

The Journal of Seventh-day Adventist History

Volume 14  
Number 3

# *Adventist* **Heritage**



*Canada: The Early Years*



Canada is the world's second largest country, surpassed only by the former Soviet Union. The name derives from an Iroquoian Indian term meaning "village" or "community."

**On the cover:** In 1932 a large group of Seventh-day Adventist believers attended the campmeeting held at Coquitlam, near Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

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# *Adventist Heritage*

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# Adventist Heritage

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# THE EDITOR'S STUMP

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Our initial vision of devoting an entire issue of *Adventist Heritage* to the story of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Canada has almost overwhelmed us. While that nation may seem to be but a rather thin line of “civilization” spread across the top of the North American continent, one should never make the mistake of thinking anything “small” about this northern giant. What the Canadian church may have lacked in numbers it has been compensated for by long traditions of pioneering and endurance, of the practice of grass-roots Adventism, and of the independence bred in a huge, unforgiving land—which still teems with wild life living in clean air under high-domed blue skies.



Dorothy Minchin-Comm

Knowing all of these things, then, how could we have imagined that the whole story could be in-

cluded in a single issue of *Heritage*? Well, we confess to having made a mistake, for, after all, we are dealing only with finite space. Hence, you have before you a double issue. (The next journal may, therefore, be a little slimmer than usual.) Here you will survey the history of the early years among Canadian churches, institutions, and their conferences. While our history here does not, in the main, go beyond the 1930's, portions of the biographical sketches scattered through the story may extend into more recent times.

Dorothy Minchin-Comm, Editor

ERRATUM: We apologize for a misnomer in our last issue. Wilton Clarke is *always* Wil—never Winston Clark. We know who Winston is too (former president of the Far Easter Division and sometime secretary to the president of the General Conference). Wilton, however, is day by day, to be found in his mathematics classroom at La Sierra University. And so he had a second bad turn from us when, in the last issue on page 21, we name Wil as the husband of his mother Esther! That should read “Fred”. Wil has been very patient with us!

# Guest Editorial

## History Teaches Everything, Even the Future

For years I've been fascinated by old, abandoned houses. During our last trip into Bella Coola, an isolated coastal town of British Columbia, we stopped to photograph a few of them. As we would leave the old homesites, I kept wondering why this attraction. Why this fetish? What did these empty, tumbledown old buildings so captivate me? With time to reflect as we drove over those historic roads, I decided that the reason for my fascination came from what many of those houses may have symbolized. Things, which, in varying degrees, are lost to us today:



- \*A father, mother and children, representing happiness,
- \*Central heating, mandating togetherness,
- \*Survival, symbolizing a united challenge for the entire family,
- \*A wood cookstove, producing homemade bread, berry pies and savory soup and suggesting commitment,
- \*Handmade clothes, representing resourcefulness,
- \*Family worship, indicating belief in God, and
- \*High days—like Thanksgiving, Christmas, town days, birthdays, weddings and parties—showing community.

And what does all of this have to do with our church? I believe it has everything to do. We must decide what place the past will hold in our plans for the future. Is heritage, in fact, God-ordained, or is it the erratic scheme of some long-forgotten personality? What would be lost if heritage is lost? And, what would be gained if heritage is preserved?

God has initiated so many rememberings.<sup>1</sup> (see references)

1. Altars and Offerings. Aaron's breastplate bore the names of the children of Israel.
2. Rainbows. God's glorious remembrance of

"the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature" (Gen 2:12-17). (Not that He'd ever forget. But He speaks to us in our own language.)

3. Tabernacle. A holy place of witness in the wilderness.

4. Sabbath. Observance of the seventh day is a memorial to God's creation.

5. High Days. Great temple feasts and celebrations which rehearse God's providences and blessings.

6. The Communion Service. A reminder pointing back to Jesus' sacrifice.

7. Nature. A reflection of the magnificence of God.

To be sure, all of these enactments of God are for the purpose of our *remembering*. Indeed, "Heritage does teach everything—even the future." It is not something which we can conscientiously ignore or avoid. It's a topic we *must* address—lest we forget. . .

To produce a magazine with a synopsis of the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada has been a venture involving the efforts of dozens of individuals. We thank the presidents of the Canadian conferences who made writing assignments. Appreciation also goes to Marilyn Pazitka at the Union office who so cheerfully helped in the project, to those who told me stories and sent pictures, and to those who wrote articles.

Heritage *does* teach everything—even the future.

*Myrna Johnson-Tetz*  
*Vice President for Public Relations*  
*Canadian Union College*  
*College Heights, Alberta, Canada*

References: (1) Ex 28:29; (2) Gen 2:12-17, PP106-107; (3) Acts 7:44, PP 343, Heb 9:23-24; (4) PP 48, 336; (5) PK 335, 405; (6) Lk 22:19; (7) Ps 19:1,2, PP 48.

# RENDEZVOUS

## Hope Holds Memories for Both Youth and Age

### I. "Someone Has to Tell Them What It Was Like"

By Jack Thorpe

**N**ote: Although Jack Thorpe's mother was widowed when he was just five years old, she reared her son in the Adventist faith which she and her husband had recently accepted. From the start, Jack was an entrepreneur and his projects have ranged from buying and selling beer bottles when he was 13 to owning and managing several businesses. He and his wife Esther started the first Seventh-day Adventist church school in Oliver, British Columbia. He believes that his family has been blessed because of their commitments to the Lord.

When he was six years old, Jack went to his first campmeeting, an event which made a lasting impression on him. Since then he has attended campmeetings almost every year of his life. His recollections are most closely associated with the permanent campsite near the town of Hope on the Fraser River, British Columbia. Although he claims to be "barely able to read and write," he has here recalled his memories of campmeetings past with humor and imagination.



Jack Thorpe

#### "A Request" (1990)

*O Time, I've just left the campground dedicated to the living God at Hope, British Columbia. This year over 7,000 people came for seven days of campmeeting blessing in unspoiled nature.*

*Did you see, Time, the beauty of that valley, nestled basket-like below the towering scraggs of rock and enclosed by thousands of trees singing to the wind? Did you notice those campmeeting-lovers, your time-touched aged and the fledglings together, walking the ribbons of tar-topped roads between the Lodge and the auditorium and among the cabins?*

*Still, Time, with your invisible power you touch all things. And today my lagging body bewilders me, as the inevitable creeps from joint to joint. How long, I wonder, before you point your icy finger in my face and say, "Your time shall be no more."*

*But, Time, give me just one more gift before you let me go. . . . The people must know about this place where the angels watch. Someone must tell them what it used to be like . . .*

And so an old man remembers. Memories of campmeetings past are like autumn leaves which, now spent, return to the earth, supplying nutrients for further growth, enabling the branches to circle the earth and bear the fruit of salvation to all mankind.

The “brethren” used to arrive early on the campground to erect the old-fashioned round tent. Ropes stitched into the canvass held the centering in place. With a pulley the great canvas castle was drawn up the pole. The men would then crawl under the skirts of the tent to push up the poles and fasten the support ropes to the stakes. In a surprisingly short time the tent would be pointing majestically toward the sky.

Sags in the canvas roof collected rainwater. In time the water would leak through, dousing some unsuspecting, large-hatted lady with a cold stream of water. This added shrieks in place of dignity to the meeting! The rostrum was made from an array of materials and decorated with fir boughs to hide its shaky construction.

Wind was always a problem at tent-raising and meeting time, as the speaker’s voice competed with flapping canvas. The center pole swaying and the push-up poles moving in rhythm to the lifting and heaving of the canvas ceiling along with the draft and dust were not conducive to peace of mind. Pioneer people were accustomed to the unexpected and seldom complained or made a fuss.

Many walked great distances, travelled by boat, or came by four-legged horse-power, pulling wagons with squeaky wheels and iron tires following the ruts of those gone before and bouncing off rocks, stumps and potholes. They couldn’t afford spring seats because money (if available) spent for such luxuries would deprive the mission field of needed funds. They came in rickety old wagons with bags of garden food and maybe a milk cow reluctantly following along.

Campmeetings were rotated in those early days. One year, the camp was held in Penticton, the next in Kelowna and the following year in Vernon. Eventually, the town of Hope was chosen. This place is cuddled by the breadth and depth of the great Fraser river, with high scraggs of rock penetrating the sky.

Travel to campmeeting for us, from the interior of British Columbia, was by passenger train. With bags of clothing, blankets, raincoats and boxes of food, we loaded our goods on the train, sat on hard, horsehair-cushioned seats and after hours of endurance we disembarked at Hope. In the middle of the tired night, we stood, waiting for the car the conference leaders had promised would meet every train. And then you see it coming—once upon a time a very nice car. We all pile in—boxes and blankets, fussing children and a talkative old man.

Nestled around the big tent like an old chicken with her brood was the city of small tents, each one as white as the next, standing, row by row, straight and square as a military encampment. But when you arrive at camp, you are unloaded in front of a strange tent. Your wife, remarkably, finds a candle and matches which she knows she packed in one of the boxes. With blankets just rolled out on the campground and only shoes removed, you find the slumber you lost some hours before on that old train. In the morning you are given a tent, and you notice a slight indentation in the ground running through the center. Weeds and small brush are cut along with armfuls of fir and cedar boughs for a mattress.

You might have chosen, however, a campmeeting mattress or a straw tick used year after year. Mouse nests could have been in them, but certainly there were crawly things that came out of the ground and found a roadway across your face and neck. The campmeeting beds were, to be sure, a museum of memories to the sleeping saints who had occupied them. They heard the prayers and family worships when, kneeling over beds and chairs, parents prayed for their children’s conversions and for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on campmeeting.



*Jack Thorpe remembers how the little tents at Hope clustered around the “Big Tent, like chicks around a mother hen.*

Some nights we could see the sky on fire with lightning. We could hear the roar of thunder bouncing from mountain scraggs to more scraggs while the rain came down with firehose-force. We would move our supplies to miss the leaks in the tent, only to find a small running creek entering one end of the tent, through the "slight indentation," under our bed of boughs, and then flowing out the other side.

In the morning, in the downpour, we raced to the cookhouse for hot food and warmth. In the meeting tent we sat on planks suspended on anything that would hold them up. We sat with our wet shoes on damp sawdust and our wet clothes enveloped in blankets torn hastily from our fir-bough beds.

On other nights, with the Canadian Northern Railway bordering the camp, the engineers must have been bored to tears by the unending monotony of hundreds of miles of unending steel track. So now it's 3.00 o'clock in the morning. I can visualize the sly smile broadening that soot-covered face. Under the controlling hand of an engineer, the whistle blows with a volume almost beyond description. The towering mountains that trough the rolling thunder from 150 pounds of steam pressure—and there's a noise *beyond* deafening. It was brain-numbing. And sleepers leaped off their fir-bough mattresses as the train thundered through.

The campfires of campmeeting lit the darkened nights and provided smoke that stung the

eyes of mothers as they stirred the family broth. Also, they reduced the ever-increasing mosquito population. In the quiet of the night we could hear the tinkle of a halter chain as horses grazed and rested, the cry of night birds, the whispers of trees telling their se-

crets to each other, and the snores of those who'd already found sleep. Their nasal deliberations would continue until the camp bell rang early in the morning.

That camp bell! Oh, how I loved the campmeeting bell. That off-tune piece of cast-iron alerted the saints to come to worship. Like bees going to the hive, they came from the tents and from the cook-fires. Children came from play, and men came from swapping yarns. The old bell governed the camp activities from early morn to its now-time-to-sleep ring.

Then there were the young who'd grown from last year's gawking youngsters into young men and women. The youthful ladies wore their best creations of cotton and lace, and the boys dressed in their mail-order suits—probably one that an older brother had left behind. The mystery of mysteries was how a young lady with downcast eyes and a boy, sly as a fox, could pass on the walkway pretending to look in an opposite direction, yet each knowing how attractive the other was. In meetings they sat conveniently close, but should they both glance at each other at the same time, a great deal of blushing and head-turning would result. One thing certain—they'd both be in attendance at next year's campmeeting.

The campmeetings of those days were more of an evangelistic crusade. Decisions were made for Christ. It was a cleansing time for the local church, and the Holy Spirit had an opportunity to be felt and to do His healing work. In meetings, after the piano was played (accompanied by the orchestration of the rain), we sang, we prayed, we heard the Word of Hope and Life, and we counted our blessings.

As the years rolled by, the railway coaches improved. Diesel engines took the place of those wonderful steam engines, and the roads of the pioneers became modern highways. Although much of our beautiful forests have been harvested, beauty unlimited remains.

*O Time, this year again we will come to the grandest holiday of all—a pre-taste of the future when the saints of God will assemble to praise His Holy Name. As we remember the past, help us to be grateful for campmeeting today, even as we look forward to the great heavenly campmeeting to come.*



While campmeetings have come and gone at Hope, British Columbia over the years, the natural beauty of the mountains hovering over the tents in the valley has never changed.

## II. “We Never Gave Up on Hope”

By Elsworth Hetke

I came to campmeeting at Hope, British Columbia, Canada, in the summer of 1990—a trip into nostalgia. Although much of the credit for what I am today must surely be attributed to past campmeetings, my first memory of a campmeeting in 1944 is not particularly striking. It really couldn't be campmeeting because they just pitched a large tent on the school grounds at Okanagan Academy—and I reckoned that didn't count for campmeeting. Making no special preparations, we simply rode to the school for the meetings and returned home. Hence, the occasion failed to be memorable. We didn't own a car, and I don't even recall how we got there and back.

