

# JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST ARCHIVES

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# *Journal of Adventist Archives*

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## **Foreword**

**Roy K. Kline, Editor**  
**D. J. B. Trim, Director of ASTR**

Welcome to volume 1 of the *Journal of Adventist Archives (JAA)*.

Why is the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR) launching this journal in the area of Seventh-day Adventist history and archives? Primarily because there are currently no peer-reviewed journals or periodicals dedicated to Adventist history. Even the long-defunct and much-lamented *Adventist Heritage* was a magazine, rather than a refereed journal. While Seventh-day Adventist scholars often publish beyond the pages of denominational periodicals, there are many topics in Adventist history that justify scholarly consideration yet have never been explored, having seemed unworthy of publication by editors aware of only the broadest contours of Adventist history. At present, articles on such topics might be sent to several Adventist publications, none of which have Adventist history as their focus. In the end, it may be as difficult to place Adventist history articles in nominally sympathetic journals as in those outside the Adventist sphere.

Further, there is no journal dedicated to Adventist archives and manuscript collections. This is unsurprising, yet in light of the undeveloped, immature state of Adventist historiography, there is an even greater need than in historical studies for a place to publish articles that identify important sources (whether in church record offices, manuscript libraries, personal collections, or government archives), expound on their relevance, and explain

their strengths and limitations. Such a forum is arguably almost a precondition for improving the state of Adventist studies, since at the moment there is little information available to guide scholars wanting to examine problems and lacuna in the original source data on Adventist history—to understand what relevant sources may exist, their nature, and even where they are located.

The *Journal of Adventist Archives* will publish the following:

(1) Articles that explore particular collections or records series, providing a guide to future researchers.

(2) Articles more historical than archival in nature but that demonstrate the value of collections or records series that have been but little used, if at all, in past research.

(3) Articles on general Adventist history: while we will prioritize articles from categories 1 and 2, the *JAA* will, from time to time, publish historical articles, especially ones on unusual or narrowly focused topics that, while deserving to be made available to a wider audience, might be difficult for an author to publish elsewhere.

(4) Bibliographical (or bibliographical-archival) articles on printed Adventist sources: while we will prioritize articles from category 2 over category 4, researchers can also benefit from critical explorations of published, not just unpublished, Adventist sources.

(5) Annually, a version of the previous year's Adventist Archives Lecture (co-sponsored by ASTR and Washington Adventist University Honors College).

(6) Short notes in which researchers identify collections in larger archives or libraries that they have discovered in the course of recent research, especially where future scholars might not look for sources on Adventist history (similar to category 1, but shorter and not requiring peer review).

(7) Brief reports of new additions to the collections of established church archives and libraries, or news of older

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collections that have been or are in the process of being inventoried and having research guides created for them.

(8) Reports of new digital collections, which should ideally assess not only the contents but also the extent and success of curation.

All articles in categories 1–5 will be peer reviewed. In some cases, notes (categories 6–8) may also be peer reviewed, depending on their scope and purpose. In categories 1–4, we seek articles that are thoroughly researched, critical (in the best sense), but written from a stance broadly supportive of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Articles in categories 2 and 3 should situate and contextualize their subject matter.

We hope chiefly to publish articles *about* collections (whether archival—including sound and video archives—manuscript, photographic, or digital collections), but will also publish beyond those limits. However, *JAA* is intended to be a journal not so much of general Adventist history, but about the sources for Adventist history and about how such sources might help us write more accurate and insightful history.

We welcome submission of articles and notes, and also invite scholars to volunteer to serve on the journal advisory board and as peer reviewers. It will surely take us a little while to achieve our ambitious goals, but we hope in due course the *Journal of Adventist Archives* will be a feature of the Adventist historical and archival landscape. This will only happen with the support of Adventist archivists, manuscript librarians, records managers, historians, and scholars of religious studies. We invite you to become part of the *JAA* community.

## **Articles**



## **Varieties of Adventists after 1844: Emerging from “fanaticism of every kind” into “the order of heaven”\***

**The Adventist Archives Lecture  
Washington Adventist University  
October 22, 2019**

**D. J. B. Trim**

In the first half of the 1840s, to an extent not true probably for centuries before (and not true since), many thousands of people in Christendom believed that Jesus Christ was just about to return to earth, to “judge the quick and the dead” and inaugurate “His kingdom” (2 Tim. 4:1).<sup>1</sup> The majority of believers in Christ’s “Second Advent” were in North America, and became associated with the name of William Miller, the New England exegete whose teaching and preaching that the *Parousia* would take place in 1843 or 1844 had put a metaphorical match to a powder-keg of eschatological expectation.<sup>2</sup> Yet “Millerites” was the label

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\* This was the first annual Adventist Archives Lecture, hosted by the Honors College at Washington Adventist University and co-sponsored by the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research. I am grateful to Bradford Haas, director of the Honors College for proposing the Lectureship, for his work with his team to host a successful event, and for inviting me to be the inaugural lecturer.

<sup>1</sup> Scriptural quotations are taken from the Authorized (King James) Version.

<sup>2</sup> Major studies include Everett N. Dick, “The Advent Crisis of 1843–1844”, Ph.D. diss. (University of Wisconsin, 1930), publ. as *William Miller and the Advent Crisis 1831–1844*, ed. Gary Land (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1994); Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry* (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald, 1944); Edwin S. Gaustad (ed.) *The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in mid-Nineteenth-century America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975);

mainstream American Protestants had put on these believers in a premillennial, imminent, and corporeal Second Coming of Christ. Their term for themselves was “Adventist”.<sup>3</sup>

Miller had not designated a precise date for the Second Advent; as a result, a number of dates in 1843 and 1844 were proposed by other Adventists, favored by some and contested by others, but each passed. Eventually, however, in the summer of 1844, consensus emerged: Jesus Christ would return to earth on Tuesday, October 22, 1844. This date was then proclaimed by some 50,000 American Adventists,<sup>4</sup> maybe 2,500 more in

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Ruth Alden Doan, *The Miller Heresy, Millennialism, and American Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987); Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan M. Butler (eds.), *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987) and 2nd edn. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993) [all page references hereafter are to the 2nd edn.]; George Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World: A Study of Millerite Adventism* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1993) and rev. edn., *William Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, rev. edn. (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2010) [all references hereafter are to this edn.]; David L. Rowe, *God's Strange Work: William Miller and the End of the World* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2008). Regionally focused works include Rowe, *Thunder and Trumpets: Millerites and Dissenting Religion in Upstate New York, 1800–1850* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985); with which cf. the classic work by Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800–1850* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1950); and, on Canada, see Denis Fortin, *Adventism in Quebec: The Dynamics of Rural Church Growth 1830–1910* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 2004), chaps. 2–4.

<sup>3</sup> The first use I have found of “Millerite” in an Adventist publication is from 1861, where it is attributed to a non-Adventist: U. Smith, “Phenomena in 1860”, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* [hereafter *R&H*], 18 (July 2, 1861), 45. The earliest use of “Millerite” in the Google Books corpus is from 1838; usage was rare through 1841, but rose dramatically in 1842 and further still in 1843. Although “Adventist” follows roughly the same trend as “Millerite”, the first recorded use is a year later, 1839, after which it occurs much less frequently. This is suggestive of “Millerite” as a term used by society at large, with “Adventist” an insider term, and thus more uncommon. See <https://books.google.com/ngrams/>.

<sup>4</sup> David Rowe observes: “We will never know the exact number” (“Millerites: A Shadow Portrait”, in Numbers and Butler, *The Disappointed*, p. 2). However, historians seem to have settled on an approximate total of 50,000 active Millerites (Miller’s own estimate); well-informed contemporaries were ready to accept a total as high as 200,000, but this is perhaps best understood as reflecting the wider body of support for an imminent and premillennial Second

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Britain,<sup>5</sup> and perhaps a hundred or so in Europe.<sup>6</sup> Enthusiasm turned to excitement as the biblically foretold end of days approached. The historian Everett Dick writes evocatively and elegiacally of men and women who “had left workshop and

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Coming, yet not for a specific date. See Dick, *William Miller and the Advent Crisis*, p. 167; Nichol, *Midnight Cry*, pp. 216–17; Cross, *Burned-Over District*, pp. 287–88; Rowe, “Millerites”, p. 7; Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, p. 181. One reason for the estimate of 50,000 active adherents is that Millerites were geographically widespread (which is highlighted by Dick, Cross and Rowe) and might be suggestive of a higher figure.

<sup>5</sup> On British Adventists see Louis Billington, “The Millerite Adventists in Great Britain, 1840–1850,” *Journal of American Studies*, 1 (1967), 191–212, repr. with this title and minor revisions in Numbers and Butler, *The Disappointed*, pp. 59–77; H. I. B. Dunton, “The Millerite Adventists and other Millenarian Groups in Great Britain 1830–1860”, Ph.D. thesis (University of London, 1984); cf. the short accounts in Dick, *William Miller and the Advent Crisis*, pp. 72–74; Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, 114–15. Some, perhaps many, British Millerites demurred about October, 1844, and “staked their hopes on a Second Advent in October 1845” (Billington 1967: 197, 1993: 63). It is impossible to be precise about how many British Adventists expected the Second Coming in October 1844 because their overall numbers are uncertain, as well as the proportion that accepted the date in the autumn of 1844. Billington argued in 1967 that “no more than 2,000 or 3,000 converts joined the British Millerites . . . between 1842 and 1846, although thousands more heard the Advent message and may have believed for a time” (1967: 208). Dunton’s subsequent research arguably indicates a slightly (or even somewhat) higher figure; Billington thought not, and stood by his estimate two decades later: see Dunton, “Millerite Adventists in Britain”, pp. 167–68; Billington 1993: 68, 76 n. 52. Given Dunton’s stronger evidential basis, I prefer his estimate of upwards of 3,000 British Millerites. But in light of the lack of consensus among them, it is unlikely that the number expecting Christ’s return on October 22, 1844, exceeded 2,500, and it might well have been less.

<sup>6</sup> Although Millerites then, and Seventh-day Adventists since, claimed Advent believers in Europe (and beyond), there is limited evidence of followers of Miller or his associates, as opposed to believers in a literal, premillennial, and impending (but not firmly dated) Second Advent. Even L. E. Froom, assiduous discoverer of Adventist antecedents and analogues, admits that “in the period from 1843 to 1847 . . . relatively few in the Old World look[ed] for the advent or the establishment of the millennium in those years”: Le Roy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald, 1946–54), III, 704; and see, e.g., *ibid.*, IV, 712–13, 718, 720; Emma E. Howell, *The Great Advent Movement*, rev. edn. (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald, 1941), pp. 19–23; Nichol, *Midnight Cry*, pp. 167–68; Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, p. 114.

household, laid down their tools and domestic cares”, and, as they believed, “stood on the brink of eternity”, eager and ready to join in the “rejoicing of the glorified”.<sup>7</sup>

But the day that was to have been earth’s last passed without “the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matt. 24:30). October 23 dawned and all who had been sure that they would be in heaven found themselves on earth instead. It is surely impossible today to have any real sense of their distress, disenchantment, and disappointment—the latter being the term those who had experienced that day rapidly adopted to describe it.<sup>8</sup> As one wrote: “Our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted, and such a spirit of weeping came over us as I never experienced before . . . we wept, and wept, till the day dawn.”<sup>9</sup>

Yet in “this time of deep trial and affliction of soul,” as another participant recalled it,<sup>10</sup> lie the origins of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It is with the roots of Seventh-day Adventism and the way it emerged out of Millerism that I am concerned in this article. The story told is a familiar one, in terms of the events rehearsed, but it is intended *not* to be another iteration of the well-

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<sup>7</sup> Everett Dick, “The Great Disappointment”, *R&H*, 109 (Jan. 7, 1932), 6. Large sections of his doctoral dissertation, “Advent Crisis”, were first published in the church’s flagship paper, *R&H*; the article cited here was the first to recycle “Advent Crisis”, which was eventually published with minor revisions, thanks to Gary Land, who edited it as *William Miller and the Advent Crisis* (see Land, “Foreword”, *ibid.*, pp. viii-ix); the quotation above is at p. 155 in *William Miller and the Advent Crisis*. I am currently preparing a study of Dick and his place in Adventist historiography, which I hope will be forthcoming in 2022.

<sup>8</sup> See below, pp. 12-14.

<sup>9</sup> Hiram Edson, undated MS fragment, Advent Source Collection, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University. I have not seen this oft-quoted MS, but it is printed *in extenso* in Numbers and Butler, *The Disappointed*, App. 1, pp. 213–16 (at p. 215). The quotation above is also quoted in, e.g., Nichol, *Midnight Cry*, pp. 264–65 (Nichol was perhaps the first to use this MS); and Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, p. 185.

<sup>10</sup> [James] W[hite], “Our Present Position”, *R&H*, 1 (Dec. 1850), 15.

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worn triumphalist narrative of “rise and progress”.<sup>11</sup> Yet, at the same time, neither is it self-consciously revisionist, as influential Adventist historiography of the 1980s and ’90s was.<sup>12</sup> I introduce a few new pieces of evidence and bring, I hope, a fresh perspective to the question of how a subset of “Second Adventists”, a term they both used for themselves and had applied to them by their antagonists, eventually became Seventh-day Adventists.<sup>13</sup> Different varieties of Adventists emerged out of what they came to call “the Great Disappointment” and I briefly explore the varying cultural, theological, and practical reactions of different Adventists to the shattering events of 1844; I suggest reasons why, of all the different successors, those that enjoyed by far the greatest long-term success are those who founded the Seventh-day Adventist

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. John N. Loughborough, *Rise and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists: With Tokens of God's Hand in the Movement and a Brief Sketch of the Advent Cause from 1831 to 1844* (Battle Creek, Mich.: General Conference Association of the Seventh-Day Adventists, 1892); id., *The Great Second Advent Movement: Its Rise and Progress* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publ., 1905); M. Ellsworth Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 2nd edn (Washington, D.C., South Bend, Ind. & Peekskill, N.Y.: Review & Herald, 1926); A. V. Olson, *Through Crisis to Victory 1888–1901* (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald, 1966); Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*. This approach, typical of Adventist history-writing, has been effectively problematized by Ashlee Chism, “[E]xcept as we shall forget’: Collective Memory and Adventist History”, Society of Adventist Philosophers ninth annual conference, Denver, Nov. 15, 2018.

<sup>12</sup> Examples include Numbers and Butler, *The Disappointed*; Gary Land, “The Historians and the Millerites: An Historiographical Essay”, in *William Miller and the Advent Crisis*, pp. xiii–xxviii.

<sup>13</sup> In the 1840s, opponents often used “Millerite” and “Second Adventist” interchangeably: e.g., “Millerites”, *Christian Messenger and Reformer*, 9 (1845), 205. Examples of its use by Adventists themselves include [Uriah Smith], “Where art Thou?”, *R&H*, 26 (Sept. 26, 1865), 129, who endorses the published views of “a Second Adventist [from] England”; and “Uncle Harvey” [probably J. H. Waggoner], “Signs of the Coming of Christ”, *The Youth's Instructor*, 16 (Feb. 1868), 9, who tells his young readers that “the name ‘Second Adventist’ is as much a term of reproach in the churches now as the name Christian was among the Jews in the time of the apostles.” In light of Waggoner’s comment, it is noteworthy that, in the *Michigan State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1860* entry for Burlington (20 miles from Battle Creek), its directory of “Professions, Trades, Etc.”, includes “Waggoner Eld. J. H., Second Adventist”, the term he presumably chose to describe himself (p. 55).

Church in 1863. I argue that it was the pragmatism of the Seventh-day Adventists and their theological view of “the order of heaven” that enabled them to prosper and endure, in contrast to most Millerite successor groups.

I

William Miller had been born into a devout Baptist family, but, as an adult, became a staunch deist. An emotional conversion experience drew him to Jesus Christ, but left him still with some reservations about Christian doctrine. Miller devoted himself for two years to a comprehensive study of the Holy Scriptures. While he explored the whole of the Bible, it appears that he found apocalyptic prophecies particularly compelling.<sup>14</sup> At the end of his study, he was convinced that the Scriptures formed a harmonious whole and taught that there would be a Second Coming of Christ to the earth—but he also, to his surprise, found (as he thought) that they indicated *when* Jesus would return to earth: the day that “the earth ... and the works that are therein shall be burned up” as foretold in 2 Peter 3:10. This text was important to Miller: inasmuch as “the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, is located by Peter after the conflagration”, it meant that “there can be no conversion of the world before the advent”. Thus, it “necessarily follow[ed] that the various portions of scripture that

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<sup>14</sup> More research is needed on intellectual influences on Miller’s investigation of the scriptures, but see Everett N. Dick, “The Millerite Movement 1830-1845”, in Gary Land (ed.), *Adventism in America: A History* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 2–5; and see now Jeff Crocombe, “‘A Feast of Reason’: The Roots of William Miller’s Biblical Interpretation and its Influence on the Seventh-day Adventist Church”, Ph.D. thesis (University of Queensland, 2011).

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refer to the millennial state have their fulfilment *after* the resurrection”, which would take place at “Christ’s coming”.<sup>15</sup>

Miller thus rejected an important Christian commonplace of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries about the millennium. Rather than being a thousand-year era in which Christ reigned on earth, it was understood figuratively; the millennium, it was thought, would be “a period when sin would be practically wiped out . . . and universal happiness would prevail as a result of the great enlightenment of mankind and the conversion of those in the remote corners of the earth.”<sup>16</sup> Or, as a leading theologian of the 1840s put it, when chiding Miller:

The great event before the world is not its physical conflagration, but its moral regeneration. Although there is doubtless a sense in which Christ may be said to come in connection with the passing away of the fourth empire . . . and his kingdom to be illustriously established, yet that will be found to be a spiritual coming in the power of his gospel, in the ample outpouring of his Spirit, and the glorious administration of his providence.<sup>17</sup>

The millennium would usher in the Second Coming rather than the other way around; and it would be largely the fruit of human effort rather than divine intervention.

Miller rejected this postmillennialist interpretation of the Book of Revelation. He was only too aware of humanity’s sinful

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<sup>15</sup> Sylvester Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller, Generally Known as a Lecturer on the Prophecies, and the Second Coming of Christ* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1853), p. 73.

<sup>16</sup> Dick, *William Miller and the Advent Crisis*, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in James White, *Sketches of the Christian Life and Public Labors of William Miller* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Seventh-day Adventist Publ. Assoc., 1875), 9-10; cf. [E. Jacobs], “To Advent believers”, *Western Midnight Cry!*, 4:5 (Nov. 29, 1844), 18. While White’s account is largely a repr. of Bliss, *Memoirs*, this quotation is from James White’s lengthy prefatory chapter, rather than Bliss’s text.

condition. He believed in a personal and premillennial Second Coming, but this meant he was open to the possibility that Christ's return might be imminent, whereas the tendency of prophetic exegesis since the Enlightenment had been to locate it in the distant future. This was a natural concomitant of a postmillennial interpretative scheme, because the Second Advent was to come *after* the millennium—and humanity clearly was not on the verge of universal peace, harmony, and happiness. More time was needed for the triumph of Christian society and its values. For premillennialists, however, Jesus might come again soon—even suddenly.

In his enthusiasm for the event he longed to see, Miller paid little heed to Christ's own words about the Second Coming and Last Judgment—that the “day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matt. 24:36; cf. Mark 13:32). Miller was intrigued by Daniel 8:14: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed”. Accepting that Daniel and Revelation were densely symbolic, he adopted a widely held view that, in the age of Christendom, with the Jewish temple and associated Levitical code abolished, the *sanctuary* signified the *world*. With that assumption, Miller then interpreted the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 as meaning the purification of the earth by fire (foretold in 2 Peter), as it had been cleansed by water during the days of Noah. He concluded from intensive study that a day in apocalyptic prophecy stood for a year and that the 2,300-day period began with the decree of the Persian king Artaxerxes, in 457 B.C., for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. By September 1822 Miller had worked out, by simple arithmetic, that the 2,300 days would end and “Christ come again in his glory and person to our earthy” *soon*, “even within twenty-one years,—on or before 1843”.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Bliss, *Memoirs*, p. 79.



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The history of how this idea became something Miller publicly taught, and how it spread is not our concern us here. Suffice to say that after a slow start it began to spread, rapidly. Millerites, as Miller’s followers were dubbed, exploited the power of the printing press. In an era when the great majority of adult Americans read newspapers and journals,<sup>19</sup> Millerite periodicals went far and wide. This was thanks in large part to Joshua Himes, a Christian Church pastor, social reformer, and press entrepreneur, who was already experienced in promoting another fringe movement, abolitionism, as a close ally of William Lloyd Garrison.<sup>20</sup> Dubbed by one hostile contemporary the ‘Napoleon of the press’ and by a historian a “media genius”, Himes had a massive impact.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to be promoted via the press, the Second Advent was proclaimed by a variety of preachers. They included another pastor of the Christian Connection (as the Christian Church was also called), James White; a middle-aged social reformer, Joseph Bates (also a Christian Connectionist); and a Congregationalist

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<sup>19</sup> This emerges strongly from, e.g., James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, Oxford History of the United States (1988; New York: Ballantine Books, 1989); and Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, paperback edn., 2005).

<sup>20</sup> Dick, *William Miller and the Advent Crisis*, pp. 60, 70; Arthur, “Joshua Himes”, p. 38; Ronald D. Graybill, “The Abolitionist–Millerite Connection”, in Numbers and Butler, *The Disappointed*, pp. 139–52 (at p. 141). We look forward to Kevin Burton’s forthcoming Ph.D. diss. (Florida State University): it will shed light on this aspect and on the wider role of Adventists in Abolitionism, which, he will show, was more substantial than appreciated in scholarship to date.

<sup>21</sup> Quotation in Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, p. 64; Ruth Alden Doan, “Neither Cult nor Charisma’: William Miller and Leadership of New Religious Movements”, in Regina D. Sullivan and Monte Harrell Hampton (eds.), *Varieties of Southern Religious History: Essays in Honor of Donald G. Mathews* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2015), p. 95. See David T. Arthur, “Joshua V. Himes and the Cause of Adventism”, in Numbers and Butler, *The Disappointed*, pp. 36–58; and Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, chap. 4, “Enter Joshua V. Himes: Mission Organizer”, pp. 56–77. Himes’s role had first been highlighted by Dick, *William Miller and the Advent Crisis*, pp. 59–64, 66–68.

minister, Charles Fitch, to whom we will return for his distinctive theology, but who was also significant for his methodology. Fitch, with Apollos Hale, who was the editor of the Millerite journal, the *Advent Shield*, pioneered a new teaching tool that was widely adopted by Adventist preachers: Fitch and Hale developed a chart, in the form of a timeline that linked historical events with Biblical prophecies, but which was illustrated with images from prophecy. Many of these were printed and used as striking visual aids; those who could not afford to buy one might well make their own. One Millerite preacher wrote at the time of how “I preach about the streets with my chart hoisted on a pole.”<sup>22</sup>

The emergence of the Millerite press, in which Himes, was instrumental; the widespread adoption of autonomously produced visual aids; and the proliferation of Adventist preachers: all these help to explain how the Millerite message spread, but they also indicate the degree to which its diffusion owed much to individual initiative and enterprise. Despite being known by William Miller’s name, Millerites were not really his followers; irrespective of how instrumental Himes’s role was, he was not some Millerite *éminence gris*. Many of those preaching the soon return of Christ had no academic biblical or theological training and had never met William Miller or his chief associates. By 1842, “the Millerite movement [had] snowballed to the point where it could no longer be controlled by any group of leaders, let alone by Miller himself.”<sup>23</sup>

Miller originally set no precise date for Christ’s return, only stating that it would be around 1843; but because Millerism was a

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<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Billington, “Millerite Adventists” (1967): 197. See Dick, *William Miller and the Advent Crisis*, p. 65; Arthur, “Joshua Himes”, pp. 43–45; Jonathan M. Butler, “The Making of a New Order: Millerism and the Origins of Seventh-day Adventism”, in id. and Numbers, *The Disappointed*, pp. 194–95.

<sup>23</sup> Stephen D. O’Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 104; cf. Doan, “Neither Cult nor Charisma”, pp. 95, 103.

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movement, rather than an organized church, there was no way to compel doctrinal uniformity. In 1842 prominent Millerite preachers affirmed 1843 as *the* year. Miller himself declared that Christ would return between March 21, 1843 and the same day in 1844. Yet later in 1843 he suggested that, as the Jewish Day of Atonement was on the tenth day of the seventh month, Christ might come in the autumn of either 1843 or 1844. Meanwhile, as modern Adventist author George Knight writes, “the less stable elements among the Millerites began to set specific dates in 1843.” February 10 and 15, April 3 and 14, “the Day of Pentecost in May, [and] the autumnal equinox in September” all had their advocates.<sup>24</sup> All passed.

By the summer of 1844, Samuel Snow, an atheist convert to Millerism, had a new thesis. By closer comparison of the Jewish and modern calendars, he fixed the end of the 2,300-day prophecy in Daniel 8:14 as occurring in 1844 not 1843. Snow proclaimed that Christ would definitely come again on “the tenth day of the seven months of the present year 1844”—which in the modern calendar was October 22nd. The “seven-month movement”, as it became known, spread among Millerites like wild fire. This, they believed, was the true “Midnight Cry” (Matt. 25:6). The definite date; the apparently clear, rational basis for it, which also explained why the other dates had been wrong; and the deeply felt desire of Adventists to see Jesus in the clouds: all led to a remarkable response.<sup>25</sup> With even greater enthusiasm than before, since time was now so short, American Millerites proclaimed the Second Advent, sounding the “seven month cry”.<sup>26</sup> And now almost all specified the same exact date: October 22, 1844. But

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<sup>24</sup> Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, p. 109; and see below, p. 24.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, p. 162. See Nichol, *Midnight Cry*, pp. 226-29

<sup>26</sup> [James] W[hite], “The Parable, Matthew XXV, 1–12”, *R&H*, 1 (1851), 100.

their confident calculations were to be confounded; their hopes, dashed; their heartfelt beliefs, ridiculed.

## II

The “Great Disappointment” is a familiar designation. Yet it surely is an inapt one.

Now, it was, to be sure, the term that those who went through the experience rapidly adopted to describe it. Within twelve months one wrote of how he had been “sick with disappointment”.<sup>27</sup> Before the end of the decade, the Adventists who had by then embraced the seventh-day Sabbath were writing of October 22, 1844, as “the great disappointment” or “the great Advent disappointment”,<sup>28</sup> or, in one of the earliest and most revealing examples I have found in print, “*our* great disappointment”.<sup>29</sup> At least once, they, themselves, are dubbed “the disappointed”.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> H. Emmons letter of Oct. 10, 1845, quoted in Nichol, *Midnight Cry*, p. 265n. and Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, pp. 184–85 at 185.

<sup>28</sup> Early examples include White, “Our Present Position”, p. 14; James White, *The Signs of the Times: Showing that the Second Coming of Christ is at the Doors* (Rochester, N.Y.: Review Office, 1853), p. 114 (he also calls it “a disappointment, at p. 111); Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, 4 vols. (1858–64), vol. 1 (Battle Creek, Mich.: James White, 1858), p. 166. J. N. Andrews uses “the great Advent disappointment” (and “a great disappointment”) in his pamphlet “The Sanctuary of the Bible”, *Bible Tracts*, no. 5 (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review & Herald, n.d. [1860s]), p. 6. Note: these terms also appear in J. N. A[ndrews], “The Sanctuary”, *Signs of the Times*, 5 (Nov. 20, 1879): 348, but this is part of a serialized reprint of the earlier pamphlet and so does not represent a distinct usage.

<sup>29</sup> Joseph Bates, *A Vindication of the Seventh-Day Sabbath, and the Commandments of God: With a Further History of God’s Peculiar People, from 1847 to 1848* (New Bedford, Mass.: Benjamin Lindsey, 1848), p. 74; anon. [James White], “Our Tour to this State”, *R&H*, 2:1, “Extra” (July 21, 1851), unpaginated—third page (this article is from an “Extra” issue, numbered vol. 2, no. 1; it should

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Yet their experience plainly had been more than *disappointing*, at least as that word is probably generally understood now. It was *devastating* to most Adventists, not least because their attitude to the predicted advent of Christ on October 22 is best characterized not by a term used by some Adventists, “the blessed hope”, but rather by the title of Charles Dickens’s near-contemporary novel, *Great Expectations* (1861): they had fully *expected*, not *hoped*, that the Second Advent would take place on that fourth Tuesday of October. Thus, Christ’s non-appearance was more than a non-event; it was itself an event, one that evoked a range of different responses, which gave rise, in turn, to several different varieties of Adventists. What they were, their beliefs and practices, and some long-term outcomes, will be the subject of the rest of this article.

First, we will review some of the responses to the Disappointment, both the inevitable theological reassessments and personal practices generated thereby. In section IV we will go back to the early 1840s to examine the reasons *why* responses took the forms they did, paying particular attention to possible roots *within* Adventism before 1844, in addition to the trauma of October 22, but concluding that the latter is the primary reason for the emergence of certain novel theological theories in the late 1840s. Section V addresses how Millerite leaders tried to hold the Advent movement together and the emergence of seventh-day Sabbath-keeping Adventists. Section VI explores some of the organizational manifestations consequent on different doctrinal reactions; then,

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be noted that there is also a later vol. 2, no. 1, dated Aug. 5, 1851, and it is with this that the pagination for vol. 2 starts).

<sup>30</sup> J. White, “The Parable”, p. 100 (emphasis supplied). Numbers and Butler used *The Disappointed* as the title of their path-breaking edited collection, yet, curiously, they neither explain why, nor explore contemporary use of that term; indeed, they seem unaware of its use by James White—the title presumably is their modern designation, rather than reflecting the actual contemporary rhetoric, but research into the latter might well be illuminating.

in section VII, we consider the implications for interpreting Seventh-day Adventist history.

### III

When the Second Advent did not occur, many Millerites were, inevitably, disillusioned with the interpretative framework that had occasioned their disappointment. Some admitted their mistakes; one of the more influential Adventist leaders, Nathaniel Whiting, even wrote on October 24 to Miller, telling him it was a “duty” for leaders of the movement to make “public acknowledgement of their error”.<sup>31</sup> But exactly where had the error lain? Adventists could not agree.

Some, like George Storrs, a Millerite from Philadelphia who had been known for particularly radical pronouncements, including against slavery, publicly renounced setting dates for Christ’s Second Coming, yet still urged that it was an actual and imminent event.<sup>32</sup> Many Millerites, however, were ready to reject the whole Adventist package. An unknown but undoubtedly large number abandoned belief in a literal Second Advent altogether. “The premillennialist doctrine that Christ might suddenly return at any time has never fully recovered from this scandal.” Some came to question the credibility of the Bible—thus, the devoutly Biblicist Millerites ironically ended up reinforcing trends to “infidelity” and atheism, already present and potent (and warned against, by Ellen G. White) well before Darwin published *On the*

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<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, 190; see p. 111 and cf. p. 305 n.8.

<sup>32</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 132, 164, 179, 191.

