

Emma C Larson (1862 - 1943)



Emma C Larson was a servant in the Oliver Payne households. Listed as a housekeeper, in many ways she was his confidante, upon whom he relied for advice and as an interface between himself and others. This essay is based on research about Emma Larson I conducted in 2008, amplified by further research in 2011.

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Emma Larson Family

During the years 1910 to 1917, Emma C Larson served Oliver Hazard Payne as head housekeeper for his properties in New

York City, Esopus and Thomasville, Georgia. She is representative of several workers whom Payne trusted deeply. Beside Emma this would include Andrew Mason, Julian Burroughs, Charles Osberg and Captain C. V. Scott commander of of Payne's yacht the Aphrodite.

Emma is listed as Emma C Larson in the census records and signed her name the same way. However in Oliver H Payne's will she is listed as Emma Christina Larson. The surname Larson and given name Emma is very common among Swedish origin families, so she may have used the C to differentiate herself from many others with the same name.

Emma's parents were Andrew Gustav Larson and wife Olivia. Both were born in Sweden, Andrew in 1832, Olivia in 1839. They migrated with their three oldest children to the United States around 1868 (one census record says 1870). Their children

Augusta Larson Turrell	born	1859	Sweden
Emma Christina Larson	born	Dec 1862	Sweden
Jennie Larson Draminsky	born	March 1864	Sweden
Mary Larson Loveless	born	1873	Wisconsin
Otto Leonard Larson	born	1876	Wisconsin
Jessie Evangeline Larson	born	Feb 1879	Missouri

Andrew G and Olivia Larson are found in the 1880 census in Liberty Township, Pulaski, Missouri with their three youngest children; Andrew is a farmer. The three oldest are gone, Augusta to Lake, Cook County, Illinois where she is a servant for the family of a master builder of railroad cars; Emma is a servant in an orphanage with 98 children in Chicago, Illinois.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Mary Larson Loveless lives in Massachusetts with her husband Frederick; they have been married two years and Frederick was born in England. Soon after the turn of the century, Frederick becomes the manager of Payne's Thomasville, Georgia estate.

Jenny Larson Draminsky is a widow living in Chicago with two sons: Ernest born January 1884 in Missouri and Emil born April 1886 in Missouri. She has Jessie Larson living with her. Emma Larson is now a servant in the townhouse of Oliver H Payne in New York City.

By 1910, Jennie's children are gone, but Jennie's father Andrew, age 77, is living with her, as is Jessie Larson. By 1920 Jennie Draminsky, age 54 cleans houses, and Jessie Larson is a 40 year old stenographer. Living with them is Margaret Draminsky, Jennie's daughter. Emma Larson is now the head housekeeper for Oliver H Payne. By 1930 we find only Jennie Draminsky and Jessie Larson living in the Chicago area.

Of the five of Emma's siblings, only Jessie Larson remained alive by the time of Emma's death on 13 March 1943. Listed as persons to be notified before settling the estate were *Jessie Evangeline Larson* of Chicago, *Private Virgil Leonard* and *Anders Leonard*, both of Corpus Christi, TX; *Oliver Loveless* in the Merchant Marine with home base Fort Pierce FI and temporary home 25 South Street, NYC; *Margaret Draminsky*, same address as Jessie Larson; and *William N Turrell*, of Villa Park IL.

Greenwood Plantation connection

Frederick Loveless was born in England and emigrated to the USA in 1890. He married Emma's younger sister Mary in 1898 and by early in the first decade of the 20th century was the horticulturist for the Greenwood Plantation, Thomasville, Georgia that Oliver Payne purchased in 1899. (See [Thomasville](#) in the essay section.) Frederick and Mary are listed as living in Brookline MA, just outside of Boston in the 1900 census.

It may be just coincidental that two sisters from Chicago wind up working for Payne, one in New York City, the other in Georgia. It is not known when Emma Larson began working for Payne. perhaps she recommended her sister and

brother-in-law for the Thomasville job, or less likely, Mary recommended Emma.

Oliver was Mary Larson Loveless's son and is listed in the 1920 census as a boarder in a house in Thomasville working in a florist shop. I did not find Frederick in the 1920 census, but he is listed in 1930 as living in Thomasville, occupation as florist, but either *flower shop* or *plantation* as his place of work. Mary Larson Loveless probably died sometime between 1910 and 1930. Oliver and Fred Loveless are listed in a Florida census of 1945 as living in Fort Pierce. Oliver died in San Pedro CA in 1973

Service for Payne 1910 - 1917

Emma Larson moved to New York City on or slightly before 1900 to work as a housekeeper for Oliver Hazard Payne. She is listed at the bottom of the list of servants in Payne's townhouse on Fifth Avenue. Andrew Mason is listed as Payne's butler.

