



Louis P. Thorpe with other members of the EMC String Trio — Irving A. Steinel and Helen B. Nicola.

From 1923 *Cardinal*, Emmanuel Missionary College.

Steinel, Irving Arthur (1884–1945)

GLENN JADE V. MARIANO

Glenn Jade V. Mariano is a Filipino Adventist who is married to Gladys P. Quilit-Mariano. They are blessed with a daughter. He graduated at AIAS in 2019 with a Ph.D. degree in New Testament biblical studies. His dissertation deals with the newness of the new covenant in Hebrews 8:7-13. He worked at Central Philippine Adventist College as Bible instructor, and he is now employed at the Adventist University of the Philippines.

Irving Arthur Steinel was well known as a musician in Adventist denominational circles.¹ He was a pianist, organist, and composer, and he was listed as one of the International Adventist Musicians.² He was also a

missionary and was visionary minded. He had teaching, leadership, and administrative capabilities. He became the first principal of the first Adventist academy in the Philippines—the Philippine Seventh-day Adventist Academy (in short, Philippine Adventist Academy [PAA]), now Adventist University of the Philippines.

Early Life

Irving was born August 6, 1884, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, U.S.A. His parents were John Steinel and Johanna Vogel-Steinel, who were both born in Germany. His family lived in Milwaukee until he was 15 years old. Then, they stayed in Battle Creek, Michigan, for ten years. They also lived in various other places in the United States. His parents became Seventh-day Adventists in 1886 when he was two years old. At the age of nine, Irving was baptized into the Adventist Church by Elder J. W. Westphal at Portage, Wisconsin, in 1893.³

Education and Marriage

Irving studied in public and private schools and colleges. He spent his elementary, high school, and tertiary years in Milwaukee Public School (until 1899), Battle Creek College (1899-1901), Battle Creek High School (1901-1902), Bethel Academy (1902-1903), Emmanuel Missionary College (EMC, now Andrews University, 1904-1905), and Washington Missionary College (WMC, now Washington Adventist University, 1914-1915). To support and continue his education, he worked as a student worker at the Battle Creek Sanitarium in Battle Creek, Michigan, as bell-boy (1899-1902) and bookkeeper (1903-1904 and 1905-1908). He also worked at the Solomon Sanitarium in Attleboro, Massachusetts, as bookkeeper and cashier (1909-1911). From 1911 to 1914, he was the cashier of the Battle Creek Sanitarium. In the summer of 1915, he was in charge of music during an evangelistic crusade in Washington, D.C.⁴

At the age of 29, Irving married Helen Morse, a singer, on January 4, 1913, while they were at WMC.⁵ One Sunday evening Irving was in charge of an orchestra concert for the chapel program. As the highlight of the concert, Helen publicly sang the new college song (written by Mr. Hall with music by Irving) for the first time. The performance was greatly applauded and appreciated.⁶ In 1915 Irving graduated as one of the first graduates of WMC with a bachelor of arts degree.⁷

Ministry

After his graduation Irving worked at South Lancaster Academy as the head of the English department (1915-1916) as his first denominational appointment. His wife was the head of the domestic science department.⁸ From South Lancaster Academy, Irving was officially appointed by the General Conference Committee (GCC) to be the first principal of the Manila training school (PAA) in 1916.⁹ He and Helen were provided with “a very pleasant home.”¹⁰ Along with him, Oliver Fisk Sevens was appointed to work as the preceptor and treasurer of the academy. On July 30, 1916, Irving and Helen, together with Oliver and his wife, Hazel Blackenber, sailed for

Manila, Philippines, to pioneer Adventist education there.¹¹

The coming of the Steinels and Sevrens to the Philippines was an answer to the request of the early Seventh-day Adventists in Manila regarding the educational work that was headed by Lewis V. Finster. Finster conceived the idea and felt the strong need to establish a training school in Manila, particularly in Pasay, after establishing the first Filipino Seventh-day Adventist Church in Santa Ana, Manila, on March 11, 1911.¹² The membership of the church was growing, especially among the young, and ministry was growing fast in the country. As the president of the Philippine Union Mission, he led in the construction of the school prior to the coming of Steinel and Sevrens. Writing on September 22, 1916, he reported that in one month they hoped that the new school building would be ready for occupancy. Professor Steinel and Brother Sevrens had just arrived in Manila and, as soon as the building was ready, they would open the school.¹³

Shortly after their arrival, the two Young Missionary Volunteer Societies were established at PAA, Pasay, and at the Trozo Church, Manila. Irving became the leader of the Young Missionary Volunteer Society that was organized at Trozo church, Manila. Oliver was in charge of the ministerial band in the society. The two missionaries were actively involved as leaders in the Adventist church's activities.¹⁴ In addition to being the principal and business manager of PAA, Irving was also elected as the secretary of the educational and Missionary Volunteer departments, even before the academy started.¹⁵