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*Origin of the Species* in 1859.<sup>33</sup> There were others, though, like Hiram Edson, a farmer from the northwest of New York state who later wrote of how he felt on October 23, 1844: “I mused in my own heart, saying, My Advent experience had been the richest and brightest of all my christian experience. If this had proved a failure, what was the rest of my christian experience worth?” Recognizing that they must have misunderstood something, but eager to know what it was, these Adventists, disappointed, but not in despair, went back to the Bible with renewed determination to plumb its depths.<sup>34</sup>

It was from the ranks of such dogged students of the Scriptures that Seventh-day Adventists eventually emerged—but only some twenty years after the devastating experience of October 1844. The process was so prolonged partly because the men and women who finally founded the Seventh-day Adventist Church were, for various reasons, very suspicious of formal organization—a point to which we will return later. However, in large part it was because new theological ideas proliferated dramatically in the aftermath of the Great Disappointment. The psychological trauma of that event made those still believing in Biblical truth inclined to question every verity or orthodoxy of past generations, rather than only those relating to eschatology. Radical, even fanatical, theological views appeared, multiplied and spread. Indeed, during the 15 years following the Great Disappointment, the centrifugal force of radical theological pluralism tore Millerism apart.

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<sup>33</sup> See Alec Ryrie, *Protestants: The Faith that Made the Modern World* (New York: Viking, 2017), pp. 216-17, 250-52 (quotation at p. 216); Dick, *Miller and the Advent Crisis*, p. 159. Ellen White writes on “the infidel and the atheist” in *Spiritual Gifts*, 1, 116, 176. The terms “infidelity” and “infidel” appear in other of her writings in the 1850s, but are used more in her writings from the 1860s onwards.

<sup>34</sup> Edson undated MS fragment, in Numbers and Butler, *The disappointed*, p. 215 (capitalization as in original). This iconic passage is used widely in literature on Adventism: e.g., quoted at length in Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, p. 185; and also mined in wider histories of religion, e.g., Ryrie, *Protestants*, p. 221.

Inevitably, there were a number of interpretations of what had actually happened on October 22 in 1844. The majority of Millerites held that they had been right about the event, even though they had been wrong about the date. Perhaps they had simply been mistaken in their sacred mathematics and the Second Advent was still close at hand; or Jesus had purposely tested His followers and, having winnowed out the half-hearted, He would return suddenly.

A sharply diverging viewpoint was that the Millerites *had* been right about the date, but mistaken about the event. What if the sanctuary in Daniel 8 was *not* a figure for the earth? What if it referred to an actual sanctuary in heaven, on which the ancient Israelite sanctuary had been modeled? This idea suddenly struck Hiram Edson on October 23, as did the inference that, if so, the anti-typical Day of Atonement would surely not entail (as he later wrote) “our High Priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth on the tenth day of the seventh month”; instead, would he not have “entered on that day the second apartment [i.e. the Most Holy Place] of that sanctuary”? But this implied “that he had a work to perform in the Most Holy before coming to this earth.”<sup>35</sup> What that “work” was, however, needed further consideration. Edson studied the matter with two other Millerites, Franklin B. Hahn and Owen R. L. Crosier. In early 1845 they began to share their conclusions, but they did not gain any wider acceptance until in January 1846 Crosier summarized them in a lengthy treatise which was published, at his expense, along with a brief endorsement by Edson and Hahn, as a special issue of the Millerite periodical the *Day–Star* in February 1846.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Knight, *Miller and Rise of Adventism*, 260.

<sup>36</sup> O. R. L. Crosier, “The Law of Moses”, *Day–Star*, vol. 9, no. 9 “Extra” (Feb. 7, 1846), 37-44; Hiram Edson and F. B. Hahn, “To the Brethren and Sisters Scattered Abroad”, p. 44. For the circumstances of publication, see the note by the editor [E. Jacobs], “Correspondents”, *Day–Star*, 9 (Jan. 31, 1846), 36.



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There were other, competing interpretations of the “right date, wrong event” kind. They included belief that the millennium *had* begun and the heavenly kingdom had been inaugurated—but that Christ had, for unknown reasons, delayed his actual physical arrival on earth, which could be expected imminently. Perhaps Christ had some other new “work or office . . . in the invisible world” to perform, as Apollos Hale wrote in an article in another Millerite paper, the *Advent Mirror*, in January 1845. However, Hale argued, while “some time must elapse” until Christ’s work “within the veil” was completed and He descended in glory, the work of salvation was *already* accomplished: “the judgment is here”.<sup>37</sup> The Bridegroom had already come spiritually and while the wise virgins would be united with Him, the foolish virgins would find that “the door was shut” (Matt. 25:10). Thus, only those who had accepted the Millerite message before October 22, 1844 would be saved when He came to earth—a belief that became known as the “shut door”.<sup>38</sup> However, Hale’s article promoted it and many Adventists, including William Miller, accepted it in the late 1840s.<sup>39</sup>

Developing this line of thinking, moreover, others embraced readings of scripture much more allegorical and symbolic. This led them to adopt spiritualizing interpretations, teaching that Jesus *had* returned to this world—but not in literal physical form. Some even expressly denied that “there is . . . such thing as a literal body of Jesus, in the universe of God.”<sup>40</sup> Such interpretations,

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<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, p. 259.

<sup>38</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>39</sup> The *Sabbatarian* Adventists’ position is often misunderstood: see D. J. B. Trim, “‘Illuminating the Whole Earth’: Adventism and Foreign Mission in the Battle Creek Years (1859 to c.1912)”, in Alberto R. Timm and James R. Nix (eds.), *Lessons from Battle Creek: Reflections after 150 Years of Church Organization* (Silver Spring, Md.: Review & Herald, 2018), pp. 135–36, 156 nn. 9-10 and sources cited there.

<sup>40</sup> Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, p. 212.

expounded by former Millerites, were to influence Charles Taze Russell and, as a result, be accepted by the “Bible Students”, the forerunners of today’s Jehovah’s Witnesses. They are thus, in a sense, an Adventist successor movement.<sup>41</sup> In contrast to metaphorical and figurative interpretations of apocalyptic prophecies, other former Millerites embraced extremely literal reading of the Bible. Some taught, for example, that true believers should act like children (cf. Mark 10:15, Matt. 18:3), sitting on the floor rather than a seat, or crawling around their houses, or even sometimes in the streets. Ellen G. White wrote of her encounter with such “fanatical ones [who] seemed to think that religion consisted in making a noise”.<sup>42</sup> Others refused to see doctors for treatment—ironically, in the light of much later developments, these included some of the first self-styled Seventh-day Adventists.<sup>43</sup>

Among the former Millerites who held that October 22 *had* marked the beginning of the millennium in Christ’s physical absence, a number seized on Christ’s words: “they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven” (Matt 22:30); yet those who did so reached opposite conclusions. One group argued that this statement of Christ meant true believers should abstain from sexual relations; but another took it to mean they could indulge in free sexual relations, since marriage had been abolished. There were others who also declared adultery or fornication acceptable, but did so on different grounds. Some for instance insisted that all who had believed as of October 22, 1844, were “perfected [and] purified”—and so none of their actions could possibly be sinful, regardless of what they were!<sup>44</sup> Others

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<sup>41</sup> As Ryrie argues: *Protestants*, pp. 226-28.

<sup>42</sup> E. G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. II (Battle Creek, Mich.: James White, 1860), p. 50.

<sup>43</sup> *R&H*, 3 (April 14, 1853), 191.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, 212.

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justified abandoning their spouses on the grounds that Christ had said that His true followers would give up their families (Matt. 8:21-22, 10:35-36, 12:48, Mark 3:31; Luke 9:60). Another group decided that the millennium had in fact begun, that it was the world's Sabbath-rest, and that they should therefore do no work; as a variant, others still maintained that Christ was testing His followers, and that, since He would come again soon, His true followers (again) ought not do any work. This refusal to labor was not as shameful a concept as free love but almost as indecent in the industrious society of the mid-nineteenth-century northern United States.

Also shocking to contemporary sensibilities was another fruit of Biblical literalism: willingness, for the first time in centuries, to take seriously Christ's words to his disciples, "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14). Increasingly iconoclastic, Adventists began to look anew at fundamentals that had previously been a given among American Protestants, such as there being only two ordinances, in contrast to the Roman Catholics' seven: Baptism and the Lord's Supper (or Communion). There seems not to have been a huge amount of heterodox practice of these ordinances among Adventists.<sup>45</sup> Some *did* propose, though, *adding* a third ordinance, which was very radical at the time. A prominent Millerite evangelist, J. B. Cook, became the chief proponent of foot washing, which had preceded the Lord's Supper and which, he argued, Christ had made an obligation as enduring as the communal taking of bread and wine. Cook explicitly likened foot-washing to the ordinances of Baptism and Communion, arguing: "The Saviour's example and command . . . employed to enforce

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<sup>45</sup> On Communion, see Michael W. Campbell, "Martin Luther, Seventh-day Adventism, and the Lord's Supper", in Rolf J. Pöhler, ed., *Perceptions of the Protestant Reformation in Seventh-day Adventism*, Adventistica, new series, 1 (Möckern–Friedensau, Germany: Institute of Adventist Studies, Friedensau Adventist University, 2018), pp. 148-53.

these ordinances, enjoins another ordinance”, which similarly embodies Christ’s teaching “of mutual affection and submission, [and] is no less binding than others”.<sup>46</sup> Contemporaries were enormously scandalized by a minority of ex-Millerites who practiced mixed-gender foot washing,<sup>47</sup> which must have seemed like another expression of free love. However, *separate* foot washing by men and by women began to gather some support, including from Owen Crosier.<sup>48</sup>

There were, then, a multitude of weird and wonderful ideas out there, as well as serious ones. Miller himself wrote with sadness “of so many of my once dearly beloved brethren, who have since our disappointment gone into fanaticism of every kind”.<sup>49</sup> Two questions present themselves: First, Why was this? Second, to what extent did the nature of the Millerite movement *before* October 22, 1844, shape reactions and responses *afterwards*?

#### IV

In looking for explanations for the extraordinary variegation of post-“seven month movement” Adventism, it must first be

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<sup>46</sup> J. B. Cook, “To be Christians, We Must do the Works of Christ”, *Day-Star*, 6 (July 1, 1845), 31.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. [Uriah Smith], “A New Sect”, *R&H*, 16 (July 17, 1860), 72.

<sup>48</sup> Letter, Crosier to E. Jacobs, Aug. 8, 1845, publ. in *Day-Star*, 7 (Aug. 25, 1845), 10 (this was before publication of his new interpretation of “the cleansing of the sanctuary”). On the history of foot washing see Ron Graybill, “Foot Washing in Early Adventism”, *R&H*, 152: 21 (May 22, 1975), 4-5; id., “Foot Washing Becomes an Established Practice”, *R&H*, 152: 22 (May 29, 1975, 6-7); Richard W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, 2nd ed, rev. Floyd Greenleaf (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press, 2000), p. 57; Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, pp. 111, 212-13.

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, 225.

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stressed again that Adventists suffered a horrible psychic wound on October 22. Every certitude was cast into doubt, all convictions overturned, and to those who did not simply abandon belief in a literal Second Advent, everything in the scriptures seemed up for grabs, open to re-interpretation. Only thus could there be even a prospect of turning Great Disappointment into great contentment, even if far in the future. Having acknowledged this, though, it is nevertheless the cases that the Millerite movement had drawn from the excitable, extreme fringes of American Christianity. This is something early Seventh-day Adventist chroniclers of the Advent movement of the 1840s were keen to dismiss; but in their understandable desire to vindicate their forebears, I suggest they went too far in downplaying the radical (or as some put it, the “scandalous”) character of the movement that bore Miller’s name.<sup>50</sup> In this section I argue that the outpouring of theological creativity and heterodoxy that followed the autumnal events of 1844 arose from doctrinal diversity and lack of organization among the Millerites before 1844, *as well as* from the terrible mental trauma arising from the failure, as it seemed, of Christ to fulfil prophecy and thus the failure of all they had said, done, and believed.

Some of our evidence for this view comes from Miller himself and from the Millerite press; a number of Adventist leaders became concerned about what they, themselves, called fanaticism. Of course, in the eyes of mainline Protestant churches, not to mention Roman Catholics, the irreligious and skeptical, Millerism was *itself* fanatical; even some like William Lloyd Garrison, on the same side as Millerites of the slavery question and close to some Millerites, articulated this concern.<sup>51</sup> It was one Adventist leaders

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<sup>50</sup> Eric Anderson, “The Millerite Use of Prophecy: A Case Study of a ‘Striking Fulfilment,’” in Numbers and Butler, *The Disappointed*, pp. 78-93 (at p. 89); cf. Ryrie, *Protestants*, p. 216.

<sup>51</sup> Anon. [Garrison], “The Second Advent”, *The Liberator*, 13 (Feb. 10, 1843), 23. I am indebted to Kevin Burton for a scanned copy of this article.

made efforts to address. For example, the first general meeting of Second Advent believers in Boston in the autumn of 1840 adopted a resolution which declared, *inter alia*, that “We do not . . . join with those who mock at sin, or . . . lightly esteem the offices and ordinances of the church, or who empty of their power the threatenings of the holy law, or who count the blood of atonement a useless thing, or who refuse to worship and honor the Son of God, even as they honor the Father”.<sup>52</sup> This was offering assurance that Millerites were orthodox in all the fundamentals of Christianity, and were not antinomians, anti-Trinitarians, or other kinds of heretics. In May 1843, another conference in Boston declared: “We repudiate all fanaticism, and everything which may tend to . . . excess”.<sup>53</sup> I read this not as an authentic acknowledgement of a Millerite tendency to excess, one the group at Boston renounced, but rather as another reassurance regarding doctrinal orthodoxy—as an attempt to reassure respectable society that Millerites in general *were* respectable in their *mores* and public behaviors. The same could be said of general denunciations, in the Adventist press of fanaticism, sometimes in reaction to second-hand accounts in mainstream newspapers.

We can discount, then, a fair amount of contemporary reportage of extremism. Yet it is still clear that Millerism in 1843 and 1844 *was* characterized by more than its fair share of radical beliefs and behaviors. Although the prejudice against Millerites means that accusations in the wider press must be treated with a degree of skepticism, there are a number of first-hand reports in Millerite papers, about unquestionably heretical beliefs and frankly wild behaviors in their own ranks, which Miller and other well-known Second Adventists deplored in print. There are sufficient of these stories, including ones reported by Millerite

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<sup>52</sup> “The Address of the Conference on the Second Coming of the Lord”, Oct. 14, 1840, in *Signs of the Times of the Second Coming of Christ*, 1 (Nov. 1, 1840), 117.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, p. 145.

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leaders (and then denounced by them), to suggest that Millerism attracted people who were drawn to the fringe of orthodox religion. Adventists themselves acknowledged that many in their ranks were inclined to be excitable and over-zealous.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, while most prominent Millerite preachers quickly repudiated both *doctrinal* heterodoxy and *immoral* conduct, some were drawn to emotion, “ecstasy and enthusiasm” in *worship* and *spirituality* hard to resist, and worship practices could be taken to an extent many found extreme.<sup>55</sup>

Furthermore, eyewitness reactions, not written for the press and thus not easily dismissed, tell a similar story. That Second Adventist enthusiasm could manifest itself in extremism is evident, for example, from the journal of John M. Emerson, a farmer in Bradford, Massachusetts. On January 30, 1843, a series of Millerite meetings started in Bradford. Emerson writes in his journal that the “Miller or Second Advent meeting began quite an excitement.” Emerson’s tone is neutral. But by the end of February his view is rather different, writing of the Millerites: “Excitement has turned into a delusion. . . . Many of the converts loose [*sic*] their strength and shout Glory to God I’m happy, and others will respond. They are more like children than persons of commonsense. It must be all Delusions.”<sup>56</sup> Not long after, on May 1st, 1843, Ruth Mason, a Vermont woman, living near the Canadian border, wrote to an uncle describing how “the Advent

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<sup>54</sup> See Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, pp. 146-50.

<sup>55</sup> Butler, “New Order”, p. 196. Still, in claiming that “*all* Adventists shared” an “enthusiastic religious experience” including “trance-like visions”, Dr. Graybill seems himself carried away with enthusiasm: Ronald D. Graybill, *The Power of Prophecy: Ellen G. White and the Women Religious Founders of the Nineteenth Century*, Ph.D. diss. (Johns Hopkins University, 1983); publ. under same title: s.l.: Eastvale Press, 2019) pp. xiii-xiv (emphasis supplied).

<sup>56</sup> Emerson MS journal, 1843, now in private hands; sold by Read ‘Em Again Books, extracts on the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America website ([www.abaa.org/book/767511318](http://www.abaa.org/book/767511318), accessed Dec. 21, 2014).

believers” had kept vigil on April 14 (one of the dates set for the Second Coming) and how “there is some very strange conduct”.<sup>57</sup>

Inherent within Millerism, then, was a potential for exuberance and extremism. It is important to acknowledge this tendency, not least because of its consequences. If Millerism had been a biblically restorationist and Christian revivalist movement preaching a literal and premillennial, but undated Second Advent, as other sects did in the first half of the nineteenth century, then, from the evidence we have, it seems unlikely that, even after the Great Disappointment, the radicals on the fringes of the movement would ever have been anything more than marginal. Of course, had the Millerites been more conventional even the shattering of their movement might not have prompted irrational thinking and radical conduct. However, their apocalyptic and socially disapproved message was attractive not only to earnest seekers after scriptural truth, but also to people from outside the mainstream, drawn to novel ideas and spiritual sensation.

Having acknowledged this, it is important not to overstate it; we ought not lose sight of the rationalist approach of the leaders and probably of most rank-and-file Millerites. To skeptics, of course, their willingness to find in ancient prophecy evidence for an actual (and imminent) Second Advent was, in and of itself, indicative of irrationality. Yet, in reality, the painstaking exposition of the Bible, based on close reading of texts (often in ancient languages) and careful analysis of calendars and mathematics, was very much the fruit of the Enlightenment. It is striking that despite Ruth Mason’s comment about “strange conduct”, her letter is not negative about Adventists; on the contrary, she explicitly warns her uncle: “Do not credit every thing [*sic*] you hear for . . . there are many falsehoods circulated

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<sup>57</sup> Letter of May 1, 1843, Rebok Memorial Library, Special Collections, MS 7. Adventism flourished in this Vermont-Quebec borderland: see Fortin, *Adventism in Quebec*.



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respecting them.”<sup>58</sup> William Lloyd Garrison, writing in early 1843, calls Miller and his followers “victim[s] of an absurd theory” and characterizes them as “laboring under [a] delusion”—but he makes it plain he does not think them delusional; he argues that they have made a serious mistake, but an honest one, and not the result of some kind of madness. He also undermines the idea of extremism by emphasizing that, in many respects, Miller’s teaching was in accord with common Christian doctrine. Garrison’s attack on the Millerites is full on, yet he never accuses them of fanaticism (except in their belief in a physical, personal return of Jesus Christ!), and he explicitly exculpates them of immoral behavior.<sup>59</sup>

When we consider how the latent (or even active) tendency to extreme beliefs and behaviors metamorphosed into some of the unconstrained doctrines and actions that arose in the late autumn of 1844, the catalyzing effect of the Great Disappointment appears obvious. The problem facing the “Second Adventists” after 1844 was that the ordeal of October 22 served to enable and empower the extremist exegetes who might otherwise have remained on the margins. Up to that point, the leaders of the Advent movement had tried to restrain the wilder impulses. Now, however, who was to say who should exercise authority? The reasoned approach to scripture had resulted in shattering Disappointment; so why *not* explore the margins of theological orthodoxy? Why not try the lunatic fringe (as some saw it) when rationality itself had spectacularly failed? This is why, to some former Millerites, no idea seemed off the table.

The destabilization engendered by this Great Disappointment mindset is evident in the fact that heterodox theological ideas with no obvious connection to eschatology, and that were not association also proliferated. For example, what we would now call

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<sup>58</sup> Rebok Memorial Library, MS 7.

<sup>59</sup> Garrison, “Second Advent”, p. 23 [quotations at col. 3].

Pentecostal ideas spread, as did interest in Utopian communalism. Anti-Trinitarianism experienced efflorescence among the Adventists. And two other powerful ideas circulated: conditional immortality and the seventh-day Sabbath.

The ancient belief that the soul did not go to heaven or hell on death, but rather “slept” until the Last Judgment when the wicked would suffer instant definitive death (rather than eternal torment), while those saved by Christ would begin everlasting life, had been revived during the Reformation, but had never caught on.<sup>60</sup> George Storrs, who later helped to publicize Snow’s “seventh-month” interpretation had rediscovered it in the late 1830s. In January 1843 Storrs launched a new periodical, the *Bible Examiner*, which proclaimed his belief in “annihilationism” (from the annihilation of the wicked at the end of time) and “conditional immortality”. By January 1844, he had won Charles Fitch (who had converted Storrs to Adventism) to his view of the state of the dead; he and Fitch had begun preaching and writing in support of the view of death as unconscious sleep. Both Storrs and Fitch encountered vehement hostility; among those who condemned their views were William Miller and his two most prominent lieutenants, Joshua Himes and Josiah Litch.<sup>61</sup> Following the Great Disappointment, though, some Adventists were willing to look at the fate of the dead with fresh eyes.<sup>62</sup>

As for belief in the seventh-day Sabbath, starting in 1842 the Seventh Day Baptists (a small Baptist sect) had tried to promote this among the Millerites, but met with an almost universally negative response. One exception was in the small village of Washington, New Hampshire, where by early 1844, a local

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<sup>60</sup> The classic long-term history is Le Roy Edwin Froom, *The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald, 1965-66); but see now Bryan W. Ball, *The Soul Sleepers: Christian Mortalism from Wycliffe to Priestley* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2008).

<sup>61</sup> See Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, pp. 165-69.

<sup>62</sup> Dick, “Millerite Movement”, p. 32.

Seventh Day Baptist, called Rachel Oakes, had persuaded a few members of a local Second Adventist congregation, notably two farmers, William and Cyrus Farnsworth, as well as Frederick Wheeler, the Methodist minister of a neighboring village, that the Fourth Commandment had never been abrogated, and thus still was binding on Christians. That summer, either Oakes or Wheeler won over T. M. Preble, a former Baptist minister of another small New Hampshire village who had gone on preaching tours with Miller and Himes. However, since all expected the world to end in a few weeks, none of the new converts to seventh-day Sabbatarianism seem to have felt a need to proselytize. That changed after October 22. In February 1845, Preble published a pamphlet urging that Christians should keep the seventh day of the week, Saturday, holy, rather than the first day of the week, Sunday. The advocate of foot-washing, J. B. Cook, avowed his support for Preble and though both soon abandoned seventh-day Sabbatarianism, it was taken up by others: Hiram Edson, who advocated for the existence and prophetic significance of a heavenly sanctuary; Joseph Bates, who had been one of Miller's prominent associates; James White, a Millerite evangelist; and Ellen Harmon, a young visionary from Maine. However, they were decidedly in a minority.<sup>63</sup>

In the second half of the 1840s, none of these views were mutually exclusive. Many ex-Millerites flirted with a whole range of beliefs over a period, not holding them all at one time, but adding this one and dropping that, depending on what sermon they heard, what tract they read, how they felt the Spirit moved.

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<sup>63</sup> This is a familiar story for Seventh-day Adventists. See Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, pp. 254-55, 262-65; see also M. E. Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, D.C., South Bend, Ind. & Peekskill, N.Y.: Review & Herald, 1926 [2nd edn.]), pp. 182-87, the first scholarly study; C. Mervyn Maxwell, *Tell it to the World: The Story of Seventh-day Adventists* (Mountain View, Calif., Omaha, Nebr. & Oshawa, Ont.: Pacific Press, 1976), pp. 67-69, 74-76, a populist account that is still of value; cf. Dick, "Millerite Movement", pp. 32-33, a concise overview.

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In sum, within a few months of the Great Disappointment, many unusual, even extreme, theological ideas and practices were widely circulating among former Millerites. Fervent advocacy and fierce opposition were commonplace. If the Adventists were to hold together, so that they could continue to warn humanity of Christ's soon return, then something had to be done.

Who, though, would take the lead? Miller was disillusioned, not with Jesus, in whose literal return Miller continued to believe, but rather with what he saw as fanaticism among Adventists. He was in poor health, advanced in age, weary from nearly fourteen years of traveling and preaching, and inevitably disheartened. And so Miller stepped back from the spotlight. Joshua Himes, his chief lieutenant, took up his mentor's mantle and vigorously worked to bring ex-Millerites together. In April 1845 the "Mutual Conference of Adventists" met in Albany, New York. While Miller attended, Himes was instrumental in "bringing together" various prominent Adventist leaders in Albany; but he plainly had Miller's support in what was, as one historian writes, "clearly a move in the direction of establishing a separate sect on Millerite grounds". The Albany conference reaffirmed the imminence of the Second Advent; took the first steps towards creating a new denomination, tentatively embracing a congregational form of church government; and rejected a range of positions perceived as extreme.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Doan, "Neither Cult nor Charisma", p. 96. On the Albany Conference, see Dick, "Millerite Movement", p. 33; Andrew G. Mustard, "James White and the development of Seventh-day Adventist organization, 1844-1881", Ph.D. diss. (Andrews University, 1987), publ. as *James White and SDA Organization: Historical Development, 1844-1881*, Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, 12 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1987), pp. 83-87; Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, pp. 228-34.

29 – *Trim: Varieties of Adventists after 1844*

This was a key moment in Adventist history, but no coherent movement emerged from the conference, even though those perceived as fanatics had deliberately been excluded. Instead, contrary to Himes's hopes, Albany proved to be the point of origin for several sects which became rivals of each other (and of the young Seventh-day Adventist Church), but which have since diminished or disappeared: the Evangelical Adventist Conference, the Advent Christian Association, the Life and Advent Union, the so-called Age to Come Adventists, the Church of God in Christ Jesus, and others. (Seventh-day Adventists later sometimes referred to these Sunday-keeping groups as "First-day Adventists", but this was not a term they used themselves.) Miller himself passed away on December 20, 1849, removing a moderating influence and obstacle to factionalism and fragmentation. The Albany Adventists differed sharply about models of church organization and about conditional immortality, but also disagreed about other aspects of the state of the dead, about the place of Jews in end-time prophecy and other eschatological matters, and, in some cases, about the Trinity. They split in two in the mid-1850s, then the successor movements split, and some of those new sects split again. In the end, they proved only moderately less volatile than the "lunatic fringe" they loathed.<sup>65</sup>

One group was to forge a distinct identity and establish a stable organization: the future Seventh-day Adventists. But it is important to note that, at the time of the Albany Conference, while there were a handful of seventh-day Sabbatarians, and believers in a heavenly sanctuary, and many adherents of conditional immortality, they were yet to cohere into a group sharing all these beliefs. And not everyone who held one of those views was to accept the other two (or even to persist with one!). Furthermore,

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<sup>65</sup> See Godfrey T. Anderson, "Sectarianism and Organization 1846–1864", in Gary Land (ed.), *Adventism in America* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 36–38; Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, pp. 233–39, 241–48, 270, 277.

in the mid-1840s, some future Seventh-day Adventists held indubitably extreme beliefs. For example, John N. Andrews, a future General Conference president, was the son of one of the no-work zealots, while a second cousin, Jesse Stevens, was a “crawler”, as was Andrews’s future father-in-law, Cyprian Stevens.<sup>66</sup>

In this time of theological ferment, in which an extraordinary multiplicity of ideas in circulation, it was not easy to identify the truly extreme positions—much less the out-and-out extremists. The seventh-day Sabbath seemed a radical doctrine to the mainstream ex-Millerites and the Albany Conference specifically condemned “Jewish fables and commandments of men”, which was a not-so-subtle jab at the Sabbatarians.<sup>67</sup> During 1844–45, the real fanatics inevitably ended up rubbing shoulders with orthodox Christians.<sup>68</sup>

Yet Sabbatarian Adventists as they gradually emerged were characterized by their decidedly rational approach to theology.<sup>69</sup> Starting in 1848 they met in a series of “Bible Conferences” during which they studied and debated the scriptures. One result of the protracted process of collective bible study was, James White wrote, that “the subject of the Sabbath began to attract considerable notice from Advent believers”.<sup>70</sup> In addition,

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<sup>66</sup> Ron Graybill, “The Family Man”, in Harry Leonard (ed.), *J. N. Andrews: The Man and the Mission* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1985), pp. 16–17; Merlin D. Burt, *Adventist Pioneer Places: New York and New England* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review & Herald, 2011), p. 19; Gilbert M. Valentine, *J. N. Andrews: Mission Pioneer, Evangelist, and Thought Leader* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2019), pp. 74, 92.

<sup>67</sup> Quoted in Dick, “Millerite Movement”, p. 33.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Knight, *Miller and the Rise of Adventism*, p. 252.

<sup>69</sup> As Doan observes: “Neither Cult nor Charisma”, p. 105.

<sup>70</sup> James White, *Life Incidents in Connection with the Great Advent Movement as Illustrated by the Three Angels of Revelation XIV* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Seventh-day Adventist Publ. Assoc., 1868), pp. 270-1, 274–75.

31 – *Trim: Varieties of Adventists after 1844*

however, a number of other common beliefs were also identified and agreed.<sup>71</sup>

- Christ’s Second Coming will be an actual event and is imminent, will be witnessed by all the world, and it will initiate the millennium described in Revelation 20
- The seventh day of the week, Saturday, not Sunday, is God’s Sabbath, the obligation to keep it is eternal
- Christ ministers in the heavenly sanctuary, mediating to us the benefits of His death on the cross
- Immortality is conditional: the dead “sleep” until the Second Coming, when the righteous are given eternal life; the unrighteous, rather than being eternally tormented, will be instantly annihilated at the Last Judgment that follows the end of the millennium.
- Christians are being called back to divine truth—the “third angel’s message” of Revelation 14—by a small “remnant” of faithful believers, who at the end of time will be the sole group that stands for true religion, especially the seventh-day Sabbath
- This remnant church will be marked by the gift of the “spirit of prophecy” (or renewal of the prophetic gifts in the Bible)

In arriving at these beliefs, they were guided by Ellen Harmon who, they believed, manifested a prophetic gift starting in late 1844. She had opposed fanaticism and in August 1846 she married James White. The Sabbatharians believed that she was inspired by God and recognized the “spirit of prophecy” as being present in her.<sup>72</sup> This was a seventh core belief, but was not, of course, a

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<sup>71</sup> On the gradual emergence and development of Sabbatarian Adventist and Seventh-day Adventist theology, see P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist message and mission* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1977; repr., Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1988).

<sup>72</sup> For a detailed narrative of these years see Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White*, vol. 1, *The Early Years: 1827–1862* (Washington, D.C. & Hagerstown, Md.: Review &

biblical doctrine—something Ellen White herself always emphasized.

The Sabbatarian Adventists maintained Miller's historicist approach to Biblical prophecy and belief in a literal, premillennial Second Coming; they endorsed the conditional immortality that divided the Albany Adventists. But with the Sanctuary, the seventh-day Sabbath, and the Spirit of Prophecy, they had adopted beliefs that all the other Adventists anathematized.<sup>73</sup> In the end, however, the Sabbatarian Adventists' rationalism and commitment to a holistic approach to Bible study helped safeguard them against extremism and fanaticism. It also was a factor in their move towards organization.