With the purchase of the Esopus estate, Andrew Mason was named the manager of the estate and is listed with his family as living in Esopus NY on the West Park Mountain Road, close to widow Margaret Van DeWater. He must have acted as the clerk-of-the-works for Payne during the heavy construction period of 1910-1911 which saw construction of the main house, the greenhouse and related houses, the gatehouse, and the garage/service area the Brothers now call the English Village. During this time John Carrère must have been very active, as he usually supervised the contractors and also was the chief landscape designer for the Carrère & Hastings firm. Shortly the Mason family moved into the former Pratt house on the property, called *the Superintendent's House* when I lived there in 1942-1945, and later named *Holy Rosary Cottage* by the Marist Brothers.

By 1910, Emma was listed at the top of the servants list for the New York City townhouse. She probably acted as head

housekeeper for Greenwood Plantation and soon the Esopus estate.

Oliver H Payne also purchased an 800 acre tract on an island near Newport Rhode Island, but I could find no record about this, except for a NY Times article indicating he was considering its purchase and a later article saying he was using it as a base for his yachting travels near the US after war broke out in Europe.

More than a mere housekeeper, Emma served as an interface between Payne and the other servants. It is believed that Payne relied heavily on her judgment. When Andrew Mason died in 1913, Emma probably recommended Julian Burroughs for the estate supervisor position. We have copies of [letters](#) Emma wrote to Julian Burroughs (some from New York City, others from Greenwood Plantation) that show she worked closely with Colonel Payne and followed his instructions, yet gently advised Payne even in construction matters (at least for the boathouse and dock area). Emma's letters show a fine grasp of English and very clear handwriting.

Although Emma never married, she related well to children, possibly from her experience working at the Chicago orphanage. Elizabeth Burroughs Kelly gave high praise for Emma during Elizabeth's stay in the superintendent's house. On several occasions Emma took the Burroughs children shopping in New York City and possibly acted as governess on several trips the children took on the Aphrodite.

Larson's life after Payne's death

Emma was not kept on after Payne's death in 1917. Elizabeth Burroughs Kelly stated that Payne left her millions of dollars, that several advisers defrauded her. This is doubtful, as the entire purchase of the Esopus properties and construction of the buildings cost only \$2 million. However, Oliver Payne did leave her \$50,000 in his will. In

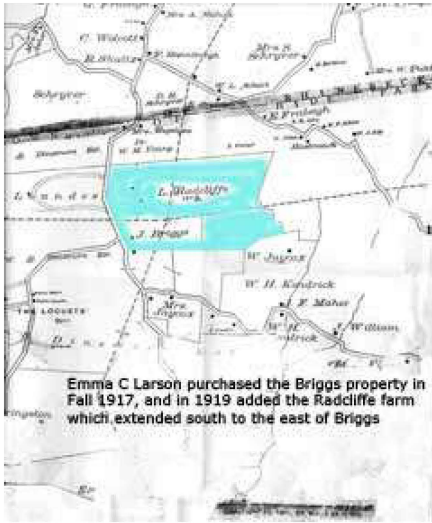
terms of 1917 currency this bequest would amount to 20 times a workman's annual salary.

Emma used some or all of this legacy to purchase property in Staatsburg, New York, north of Poughkeepsie.

The census records for 1920 and 1930 show Emma Larson living in Staatsburg. In 1920 she had Dorothy Edna Mason, the youngest Mason daughter as a ward. Dorothy's mother Annie had died in 1915. By 1930 Emma lived alone. Alice Mason married John Boyce Van DeWater in January 1917; John became a prominent attorney in Dutchess County. The couple lived at 125 South Hamilton Street and later at 22 Thornwood Drive. John died in 1968, but Alice stayed on in Poughkeepsie until her death in 1984. The couple had two sons, John Mason Van DeWater and Robert Barclay Van DeWater. Robert joined his father to form the prominent law firm Van DeWater & Van Dewater.

John Boyce Van DeWater grew up in Hyde Park and was very familiar with the Staatsburg area. His mother was a Lasher, whose family operated a meat market in Hyde Park which continued into the 1970s. While in school, John would often deliver orders for the Lasher market to the Vanderbilt and Mills families, so he was very familiar with the Staatsburg area. It seems likely that John may have been instrumental in suggesting that Emma relocate there, as he married Alice in January 1917, Emma left the Payne service later the same year and purchased property in Staatsburg in September 1917. John B Van DeWater handled all Emma's subsequent land transactions and took care of her estate and funeral arrangements.