In 1945, however, we had no campmeeting on the academy grounds. Excitement surged through the conference because land had been purchased in Hope, down at the entrance of the Fraser Valley. Now we'd have a permanent camp site. Still, the most permanent thing done that year was pitching the same old tent—but *now* it was in Hope.

Campmeeting 1946 caused great enthusiasm in our house. *This* time we'd go to Hope in style—we'd have a car. Throughout the war years and for some time thereafter, cars weren't readily available. Dad had put his name into both the Mercury

and the Chevrolet dealerships in Kelowna. He was prepared to accept the first vehicle that came along—what he got was a 1929 Essex Super-6.

Mom baked and cooked for days. We'd travel as a caravan with the Herman Kneller family. Our two fathers projected a long, one-day trip to Hope. The Knellers owned a vintage Nash which had



**Left:** Elsworth Hetke grew up to become a minister. In 1960, he remembers, “I had half of Nova Scotia as my parish.” Two years later he sailed for India and stayed for twenty-three years. **Right:** Just before Hope Campmeeting in 1946, amid post-World War II privations, Bill Hetke purchased a 1929 Essex. Standing beside his new purchase, with a jaunty foot set on the running board, he couldn't possibly know that the Essex would spend the rest of its life blowing out its “rear end” approximately every 1,000 miles.

once been a sedan. But now it had been cut down, embellished with wooden sides and converted into a pickup truck.

The Knellers had two girls, and I had three sisters. The seating arrangements, therefore, bickered down to the place where I was the one delegated to riding on the back of the Nash pickup. (And I'd rather set my heart of getting into our “new” Essex.) Anyway, we headed north toward Vernon, with the steam-release radiator doing its work steadily over the hills. Huddled in the back

of the Nash, I received most of the benefit of the hissing sprays of steam. Hours went by, but they were no drudgery to me—not for a boy who, until 1943, had travelled only by horse and buggy. (Indeed, the trip from Winnipeg to Kelowna to put the Hetke kids into a Christian school had been my first train ride.) Hence, going to campmeeting under motor-power was high adventure.

Steep and narrow, by today's standards, the road wound through Falkland, Westwold and Monte Lake. The mechanically activated brakes created hot smells and loud noises as we ground down the hill from Monte Lake to join the Trans-Canada highway. At last we reached Kamloops. It became apparent by then, however, that with all the stops "to cool things down" (both radiators and brakes), we'd not make it to Hope in one day—100 miles covered and 200 more to go.

But we pressed on, the climb out of Kamloops once more spraying steam over us. Finally the road descended to the Thompson River, toward Cache Creek. We passed an old orchard planted by an English visionary who'd built a flume, extending for many miles along the side of the road. Long before he finished the project, however, he went broke. Both flume and orchard stood as exemplars of Burns' line: "The best laid plans of mice and men go oft awry!" Our own efforts to reach Hope were about to become *another* monument.

With the Nash in the lead and the Essex trailing somewhere behind, we steamed through Cache Creek. We'd almost made Ashcroft when the sudden demise of the differential on the Essex halted all further progress. My German-speaking father (who knew only limited English) was thoroughly frustrated by this episode with his very first car. His heavy accent permitted him to call the Essex by its correct name—and, at the same time, also to describe its ailment accurately.

We took several boxes out of the Essex and piled them onto the back of the already-full Nash. Three or four more people climbed aboard with me. Promising to follow as soon as he could, Dad stayed behind to get the car repaired. (In all, the Essex had five different "rear ends" while we owned it.) Now the Nash *really* had to struggle to get through the Fraser Canyon, steam showers falling

upon us more and more frequently. . . . Never mind! We were on the way to campmeeting.

At last, we rolled past Hell's Gate and on into Hope, where we quickly settled into our enjoyment. Two days later Dad arrived.

Now I knew that we'd reached a *real* campmeeting. The smell of the canvas tents, the huge auditorium, the sawdust-covered floor, the benches—it almost overwhelmed the senses of a nine-year-old. . . . Ah, yes! Those benches! Built for utility but most certainly not for comfort, they each offered a one-board backrest. It bent and bowed to the pressure of adult loggers, farmers and housewives. The same board, however, caught me right at the nape of the neck. Many a kid who fell asleep on a campmeeting bench "trickled" through the gap between seat and backrest. Surely he would have fallen into the sawdust below, except for one thing. One actually *couldn't* fall off the seat. No. More than likely the seat of one's pants



Mom and the rest of the family also posed in front of the "new" car, parked in front of the Hetkes' twelve-acre apple orchard in East Kelowna, British Columbia. (L-R) Florence, Mother Natalia Hetke, Nettie, and Agnes. Asserting his natural masculine "car interest" among his sisters and mother, young Elsworth sits proudly on the hood of the Essex.

would be firmly anchored to the fir or spruce bench by a good quality pitch sap.

Then we had the preachers! Who could every forget Carlyle B. Haynes, Roy Allan Anderson, and Meade McGuire, to say nothing of H. M. S. Richards (the original) and the Kings Heralds, as well as Eric B. Hare and all the missionaries? They had a way with words that made my spine tingle. Sometimes they'd say things like, "This may be the last campmeeting we'll ever have on this earth. Next year we could meet in heaven!" This idea could strike a boy with hope and terror at the same time. Might we *really* be in heaven next year? But I still had so much living to do! I didn't know whether I wanted to go or stay. . . . Then, abruptly, campmeeting ended. I don't remember anything of the trip home. Whatever it was, it had to be anti-climactic. The next possible campmeeting had to be a whole year away—and for a nine-year-old that was eternity.

When the 1947 campmeeting time finally arrived, Dad, remembering 1946, said, "Unless we get a new car, we can't go to Hope this year." How we prayed for a new car! Surely the garage would call us soon to come and pick it up. Precious few days remained, however, and this time Mom didn't cook or bake anything. The day for departure came and went. We still waited at home, waited for the call. The disappointment crushed us all.

I didn't even want to go to church on that first Sabbath while campmeeting was on. Only a few old fogeys were left in the church. Even our parents didn't seem to have much heart for church that day. We tried to be resigned to our fate—no campmeeting in 1947 for the Hetke family.

Then, early Tuesday morning Kelowna Motors called us. We could have our new car tomorrow! Maybe, I thought, just maybe we could still get to campmeeting! But dad said, "No. The car will have to be broken in properly first." That meant 300 miles at 30 mph, and the next 500 at 50 mph. Still, Dad really didn't sound very convincing. Mom started her Sabbath baking on Wednesday—cinnamon rolls, apple pies, and all her other masterpieces.

Then Dad made the announcement: "I think we can get to Hope in time for the last weekend of campmeeting." Much jubilation, as we all plunged

into preparations.

With Mom's lunch packed into the back of the new Mercury, we headed out. Because Dad cheated a little on the engine break-in instructions, we arrived in Hope in a record eight hours. Of course, we did have to stop a few times. The fresh cherries and tuna fish sandwiches inside the ten-year-old boy in the back seat created a little trouble, however, because the soft springs recorded every curve in the canyon roads. But joy, oh joy, our car didn't overheat.

What a special treat that second weekend held for us. And what great reunions with our friends. Plus, the Voice of Prophecy was there. And Eric Hare. And Paul Wickman. Paul told mission stories and taught the kids two songs in an odd African language—"Only Believe" and "I Will Make You Fishers of Men." (I can still sing them.) And how will I ever forget *Clever Queen* and the *Haunted Pagoda*. Even more importantly, however, that was the year I knew that I was going to be a missionary—a forecast of the twenty-three years I'd spend in India.

Campmeeting time at Hope keeps coming around every year. And we're still here—for this I'm truly sorry. Will there be another next year? The British Columbia Conference, of course is planning one. But we all agree that attending campmeeting in the fields and valleys of Heaven would be a much better idea.



# The Beginning of the Organized Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada<sup>1</sup>

By Myrna Tetz

**E**stablishing union conferences was a new idea among Seventh-day Adventists in early 1901. Church leaders, however, sensed a need for stronger ties among the churches in North America. Therefore, at a meeting of the General Conference, they decided to divide the continent into five union conferences.

At first the Canadian provinces were joined to the areas of the United States nearest to them. The Eastern Union included parts of the U. S. as well as the Maritimes, Newfoundland and Quebec. Ontario was incorporated into the Lake Union while Manitoba joined the North West Union and British Columbia the Pacific Union. The provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan had not yet come into existence.

Within a few months it was seen that for practical purposes the territories were too vast. At a meeting of church leaders in South Lancaster, Massachusetts on November 27, 1901, the Eastern Union relinquished control of all Canadian territories. Thus the original five were greatly reduced, and new unions were identified. The North West Union split into two. The Manitoba Mission Field, along with Alberta and Saskatchewan and the Central Union, was assigned to the Northern Union.

The enormous distances prevented any close tie between the East and the West. So, for twenty-five years, there existed an Eastern Canadian Union and a Western Canadian Union.



## The Eastern Canadian Union

S. H. Thurston was subsequently selected to be the first president of the new Eastern Canadian Union (1902-1909). J. W. Collie (then president of the Quebec Conference) became vice-president, and Carroll H. Drown served as secretary-treasurer. Charles Parmele was named auditor. These Union administrators carried on a vigorous program. In 1906 Thurston led a movement against the Lord's Day Act of that year. The Union officers also recommended a new distribution of labor. They appropriated \$400 to build a mission boat for the coasts of Newfoundland. A contingent of ministers was sent to Prince Edward Island, Cape Breton, Newfoundland and Quebec. They also recommended the publication of a monthly paper of from eight to sixteen pages. (By 1903 Eugene Leland became editor of this paper. Later, he founded the Lonedale Academy in Ontario and became its principal.)



Settling the location for church headquarters took some time. Historian J. Ernest Monteith<sup>2</sup> suggests that the Eastern Canadian Union conference office was first established in Montreal. William Guthrie (1909-1912) first established the Union office in Ottawa and then moved it to Port Hope. A strong proponent of evangelism, M. N. Campbell (1912-1917) moved Union headquarters to Oshawa, Ontario, during his term of office. To balance the church's ministry, A. V. Olson (1917-1920) established a training program for French-speaking workers at Oshawa Missionary College. Three other presidents of this pioneer period were: F. W. Stray, F. McVagh, and W. C. Moffat.

From the start, the Canadian church set goals for itself—some of them quite ambitious. At the Eighth Biennial Session of the conference, the brethren decided to “urge all Sabbath Schools to strive to reach the aim of 15 cents a week per member as an aid to our conferences in raising the 25-cent-a-week fund.” Membership goals included: “One soul for Christ in 1916, an average of a tract a day circulated, one subscription to the weekly *Signs* obtained by each member, the *Review* in each Sabbath-keeping family, and the reading of *The Testimonies* (Vols. 6 and 9).” The treasurers fought for solvency. At the tenth Union meeting in 1924, Amy Frank (treasurer of the Maritime Conference, was selected as Union secretary-treasurer. “We have come to look with great disfavor on the accumulation of debt,” she announced, “and a healthy determination to swing ourselves clear of every encumbrance pervades every office in our Union.”

In a meeting of the Union Conference in Kingston, Ontario in 1924, the name of H. M. S. Richards appears. He opened a discussion in which the interest focused on the use of *Present Truth* in evangelistic and personal efforts.” As a result, he was chosen as the chairman of a committee to “select numbers of *Present Truth* to be published by the Canadian Watchman Press to supplement the edition of 13 numbers now in use.” J. L. Wilson<sup>3</sup> was another evangelist, called to be Union evangelist in the early 1920's when headquarters had moved to Oshawa, Ontario.

At the Union Quadrennial Session four years later, further strong recommendations were passed. (1) Workers should refrain from all side-lines of business and live within their regular incomes. (2) No worker



*Above left: Sperry D. Hartwell (1857-1932), the first treasurer of the Canadian Union Conference. Leaving Ontario in 1905, he was ordained to the gospel ministry and worked in Battle Creek, Michigan. Above middle: H. A. Shepherd served Canada for 30 years (1921-1951), first as teacher and accountant at Canadian Union College, and then as Business Manager and Secretary-Treasurer. Above right: Verah Macpherson (1877-1959) came to Canada from the secretary-treasurership of the Northern California Conference. After serving first as treasurer of the Alberta Conference (1914), he became Union Treasurer. About 1918 he went to New England Sanitarium and Hospital as Business Manager. Bottom left: Thomas D. Gibson (1855-1942) became Treasurer of the Ontario Conference in 1914. At the same time, he edited the Canadian Messenger. Bottom middle: B. B. Nofstger (1864-1957) became the second treasurer of the Ontario Conference. He took a special interest in young people and helped many young Adventists to get a Christian education. Bottom right: Coming from Toronto, Mrs. Amy Frank Wilson was educated at Lornesdale Academy (the forerunner of Kingsway College). In addition to becoming the second treasurer of the Eastern Canadian Union Conference (1923-29), she also edited the Canadian Messenger for several years.*

*Opposite page. Above: Canadian-born M. N. Campbell (1874-1958) president of the Union. His name remained familiar to constituency for twenty-five years, beginning in 1932. Bottom left: W. B. Ochs guided the Canadian Union out of the depression (1936 -1942). Bottom right: H.L. Rudy served his “apprenticeship” in executive experience in Central Europe. One year as president of the Alberta Conference introduced him to Canada. He became the third president of the Union (1943-1950). Under his administration, Canadian Union College became a senior college.*

would be employed who was not a faithful tithe-payer. (3) Rallies on Christian education were to be encouraged in the church, because "this is an unfortunate age for the young in which the spirit of abandon and self-indulgence that besets the youth with special temptations and dangers." And (4) The conferences should all "launch an active evangelistic program in an effort to reach all our young people during 1928.)