After several months of working and praying, the date arrived for the opening of the Adventist training school in the Philippines. PAA was finally opened for educational training on Tuesday morning, June 12, 1917. Administrators, teachers, staff, new students, and friends were excited that day. Irving and Oliver put a lot of effort into preparing everything for the opening. More than expected, 52 young people, coming from different districts and mission stations, were enrolled to be trained in the boarding school (school and dormitory were in one building). The number of students was limited due to lack of accommodation for them. A primary course was also opened due to the demand, and 11 children were enrolled in it.¹⁶

During the first year, there were seven faculty members: the two missionary couples and three native teachers. Irving taught seven classes a day. Helen was the teacher of instrumental music. Oliver (also a dean) taught eight classes a day. Hazel conducted the primary course with 11 children. In addition, three native teachers carried the rest of the work.¹⁷

Irving and Helen had served the PAA for about seven years, including their preparatory work for the opening of the academy (1916-1922). Progress and improvement of the academy were evident as the years went by. Irving and Helen took a furlough in America in 1922 and Oliver was in charge in their absence.¹⁸ Oliver became the next principal of PAA from 1922 until 1927.¹⁹ These two professors and principals of PAA were among the educators "who have had a great part during the regime of the Far Eastern Division."²⁰

In 1925, PAA "was upgraded to Philippine Junior College with Professor Oliver Fisk Sevrens as president. In 1933 it gained senior college status [Philippine Union College with Dr. D. I. Stumps as the first president]. In 1957 it

was authorized to open up a school of graduate studies.²¹ "On August 1, 1996, in accordance with Republic Act (RA) No. 7722 and by the virtue of the Resolution No. 132-96, Series of 1996, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) granted AUP the long-awaited University Status entailing the change of the school's name from Philippine Union College to Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP).²²

In 1922 the General Conference Committee voted that the Steinels be released from their appointment in the Philippines "to connect with the work in China" because they did "not feel clear in answering the call to the Far Eastern Division,"²³ and they also had another plans.²⁴ It is unclear whether they worked in China or not. However, a source stated that, after their successful years in the Philippines, they returned to the USA in 1922 and resided at EMC. Irving studied there "with Birt Summers, chair of the music department, who taught keyboard and was also known for his work as a composer."²⁵ The couple's status at EMC is not known. Yet, Irving "appears to have taught and was a pianist in the school orchestra and a member of the EMC string trio. He composed the college's school song."²⁶

Contribution/Legacy

In the mid-1920s, the couple left EMC and worked at the Glendale Hospital in California. Irving "assisted H.M.S. Richards in his tent efforts and initial work in radio evangelism."²⁷ Then, in the 1930s, he "served as organist in Richards' first Voice of Prophecy radio programs."²⁸ During this time, the GCC appointed Irving to be a music director at the River Plate Junior College in Argentina. Yet, he reluctantly refused to accept the appointment in South America, so he was released from that appointment in 1931.²⁹ "They taught music in their Glendale home for twenty years, until his death."³⁰

Irving contributed a work to the book published by EMC in 1924 titled *Our Academies: Their Purpose, Organization and Administration and Curriculum* (compiled and edited by Harry Elmo Edwards). He wrote on the "Historical Development of SDA Secondary Education."³¹ Also, he "composed several songs and anthems, many being written at night while he was sitting up in bed. He wrote tunes for two hymns, "I Give My Heart to Thee, O Father," and "Welcome, Sweet Day of Repose," in the 1941 *Adventist Church Hymnal*. The latter, written in 1939, was retained in the 1985 *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* as hymn #380."³²

Later Life

The Steinels had participating in the annual meetings of the General Conference as musicians since 1922. Irving was the official pianist and Helen was a soloist. They were also participants in the 1941 General Conference Session, the largest of their time.³³ In California, Irving died on December 20, 1945³⁴ at the age of 61. The cause of his untimely death was unclear. After his death, "Helen taught music at Hawaiian Mission Academy in Honolulu and at Monterey Bay Academy in California. She married Milton M. Hare in 1955 and died in San Jose, California, twenty-one years later, at age 89."³⁵

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NOTES

1. General Conference Committee (GCC), "Six Hundred Thirty-Fourth Meeting," under "Death of Irving A. Steinel," December 31, 1945, 2237.
2. See Dan Schultz, *Adventist Musicians Biographical Resource* (College Place, Washington: International Adventist Musicians Association, 2014), s.v. "Irving Arthur Steinel."
3. Secretariat Department of the General Conference, "Personal Information Forms and Biographical Material of Irving Arthur Steinel," December 31, 1950.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.; IAMA and Dan Schultz, *Adventist Musicians Biographical Resource* (updated August 9, 2019), s.v. "Irving Arthur Steinel" (para. 2), accessed August 19, 2019, <http://www.iamaonline.com/>. Helen Morse's parents were Charles C. Morse and Joanna S. Morse of America. In 1901 Helen was baptized into the SDA church by Elder E. J. Van Horn in Cleveland, Ohio.
6. Olive Krum-Hagmann, ed., "Washington Missionary College," *Columbia Union Visitor*, vol. 20, no. 16 (1915), 8.
7. SDGC, "Personal Information Forms and Biographical."
8. Ibid.
9. GCC, "One Hundred Seventy-Fourth Meeting," under "Asiatic Division Appointments," January 20, 1916, 388.