The first mention of Emma we can find in the Dutchess County records is the sale by Mary Quick of Brooklyn NY to Emma Larson of New York City on 11 September 1917 of 31 ± acres in Staatsburg, at the northern end of Hyde Park NY. (See [endnote one](#).)



In later deeds, Ms Emma Larson appears listed as a grantee of land from respectively Julia Radcliffe and Phillip Radcliffe. All three of the Radcliffe deeds apply to the same parcel, consisting of 130± acres and also rights to collect wood from a parcel which must be accessed via the Kendricks property. The wood is for personal use and not to be sold commercially. (See [endnote two](#) for further information about Radcliffe properties.)

The 1891 map in the county records shows the Quick property to be like a square in the lower left corner of a 2 x 2 square design, with the Radcliffe property making up the other three squares. The deeds place the parcel(s) east of the Albany Post Road. The road leading into Staatsburg may have been the original Post Road, replaced later by a newer section of Route 9. The 1929 sale to the County of Dutchess (liber 496 p 299 15 May 1929) took about half acre from the west side of her property for the State Road 5135 - 0.069 acres and 0.416 acres east of the original Hyde Park-Staatsburg road for \$4,100.00. John Van DeWater is her attorney. A 1935 map in the County Records Room places her property just east of the new Albany Post Road, and just north of where the original Hyde Park Staatsburg road rejoins the new Albany Post Road.

In 1929 Emma sold the homestead of William H Radcliffe to Ethel Francke, The latter is to assume the mortgage of \$13,000. (liber 500 p 308 1 July 1929) The sale includes woods accessible via a right of way over land owned by William H Kendrick. She also grants a mortgage to Ethel Francke for \$16,000 on 9 October 1929 (book of mortgages liber 373 p 119) secured by the Radcliffe parcel(s) totaling 125.69± acres

The mortgage books in the county records note that the mortgage Francke to Larson was satisfied. The note is dated 2 June 1934. I assume Francke defaulted on the mortgage and Larson took back the property. No record of this found.

On 27 March 1933, Emma C Larson leased the Radcliffe farm to Norman Van Wagner (liber 672, p 287, 27 March 1933) for one year 1 April 1933 to 31 March 1934. The lease is interesting because it describes the buildings and animals and equipment on the property and arranges that the same be returned to Larson in equal condition at the end of the lease period.

On 2 June 1934, Emma C. Larson sells the remaining portion of the Radcliffe parcel to Raymond B Hamilton and his wife Jeanette of Roslyn Heights (liber 538 p 387 2 June 1934). The sale entails 106± acres, as the woods were sold previously to the Staatsburg Water Company. The sale is subject to an agreement with Norman Van Wagner who had leased the farm from Emma for at least another year. There is another deed (liber 672, p 285 -12 May 1934) Emma C Larson to Raymond B Hamilton indicating the sale of the property was for \$15,250.

In 1936, Emma C Larson granted a right of way to Central Hudson Gas & Electric Company and the Red Hook Telephone Company (liber 554, p 533) permitting the placement of telephone and power poles and running of lines across her property.

In the same year, Emma Larson borrowed \$2000 from the estate of Sarah J Smith for which Fallkill National Bank and Thomas S Smith were trustees. (mortgage liber 406 p 515 26 June 1936). The mortgage is marked as 'satisfied' on 23 Aug 1943, probably paid as proceeds from the Larson estate.

Emma retained the former Mary Quick property for her own use until her death on 13 March 1943. Her long time attorney, John Van DeWater, was named executor of the will. On 21 August 1943 the Larson parcel was sold by John Van DeWater to Clinton D Brown of 115 East 89th Street, New York City for \$11,000 (21 Aug 1943 liber 610, page 55,. Another deed Larson to Brown was executed (8 Feb 1944, liber 614 page 85) for the same parcel but with a modern survey.

Subsequent parcel activity: Clinton B Brown held the property until his death. Meanwhile, he deeded the property to himself and his wife Erzsebet D Brown (31 October 1955, liber 904 page 164), possibly to ensure that his wife inherit the property upon his death.

In 1965, the widow Erzsebet Brown aka Elizabeth Brown now living in Washington DC sold the property to Morris Canter and his wife Helen E Canter, both of 2 Barclay Street, New York City.