### The Western Canadian Union

Originally the territory of British Columbia was divided two ways. The western part of the province joined the North Pacific Union while the remainder became part of the Upper Columbia Conference. The British Columbia Conference organized in 1902 with the Manitoba Mission following a year later. The Alberta Mission came into being in 1904, and two years later it became a conference. The Saskatchewan Mission organized on January 1, 1907.

The organizational meeting of the Western Canadian Union was held in the Leduc German church in Alberta. Professor E. L. Stewart served as the first president (1907-1910).<sup>4</sup> Describing the convention, the local newspaper raised an

interesting question: "These people, in our opinion, are bound in the not distant future to be no mean factor in Alberta, and, as such, are their doctrines and beliefs being given the attention they deserve?"

The Depression years hit Canada hard, both East and West. In 1930 the cash on hand for the Western Canadian Union Conference was \$100, with \$682.66 in the bank. The telephone bill was @210.67 and postage ran to \$176.71. A minister's annual salary was \$2,137.83, and women officer workers earned 35 cents an hour.

### The Canadian Union Conference

Upon the recommendation of General Conference leaders in 1932, the two Canadian unions merged to become The Canadian Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. M. N. Campbell was the first president of the amalgamated unions, followed by W. B. Ochs and H. L. Rudy.

An examination of early Messengers and Tidings reveals an emphasis on the distribution of tracts, books and other truth-filled literature. Also on sacrificial giving and personal witnessing. Public evangelism and concerns for the youth took high priority.

Through the years, then, there has been little change in what the church stresses. The changes have occurred as the church has grown in numbers, faced new challenges, and adjusted to the "increased knowledge in these modern days." One would like to believe that some things never change—dedication, sacrifice, loyalty. Today the Seventh-day Adventist church membership in Canada has increased to nearly 40,000. As the heritage of her past influences the plans and dreams for the future of the church in Canada, the members to-

*In 1924, the Western Canadian Union Conference had quite a slim account with the Royal Bank of Canada. At the end of October that year the organization had nothing but a debit of \$599.00. Every dollar meant huge sacrifice, and treasurers, to be sure, had to "live by faith."*

| Western Canadian Union account with |            |          |             | The Royal Bank of Canada |             |             |         |
|-------------------------------------|------------|----------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------|
| DATE                                | DEBIT      | CREDIT   | BALANCE     | DATE                     | DEBIT       | CREDIT      | BALANCE |
| 11                                  | Dr. P. K.  |          | 1928 96 Cr. | 15                       | Fud.        | 2928 47 Cr. | 2928 47 |
| 12                                  | From C. L. | 25 85 80 | 277 87 63   | 113                      |             | 30          | 2898 47 |
|                                     | 1187       | 20 20    |             | 26                       | T 1191      | 3 43 85     |         |
|                                     | Dr. P. K.  |          | 237 805     | 29                       | 1197        | 275         | 587 99  |
|                                     | T 1190     | 368 23   |             | 30                       | Dr. C. L.   | 118 97      |         |
|                                     | 1190       | 92 24    |             | 1200                     |             | 2           |         |
| 13                                  | 1185       | 50       |             | Dr. P. K.                | 1051 50 Cr. |             | 624 68  |
| 15                                  | 1192       | 78 75    |             | Rep 30 Bal.              | 4098 92     | 4098 92     | 624 68  |
|                                     | 1188       | 31 50    |             |                          |             | 624 68      | 624 68  |
| 16                                  | 1186       | 74       |             | Oct 1                    | 1204        | 15          |         |
| 18                                  | 1191       | 630      |             |                          | 05          | 76 31       |         |
|                                     | 29556      | 3735 34  |             | 2                        | 02          | 920         |         |
|                                     | 459        | 3437 85  |             | 3                        | Dr. P. K.   |             | 105 96  |
|                                     | 26         | 4 63 05  |             |                          | 1203        | 140         |         |
|                                     | 349        | 5043 10  |             | 4                        | 07          | 25          |         |
|                                     | 615        | 5 63 37  |             | 6                        | 14          | 60          |         |
|                                     | 408        | 3 87 51  |             |                          | 10          | 100         |         |
| 19                                  | 1194       | 50       |             | 4                        | 11          | 91 57       |         |
| 20                                  | 1193       | 32       |             | 8                        | 20          | 150         |         |
| 25                                  | 1198       | 118 76   |             | 9                        | 1195        | 5           |         |
|                                     | 99         | 25       |             |                          | 1201        | 25          |         |
|                                     | 96         | 5        |             |                          | 19          | 2655        |         |
|                                     | 31         | 11 59    |             |                          | 09          | 75          |         |
|                                     |            |          | 2928 47     |                          |             |             |         |
|                                     |            |          | 29237 21    |                          |             |             |         |
|                                     |            |          | 30165 68    |                          |             |             |         |

day “have nothing to fear for the future except as they forget the way the Lord has led in the past.”

## Sources

<sup>1</sup>The material for this article was gleaned from the records on file at the offices of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada, Oshawa, Ontario. Also from several publications: *The Eastern Canadian Union Messenger*; *The Western Canadian Union Tidings*; and J. Ernest Monteith, *The Lord is My Shepherd*.

<sup>2</sup>Any record of the history of the Adventist Church in Canada must be heavily indebted to the work of J. Ernest Monteith, *The Lord is my Shepherd*. Edited by Malcolm and Lorine Graham and Published by the Canadian Union Conference of the S. D. A. Church, c 1983.

<sup>3</sup>J. L. Wilson was the father of J. W. Wilson who eventually became president of the Canadian Union Conference.

<sup>4</sup>Succeeding presidents of the Western Canadian Union were: H. S. Shaw, C. F. McVagh, and A. C. Gilbert.



## Alberta Sources Continued from page 53.

<sup>17</sup>One proud tradition, reported by Stella B. Lowry, secretary of the Sanitarium Association, is that Ellen White sent testimonies to Elder Boynton regarding location and plans for this institution.

<sup>18</sup>*The Medical Missionary*, June, 1905. At one point the workers had to live in a tent in order to make room for more patients in the building. By 1907 the sanitarium had moved into a thirty-room brick building.

<sup>19</sup>M. H. Philbrick began his career as a church school teacher. Then he taught history and Ukrainian at Canadian Junior College. He also edited the Ukrainian paper, *Watchman for Truth*. Later, he worked in the eastern Canadian conferences. (Monteith, 107)

<sup>20</sup>Letter to Myrna Tetz from Anne Hryirchuk-Samograd, 1991.

<sup>21</sup>One fifteen-year-old boy, after his baptism in Myrnam, had to spend his Sabbaths hiding in the cellars of some of the church members while his old brothers hunted for him in order to beat him.

<sup>22</sup>Letter to Myrna Tetz from Eva Melnechuk-Proskiw (1991), concerning her parents. Mike and Kathryn Melnechuk arrived in Alberta with five daughters and then added five more children to the family. All ten have married Seventh-day Adventists and six of them attended University.

<sup>23</sup>J. Ernest Monteith, *The Lord is My Shepherd*, 108.

<sup>24</sup>Cal Smith and Peter Rick were brothers-in-law. Peter Rick and his wife served four years in the mission service in India before going to Peace River. For one entire year the Alberta Conference could not afford to pay them any wages, so they worked at any jobs they could find. He was not ordained until 1924. Attached emotionally to the great north country, the Ricks finally moved to Fairview in 1928 to make their permanent home.

<sup>25</sup>The Calvin Smiths not only worked extensively for Indians, but they also put in a particularly self-sacrificing year in 1918, nursing many through the flu epidemic. Aileen Albersworth, ed., *A Light in the Peace*. (Grande Prairie: Menzies Printers, 1908), 53-87.

<sup>26</sup>Albersworth, 3-7.

<sup>27</sup>In addition to the Reiswigs, other early families in Peoria were: Berg, Prosser and Seibel.

<sup>28</sup>Adventist families associated with the Belloy-Smoky River district included: Prosser, Bohnke, Grauman, Schultz, Boettcher, Littman and Comm.

## The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (1991)

Oshawa, Ontario

Alberta Conference (1906). Red Deer, Alberta. Churches, 56; membership, 7,411. President: Don Corkum.

British Columbia Conference (1902). Abbotsford, British Columbia. Churches, 65, membership, 8,213. President: Ronald Watts.

Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference (1903). Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Churches, 39; membership, 2,924. President: Lester Carney.

Maritime Conference (1902). Moncton, New Brunswick. Churches, 27; membership, 1,753. President: Robert Schafer.

Ontario Conference (1899). Oshawa, Ontario. Churches, 85; membership, 15,333. President: Richard Bacchus.

Quebec Church Conference (1880). Longueuil, Quebec. Churches, 36; membership, 3,138. President: Robert Samms.

Newfoundland and Labrador Conference (1895). St. John's, Newfoundland. Churches, 9; membership, 657. President: David Crook.

# 1. The Quebec Seventh-day Adventist Church Association (Est. 1880)<sup>1</sup>

While the St. Lawrence valley of Quebec, Canada, had been settled by French immigrants in 16th-century. In the late 18th-century, the mountainous land east of the valley was occupied by United Empire Loyalists who abandoned the new Republic of the United States. English, Irish and Scots settled in this southeastern corner of the province—known as the “Eastern Townships,” and they retained an affinity for their American neighbors to the south. Three major factors helped the spread of Adventism in this district in the 19th century.

First, kinship brought people together. William Miller visited his sister who lived in Hatley, in Stanstead county. In fact, he made five trips between 1835 and 1846.<sup>2</sup> On each of these journeys he vigorously preached the Second Coming of Christ. Also, Hatley became the first town in North America to host a Millerite Campmeeting in June, 1842, during a visit of Josiah Litch.<sup>3</sup> The Eastern Townships were also visited by Joshua V. Himes and other early leaders, both before and after the Great Disappointment.<sup>4</sup> And finally, the flood of Millerite and early Seventh-day Adventist publications had an enduring effect on Canadian readers, and one finds in them frequent letters from believers in the Eastern Townships.<sup>5</sup>



## “The South Stukely Church: Where It All Began”

*by Denis Fortin*

Note: Little did I know when I accepted work as a pastoral intern for the Quebec Conference in 1982, that I would preach my first sermon in the oldest church in Canada, at South Stukely. That first year in the Eastern Townships District convinced me of the richness of our Seventh-day Adventist church heritage in Canada.



## The Prelude to Canadian Adventism

Sabbath-keeping Adventism arrived in Canada just four years after the Great Disappointment of 1844, brought in by Captain Joseph Bates himself.<sup>6</sup> He raised up several little companies of Sabbath keepers in the Townships, and two years later James and Ellen White made their first trip north of the Canada line. They met with the believers in the Melbourne and Hatley areas.<sup>7</sup>

Although the work of evangelism progressed slowly between 1850 and 1860, Quebec attracted many dedicated workers. By the time the Whites visited again, in 1861, the new Adventists were ready to hear about church organization.<sup>8</sup> They found the members living along the Canada-U.S. border between the state of Vermont and Canada East (as the future province of Quebec was then called). One of the pioneers in Quebec, A. S. Hutchins, reported that a church of 16 members had been organized in June, 1862, in South Troy, Vermont. He noted that some of the members came from Potton, a few miles to the north. Probably these were the first Canadians to become members of an organized Seventh-day Adventist church.<sup>9</sup> At the end of that year, another Canadian-American church was organized in East Richford, Vermont, right<sup>10</sup> on the border. Being both American and Canadian, the church reflected the kinship existing between the two nations.<sup>11</sup> Within the next two years, other churches were organized in Westbury and Eaton,<sup>12</sup> and Sutton and Dunham.<sup>13</sup> Throughout the 1860's, visiting brethren strengthened the young churches in the Eastern Townships of Canada, but no permanent workers yet lived in Quebec.



### A Well-Pastored Congregation—at Last

Between 1868 and 1875 pastoral care fell away somewhat, and the church received only one visit! As a result of the neglect, the situation was becoming critical. When Elder A. C. Bourdeau and his son-in-law, Elder R. S. Owen, arrived in Canada they decided to stay—and they wrought a dramatic change.<sup>14</sup> Soon they organized another Canadian church at South Stukely. Workers combined many facets of Adventism by having, in addition to public evangelism, camp meetings, health and education emphasis, and good community relations.