## VI

The beliefs of the Sabbatarian Adventists emerged only gradually and among widely scattered groups of former Millerites. For more than fifteen years after the Great Disappointment, there were no Seventh-day Adventists; there were scattered groups who eventually held all these beliefs in common. There were other groups who held several of these beliefs but not all. Seventh-day sabbath-keeping Adventists did not even have a common name for themselves.

What complicated the situation was that many were deeply suspicious of any church organization. Many Millerites had been formally disfellowshipped by their denominations for adherence to

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Herald, 1985), pp. 145–78. For her efforts to counter ex-Millerite extremists, once she had encountered them, see, e.g. *Spiritual Gifts*, II, 49-50.

<sup>73</sup> Butler, "New Order", p. 202, particularly stresses the place of the seventh-day Sabbath as a dividing line.



### 33 – Trim: Varieties of Adventists after 1844

Second Adventism, while others had been informally blackballed by their local church. They were hostile to ecclesiastical structures. In an article published in February 1844 in *The Midnight Cry*, a widely read Millerite periodical, George Storrs bluntly declared: “Take care that you do not seek to manufacture another church. No church can be organized by man’s invention but what it becomes Babylon the moment it is organized.”<sup>74</sup> Those Millerites who gradually adopted Sabbatarian Adventist theology shared with the other Second Adventists a deep-seated suspicion of creeds, of any sanctions against believers, indeed often of any formal organization at all; this was Babylon, out of which true Christians were called by apocalyptic prophecy (Rev. 18:4). Many maintained that each congregation was sovereign unto itself; they were actively opposed to any more over-arching form of organisation other than periodic regional meetings to study the Bible.

A significant number of Sabbatarians were so suspicious of ecclesiastical structure that they did not even want to choose a name. The prominent early minister Roswell F. Cottrell declared in the spring of 1860, about the scattered Sabbatarian groups, in terms that raised the specter of Revelation 13:11 and apostasy: “I think it would be wrong to ‘make us a name,’ since that lies at the foundation of Babylon. . . . We want no name with the two-horned beast.”<sup>75</sup> Others, disagreeing at least in part, described themselves in other ways: as part of “the scattered flock” or similar terms, but

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<sup>74</sup> Quoted in George R. Knight, *A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventists* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review & Herald, 1999), p. 51.

<sup>75</sup> R. F. C[ottrell], “Making a Name”, *R&H*, 15 (Mar. 22, 1860), 140; this was a letter from Cottrell to *Review* editor Uriah Smith, which, having appeared in issue no. 18, was repr. in no. 23 (Apr. 26, 1860), p. 180. Thus, Cottrell’s views were certainly not censored. On Cottrell, see Michael W. Campbell, “Cottrell, Roswell Fenner”, in Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon (eds.), *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review & Herald, 2013), pp. 351–52.

these were vague and not helpful in forming a common identity.<sup>76</sup> Some Sabbatarians surely emulated James White and self-identified as members of “the great second Advent Movement” begun by Miller.<sup>77</sup> Yet that movement included other groups of Adventists who did not share their seven distinctive beliefs; indeed, White’s use of the term may indicate an enduring hope for eventual unity among William Miller’s former followers. But that did not serve the current need, to protect Sabbatarians from the “apostate Adventists”, doing “all in their power to overthrow them”.<sup>78</sup> For that, something more precise, was needed, something that could demarcate the seventh-day Sabbatarians from other Adventists. But what?

Joseph B. Frisbie, another influential early Adventist minister, though unlike Cottrell, one who advocated for greater organization, maintained throughout the mid and late 1850s that “the Church of God” was “the only name that God has seen fit to give His church”.<sup>79</sup> This was a term that was associated with the

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<sup>76</sup> George R. Knight, *Organizing for Mission and Growth: The Development of Adventist Church Structure* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review & Herald, 2006), p. 36.

<sup>77</sup> James White, “Saving Faith”, *R&H*, 33 (Feb. 16, 1869), 57–59 at 59 (at p. 57, White also refers twice to “the great Advent movement”, doing so in the context of both the historical-theological terms of art discussed earlier in this article, for he links the “Advent movement” to “Millerism” [a term he evidently accepted by this point], and relates both to “our disappointment”); id., “Our Faith and Hope; Or, Reasons Why We Believe as We Do. Number Five—Time of the End” and “Number Ten—The Kingdom”, *R&H*, 34 (Dec. 21, 1869), 201, and 35 (Feb. 1, 1870), 42 (White writes here of “the great second-advent [*sic*] movement of 1840-1844”). Cf. George Butler, “The Spirit of Sacrifice”, *R&H*, 34 (Dec. 21, 1869), 206, connecting “the great gospel movement started” to “the first advent”, i.e., similar terminology.

<sup>78</sup> [James White], “Our tour east”, *Advent Review*, 1 (August 1850): 14.

<sup>79</sup> J. B. Frisbie, “Church Order”, *R&H*, 6 (Dec. 26, 1854), 147; cf. id., *Order of the Church of God* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the Review & Herald Office, 1859). See Theodore N. Levterov, “Frisbie, Joseph Birchard (1816–1882)”, *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*: <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=89BU>.

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Sabbatarians into 1860;<sup>80</sup> it was one that some of the movement's leaders seemed to endorse;<sup>81</sup> and it was seriously proposed, in 1860, as an alternative to the designation of SDA.<sup>82</sup> To other Sabbatarians, however, "Church of God" seemed unduly presumptuous, even arrogant.<sup>83</sup> In any case, another name had emerged—"Seventh-day Adventist". Like other terms for reformist minorities (Lollard, Huguenot, Puritan and probably Waldense), it originated among the group's enemies, but was embraced by those at whom to whom it had been applied, perhaps as an insult. It seems to have first been used in Michigan and by the end of the 1850s at least some Sabbatarians in the state (including James White) were applying it to themselves.<sup>84</sup>

In October 1860, at Battle Creek, Michigan, at a "general conference" of Sabbatarian Adventist leaders, there was considerable debate about a name, and eventually it was agreed to do so, without opposition but apparently far from unanimously.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Smith, "A New Sect", 72; Letter, L. Martin to Smith, publ. in *R&H*, 16 (June 26, 1860), 46; "Business Proceedings of B[attle] C[reek] Conference", *R&H*, 16 (Oct. 9, 1860), 161.

<sup>81</sup> Anon. [Uriah Smith?], "Secret Prayer Successfully Manged", *R&H*, 16 (July 24, 1860), 73.

<sup>82</sup> "Business Proceedings of B[attle] C[reek] Conference (Continued)", *R&H*, 16 (Oct. 16, 1860), 169.

<sup>83</sup> See Schwarz and Greenleaf, *Light Bearers*, p. 91.

<sup>84</sup> It was used in Jackson, Mich., in 1853, seemingly by others as a descriptive label; at least this appears to be the implication of S. T. Cranson to James White, Mar. 20, 1853, publ. in *R&H*, 3 (Apr. 14, 1853), 191. The well-known comment of Ellen White, "The name, Seventh-day Adventist, is a standing rebuke to the Protestant world", seems to me suggestive of a turning around of what had been an insult, especially since "seventh day" was an imputation of Judaizing: Ellen G. White, *Testimony for the Church*, no. 6 (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the Review & Herald Office, 1861), in *Testimonies for the Church*, 6 vols. (Mountain View, Calif. & Omaha, Nebr.: Pacific Press, 1948), 1, 223. For James White's self-designation, see *Michigan State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1860*, p. 39: the professional directory for Battle Creek, includes "White Eld. James, Seventh Day Adventist".

<sup>85</sup> "Business Proceedings of B[attle] C[reek] Conference (Concluded)", *R&H*, 16 (Oct. 23, 1860), 178-79.

However, “Having voted to adopt a name, the discussion now turned on what that name should be. The name Church of God was proposed and zealously advocated by some”, but strongly opposed by others since it “was already in use by some denominations, and on this account, was indefinite, besides having to the world an appearance of presumption.” Eventually, “The name Seventh-day Adventists, was proposed as a simple name and one expressive of our faith and position.” Following further discussion David Hewitt, from Battle Creek, then “offered the following resolution: *Resolved*, That we take the name of Seventh-day Adventists.” But there was no consensus, but opposition apparently focused on the wording of the motion (“That we take the name...”) rather than the proposed name as such. Ezra A. Poole, from New York, at this point offered an alternative proposal, as the minutes record: “*Resolved*, That we call ourselves Seventh-day Adventists. After a somewhat lengthy discussion, the question was called for, and the resolution adopted.”<sup>86</sup> By this rhetorical device, they dodged Cottrell’s concern about “making a name” for themselves; diehard opponents were not mollified, but enough support was won to move forward.

A common name did not yet mean a common organization. Hostile voices were vociferous in opposing organizing the loose groups into a denomination. Senior figures including Andrews and Cottrell were among those who still did not accept the principle of organization beyond the local congregation, or did so reluctantly and opposed anything other than minimal supra-local structure.

However, Adventists faced the same problem as the early church and indeed the problem that faces all Christian believers—how to define oneself against the world and against Christians who believe differently to oneself. In particular, how were faithful believers to be safeguarded from the emerging “first-day”

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

Adventist denominations, or the extreme, lunatic fringes of the Great Second Advent Movement? One way was to write to the *Review* for confirmation of a minister's *bona fides*, but the disavowals it periodically published highlighted that there were wolves ready to prey upon the scattered flock!<sup>87</sup> How were Sabbatarian believers to be safeguarded from from “imposters”—those who had other beliefs but dissembled in order to get at foot in the door to convert seventh-day Sabbath-keepers?<sup>88</sup> Or swindlers, claiming to be Sabbatarian ministers in order to defraud believers? This was to happen in Iowa around 1862, where local Adventists, in James White's words, “got badly fleeced”.<sup>89</sup> How were the Sabbatarians to retain control of the property of the local church buildings they had constructed without legal associations in which ownership could be vested? In particular, what would happen to the *Advent Review & Sabbath Herald*, the journal that bound the inchoate movement together, if James White died or went bankrupt? What if it were taken over by an editor who did not support the key Sabbatarian Adventist doctrines? This had happened in one of the other Adventist denominations, as the Sabbatarians undoubtedly would have been aware.<sup>90</sup>

James White had been skeptical about organization in the late 1840s. But by the early 1850s he had come to believe passionately that the Sabbatarian Adventists *needed* to organize for practical reasons; further, doing so would be conforming to God's will and the gospel pattern, rather than defying it. He expressed this

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<sup>87</sup> E.g., anon. [James White], “Note to Sister Eliza Burbee”, *R&H*, 22 (June 2, 1863): 8.

<sup>88</sup> See, e.g., [James White], “Church Order”, *R&H*, 6 (Jan. 23, 1855), 164.

<sup>89</sup> White, “God's free-men”, in *R&H*, 22, 1 (June 2, 1863): 8.

<sup>90</sup> See Knight, *Miller and Rise of Adventism*, p. 247, cf. p. 243; David L. Rowe, “A New Perspective on the Burned-Over District: The Millerites in Upstate New York”, *Church History*, 47 (Dec. 1978), 414.

position eloquently in editorials and leading articles in the *Review & Herald* throughout the 1850s, shrewdly referring to his ideal of order and organization by the terms “gospel order” and “bible order”.<sup>91</sup> In 1850, Ellen White saw a vision on church order. She was shown, she wrote, “that everything in heaven was in perfect order” and had underscored, by an angel, “how perfect, how beautiful [is] the order of heaven”, before being told “follow it.” God’s people had to be united if they were to make any headway in the world; and too much plurality in matters of belief and praxis undermined unity. Other visions followed. Looking back, more than forty years later, Ellen White recalled of these early years:

As our numbers increased, it was evident that without some form of organization there would be great confusion, and the work could not be carried forward successfully. To provide for the support of the ministry, for carrying the work in new fields, for protecting both the churches and the ministry from unworthy members, for holding church property, for the publication of the truth through the press, and for many other objects, organization was indispensable.<sup>92</sup>

The tide turned, gradually, but decisively, against the localists and minimalists.

The history of how this happened, from 1844 to the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863, would take too long to rehearse here. It has in any case been surveyed by a number of scholars, though the 1840s and 1850s have often been

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<sup>91</sup> See Mustard, *James White and SDA Organization*, p. 116n.; Knight, *Organizing for Mission and Growth*, pp. 33–35, 37–39, 45; D. J. B. Trim, “Ordination in Seventh-day Adventist History”, *Theology of Ordination Study Committee* (Jan. 15–17, 2013), available at [www.adventistarchives.org/ordination-in-sda-history.pdf](http://www.adventistarchives.org/ordination-in-sda-history.pdf), pp. 6–7, 10–11. Other early leaders supported White in his push for “the order of the gospel” as Joseph Bates put it in 1854 (Knight, *Organizing for Mission and Growth*, p. 41).

<sup>92</sup> White to “Brethren of the General Conference,” Dec. 19, 1892, Letter 32, 1892, publ. in *Daily Bulletin of the General Conference (Review and Herald Extra)*, 5:2 (Jan. 29–30, 1893), p. 22.

studied as part of broader studies of organization or doctrinal formation, rather than considered in their own right. The main contours have, however, been clearly delineated.<sup>93</sup> The process owed much to James and Ellen White. The weight of the prophet’s visions and the influence of her testimonies—the force of her husband’s rhetoric and the power of the biblical arguments he adduced—gradually, these won the Sabbatarians over. By the late 1850s, local churches were starting to organize on the lines advocated by James and Ellen White; there was still suspicion and opposition, but they could now be overcome. This was true not only of the celebrated Sabbatarian evangelists and editors, who came together in the autumn of 1860 to adopt the name “Seventh-day Adventist” and incorporate the press; who from late 1861 to early 1863 organized “Conferences” of local churches in different states; and who, in May 1863, founded the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. It was also true at the local level.

The move of rank-and-file seventh-day Sabbath-keeping Second Adventists to approve or at least accept a common name and supra-congregational organizational structures has received little attention, yet surely was the foundation of the grander actions taken by prominent leaders on a wider stage. It is a process perhaps encapsulated in the experience of a Sabbatarian Adventist company in Dorchester, Massachusetts, in summer 1860. The group’s elder, Otis Nichols, wrote to the *Review & Herald*, reporting that they had organized themselves into a church, and that “many are startled, and say ‘this is making the church with

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<sup>93</sup> See Anderson, “Sectarianism and Organization”, pp. 36–65; Mustard, *James White and SDA organization*, pp. 116–62; Knight, *Organizing for Mission and Growth*, pp. 29–61; Douglas Morgan, “Toward Oneness and Freedom: The Road from ‘Babylon’ to General Conference Organization”, *Spectrum* 41:2 (Spring 2013), 16–26; Stanley D. Hickerson, “Moving toward Organization: 1854–59”, *Adventist World*, 9:5 (May 2013), 19–20; D. J. B. Trim, “‘Something More in the Way of Organization’: Seventh-day Adventist Ecclesiastical Polity in Historical Perspective”, *Ministry*, 89:9 (Sept. 2017), 16–19.

Babylon, and partakers of her fornication.” Nichols offered a simple but definitive rejoinder: “We think not.”<sup>94</sup>

## VII

Why does this matter for Seventh-day Adventist history? Without the move from disorganization to organization, the Great Second Advent Movement would today have barely any representation in the world.

The Advent Christians still exist, but number only in the tens of thousands and have a limited geographical presence. The other offshoot sects and denominations, mentioned earlier, long ago disappeared or merged into churches that do not proclaim the Second Coming of Christ. Writing in the 1890s, Ellen White recalls the need for organization and the move towards it, then observes:

Yet there was strong feeling against it among our people. The first-day Adventists were opposed to organization, and most of the Seventh-day Adventists entertained the same ideas. We sought the Lord . . . and light was given . . . that there must be order and thorough discipline in the church—that organization was essential. System and order are manifest in all the works of God throughout the universe. Order is the law of heaven, and it should be the law of God’s people on the earth. We had a hard struggle in establishing organization. . . . But . . . prosperity attended this advance movement.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> O. Nichols, “Organization”, *R&H*, 16 (Aug. 28, 1860): 116. See “Nichols, Otis and Mary,” in Fortin and Moon, *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, pp. 476–77.

<sup>95</sup> White to “Brethren of the General Conference,” Dec. 19, 1892, cited above, n. 92.



41 – *Trim: Varieties of Adventists after 1844*

As she recognized, organizing had helped the seventh-day Sabbath-keeping Second Adventists to emerge from all the other varieties of Adventists that existed after 1844.

In a testimony written in the mid to late 1880s (first published in 1889), White states an important principle: “One point will have to be guarded, and that is individual independence.”<sup>96</sup> Having done so, however, she then qualifies it, and makes it clear that this insight comes both from inspiration and from the experience of other ex-Millerites. She writes:

No one has the right to start out on his own responsibility and advance ideas . . . on Bible doctrines when it is known that others among us hold different opinions on the subject and that it will create controversy. The first-day Adventists have done this. Each has followed his own independent judgment and sought to present original ideas, until there is no concerted action among them, except, perhaps, in opposing Seventh-day Adventists. We should not follow their example. . . . Followers of Jesus Christ will not act independently one of another.<sup>97</sup>

The determination to hang together and the willingness to create structures that promoted united action in the interest of “present truth”: these distinguished the Adventists who in 1863 established the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

What of the other varieties? Among the real radicals, there was no interest in organizing formally; even the various kinds of “Albany Adventists”, the ex-Millerite mainstream, were mostly marked by entrenched hostility to anything other than the most rudimentary organizational structures. This was, indeed, one of the many things the first-day Adventist denominations split over. And this is not surprising. As we have seen, a significant number

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<sup>96</sup> White to “Brethren and Sisters [. . .] at Oakland,” March 1, 1887, Letter 53, 1887, publ. in *Testimonies for the Church*, v, 534.

<sup>97</sup> *Testimonies*, v, 535.

of Millerites were people who, by nature or instinct, were drawn *to* new or extreme ideas, and *away* from the conventional, which may well have been part of what attracted them to Millerism in the first place. After October 22, 1844, any predispositions were only reinforced. When a new theological idea circulated, many Second Adventists were drawn to it like a moth to the flame, making it difficult for them to coalesce into organized churches. Constantly drawn after new ideas, highly individualistic, and instinctively suspicious of formal structures, they were less likely to organize and, if they did, naturally tended to fragment. Collectively, they were inherently dynamic yet also innately incoherent.

Both the ultra-radical ex-Millerites and the moderate Albany Adventists failed to make a significant lasting impact on the world. Their fate could have befallen Seventh-day Adventists.

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In conclusion: what, then, can we say about Seventh-day Adventism and Millerism? Ultimately, the two are distinct.

Almost every movement has its roots, of course, and Seventh-day Adventist roots lie in Millerism, out of which it unquestionably developed. By the early 1850s the leaders of what would become the Seventh-day Adventists identified the first and second angel's message of Revelation 14 with Millerism, lending it a prophetic luster. By then, William Miller had passed away, but those first leaders held (and probably the majority of church-members still hold) Miller in high esteem. Indeed, it has been argued recently that, thanks to their admiration, Adventist collective memory was molded to make Miller crucial in the Seventh-day Adventist origins story.<sup>98</sup> Into the twentieth century, long-lived survivors

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<sup>98</sup> Doan, "Neither Cult nor Charisma", p. 104; she goes so far as to suggest that Miller's role in "Millerism" can be "understood . . . as a construction of his

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continued nostalgically to situate Seventh-day Adventism in the ranks of the “great Second Advent Movement”.<sup>99</sup>

Still, just as the Reformed Protestantism of Calvin, Bullinger, and other Swiss reformers owed much to Martin Luther, yet was organizationally and theologically distinct from Lutheranism, so the Seventh-day Adventist Church broke decisively with Millerism. The Millerite mainstream was perpetuated instead in the various Advent denominations (the “first day” Adventists) which briefly flourished in the mid to late nineteenth century, before falling into sustained decline in the twentieth.

Seventh-day Adventism is unquestionably part of the wider “Second Advent Movement”. It is the most potent and enduring expression of mid-nineteenth-century premillennialism. But that is so, largely because the denomination’s founders rejected the chaos that ensued after “the great Advent disappointment” and turned instead to “gospel order”, as understood and promoted by James and Ellen White and their close associates, yet rejected by the “first-day Adventists”. One result is that, even though some Seventh-day Adventists self-identify with Miller and his followers, they are not really best thought of as Millerites; SDAs, despite common DNA, represent a decided disjuncture with mainstream Adventism of the mid-nineteenth century. The fault lines which have attracted the most attention in the existing literature are doctrinal distinctives (the Sabbath, the Sanctuary, the Spirit of Prophecy, etc.) of Seventh-day Adventists. Yet, crucially, the different kinds of Adventist *also* had very dissimilar ecclesiological understandings and divergent organizational practices. Thanks

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followers” and especially of those followers who became Seventh-day Adventists. This would be bracing, at the least, to many present members of the SDA Church, but it is a concept that may well reward further exploration, especially since the twenty years *after* 1844 continue to be under-explored by historians, in contrast to the decade and a half preceding it.

<sup>99</sup> J. N. Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement: Its Rise and Progress* [Nashville, Tenn.]: Southern Publ., 1905.

not least to the move away from “fanaticism of every kind” and into “the order of heaven”, Seventh-day Adventists are a very distinct variety of Second Adventist.

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## **Personal Diaries and the Study of Adventist History: Filling out the Context of Adventist Events and Communities**

**Gilbert M. Valentine**

### **Abstract**

Personal diaries are a relatively recent literary feature of Western European and American culture. In their early forms they often reflected an interest on the part of a believer to narrate or document one's spiritual progress. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century their scope expanded to include recording personal feelings on a wider range of topics, exploring intellectual growth, narrating the key events of experience and recording impressions of and reactions to the swirl of events around the individual. Recent studies emphasize that diaries are not like autobiographies which take a perspective of looking back on the past, but rather, they are written for a future self or a future other to read and therefore represent an attempt to make meaning of the events and relationships of the present as life is experienced. They thus give historians a particular perspective on understanding the past.

This paper briefly discusses the history of diary writing and the study of diaries as literature. It then considers the value of diaries as important sources for understanding the texture of Adventist experience in the nineteenth century and their helpfulness in providing detail to fill out a richer and wider context for significant developments in the story of the Adventist Church.

It briefly surveys diaries that are already fairly well known to Adventist historians and then discusses several newly available or under-utilized diary sources relevant to the writing of Adventist History.

### **Introduction**

America's pre-eminent, award-winning historian of the post-Civil War Reconstruction, Eric Foner, broke much new ground in his writing, shattering political and racial stereotypes and establishing radical new understandings of both the War and the Reconstruction period.<sup>1</sup> His methodology and his gift of historical insight enabled him to create a new comprehension and appreciation for what was happening in the lives of the men and the women of the period and to convey a new sense of the texture of their lived experience. How did it feel to live through these times? How did the traumas impact family and communal life? "Foner delves deeply into the politics of the time, to be sure," writes the *Washington Monthly*, "but he spends much more time showing how political decisions affected real people. . ." <sup>2</sup> Foner was able to achieve this because he went out of his way to research personal diaries and journals, memoirs and personal correspondence from the period.<sup>3</sup> He did not just rely on state

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<sup>1</sup> Foner was awarded the Bancroft Prize in 1989 for his book *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. In 2011 for his book *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery* (2010) he won the Pulitzer Prize for History, the Lincoln Prize, and the Bancroft Prize.

<sup>2</sup> See the summary at <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/54256/forever-free-by-eric-foner/9780375702747/> (Accessed, Jan. 3, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> An example of the kinds of Civil War diary material available can be found in *The Cormany Diaries: A Northern Family in the Civil War*, ed James Mohr (Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1982). According to Mohr, these diaries kept by Rachel and Samuel Cormany "are the diaries of common folk. The personal observations, impressions, reactions, and assumptions of ordinary people are not readily available." The diaries record "individual experiences from a social stratum that American historians are often forced to treat in extremely generalized, impersonal or statistical terms," xi. Such diaries are important for

papers, formal correspondence, newspaper reports and records of legislative actions.<sup>4</sup>

Diaries and journals are a valuable resource for understanding the context and the texture of important historical developments. They are a valuable but often overlooked resource for a more adequately textured and contextualized understanding of Adventist History. In this paper I first briefly explore the history and development of the diary, its multiple uses and its current interest to students of literary theory. I then attempt to provide an overview of diary sources relevant to Adventist history and discuss several newly available diaries.

### **Diaries and Journals**

As diary scholar Cinthia Gannet points out, the terms “journal” and “diary” have been used synonymously for centuries. They come from similar Latin root words meaning day or daily. “Journal,” can be traced back to Old French *journal* from the Late Latin *diurnal* meaning belonging to the day. Its first usage in English, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1976) dates from the mid fourteenth century in connection with daily religious services.<sup>5</sup> It came to be associated with usage in commerce and bookkeeping, as in a daily ledger and then in public affairs as a record of events and proceedings whether daily or not – a usage it still retains in academic publications such as *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, or in newspapers such as the *Wall*

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social history, the history of the family, and the history of women, for example and are the kinds of diaries discussed in this paper.

<sup>4</sup> See for example, Eric Foner’s recent book, *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railway* (New York, W. W. Norton, 2015) which is based on the discovery of a secret journal kept by Sydney Howard Gay, a prominent New York organizer in “the underground railway” system.

<sup>5</sup> Oxford English Dictionary. See also Cinthia Gannett, *Gender and Journal: Diaries and Academic Discourse* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 106-107.

*Street Journal*. “Diary,” from the Latin *diari-um* made its entry into English also via Old French but at a later time during the Renaissance. Its first usage seems to have been as nearly an exact synonym for journal.<sup>6</sup>

Robert Fothergill, one of the first to seek a theoretical understanding of this literary genre, sees four identifiable early strands of literature that are embraced by the terms journal and diary.<sup>7</sup> The earliest would seem to be public records and accounting information for communal use such as ration lists, records of tribute, donations, eventually including such things as transactions of civic organizations and military campaigns. The travel journal was also an early proto-type as a record of the journeys of officials and priests and then later official explorers and these were often published. This style of journal eventually became popular as a medium for recording the travels of the private “gentleman.” A third progenitor form was what was often called a “commonplace book” (similar to the more recent *scrapbook*). This approach to the diary was a more catch-all form of a household journal. Fothergill asserts that the fourth antecedent, the “spiritual journal,” as a record of an individual’s spiritual autobiography and a tool for self-examination and assessment became the “prime source” for the modern diary. It descended from “pre-established” medieval forms of spiritual reflection and Quakers, Methodists and other dissenters widely encouraged its use during the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>8</sup> Because America was settled largely by such dissenters, the spiritual diary is one of the oldest literary traditions in America, notes Gannett.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Robert A. Fothergill, *Private Chronicles: A Study of English Diaries*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 15, 16.

<sup>8</sup> Fothergill, 18.

<sup>9</sup> Gannett, 110.



Historians of the genre of the personal diary point to the earlier dramatic changes in culture, intellectual enquiry and self-consciousness that occurred during the renaissance and the subsequent reformation that had nurtured diary writing and autobiography. This is the period in which people like Samuel Pepys (1633-1703), John Evelyn (1620-1706), and James Boswell (1740-1795) wrote their diaries although it was not until much later that we knew they had been writing. It was only in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, that such diaries were “discovered” and published. The salacious details in their pages ensured that they quickly took center stage in the public mind and gave a very male slant to the genre. This strand of development, Fothergill argues, was the background to what became, in the later 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the secular personal diary with its focus on the inner reality experienced by the diarist.<sup>10</sup> Up until this time, the genre was largely unaware of itself. New technologies in printing, along with cheaper sources of paper quickly popularized the genre. By 1836, for example, stationer John Letts, was selling thousands of blank calendar-type diaries annually in twenty-eight different formats and there were numerous other entrepreneurs in the market.<sup>11</sup>

More recently increased attention has been given to the contours of women’s journal-keeping traditions. Feminist scholars such as Margo Culley and Penelope Franklin highlight the overlooked but distinctive contributions this tradition of journal keeping makes to our understanding of the past.<sup>12</sup> During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century westward expansion in America, women, frequently cut off from their families as they settled the frontier, found themselves playing a much more central role in the economic life

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<sup>10</sup> Fothergill, 17, 18.

<sup>11</sup> One estimate suggests 300,000 were being sold each year.

<sup>12</sup> Margo Culley, ed. *A day at a Time: The Diary Literature of American Women from 1764 to the Present*, (New York: Feminist Press at City University of New York, 1985); Penelope Franklin, ed. *Private Pages: Diaries of American Women 1830’s – 1970’s*, (New York: Ballantine, 1986).

of the family and a more public role in society. Other facilitating factors that encouraged women diarists to put pen to paper included the influence of the age of romanticism with its emphasis on the valuing of emotions and sensation and the idealizing of nature along with rising literacy rates, higher education levels for women and the emerging women's rights movement. Women diarists wrote for themselves as they confided in journals their thoughts and feelings about their processing of these new experiences and their spiritual and social development. They also wrote as family and community historians recording "in exquisite detail," says Culley, "the births, deaths, illnesses, visits, travel, marriages, work and unusual occurrences that made up the fabric of their lives."<sup>13</sup> During the nineteenth century many women found themselves able to break through social limitations imposed by the prioritizing of male discourse and slowly find their own voice at first by writing privately for themselves in diaries and journal and then as the century progressed turning such material into public writing. Writing diaries and journals contributed much to the developing of female literacy and the challenging of male prescription of women's roles.<sup>14</sup> Many of these diaries have only become available in the Twentieth Century and this, along with other changing cultural values, as Gannett has pointed out, has helped the tradition of women's diaries in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to become much more central to what had previously been a male-dominated genre.

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<sup>13</sup> Culley, 4.

<sup>14</sup> *Nineteenth Century Women Learn to Write*, Catherine Hobbs, ed (Charlottesville, NC: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 26.

### **The Diary and Literary Criticism**

A rich literature about the literary genre of diaries pursues probing questions such as who wrote them and why.<sup>15</sup> Contemporary French scholar of the genre, Phillippe Lejeune, one of the more creative scholars, experimented with the use of the diary form in different modes of recording as part of his research. Jeremy Popkin in his preface to Lejeune's collection of publications on diaries observes that because the overwhelming majority of diary writers do not aspire to see their words published and most diarists would not label themselves as authors, the diary therefore "exists at the margin of literature," as a "poorly understood genre."<sup>16</sup> Lejeune has done much to create a more respected place for what Julie Rak asserts is a "most overlooked and devalued form of writing in the fields of literary studies and history."<sup>17</sup> Clearly differentiating between autobiography, which principally looks backwards, Lejeune stresses that the diary looks forward and is written to some "future self" and generally does not know where it will end. Lejeune contributes much to contemporary understanding of the wide-ranging literary nature of the diary (the one essential qualification is that the writing must have a date). Others have highlighted the varied roles the diary fulfills for authors including such functions as providing a forum for self-encounter—a place where there can be "an audit of meaning" of the self, a safe place to try out new roles and a place to mourn and to heal.<sup>18</sup> These roles, however, are woven in an

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<sup>15</sup> Cinthia Gannett provides a comprehensive list of bibliographic sources. *Gender and the Journal*: 219-247.