Emma C Larson last will

Emma C Larson died 13 March 1943. (See [endnote three](#).)

Of the five of Emma's siblings, only Jessie Larson remained alive by the time of Emma's death on 13 March 1943. Listed as persons to be notified before settling the estate were *Jessie Evangeline Larson* of Chicago, *Private Virgil Leonard* and *Anders Leonard*, both of Corpus Christi, TX; *Oliver Loveless* in the Merchant Marine with home base Fort Pierce FI and temporary home 25 South Street, NYC; *Margaret Draminsky*, same address as Jessie Larson; and *William N Turrell*, of Villa Park IL.

Emma C Larson died 13 March 1943. She had executed a will 1 December 1932, naming [John Van DeWater](#), a Poughkeepsie

attorney as her executor.

Sole person to receive proceeds of her estate was her sister, Jessie Evangeline Larson, who lived at 815 1/2 Lake Street, Oak Park, Illinois.

Besides Jessie Larson, the attorney tried to contact any other persons who might have an interest in the estate, namely nephews and nieces, as Emma's other siblings had all died before 13 March 1943. These included

Virgil and Anders Leonard, sons of Emma's deceased brother Otto Leonard Larson. Notices were sent to the address 1500 15th St, Corpus Christi, TX. Virgil was in the Army, and a notice was also sent to his military address.

Oliver F Loveless, son of Emma's deceased sister Mary L Loveless. Oliver was in the Merchant Marine. Notices sent c/o Fred Loveless, RFD #2, Fort Pierce FL and also to Box 1855, 25 South Street, NYC

Margaret Draminsky, daughter and only issue of Jennie L Draminsky, Emma's deceased sister. Notice sent to 815 1/2 Lake Street, Oak Park IL

William N Turrell, son and only issue of Augusta L Terrell, Emma's sister who predeceased her, sent to 613 South Street, Villa Park IL

Emma C Larson estate

Emma's **real estate** consisted of a parcel of land 26 acres along the West Side of Albany Post road in Staatsburg. She lived in a 9 room stone house 125 years old. There was a 5 room frame cottage, as well as a frame barn and frame garage. The assessed value was \$11,000 but the appraiser reduced his estimate to \$10,000 because the buildings were run down.

The **furniture** was appraised at \$3,332.55. Little of the furniture was better than nominal value. She had many lithographs and paintings, none of substantial value.

The property was **mortgaged** to Fallkill National Bank for \$2,000. At the time of her death she owed interest at 5% of \$29.17

Emma had other debts, the most notable of which were:

Ingeborg Hornslatte \$150

Estate of [W W Fuller](#) \$1000 & \$675 interest

Webster Kipp note for \$300

Margaret O'Neil \$500

Erika Westerberg \$1000

Carla Bresson loan \$2200

Victoria Home for Aged \$700

After attorney fees & other fees, Jessie Evangeline Larson received \$2,994.77

Funeral arrangements in Hyde Park paid to Schoonmaker for \$727.10 and Chicago funeral expenses \$190.88

After a service in St. Margaret's Church in Staatsburg, on March 19, Emma was buried in Oak Park, Illinois (See [endnote four.](#))

Notices were placed in Poughkeepsie newspapers (\$20.72) and Rhinebeck Gazette (\$16.71)

To settle the Emma Larson estate, John Van DeWater was able to sell the Quick parcel for \$11 ,000 in 1944 to Clinton Brown (liber 610 p 55 and liber 614 p 85, the latter deed reflecting a more modern survey)

Emma Larson burial



The arrangements for funeral service and burial were handled by John B VandeWater, husband of Alice Mary Mason. After a funeral service at Saint Margaret's Church in Staatsburgh, the remains were sent to Chicago for burial in the cemetery at Oak Park, Il. Photos of the gravesite were taken by Billy King, a cousin of Richard Foy in Fall 2008.

The ornate celtic cross may have been the gift of Oliver H Payne, as Emma's father, Andrew Gustav, died in 1913. I believe Payne also paid for the Andrew Mason Celtic Cross in Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx NY. Click on the Celtic Cross to see the individual monuments.