By mid-summer, Bourdeau and Owen had pitched a tent in nearby Bolton. Because it was the first time a tent had been pitched in Canada to present a series of lectures, their crusade attracted attention. At the end, twelve people decided to keep the Sabbath.<sup>15</sup> Another series of

meetings in Bolton in February of the next year also brought good results. When A. S. Hutchins joined Bourdeau at Bolton



*Above:* The first Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada was established in 1883 at South Stukely, in the Eastern Townships District of Quebec. *Below:* The Knowlton Sanitarium in the town of the same name in Quebec operated from 1903-1903. The first institution of its kind, it was sponsored from Battle Creek Sanitarium and conducted the first S.D.A. nursing school in Canada.

*Opposite Page:* Carroll H. Drown became the first principal of the Fitch Bay School, Quebec.

in another summer campaign, the local newspaper reported that twenty “heads of family” had converted and that ten to twelve were preparing already for baptism.<sup>16</sup> Later in the year, Owen held further meetings in South Stukely, a few miles north of Bolton, and in July three families had accepted Adventist teachings.<sup>17</sup>

Firm believers in public evangelism Bourdeau and Owen pitched their tent in the public park in Waterloo, six miles west of South Stukely. July 1, 1876, opened a series of lectures which, at the rate of eight meetings a week, would last for two months. The local *Waterloo Advertiser* not only carried advertising for the orderly and well-attended<sup>18</sup> meetings but also gave detailed accounts of the preaching.

By mid-August the Sabbath Question was on everyone’s mind. Again, the *Advertiser* helped spread the word, printing a long article on the Sabbath which presented arguments from history and documentation for the change of the day of worship.<sup>19</sup> Bourdeau and Owen were pleased with the outcome of this first large crusade in Canada. By October Bourdeau reported that thirty people had been baptized and that he’d begun meetings in French to accommodate the French-speaking population in the area.<sup>20</sup>

The next month Bourdeau and Owen moved their families to Waterloo and started regular meetings on Tuesday evenings. He reserved Wednesday evenings for South Stukely and went to Bolton for worship services on Sabbath. All winter evangelistic meetings went on in Warden, Dillington and Waterloo, and yet another congregation was organized.<sup>21</sup>

On September 30, 1877, sixteen members joined themselves to form the “Stukely and Bolton Church.”<sup>22</sup> They met in a stone school-house near the William Booth<sup>23</sup> home in West Bolton. At last, the planning of a church building seemed to be justified, and in the spring of 1880 the members began the construction of their own place of worship in South Stukely.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile the other three churches organized before 1877 (Richford and Sutton, Sutton and Dunham, and Westbury and Eaton) had been disbanded. South Stukely, therefore, moved into first place as the oldest Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada—though they were, in fact, the third Canadian congregation.



### Expansion Begins

Bourdeau and Owen worked tirelessly and endlessly, but they had even greater ideas for the future of Adventism in Canada. They found a suitable camp site in Magog, near beautiful Lake Memphremagog, and called for a camp meeting. The campmeeting custom had originated with the Methodists and passed on to the Millerites, both groups using the gatherings to good advantage. Not only was campmeeting a time of annual revival for church members, but it also included non-believers and became a time for sharing



*Above:* Mrs. A. C. Bourdeau. *Middle:* R. S. Owen was the son-in-law of A. C. Bourdeau and succeeded him as president of the Quebec Conference. *Below left:* Elder Rodney S. Owen of South Stukely, Quebec. His wife was the daughter of Elder A. C. Bourdeau. Mary Owen, the daughter of Elder Owen, is standing. She is married to Walter J. Blake, an S.D.A. minister who at the time of his death was principal of Indiana Academy. Mary later went to the Philippines where she taught English in the, Philippine Union College. Mary’s brother Chester sits near his pet rabbit. Chester was drowned in Lake Goquac in Michigan when a young man. *Right:* A. C. Bourdeau.

one's own beliefs with neighbors. Like fairs and circuses, campmeetings were attended by anyone with religious interests or with enough curiosity to warrant the physical inconveniences which sometimes attended the gatherings.

Once again to the foreground, the *Waterloo Advertiser* announced a campmeeting to be held at J. J. Webster's grove in Magog, fifteen miles east of South Stukely, in August, 1879. Large canvas tents would be set up for shelter, and several well-known Adventist preachers from the United States were expected to attend. Moreover, the railways, boats and stage companies had offered special reduced fares for whoever wished to come. Thus people from Newport, Vermont, for example, could embark on the *Lady of the Lake* and enjoy the pleasure of crossing the entire length of Lake Memphremagog.<sup>25</sup> Many, many people attended the campmeeting between August 21 and 26, but on the Sunday a very large non-Adventist crowd came. Following the delivering of a temperance message, a Temperance Society was organized with A. C. Bourdeau as its president. Having now grown to sufficient maturity, the Province of Quebec was separated from the Vermont Conference. It was formed into a mission supervised by the General Conference.<sup>26</sup>

### More Magog Campmeetings

Although many campmeetings were to follow, the second one, held from August 11 to 17, 1880, outshone them all. Huge crowds attended, but, even more significantly, James and Ellen White made their third and final visit to Quebec. D. T. Bourdeau, just returned from a five-year stay in Europe, and George I. Butler were also present.

When the meetings started on Thursday night, Webster's grove held twenty canvas tents and one circular pavilion, sixty feet in diameter. With preaching services three times a day (10.30 a.m., 2.30 and 7.30 p.m.), social meetings thrice daily (5.30 and 9.00 a.m. and 4.30 p.m.), people kept more than busy.<sup>27</sup>

On Friday evening, just before sunset, James and Ellen White arrived on the camp ground. As Whalley describes their arrival, "When the people saw the White's [sic] there was a loud shout of victory and a joyous welcome."<sup>28</sup> In its extensive reporting on the meetings, the newspaper gave Ellen White some very generous tributes. When, on Sabbath afternoon, she spoke on I John 3:1-3, the reporter from the *Advertiser* seemed to have been touched: "It is impossible to describe the peculiar eloquence of this lady speaker. She possesses a certain dignity of manner, a quiet consciousness of strength that rivets the attention of the audience at once."<sup>29</sup>

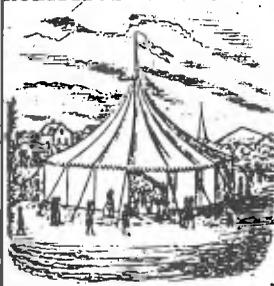
On Sunday special trains, stages and boats brought 2500 people to the camp ground. In the morning, James White, president of the General Conference, preached on the reasons for the Adventist faith. He also gave a report on the progress of the world work. In the afternoon Ellen White spoke on temperance. This time the reporter wrote: "In treating this subject, the speaker took an entirely new line which had the double merit of originality and good sense, a combination rarely found."<sup>30</sup> The lively success of this particular campmeeting impressed Ellen White herself. "I never saw a people so grateful for our labors as in this place."<sup>31</sup>

An important piece of business was transacted at this time. On Monday afternoon, August 16, the believers in Quebec, under the leadership of James White, organized themselves into the first local Canadian conference,<sup>32</sup> "Seventh-day Adventist Conference of the Province of Quebec."<sup>33</sup> A. C. Bourdeau was elected president, his brother D. T. Bourdeau, secretary, and Andrew Blake, treasurer.<sup>34</sup> The Quebec membership stood at 132, distributed among three churches: Westbury and Eaton, Bolton and Stukely, and Dixville. Two companies met at Sutton and Brome.

After a busy intervening year, the tents went up in Webster's grove for the third time, August 10-16, 1881. Every one anticipated another visit from the Whites, but just as the meetings began, A. C. Bourdeau received a telegram announcing the death of James White the previous Sunday. A deep sadness settled over the campground, everyone remembering the joys of just one year ago. A. C. Bourdeau and D. M. Canright held a memorial service on Sabbath afternoon.

**Left:** An advertisement taken from the *Waterloo Advertiser* of June 30, 1876, describes the nature of evangelism as conducted in the "Big Tent" by A. C. Bourdeau (from Vermont) and R. S. Owen (from Michigan). **Right:** Church treasurer's receipt, South Stukely Church, Quebec, September 13, 1930.

**RELIGIOUS LECTURES!**



ELD. A. C. BOURDEAU, Vermont, and R. S. OWEN, Michigan, will give a course of Lectures on the signs of our times—the most striking events of our day, and on practical religion—the new birth, repentance, faith, and a Christian life, &c.

**Large and Commodious Tent,**  
near the Park, at Waterloo, commencing

**SATURDAY, 1st JULY,**  
at 7.30 P. M., and continuing evenings, Friday excepted, as long as the interest may demand. Sundays 10.30 A. M., and 2 and 7 P. M. Admittance free, and no collections.

**CHURCH TREASURER'S RECEIPT**

No. 5. Date, Sept 13, 1930

Received of 2 \$ 1.00

THE FOLLOWING TO BE APPLIED AS ENTERED

| TITLE                 | AMOUNT | RECEIVED |
|-----------------------|--------|----------|
| HARVEST INGATHERING   |        |          |
| SACRIFICE WEEK        |        |          |
| ANNUAL OFFERING       |        |          |
| BIG WEEK              |        |          |
| COLORED WORK          |        |          |
| SABBATH SCHOOL        |        |          |
| FOREIGN MISSIONS      |        |          |
| RELIGIOUS LIBERTY     |        |          |
| CHURCH EXPENSE        |        |          |
| NEEDY POOR            |        |          |
| CHURCH SCHOOL         |        |          |
| HOME MISSIONARY WORK  |        |          |
| TOTAL AMOUNT RECEIVED |        | 1.00     |

TREASURER OF THE CHURCH  
SEP 13 1930  
A. C. BOURDEAU, PRES. D. T. BOURDEAU, SECY.

Outreach remained a strong motivation, as always. But presentations were balanced enough to break down prejudice. When twenty-four people came forward at one of the social meetings, one doubting observer said: "I have heard that you only seek to make proselytes from other people, but never convert souls to Christ. What I have seen today is sufficient to refute this story." The next day 1000 people witnessed fifteen candidates baptized in the lake.<sup>35</sup>

### **Building Friendships in the Community**

From the time they moved to South Stukely in 1880, the Bourdeau family got on well with their neighbors and with other churches.<sup>36</sup> Right after the third Magog campmeeting, however, Mrs. A. C. Bourdeau became ill and left for treatments at the Battle Creek Sanitarium. When her illness was reported in the newspaper, the Episcopal Church presented a basket of cakes to Elder Bourdeau as a gesture of comfort.<sup>37</sup> Her condition deteriorated steadily, and she died on November 27, 1883, just six weeks after the South Stukely Church dedication. The paper expressed community sorrow: "It is with much regret that we record the death of Mrs. Bourdeau. . .after a long and lingering illness. She was much respected, and her decease cast a gloom over the whole community. Some of this deep respect was due to the spirit of cooperation that existed between A. C. Bourdeau and the St. Matthews Church, to whom he freely lent the conference tents for their Harvest Home Festival."<sup>38</sup>

### **Dedication Day for South Stukely—and After**

Three years under construction, the South Stukely Church was completed in September, 1883. Wishing to make the dedication a real celebration, the congregation pitched a large tent, accommodating 700 people, near the church. For the extended services from October 4 to 9, S. N. Haskell and other ministers came up from Vermont.<sup>39</sup> Elder Bourdeau must have felt that to be the culmination of his ministry. He relinquished the presidency of the Quebec Conference.<sup>40</sup> And, with his wife's death so soon afterwards, he left the South Stukely community. Soon after he sailed as a missionary to Europe.<sup>40</sup>

Since Christian education was also a major interest of early Seventh-day Adventists, it is not surprising that the first elementary school in Canada opened in South Stukely in 1884. Within four months R. S. Owen announced "a very prosperous church school" with an average attendance of twenty students. All of them took an interest in the religious exercises and some even determined to take "a new start in the Christian life."<sup>42</sup>

In the town of Knowlton, a few miles south of South Stukely, Dr. W. H. White established a sanitarium in 1903. The one large building had been a boarding house before it was purchased by Battle Creek Sanitarium.<sup>43</sup> "The celebrated Dr. Kellogg of Battle Creek, Michigan," it was reported, "was present on the occasion of its opening." By this time, apparently, the Seventh-day Adventist Church owned a considerable amount of property in Knowlton. The sanitarium was quite prosperous during the administration of Dr. White. It had a "nurse training" branch under the instruction of a local physician, Dr. N. M. Harris.<sup>44</sup>

As Canada's oldest existing Seventh-day Adventist church, South Stukely stands as a memorial to the incredibly hard work of the pioneers who believed that the message of Christ's coming and the hope of salvation should be heard by every person in their community. Difficulties never undermined their perseverance.

*The early Seventh-day Adventist church at Fitch Bay, Quebec was organized in 1902. Very soon it established a church school in this woodland setting.*



## The French Canadian Mission and Its Colporteurs by George Dronen

The first French-speaking Seventh-day Adventist evangelists were the Bourdeau brothers. While they gave much of their time to the ministry in the English-speaking Eastern Townships, a small French-speaking work was slowly running parallel. Its success has to be credited to the work of laymen and colporteurs.

The first French-Canadian convert was Napoleon Paquette of Lachute, Quebec. He accepted the Adventist faith while visiting in the United States. In 1887 he returned home to share his discoveries with his family. At first his relatives were happy to see him, but when they found out that he had abandoned the Roman Catholic Church, panic ensued. Finally, the local priest influenced his parents to turn him out. He took up colporteur work, but became utterly discouraged with his solitary situation and left the church. Twenty years later, however, he was reclaimed by L. F. Passebois.