<sup>16</sup> Jeremy Popkin, "Preface" in Phillippe Lejeune, *On Diary*, eds Jeremy A. Popkin and Julie Rak. Translation by Katharine Durmin, (Manoa, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 2, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Julie Rak, "Dialogue with the Future: Philippe Lejeune's Method and Theory of Diary," *Ibid.*, 16

<sup>18</sup> Anne Berthoff, *Reclaiming the Imagination: Philosophical Perspectives for Writers and Teachers of Writing*. (Upper Montclair, N. J.: Boynton-Cook, 1984) cited in Gannett, 136; Franklin, xix, xx.

around the narrating and chronicling of life events as they happen and as they are experienced. It is this aspect of diaries that make them of value to historians.

### **Diaries as Sources of Context and Texture**

Historians have learned that that when working with personal texts like diaries or correspondence they must ask a range of questions about author, purpose and style if the diaries are to be helpful as sources and they notice matters even of their materiality.<sup>19</sup> Diaries, for example, may be shaped by moments of inspiration, transitional events, and/or the high points of life, but also by habit and routine and the observation of ordinary daily events. Some, for example, function almost as almanacs with a focus on simple notices of the weather and the changes in weather that helped differentiate one day from another. Or they may be focused on production indicators such as the number of brooms produced daily in the writer's home, or they may serve as daily memos of the meetings conducted or attended by the minister-writer. They may be written for oneself as a "future self" or for an imagined other, but they are woven together by a single voice and they often play with the tension between concealing and revealing, between "telling all" and speaking obliquely or keeping silent.

Diaries are of value to historians because as their authors wrote about events in their daily routine, they inevitably wrote about their key relationships with others - friendships, kinships, acquaintances and strangers. The network of relationships thus

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<sup>19</sup> Steven Kagle provides a helpful typology of diary literature in *Early Nineteenth-Century American Diary Literature* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986). Steven Stowe of the University of Indiana provides a helpful discussion of the kinds of questions historians should ask of diaries as sources for the understanding of history in "Making Sense of Letters and Diaries." See <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/letters/letters.pdf> for more. The "History Matters" website is a project of the Graduate Center, City University of New York and the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University.

woven around and into the narratives of key events help to convey both a sense of the importance of the events to the writer and their meaning. In this way they convey a sense of how the writer and their network of relationships experienced significant events and developments. For example, when the first passenger train pulled in to South Paris, Maine on the newly completed trunk line from Boston to Canada in 1850, it was an important enough event for John Andrews' Aunt Persis to warmly dress her two small daughters on a snowy winter day to drive two miles into town by sleigh to witness the event.<sup>20</sup> It was a development that would change their lives. It was a development that also helped make Paris Hill an attractive location for James White to begin publishing his new journal, the *Review and Herald*.

Diaries draw their energy from the way the writer searches for meaning while in the thick of changing events and relationships which, at the time, no one completely grasps. For Adventist historians diaries can provide an important sense of the texture of what it meant to live as an Adventist in the nineteenth century and the social context in which living as an Adventist was experienced.

### **Adventist Diarists**

The number of diary sources available to the Adventist historian is not large. Most diaries that are accessible have been authored by males who at various times served in various official church roles. (Lists of diaries with location information are provided in Appendix I and II). Notable among the diaries are those by:

- George Amadon, longtime foreman of the Publishing House at Battle Creek. (This diary is helpful for providing an understanding of James White's management style and a context for Ellen White's letters on the matter.)

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<sup>20</sup> Persis Sibley Andrews Black Diary, (PSABD), March 18, 1850.

- Joseph Bates who kept a ship's log during his sea-faring experience on the *Empress* in 1827-1828, before he became connected with the Advent movement.
- John Byington, the first General Conference President in 1863 and thereafter a pastor in the Michigan Conference.
- R. De Witt Hottel, an Adventist minister from whom we have a diary fragment recording his experience in attending the 1888 General Conference session. (This diary provides a helpful corroboration of topics presented and of the personnel involved and also provides insight into the drama of the event.)
- John Loughborough, a prominent church pioneer whose diary is helpful for corroborating events and places and chronicling the events of his life.
- Oles A. Olsen, President of the General Conference from 1889 to 1897 kept a diary during the period prior to his service in Battle Creek. (The diary is primarily a record of his travels and meetings in Scandinavia with little personal reflection.)
- William Henry Meredith, a pastor in Great Britain who became Union President in the 1920s kept a diary which is helpful for filling out the last years of Ellet J. Waggoner's time in England editing *Present Truth*.
- Wilton Smith, son of *Review* Editor, Uriah Smith, kept a travel diary for the extended journey he made with his father through Europe from May 1 to December 18, 1894. (The diary provides insight into habits and practices of the Smith family. It was used extensively by Gary Land in his biography of Uriah Smith.)
- Jean Vuilleumier, a Swiss pastor, editor and church leader who began his involvement with the church's publishing work during the last year of John Nevins Andrews' life. (The diary provides helpful context for the early development of the church in Europe. It also provides

perspectives on the post 1888 stresses in Battle Creek. Vuilleumier lived there during 1889-1890. Written in French the diary was recently translated and placed in Adventist research centers so that it could be more widely available to Adventist scholars.)<sup>21</sup>

Five Adventist women diarists whom the author has found helpful because of their personal reflections on current events in Adventist history and their own involvement in the events make them valuable resources include the following: Ellen White, Angeline Andrews and her sister, Harriet Smith, Julia Ann Corliss (nee Burgess), wife of a prominent Adventist preacher and innovative missionary, and Jennie Thayer who was involved in various church publishing enterprises.

Ellen White's diaries are fragmentary but sometimes extend for several months at a time. They have often been drawn on as a source of textual material for some of her publications because Ellen White often used her journals for article writing and even for letter writing.<sup>22</sup> They are still helpful sources for understanding the back story of significant events and the writer's thoughts and feelings about the various crises she faced, such as her times of struggle with James, or struggles over problematic issues that confronted the church. A close reading of the diaries, taking care to also notice what Margo Cully calls "the silences," provides many new insights into the relational dynamics involved in church growth and development.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *The Personal Diaries of Jean Vuilleumier (1864 – 1956) for the Years 1878 - 1880, 1883 – 1891*. An English Translation from the French by Bernina Ninow. Editor, Gilbert M Valentine, May, 2019.

<sup>22</sup> For further detail on this see Tim Poirier, *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, eds Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2013), 771.

<sup>23</sup> Culley, 21. There were times when things were so frightful and painful in Ellen White's experience she confided to her diary that she could not confide them to her diary. EGW Diary Feb. 13, 14, 1873.

Similarly Angeline Andrew's diary, maintained for much of the period 1859–1864, while known to Adventist historians since the 1970s and mined for contextual detail by Ron Graybill, still has much to offer the historian interested to understand what it meant to experience life as an Adventist in the early years of the movement. Angeline was spouse of church pioneer wife of John Nevins Andrews.<sup>24</sup> In particular, this diary gives insight into the nature of the church's struggle to understand Ellen White's charismatic gift in the light of the New Testament teaching on Spiritual Gifts and the other manifestations of prophetic charisma in early Adventism.

More recently some fragments of the diary of Harriet Smith (wife of *Review* editor Uriah Smith and sister-in-law to John Andrews) have become available. These fragments are from the years 1866 and 1867, years in which James White was recovering from his first stroke. The diary provides new insights into the experience of White's illness, his fitful journey back to partial health and the stresses that this induced in the family. The diary is also valuable for the glimpses it gives into the family life of the Whites as they struggled with an unsettled teenage son (Edson) and they provide an understanding of the texture of congregational life in Battle Creek at this stressful period.

The Julia Ann Corliss (nee Burgess) diaries have only very recently become available and at the time of writing were still being processed. Julia trained as a teacher in central Michigan and became an Adventist at the age of 22 in 1866. She served for a time in the Whites' home at Greenville, as housekeeper and sometime secretarial assistant and then in late 1868 she married John Corliss, another new Adventist who was to be appointed as superintendent of the recently established Western Health

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<sup>24</sup> Graybill uses them in constructing his portrait of John Nevins Andrews as a family man. "The Family Man," in *J. N. Andrews, the Man and the Mission*, ed Harry Leonard, (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1985), 25.



Institute. Julia accompanied her husband to the South Pacific and helped establish the Australian Mission in 1885 and later served both in California and in England. Her extensive diaries do not record every day's activities for the period 1863 to 1908 (there are some gaps) but they do provide a rich source of information hitherto unavailable about the experience of establishing the work in Australia and the challenges and rewards of Adventist family life. They provide significant background and context about women in ministry in Australia and why Ellen White would consider that a woman like Julia should appropriately be ordained to such ministry.

### **Non Adventist Diary Sources**

Two non-Adventist diary authors offer brief but insightful comments and observations on their Adventist relatives. These perspectives broaden and enrich our understanding of how Adventists were perceived and experienced in their communities.

Persis Sibley (1813–1891), the daughter of a prominent Maine political family began keeping a diary in 1841 when she was 28 years old and maintained her diary keeping with some breaks through until 1864.<sup>25</sup> In 1842, Persis Sibley, who had trained as a secondary school English and Art teacher, married Paris Hill Attorney, Charles Andrews, uncle to John Nevins Andrews.<sup>26</sup> John Andrews lived with this aunt and uncle for about six months in Dixfield, Maine in late 1843 and early 1844 while he attended high school. Because of his Millerite beliefs, he declined a tuition

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<sup>25</sup> Her diary is known as the Persis Sibley Andrews Black Diary (PSABD). She married Alva Black after the death of her first husband. Six volumes of the diary (1841 – 1853) are kept in the Maine Historical Society in Portland. The diary has been carefully transcribed. The archival items are filed under “Black, Persis Sibley Andrews 1813-1891.” The Massachusetts Historical Society has another five volumes which run from 1853 through to 1864. Microfiche copies of the diary are available at the Burman University library in Alberta, Canada and at the General Conference Archives.

<sup>26</sup> Charles was the youngest of J. N. Andrews' nine paternal uncles and aunts.

sponsorship offered by his uncle to study law. In later years Andrews interacted with the family on numerous social occasions, visiting their home and helping out in times of emergency.

As the Maine Historical Society introductory notes to the diaries observe, Persis and Charles Andrews were a social, fun-loving and politically well-connected couple. Persis' early diaries portray her as a happy adjusted woman with a well-developed personal philosophy and a keen interest in politics. Her husband Charles was elected as a Democrat to the United States Congress in late 1850 (during the time that James and Ellen White were living in J. N. Andrews' parents' rented home on the opposite side of the street to Persis and Charles in Paris Hill.)<sup>27</sup> Persis' daily accounts provide rich detail that illuminates both the broad sweep and the fine points of rural life.

A close reading of Persis Sibley Andrews' diary introduces the Adventist historian to a wide circle of the members of the extended Andrews family and also to other people who were part of the Sabbatarian Millerite church in North Paris attended by John Andrews and his family. Her astute observations on the occasion of her visits to John Andrews' home and the homes of his relatives and her reflections on various Sabbatarian Adventist women she employed as her housekeepers give numerous unique perspectives on the lives and experiences of ordinary Adventists during an important early period of Adventist development.<sup>28</sup> The texture of what it meant to live in a small village as a Sabbatarian Adventist during the late 1840s is enriched by a study of her diary. Her dark perceptions of what Sabbatarian Adventists believed about the end of the world and their mechanisms for coping with their

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<sup>27</sup> Charles took his seat on March 4, 1851 and died of consumption 13 months later in office, April 30, 1852.

<sup>28</sup> See for example, PSABD, January 1, 6, February 18, 28, March 11, 22, 1846.

disappointment are particularly illuminating for the Adventist historian.<sup>29</sup>

Sarah Woodruff Pottle (d.1887) was an aunt of J. N. Andrews, the wife of maternal uncle Edward, an attorney who lived in Rochester, New York, when the Andrews family lived there. Sarah kept brief diaries over a twenty-six year period. The diaries record numerous visits of J. N. Andrews and his family to this Rochester aunt and uncle and reflect on the aunt's understanding of John's preaching and his beliefs. Other diaries in this collection kept by Maurice Leydon, the husband of J. N. Andrews' cousin Margaret indicate that the Pottle family was closely involved with Susan B. Anthony's agitation for women's voting rights in Rochester in 1873. Margaret was prosecuted for attempting to vote illegally.

### **Newly Available Lewis Family Diaries**

Very recently, a set of diaries kept by Theodore Bogardus Lewis (1844-1923) who, for twenty-five years, served as the custodian of the old "Dime" Battle Creek Tabernacle, and a set kept by his son, Adventist evangelist Theodore Gardner Lewis (1875-1942), have been made available to Adventist historians. These diaries give promise of being a valuable source of understanding of the texture of Adventist experience and the broader social context of critical developments and transitions in Adventist history. The longer diary was kept by an author who happened to grow up as a neighbor of the James White family in Battle Creek. Both father and son diarists maintained a close friendship with Edson White in his later years.

The diaries kept by the father, Theodore. B. Lewis begin in 1864, resume in 1880 after an 18-year gap (1865-1879) and then continue across a span of forty-three years from 1880 through 1897 and 1899 to 1923. After his retirement from his custodial role at the Tabernacle, T. B. Lewis served for a number of years as

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<sup>29</sup> PSABD, March 8, 1846.

the elevator operator in John Harvey Kellogg's Battle Creek Sanitarium.

The twelve diaries of the son, Elder Theodore G. Lewis begin in 1912 when as an established Seventh-day Adventist evangelist he was assigned to Appleton, Wisconsin (he had graduated from Battle Creek College ministerial course in 1896), and they continue to 1915. The diaries of 1916 to 1924 were written after Lewis had left the ministry and had moved back to Battle Creek, Michigan.

These important historical documents are part of a large collection of family genealogy materials gathered and preserved by Lila Jo Peck (formerly of Marshall, Michigan) and which, on her demise, were passed on to her sister Linda Mills, a retired Adventist school teacher in Riverside, California. Linda Mills and her late sister are the great granddaughters of Theodore Bogardus Lewis. The small leather bound journals which have been carefully preserved in excellent condition came into the writer's possession in 2016. Of particular value about the diary collection, is that Lila Jo Peck had the entries carefully transcribed, faithfully reproducing the written text, spelling mistakes and grammatical imperfections included. The six large volumes of transcripts along with the original diary volumes are held at the Heritage Research Center at Loma Linda University and the collection is now available on-line.<sup>30</sup>

The diaries suggest that Lewis was a warm-hearted, friendly conversational gentleman. Lewis knew a great many people in Battle Creek and in the church at large for he had lived in Battle Creek since he had been ten years of age. The names of many Adventist leaders pepper the pages of his diary.

Theodore B. Lewis was the son of Jonas Lewis, one of the first five Seventh-day Adventists who moved to Battle Creek when the Review and Herald publishing plant was first established there in

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<sup>30</sup> Theodore Bogardus Lewis Diaries Transcription, (TBLDT) available at <https://cdm.llu.edu/digital/collection/p17224coll8>. Accessed May 10, 2010.

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1855. He purchased a home in what became known as the West-end and sold firewood (and later coal) from his home. According to Lewis family tradition, this small firewood industry gave rise to the name Wood Street. James and Ellen White purchased a property next door to the Lewis home and they were neighbors on Wood Street up until later in 1863 when the White family moved to a location closer to the publishing office.<sup>31</sup> Theodore B and his siblings grew up as neighborhood friends with the White boys, Henry, Edson and Willie. Music may have been one of the shared interests. The diary tells us that T. B. Lewis's elder brother Griffith volunteered in 1862 as a musician for the Union Army in the Civil War (he played the Cornet). This may provide some background to understanding the strength of the temptation that sixteen-year-old Henry White faced over volunteering for the army at the time. The White boys had become caught up in playing music for the parading recruits on the empty lot on the other side of their Wood Street home in the mid-1863.<sup>32</sup> In later years T. B. Lewis and his son maintained contact particularly with Edson and Emma White and their close relatives Frank and Harriet Belden. The diaries record many meals and outings shared together. When W. C. White was in town (in 1901 for example) he would call in to visit with T. B. Lewis at his home.<sup>33</sup>

The diaries—typical of diaries of the period—speak a good deal about the weather each day and the state of health of the writer and his family. They record many routine things like the number of brooms Lewis was able to manufacture each day with his patented broom making machine. They also note many

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<sup>31</sup> Michael Campbell and Stanley Hickerson “Homes of James and Ellen White,” *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, eds. Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2013), 879.

<sup>32</sup> Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Progressive Years, 1862-1876* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1986), 60, 61, 70, 71.

<sup>33</sup> TBLDT April 27, 1901, <https://cdm.illu.edu/digital/collection/p17224coll8/id/14/rec/21>. Accessed May 10 2020.

routine matters about the care of the Tabernacle and its environs. They are of distinctive interest however, because of the many details they relate about everyday ordinary community life and about the attitudes and values that Adventists shared in Battle Creek. Shortly after the diary begins in 1864, for example, Theodore relates the details of his marriage to nineteen-year old Eleanor Worden, a non-Adventist girl. It seems that he may have visited James White for some counsel but then decided to get married to Eleanor at the Congregational church at fairly short notice.<sup>34</sup> As they sat in church together the next Sabbath Lewis recorded that he could sense everyone in the congregation staring at them. Eleanor was baptized by James White a month later.<sup>35</sup>

Lewis writes frequently about the weekly routine of meetings held in the church during the week and the many meetings that crowded each Sabbath. He tells us who the preachers were each Sabbath and at the many Friday night and mid-week meetings. The diaries tell us when the church could not meet because the weather was too cold or the heating system did not work. T. B. Lewis in his early years was not given to deep theological reflection on the preaching other than an occasional comment that the sermon was interesting or perhaps not well supported by scripture. But as the years went along he became more interested in theology—particularly during World War I when the “Eastern Question” became a highly sensitive issue and his minister son T. G. Lewis began to adopt another interpretive approach. Whether the prophecy of Daniel 11 pointed to Turkey or to Rome at the time of the end of the Ottoman Empire became a very divisive issue for the church. Any student of the history of prophetic interpretation will want to consult this source for a perspective on how the fraught debate disturbed the waters of both small and large churches and cost ministers their jobs when they differed from the

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<sup>34</sup> TBLDT, March 26, 30, 1864.

<sup>35</sup> TBLDT, April 2, 30, 1864.

orthodox interpretation that the fall of Turkey would directly lead to the battle of Armageddon.<sup>36</sup>

The diaries give other helpful insights into Adventist practice at the local congregational level. For example, they provide a window into how the local church at Battle Creek went about its collection of tithe. T. B. Lewis was a tithe collector and spent part of several days each week visiting the homes of church members in the community collecting the tithes. Lewis's diary accounts indicate that this was an effective way for church leaders to keep in touch with the joys and the needs and hurts of church members. The diaries also tell about the social life of the community. With a rigorous publishing house six-day working week that ended late on Friday afternoon and began again at 7.30 am on Sunday morning, church members who worked in publishing or at the Sanitarium had little time for shopping. Going to town on Saturday night right after Sabbath was a regular practice. Later during World War I, Saturday night was also the time when "picture shows" caught at least some Adventists up to date with the progress of the war.<sup>37</sup>

There are also new insights about behind-the-scenes tensions surrounding major church developments like the General Conference Reorganization session in 1901, which took place in the Dime Tabernacle. The custodian reports that the twenty-year old Tabernacle was given a new roof and a major spruce up just before the conference. In fact, the renovations were not quite complete when Ellen White gave her first Friday night talk in the refurbished Tabernacle.<sup>38</sup> But it was still good to hear Ellen's voice "as of old" recorded Lewis. Because Lewis seems to have been

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<sup>36</sup> Numerous diary references refer to the problem in 1915 and detail the difficulties that led to the removal of T. G. Lewis from ministry. For example, TBLDT, January 22, 23, 27, February 13, March 4, 9, April 3, 1915.

<sup>37</sup> TBLDT, February 1, April 25, 1915, April 28, October 13, November 17, 1917.

<sup>38</sup> TBLDT, March 29, 30, 1901.

regarded as the security officer as well as the custodian it was he who was called to remove a man by the name of Nelson [Helge ?] who with his six supporters protested over some issue during the session and tried to take over the platform on Sabbath morning. When the same protesting party attempted another platform takeover a day or two later during the session, Lewis had to take the dissenters to the police station for lock-up – a duty he had to perform again the next Sabbath.<sup>39</sup> Apparently there were more tensions associated with these important meetings than were reported in the *Review*.

Other branches of the family referred to in the diaries and family charts are of interest to Adventist historians because of their connection with other Adventist institutions in Battle Creek. T. G. Lewis's father-in-law, for example, Oscar T. Burt, began his career in the press rooms of the *Review* and *Herald* in the 1890s before it was destroyed by fire. He later became the manager of the very large Battle Creek Sanitarium Laundry – a position he held for 25 years. Other relatives studied nursing at the Sanitarium. Some began their study of medicine there and then completed it elsewhere after Kellogg broke with the church. Other relatives were involved in the establishment of the Grand Ledge campground. The materials provide a helpful perspective on how the local congregation in Battle Creek worked its way through the Kellogg schism and in ensuing years continued to maintain cordial work relationships and Christian fellowship.

As these examples make clear, the chief value of the Lewis diaries is that they provide a rich source for the social history of Adventism around Adventist headquarters in Michigan. Much of the historical analysis of the church thus far has been to try and understand the church's institutional and theological development from the perspective of its influential leaders or preachers. These materials, by contrast, give insight into the every-day life of an

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<sup>39</sup> TBLDT, April 6, 9, 20, 1901.



important Adventist community. Lewis, for example, served as a polling officer in Battle Creek in 1916 for both local and national elections recording the number of votes cast by local residents. In the run-up to the presidential election he and his granddaughters attended political rallies and met both Theodore Roosevelt and William Jennings Bryan when the candidates visited town.<sup>40</sup>

The two Lewis diarists tell of the routines, the Sabbath fellowship, weddings, funerals and the values and lifestyle of ordinary Adventists. They tell of economic stresses and of the way families struggled to survive during hard times, pay their bills and keep alive their hope in a God who would eventually put right all the wrongs and bring an end to suffering. They tell of the love and commitment and the joys of family life and the care and support ordinary Adventists provided for others. Church historians will find much in this resource to help them develop a more comprehensive understanding of their community.

### **Conclusion**

Diaries are an important historical source for establishing the context of developments in Adventist History and for confirming or disconfirming data and perspectives from other contemporaneous historical sources. Understanding diaries and journals as a distinctive literary genre is also important because such enables the historian to better utilize their value and their role as historical source. Adventist historians engaging with the genre fill the place of the diarist's unknown "future self" and the diaries become again a forum for self-encounter – but this time on a broader scale. Students of Adventist history and the community itself is provided opportunity for a new self-encounter. Diaries provide rich new insights in what it meant to be an Adventist and how Adventism was experienced in everyday life. In this way they also help inform the community what it might mean to be an

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<sup>40</sup> TBLDT, April 3, August 7, 30, September 30, October 5, November 7, 1916.

Adventist now. The newly available diaries discussed here will provide much more color and texture to our understanding of nineteenth and early twentieth-century Adventism.

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**Appendix I:  
Bibliography of Selected Manuscript Diaries Relevant to  
Adventist History**

(Not all of the documents below are referred to in the text)

**Angeline Andrews Diaries:** November 1859 – December 1865. Transcribed by Ron Graybill and located at Loma Linda University Heritage Research Center. Angeline Andrews was the wife of Adventist pioneer John Nevins Andrews and sister-in-law to *Review and Herald* editor Uriah Smith.

**Catharine Newton Byington Diaries:** 1863-1885 (5 Vols). Byington – Amadon Diaries (Collection 12) located at the Center for Adventist Research (CAR) Berrience Springs MI. Catharine Byington was the wife of John Byington.

**Dortch Diaries:** 1880s and 90s. Housed at Southwestern Adventist University, the Dortch family diaries were kept by a farming family who converted to Adventism in the early 1880s. They give a helpful account of Adventist lived experience from the ground up.

**Ellen White Diaries:** The Ellen G. White Estate holds sixty-three diary/journals kept by Ellen White the earliest dating to 1859. The documents vary from commercial calendar type volumes to lined foolscap sized journals. While many chronicle day-to-day activities they also contain drafts of articles and sometimes letters. The documents tend to span several years and entries are do not necessarily follow chronological order.<sup>41</sup>

**Emmer Webber Diary:** 1863-1874 (11 Vols). These are held in the private collection of Joan Kihlstrom, of Dayton, Ohio. The diaries were kept by a young woman who became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1868. The diaries are discussed in Llewellyn E. Foll,

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<sup>41</sup> For further detail, see Tim Poirier, *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, eds Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2013) p. 771.

"Heirloom: Emma Webber's Diary," *Adventist Heritage* 7, no. 2 (Fall 1982): 53-61.

**George W. Amadon Diaries:** 1870-1871, 1873 – 1878, 1880, 1908-1912. Byington – Amadon Diaries (Collection 12) located at CAR. George Amadon served in the Review and Herald Publishing House in Battle Creek as foreman and sometime editor of the Youth's Instructor.

**Harriet Newell Smith (nee Stevens) Diaries:** 1866, 1869 (fragment) Transcribed by Kevin Burton in 2014. Uriah Smith - Mark Bovee Collection (Collection 146) located at CAR. Harriet was wife of Uriah Smith, editor of the *Review and Herald*.

**Jennie Thayer Diaries:** 1875, 1877, 1883, 1885 – 1890, 1896, 1898 – 1901, 1903, 1906-1908, 1916, (17 Vols.) housed at the General Conference Archives in Silver Spring MD. Jennie attended Battle Creek College and served in various roles in the publishing work of the church both in Battle Creek and for five years as a missionary in England where she assisted with *Present Truth*. She was the founding editor of the *Atlantic Gleaner*.

**Jean Vuilleumier Diaries:** 1878-1881, 1883, 1885-1889, 1894. Some years are fragmentary. *Inventaire de la collection Jean Vuilleumier*, held at Archives Historiques de l'Adventisme Francophone, Campus Adventiste du Saleve 33, Chemin du Perouzet 74160 Collonges-sous-Saleve, France. Adventist minister, Jean Vuillemeier worked as a sixteen-year old editorial assistant to John Andrews during the last years of his life.

**John Byington Diaries:** 1857 – 1886 (21 Vols.) Byington – Amadon Diaries (Collection 12) held at CAR. John Byington served as the first General Conference President in 1863 and thereafter as a pastor in the Michigan Conference.

**John Norton Loughborough Diaries:** 1856 – 1923 (54 Vols) [missing years are 1854-1858, 1860-1866, 1869, 1877, 1884-1886],

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John N. Loughborough (Collection 327) held at CAR. John Loughborough became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1852 and became a prominent pastor evangelist noted for his pioneering church planting work in California and in England.

**Joseph Bates:** Ship's Logbook for *Empress*, 1827-28. Copies at New Bedford, MA: Old Dartmouth Historical Society Whaling Museum and at CAR. Analysed in MA Thesis by Jerry E. Daly. Loma Linda University 1981.

**Julia A Corliss (nee Burgess) Diaries:** 1863 – 1869, 1884 – 1908 (13 Vols) held at CAR. Julia Burgess was a 25 year old teacher in Ithaca, Michigan when she married recently converted John Corliss who later became a successful evangelist and missionary. They had met when staying at the White's home in Greenville, Michigan in early 1868.

**Martha Byington Diaries:** 1857, 1860 (2 Vols) Byington – Amadon Diaries (Collection 12) held at CAR. Martha, daughter of John and Catharine Byington married George Amadon on October 12, 1860.

**Oles A. Olsen Diary:** 1870 -1871, 1873 -1881, 1884, 1886, 1888 - 1893, 1898 - 1902, 1906 - 1909, 1913, (24 Vols.) held at the General Conference Archives, GC PC101: O. A. Olsen, Bx 3. Olsen was President of the General Conference from 1889 to 1897. His diaries are partial and primarily record his travels and speaking appointments with only a minimum of personal reflection and recording of impressions.

**R. De Witt Hottel Diary:** 1888, held at the General Conference Archives. Hottel was an Adventist minister serving in Virginia in 1888. His sketchy diary for the year record his experience at the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference. See Ron Graybill, "Elder Hottel goes to General Conference," *Ministry*, Vol. 61, Feb. 1988, pp. 19-21 for a discussion of the diary contents.

**Seigfried H. Horn Diary:** (b. March 17, 1908 – d. November 28, 1993) Multi volume diary is in possession of Larry Geraty, Riverside CA. Horn was a Seventh-day Adventist archaeologist and Bible scholar. He is perhaps best known for his numerous books and articles and for his excavations at Tell Hesban in Jordan. He was Professor of History of Antiquity at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan (now part of Andrews University).

**Theodore B Lewis Diaries:** 1864, 1880-1897, 1899-1923. (44 Vols) Lewis, Theodore Bogardus, Extended Family Collection, held at Loma Linda University Heritage Research Center. T. B. Lewis served as Custodian of the Dime Tabernacle in Battle Creek and later worked as an elevator operator in the Battle Creek Sanitarium.

**Theodore Gardner Lewis Diaries** 1912-1924 (12 Vols) Lewis, Theodore Bogardus, Extended Family Collection, held at Loma Linda University Heritage Research Center. Employed as a pastor in the Wisconsin and North Illinois Conferences T. G. Lewis was in 1915 removed from the ministry because of his view on the Eastern Question.

**William Henry Meredith:** “Pages from a Minister’s Diary, 1926-1932” edited by Brian Phillips. Copies are held in E. J. Waggoner Research Papers – Woodrow Whidden’s Research (Collection 311) CAR. William Meredith was President of the British Union Conference between 1926 and 1932.

**Wilton Smith:** Diary from May 1 to Dec 18, 1894. A copy is held at CAR. The son of *Review* Editor, Uriah Smith, Wilton recorded a 128 page travel diary for the extended journey he made with his father through Europe in 1894. The diary provides insight into

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habits and practices of the Smith family. It was used extensively by Gary Land in his biography of Uriah Smith.

**Non Adventist Sources**

**Persis Sibley Andrews Black Diary:** 1842 – 1864 (11 Vols). Six volumes are held by the Maine Historical Society in Portland, Maine and five are held in the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston, Mass. Microfiche copies are held by Burman University. Persis Sibley married J. N. Andrews' paternal uncle Charles in 1843 and Andrews lived with them for a time shortly after their marriage.

**Sarah Woodruff Pottle Diaries:** 1860-1886 (22 Vols) are part of the Maurice Leyden Collection in the Civil War Manuscripts, Bartle Library, Binghamton University, Binghamton, New York. Sarah Pottle was J. N. Andrews' maternal aunt. The diaries record numerous visits of J. N. Andrews and his family to his Rochester Aunt and Uncle Edward. In this collection there are also 25 diaries that were kept by Maurice Leydon, Sarah Pottle's son in law. These are of little interest to Adventists other than that they give information about J. N. Andrews' cousin Margaret, who as a protégé of Susan B. Anthony participated in agitation for women's voting rights in Rochester in 1873 and was prosecuted for attempting to vote illegally.

**Appendix II:  
A List of Additional Diaries of Possible Interest to  
Adventist Historians**

This list of diaries was compiled by Kevin Burton. The materials are held at the Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs MI.