10. A. G. Daniels, "In the Philippines Again," *ARH* vol. 94, no. 6 (1917), 14.
11. See E. A. Moon, "Obituary: Professor Oliver F. Sevens," in *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, vol. 16, no. 6 (1927), 23.
12. B. B. Alsaybar, "PUC Celebrates Golden Anniversary," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, July 1967, 18; Herman L. Reyes, *Breaking Through: Why the Seventh-day Adventist Church Has Grown to Be the Largest Protestant Church in the Philippines* (Quezon City, Philippines: Kaunlaran Trading & Printing, 1981), 96-99.
13. L. V. Finster, "Mission Notes," *ARH*, vol. 93, no. 59 (1916), 13.
14. S. L. Frost, "Young People's Missionary Volunteer Work in the Philippines," *Asiatic Division Outlook*, vol. 6, no. 23 (1917), 3.
15. W. E. Howell, "Good Progress in the Philippine Academy," *ARH*, vol. 98, no. 46 (1921), 18; J. E. Fulton, "Organization of the Central-Southern Luzon Conference," *ARH*, vol. 94, no. 6 (1917), 16.
16. L. V. Finster, "The Opening of the Philippine Academy," *Australasian Record*, vol. 22, no. 32 (1977), 3; Frederick Griggs, "A Cause for Gratitude," *ARH*, vol. 94, no. 44 (1917), 2. Based on different reports, there was discrepancy with regard to the total number of students enrolled in 1917: 36, 52, or 53 students. See e.g., I. A. Steinel, "Report of the Educational and Missionary Volunteer Department of the Philippine Union Mission," *Asiatic Division Outlook*, vol. 9, no. 23-24 (1920), 6; M. Ellsworth Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1926), 685; cf. Griggs, "A Cause for Gratitude," 2; S. L. Frost, "Reports From the Field: Our Training School in the Philippines," *Asiatic Division Outlook*, vol. 6, no. 22 (1917), 1-2.
17. Griggs, "Cause for Gratitude," 2; Frost, "Reports From the Field," 1.
18. S. L. Frost, "Progress of the Educational Work in the Far Eastern Field," *Asiatic Division Outlook*, vol. 11, no. 12 (1922), 8-11.
19. Francis McClellan Wilcox, ed., "Of Special Interest," *ARH*, vol. 121, no. 36 (1944), 24.
20. Arthur Whitefield Spalding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists: A Revision of the Books Captains of the Host and Christ's Last Legion* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1962), 4:183.
21. Alsaybar, "PUC Celebrates Golden Anniversary," 19.
22. Adventist University of the Philippines, "Philippine Union College (PUC) to Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP)," 2006, online website, accessed April 30, 2020, <http://web1.aup.edu.ph/puc-to-aup-2/>.
23. GCC, "One Hundred Fifty-First Meeting," under "I. A. Steinel Released," July 5, 1923, 386.

24. There was another record of the GC vote about Steinel's release from the appointment to the Philippines that was voted during the 113th meeting of the GC Committee on June 22, 1927, due to their other plans. General Conference Committee, "One Hundred Thirteenth Meeting," under "I. A. Steinel Released," June 22, 1927, 310.
25. IAMA and Schultz, *Adventist Musicians Biographical Resource*, s.v. "Irving Arthur Steinel" (para. 4).
26. Ibid.; Dewitt S. Osgood, "Obituaries," under "Dr. Ella Iden Edwards," *Lake Union Herald*, vol. 39, no. 4 (1947), 7.
27. IAMA and Schultz, *Adventist Musicians Biographical Resource*, s.v. "Irving Arthur Steinel" (para. 7).
28. Ibid.
29. GCC, "Two Hundred Thirtieth Meeting," under "Voted: I. A. Steinel Released," June 15, 1931, 366.
30. IAMA and Schultz, *Adventist Musicians Biographical Resource*, s.v. "Irving Arthur Steinel" (para. 7).
31. Ibid., s.v. "Irving Arthur Steinel" (para. 5).
32. Ibid., s.v. "Irving Arthur Steinel" (para. 8).
33. Ibid., s.v. "Irving Arthur Steinel" (para. 6).
34. GCC, "Six Hundred Thirty-Fourth Meeting," under "Death of Irving A. Steinel," December 31, 1945, 2237; IAMA and Schultz, *Adventist Musicians Biographical Resource*, s.v. "Irving Arthur Steinel" (para. 7).
35. IAMA and Schultz, *Adventist Musicians Biographical Resource*, s.v. "Irving Arthur Steinel" (para. 9).

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