In the wake of the work of the Bourdeau brothers, the book ministry went on in the French Canadian Mission. Hence, in 1890, R. S. Owen and H. E. Rickard were able to discover three French families in Angers who had learned of Adventism through reading denomination publications.

Between 1910 and 1919, however, Adventists in Quebec suffered a great deal of persecution from the priests. Both preachers and colporteurs were the victims of repeated arrests and imprisonments. Argyle Taylor,<sup>45</sup> along with Camille Armeneau and Joseph Fortier, sold French Bibles and other religious publications at great risk. In 1910 he was jailed for canvassing without a license. He appeared before the local magistrate after having been

### Argyle Taylor's Own Story (1919)

At Thetford Mines, March 13, I had only canvassed two hours when an officer was on my track and took me to the police station. After explaining why it was not necessary for me to have a license, I went back to selling Bibles. Three hours later two policemen came up to me and said, "I guess you will go with us."

When I entered the office, the chief said, "Well, you are back again." As I would not give my consent to stop my work, I was put in the lockup for the night. There I sang the songs of Zion for two hours before I lay down on a board to sleep.

At ten o'clock the next morning I was brought into the office. The clerk arose and read the charge and explained that I would have to pay the cost of the court, etc. I answered that I would pay nothing as I was doing a legitimate work, and was an authorized colporteur of the British and Foreign Bible Society, also that we are protected by the Provincial, Dominion and Imperial governments.

He replied, "The judge will be here March 21st, and you can come before him then and plead your case." I told him that I did not propose to make myself any

trouble but would leave it with them to make . . . trouble. . . . I also stated that I could call on the Bible Society in Quebec City, and they would come to my help, as they are pledged to protect their colporteurs from any interference whatsoever.

After a little telephoning, they said, "You may sell; sell all you like. Is that all right?"

I replied that I was willing to call it settled as far as I was personally concerned, but I would talk it over with our superintendent, for the idea is that it is time for this sort of thing to stop in the Province of Quebec.

"Racial distinction," an official remarked.

I said there was no quarrel in me over racial distinction, but that Jesus Christ gave His life for the Frenchman as well as the Englishman, and that personally I loved the French Canadians. I also said, "But I do not love the papacy, that system that holds the people in darkness, ignorance and superstition all their lifetime. And that is why I am selling Bibles to enlighten them.

I then went to the cell for my clothing. Opening the satchel, I offered the goods right there, and the clerk handed me the price of the Bible.

imprisoned for two days. "I have been incarcerated for two days, Your Honour, and all because I sold a small pamphlet," he said. "Only a simple booklet on hygiene, health and temperance. Since I began, I have sold in all merely six copies, and I have received in return forty-six cents. I was not aware that I had offended in this." He was released.

Five years later Argyle again ran into trouble in Quebec City. One day a man tore ups some of the papers he was selling. Then a flock of children pursued him from door to door, making so much noise that he could do nothing. Gradually, as bigger boys joined the mob, they pelted him with dirt, sticks and stones. When a policeman finally rescued him, he was taken to the police station for creating a disturbance. In 1917 Argyle was arrested for selling Bibles on the street. He got out of jail only by paying a fine. "If we find you selling Bibles again, we'll put you in a dark hole—for a good while."

Just how many times Argyle was arrested would be anyone's guess. Many

## From The Journal of Emma Landry-Nadeau<sup>46</sup>

"I graduated from Maritime Academy, in Memramcook, New Brunswick, in May, 1922, having finished the twelfth grade. Elder Passebois, who had charge of the French work in Quebec at that time, asked me to come to Montreal to help the mission force by giving Bible studies. I felt that my Acadian French would not be sufficient for the kind of work he expected, so I wrote refusing to go. I was soon to learn, however, that one did not easily say "no" to Elder Passebois. He answered immediately. "We can use you with the knowledge you have. Come. We'll start you at \$12.00 a week."

So I decided to try it, not just for the money but because I wanted to do God's will. Therefore, in July, 1922, I left home for Montreal. I'd never been in such a big city, and at first the crowds and the traffic overwhelmed me. And I had to learn to find my way on the clattering streetcars. I lived by myself in a boarding house from which I went out each morning to sell the French *Signs of the Times* or to solicit funds for the work. Even as I had feared, my command of Quebec French was not good enough to give Bible studies. But more than anything, I missed the peace and the green landscape of my countryside. I was terribly lonesome. But whenever I talked of going back to New Brunswick, Elder Passebois would say, "Miss Landry, you're not going home."

After sticking it out for two weeks, I finally decided to act. Saying nothing to anyone, I packed my trunk one night and next morning went down to the train station to get my ticket. I stopped at the conference office to pick up my last paycheck, and then started walking toward the streetcar stop on the way to my boarding house. As I walked along, I began to have doubts about my plan. So I prayed that if it was not God's will that I go home, he would send something to stop me.

I'd just finished this prayer, when I looked up to see Elder Passebois, striding along in his usual brisk manner. Desperately I looked for somewhere to hide, but it was too late. He had already seen me. Greeting me cheerfully, he asked me where I was going. I confessed my plan and waited for the lightning to strike. But I need not have feared. "Now, Miss Landry," he said, "you don't want to do that." His kind voice melted me, and I began to cry. "It will soon be campmeeting," he went on, "and you'll enjoy that. Then when the school term begins at Oshawa this fall, you can attend and get more education in French."

By this time I had wiped away my tears and was even smiling. "Go back to your room," he continued, "and read Chapter 34 in *The Desire of Ages*. Then unpack your trunk. Tomorrow you can get a refund on your ticket." He paused a minute, then touched my arm. "We're canning tomatoes at our house tonight. Why don't you come over and help us?" Before we separated I even confessed to him how I'd prayed and that I now was sure that God wanted me to stay and work for Him in Montreal.

Once I had something to look forward to, time flew by, for I knew that after campmeeting I would be going to Oshawa Missionary College. So I was glad that God had intervened to keep me from going home."



**Photo:** Born in France, Louis Passebois (1874-1948) attended Battle Creek College in 1890 and first became a missionary in Egypt and France. In 1914 he began working in French Canada where he had a real talent for holding the scattered Adventists together. Well known for his fearless preaching, he attracted much opposition. He was arrested fourteen times, his home was burned down, and he received fourteen letters threatening him and his family with death--but nothing stopped the courageous little man.

years later he was arrested in Hull where he was imprisoned for two weeks, less one day.

Nor were women spared difficulties. In 1910 a Sister Roach was arrested several times for canvassing without a license. In 1913 Camille Armeneau and Ferere Fortier were arrested and charged with the same offence in Montreal. The judge found them guilty and then suspended the sentence. Just an hour before the men were taken into custody, Armeneau discussed the sale of *La Sentinelle* with the local parish priest. The latter promised to review the magazine from his pulpit the next Sunday. He kept his word and thus gave the colporteurs fine publicity.

In 1919 Mrs. Passebois with two young ladies (Misses Butler and Parnell) sold Adventist literature in Plessisville. The local priest persuaded the mayor to stop them, threatening them with jail if they did not leave town on the next train. A landmark court case followed which ultimately opened up almost all of Quebec to literature ministry.<sup>47</sup>

In the years since these early beginnings, the literature evangelists have contributed much to church-growth in Quebec. In 1974, for instance, the church in Quebec gained 245 members. Of the 215 who were added by baptism, many were influenced by the fifty literature evangelists working in the territory.<sup>48</sup> Between 1985 and 1990 the French work among the indigenous French-speaking people has revived, under the leadership of Robert Fournier from Ontario. With the twelve full-time workers he has recruited from among the French-speaking converts, he has made the colporteur work in Quebec the strongest in Canada today.

## Sources

<sup>1</sup>This article is abridged from a longer, unpublished manuscript by Denis Fortin, "The Beginnings of Seventh-day Adventism in Canada." (Quebec City, 1991), 13pp. He cites as major sources two works: Robert Stephen Whalley, "The Rise of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Quebec." (Unpub. manuscript, 1976); and J. Ernest Monteith, *The Lord is My Shepherd: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada*.

<sup>2</sup>Sylvester Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller* (Boston: J. V. Himes, 1853), 353.

<sup>3</sup>Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry*. (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald, 1944), 111.

<sup>4</sup>Whalley, 3-6.

<sup>5</sup> See the following Millerite publications for correspondence from Quebec: *The Advent Herald*, the *Signs of the Times*, *Day-Star*, *Western Midnight Cry*, and others. Also *The Advent Herald* and *The Review and Herald*.

<sup>6</sup>Joseph Bates gave his current tract wide distribution, *The Seventh-day Sabbath, a Perpetual Sign*.

<sup>7</sup>During this visit, Ellen White wrote that although she was sick and her throat was badly irritated, the Lord heard their prayers and healed her instantaneously. (See E. G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1915, 132-133.)

<sup>8</sup>James White, "Eastern Tour," *Review & Herald*, September 24, 1861. (See also Ernest Monteith, "Quebec," p. 27.

<sup>9</sup>A. S. Hutchins, "Meetings in South Troy," *Review & Herald*, June 17, 1862.

<sup>10</sup>At its business meeting, the church voted "that this church be called the church of Richford and Sutton." Thus it became, undoubtedly, the oldest record we have of the existence of a Canadian Seventh-day Adventist church. See "Records of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Richford, VT and Sutton CE." A copy of this record is available in the Heritage Room of the James White Library, Andrews University. See also a letter in the *Review & Herald*, January 27, 1863, reporting the organization of the Richford-Sutton church.

<sup>11</sup>The Abercorn Church, Quebec, just a few miles north of Richford was organized in 1900. Members came from both Quebec and Vermont to attend.

<sup>12</sup>Organized February, 1864. A. C. and D. T. Bourdeau, "Recent Labors," *Review & Herald*, March 15, 1864.

<sup>13</sup>Organized July 2, 1866. A. C. Bourdeau, "Report from Brother Bourdeau," *Review & Herald*, August 22, 1865.

<sup>14</sup>Whalley, p. 26.

<sup>15</sup>A. C. Bourdeau, "Canada," *Review & Herald*, September 20, 1875. (Cited in Whalley, p. 26)

<sup>16</sup>A. C. Bourdeau, "Canada," *Review & Herald*, March 27, 1876. (Cited in Whalley, 26) See also "West Bolton," *Waterloo Advertiser*, June 30, 1876.

<sup>17</sup>A. C. Bourdeau and R. S. Owens, "Canada," *Review & Herald*, July 3, 1876. (Cited in Whalley, 28)

<sup>18</sup>*Waterloo Advertiser*, June 30, 1876. Short accounts of the various lectures are given in the issues of July 7, 14, and 21, 1876, under the headings: "Tent Meetings."

<sup>19</sup>"The Sabbath Question at the Tent," *Waterloo Advertiser*, August 18, 1876. Following this article, however, the newspaper carried no more news about the tent meetings.

<sup>20</sup>A. C. Bourdeau, "Canada," *Review & Herald*, August 10, 1876; October 5, 1876. (Cited in Whalley, 28).

<sup>21</sup>Whalley, 29-30.

<sup>22</sup>"South Stukely Church Records." A copy of these records is available in the Heritage Room of the James White Library at Andrews University.

<sup>24</sup>The Booth family were Adventists from 1876 and charter members of the South Stukely Church. Their descendants have made their mark on Canadian Adventism ever since. John and Mary Booth's daughter, Merle

(Sources Continued on Page 33.)

## 2. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Newfoundland and Labrador (Est. 1895)<sup>1</sup>

By *Trudy Morgan*

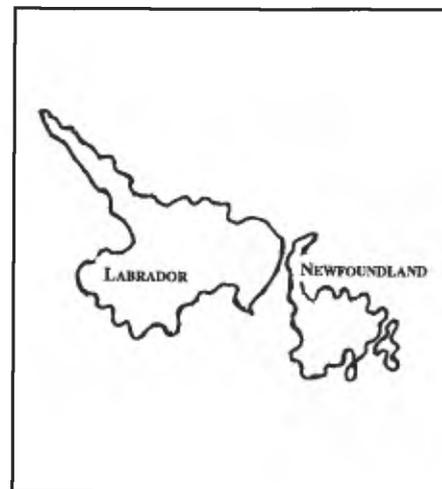
If you have been so fortunate as to fly the polar route from Europe to America, you will have passed the island of Newfoundland. It is part of the breath-takingly beautiful land-and-sea-scape of Canada's frozen north, shining blue and white on a sunny day. You will see the long finger of Newfoundland's northwest peninsula, laid across an indigo ocean, pointing back eastward to the snowy, chunky district of Labrador. The island has been described as an odd-shaped door-knocker at the eastern gateway to the North American continent.<sup>2</sup>

On the ground, however, Newfoundland and Labrador have always presented a culture and a challenge unique to themselves. Newfoundlanders are proud of their being claimed in 1593 as the first possession of the British Empire. Wishing to keep the cod-rich Grand Banks exclusively for her "Fishing Admirals," Queen Elizabeth I forbade any other settlers in this outpost. No landsmen, to be sure, with their finicky concern for law and order and their ambition for the comforts of

civilization! And when other settlers did finally arrive, they, along with the fishermen, had to brave the long, harsh winter hurricanes, tidal waves, and icebergs, as well as dense and seemingly endless fogs.<sup>3</sup>

Newfoundland and Labrador as a missionary enterprise first came to the attention of the General Conference in 1893.<sup>4</sup> The next year two Adventist laymen from Battle Creek, Michigan, L. T. Ayres (a schoolteacher) and E. O. Parker<sup>5</sup> and their wives arrived in Newfoundland. Self-supporting missionaries, they were the first to bring Adventism to this island.

