

Lehman, Emma Augusta ^[1]

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Richard Walser, 1991

28 Aug. 1841–6 Nov. 1922



Portrait of Emma Augusta Lehman in the possession of Salem College. Image from the North Carolina Digital Collections.

^[2]Emma Augusta Lehman, teacher and poet, was born at Bethania ^[3], the daughter of Eugene Christian and Amanda Sophia Butler Lehman. Her father was director of the village orchestra. She had two brothers, John Henry and Oliver J., and a sister, Sallie E. (Mrs. Kapp). Sent by her moravians ^[4] "Moravian parents to Salem Academy ^[5] at age thirteen, she was graduated in three years. At sixteen, she was put in charge of the school at Bethania, and she later taught at a school near Pilot Mountain ^[6]. In 1864 she became a member of the faculty at Salem Academy, where she remained for fifty-two years. English literature was her specialty, but she also taught piano, art, astronomy, and botany. When she discovered a previously unknown plant, it was named *Monotropsis lehmani* in her honor.

Though a small, frail person, Emma Lehman was a strict disciplinarian who inspired her students. Her bright round eyes gleamed with intelligence and curiosity. Her *Sketches of European Travels* (1890) ^[7] tells, in the fashion of the day, of England, France, Italy, and a brief Rhine journey. Among the forty-seven pages in her *Poems* (1904) ^[8] are such titles as "Queen Flora's Opening Day," "At Easter-Tide," "Sunset on Pilot Mountain," "North Carolina's Heroes," "Our Graveyard Cedars," and "Sesqui-Centennial Ode: On the 150th Anniversary of the Arrival of the Moravian Settlers in Wachovia ^[9], N.C." Salem College ^[10] awarded her an honorary M.S. degree in 1914 to celebrate her fiftieth year as a teacher there. Her name has been perpetuated in the endowed Emma Lehman Chair of Literature at the college.

References:

E. C. Brooks, ed., *North Carolina Poems* (1912)

Delta Kappa Gamma, comp., *Some Pioneer Women Teachers of North Carolina* (1955)

Salem College, *Alumnae Record* (November 1922)

Sketches by Adelaide L. Fries (Drawer M, Moravian Archives, Winston-Salem)

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Authors:

Walser, Richard ^[15]

Origin - location:

Forsyth County ^[16]

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