Dudley M Canright	1867
Solun A. Farnsworth	1867
Ida D. Farnsworth	1871
Elgin G. Farnsworth	1873, 1876, 1923
O. A. Johnson	1877, 1878
Sara M. S. Johnson	1877, 1878
Henry P. Holser	1879
Lida Funk	1880
Elizabeth E. W. Gauterau	1886
Joel Saunders	1887, 1893, 1898
Sherman E. Wight	1888
Vesta Farnsworth (nee Olsen)	1890, 1902, 1905
James E. Beecraft	1895
Augustin C. Bordeau	1897
Roy E. Farnsworth	1903
Percy C. Magan	1903, 1904
Waldo Farnsworth	1906
Mabel B. Richardson	1914
W. G. Turner	1938, 1939



## **Seventh-day Adventists and Abolitionist Petitions**

**Kevin M. Burton**

### **The Intersection of Morality and Public Policy**

The historiography of Millerites and Seventh-day Adventists (herein referred to collectively as adventists) generally assumes that these apocalyptic groups were apolitical.<sup>1</sup> At least four

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<sup>1</sup> This theory has been applied to all premillennialists from postmillennialists, particularly since World War I, and the Millerites and their decedents are typically presented as the quintessential exemplars that prove its veracity. Here is an incomplete, but representative list of works from the 1960s to the 2010s that have advanced this distinction. Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution*, The Jonathan Edwards Classic Studies Series (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 59-66; Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role* (1968; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 34, 232; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 357-358, 845; J. F. C. Harrison, *The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism, 1780-1850* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1979), 6-7; Ruth H. Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756-1800* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 131; David L. Rowe, *Thunder and Trumpets: Millerites and Dissenting Religion in Upstate New York, 1800-1850*, American Academy of Religion Studies in Religion, 38, Charley Hardwick and James O. Duke, eds. (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 74-77, 99; Michael Barkun, *Crucible of the Millennium: The Burned-Over District of New York in the 1840s* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986), 24-25; Randall Balmer, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into Evangelical Subculture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 32-33; Richard J. Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 15; John R. McKivigan, *The War against Proslavery Religion: Abolitionism and the Northern Churches, 1830-1865* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 20, 51; William E. Juhnke, "Prophetic Pacifism in the American Experience: A Response to Grant Underwood and George R. Knight," in Theron F. Schlabach and Richard T.

overlapping factors have led to this mischaracterization. First, much of that interpretation is rooted in a narrow understanding of the term “politics” that is envisioned as distinct from “religion” and limited to partisanship.<sup>2</sup> Second, historians have been

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Hughes, eds., *Proclaim Peace: Christian Pacifism from Unexpected Quarters* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 173; Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 38-40, 49, 100-101; David Morgan, *Protestant & Pictures: Religion, Visual Culture, and the Age of American Mass Production* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 29, 34; Thomas F. Curran, *Soldiers of Peace: Civil War Pacifism and the Postwar Radical Peace Movement*. The North's Civil War Series, No. 22, Paul A. Cimbala, ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003), 6-7, 15, 197; Christine Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 17-18; David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America*, Religion in America, Harry S. Stout, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 28 ; George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 48-51; Newell G. Bringhurst, “Four American Prophets Confront Slavery: Joseph Smith, William Miller, Ellen G. White, and Mary Baker Eddy,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 26 (2006): 120-141; George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War*, The Littlefield History of the Civil War Era, Gary W. Gallagher and T. Michael Parrish, eds. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 3; Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, *Setting Down the Sacred Past: African-American Race Histories* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 215; Sean A. Scott, *A Visitation of God: Northern Civilians Interpret the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 161; Ben Wright and Zachary W. Dresser, “Introduction,” in Ben Wright and Zachary W. Dresser, eds. *Apocalypse and the Millennium in the American Civil War Era*, *Conflicting Worlds: New Dimensions of the American Civil War*, T. Michael Parrish, ed. (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 2-4; Alison Collis Greene, *No Depression in Heaven: The Great Depression, the New Deal, and the Transformation of Religion in the Delta* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 63; Matthew Harper, *The End of Days: African American Religion and Politics in the Age of Emancipation* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 6-8, 165-166n14; Richard Carwardine, “Antebellum Reform,” in *Turning Points in the History of American Evangelicalism*, Heath W. Carter and Laura Rominger Porter, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2017), 66-67.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Ronald D. Graybill has argued that the Millerites were “distracted from social reform movements by an intense religious crusade.” The problem is that this distinction between “social reform” and “religious” crusades assumes that the two projects could not harmoniously coexist. Ronald D. Graybill, “The Abolitionist-Millerite Connection,” in *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed., Ronald L. Numbers and

imprudently reliant on the discredited theory that claims apocalypticism causes adherents to become socially withdrawn and inactive.<sup>3</sup> Third, scholars have limited themselves through an overdependence on sources in adventist archives and ignored or dismissed the political issues advocated therein with supposedly apolitical terms such as “paper radicalism.”<sup>4</sup> Finally, adventist historiography has been primarily focused on leaders at the near-complete oversight of the “average” adherent.<sup>5</sup>

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Jonathan M. Butler, eds. (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1993), 143.

<sup>3</sup> The most important critics of this theory include: James West Davidson, *The Logic of Millennial Thought: Eighteenth-Century New England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977), 28-36, 75-80, 138-139, 273-279; James H. Moorhead, “The Erosion of Postmillennialism in American Religious Thought, 1865–1925,” *Church History* 53, no. 1 (March 1984): 61-77; James H. Moorhead, “Between Progress and Apocalypse: A Reassessment of Millennialism in American Religious Thought, 1800–1880,” *Journal of American History* 71, no. 3 (December 1984): 524-542; Stephen D. O’Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 12; James H. Moorhead, “Apocalypticism in Mainstream Protestantism, 1800 to the Present,” in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. 3, *Apocalypticism in the Modern Period and the Contemporary Age*, Stephen J. Stein, ed. (New York: Continuum, 1998), 79; James H. Moorhead, *World without End: Mainstream American Protestant Visions of the Last Things, 1880–1925*, Religion in North America, Catherine L. Albanese and Stephen J. Stein, eds. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 1-18; Stephen J. Stein, “American Millennial Visions: Towards Construction of a New Architectonic of American Apocalypticism,” in *Imagining the End: Visions of Apocalypse from the Ancient Middle East to Modern America*, Abbas Amanat and Magnus Bernhardsson, eds. (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002), 201; W. Michael Ashcraft, “Progressive Millennialism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Millennialism*, Catherine Wessinger, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 45, 48, 52; B. M. Pietsch, *Dispensational Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 7-9, 154-165.

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan M. Butler, “Adventism and the American Experience,” in *The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America*, Edwin S. Gaustad, ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 173-206; Eric Anderson, “War, Slavery, and Race,” in *Ellen Harmon White: American Prophet*, Terrie Dopp Aamodt, Gary Land, and Ronald L. Numbers, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 270.

<sup>5</sup> Though not solely responsible, the Ellen G. White Estate has done much to steer Adventist historiography in the direction of social history through the publication of *The Ellen G. White Letters & Manuscripts with Annotations*, vol. 1, 1845- 1859 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2014). The first volume of this series is

As will be seen below, one way in which my research seeks to overcome these issues is through the exploration of anti-slavery petitions submitted to Congress, the House of Representatives, and state legislatures.

### **Discovering the Adventist Abolitionists**

To collect such petitions has required a clearly defined methodology and will continue to take a considerable amount of time. The first challenge is to identify Millerites and Sabbatarian Adventists by name. Since no adequate database provides this information, I began, for the Millerites, by copying general conference membership lists into an Excel spreadsheet (several such lists were published in the *Signs of the Times*). I have thus far been more thorough regarding the Sabbatarian Adventists, by writing down every name I have found in all available diaries, letters, manuscripts, and periodicals. Such thoroughness has its limitations, however, and at present I have only extracted information from the 1840s through the middle of 1853.

Though these lists are invaluable sources for historical research, they are virtually useless without the person's corresponding residence. To illustrate, while my list of Sabbatarian Adventists currently includes 1,758 names, I know the residence of no more than 40% of those individuals. Beyond this, other factors complicate this methodology. Since people moved fairly frequently in the 1840s and 1850s, it is necessary to know when people lived at the place they did. Religious defections and detachment also complicate the process; just because a person's name appears in an adventist source does not indicate that they were or remained an adventist (although it usually does). Therefore, a significant amount of research is needed to verify that

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the first major work of Seventh-day Adventist history to give serious attention to non-leaders, though not in narrative form.

the correct individual has been identified and that she or he was an adventist during the period of my research. In spite of such complications, such databases open seemingly endless possibilities for new research that will lead to more nuanced descriptions of the adventist past.

Though I began to create my databases with broader research intentions in mind, when I discovered that Joseph Bates was an active petitioner, I realized that I had the tools to find more adventist signatures on petitions.<sup>6</sup> Though ultimately rewarding, this too, has proven to be quite time consuming. The largest corpus of extant petitions are housed at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and made available through the Center for Legislative Archives.<sup>7</sup> Thousands of anti-slavery petitions survive but many have been destroyed (for example, one employee used to burn petitions to stay warm while working<sup>8</sup>). Many of the surviving petitions are separated into two categories: those submitted to the Senate and the House of Representative. The petitions in both of these categories are organized by subject and congress number (which provides an approximate date for undated petitions). Many more abolitionist petitions were seemingly extracted from this collection (or taken from elsewhere) at random and placed in a variety of Library of Congress collections (also housed at NARA).

Needless to say, this method of organization was not devised to readily facilitate searching for individual names on petitions. No finding aids exist to point researchers to the boxes that contain petitions from certain towns, counties, or states. Therefore, when I

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<sup>6</sup> Kevin Burton, “Joseph Bates and Adventism’s Radical Roots,” *Adventist Review*, March 3, 2020. Available at <https://www.adventistreview.org/joseph-bates-and-adventisms-radical-roots> (accessed May 31, 2020).

<sup>7</sup> For more information, visit <https://www.archives.gov/legislative>.

<sup>8</sup> Susan Zaeske, *Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, & Women’s Political Identity*, Gender & American Culture, Thadious M. Davis and Linda K. Kerber, eds. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003),173-174.

began to search through abolitionist petitions at NARA in April 2019, I started looking through petitions submitted to the House during the 26th United States Congress (March 4, 1839, to March 4, 1841). Since my lists of names were far from comprehensive, I decided that I would need to make a list of each petition I encountered and write down the location of the petition and box number in which it is stored so that I could more easily find them again when needed. I will eventually give this crude finding aid to the Center for Legislative Archives to assist future historians in their research of abolitionist petitions. I have thus far spent only 12 days on this project at NARA, but have already documented the location of nearly 5,000 petitions.

Far fewer anti-slavery petitions submitted to state legislatures have survived. The Maine State Archive, for example, retains less than fifteen anti-slavery petitions (they have been scanned and placed online; [https://digitalmaine.com/arc\\_img/](https://digitalmaine.com/arc_img/)). While the Vermont State Archive contains a significantly higher number, none of the anti-slavery petitions submitted to the state legislature from 1840 through 1865 have survived. However, the names of every signatory on extant petitions have been written on a card catalogue index available to researchers on location, which is exceedingly helpful. By contrast, at least 20 cubic feet of petitions (not all of which relate to abolition) submitted to the New York State Legislature have survived, but were badly damaged by fire in 1911 and currently unavailable for research. The most accessible (and probably most complete) collection of state legislature anti-slavery petitions are housed at the Massachusetts State Archive. Several thousand anti-slavery petitions have both survived and been digitized by Harvard University (they are accessible at <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/antislaverypetitionsma>). These petitions can easily be searched by location or by the first few names listed on the petition.

### **Summary of Research**

In total (exclusive of the time taken to prepare lists of names) I have devoted about four weeks to petition research. Much of this time has been spent noting the location of petitions at NARA and state archives, meaning that I have spent only about two weeks actually looking for adventist signatories on petitions. Nevertheless, as of May 2020 I have identified 51 different Millerites and Sabbatarian Adventist petitioners on 118 different petitions. These statistics do not include one significant petition, however. On February 3, 2020, I guided some of my students from Southern Adventist University through NARA as they assisted me in my petition research. During this time, one of those students, Xavier Snyder, found a petition submitted to the U.S. Congress in April 1862 that was prepared and circulated by “Seventh Day Adventists and others” from Linn County, Iowa. This petition—the first to be found that was circulated in the name of the Adventist Church—contains 44 signatures, most of which were Seventh-day Adventists.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, close to one hundred adventist signatories have been found in only about four weeks of time.

These petitions have great historical significance and illuminate our understanding of religion and politics generally and apocalypticism, Millerism, and Seventh-day Adventism specifically. First of all, since the majority of these petitions were circulated and signed by practicing adventists, it dispels once again the charge that premillennialists are apolitical. More important, however, is the fact that these petitions reveal the religious and political views of both adventist leaders and laypeople and grant us insight into their views on gender and race.

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<sup>9</sup> Angela Baerg, “Students Gain Rare Hands-on Experience at National Archives,” *Southern Tidings*, May 2020, available at <https://www.southerntidings.com/news/students-gain-rare-hands-on-experience-at-national-archives/> (accessed May 31, 2020).

Female abolitionists were among the most active petitioners, and as Susan Zaeske has demonstrated in her book, *Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery & Women's Political Identity*, this political act was both highly controversial in antebellum America as well as foundational for the women's suffrage movement.<sup>10</sup> The fact that numerous adventist women signed (and probably circulated) anti-slavery petitions reveals that they too contributed to both the abolitionist and women's rights causes in America's history. In regard to race, while it is significant that adventist women and men joined the tiny minority of Americans willing to sign and circulate petitions protesting southern slavery, it is perhaps more significant to find that they were among the even smaller minority to petition against Jim Crow racism in the North.<sup>11</sup> Numerous adventists, for example, petitioned against segregation on northern trains and against all laws that distinguished people by color—including Massachusetts' law that forbid interracial marriage. Far from being apolitical, in the early 1840s adventists contributed to the overthrow of both Jim Crow segregation on Massachusetts trains and the state's interracial marriage law—two of the abolitionists' key victories.<sup>12</sup>

This excursus regarding the search for adventist petitioners reveals a deeper need in adventist studies to look beyond the adventist archives for sources on adventist history and think outside the stereotypes that have been placed upon the adventist collective. It reminds us again that it is ill-advised to draw major

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<sup>10</sup> Zaeske, *Signatures of Citizenship*.

<sup>11</sup> In 1840, for example, Joseph Bates was able to gather 80 signatures for abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, but only 21 for the eradication of Massachusetts' Jim Crow laws. "Massachusetts Legislature: List of Petitions Presented to the Late Session of the Legislature," *The Liberator*, April 3, 1840, 54.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Archer, *Jim Crow North: The Struggles for Equal Rights in Antebellum New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 91-108, 135-148; Amber D. Moulton, *The Fight for Interracial Marriage Rights in Antebellum Massachusetts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).



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conclusions without first thoroughly searching for adequate documentation to either prove or disprove our initial hypotheses.

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## **James H. Howard and the Emergence of Adventism as an African American Religious Alternative, 1896-1919**

**Douglas Morgan**

### **Introduction**

This article is part of a larger project to situate the African American Adventist story within African American religious history, to understand it as a black urban religious alternative rather than a kind of adjunct or sidebar to the “main” Adventist historical narrative. Put another way, I am interested in how people of African heritage in America<sup>1</sup> found Adventism, fought to make it fully theirs, transformed it ultimately into the nation’s most racially diverse religious body, and came to enjoy better health and accelerated upward mobility in the process.<sup>2</sup>

My focus here is on the *emergence* of Adventism as an African American religious alternative. From a scattered few — likely no more than 100-200—in 1896, the number of African American adherents to Adventism reached 3,500 by 1919. During the nadir

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<sup>1</sup> I use “black” and “African American” interchangeably for persons of African descent living in the United States. My hope is that eliding in this way important distinctions between the experience of immigrants and that of those born in the United States will be acceptable for the purposes of this article.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Lipka, “The Most and Least Racially Diverse U.S. Religious Groups,” FactTank, 27 July 2015, Pew Research Center, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/07/27/the-most-and-least-racially-diverse-u-s-religious-groups/>; “In U.S., Black Members of Adventist Church Defy Health Disparities, Study Shows,” Adventist News Network, 28 June 2011, <http://news.adventist.org/2011/06/in-us-black-members.html> (accessed 9 July 2011).

of race relations in American history, a lasting foundation was set in place for a black religious movement that would thrive throughout the century that followed.

In *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, to my knowledge the most effectively contextualized synopsis of black Adventist history to date, Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart point out the apparent incongruity between the loyal following that Adventism has garnered among black people in America and a deeply-ingrained pattern of racial discrimination and injustice within the denomination. While they delineate the denomination's undeniable propensity for replicating and sustaining strains of racism prevalent in the wider society, they have little to offer on the questions I wish to prioritize.<sup>3</sup>

Why, did a remarkably large proportion of high-achieving, well-educated, idealistic, race-conscious African Americans join the Adventist movement during this early, formative period? (See Appendix A). What drew them? Why did a "critical mass" remain despite the manifest inequities and racially-benighted mentalities they encountered in the white-dominated denomination? The experience of James H Howard points us toward some ways of situating black Adventist history that, if more fully utilized, might help us toward better understanding of these questions.

### **James H. Howard's Vision**

When Dr. James H. Howard (1861-1936) became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1887, he was very likely the first black resident of Washington, D.C., and one of the first of any race there, to do so. Adventism's organized presence in the nation's capital had been launched just a year earlier in the form of a city mission. The

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<sup>3</sup> Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, rev. ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 277-289.

Washington mission gradually gained momentum, and a church was formally organized in February 1889 with 26 members.<sup>4</sup>

It is difficult to imagine Adventism finding a more winsome and well-positioned ambassador to black Washington than James H. Howard. Born in 1861 in an historic, free black community near Sandy Spring, Maryland, north of Washington, D.C., he graduated from Howard University in Washington as class valedictorian at age 18, and went on to earn an M.D. at Howard Medical School in 1883, again at the top of his class.<sup>5</sup>

Instead of practicing medicine, Dr. Howard became a civil servant in the Pensions Office of the War Department. At the point when twenty-six-year old Howard encountered Adventism, he had just stepped into a future bright with promise for success, financial comfort, and prestige among the black elite of Washington society.<sup>6</sup>

His embrace of Adventism thus “created a sensation among the [Howard University] faculty, student body and alumni,” wrote

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<sup>4</sup> Dr. Howard’s initial acquaintance with the Adventist message came through literature he received from Georgia Harper, one of many young mission workers, who later married future General Conference president William A. Spicer. See Daniel A. Ochs and Grace Lillian Ochs, *The Past and the Presidents: Biographies of the General Conference Presidents*. Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1974), 132-133; Douglas Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe: Apostle to Black America* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2010), 179-180.

<sup>5</sup> DeWitt S. Williams, *She Fulfilled the Impossible Dream: The Story of Eva B. Dykes* (Xulon Press, 2016). Dr. Howard also became a father-figure and mentor to his better-known niece, Eva B. Dykes, who in 1921 became the first African American female to complete the requirements for a PhD.

<sup>6</sup> Three sheets containing 15 photographic portraits each of African Americans who had attained positions as federal government clerks by passing competitive examinations were included in materials prepared by W.E.B. Dubois for the Negro Exhibit of the American Section at the Paris Exposition Universelle in 1900, which was intended to show the economic and social progress of African Americans since emancipation. The clerks are not identified by name; two appear to bear a passing resemblance to Dr. Howard’s passport photo, taken more than twenty years later. The latter, the only currently-known photograph of Dr. Howard, was discovered by DeWitt Williams in 2015.

Kelly Miller, a long-time professor and dean at Howard University. A public intellectual of a stature roughly on par with the likes of Cornel West, Michael Eric Dyson, or Henry Louis Gates today, Miller published a glowing obituary tribute in 1936 in his nationally-syndicated newspaper column that concluded: “I know of no alumnus of Howard university who by reason of intelligence, character, devotion and a consecrated sense of duty deserves to rank higher in the estimation and esteem of his Alma Mater than this unpretentious man of God, Howard of Howard.”<sup>7</sup>

So, why would a man of James Howard’s caliber embrace an obscure, often-ridiculed, new religious movement with no more than 30,000 adherents worldwide, almost entirely unknown among black Americans, and without a single congregation in the nation’s capital? Eight extant letters written from Dr. Howard to Adventist church leaders, along with a handful of other sources, connected with three crisis points — 1889-1890, 1902-1903, and 1906-1908 — provide clues.

First and foremost, his letters indicate that Adventism’s radical biblicism struck a deeply responsive chord. “Pure” was a key word for Dr. Howard. In Adventism he saw an unalloyed purity of biblical truth and a commitment to living it without compromise for the sake of popularity, comfort, or the achievement of any other end. “Our great desire is that the truth, the character and glory of the Lord be revealed purely,” he wrote in 1903.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Kelly Miller, “Howard of Howard.” *Atlanta Daily World*, 27 Jan. 1936: 4. Also appears in variously edited forms in Miller’s column “Kelly Miller Says,” syndicated in black newspapers throughout the nation

<sup>8</sup> J.H. Howard to E.G. White, 17 July 1903, Ellen G. White Estate Incoming Correspondence.

### **Facing the Challenges of Contextualization**

Dr. Howard experienced the first crisis in his quest to uphold purity in the social practice of Adventism just two years after his conversion. In the October 29, 1889 issue of the *Review and Herald*, he read with dismay a report by Robert M. Kilgore about a camp meeting and institute for church workers held in Nashville, Tennessee. Kilgore, superintendent of Adventism's nascent work in the South, attributed the low turnout for the meetings to the refusal of local white people to attend, even though interested in the Adventist message, because of the noticeable presence of black people. Kilgore wrote of the impracticability of defying the color line in conducting the church's work in the South and proposed that the next General Conference consider adoption of a policy to govern the church's southern mission accordingly.<sup>9</sup>

Writing in protest to General Conference president O. A. Olsen, Dr. Howard insisted that exclusion of some from full and equal participation in church fellowship on account of race contradicted pure gospel principle, and he rejected the notion that such a policy could be justified on grounds of expediency. Dr. Howard warned the church president that "if we compromise with this worldly hatred that Americans call 'prejudice,' while professing to have the love of Christ in our hearts, to have the purest light of the gospel, to be looking for the early advent of the Savior, and to be keeping the commandments," Adventists would be considered "the most pronounced hypocrites of all professing Christians."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> R.M. Kilgore, "Tennessee Camp-Meeting and Nashville Institute," *Review and Herald* (29 Oct. 1889): 11; J.O. Corliss to W.C. White, 29 Sept. 1889, in *Manuscripts and Memories of Minneapolis* (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1988), 147-150. This was the occasion at which Charles M. Kinney became the first black Seventh-day Adventist formally ordained as a minister.

<sup>10</sup> J.H. Howard to O.A. Olsen, 3 Nov. 1889, Presidential Incoming Correspondence, General Conference Archives.

In his earliest associations with the movement, Dr. Howard had experienced a fellowship unconstrained by racial barriers, congruent with his understanding of Adventism's eschatological vocation as a prophetic minority. He did not stake his convictions about the truth of Adventism on how on well the church performed in race relations. But no matter how fervent his own enthusiasm, he could not be an effective advocate for the faith in Washington's black community without something good to report. In response to the inevitable question, "Are your people as hypocritical as the rest of the churches on the race question," he had, for the first two years, happily been able to respond in the negative because "I have had so much confidence in our church and their faithfulness to the principles of Christ."<sup>11</sup>

Howard's perspective thus suggests a second feature that attracted black people to Adventism: it gave promise of succeeding where American Christianity had historically failed by applying the gospel remedy to the nation's original sin. But now the damaging *Review* article had gutted the assurance of Dr. Howard's testimony. When asked about Adventism's stance toward black people now, he reported to Olsen, "my heart and lips hesitate to answer" because "I am not sure what the defined *practical* position is on the question."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Howard to Olsen, 3 Nov. 1889. Alonzo T. Jones, who worshiped with the embryonic congregation when he came to Washington late in 1888 to advocate for religious liberty in congressional committee hearings, recalled that about half of the group was "colored." He had been "pleased to see how freely and brotherly they met and conducted their services simply as Christian brethren," in a letter to an unidentified General Conference official, 3 July 1907. A.G. Daniells presidential correspondence files, General Conference Archives.

<sup>12</sup> J.H. Howard to O.A. Olsen, 27 Jan. 1890, Presidential Incoming Correspondence, General Conference Archives. To illustrate the impact Kilgore's article would have if it came to the attention of a colored person wanting to know more about the Adventist faith, Howard related to Olsen how a "wet blanket" had been thrown over the initially positive discussion about Adventism that he and his wife, Belle, had in the home Rosetta Douglass Sprague, daughter of Frederick

Despite these troubling developments, Dr. Howard did not lose hope that Adventism would rise to the remarkable opportunity that had been opened for the movement to reach Black America. The “purity of the church here [in Washington] speaks for itself on this question,” he affirmed. More fundamentally, his faith that God’s will would ultimately prevail in His last-day church seemed unshakable.<sup>13</sup>

### **Inspired Hope**

New reasons for hope also helped Dr. Howard to absorb the blow inflicted by the disillusioning recognition of the gap between the principles and practice in Adventism. Though already a believer in the prophetic ministry of Ellen White as a gift of the Holy Spirit to the church, his confidence in the gift as a means by which God would enable His church to overcome its racial sins would soon receive a powerful boost. In an address to a spring meeting of church leaders in 1891, put in pamphlet form under the title, “Our Duty to the Colored People,” Ellen White declared, in forceful and repeated terms, racial equality and inclusion to be principles of the gospel.<sup>14</sup>

The doctor could hardly have hoped for a more ringing affirmation of the sentiments he expressed in his letters to O. A. Olsen a year and a half before. Furthermore, the prophet specifically repudiated the color line policy proposed at the 1889

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Douglass, when another guest shared a rumor that the Adventist church in a different city had separated the races.

<sup>13</sup> Howard to Olsen, 3 Nov 1889.

<sup>14</sup> For example: “You have no license from God to exclude the colored people from your places of worship....They should hold membership in the church with the white brethren.” The pamphlet was sent to “leading brethren laboring in the South,” but not published or advertised for general readership in the church. However, W.C. White, the prophet’s son, confidante, and business manager, heard through the grapevine of Dr. Howard’s interest in the pamphlet and mailed him a copy. W.C. White to Dr. James Howard, 8 June 1891, Ellen G. White Estate, W.C. White Letter Book 2A, 355-358.



General Conference by Robert M. Kilgore, author of the *Review* article that had prompted Howard to protest.<sup>15</sup>

By 1899, the tenth anniversary of its organization as a church, Washington's racially integrated Adventist congregation had grown from 26 to 150 members, including around 50 African Americans, with a high level of evangelistic and humanitarian endeavor in evidence. Yet, by this time a second crisis was already in the making. While the number of black members continued to increase, growth was stagnant among whites, and a disconcerting number of white members were withdrawing from active involvement, some of them clearly put off by the increasing black presence. As the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, Adventism's interracial miracle in Washington seemed on the verge of succumbing to "white flight," and being swept along in the "capitulation to racism"<sup>16</sup> underway in American society since the late 1890s.

After a twelve-year hiatus, Dr. Howard resumed corresponding with Adventist leaders, this time with a noticeably sharper tone — a boldness and almost fierce urgency reflecting a dramatic new set of circumstances. This second crisis would be a far more consequential and agonizing one precisely because it would also be a moment of exhilarating opportunity beyond what

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<sup>15</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Southern Work* (1901), 15. Dr. Howard's spiritual bond with Ellen White must have been strengthened by her direct, personal ministry to the Washington congregation. She preached week-long series there in 1889 and 1890, with a brief one-meeting visit in between (Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Lonely Years: 1876-1891* (vol. 3), 416-417; Ellen G. White, *Diary*, November, 1890 [Manuscript 46] and December, 1890 [Manuscript 53], Ellen G. White Estate. These efforts were part of her nationwide campaign in the aftermath of the 1888 General Conference to bring Christ-centered renewal to the church. In the light of Benjamin Baker's analysis of the Christological themes generally characteristic of Ellen White's post-1888 revival message in "Our Duty," intriguing hints of similarity in Dr. Howard's letters to O.A. Olsen in 1889 and 1890 invite further exploration.

<sup>16</sup> The title of Chapter 3 of C. Vann Woodward's classic, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

even he could have anticipated. Adventists were thrust into the limelight of a stage that was both the national capital and the capital of black America in terms of population and cultural influence.<sup>17</sup>

### **Engaging the Color Line**

In 1902, at the recommendation of its recently-elected leader, A.G. Daniells, the General Conference commissioned two evangelists — one black and one white — to conduct separate tent meetings during the summer that, in tandem with a division of the existing congregation, would eventuate in two viable congregations — one white and the other black. Observation during a visit to the nation's capital in the summer of 1901 solidified Daniells' conviction that the Adventist cause in Washington could only thrive by accommodating racial segregation, as did nearly all the city's churches.<sup>18</sup> But Daniells may have underestimated the extent and depth of conviction among Washington church members of both races that bringing racial divisions into the church would not simply be unjust but a denial of the Adventist faith and its prophetic witness.

The impact made by the black evangelist, Lewis C. Sheafe, also defied Daniells', and just about everyone's, calculations. Sheafe, a former Baptist noted for fiery eloquence who had joined the Adventist cause in 1896, preached with a "persuasive

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<sup>17</sup> Works illuminating black Washington and its cultural significance around the turn of the twentieth century include Willard B. Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990); Constance McLaughlin Green, *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967); Jacqueline M. Moore, *Leading the Race: The Transformation of the Black Elite in the Nation's Capital, 1880-1920* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999); Blair A. Ruble, *Washington's U Street: A Biography* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> A.G. Daniells to W.C. White, 21 July 1901, Ellen G. White Estate Incoming Correspondence.

eloquence and convincing logic” that had “awakened this sated city, among the whites and blacks, to the impulses of a higher and truer Christian life,” according to the *Colored American* newspaper.<sup>19</sup> Other papers, including the *Washington Post* and other major dailies also gave him laudatory coverage.<sup>20</sup>

Suddenly, an Adventist evangelist was a city-wide phenomenon. During “the nadir” of post-emancipation race relations in America, only months after the mere presence of Booker T. Washington at a dinner with President Roosevelt sparked national controversy, Sheafe presented the gospel in a way that drew both races into the same audience, less than two miles from the White House.<sup>21</sup> Both races also were substantially represented in the 80 accessions to Adventism that were attributed to Sheafe’s 1902 campaign.<sup>22</sup>

### **Facing a Disappointing Detour**

Now, on a much larger scale than when Dr. Howard suggested it a dozen years before, the opportunity stood wide open for Adventism to present in the nation’s capital and beyond “the pure gospel in both precept and practice,” authenticated by a consistent

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<sup>19</sup>“A New Faith Comes,” *Colored American* (13 Sept. 1902), 1-2. The article claims that the meetings drew nightly the “best citizens” of “both races.” In a lengthy letter of 3 July 1907 to an unidentified General Conference officer, A.T. Jones states that whites outnumbered blacks at Sheafe’s meetings. Though uncorroborated and almost certainly an exaggeration on Jones’ part in service of his polemic against Daniells, it cannot be entirely dismissed.

<sup>20</sup> Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe*, 202-207.

<sup>21</sup> Robert J. Norrell discusses the Washington-Roosevelt dinner and the ensuing controversy in *Up From History: The Life of Booker T. Washington* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2009), 4, 243-253.