When Seventh-day Adventist doctrines were first introduced to Newfoundland, controversy followed close behind. In 1895 and Adventist minister, Elder S. J. Hersum, began holding meetings in St. John's. In August of that year, a local newspaper reported a lecture on "The Sabbath Question," given by a Mrs. Cowperthwaite<sup>6</sup> in one of the cities major churches. "The arguments of the Seventh-day Adventists were taken up and simply annihilated without mercy," the reporter affirmed.



Elder Hersum's spirited reply in the next day's paper not only defended the Adventist position but also concluded that the opposing lecture "was no more effective. . . than for a little boy with a popgun, to shoot peas at a British man-of-war." The lively debate between Elder Hersum and his opponents continued, as a kind of "serial," in the pages of the *Evening Telegram* for almost a year. In a city with such deeply ingrained religious traditions, this kind of controversy did much to awaken interest in the new religion. And, surprisingly, Hersum was able to organize a church of 18 members. By the next year they'd built a small church, 28' x 40'.<sup>7</sup>

By 1901, other Adventist workers had arrived to spread the Word throughout the island. Elders J. J. Farman and C. A. Hansen held tent meetings in Harbour Grace, reporting

“a good interest,” although they admitted that “the people here see things differently, and they move slowly.” Working in Newfoundland, especially in the outports, must have been quite a culture shock for these workers who came from other parts of North America. Elder Farman reported to the *Review & Herald* that Hansen and his wife, who had just arrived from Iowa, “often speak of how well they enjoy the climate and the surroundings.” Elder Hansen himself, however, wrote to the *Review* that “we find it much colder there than in Iowa, and there has not been one warm day since we came. One can work without a coat only occasionally, but not often.”<sup>8</sup>

The first two baptisms into the Adventist church in Newfoundland occurred in 1895. The new members were Mrs. Anna Pippy, the wife of a

prominent St. John’s businessman<sup>9</sup> and Edward Butler, a checker of ships’ cargo at Harvey’s East End Wharf in St. John’s.<sup>10</sup>

The first Adventist workers in Newfoundland were challenged by the isolation of many small communities, people being widely scattered and difficult to reach. At the time that Farman and Hansen held their meetings in Harbour Grace, they were also raising money to buy a boat for the canvassing work. The one colporteur then working in Newfoundland felt that a boat would be “a necessity” in the work of literature evange-

lism. This dream was realized in the 1920’s, when the church operated two mission boats. Through this ministry many isolated fishing communities



**Above:** The first Seventh-day Adventist church building in Newfoundland was on Cookstown Road, St. John’s. This picture, taken about 1952, shows the sign board for the six-month evangelistic campaign held by G. D. O’Brien and his male quartet, The Ambassadors, from western Canada. **Below:** “The Manse” in St. John’s. Because of sometimes vitriolic local prejudice, Adventist ministers had difficulty finding living quarters when they were assigned to Newfoundland. Feeling this to be an on-going insult to their pastors, the members purchased this property at 106 Freshwater Road in 1914. Ultimately the little home was expanded to house not only the parsonage but also the mission conference office, the radio station and the academy.

# Outport Doctor

By Fern Penstock

NOTE: This was the first medical work in Newfoundland. A very permanent impression was made in St. John's in 1955 when the Hildebrands and Moores arrived and set up an office. While Art and Verna Moores stayed to build up the slow-growing practice, Eugene and Jean Hildebrand worked as a replacement medical team in the outports.

Verna Moores gave the polishing cloth a final swish and stood up to survey the spotless surgery. Now, along with the usual medicinal smell of a doctor's office, the place now smelled of soap and floor wax. She then hurried to the kitchen to prepare a warm potato and onion-soup supper for her family.

When her husband, Dr. Art, arrived thirty minutes later, and when he'd struggled out of the wild, welcoming embraces of their two little boys, Verna asked about one of her favorite people. "How's Uncle Tom Critchley? Is he very bad?"

"Oh, he'll be fine," Art pulled his chair up to the table. "He slipped climbing out of his dory, but it'll take more than a little sprain to keep down an old salt like him."

Halfway through the meal, they heard a car pull into the yard. Verna hoped Art wouldn't have to go out on another housecall. Through the open door, she could hear him inviting someone into the surgery. A lot of agitated

talking followed the stamping of a number of boots. Mindful that she was also the doctor's nurse, as well as his wife and cleaning lady, she handed the baby over to his older brother and went to the front of the house.

Four men with grizzled beards stood in the middle of her freshly waxed floor. "I say, Doc, we've got a fella out 'ere with a fish 'ook in 'is mouth." The eldest of the visitors held his rain hat respectfully in both of his hands. "Tink you can do any'ing fer 'im?"

Verna winced. That had to hurt. "Of course," Art replied. "Bring him in, and we'll see what we can do." But, as they disappeared into the foggy darkness, she couldn't help noticing the mud already deposited on her carefully polished floor. Well, no matter. Someone out there needed help. She began laying out the instruments and dressings she thought might be needed.

Once again the voices approached the door—much louder and more excited than before. One man burst into the light, stumbling into the room. "E's coming, Doc. But it's just that 'e don't care fer this sort o' r'ing."

Then the whole group came milling and stomping through the door. In their midst and at the center of their attention walked a huge Newfoundland dog, with a fish hook caught in his smooth, black lower lip. The dog's toenails skidded unwillingly across the mud-spattered floor.

Verna saw Art blink several times as his mouth fell open. One of the men, a bewhiskered little Irishman, pressed forward to explain. "Hit's 'im, Doc. 'E's the

one what's got the fish 'ook in 'is mouth." He went on, but only half apologetically. "Sure, an' we t'ought ye might say No if we told ye the truth." Then, realizing that rejection might still be a possibility, the men rushed on. "Ye will 'elp 'e, won't ye, Doc?" The now-conquered patient looked up soulfully. "'E's 'urt some bad, 'e his."

Art winked at Verna. "Nurse, prepare the patient for surgery. This here's a bad case."

Half an hour later Art and Verna Moores stood amid the shambles of the once-antiseptic surgery. The patient hadn't submitted very humbly to treatment, and now the whole place smelled of codfish and wet dog. Blobs and smears of mud, along with puddles of water, covered the floor.

They surveyed the desolation. "Mrs. Moores, did I ever promisue you a quiet or easy life?"

"Never, I'm sure." Verna smiled at him fondly. Then, both laughing, they got out the mop bucket, and the doctor and nurse started scrubbing the floor again.



**Above:** Fern and Floyd Penstock served Seventh-day Adventist schools for eleven years between 1953 and 1965, with two leaves for study, first at Atlantic Union College, MA, and then at Walla Walla College, WA. In 1955, they welcomed Baby Daughter Sierra into the family. **Below:** The Moores and Hildebrands went to Newfoundland together as a medical team. The doctors were both graduates of the College of Medical Evangelists (later Loma Linda University), CA, in 1953. (L-R: Eugene W. Hildebrand, Jean Hildebrand, Verna Moores, and Arthur A. Moores.



were reached with the Adventist message.

Medical missionaries also came to Newfoundland in those early years. Drs. Alfred A. and Carrie M. Lemon moved to St. John's in 1902 and opened the Newfoundland Health Institute. Dr. Carrie Lemon holds the distinction of being the first woman

doctor licensed to practice in Newfoundland. The Lemons' medical ministry drew much attention in St. John's, and Dr. Carrie became well known for her support of the temperance movement.

Through the dedication of these early workers and the enthusiasm of their first converts, the message spread

throughout the island. In 1911, two new believers in the town of Englee found their faith tested when they were charged with fishing on Sunday. James Dower and Edward Lane were convicted by the local magistrate and sentenced to a fine or fourteen days' imprisonment. With the support of Elder C. H. Keslake (the Adventist minister in St. John's) the case was appealed to the Supreme Court of Newfoundland.

The Court overturned the magistrate's decision on a technical point, and Lane and Dower were acquitted. This experience not only gave two new believers and their families a chance to take a stand for their new-found faith, but it also brought the Adventist church in the public eye once again. Elder Keslake used the opportunity to write a series of letters to the *Daily News*, championing the cause of religious liberty.



**Above:** During the lean 1930's the Seventh-day Adventists in St. John's operated a soup kitchen, even though their resources were very meagre. **Below:** The early Dorcas Society in St. John's included familiar names of wives of the pioneer Adventist families: Front Row (seated L-R): Mrs. Noseworthy, \_\_\_\_\_, Mrs. Fern Butler, Mrs. Elsie Dawe, Mrs. Jenny Mann, Mrs. Irene Clarke. Back Row (standing L-R): Mrs. Nellie Trenchard, Mrs. Elizabeth Winsor, Mrs. Webber.

“There are those,” he charged, “who stand ready to subvert religious liberty and imprison men for no other crime than that of being God-fearing!”

This was not the only time Elder Keslake was involved in controversy during his seven years in Newfoundland. Like other Adventist ministers in these early years, he engaged in public debates with clergymen of other denominations on the Sabbath question. And defending Bible truth in those days could lead to harsh treatment. One evening, Elder Keslake came home to his rented rooms to find his belongings out on the sidewalk and his family staying with friends. The landlord had been visited by a clergyman in the afternoon and had subsequently evicted the Keslakes without notice. These conflicts frequently made finding housing almost impossible for the ministers. This problem led to the purchase of the property at 106 Freshwater Road, an address for the Newfoundland Mission which has remained unchanged to this day.<sup>11</sup>

### Outreach by Radio

A series of workers, both Canadian and American, served the church, and slowly the truths of Adventism spread into outport communities along Newfoundland’s 4,000-mile coastline.<sup>12</sup> Still, at the end of 1928 the total membership numbered only eighty-nine. In 1930, the extreme difficulty of transportation made the use of radio appear to be a happy solution, and the believers were ready to make any sacrifice to launch the project.

Perhaps the establishment of a small radio station in the Manse on Freshwater Road is the most outstanding achievement in the history of the Mission.<sup>13</sup> Pastor Harold Williams first went on the air in early March,

1930, with the call letters 8BSL (Bible Study League), broadcasting Bible studies and religious music from his own home.<sup>14</sup> Public response to this outreach was enthusiastic and positive.

By 1932 Station VOAC (Voice of the Adventist Church) was established—with no strings attached. Now church services, news and weather (readings from the St. John’s newspaper) went out to rural Newfoundland daily where isolated families hovered over their crystal sets and Atwater Kent radios. Church members also had a chance to take part in producing a variety of programs<sup>15</sup> and using local music talent. When W. C. Baird first put on “The Painter’s Programme,” a counselling session for painters and woodworkers, he became flustered. Mixing up the pages of his carefully typed script which his nephew, Broadcaster Clarence Whitten, had typed for him, poor Brother Baird’s plaintive voice went out over the airwaves, “Oh my goodness! Where am I!” (The next day he endured the laughter of his friends who inquired as to whether he’d found himself or not.)<sup>16</sup>

During the early 1930’s the station’s call letters were changed to 8RA, then to VONA. After the station was sold to a local businessman,<sup>17</sup> the church established a new, non-

commercial station in 1932. Its call letters, VOAC, later changed to the name we know today, VOAR (The Voice of Adventist Radio).<sup>18</sup> VOAR still reaches out to Newfoundland and Labrador today, as necessary as it ever was. Although the S.D.A. church in Newfoundland still has only 670 members, one of the most powerful witnessing tools of the Church in Canada has been this radio station.

Despite the hardships and opposition faced by Adventist pioneers in Newfoundland, many people were receptive to their message. Pastors,



**Above:** Colporteurs used the mission boat, *The Hope*, for canvassing the northern outports of Newfoundland in 1926. **Below:** Over the years Radio Station VOAR provided Adventist young people with valuable broadcasting experience. Here, in 1954, Ralph Janes, a student at Newfoundland Academy sits at the controls. Janes is now president of Kingsway College, Ontario.

teachers, doctors and others who came to Newfoundland to work found that although the climate was sometimes inhospitable, the people were not. A warm camaraderie has always existed among the workers who have served in Newfoundland, and many have returned in later years to visit the people to whom they have ministered. Through very difficult beginnings the Seventh-day Adventist church did, indeed, take firm root in the rocky soil of this storm-blown Old Rock.

### Sources

<sup>1</sup>The Newfoundland Conference includes Labrador and the French Islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon.

<sup>2</sup>Modern communications first alerted the continent to the existence of the colony when, in 1858, the U.S. frigate *Niagara* laid the first trans-Atlantic cable at Trinity Bay, Newfoundland. In 1901, atop Signal Hill, St. John's, Guglielmo Marconi heard the first faint clickings from England which announced the beginnings of long-range, wireless telegraphy.

