to the whole world. She was much impressed by Mrs. Eddy's method of work. "She watched, she prayed, and more than anyone I have ever come in contact with, she worked. Order, neatness, accuracy, and dispatch characterized her methods," Miss Shipman noted.

Mrs. Eddy enjoyed having students read the Bible to her, and on one occasion Miss Shipman read to her Hebrews 11. She noted that Mrs. Eddy had two unabridged dictionaries in her study.

In early October 1904, at the request of The Christian Science Board of Directors, Miss Shipman was asked to present a paper on the distribution of literature as part of the program "Obedience to the By-Laws," at the meeting of the General Association of Teachers held on October 10 in Chicago. Her work as a teacher of Christian Science began in 1905 and from that time she taught until 1958. In addition to her teaching, her meetings of the Association of her pupils, and her practice, she was always ready to answer any call from the Church. Miss Shipman participated in or contributed to many special meetings of The Mother Church. On June 4, 1940 she served as Chairman of the Activities Meeting and on June 9, 1953 she gave an ad-



The White Mountain Christian Science church in Fabyan, New Hampshire was dedicated in 1898. Mrs. Royal D. Rounsevel, left, was First Reader and Miss Shipman, right and above, served as Second Reader.



Miss Shipman at her desk

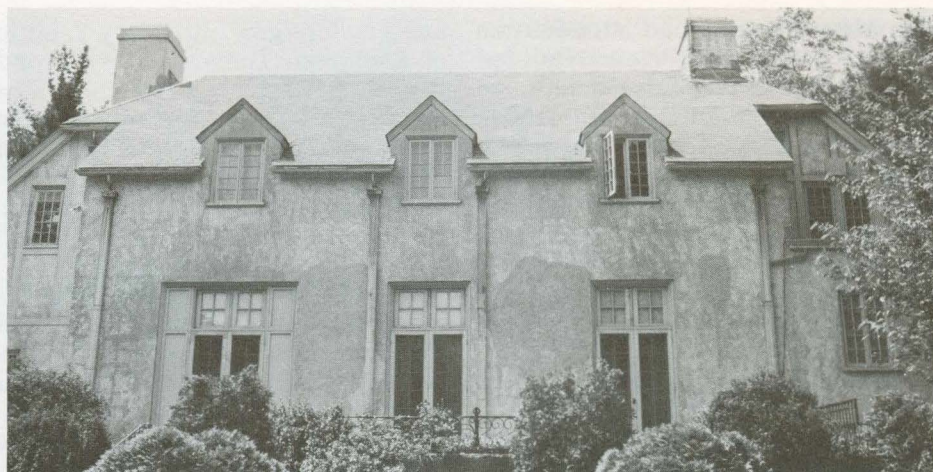
Gordon N. Converse

dress on "Our Leader and Her Healing Mission," which was published in the *Christian Science Sentinel*. She taught the 1952 Normal class. At the 1958 Periodicals Fruitage Meeting she spoke on "The Lesson-Sermon: Our Divinely Inspired Pastor."

Emma Shipman's first article, describing the White Mountain Church dedication, was published in the *Christian Science Weekly* in 1898. During her lifetime she wrote over fifty articles for the periodicals, including *The Christian Science Monitor*, dealing with timely topics. Today her articles are as fresh and spontaneous as they were then, written with clarity, exactness of statement and a gracious flow of style.

In 1949-1950 Miss Shipman served as President of The Mother Church, presenting in this connection two notable addresses, one at the time of induction, the other when she retired. Her article, "The Healing Power of the True Concept of God," was translated into several languages for *The Herald of Christian Science*. Other articles were reprinted in booklets, namely, "Work," and "Requirements in Christian Science Practice."

Miss Shipman served on the Board of Trustees of Longyear Foundation from 1924 to 1928 and on the Longyear Board of Visitors in 1929. During part of this period she lived with Miss Alice Young in Mrs. Longyear's studio cottage on Beecher Road, Brookline.



Two houses in Brookline, Massachusetts where Miss Shipman lived. Above, Mrs. Longyear's studio "cottage" on Beecher Road. Below, home on Clinton Road where Miss Shipman lived later.

Emma Shipman's life was devoted to the Cause of Christian Science. It is appropriate to quote from a letter written by another pioneer worker, Daisette D. S. McKenzie, to Miss Shipman on December 19, 1950: "Your quiet, loving, faithful, intelligent service to our Cause is treasured by many and many a heart."

Anne Holliday Webb

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