<sup>22</sup> L.C. Sheafe to H.E. Osborne, 1 February 1903, General Conference Archives; L.C. Sheafe to A.G. Daniells, 13 February 1903, General Conference Archives. Approximately 30-35 white members remained with black members in the First Church after the September 1902 split; the number of white members was reported to be 46 at the end of March 1903, with nearly all of the increase attributed to Sheafe’s evangelism. See Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe*, 258-260

repudiation of the color line, such as was almost nowhere else to be found. Incredibly, from Dr. Howard's perspective, the opportunity generated by Sheafe's evangelistic success had been sabotaged by the General Conference leadership's insistence on carrying out the division of the Washington church along racial lines in September 1902. The event received coverage not only in the Washington press, but nationwide, including the *New York Times*. The *Washington Evening Times*' headline delivers the sharpest blow to the *solar plexus*: "Color Line Drawn Between Adventists, The Church in Washington to Be Divided."<sup>23</sup>

James H. Howard's highest spiritual aspiration — a prophetic minority faithful where American Christendom at large had fallen, its witness now amplified to a longing world — was being frustrated on the cusp of realization. The division of the church had caused many who had gained a favorable impression of Adventism to now reappraise. These included W. Calvin Chase, influential editor of the *Washington Bee*. Chase had delighted in the failures of the clergy to refute the biblical evidence Sheafe presented, but the news that the Adventists would divide their congregation by race prompted him to comment: "Even in this new religious organization the spirit of caste is being fostered and perpetuated. Every offshoot of American Christianity partakes the venom of the parent tree, race prejudice." After showing signs of promise in overcoming America's original sin, Adventism seemed to have ended up failing, just like all the others.<sup>24</sup>

Dr. Howard thus fervently implored both Arthur Daniells and Ellen White to support remedial action that could salvage some

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<sup>23</sup>"Color Line Drawn Between Adventists," *Washington Evening-Times* (2 September 1902): 3; also, "Will Form Two Churches, Peculiar Status of the Seventh Day Adventist Congregation," *Washington Post* (2 September 1902): 12; H.W. Cottrell, "Washington, D.C.," *Atlantic Union Gleaner* (1 October 1902): 5-6; H.W. Cottrell to A.G. Daniells, 24 September 1902, GCA; Editorial, *St. Paul Appeal* (27 September 1902): 2.

<sup>24</sup> Untitled editorial comment, *Washington Bee* (6 September 1902): 4.

substantial benefit from the opportunity by having a white evangelist team up with Sheafe during the 1903 evangelistic season. This would be a way to make known “the true principle involved as to the relation of the races in the church” and win those of both races “willing to have part in such a gospel exemplification.” Adventists still had a chance to provide it, he insisted, if church leaders would “do the right thing.”<sup>25</sup>

Elder Daniells and the denominational leadership did not accept Dr. Howard’s gospel interracialism as a guiding principle for denominational practice. But, concomitant with the move of denominational headquarters to the Washington, D.C. area in the summer of 1903, Daniells provided Sheafe warm support for continued evangelistic work directed toward Washington’s black community. Sheafe’s efforts along these lines led to formation of the People’s Seventh-day Adventist church in December 1903, its chosen name pointedly signaling principled openness to all people though in practice the congregation was overwhelmingly black.<sup>26</sup>

A striking opportunity remained open in Washington for Adventism to take the forefront in applying the gospel to the nation’s racial inequities, albeit in a less pure form than Dr. Howard had advocated. The momentum generated by Sheafe’s evangelistic breakthrough might have been sustained by prompt development of high quality institutions for education and health care that would showcase, in the cultural center of Black America, the transformative potential that the Adventist forte in holistic ministry, or medical missionary work, held for an oppressed people. That’s what Sheafe envisioned and was poised to lead,

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<sup>25</sup> J.H. Howard to E.G. White, 10 July 1903, Ellen G. White Estate Incoming Correspondence.

<sup>26</sup> Morgan, Lewis C. Sheafe, 268-270; 273-278.

having acquired and financed without denominational assistance, a building well-suited to accommodate the initial stages.<sup>27</sup>

Yet during this critical window of opportunity the denomination revealed its priorities in raising \$150,000 for the new headquarters and the launch of Washington Training College and Washington Sanitarium, with the amount going to the development of institutions to serve African Americans in Washington totaling zero. That in itself would not necessarily have been catastrophic if it had not soon become clear that a *de facto* color line would firmly exclude African Americans from both the school and the sanitarium in Takoma Park.<sup>28</sup>

### **Finding a Way through the Crisis**

The ensuing move to congregational independence on the part of Sheafe and the People's church in February 1907 brought about a third major crisis point in James H. Howard's Adventist journey. Attention now turned to the First church. The denomination faced the loss of close to 20% of an estimated 1,300 black Adventists nationwide, if that congregation were to follow the path taken by the People's church. It seems quite plausible that such a step would have generated momentum toward a separate black Adventist denomination, in accordance with the general pattern of American Christendom.

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<sup>27</sup> Lewis C. Sheafe, "People's Seventh-day Adventist Church of Washington, D.C.," *Review and Herald* (24 August 1905): 15-16. An effort on the part of black community leaders in 1907 to establish in Washington an "industrial and training school" for black young people modeled after Hampton and Tuskegee did not come to fruition but illustrates the widespread interest in such an institution. Adventists failed to meet this interest, but soon Nannie Burroughs did, in large measure, by establishing the National Training School for Women and Girls in Washington in 1909, with the support of the National Baptist Convention. "Washington to Have Training and Industrial School," *New York Age* (20 June 1907), 3; "Colored Training School" *Washington Bee* (13 Oct. 1907), 7.

<sup>28</sup> Morgan, *Lewis C. Sheafe*, 284-311.

The respect Dr. Howard commanded meant that his influence would be decisive. The documents preserved from the A.G. Daniells presidency in the General Conference Archives include a brief untitled manuscript that contains in quotation marks a two-paragraph statement made by Dr. Howard at a special meeting to decide the matter held at the church on March 30, 1907:

No condition brought about by the errors of our Conference brethren would justify Brother Sheafe in taking the extreme position that he did. Don't separate from the cause. Men don't own the cause nor the denomination. Don't let us move one peg from the organized work. I shall not move, even if all others move.<sup>29</sup>

A move to independence was thus averted, but conflict between the congregation and denominational leadership did not settle down until, a year-and-a-half later, a testimony from Ellen White finally spoke directly to the racial turmoil in Washington, D.C. Once again, the influence of Dr. Howard was critical in keeping the First church in the denominational fold, even though it meant accepting the prophet's counsel for a much greater degree of accommodation to racist social norms than the doctor had previously been willing to countenance.<sup>30</sup>

Though much drama lay ahead over Adventism's racial polity and the possibility of a viable separate and independent black Adventist denomination, the position Dr. Howard took at this early and crucial turning point adumbrated that of the large majority of African Americans who came into the orbit of Adventism in the following decades. And it leads us to reflect on

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<sup>29</sup> Untitled transcript of Dr. Howard's statement dated 30 March 1907, General Conference Archives.

<sup>30</sup> A.G. Daniells to W.H. Green, 23 Nov. 1908, General Conference Archives.

something perhaps even more amazing than the fact that people like James Howard were drawn to Adventism. Why did most of them choose to stay, despite the manifestly unjust and paternalistic pattern dramatized in Washington, D.C. during the first decade of the twentieth century?

James H. Howard was a self-respecting black man — intensely dedicated to the well-being of his oppressed race. He was also an American who made a career of federal government service. But, to race and nationality, he had added Adventism as a third source of identity that took priority over rather than fusing easily with the other two.

“I am more a Seventh-day Adventist than a colored man,” he testified during the 1889-1890 crisis.<sup>31</sup> Adventism conferred on him an identity, and with it a sense of dignity, significance, and destiny that gripped his being at a level much deeper than a set of convincing theological propositions, a grip not easily loosened by the vicissitudes of life in the world or the church.

For Dr. Howard, the validity of Ellen White’s prophetic gift and the visible organization tied together by the General Conference fused inseparably with “the truth” — the “last message of mercy” as components of the Adventist identity and the cause it entailed. Efforts, such as by made by Sheafe, to sustain an Adventist identity based on its doctrines detached from the other components proved unsustainable, despite the formidable power of their appeal to racial justice.

But the Adventist identity could only be viable and determinative for Dr. Howard because absolute racial equality was inherent in “the truth” that he was certain would triumph. The errors of “Conference brethren” could not change that, nor could any particular set of leaders even claim ownership over the God-ordained organizational vehicle for that truth.

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<sup>31</sup> Howard to Olsen, 3 Nov. 1889.



Similarly, Dr. Howard's confidence in Ellen White's prophetic gift could withstand puzzling and perplexing counsel to accommodate racist social norms for the sake of missional expedience *so long as* the trajectory of her witness pointed to racial equality as heaven's norm and the triumph of a gospel that erases invidious racial distinctions preparatory to the final realization of God's kingdom.

Ellen White's testimony to the Washington churches in October 1908 regarding the near-term response to the race question went contrary to Dr. Howard's convictions concerning the purity of the church's racial witness: "If it should be recommended that and generally practiced in all our Washington churches, that white and black believers assemble in the same house of worship and be seated promiscuously in the building, many evils would result," she wrote. The church's "work with both races would be greatly hindered."

At the same time, her testimony remained tethered to the principle of equality she had set forth in 1891 and which defined the future toward which the movement of God was headed. Even the accommodation she urged came with the reminder that "God has marked out no color line..." There should be no policy of "absolute exclusion" for both "white and colored people have the same Creator and are saved by the redeeming grace of the same Saviour" and are headed for the same heaven.<sup>32</sup>

Unfortunately, no sources that would shed more light on Dr. Howard's own thinking about this pivotal moment have come to light. But his experience, along with that of his congregation, in the 27 years that remained for him, reflects a settledness within the Adventist framework, drawing on its resources and pushing its limitations as far as possible in developing educational

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<sup>32</sup> Ellen G. White to our churches in Washington, D.C., Letter 304, 1908, 19 Oct. 1908, Ellen G. White Estate.

opportunities for black youth in Washington, as well as young females in Ethiopia.<sup>33</sup>

### **Conclusion and Lessons for Today**

I have chosen to devote the bulk of this study to the perspective of one individual in hopes of drawing attention to some promising and largely unexplored ways of situating African American Adventist history.

*The urban context:* The “southern work” and the initiatives of J. Edson White and the Southern Missionary Society have held the dominant, central place in the historiography of black Adventism during this early period – the first chapter, so to speak, of the black Adventist story. But during this same era, quickly on the heels of Edson White’s southern mission, Washington, D.C., then the unrivaled cultural and population center of Black America, also became the locale for the largest concentration of black Adventist membership. It is at least equally determinative as the Deep South as the arena for Adventism’s initial grappling with race relations and in which both its promise as a movement with compelling appeal to African Americans, and the failures constricting its realization were dramatized.

The urban context of course looms far larger in African American history during the era of “great migration” following World War I, but, as Dr. Howard pointed out in his exhortations to church leaders around the turn of the twentieth century, three of the top four black population cities in the nation were Washington, D.C. and, nearby on the mid-Atlantic coast, Baltimore and Philadelphia.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> A.E. Webb, “James M. Howard, M.D.,” *Review and Herald* (20 Feb. 1936), 21.

<sup>34</sup> J.H. Howard to A.G. Daniells, 15 Feb. 1903, Ellen G. White Estate Incoming Correspondence.

It is not simply a matter of population mass, but the fact that, as Dr. Howard put it, many of the “most intelligent colored people” resided in these cities, forming a thriving social and cultural network, including numerous newspapers with great potential for both good and harm in influencing receptiveness to the Adventist message.<sup>35</sup> “I wish some of our prominent men would take pains to become acquainted with the colored people who have had advantages, instead of taking the opinions of those who will not, or do not represent aright,” Howard wrote to O.A. Olsen.<sup>36</sup> That missional advice, I suggest, holds true for historical study. What we have seen of the Washington, D.C. story suggests the value of taking pains to become acquainted with both the context and the rich body of black-generated sources in urban settings for illuminating the black Adventist experience. It also leads to my second point.

*African American and religious and intellectual context:* The overarching context of racial injustice and conflict in America almost always receives some attention in studies relating to black Adventism — it is unavoidable. The aspirations and demands of black Adventists are noted, but my impression is that the preponderant interest has been to measure how well (or poorly) the dominant white Adventists have treated a relatively powerless and disadvantaged black minority. With the exception of R. Clifford Jones’ study of J.K. Humphrey,<sup>37</sup> I am not aware of much effort to go deeply into black religious and political thought, exploring how black Americans saw their needs and the range of options and strategies they explored to resolve them.

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<sup>35</sup> Howard to E.G. White, 10 July 1903.

<sup>36</sup> Howard to Olsen, 27 Jan. 1890.

<sup>37</sup> R. Clifford Jones, *James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventists* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2006).

A small but dynamic black Adventist movement took shape during the three decades spanning from the late 1880s to the late the 1910s, amidst the final demise of Reconstruction-era efforts to construct a racially equitable civic order, the death of Frederick Douglass, the onset of legally codified segregation in the South, and the new elevation of racist ideologies nationwide. James Howard represents a striking number of high-achieving, politically aware African Americans seeking solutions who found Adventism through their own initiative, rather than in response to efforts specially directed to the black population, and who came to see in it an appealing, alternative path to racial uplift as well as religious meaning (see Appendix A).

The specific political context of the Republican party's turn away from equal rights as a meaningful priority in the 1890s, thus opening the door for legal imposition of white supremacy in the South, illuminates the turn to Adventism that some took, including Sheafe and Dr. Mary Britton of Lexington, Kentucky.<sup>38</sup>

James H. Howard's quest for a pure, radical gospel in preparation for Jesus return, accompanied by an outpouring of the Holy Spirit manifest in overcoming racial prejudice, invites further study in the light of the various holiness and Pentecostal movements prominent among Americans of both races during this period. Many of them were racially mixed, to varying degrees and with varying longevity. The evidence from Dr. Howard's correspondence and numerous other sources about the understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit's work in the Washington church during the 1890s bears resemblance to that of a holiness group known as the Evening Light Saints, which

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<sup>38</sup> Douglas Morgan, "Adventism's Promise for Black Liberation," *Spectrum* (Winter 2016): 71-78,

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became the denomination known as the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) or the Church of God Reformation movement.<sup>39</sup>

My hope is that the story of James Howard elicits interest in the potential of re-framing the story of Adventism's emergence in black America. The assumption, implicit at least, underlying most of the relevant historiography, is that Adventism is "white" in its essence, with its benefits belatedly extended to people of color, many of whom embrace it, but who then find themselves relegated to the margins where they experience unfair and condescending treatment. The story then revolves around their efforts to achieve equal treatment as a minority in a religious movement that is, in its historic and perpetual core, of, for, and by white people.

The contextual frames I propose reveal instead forward-thinking, educated, professional African Americans deeply dedicated to the cause of their people, who saw in Adventism the promise of holistic racial redemption and who took the initiative in claiming an identity that was both race-transcending and race-affirming. The dissonance they experienced when reality betrayed these aspirations drove some away while others persisted in the project of aligning performance with promise, despite the slowness of its progress, in faith that the purposes of the God who raised the movement would prevail.

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<sup>39</sup> "The Evening Light Saints held that interracial worship was a sign of the true church and gave racial prejudice a theological critique," writes historian Estrelida Y. Alexander. In contrast to the typical holiness testimony to being "saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost," the Evening Light Saints spoke being "saved, sanctified, and prejudice removed." See, Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 82-83; Calvin W. Edwards and Gary Land, *Seeker After Light: A.F. Ballenger, Adventism, and American Christianity* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2000); Gary Land, "At the Edges of Holiness: Seventh-day Adventism Receives the Holy Ghost," *Fides et Historia* (Summer/Fall 2001): 13-30.

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## Appendix A

### *Prominent Black Converts to Adventism, ca. 1875-1905*

<b>Alphonzo Barry (d. 1914):</b>	Temperance lecturer; minister
<b>Mary E. Britton (1855-1925):</b>	Educator, physician, social reformer
<b>James R. Buster (1857-1907):</b>	Restaurateur; colporteur, minister
<b>Franklin H. Bryant (1877-1909):</b>	Author, educator, attorney
<b>James Alexander Chiles (1860-1930):</b>	Attorney; argued civil rights case in SCOTUS
<b>William Hawkins Green (1871-1928):</b>	Attorney, minister
<b>James K. Humphrey (1877-1952):</b>	Minister/evangelist
<b>Charles M. Kinney (1855-1951):</b>	Minister, colporteur, church planter
<b>Anna Knight (1874-1972):</b>	Educator, medical missionary
<b>Lewis C. Sheafe (1859-1938):</b>	Minister/evangelist
<b>Rosetta Douglass Sprague</b>	Social reformer/advisor to

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<b>(1839-1906):</b>	Fredrick Douglass
<b>Matthew C. Strachan (1875-1951):</b>	Minister, educator, social reformer
<b>Franklin W. Warnick (1868-1942):</b>	Minister, educator



## **Make America Healthy Again: Seventh-day Adventists, Cookies, and the Health Message from 1910 to 1930**

**Kristopher C. Erskine**

### **Abstract**

On the table spread of Adventist histories and biographies, many of the dishes have already been sampled. Left cold on the corner of the table behind the narratives of church leaders, missions, sanitariums and other institutions, however, is the history of Adventist cookie bakeries. Adventist families like the McKees, Casons, Byrds, Dortchs, Callicotts, and Bishops have dominated commercial sweet cake and cookie baking in the South since the 1910s and found success in sweet cake baking even as the depression deepened into the 1930s. While the culture of Adventism today is less accepting of the industry of sugar, many of those who became cookie bakers were devout Adventists and were migrating from professions in medicine and the ministry. Many had also come to cookies from other food work in sanitariums, or as farmers, or grocers. Some started baking right out of college, but very few came from a business background until the 1930s. Commercially baked cookies were probably a healthier option than mom's cookies in the 1910s. It was at this pivotal moment that Adventists began migrating to cookie bakeries by the dozens. Between 1910 and 1930 there were more than one hundred Adventists who entered cookie baking. By the 1970s, another

hundred had joined their ranks. These bakers were raised in and around Adventist centers of gravity, such as Battle Creek. They were physicians, pastors, nurses, Adventist publishers, and teachers. Were they furthering the health message by selling cookies?

For the first time, oral histories have been taken with many of these bakers, their surviving families, and with the men and women who managed their baking empires. These oral histories were conducted with more than forty subjects in cities throughout the South, from Daytona to Dallas, from to Birmingham to Winston-Salem, Rome, Savannah, Baton Rouge, Knoxville, Keene, and Chattanooga.

The author has utilized primary sources at the libraries of both Southern Adventist University and Southwestern Adventist University. The digital archive at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist's Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research was also heavily utilized. College annual yearbooks and bulletins, and student records were consulted, as were the private collections of many of those interviewed for this research. Hundreds of newspapers were scoured, as were census records, city directories, and military records, and archives throughout the South.

By the 1980s most of these bakeries were gone but this culinary biography suggests that not only might these bakers have believed themselves part of the Adventist health message, but that the contemporary application of that Adventist health message is missing a few ingredients.

#### Key Words

Seventh-day Adventist, health message, cookie, culinary history, food history, Jack's Cookies, Dortch, Rex Callicott, Rufus Lee Ward.

## **Introduction**

The 1910s brought shifts in cultural tides unseen in the United States since the Civil War. Perhaps most obvious in this decade was the growing popularity of motorized transport and the continuous rumbling advance of the steamrollers improving roads across the nation. Yet equally important in that shift were the First World War and the progressive amendments. Less apparent, but of equal import from a cultural perspective, was the revolution of food production and shopping, both of which gained both attention and momentum in the 1900s and 1910s; the advent of self-serve shopping in 1916, for example, permanently changed how Americans shopped.<sup>1</sup> Those tidal changes occurred over a remarkably short period of just a few years. Partially enabling this shift were new food safety laws in the United States. In the first two decades of the 1900s more Americans died from food they ate than from causes like cancer, heart disease, or Alzheimer’s—the leading causes of disease-related deaths in the United States a century later. Aside from assuaging hunger, what you put into your mouth often had fatal consequence.

It is within this context that we find the Seventh-day Adventist health message. Seventh-day Adventists (SDA or Adventist) were among the leaders of a generation of Americans who advocated a healthy diet, exercise, and fresh air. Armies of physicians and nurses at sanitariums across the nation and around the world prescribed clean living to the sick and healthy alike. Adventist sanitarium and church-affiliated publishers helped educate readers on these health principles. Meanwhile, bakeries at these sanitariums cooked up plant-based foods, fresh breads, and fresh fruits and vegetables. The sanitarium, however, was not the only Adventist institution building a church-wide culture of better health. Adventist educational institutions also encouraged

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<sup>1</sup> What is widely believed to have been the first self-serve grocery store, a Piggly Wiggly, opened in Memphis, Tennessee in 1916.

students—especially the females—to take courses in baking and often sold bread to their local communities. In the imagination of many Seventh-day Adventists today, particularly one who was raised in the church and attended an Adventist academy or college, those bakeries might feature men and women in white baker's hats pulling hardy wheat bread from the oven, cutting it into wide slices and enjoying it steaming hot with a little honey or butter. The imagination is helped, no doubt, by the crumbling bakery ruins of yesteryear scattered across Adventist campuses throughout North America, most of them long shuttered. It is these physical ruins that continue to have symbolic meaning for generations of Adventist youth who have attended these schools, and to give Adventists part of their cultural identity.

While this legacy may provide a cultural frame of the Adventist bakery, it is incomplete. In fact, the history of Adventist foodways, in general, is largely unstudied. While the Adventist historian is busy writing about Protestant missionaries in China, or perhaps on American diplomatic history, the veggie links are getting cold and the bread is getting stale. Because it has been a topic so long in the oven, so to speak, the historian will find—not to belabor the pun—a set table rich not only with breads, fruits, and plant-based foods, but also with cookies. While academy bread bakers, doctors, nurses, pastors, colporteurs, book publishers, and sanitarium workers were busy saving American souls—and their health—their colleagues were leaving these very ministries by the dozens to become cookie bakers. Between 1910 and 1930 nearly one hundred Seventh-day Adventists are known to have entered the cookie baking business. By the 1970s another hundred are known to have joined their ranks; approximately two hundred Adventist cookie bakers have been documented from as early as 1914.

Nearly all of these bakeries have closed. There is no real mystery to their disappearance—businesses close and are sold in a market economy. The real mystery is why so many Seventh-day

Adventists left careers in the ministry to enter cookie baking. Included in this group are a few cookie bakers who themselves never worked for the church but who came from families of church workers. Here, the focus is on these church-affiliated bakers; specifically highlighted within this group are those who entered cookie baking between 1910 and 1930. Of the one hundred Adventists who entered cookie baking during this period, approximately half of them came from families heavily invested in church employment.

The fragmented nature of the archival collections, however extensive these collections truly are, develops an incomplete image. Those document collections are primarily the digital archive through the Archives Statistics and Research maintained by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (ASTR), and the massive collections of digitized documents available from [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com), [newspapers.com](http://newspapers.com), [archive.org](http://archive.org), and [ellenwhite.org](http://ellenwhite.org). In addition to these collections research has included multiple on-site archives and interviews with retired bakers or the children and grandchildren of bakers long-deceased. These interviews have taken place in person from Texas to Florida to North Carolina, and every state between, except for Arkansas. Phone interviews and email correspondence has been conducted with bakers' descendants from Maryland to California. Although there are few footnotes in this article noting these particular interviews—because the bulk of that research pertained to bakeries that opened after the 1920s—much of the research here would have been impossible without those interviews and hundreds of phone calls and emails. That research culminated in a book-length manuscript which was privately published by one of the bakers' families. That manuscript tells the story of those Adventist cookie bakers.

So why did so many Adventists go into commercial cookie baking in the 1910s and 1920s?<sup>2</sup> In short, there is no clear answer. What is entirely missing from this research has been letters, diaries, and personal notes; these bakeries and their families have virtually no textual record of their baking history and what record does survive from that period is often limited to what the grandchildren can remember. As fragmented as this history is, for those who started baking cookies prior to roughly 1930 the answer is even less clear. The year 1930 is somewhat of an arbitrary date, yet what does seem clear is that after the 1920s many of the new bakers seem to have purchased existing bakeries from other Adventists, opened up additional branches of the family bakery, or assumed control the family bakery from their parents or an older sibling.

Prior to 1930 one can see a pattern. About half of the one hundred pre-1930 bakers came from church working families into the cookie profession. For a husband who worked for an Adventist-owned health food publishing company and whose wife was a nurse at an Adventist sanitarium, could baking cookies commercially somehow have been synonymous with good health? For a physician at a sanitarium in Kansas to converge with a nurse

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<sup>2</sup> Many of these bakers were wholesale businesses. The list of bakers was developed from city directories, newspapers, census records, military and draft cards, and from Adventist publications. The term “baker” or “bakery” will refer to cookie bakers or cookie bakeries – not bread bakeries – unless otherwise noted. Measuring how many bakeries and how many bakers existed is problematic. Some bakers, for example, opened multiple bakeries in different locations, or perhaps closed one shop, moved across the country, and opened another shop by another name. Is this one baker or two? If there is a partnership for one bakery, are there multiple bakers, or a single baker? And how do we count the bakery if that partnership opens another bakery with the same name, but hires a different Adventist manager? Sometimes a husband and wife opened up a single bakery. In some cases an entire family owned and operated the bakery. At other times two separate bakers appear to have partnered to open a third bakery under a different name. Occasionally a single baker will pass through the hands of three or four Adventist bakers or families of bakers over the course of its lifetime. For this reason a precise number of bakers, or bakeries, has not been offered.

from the Madison Sanitarium in Tennessee and open a cookie bakery, what is the explanation? For two male nurses at sanitariums on the west coast who open a vegetarian food factory in Portland, Oregon, and then open a bakery that specialized in cookies and other sweet goods, what is the motive? Or for a man who opened Vegetarian Cafeteria in Oklahoma City, and then years later opened a cookie bakery in the same city, what were his thoughts? In one case two brothers become cookie bakers, while the other two brothers died while missionaries in India and Burma. The father of these four boys was a pastor in Texas. And why did that same father, also former missionary, leave his pastorate to bake cookies? Could he minister more effectively in a cookie shop than behind the pulpit? Were cookies part of the health message?

Of those cookie bakers who never entered church work themselves, some came from families where siblings or parents were church workers or medical professionals. One family, for example—the Callicotts—had eight siblings, all of whom entered either baking or church work (or married husbands who did); four were bakers and four were church workers, until one of the pastors left his position and became a cookie baker. The Callicott brother who was the most successful cookie baker never worked for the church but donated generously to Ozark Adventist Academy and the conferences of the Southwestern Union of Seventh-day Adventists over his lifetime.<sup>3</sup> This was Rex E. Callicott. Ozark Academy's girls' residence hall was, at one time, named Callicott Hall, after Rex. The main administration building at Ozark Academy is still named after Callicott—the R. E. Callicott Educational Center. Callicott also has a park named after him adjacent to the campus of Southwestern Adventist University. Mr. Callicott started baking cookies in the early or middle 1920s.

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<sup>3</sup> Richard W. Bendall, "Rex Callicott... A Friend of Youth," *Southwestern Union Record* (March 1987): 2-3.

These bakers, who did not work for the church, but whose parents or siblings were church workers are relevant inasmuch as their families and their own contributions to church institutions, of both time and material, are evidence of the deep culture of religious devotion and commitment to the Adventist message within those homes.

What motivated these church families to leave a ministry within the church to stand behind the counter of a cookie shop is, in the end, largely speculation. All of these men and women have passed away, as have all of their children. What did they understand about cookies was consistent with the Adventist ministry and mission?

### **Food, Disease, and the Health Message**

It is out of context for Americans today, but in 1900 more people died from food related sicknesses than from any other cause. The Pure Food and Drug Act, passed in 1906, was the first of several major pieces of legislation intended to bring accountability and safety to the food industry. This particular law made illegal the “manufacture, sale, or transportation of adulterated or misbranded or poisonous or deleterious foods, drugs, medicines, and liquors.”<sup>4</sup> The Pure Food and Drug Act was highly controversial, and one of the hottest political issues of its day. But it was this law, perhaps more than anything else, which officially kicked off a national consciousness regarding food safety.

Still, for the next two decades more Americans continued to die from foodborne disease—or diseases that were believed connected to nutrition—than from any other cause. During the first decade of the 1900s between two and three times more deaths

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Congress, “Pure Food and Drug Act,” *The Statutes at Large of the United States of America, from December 1905, to March 1907, Concurrent Resolutions of the Two Houses of Congress*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1907): 768-772.



were attributed to tuberculosis than to cancer.<sup>5</sup> Tuberculosis, enteritis (food poisoning), and diarrhea (often brought on by eating unsanitary foods) were three of the top four leading killers in the United States. It was 1924 before these three causes decline and drop off the list of the top four killers.<sup>6</sup> At the time, experts argued that your home kitchen was not safe, it was not even safe to share a cup or dish towel. “No household,” one author in the *Journal of Home Economics* wrote in 1920, “can afford to neglect the practice of common approved methods of sanitation... typhoid fever has been spread many times through the neglect of this simple precaution.”<sup>7</sup> This same publication also argued in 1920 for more oversight of university level home economics courses, arguing that not nearly enough emphasis was placed on these programs.<sup>8</sup> There was deep concern over the safety of the food Americans ate, and the thrust of the response was to both increase the awareness among housewives to keep clean kitchens, and from producers of food, to encourage those housewives to buy factory-made foods which were marketed as safer than homemade food.

Well-intentioned food manufacturers met the increased demand and marketed foods as clean and pure with advertisements that often evoked images of whiteness and beauty. The Collegedale, Tennessee’s Southern Junior College (SJC) yearbook, *SoJuConian*, for much of the 1920s included an advertisement for Iten Biscuit Co., which marketed itself as a

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<sup>5</sup> Tuberculosis is not a foodborne disease but in the first two decades of the 1900s nutrition was considered a TB prevention measure. “Leading Causes of Death, 1900-1998,” *National Vital Statistics System*, available at [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/lead1900\\_98.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/lead1900_98.pdf); Gavin Churchyard, et al., “What we Know about Tuberculosis Transmission: An Overview.” *The Journal of Infectious Diseases* 216, no. 6 (October 2017): 407-16.

<sup>6</sup> “Leading Causes of Death, 1900-1998.”

<sup>7</sup> “Is the Average Home Sanitary?” *Journal of Home Economics* 12, no. 3 (1920): 130.

<sup>8</sup> Jean Krueger, “A Comparative Study of Home Economics Courses in Colleges,” *Journal of Home Economics* 12, no. 6 (1920): 250.