<sup>3</sup>Newfoundland and Labrador had but one task, that of converting the meat of the codfish into the coin of the realm by trading, all the way from the Mediterranean to Brazil. Having but one economic outlet, they had a long history of poverty and hardship. Recent years, however, have brought prosperity from the pulp-and-paper mills fed by the vast forests of the region and the rich ore deposits in Labrador.

<sup>4</sup>L. T. Ayers, "Newfoundland," *Review & Herald*, October 10, 1893, 638-639. For a detailed history of the work in this province, see J. Ernest Monteith, *The Lord is My Shepherd: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada*. (Oshawa, Ont.: The Canadian Union Conference of S.D.A., 1983), 132-140, 189, 214-215, 230-231, 266. See also, "A Brief History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Newfoundland," in *The Crusader* (Portugal Cove, Nfld.: New Life Crusade, 1982), 5.

<sup>5</sup>Parker and Ayres had previously been colporteur in the Maritimes, so it was convenient to send them across the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Newfoundland. Aboard ship, even before reaching Port-aux-Basques (Newfoundland's Gulf port), they met their first potential convert, Mrs. Anna Pippy.

<sup>6</sup>Mrs. Cowperthwaite stirred up much hostility, denouncing Adventists by every possible means and by equating them with infidels and liquor dealers. Ayers and Hersum ably refuted her charges. (See "Mrs. Cowperthwaite's Lecture," in St. John's *Evening Telegram*, August 1, 1895; and "A Letter from Mr. H. J. Hersum," *Evening Telegram*, August 2, 1895. (Cited in David Kennedy, ed., *As He Has Led Us in the Past: 90 Years of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Newfoundland* (St. John's: Creative Publishers, 1985, 8-10). See also, S. J. Hersum, "Newfoundland," *Review & Herald*, July 9, 1895, 442-443.

<sup>7</sup>S. J. Hersum, "Newfoundland," *Review & Herald*, November 3, 1896, 704.

<sup>8</sup>Warmth reaches Newfoundland from the off-shore Gulf Stream, but not often. The long, cold, damp winters have long been legend, and cynics like to advise that if one does not happen to be in Newfoundland on precisely the right day, he might miss summer altogether for that year. The island's northeast coast and Labrador are sealed off by ice from January to June.

<sup>9</sup>Mrs. Pippy's becoming a Sabbath-keeper caused much public discussion. The local Methodist minister denounced Adventists from his pulpit and called Parker a devil. (O. E. Parker, "Newfoundland," *Review & Herald*, June 12, 1894, 380)

<sup>10</sup>An employee of Job Brothers, Edward Butler lost his job because of the Sabbath question. From then until his death in 1950, he was a self-supporting lay worker. His grandson, George Adams, has held many positions of responsibility in the S.D.A. Church.

<sup>11</sup>George Morgan, "106 Freshwater Road," in Kennedy, 11-13. The Newfoundland Mission was part of the Northeastern Conference which included eastern Canada and New England. The

men of the church had good credit rating, so they borrowed \$1,500.00, built the Manse, and let the minister's rents pay off the loan. A legal mortgage was impossible, so the conference had to sign the conveyance, despite the fact that they had never before done so for any individual's needs.

<sup>12</sup>Monteith, 134-136.

<sup>13</sup>Monteith, 136. See also, Clarence Whitten, "VOAR—The Early Days" in Kennedy, 17-18.

<sup>14</sup>H. B. Tucker, "Radio Station '8 BSL,'" *Eastern Canadian Messenger*, March 18, 1930, 3. The station operated on 228.9 meters, 1,310 kilocycles and 10 watts. Even while testing the station, twenty-five calls came in. And when a little program was aired to test the antenna, fifty calls came in. Harold Williams acquired his expertise from George Stevens, an Adventist who had operated a radio station in Auburn, New York. Late in 1930, Stevens himself came to St. John's as a self-supporting worker.

<sup>15</sup>The studio was now housed in the Cookstown Road Church. Edward Butler (the first Adventist convert), conducted "The Layman's Study Hour."

<sup>16</sup>Kennedy, 17-18.

<sup>17</sup>After the government permitted an increase of power, the call-letters VO were assigned to Newfoundland, and VONA (Voice of the North Atlantic) became the first commercial radio station in the colony. The ever-present need for funding to maintain the station had brought in advertising. Difficulties over the advertisements arose, however, over the church's refusal to advertise products inconsistent with its teachings. VONA was sold in 1932.

<sup>18</sup>In 1952 VOAR (The Voice of Adventist Radio) was granted a private commercial license, even though it was still a non-commercial radio station. By 1959 broadcast time stepped up to thirty-eight hours a week, tape-recording facilities improved, and the Voice of Prophecy was augmented by other programs like "Unshackled," "Your Radio Doctor," "The Quite Hour," and "Your Story Hour." Also, regular Sabbath morning services are broadcast from the new Queen's Road S.D.A. Church. VOAR has been reaching St. John's area listeners for many years, but today it has made an exciting new power increase.

### 3. The Beginnings of the Adventist Church in Ontario (Est. 1899)<sup>1</sup>

By Myrna Tetz

**T**he story of Adventism in Ontario goes back to 1850 and is associated with the Millerites. It focuses on one, Peter Gibson, who sent a contribution of one dollar to the *Advent Review*, in care of C. A. Minor.<sup>2</sup> Apparently Minor had already travelled in western Ontario, for there is an interesting letter from D. C. Corcoran in the village of Delaware, some ten miles west of London. He describes the visit of a “beloved brother” who “expounded to him” the significance of the law of God. Only later, through the reading of the *Review*, did Corcoran, his wife, and a neighbor, Mrs. Estacy Young, become Sabbath-keepers.

#### Millerite Connections

Meanwhile, Peter Gibson had invited any brethren of the Philadelphia Church (the name Seventh-day Adventist was not adopted for another ten years) to visit him that summer, should they be travelling west. He may have been a known follower of William Miller and therefore a good prospect for accepting Sabbath truth.<sup>3</sup> In any case, in late 1851 Hiram Edson

and Joseph Bates made a circuit of Lake Ontario, laboring among all known Millerites.

Despite “tedious cold weather, deep snow and cold impenetrable hearts,” they were able to report 100 converts in Canada West (Ontario).<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, some twenty new believers appeared in Mariposa and Reach in northern Ontario. They shared their beliefs by assiduously circulating tracts and the *Review*, by encouraging one another to live above persecution and disappointment, and by waiting eagerly for a visit from the “travelling brethren.”

Only one attempt at proclaiming the Sabbath was made by a Seventh-day Adventist leader during the 1860’s. R. F. Cottrell held eighteen public meetings in Bronte, where he encountered stiff opposition from those who loudly misrepresented the basic Adventist faith. Undaunted, Cottrell called his audience to forsake “their fashionable as well as their unpopular sins” and be converted. His efforts, it seems, met with no success.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, any meetings running into July could hardly maintain the interest of



the farmers who, by then, were becoming anxious about their crops. Again, Ontario school laws made it difficult to hold religious services in schoolhouses—and halls were both scarce and high-priced. Canada, it began to appear, would be a difficult missionfield in which to make a mark.

Ten years later, in 1872, Cottrell again tried public evangelism, this time near Milford, Prince Edward County, Ontario. Now it was the weather, not the people, who resisted him. Storms and winds, with snow drifts blocking the roads in every direction—once

more the results were discouraging. Finally, four years later, John Fulton baptized five persons in Lake Huron, and the first church of eight members was organized in Lambton County. He moved on to Chatham where, in the summer, he pitched his tent on one of the main streets and nurtured a little company of sixteen Sabbathkeepers.<sup>6</sup> With southwestern Ontario assigned to the Michigan Conference as a mission field, the impetus to face the challenge of evangelism increased throughout the late 1800's.

### Toronto at the Center

Naturally, Toronto soon became a center of church activity. In 1883 George Brown established a "reading room" in his home on Yonge Street, and within a year he had some converts—although there is no record of the establishment of a church at that time.<sup>7</sup> In 1889 a group of colporteurs began work in the city, and four years later four Bible workers were appointed to Toronto. They rented a house, fitted up the parlor for meetings, and set up a Sabbath School with sixty members. Finally, in 1895, I. H. Evans visited Toronto and organized an eighteen-member church in a rented store on Dundas Street.

At the first campmeeting in the summer of 1899, F. D. Starr was elected the first conference president. Also of special interest was the ordination of two young men, William Ward Simpson and E. J. Dryer. The latter had served forty days in jail in Chatham for allegedly working on a church building on Sunday. Campmeetings in Ontario, of course, like those in other parts of the country came to serve the members as the highlight of their year, both spiritually and physically. In this vein, a 1917 advertisement for a campmeeting in Duffering Park, Toronto, advised: "There is a beauti-



**Top:** The Eastern Canadian Messenger for March 11, 1919. **Right:** Canadian church papers also offered practical, every-day help to their readers. Baby chicks, anyone? (Eastern Canadian Messenger, Oshawa, Ontario, Vol. 28, No. 4, January 24, 1928.) **Bottom:** Invitation to an Ontario campmeeting in the Eastern Canadian Messenger. (Oshawa, Ontario, Vol. 32, No. 12, June 7, 1932.)

ful grass field in the center of our large and small tents. There are covered sheds where teams and autos can be sheltered. The street car service is most excellent, street cars running every two minutes, connecting the park with all parts of the city." The first Ontario campmeetings were often held in cities where there were few, if any, believers. Many of the early churches grew up as a direct result of these exciting gatherings.

The second phase of the church in Toronto began with the work of M. J. Allen in 1908. A Canadian who had become an Adventist in San Francisco, he sold his business and moved home. After some years of self-supporting work, he became a salaried employee. Meanwhile, John Thomas Errington set about the construction of a modest S. D. A. church building on Awde Street (1912). In four years

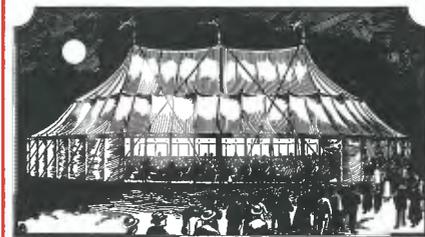
## BABY CHICKS



**N**OW is the time to send in your orders for White Leghorn, White Rock and Barred Rock baby chicks from superior quality foundation stock, all bred for production. They simply have to lay. For particulars write

**VIRGIL N. CLYMER**  
R.R. No. 2 Oshawa, Ontario

## JOINT CAMPMEETING of the Ontario and St. Lawrence Conferences



To be held at Oshawa Ontario, on the Campus of Oshawa Missionary College, June 23 to July 3

All desirable rooms in the dormitory at the college should be written to Prof. L. H. Hartlin, Box 308, Oshawa, Ont., making reservations. A large number of living tents will be pitched on the campus, and will be rented at the following prices for the ten-day period:  
18 ft. x 12 ft. tent \$2.00  
12 ft. x 14 ft. tent \$2.00  
Bed springs \$2.00  
Straw tick \$1.00  
Chairs \$1.00 for six.

Those desiring tents should bring their own straw ticks.  
Special Offer to Members Coming 200 Miles or Further.  
All members in Ontario or Ontario from Oshawa, who attend the campmeeting will be provided with a tent and bed spring free of charge, until supply is exhausted.

**DAILY PROGRAMME**  
7:00-8:00 Breakfast  
8:00-9:00 Devotional  
9:15-10:15 Bible Study  
10:30-12:00 Conference Session  
12:15 Dinner  
2:00-3:00 Worker's Meeting  
3:30-4:30 Sermon  
4:00-4:30 Young People  
6:15 Supper  
7:30-9:00 Sermon

**SABBATH**  
8:30 Breakfast  
9:45-11:00 Sabbath School  
11:00-12:30 Sermon  
1:00 Dinner  
3:00-4:00 Sermon  
4:00-4:30 Young People  
6:15 Supper  
7:30-9:00 Sermon

This will be the most interesting camping ever held at Oshawa. The quality of the St. Lawrence and Ontario Conferences will have the opportunity of meeting, and new friendships will be formed.  
All conference workers from both fields will be present. The newly elected officers of the Canadian Union Conference will also be with us. They are as follows:  
W. N. Campbell, President  
D. J. In, Treasurer  
H. W. V. A. Eds. Sec.  
P. D. Gerrard, Publishing Sec.  
The program will be in charge of E. J. Green.  
There will be non-interfering meetings for adults, young people and children.  
Meals will be served in the college cafeteria at moderate prices.  
Come on the opening day and remain until the close.





major cities which has given it a large constituency. And it has become the heart of church administration in the Big Country.

**Sources**

<sup>1</sup>The main sources for this article are: J. Ernest Monteith, *The Lord is My Shepherd: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada*, and Dennis Uffindell, "The Origin of the Seventh-day Adventist Church."

<sup>2</sup>*Advent Review*, November, 1850, 72.

<sup>3</sup>The Gibsons' letters to the *Review* continued for many years, with Elizabeth continuing correspondence after her husband died in 1854.

<sup>4</sup>The census of 1851 recorded 663 "Second Adventists" in Upper Canada. (Montieth, 42)

<sup>5</sup>R. F. Cottrell, "Meetings in Canada," *Review & Herald*, January 20, 1863, 61.

<sup>6</sup>Montieth, 43-44.