End notes

Endnote one. Deed for Mary Quick parcel found in Liber 399 Page 446, 11 September 1917. Mary Quick of Brooklyn NY grantor, Emma Larson of New York City grantee. A 31 ±acre plot of land bordered on the north and east by the lands of William Dinsmore and the Radcliffe heirs and on the south by lands of William Dinsmore. Previous sales, in decreasing chronological order were:

- A. Judson Briggs to Mary Quick (liber 331 page 2 December 1, 1903)
- City National Bank and Judson Taylor to A Judson Briggs (liber 190 page 322 June 10, 1878);
- Judge Joseph F. Barnard and wife Emily to City National Bank (liber 190 page 175 November 13 1875, recorded June 9 1878);

- Catherine Mallory to Joseph F. Barnard (liber 68 page 133 December 10, 1872);
- James Mulford to William Mallory (liber 108 page 185 April 26, 1854 recorded December 1, 1856)

Endnote two. Three deeds from Radcliffe descendants clarify the sale of 120 acres to Emma Larson:

- Julia L. Radcliffe and Marion L. Asher Remington Radcliffe and Maude Radcliffe, town of Hyde Park to Emma Larson, town of Hyde Park (liber 405 page 86 March 12, 1919) Property borders that of William H. Kendricks
- Phillip Radcliffe, town of Rhinebeck to Emma Larson, town of Hyde Park liber 405 page 85 March 29, 1919) Homestead of William H. Radcliffe
- Julia L. Radcliffe and Marion L. Asher Remington Radcliffe and Maude Radcliffe, town of Hyde Park to Emma Larson, town of Hyde Park (liber 405 page 255)

The Radcliffe family had extensive holdings in the Hyde Park & Clinton vicinity going back to before 1800. William Radcliffe extended his holdings by the purchase of small parcels.

- 1873 liber 173 page 407 Conrad Ackert grantor to William H Radcliffe grantee 4 ± acres for \$250.00
- 29 Feb 1836 liber 58 page 254 Michael Fletcher grantor to Conrad Ackert grantee 4 acres 35 perches.
- 1882 liber 211 page 276 William Jaycox & Emma his wife grantor to William H Radcliff estate grantee 2 acres 24 perches

Endnote three Poughkeepsie Journal death notice, published Tuesday 16 March 1943. Retrieved from the Adriance Library collection in 2008 along Bancroft Road but now on Market Street, Poughkeepsie NY. There seems not to have been an obituary, just a short death notice

Endnote four Episcopal Church in Staatsburg. The first church was constructed about 1854 and located in the center of Staatsburg. (It is now the Staatsburg Library.) St. Margaret, its successor, is an impressive little church located just south of the current Dinsmore Golf Course. Built in 1892 by the Livingston-Mills family, it is a place of safekeeping for two 12th century stained glass windows brought from the Chartres region in France, as well as one from the Tiffany studios. At the church, I met and spoke with Jean White, a native of Staatsburg. She showed me the exact location of the Larson properties. As a youngster, she heard it referred to as "Miss Larson's Home". She also remembered hearing of several families of persons who had worked on the Payne Estate in Esopus and later came to work on Miss Larson's property.

Endnote five. W W Fuller is probably Williamson Fuller, an attorney in Payne's firm who acted as the 'straw man' in the purchase of the two properties in Esopus which constitute the Payne estate.

The Vandewater family has several generations of lawyers based in Poughkeepsie. Alice Mason, the eldest daughter of Andrew Mason, married John Boyce Van DeWater in January 1917. Richard Foy served with John's son and junior partner, Robert B VanDeWater on the board of the Dutchess Bank & Trust Company during the decade of the 1970s.

Census records:

1880_MO_Pulaski_Liberty__Andrew Larson family
1880_IL_cook_lake__Augusta Larson
1880_IL_cook_chicago__Emma Larson
1900_NY_manhattan_Payne OH
1900_MA_norfolk_brookline__loveless fred & mary
1900_IL_cook_chicago__Jennie Draminsky
1910_IL_cook_proviso__Jennie Draminsky & Andrew Larson
1910_IL_cook_chicago__margaret & emil draminsky
1910_GA_thomas_militia_district_fred loveless
1910_NY_manhattan__Emma C Larson
1920_IL_cook_river_forest__Jessie Larson & Jennie Draminsky
1920_IL_cook_chicago_William Turrell
1920_GA_thomas_militia_district_637__Loveless family
1920_NY_dutchess_staatsburg__Emma C Larson
1930_IL_cook_chicago__Jessie Larson & Jennie Draminsky

1930_GA_thomas_thomasville__Loveless Fred
1930_GA_thomas_thomasville__Loveless Oliver
1930_IL_cook_chicago_Emil Draminsky
1930_NY_dutchess_hyde park_staatsburg__Emma C Larson
1945_Florida census_ Oliver and Fred Loveless

most recent revision: 3 April 2009

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