“Snow White Bakery,” conjuring up images of purity.<sup>9</sup> Wonder Bread capitalized on the concept of purity and health by bleaching its flour white. Ward’s Bakery, a major American bread manufacturer since the 1880s, marketed its bread as made in “the snow white temples of cleanliness.” Further, Ward promised not only that, “Our Physician Guards Your Interests,” but that “the hand never touches the bread at the two great Ward plants.”<sup>10</sup>

Albert’s Bakery, a Canada-based operation, even advertised that all of its workers had been x-rayed and were guaranteed to be tuberculosis free.<sup>11</sup> These bakers strove for “Purity Absolute.”<sup>12</sup> New food technologies meant that even the flour was untouched by human hands; a consumer could purchase a loaf of bread upon which human hands had laid nary a finger on a single ingredient during any part of any process, from the sowing of the grain seed until the consumer opened the bag of sliced bread.<sup>13</sup>

It was not just the idea of purity in the context of food safety that companies wanted to sell, they also marketed their bread as nutritious and wholesome. Although food marketing perennially capitalizes on the consumer’s desire for good health, it was of particular interest during the 1900s and 1910s when the leading causes of death for Americans were, or were believed to be, connected to nutrition intake. Holsum Bread is an example of a product’s branding that was used as a marketing tool. And unlike in all the history of mankind, if you ate factory-made bread, there was no more guessing at the oven temperature. With electric or gas factory ovens—instead of fired home ovens—the dough was consistent, thoroughly baked, bubble-free, and the problem of

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<sup>9</sup> Southern Junior College, *The Southland 1927* (Collegedale, TN: The So-Ju-Conian Organization of Southern Junior College, 1927): np.

<sup>10</sup> “Our Physician Guards Your Interests.” *The Sun*, New York, November 24, 1911.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*; also see John C. Abell, “July 1, 1910: Give Us This Day Our Automated Bread,” *Wired*, June 30, 2010.

<sup>13</sup> C.H. Bailey, “A Biochemical Survey of Bread Production,” *Journal of Home Economics* 22, no. 4 (1927): 128-130.

unsanitary kitchens was eliminated. All of the housewife's problems were solved simply by making the more convenient, and safer, choice and buying factory-made food at the grocers. It was an easy way for the homemaker to bring healthy food to her husband and children. Cookie bakeries were very much a part of this march to healthier living. Hydrox cookies, the original Oreotype cookie, were introduced in 1908 (Oreos were not introduced until 1912). Even the name Hydrox was a marketing tool, designed to suggest purity by combining the words hydrogen and oxygen; a name that, more than a century later, evokes images of Comet, Drano, or some other clog-fixing or cleaning product.<sup>14</sup>

It was within this growing healthier food national consciousness that the Adventist church was also marketing its own health message. Adventists had developed a culture of healthful living decades before 1910, but in this national teachable moment Adventists seem to have envisioned an opportunity to engage the public in a food ministry. Adventists were already neck deep in evangelism, opening new schools and hospitals, and spreading the message of education, healthcare, and healthful living. Combining this triumvirate of principles that are still near and dear to the Adventist heart was the sanitarium. Adventist-owned or operated sanitariums and hospitals educated residents, fed them the most cutting-edge health food—or just fresh grains, fruits, and vegetables—and advanced a vigorous lifestyle of activity fueled by natural medicines, alternative therapies, and clean air. By the mid-1910s there were Adventist sanitariums across the United States and around the world. These sanitariums were among a generation of pioneers of the modern health food and healthy lifestyle movement.

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<sup>14</sup> Philip K. Wilson and W. Jeffrey Hurst, "Chocolate as Medicine: A Quest over the Centuries" (Cambridge: The Royal Society of Chemistry, 2012): 5.3, "Pure and Unadulterated Chocolate"; Paul Lukas, "Oreos to Hydrox: Resistance is Futile," *Fortune*, March 15, 1999.

How do cookies fit into the healthy living movement? One will not find cookies on the Battle Creek Sanitarium menu. One will find prune toast on that menu, as well as nuttolene toast, bromose, maltol, dyspeptic wafers, and carbon crackers. Or one could choose nutta, or wheatose gruel.<sup>15</sup> Even if palatable, these words do not excite the taste buds, although, like Hydrox cookies, these names were likely intended to make the consumer feel that their food was safe. Still, you might rather have one of your grandmother's warm cookies. Perhaps that is what Adventist brothers Duane and Foster Wheeler were thinking when they created the Grandma's Cookies bakery and brand in 1914. In 1907 the family was in Santa Clara, California, and uncle Fred Wheeler was a minister. Duane and Foster's father George owned a health food restaurant, the Hygiea. George was later a colporteur, a missionary, and then he returned to the United States to work for the Central California Bible House, and finally he became a pastor. This family, like many others, produced both cookie bakers and church workers.

### **Adventists and Health**

Admittedly, it is hard for the Adventist in the twenty-first century to frame cookies as health food, or cookie bakers as ministers of the health message. But during an era where there was fear from the things you ate, and factory-made baked goods were marketed as healthier, could cookie bakers credibly claim to be restoring American health? Although factory-made foods were marketed as a safe haven, American housewives appear to have done plenty of cooking at home, or at least the expectation that wives would cook at home sustained the publication of new cookbooks. A search for cookbooks from the 1910s through the 1920s in the digital archive, archive.org, returned 893 results, and

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<sup>15</sup> "Menu," Battle Creek Sanitarium, Battle Creek, Michigan. Unknown date. Accessed from [http://menus.nypl.org/menu\\_pages/1963/explore](http://menus.nypl.org/menu_pages/1963/explore), on May 19, 2020.

there are plenty of cookie recipes to be found on their pages. Although no studies were found that would easily support this assertion, it seems likely that by 1920 most housewives continued to cook at home but had fallen into a pattern of buying staple items like bread and cookies from the store a little more often than their mothers may have. Perhaps the clearest evidence in support of this assertion is the advent and success of so many cookie bakeries and other mass-produced food makers from 1910 onwards. Oreo, Grandma's Cookies, Mother's Favorite Cookies, and the Moon Pie are but a few examples of well-known mass-produced cookie brands that were introduced to the market in the 1910s. Even the Adventists got into the game of mass-produced food and opened factories from Loma Linda to Battle Creek.

Yet the oatmeal cookies, vanilla wafers, and coconut macaroons the Adventist cookie bakers were producing do not appear to have caught the eye of prophet leader Ellen G. White and the Adventist health message. Although White had much to say on diet and was consistently and undeniably opposed to tobacco and alcohol, her thoughts on sugar were closer to her views on salt, milk, and spices—views that indicate a mix of tolerance, rejection, patience, and evolution. What is consistent and found throughout her writings is that White believed in a healthy diet and does advise against the “free use” of milk, salt, sugar, and spices, and occasionally she even claims to have given them up on her own table, yet she does not wage a calculated campaign against these food items, and often comes down in the middle. Even when she is firmly and urgently opposed to meats, spices, and rich foods such as fats and butter, she does not target sugar as an area in need of immediate reform, as in her statement below:

But at present our burden is not upon [milk and sugar]. The people are so far behind that we see it is all they can bear to have us draw the line upon their

injurious indulgences and stimulating narcotics. We bear positive testimony against tobacco, spirituous liquors, snuff, tea, coffee, flesh meats, butter, spices, rich cakes, mince pies, a large amount of salt, and all exciting substances used as articles of food.<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, White leaves the door open to reconsider sugar at a later time; yet, even later she does not write or suggest, definitively and with the certitude she has here for tobacco—and, often, meat—that items like sugar and milk should be abandoned completely. Adventists in the 1910s and 1920s simply were not hearing from their church fathers, and sisters, that the abandonment of sugar was a matter of salvation, nor even a matter of particular import. There is no evidence of a concerted effort to eliminate sweet foods from the tables of Adventist colleges and academies across the country. Bakeries were integral to the Adventist educational institution, yet there is no coherent narrative that these institutions steered clear of pastries and sweet breads in totality. A plug for the Southern Junior College bakery in the 1928 yearbook relates this probably fictional conversation between family members while the daughter is home on break from Southern Junior College, but provides some context:

‘Mother, this pie is delicious! I always love to visit home on my vacation because you have such good lemon pies.’

‘Just a minute, John, don’t be so hasty. Give your sister, Mary, credit for this meal. She wanted to cook the first meal for you when you arrived home. You see

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<sup>16</sup> Ellen White, “An Appeal for Burden Bearers,” in *Testimonies for the Church*, (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1875): 21; Ellen White, “The Use of Sugar,” *Ellen White Defend*, accessed January 31, 2019, <http://www.ellenwhitedefend.com/subjects/sugar.htm>.

she has been studying cooking at S.J.C. and I think she has done well.’

‘Well! Well! Mary; tell us all about it.’<sup>17</sup>

Even at SJC, an Adventist school with a culture of deep religious tradition, there are tales in 1928 of students learning how to bake sweet, traditionally sugary foods at college. Thus, even if official anti-sugar directives were in place, the culture had not followed. Browsing through the SJC yearbooks and catalogs in the 1920s it is clear that the college embraced a philosophy that would have avoided the *regular* and *free*—to use E.G. White’s words—consumption of sugary foods, but there was certainly no evidence of a full exclusion of sugar from SJC dining hall food in the 1920s.

Any discussion of health principles and Ellen White, however, is incomplete without the context within which White lived and wrote. During the Third Great Awakening (roughly the 1850s through the early 1900s), healthful living and temperance were perennial watchwords. Names like Sylvester Graham, Mary Baker Eddy, Bernarr MacFadden, Horace Fletcher, and John Harvey Kellogg made healthful eating and living popular. Within the middle of this tempest of temperance was Ellen White, very much a product of her time with regard to the Adventist health message. Because the Third Great Awakening and the temperance movement occurred more or less simultaneously it is almost impossible to disentangle one from the other, and much of what developed as important aspects of Adventist culture—education, healthful living, and natural foods—is also at least partially a product of that time.

Ruth Clifford Engs, in her book *Clean Living Movements*, identifies the most vocal of the reformers and temperance

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<sup>17</sup> Southern Junior College, *The Southland 1928* (Collegedale, TN: The So-Ju-Conian Organization of Southern Junior College, 1928): Not paginated, look for “Domestic Science,” McKee Library, Collegedale, TN.

groups.<sup>18</sup> Groups like the Anti-Saloon League, the American Temperance Society, Daughters of Temperance, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and many others, led the way in changing how Americans viewed alcohol and "devil's sticks," cigarettes. Equally important to the movement were organizations like the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations (Y) which provided young people with a space in which they could not only develop healthy relationships but also develop their health. Organizations like the Y were the very definition of integrating Christian living with temperate living and sent thousands of missionaries to all corners of the globe during the Third Great Awakening.

The impact of the religious awakening and the temperance movement of the last decades of the 1800s are evident in the growth of both the missionary and prohibition movements in the first two decades of the 1900s. The zeitgeist of American culture was moving against alcohol during Ellen White's life and times. American women were especially sympathetic to this cause and often led the way in temperance and prohibition efforts. As an American woman, White was right at home. And so was the church-at-large; by the end of the 1920s there were fifty-seven Adventist academies and colleges and fifteen sanitariums and hospitals in North America.<sup>19</sup> Although an extensive history of these institutions was not compiled for this research, the rural locations of Adventist schools, the historical prominence of the bakery on Adventist residential campuses, and the Adventist

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<sup>18</sup> Ruth Clifford Engs, *Clean Living Movements: American Cycles of Health Reform* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2001).

<sup>19</sup> H.E. Rogers, *Statistical Report for 1929 of Seventh-day Adventist Conferences, Missions, and Institutions: The Sixty-seventh Annual Report, Year Ending December 31, 1929*, (Takoma Park, Washington: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1919).



work-study educational philosophy would suggest that all of them operated their own bakeries.<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, baking was one of the many vocations Ellen White proscribed for young people on school campuses, writing, “Various industries should be carried on in our school... Preparation should be made for the teaching of blacksmithing, painting, shoemaking, and for cooking, baking, washing, mending, typewriting, and printing. Every power at our command is to be brought into this training work, that students may go forth well equipped for the duties of practical life.”<sup>21</sup> Thus, in addition to regular cooking, which is noted as separate from baking, a bread culture was literally baked into the young men and women who spent formative years on these campuses. This was particularly true if they attended an Adventist college after three or four years at an Adventist boarding academy. At college one can imagine shared experiences of their respective academy’s bakery and other industries in the same way that Adventist university students of subsequent generations might universally reflect on the prohibition of radios in academy dorm rooms, social distancing guidelines with the opposite gender, marching in the gym on Saturday evenings, joining the campus Medical Cadet Corps, or other lore from academy culture found across North America. Whether academy experiences were shared among college schoolmates or not, the bakery culture did build a qualitative common identity within the church.

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<sup>20</sup> *The Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* for each year of the 1920s records only one or two bakery industries in any given year in North America and which appear to be attached to educational institutions. However, a word search for “bakery” and “college bakery” in the ASTR periodical digital archives reveals that the yearbook data is incomplete. Further, it is unlikely that the yearbook would list a bakery as an industry if it was not serving as a commercial enterprise to the community, as academy and college industries have traditionally, but perhaps mistakenly, been understood. Many of these bakeries may have employed only a few students and served only the campus community.

<sup>21</sup> Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*. (California, Pacific Press Publishing, 1913), 310.

So strong was the cookie baking subculture that by the end of the 1920s there had existed more Adventist-owned cookie bakeries in North America—approximately one hundred—than existed academies, colleges, and sanitariums combined—seventy-two.<sup>22</sup> Stated another way, there were more Adventist cookie bakeries outside the church than bread bakeries inside church institutions. Over a period of several weeks Adventist institutions could serve 15,592 unique students and patients.<sup>23</sup> Bakeries need only have served 156 unique customers over the same several week period to have reached more people, and many bakeries served several hundred customers. One bakery posted a ‘for sale’ advertisement in the *Pacific Union Recorder*, writing that the “wholesale cookie and turnover business, doing about \$900 worth of business per week. Employ nine and ten men.”<sup>24</sup> The asking price was \$7,000. Another advertisement in the *Central Union Outlook* reported a bakery for sale and claimed the bakery was, “Doing about \$1,000.00 per week. Near two Adventist schools. Serves over 1,000 stores.”<sup>25</sup> The asking price was \$6,500. Most bakeries had asking prices of between \$2,000 and \$7,000, suggesting that most of these bakeries were clearing 156 unique customers over several weeks. It is not a perfect analogy, yet the bakeries may have been clearing ten times that number, and many do mention specific customer numbers in the several hundreds.

A cookie bakery, the bakers may have believed, was a ministry that could reach a different kind of customer. Part of the ministry would be as simple as remaining closed on the Sabbath. One Adventist cookie baker wrote this newsy bit for the Adventist

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<sup>22</sup> “Statistical Report for 1929.”

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 19-20. The number of students enrolled in Adventist schools, grades 1-16, in 1929 was 14,030. Adventist sanitarium claimed a capacity of 1,562, combined across all fifteen institutions. A sanitarium was a long-term stay facility, lasting perhaps several weeks.

<sup>24</sup> “Advertisements,” *Pacific Union Recorder* 22, no. 36 (April 19, 1923): 7.

<sup>25</sup> “Advertisements,” *Central Union Outlook* 13, no. 39 (September 30, 1924): 7.

publication, the *Southwestern Union Record* of his own cookie bakery in Spokane, Washington, in 1915,

Our business keeps good. I enjoy taking our Ford— [just think of it!]-and delivering cookies. We have a nice business for a Sabbath-keeper. We get our work all done Friday before night, then Sunday morning we go to baking for Monday delivery. Our phone hardly ever rings on the Sabbath. The people have found we don't do any business on that day; in fact we get them plenty of cookies before the Sabbath so they don't need to call us.<sup>26</sup>

When the bakeries sold, the Adventist owner often stipulated that they would only sell to a Sabbath keeper, and in a few cases “several other Adventists are employed” was given as the reason, hoping the Adventist bakers would remain a part of the bakery under new ownership.<sup>27</sup> When the bakers sold, a frequently noted reason was either to return to church work or to move their family closer to an Adventist school. The owner of Peerless Cookie Company in Texas noted in 1925, “My reason for selling is that I desire to move where I can put my children in one of our schools.”<sup>28</sup> Another cookie baker in Oklahoma included in his ‘for sale’ advertisement, “I find it necessary to sell in order to get closer to our college for my children.”<sup>29</sup> Robert Carson of Raleigh, North Carolina noted that he was selling his bakery because he “desires to answer call into the Lord’s work.”<sup>30</sup> Some bakers may have believed Carson was already in the Lord’s work. Carson was the manager of the Nebraska Sanitarium and Food Company, and

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<sup>26</sup> “From W.D. Dortch,” *Southwestern Union Record* 15, no. 43 (1916): 1.

<sup>27</sup> “Advertisements,” *Central Union Outlook* XVII, no. 13 (April 3, 1928): 7.

<sup>28</sup> “Advertisements,” *Southwestern Union Record* XXIV, no. 17 (April 28, 1925): 8.

<sup>29</sup> “Advertisements,” *Southwestern Union Record* XXV, no. 30 (July 27, 1926): 8.

<sup>30</sup> “Advertisements,” *Atlantic Union Gleaner* XXXII, no. 14 (April 5, 1933): 7.

later Wabash Valley Sanitarium, prior to entering cookie baking, but he seems to have retired after selling the bakery.<sup>31</sup>

The health principals embraced by Adventists were the “entering wedge,” and the Adventist publication *Life and Health* was one of the messengers of that entering wedge.<sup>32</sup> In 1926 *Life and Health* touted the usefulness of cookies in a regular diet, writing, “For endless ages the jam pot and the cookie jar have been pictured as the pantry tempters of childhood. Many a downfall has been laid at their door, for are they not ever just beyond reach? Now cookies and jams play a part in the child’s diet if they are not used to excess. Cookies, if simply made, are just a glorified breadstuff... As a part of the regular meal they are an excellent source of nourishment.”<sup>33</sup> This, from an article titled, “Right Foods Build Strong Children.” Might *Life and Health* have an example of a “simply made” cookie? In a 1918 monthly edition *Life and Health* does include a recipe for rolled oatmeal cookies. It is a recommendation for Sabbath breakfast. Of the 3.5 cups of total ingredients 1.25 cups of those are either brown sugar or hard shortening. That recipe was recreated for this research and the product did not taste unfamiliar; it was similar to a molasses bar in cookie form.<sup>34</sup> The citation of *Life and Health* here is not necessarily an example of the Adventist church encouraging its members to become cookie eaters; indeed, other references in this publication during the 1910s and 1920s recommend against a steady diet of cookies. Yet it should demonstrate that the idea of a few cookies was at least not contrary to the health message. And cookies may have even been compatible with the health message.

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<sup>31</sup> “U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918,” digital image s.v. “Robert Leonard Carson” (born August 15, 1873), *Ancestry.com*, accessed on May 21, 2020.

<sup>32</sup> “Read This,” *Columbia Union Visitor* 26, no. 1 (January 6, 1921): 6.

<sup>33</sup> “Right Food Builds Strong Children,” *Life and Health* 31, no. 1 (January 1926): 13.

<sup>34</sup> “Rolled Oat Cookies,” *Life and Health* 33, no. 7 (July 1918): 213. The baker-experimenter for this research was the author’s son, Kellen A. Erskine.

What better “entering wedge” for a lost soul than a cookie and at least one Adventist cookie baker equated his product with the health message. A Los Angeles-based Adventist-owned cookie bakery, Radio Baking Company, advertised “health cookies and whole wheat sticks” in the Adventist publication, *The Pacific Union Recorder*, in 1924, noting that these products were healthy because they “are made with brown sugar and Crisco.”<sup>35</sup> Another, Martin’s Cookie Company out of San Jose, California, in the same publication in 1932, advertised for sales positions and added that “conscientious Adventists can sell these as they contain no harmful ingredients.”<sup>36</sup> The “harmful ingredients” Martin may have been referring to in the context of Crisco, was lard or tallow. When Crisco was introduced in 1911 it was the first all-vegetable shortening and, if they were using Crisco, some Adventist cookie bakers may well have considered their animal-free cookies a legitimate offering to the health food ministry.

Yet within Martin Cookie’s advertisement is the hint that there may have been at least a conversation among Adventists in the context of cookies and the health message—and he assured readers that Adventists could sell them with a clean conscience. References to cookies in Adventist publications are found by the hundreds, and in a random sampling of more than three hundred of those several hundred references, none were found to have specifically indicated that abstaining from cookies was necessary or that cookie bakers were out of sync with the health message.<sup>37</sup>

Rather than spurning cookies the church seems to have embraced them. By the end of the 1920s at least one of the Adventist school bakeries were selling cookies commercially. In 1929 Southern Junior College reported that “The College Bakery has now added the production of cookies to its accomplishments.

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<sup>35</sup> “Special,” *Pacific Union Recorder* 24, no. 7 (September 25, 1924): 7.

<sup>36</sup> “Several,” *Pacific Union Recorder* 32, no. 1 (1932): 7.

<sup>37</sup> Those that did offer negative commentary on cookies suggested only that they should be eaten in moderation.

The cakes are being furnished to dealers along with the bread.”<sup>38</sup> And Southern reported that the bakery sold “very considerable quantities of cakes and pies.”<sup>39</sup> And in at least one case a former cookie baker from outside the church accepted a position to manage a college bakery. Cookie baker Floyd Walleker had grown up a missionary and pastor’s kid, and his father was still pastoring when Floyd started baking cookies in the 1920s. By 1929 Walleker is mentioned as manager of the Washington Missionary College commercial bakery.<sup>40</sup>

To contextualize the trend of cookie baking during this period, however inadequately such a sampling may be, a search was conducted on the ASTR digital archives for the words “cookie” and “cooky.” There were 1549 results, but only 221 of those references appear in publications after 1939.<sup>41</sup> The 1910s and 1920s were the heyday for Adventist cookie bakers.

However popular the trend was, not all Seventh-day Adventists were happy with the cookie heyday, and the cookie baking movement did not escape notice in the Adventist community. In the March 1925 issue of the *Southern Union Worker*, an article titled “WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR TALENTS?” encouraged readers to leave their “ordinary employment” and put their God-given talents to work in the ministry. Tennessee River Conference president H.E. Lysinger wrote, “Possibly some must follow common commercial business, but from the instruction we have, we fear that too many Seventh-day Adventists are going into, rather than getting out of, commercial enterprises (one of which is the cooky business—a business that is purely a money-making proposition and does not

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<sup>38</sup> “Collegedale Notes,” *Field Tidings* 21, no. 11 (March 13, 1929): 6.

<sup>39</sup> “Collegedale Notes,” *Field Tidings* 31, no. 22 (June 3, 1931): 7.

<sup>40</sup> “Washington Missionary College: News Notes,” *Columbia Union Visitor* 34, no. 46 (November 28, 1929): 3.

<sup>41</sup> A general search was made which included all periodicals available. Accessed on May 10, 2020, from <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/Forms/AllFolders.aspx>.

represent our message in any way, shape, or form).”<sup>42</sup> Although Tennessee, and the Southeast generally, would not become a center of gravity for Adventist cookie bakers for another decade or two, by 1925, when this article was written Lysinger would have already lost a small handful of church workers from his conference to the cookie baking industry.

Lysinger’s call to spiritual arms, and his exclusion of cookie bakers as part of that arsenal, suggests that Lysinger at least was hearing conversations that cookie baking was part of the Adventist ministry. If not, why specifically call out cookie bakers, and why explicitly claim that the cookie business was wholly unrelated to the church message. But even here, the cookie itself was not attacked because of its health properties. Lysinger continued, writing that, “every one [sic] [should] utilize every remaining hour of probationary time in aggressive work for the Master.” The call to spiritual arms is about saving the Niagara of souls that were, every minute, hurtling to their eternal damnation, while the business person was behind the till counting their coins. But clearly the cookie bakers had the attention of their fellow Adventists.

In the theological terms of the 1920s Lysinger might have been understood as a fundamentalist, wishing to adhere to traditional theology and evangelistic efforts, while the cookie bakers, if they thought of themselves as anything at all, would have been on the modernist side, offering a softer evangelism. Were the cookie bakers genuinely attempting to use cookies to evangelize and spread the health message? Without wading further into either the theory or the mission of the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy of the 1920s, it seems that Lysinger was off target. These cookie bakers were individuals, several of whom, spent time in prison for their religious beliefs in the 1880s and 1890s. Some

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<sup>42</sup> L. E. Lysinger, “WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR TALENTS,” *Southern Union Worker* 19 no. 14 (March 19, 1925): 2.

were missionaries, there was a publishing house vice president; they were physicians, nurses, colporteurs, and pastors. These were committed Adventists who held church offices, organized camp meetings, held Bible studies in their cookie shops, wrote for and edited weekly union newsletters, canvassers who spent months away from home while selling *Daniel and Revelation*, and sanitarium workers. These were men and women of deep faith whose *bona fides* were in order. Some of them would be sainted for their work in the church if Adventists offered such veneration. And there they are, baking cookies.

### **Adventists and Cookies**

They could be found all over the United States (Canadian cookie bakeries appear only after the 1920s). Surprisingly, they rarely appear in the cradle of Adventist civilization—Michigan and the Northeastern United States. And with the exception of the Pacific Northwest, the bakeries rarely appear in the northern half of the country. Bakeries appear in Kansas, but not Nebraska, Colorado but not Wyoming. The three bakeries found in the northern half of the United States appear as satellites to sanitariums or Adventist colleges—these were in Cincinnati, Chicago, and Battle Creek. By the 1930s the center of gravity had shifted from the Pacific and Southern states to the Southeastern and Southwestern states and roughly formed a triangle between Keene, Texas, Collegedale, Tennessee, and Tampa, Florida. There were some bakeries outside of that triangle, but most of those outliers were bakers who had family ties specifically to one of the three city-points on the triangle.

The very first Adventist cookie bakery may have been in Tallyrand, Kansas, in either 1904 or 1910, although evidence is not clear that these early bakeries primarily baked cookies; the family are only specifically noted as cookie bakers in 1929.<sup>43</sup> Tallyrand,

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<sup>43</sup> "Union News Notes: For Sale," *Field Tidings* 21, no. 28 (July 10, 1929): 8.



Kansas, even today, is a small town. It is difficult to imagine why a bakery would have opened there more than a century ago, and not difficult to imagine why it disappeared from public record just a few years later. This was the Austin family, parents Samuel and Martha, and their two sons, Fred and Donald. The brothers appear to have spent longer in cookie baking than their parents, but prior to baking cookies Fred worked in Battle Creek as a baker, and then opened a vegetarian food store in Knoxville, Tennessee. Finally, by 1920 the family has a bakery in Little Rock, Arkansas, although this may have primarily marketed bread, not cookies—the evidence is not clear. There are other cookie bakers who, prior to cookie baking, own vegetarian restaurants or whose families operated these restaurants. One of those was the Wheeler family mentioned above.

Early Adventist cookie bakers—prior to 1916—were William Dortch Jr. and his sons Ambrose and Omer (1916); Dr. George Droll (1916); brothers Duane and Foster Wheeler (1914); Charles Foster and Harry Haynes (c. 1910); John Osborne and son Jesse (1915); and brothers Harry and O.B. Watson (1914) (Appendix 1). All of these early bakers except for the Osbornes had connections to either church work or the medical or health-related profession. By far the most influential baking family were the Dortchs. From the William Dortch Jr. family and bakeries came many of the non-Dortch bakers in the 1920s and in the four decades that followed. It is the Dortch story that typifies the dedication to the church. Like so many other Adventist cookie bakers over the next half century, the Dortch narrative begins in Tennessee. It is a narrative that conveys the strong commitment to their faith many of these cookie bakers shared.

Until 1871, there were no Sabbath-keepers affiliating with the Seventh-day Adventist church in Tennessee. It was in that year that Elbert B. Lane held the first meetings to share the Adventist

message at a railroad station near Nashville.<sup>44</sup> One of the first families converted to the Adventist message was the William and Middy Dortch family. It is not known what year the Dortch's joined the church, but an 1879 *The Review and Herald* notes that John Henry Dortch—a son of William and Middy Dortch—would be granted a credential or license in the new Tennessee Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. What those credentials permitted Dortch to do is not clear, but there were only forty Adventists in the new Tennessee Conference in 1882, and only forty-two in the Kentucky Conference (which had shared membership with Tennessee territory prior to 1882).<sup>45</sup> In the very next issue of *The Review and Herald* John Henry Dortch is elected Director of the Tennessee Tract Society for West Tennessee, and in the next issue of the same publication it is reported that he is elected to the executive committee of the Tennessee Sabbath School Association.<sup>46</sup> After 1879, when the Dortch name first appears in Adventist publications, the Dortch name is frequently mentioned; between the years 1880 and 1899 Dortch searches net 240 search results in periodicals on ASTR's digital archives. Most of these Dortch results are directly connected to the William and Middy Dortch family and focus on Dortch service to the church and on the time three Dortch men spent in jail for their religious beliefs. These men were William Sr., in 1886, and William Jr., and John Henry in 1893.

The *American Sentinel* tells the story. Officially, the men went to jail, supposedly for working their farms on Sunday, which the state considered the official Sabbath. The backstory is more

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<sup>44</sup> "Tennessee," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 54, no. 7 (August 7, 1879): 55. Lane is also the surname of an Adventist cookie baker, but a firm connection between the cookie baker and the evangelist could not be made.

<sup>45</sup> "Organization of the Tennessee Conference," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 54, no. 18 (October 23, 1879): 143.

<sup>46</sup> "Tennessee Tract Society," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 54 no. 19 (October 30, 1879): 151; "Organization of the Tennessee Sabbath School Association," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 54, no. 20 (November 6, 1879): 159.

complicated. In 1893, seven years after William Sr. and two other Adventist men spent time in jail, and several months after John Henry and brother William Jr. were jailed, John Henry wrote an article in his local newspaper. In this article he defended the distribution of religious literature in his town. The literature called out the “Religious Intolerance in the Republic,” and the locals subsequently claimed, “the Adventists” were the “tools” of “anarchists.”<sup>47</sup> Recall that John Henry had been involved with the Adventist Tract Society since 1879. When William Jr. and John Henry Dortch were arrested in 1892, three other Adventists were also arrested for violating the Sabbath. One of those men was William Ward. The other two were Ward’s sons—George Harry and Rufus Lee. The Ward brothers were not only arrested but one brother also forced to testify against his own family.<sup>48</sup> Like the William Dortch family, the Rufus Lee Ward family produced numerous cookie bakers, physicians, and church workers.

The men were found guilty, and they filed an appeal with the Tennessee Supreme Court. Meanwhile, a local newspaper vilified William Jr. and blamed his willingness to work on Sunday on the insidious influence of the “northern Sunday law-breakers, ...Advent rascals” who were “guilty of blasphemy worse than devilish.”<sup>49</sup> This is unsurprising language from residents of a Southern state whose newspaper editors and elected officials may have fought in the Civil War and, now after Reconstruction’s failure, could now retaliate against a Northern influence if such retaliation was within their grasp. The author added that these men were “more deluded than bad,” the author added that “the

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<sup>47</sup> “An Adventist Defends his Brethren,” *American Sentinel* 8, no. 13 (March 30, 1893): 100; “Justice Standeth Afar Off,” *The American Sentinel* 7, no. 41 (1892): 325; “The National Religious Liberty Association and the Tennessee Persecutions,” *The American Sentinel* 8, no. 10 (1893): 77.

<sup>48</sup> “Daily Bulletin of the General Conference,” *Review and Herald Extra* 5, no. 13 (1893): 323-9, 326.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid; “Daily Bulletin of the General Conference,” *Review and Herald Extra* 5, no. 13 (1893): 323-9, 326.

real criminals, propagandists or sowers of bad seed that need hanging are the pamphleteers known as the National Religious Liberty Associations,” who were “anarchistic.”<sup>50</sup> This would have been a direct reference to Henry Dortch (more deluded than bad) and to Seventh-day Adventists (northern, propagandist, criminal, and anarchistic) who were leading the charge in the United States for religious liberty, particularly against Sunday laws.

As for the charge against Adventists for working on Sunday, it was purportedly admitted by the attorney-general of the state of Tennessee that the Sunday no-work law was in place to prevent Sunday worshipers from being nuisanced, and that working on Sunday was a nuisance only because “the work is done by those who dissent from the dogma that Sunday is a sacred day.”<sup>51</sup> The only two witnesses to William Dortch working on Sunday were two neighbor boys who mentioned to others in town that Dortch had not been where they expected to find him—teaching singing at his church—and they had instead found him at work in his garden.<sup>52</sup> For that, he was arrested. Clearly some in the community were looking for an opportunity to persecute the Adventists. Persecute they did, from at least from 1886, when the Dortch father was arrested, until 1892, when the Dortch sons were arrested. There were years of persecution, yet the Adventists remained devout in their faith. It may seem petty to the modern reader since it was not a matter of forcing work on Saturday, and instead was compelling rest on Sunday, but in John Henry Dortch’s own words, he was not able to,

outwardly observe [Sunday] as different from other days. You may say this is a foolish notion, but that

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<sup>50</sup> “Daily Bulletin of the General Conference,” *Review and Herald Extra* 5, no. 13 (1893): 323-9, 326.

<sup>51</sup> “National Religious Liberty Association,” *American Sentinel* 7, no. 33 (August 25, 1892): 264.

<sup>52</sup> “The National Religious Liberty Association and the Tennessee Persecutions,” *American Sentinel* 8, no. 10 (March 9, 1893): 77.

does not free us from the obligations to preserve consciences void of offense toward God. We are sorry that we can not [sic] always obey both God and man, but in the case of conflict between the two, with the apostles we choose to obey God rather than man, and we believe that under the constitution of the State we have the right to do so.<sup>53</sup>

One other similar case deserves mention. Two years prior to the William Dortch Jr. case, an Adventist named Leonidas A. Callicott of Dyer County, Tennessee was also arrested for working on Sunday. Dyer is about seventy miles west of Henry, Tennessee.<sup>54</sup> Almost certainly, William Dortch Jr. was at least acquainted with the Callicott family. *The Review and Herald* details evangelization efforts that Dortch made at Callicott's Mill, where the Callicott family lived.<sup>55</sup> One of Leonidas' sons, Rex, would build the Jack's Cookies empire. Another two sons, Oakley and Charles Reece, also became commercial cookie bakers. Leonidas was eventually acquitted, but not before they all had been harassed at the hands of zealous Sunday-church-goers.<sup>56</sup>

Perhaps having had enough religious persecution in Tennessee, many of Leonidas Callicott's family and the William Dortch Jr. family members were gone from Tennessee by 1910.

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<sup>53</sup> "An Adventist Defends his Brethren."

<sup>54</sup> Callicott's Mill is in Lake County, Tennessee. In an interview with an elderly descendent of the Callicott family, Leon Wade, Wade confirmed to the author that Callicott's Mill was a sawmill operated by the Adventist Callicott family, which the Wade family also helped operate. The Wade family married into the Callicott family. Rex Callicott's aunt Lenora, a sister of Leonidas Callicott, was Leon Wade's great-grandmother. Leon Wade, interview with the author, January 31, 2019, Sand Mountain, Alabama.

<sup>55</sup> S. Fulton, "Tennessee," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 61, no. 26 (1884): 412; "They Suffer for Their Faith," *The American Sentinel* 11, no. 30 (1896): 234-5.

<sup>56</sup> W. H. McKee, "Due to Religious Liberty Literature," *The American Sentinel* 5, no. 34 (1890): 270; *Ibid.*; "Persecution in Tennessee," *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 66, no. 29 (1889): 465.

They left Tennessee to support and work with the Adventist school in Keene, Texas. One brother, George Washington Dortch moved to Battle Creek to work at the sanitarium. John Henry stayed in Tennessee until the early 1920s and then moved to Keene, where a daughter taught at Southwestern Junior College. Brother Levi opened a cookie bakery, and sister Anna married a man who became a cookie baker, Rufus Lee Ward, who, as mentioned above, with his father and another brother had spent time in jail for working on Sunday in Tennessee.

Walking through the valleys and the shadows of death in Tennessee seems to have steeled these families in their faith. These are the kinds of Adventists that future Adventists would call heroes and martyrs if they knew their stories. The Callicott, Dortch, and Ward families—and others not mentioned above, such as the Kinder, Lowry, Lane, and Leslie families—produced children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren who dedicated their lives either to the church as ministers, teachers, medical professionals, missionaries, or who were men and women that worked outside the church as cookie bakers and were actively involved in their church communities. It was these families—the very earliest Tennessee Adventists, relentless in their evangelism, daring in the face of opposition, devout in their faith, active in their church, absolutely steadfast in their trust in the Lord, and willing to go to prison for their beliefs—it was these first families of Adventism that also started the first commercial cookie bakeries.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Only six cookie bakeries or brands originally opened or created by Adventists are still operating, and only two of those came out of the 1910s or 1920s. Those are Byrd's Cookie Company (Savannah, Georgia) and Grandma's Cookies (originally baked in Portland, Oregon). Grandma's Cookies sold to a non-Adventist family in 1942. Byrd Cookies' fourth generation owner is Stephanie Curl Lindley, who is no longer Adventist. Two of the remaining three bakeries are still operated by Seventh-day Adventists. The McKee family began baking in Chattanooga in the 1930s and the third generation McKee family still operates the bakery outside of Chattanooga, although it now has plants in Arkansas and Virginia as well. The other bakery still owned by an Adventist is Bud's Best, also

### **Conclusion**

Why did so many Adventists leave church work and enter the cookie baking business? No textual evidence was found in this research that would answer this question conclusively or perhaps even persuasively for many readers. Yet there are the facts: close to fifty men and women are known to have left their professions as physicians, nurses, teachers, publishers at Adventist presses, sanitarium workers, missionaries, pastors, and colporteurs, and started baking cookies. Or they came from families where parents, siblings, or spouses worked in those professions. These bakers began pulling cookies from the oven at exactly the moment when the safety and health of food was of critical import to the nation. They flowed into the stream of the Adventist health message and swam with the various bread bakeries, vegetarian restaurants, sanitarium food factories, health publications, medicine, and the overall principles of temperance. They kept their bakeries closed on Sabbath and preferred to employ other Adventists. When it was time to sell the bakery they preferred to sell to fellow Sabbath keepers, and when they listed a motive for selling the bakery it was often to move their family closer to an Adventist school. Some of them returned to the ministry as sanitarium workers, nurses, or missionaries after baking cookies. By all visible measures these cookie baker families were unflinching, unrelenting, remaining tethered to their religious moorings even when that meant prison.

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in third generation management. Owner Bud Cason began baking in the 1960s after buying his aunt's bakery, Greg's Cookies, which first opened in the 1930s. Bud has retired, and his son Al Sr. is president of the company. Bud Cason's bakeries have always baked cookies in Birmingham, Alabama. A fifth bakery is Little Brownie, which was opened by Julian Ball in the 1950s. Ball was a third-generation baker whose family began baking cookies in the early 1920s. Little Brownie is one of the two bakeries that currently produce Girl Scout cookies, but it is no longer owned by an Adventist. The final bakery was Jack's Cookies. Although there are no longer any bakeries with this name, bags of Jack's Cookie vanilla wafers can still be purchased in discount grocery stores.

Were these pious men and women who dedicated their lives to their church and their faith suddenly and completely abdicating their commitment to ministry? Or was their shift to cookie baking an effort at a more progressive ministry? The answer is not clear, but it is a curious presence on the table of Adventist history, and one that deserves to be sampled.

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## **Appendix 1: Adventist Cookie Bakers with Close Church Ties**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Founder or Owner</b>	<b>Opened</b>
<b>Alonzo French Bakery (name unknown)</b>	<b>Ardmore, Oklahoma</b>	<b>Alonzo French</b>	<b>&lt; 1927</b>

Alonzo French was head nurse at the Southwestern Sanitarium in Keene, Texas prior to becoming a cookie baker.

<b>Austin Family Bakeries (name unknown)</b>	<b>Little Rock, AR Kansas City, MO Tallyrand, KS</b>	<b>Donald and Fred Austin, sons of Martha and Samuel Austin</b>	<b>&lt; 1920 c. 1904 c. 1910</b>
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Samuel was a Bible worker for the Adventist church and his brother Fred was a pastor. Samuel's son Fred is in Battle Creek briefly as a baker in 1915 and then moves to Knoxville to manage a vegetarian food store. Before the end of the 1920s he is a cookie baker.

<b>Beck's Cookie Shop</b>	<b>Bristol, VA</b>	<b>Hannibal E. Beck</b>	<b>c. mid-1920s</b>
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For well over twenty years Hannibal was a colporteur for the church and a field agent for the Kentucky Conference of SDA, and then became a cookie baker. Verna Beck, Hannibal's wife, was the founding teacher / administrator of the Adventist school in Paducah, Kentucky.

<b>Burd Cookie Co.</b>	<b>Glendale, CA</b>	<b>Irving A. Ford and William D. Salisbury</b>	<b>1917</b>
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Irving Ford worked for a Battle Creek, Michigan-based religious liberty organization in the 1880s, and then for the Review and Herald into the 1890s. He continued working for the church until at least the 1910s and becomes a cookie bakery at some point before 1917.

William was a missionary in Australia during the first decade of the 1900s, as manager of the Echo Publishing Company, an Adventist press in Melbourne. By the mid-1910s William was in Glendale, California working as a cookie baker. Salisbury and Ford both lived in Battle Creek in the 1880s and 1890s.

**Burlie Lowry Bakery**      **Texas and South Carolina (unknown)**      **Burlie W. Lowry**      **c. 1925**

Burlie's father was a pastor. Two of Burlie's brothers were missionaries and both of them died in the mission field. One of Burlie's other brothers was a cookie baker (profiled below). The Lowry family migrated from Tennessee to Texas around the same time as the Callicott and Dortch families.

**Callicott Bakery**      **Knoxville, TN**      **Reece Callicott**      **c. 1925**

Reece was a pastor in Tennessee, then opened a cookie bakery in Knoxville. Then at some point prior to 1930 he worked for church again, at the Adventist publishing house in Maryland. He then appears in Wheaton as a cookie baker.

**Callicott Brothers Bakery**      **Memphis, TN**      **Oakley and Rex Callicott**      **1925**

Oak and Rex were brothers to Reece, above. Neither Rex or Oak ever worked for the church, but their father was arrested in Tennessee for his religious beliefs and spent time in jail. The family migrated to the Keene, Texas area with the Dortch, Lowry, and Lane families, all of whom were both heavily invested in both church work and in cookie baking.

**Carson Cookie Company**      **Raleigh, NC**      **Robert L. Carson**      **c. 1926**

Robert worked at Wabash Valley Sanitarium in Lafayette, Indiana in the 1920s. By 1926 he had moved to North Carolina and had become a cookie baker.

**Dan D Bakery**      **East Saint Louis, MO**      **Hans Walleker and Floyd Walleker**      **< 1928**

Hans was a pastor and a missionary for more than two decades, then opened Dan D Bakery with his son Floyd in 1928. Hans went back to ministerial work probably by the 1930s. Floyd himself began working for the church in 1929 as the manager of the Washington Missionary College bakery.

**Dixie Cookie Co.**      **Austin, TX**      **Martha E. Rouut**      **c. 1928**

Martha was a canvasser of religious books, and possibly a teacher, prior to cookie baking. Her husband was a Adventist pastor in Texas and left her for a younger

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woman, at which point Martha either bought or opened a cookie bakery. The bakery she operated seems to have been purchased from an Adventist pastor in the Texas Conference.

<b>Dixie Cookie Co.</b>	<b>Norfolk, VA</b>	<b>William S. Lowry and Orville L. Lowry</b>	<b>c. 1930</b>
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Like the Dortch and Callicott families, the Lowry family were heavily involved in both church work and in cookie baking.

Sidney Lowry was an Adventist pastor for the Texas Conference, but he left the ministry to open a cookie bakery. Sidney may have briefly been both a pastor and a cookie bakery owner. Sidney had at least four sons who survived to adulthood. One of those was Charles Fulton Lowry, who died in Burma in 1919 while in the mission field. Another son, Gentry George, also died in the mission field, in India, in 1942.

Another son, Orville Lowry, spent his life as a cookie baker. The fourth son, Burlie Lowry, spent much of his working life as a cookie baker.

<b>Dortch bakery (name unknown)</b>	<b>Atlanta, GA</b>	<b>Levi W. Dortch</b>	<b>c. 1921</b>
<b>Dortch bakery (name unknown)</b>	<b>Denver, CO</b>	<b>William D. Dortch Jr., and Volney Dortch</b>	<b>c. 1920</b>
<b>Dortch bakery (name unknown)</b>	<b>Los Angeles, CA</b>	<b>Volney Dortch</b>	<b>1922</b>
<b>Dortch bakery (name unknown)</b>	<b>Oklahoma City, OK</b>	<b>Levi W. Dortch</b>	<b>c. 1921</b>
<b>Dortch Baking Company</b>	<b>Atlanta, GA</b>	<b>Dudley Dortch</b>	<b>1929</b>
<b>(Dortch) Cooky Shop (name unknown)</b>	<b>Atlanta, Georgia</b>	<b>Levi Dortch</b>	<b>1920s</b>
<b>Dortch Baking</b>	<b>Memphis, Tennessee</b>	<b>William D. Dortch, or Rex Callicott and Oak Callicott</b>	<b>1928</b>
<b>Dortch Baking Company</b>	<b>Miami, FL</b>	<b>Jesse Dortch</b>	<b>1927</b>

<b>Dortch Brothers Bakery</b>	<b>Spokane, WA</b>	<b>Omer Dortch and Ambrose Dortch</b>	<b>c. 1922</b>
<b>Dortch and Sons Bakery</b>	<b>Spokane, WA</b>	<b>William D. Dortch Jr., Ambrose Dortch, and Omer Dortch</b>	<b>c. 1915 or 1916</b>
<b>Dortch bakery (name unknown)</b>	<b>Keene, TX</b>	<b>Unknown Dortch</b>	<b>c. 1926</b>

Many of the Dortch family either worked for the church or became cookie bakers. After three Dortch men spent time in jail for their religious beliefs, the William D. Dortch Jr. family left Tennessee and resettled in Keene, Texas. One of William's children, Clarence, taught at Southwestern Junior College, where he was also head of the department. Then during World War II he accepted a position teaching music at Southern Junior College.

One of William's brothers was John Henry Dortch. John Henry, who spent time in jail and who had been so committed to the church in Tennessee, had at least one child who became a teacher. This daughter, Flora, taught in Keene, Texas.

William's son Volney was also a baker. Volney's son, Volney worked for the Porter Sanitarium in Denver and then Madison Hospital in Tennessee.

Another of William's brothers, George Washington Dortch, worked at the Battle Creek Sanitarium in the 1890s and then for Review and Herald Publishing. George's son, Dudley Dortch, also worked at Review and Herald. Dudley Dortch later opened up cookie bakeries throughout the South.

Another brother, Levi Dortch, worked at the Battle Creek Sanitarium as a nurse, and then left healthcare and became a cookie baker.

<b>Edwin C. Milam Bakery</b>	<b>Pueblo, CO</b>	<b>Edwin Milam</b>	<b>&lt; 1926</b>
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Mr. Milam was a colporteur in Oklahoma and then a baker in Colorado. Mrs. Milam worked for the Southwestern Union Conference for seven years in Texas before she married Mr. Milam and moved to Oklahoma.

<b>Frank – Knox Cookie Co.</b>	<b>Chattanooga, TN</b>	<b>Hershel Frank and Norman Knox</b>	<b>c. 1929</b>
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Norman Knox did not work for the church, but his father worked as manager and treasurer for the Southern Publishing Association and the Southern Union Conference. His brother Gilbert and his wife Bettie both worked in Battle Creek where Gilbert as manager of the sanitarium's food company. Bettie was nurse.

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Another brother, Maurice Foster Knox, was a cookie baker. Brother Raymond was also a baker, but not a cookie baker.

**Frank's Cookie Co.    Nashville, TN    Arthur Frank    1929**

Arthur Frank worked for the Adventist press, the Southern Publishing Association for about twenty years, beginning prior to 1910. Sometimes in the late 1920s he left the Southern Publishing Association and opened a cookie bakery in the Nashville, Tennessee area. Arthur is the father of the Frank brothers mentioned above.

**G & R Baking Co.    Chicago, IL    Ralph Grose    c. 1919  
or 1925**

Ralph Grose entered cookie baking and then sold his bakery to attend a medical evangelist course in Loma Linda.

**George Droll    Kansas City, MO    George A. Droll    1916 &  
Bakery (name    &    Marvin Lane    c. 1920s  
unknown)    Nashville, TN**

Droll was a physician, a stomach specialist, in Kansas City, and then moved to Nashville where he practiced at the Madison Sanitarium before becoming a cookie baker.

Marvin Lane was a nurse in Kansas City, Missouri.

**Grandma Cookie    Portland, OR    Duane E. and    1914  
Co. (founders, *not*    Foster D. Wheeler**

Neither of these brothers worked for the church but their father was a missionary and a pastor. The father may have started his work in the ministry as a colporteur around 1910.

**Harding Cookie    Cincinnati, OH    Charles Harding    c. 1924  
Company**

Worked at the Cincinnati Sanitarium in 1920 (not an SDA institution), then opened a cookie bakery in the mid-1920s. After working as a baker for at least two years he returned to the sanitarium, and then worked for a printer. Charles' wife, Goldie, was a nurse at the Cincinnati Sanitarium.

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<b>Haynes-Foster Food Company (and The Dixie Bakery)</b>	<b>Portland, Oregon area (multiple locations)</b>	<b>Charles Foster and Harry Haynes</b>	<b>&lt; 1910</b>
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Both Foster and Haynes were nurses prior to 1910, one at a sanitarium in Glendale, California, and the other at a sanitarium in Portland, Oregon. By 1910 they had started producing vegetarian foods. Although not strictly cookies, at least Haynes appears to have opened a bakery that was producing primarily cookies and sweet goods – The Dixie Bakery, also in Portland.

<b>Jack's Cookie Co</b>	<b>Amory, MS</b>	<b>Carl Aiken</b>	<b>1928 or 1929</b>
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Carl graduated from Southern Junior College and accepted a job at an Adventist school in Mississippi. After one year he stopped teaching and opened the first Jack's Cookies in Amory, Mississippi. Amory was a small town where there was also a non-sectarian nurse training school.

<b>John Weber Bakery (name unknown)</b>	<b>Battle Creek, MI</b>	<b>John Weber (or Waber)</b>	<b>&lt; 1921</b>
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John Weber had been a Battle Creek Sanitarium worker, then a school teacher. Sometime before 1921 he became a cookie baker.

<b>Lane Baking Co.</b>	<b>St. Louis, MO Louisville, KY</b>	<b>Marvin A. Lane</b>	<b>&lt; 1920 c. 1923</b>
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Marvin is a nurse at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, and also listed as a nurse in Kansas City, Missouri (and ran a bakery with Dr. Droll). By 1920 he is a bakery in St. Louis, and later has a cookie bakery in Louisville, Kentucky.

<b>Lawrence Corwin Bakery (name unknown)</b>	<b>Waco, TX</b>	<b>Lawrence Corwin</b>	<b>c. 1917</b>
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Corwin was a baker first, and then he served as a missionary to Central America. Both his father and his uncle were pastors.

<b>Leslie Cookie Co.</b>	<b>El Paso, TX and New Orleans, LA Fresno, CA</b>	<b>Claude Leslie (father) and (sons) Robert Leslie and</b>	<b>c. 1930 &lt; 1925</b>
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**Jefferson Davis  
Leslie**

Jefferson D. Leslie was working for the Southwestern Union Conference as a colporteur by 1917 when he claimed conscientious objection to the draft. In 1925 Jefferson sold his bakery to accept a call to the mission field. He was still working for the church in 1942 when he registered for the draft in the Second World War. Brother Robert seems to have worked as a cookie baker until he passed away in 1942. The Leslie brothers' father, Claude, was a missionary in Central America in and engaged in religious work in Texas prior to baking cookies. Within a few years of returning from the mission field in 1921 the father began working at a cookie bakery. The Leslie brothers' maternal grandfather was a pastor.

**McAbee Cooky Co.    Spokane, WA or    Lewis M. McAbee    c. 1917**  
**Portland, OR    and Sarah**  
**Elizabeth McAbee**

Lewis and Sarah were proponents of leading-edge medical therapies in Toledo, Ohio. Lewis was proprietor of a Battle Creek Baths hydrotherapy business, and Sarah was a nurse. They both appear in public records as nurses and masseuses, in Ohio, in Spokane, Washington, and later in Portland, Oregon. Their foray into cookie baking was short-lived, lasting perhaps into the mid-1920s, at which point they both appear to have begun working as nurses at a Portland sanitarium.

**Milo Beaumont    Birmingham,    Milo A. Beaumont    c. 1928**  
**Bakery (name    AL**  
**unknown)**

Milo did not work for the church, but owned a Vegetarian Cafeteria in Birmingham, Alabama. He had previously worked for an establishment of the same name in Nashville, and perhaps also had worked at the Madison Sanitarium. In the 1920s he opened a cookie bakery in Birmingham.

**Mother's Favorite    Glendale, CA    Julius C. Henson    c. 1923**  
**Cookie Co.     and Irving A. Ford**

Julius Henson worked at the Adventist sanitarium in Glendale, California, as a chef. His wife Frances was a nurse. At some point in the early 1920s Julius left sanitarium work to operate a cookie bakery. By 1930 his wife was also working in the bakery.

Irving Ford worked for the church and has been detailed above.

**Perfection Baking Co.**      **Louisville, KY**      **Hubert Morphey and Marvin A. Lane**      **L. c. 1925**

At some point prior to 1906 Hubert Morphey was working at the Southern Publishing Association, where he remained until he left this position and started baking cookies sometime around 1924.

**Pierce Specialty Baking Co.**      **Dayton, OH**      **Roy L. Pierce and Emma G. Pierce**      **c. 1926**

Roy worked for the Good Health Publishing Company in Battle Creek. This was effectively the publishing arm of the Battle Creek Sanitarium. Roy and Emma were briefly at a publishers in Fort Worth, Texas before accepted a call as Vice President of the Southern Publishing Association in Nashville by 1920. After twenty years working for the church, promoting the Adventist message and good health, Roy and Emma became cookie bakers.

Eulie Dortch may have worked for the Pierces. He is listed as a baker in Dayton in the 1930 census. He had spent much of his life until the late 1920s working for the Adventist press, Southern Publishing Association in Nashville. He later returned to work for the publishing association.

**Stoner / Schulenburger Bakery**      **Witchita Falls, TX**      **Chester Stoner and Hubbard Schulenburger**      **c. 1922**

Schulenburger worked as a printer for the Southwestern Union Conference, then dabbled in baking during the early 1920s.

**Ward's Cookie Shop**      **Nashville, TN**      **Rufus Lee Ward**      **c. 1921**

Rufus Lee was Harry Ward's father. Rufus did not work for the church, but he and a brother and their father were arrested for working on Sunday in Tennessee.

**Ward's Homemade Cookies**      **Savannah, GA**      **Harry Ward**      **c. 1922**



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Harry Ward was Rufus Lee Ward's son. Neither worked for the church, but like the Dortch family, the Ward family produced many bakers. It was Rufus Lee's father and brother that were arrested in Tennessee for their religious beliefs. The Ward family were one of the earliest Adventist families in Tennessee.

<b>Watson Brothers' Cooky Factory</b>	<b>Fort Worth, TX</b>	<b>Harry Watson and possibly brother O.B. Watson</b>	<b>c. 1914</b>
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Harry's wife was a teacher. O.B. was later an Adventist minister. Their father was also a minister, and later, president of the Montana Conference. Harry eventually left Texas and moved to Montana to be near his father. O.B. is never listed in public documents as a baker but he was the only sibling of Harry Watson, thus the name of the bakery implicates him as the namesake of the bakery.

Source: The biographical information on a single individual's name, a single bakery, and each (or all) bakery location, represents dozens of documents. All of the information found in this table has come from only two digital archives through which this research can be replicated, and both of which are word-searchable digital archives. The first is ancestry.com. The other is the ASTR digital archive.

## **Archival News and Notes**

## **Update on Recent Accessions and Collections at General Conference Archive**

**Ashlee Chism**

### **Update on General Conference Archive Collections**

The General Conference Archives and Rebok Memorial Library Special Collections has had several recent accessions and collections updates. Here are four of the more notable arrivals:

First, a travel diary from 1919 belonging to Elmer E. Andross, was donated by his descendants, the Folkenberg family. In 1919, Andross was General Conference Vice President for North America (today's equivalent position would be president of the North American Division) and he was sent, along with other church leaders, to visit Adventist missions in India and Africa. This diary is comprised of handwritten descriptions of his visits, documents pasted onto its pages, and blank pages. Of note is the translation of a song sung to greet Andross and the other church leaders upon their arrival at the Suagram Church in East Bengal as well as the handwritten petitions from other locations in East Bengal requesting for people to be sent to those places. Andross's travel diary has been accreted to the existing Andross Personal Collection (Personal Collection 4).

Second, the Frost Personal Collection (Personal Collection 124) is one of the newest collections at the Archives. Comprised of over a hundred photographs from early mission work in China, the collection was donated in October 2019, delivered to the Archives

by Bob Folkenberg, Jr. Samuel and Ella Frost began church work in China in 1916. Ella Frost returned to the United States in 1940, and Samuel returned in 1945, after having been interned in the Philippines by the Japanese Army, but the couple returned to Japan in 1948 before having to leave in 1949. While most of the photographs are from the 1920s and 1930s, some of the photographs are from 1949, and show damage done to Church-owned properties during the war. The photographs have been digitized, but are still being processed, but will eventually be making their way to the Archives' images website.

Third, another collection which is not actually *new* but warrants a mention all the same is the Jennie Thayer Collection (Manuscript Collection 6), which consists of sixteen diaries, an autograph book, and envelopes once belonging to Sarah Jane 'Jennie' Thayer (1853-1940). Thayer's great-niece, Miriam (Gilbert) Tymeson donated five of the diaries in 1984 and the other diaries and the autograph book around 1974 as part of the Frederick C. Gilbert Collection (Personal Collection 2). This makes this collection part of the original collections held by the General Conference Archives. These items of Thayer's have been transferred from the Gilbert Collection and added to the later donation to make them easier for researchers to find. Additionally, the collection was re-named from the Miriam Tymeson Collection (Personal Collection 83) to the Jennie Thayer Collection and transferred to the Rebok Memorial Library's Special Collections as Manuscript Collection 6 to better reflect the collection's contents. The diaries are in the process of being scanned and transcribed by our Archives and Special Collections Coordinator, Ashlee Chism.

Fourth, the Archives has recently received Robert H. Pierson's notebooks containing his sermon outlines, spanning the 1930s through the 1980s, as well as books owned and consulted by Pierson. The notebooks and books were donated by family members and are being inventoried and accreted to the existing

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Pierson Collection, and will provide researchers with valuable insights into Pierson's work as a pastor, evangelist, missionary, and church administrator, including his tenure as General Conference President. We look forward to the completion of the Pierson Collection's finding aid during 2021.

## **Looking Back on a Year of Accreditations**

**D. J. B. Trim**

From November 2019 through December 2020, the Archives team within the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR) has undertaken three accreditations of church archives on three continents.

In early November 2019, ASTR director David Trim and the South American Division's ASTR director, Dr. Thadeu de Silva Filho, visited Universidad Adventista del Plata (River Plate Adventist University), in Libertador San Martin, Entre Rios Province, Argentina. The third member of the accreditation panel was Elder Roberto Gullon, executive secretary of the Argentine Union Conference. River Plate University is the oldest Adventist higher education institution in Latin America. They inspected the Centro de Investigación White and the Centro Histórico Adventista, twin archives and research centers.

The inspection team was impressed by the very clear desire of what is a very experienced leadership team at the twin *centros*, to improve the way they manage collections with which they already have considerable familiarity; the ingenuity and passion the Center team brings to their work, and the way they maximize limited resources to communicate widely about Adventist history and to preserve the sources of Argentinian Adventist history. Going beyond purely archival matters, the leadership team has a regular research publication program, which includes publishing a

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series of articles in church papers, and it conducts regular public lecture/seminar program (which Dr. Trim contributed to, with a lecture on Ferdinand and Ana Stahl and their socially conscious mission work in Peru).

The inspection team recommended a conditional award of Recognized status, the conditions being installation of appropriate fire suppression, ladders, and a dehumidification system (include monitoring); and creation of more thorough and locally applicable policies regarding a) external researchers, including institution-specific application forms and agreements; b) Collection Management; c) Disaster Recovery.

In February, Roy Kline, ASTR's Assistant Director for Archives and Records Management, inspected the division records center and archives at the headquarters of the Southern Asia Division in Hosur, India. This culminated a four-year process in which Dr. Trim had visited India once and Elder Kline twice, carrying out training and advising on what was needed to be accredited. As a result, a dedicated archivist has been appointed and there is a robust oversight system by appropriate committees. The division has invested considerably in personnel, systems, and hardware. The result was that both archives and records center were unconditionally accredited at the "Emerging" level. The division executive secretary, Elder Measopogu Wilson, is committed to achieving higher levels of accreditation before the current level expires in 2025.

In late February 2020, just before pandemic-related lockdowns were imposed in Maryland and California, Dr. Trim led a three-person ASTR evaluation team, composed of Kline and Ashlee Chism, ASTR's Archives and Research Center Manager, to California, for an inspection of the Nelson Memorial Library and Walter C. Utt Center for Adventist History (WUCAH) at Pacific Union College, north of San Francisco. The professionalism and dedication of the WUCAH and library special collections team was very marked. It was evident both in the collections themselves and

in the outreach done by the team, to raise awareness not only among college faculty and students but also in the local community, of PUC's history and how the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the US West Coast intersects with local Californian history. A great deal of work had been done in preparation for the visit; in the end, the inspection team recommended a conditional award of Approved. The conditions were met by the end of the year and so, in December 2020, the award was made unconditional for the full five years.

These three archival centers are added to the ranks of those already accredited: the special collections of the Roy Graham Library at Newbold College; the West-Central Africa Division headquarters archives and records center; and the Center for Adventist Research at Andrews University. The GC Archives team looks forward, when travel is again possible, to carrying out postponed inspection visits to the headquarters of the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, the East Indonesia Union Conference, and the East-Central Africa Division, each of which has a records center (the Southern Asia-Pacific Division also having an archive). The team is also eager to engage with other Adventist archives and records centers to help them raise standards; if interested, please contact Roy Kline: [kliner@gc.adventist.org](mailto:kliner@gc.adventist.org)





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