<sup>7</sup>An elderly couple and their granddaughter attended Brown's reading room and began keeping Sabbath. They claimed to have been baptized by William Miller in 1844, the only ones remaining of some

2,000 Millerites who had once lived in the Toronto area. (George Brown, "Canada," *Review & Herald*, October 28, 1884, 684-685.)

<sup>8</sup>The new church on Awde Street served as a place of worship for the next forty years and also housed the offices of the Ontario Conference in the basement.

<sup>9</sup>Of the establishing of this branch of the *Review & Herald*, Morse reported: "Under the supervision of the Canada Tract and Missionary Society, the canvassing work had already been taken hold of to a limited extent in the Province of Quebec; and in the Province of Ontario one canvasser had been engaged for a portion of the time since last December. Something had also been done in the Maritime Provinces. Two canvassers were sent from Michigan to Toronto to start the work there simultaneously with the establishment of the office.:" (Cited in George Dronen, "Notes" (1991), 2.)

<sup>10</sup>This edition of *Bible Readings* sold 15,000 copies in Canada. E. G. White's *Patriarchs and Prophets* was also printed in Canada.

<sup>11</sup>In 1902 the press moved to Montreal, and then back to Toronto two years later. In 1908 it transferred to Ot-

tawa, three years later to Port Hope (thirty miles east of Oshawa). (Dronen, 2)

<sup>12</sup>This major move of 1913 was made possible by the donation of the land and a building. Also, the *Review & Herald* Publishing Association transferred equipment and personnel to the Canadian House. A new provincial charter granted the Canadian Watchman Press permission to publish and print a denominational magazine and also to manufacture books, papers, and materials to supply the needs of the denomination in Canada.

<sup>13</sup>In addition to titles already in print, the Watchman Press produced other important books: *The Modern Medical Counsellor*, E. G. White's *The Desire of Ages*, and health books for the French-speaking population. Imports included: Arthur Maxwell's *Bedtime Stories*, *The Bible Story*, and *The Children's Hour*, and *Drama of the Ages* by W. H. Branson. Magazines were: *The Canadian Watchman* (1920-1943), which later became *The Signs of the Times* (1943-1954). For the needs of the French-speaking population there were: *Le Messager* (1924-1928, 1937-1953) and *Les Signes des Temps* (1928-1936)—an evangelistic journal. (Dronen, 2)

| Dr. THE CANADIAN BANK OF COMMERCE in acc't |             |         |                                | with <i>R. C. W. Conference.</i> |         |         |
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## Quebec Sources Continued from Page 21.

(b. 1893) became the mother of Brock Wells (Education Secretary for the Canadian Union) and John H. Wells, well-known across Canada for his vigorous leadership in the colporteur work—particularly in Saskatchewan.

<sup>24</sup>Monteith, 29. Also “South Stukely,” *Waterloo Advertiser*, March 26, 1880.

<sup>25</sup>“Camp Meeting,” *Waterloo Advertiser*, August 1, 1879; “Memphremagog Camp Meeting,” *Waterloo Advertiser*, August 7, 1879.

<sup>26</sup>Whalley, 33-34.

<sup>27</sup>“The Seventh-day Adventist Camp-Meeting at Magog,” *Waterloo Advertiser*, August 27, 1880.

<sup>28</sup>Whalley, 35.

<sup>29</sup>“The Seventh-day Adventist Camp-Meeting at Magog,” *Waterloo Advertiser*, August 27, 1880.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>E. G. White, Letter 39, 1880. (Cited in Whalley, 35)

<sup>32</sup>The presidents of the Old Quebec Conference are as follows: A. C. Bourdeau (1880-1884); R. S. Owen (1884-1893); J. B. Goodrich (1893-1897); Eugene Leland (1897-1899); I. N. Williams (1899-1901); S. A. Farnsworth (1901-1903); H. E. Rickard (1903-1906); D. E. Lindsay (1906-1908); W. H. Thurston (1908); William Cuthrie (1908-1910); G. H. Skinner (1910-1911); W. J. Tanner (1911-1914); A. V. Olson (1914-1916); W. C. Young (1916-1919); F. C. Webster (1919-1920); D. J. C. Barrett (1921-1922); F. G. Lane (1922-1925); C. F. McVagh (1925-1926); M. V. Campbell (1926-1928); and W. H. Howard (1928-1932). (See Monteith, 24.)

<sup>33</sup>“Organization of the S.D.A. Conference of the Province of Quebec,” *Review & Herald*, September 12, 1880. (Cited in Whalley, 35).

<sup>34</sup>Monteith, 32.

<sup>35</sup>“Memphremagog Camp Meeting,” *Waterloo Advertiser*, July 29, 1881, and “The Camp Meeting Season,” *Waterloo Advertiser*, September 2, 1881.

<sup>36</sup>“South Stukely,” *Waterloo Advertiser*,

December 24, 1880; October 13, 1882. In December of 1880, when the local Christian community wished to establish a branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society, A. C. Bourdeau was elected vice-president.

<sup>37</sup>“South Stukely,” *Waterloo Advertiser*, September 16 and October 7, 1881.

<sup>38</sup>“South Stukely,” *Waterloo Advertiser*, November 30, 1882. (Cited by Monteith, 32)

<sup>39</sup>“South Stukely,” *Waterloo Advertiser*, September 21, 1883.

<sup>40</sup>A. C. Bourdeau was succeeded as Quebec president by his son-in-law, R. S. Owens, who remained in office until 1893. During this period the Seventh-day Adventist message spread to other communities. Churches were established in Fitch Bay, Way’s Mills, and North Potten and South Bolton. (Monteith, 33)

<sup>41</sup>“South Stukely,” *Waterloo Advertiser*, March 21, 1884, and Monteith, 32.

<sup>42</sup>Monteith, 173.

<sup>43</sup>Marion L. Phelps, ed., *Yesterdays of Brome County*. (Knowlton, QC: Brome County Historical Society, 1967, 80.)

<sup>44</sup>Ernest M. Taylor, *History of Brome County*, Vol 2 (Montreal: John Lovell, 1908), 37. The sanitarium lasted for only five years, after which Dr. Harris purchased it in 1908. He continued to operate it successfully for many years. For vague reasons, both Taylor and Monteith remark that the sale of the sanitarium was the result of an already declining work in the Eastern Townships.

<sup>45</sup>Argyle Taylor was the adventurous son of an old pioneer couple in South Bolton, Eastern Townships, Quebec.

<sup>46</sup>Emma Landry’s daughter, Olivine Nadeau-Bohner writes the following note: “Things turned out for Emma just as Elder Passebois had planned. At school in Oshawa Missionary College that fall she met Louis Nadeau, another French student who was hoping to work for God in Quebec. They became friends, and, although Emma returned to work in Montreal during the school year of 1923-1924, she and Louis corresponded. By the summer of 1924, the relationship had deepened into love. On July 9, 1924, they

were married at the home of the French pastor in Montreal. It was just a little more than two years from the day Emma had stood on that Montreal street corner, weeping and telling Elder Passebois that she was planning to go home. Louis and Emma spent their first year of married life living in one room in the dormitory at O.M.C. while Louis finished the French academic course. After he graduated, they were called to pastor the French church in Montreal, where they continued working under Elder Passebois for several years.”

<sup>47</sup>The conference president took legal action against the mayor of Plessisville for his interference with the law of license in the Province of Quebec, Article 1243: “Colporteurs selling religious literature in the employ of a religious society of the said Province of Quebec do not require a license.” The case was tried on September 20, 1919, in Athabasca. The complainants argued that the priest and mayor had conspired to run the colporteurs out of town. The defendant charged that the colporteurs were in conspiracy against the Church of Rome and forbade anything being said against the priest. Passebois was accused of publicizing the case in the *Orange Sentinel*, which he had not done. After reserving judgment for thirty days, the judge awarded the Adventists \$25.00 in damages. Thereafter, whenever authorities in other towns tried to intimidate Passebois and his associates, the pastor informed them that action for \$500 in damages had been taken against other would-be persecutors. Hostile attitudes invariably changed.

<sup>48</sup>In 1974 the colporteurs came from Haiti, France, and other French-speaking areas. They sold more than \$200,000 worth of Seventh-day Adventist literature.



## 4. Adventist Beginnings in British Columbia (Est. 1902)

*By Dorothy Eaton Watts and Others*

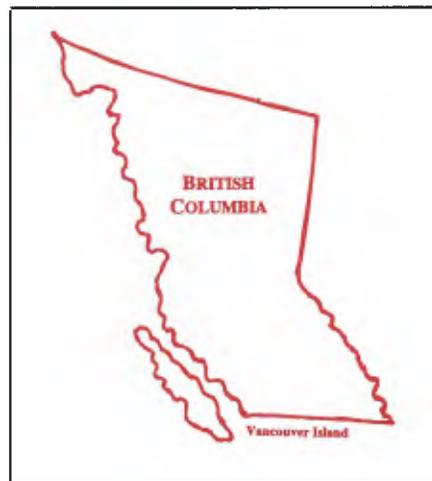
In the late 1880's, having become part of the territory of the North Pacific Conference (U.S.), western British Columbia was evangelized by ministers from Oregon.<sup>1</sup> While earlier missionary activity cannot be documented, we have evidence that Sabbath-keepers were known in 1886, when the following note appeared in the proceedings of the British Columbia Legislature: "Mr. Grant said there were some people in this province who honestly believe that our Saturday was the real and original Sunday, and they regularly kept that day."<sup>2</sup> At the turn of the century, to the east in the Okanagan Valley, the first Sabbath-keepers were American immigrants.

During the first decade of this century, Pitt Meadows (a small town 24 miles east of Vancouver) became the center of Adventism in the province. In 1903 William Manson gave a 320-acre farm for the building of two Adventist institutions: Manson Industrial Academy<sup>3</sup> and the conference headquarters.<sup>4</sup> In those days, the Fraser Valley Local train stopped at Pitt meadows, near the school, travelling west in the morning and back again in the evening.<sup>5</sup>

It is quite probable that the first conference president, Joseph L. Wilson, rode that "milk-train" with the other four conference trustees when they went to inspect the proposed location of their first church school.<sup>6</sup> Although Pitt Meadows is today an "Adventist ghost town," the memory of the pioneers is preserved in the names "Advent Road" and "Advent Village Estates." And a small white wooden church on the corner of Harris and Ford Streets was built by the pioneers.<sup>7</sup>

The main building of Manson Industrial Academy was a 42' x 50' wooden structure, with three stories above the basement. It had sixteen rooms, with accommodation for twenty-five students. Classrooms occupied the main floor while the basement<sup>8</sup> contained a laundry, kitchen, and dining room<sup>9</sup>. The entrance was by a high board walk, going in from Ford Road.<sup>10</sup> Today town houses, apartments and a shopping center stand on the land which was once a spacious campus.

The first classes at Pitt Meadows were held in the summer of 1904 in a log structure that served as both church and school. Ten students enrolled.<sup>11</sup> By 1909 the large building near Advent Road was in use and continued until 1915.<sup>12</sup> A peak enrollment of 35 students occurred in 1910<sup>13</sup>. . . . The Pitt Meadows chapter



closed in 1920 when the Adventists scattered across the province,<sup>14</sup> leaving the lovely fields to eventually be taken over by housing developments and an airport.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, the conference office had, in 1911, moved to the basement of the Kitsilano Church, on the corner of Maple Street and 1st Avenue, in Vancouver.<sup>16</sup> By this time British Columbia had sixteen organized churches and 355 members,<sup>17</sup> a growth rate of 373% in just nine years. (In 1902 the conference had only five churches and seventy-five members.)<sup>18</sup> Although the membership quadrupled in the first decade after organization, the second decade showed only a 78% growth. In 1921 the 633 Adventists in British Columbia met in twenty-churches and companies.<sup>19</sup>

### Campmeetings

Skyscrapers now crowd the area where a “city of tents and campers” once gathered, in September, 1902, for the first British Columbia campmeeting, at the corner of Westminster Avenue and Harris Street (now Georgia Street) in Vancouver.<sup>20</sup> That final weekend of the camp, ninety people attended—fifteen more people than the total membership of the conference. Representatives of all five churches were there to witness the official organization of the British Columbia Conference.<sup>21</sup>



*Above left: One of Canada's true "old timers," C. O. Smith, could recall the beginnings of the Cumberland Church in British Columbia in 1902. Later he became president of Canadian Junior College. At the time of his retirement he was teaching in the Bible Department at Atlantic Union College. Above right: A Newfoundlander by birth, George Adams began and ended his ministry to the Adventist church in British Columbia--with years of mission service in between. Middle left: S. G. White was first a colporteur and then a minister in the Vancouver area. About 1921 he raised up a twenty-two-member church in White Rock. Middle right:*

*About 1930 Desmond Tinkler began his ministry as a colporteur-evangelist in Prince George in "The Caribou" (north central British Columbia). After thirty years of service to his homeland, he became president of the Newfoundland Mission (1959-1963). Below: The first campmeeting in British Columbia was held in September 1902. the "city of tents" was pitched at the corner of Westminster Avenue and Harris Street (now Georgia Street) in Vancouver. Here a group of campers pose in front of the main tent.*



Afterwards campmeetings were held in a variety of places—from Vancouver and Pitt Meadows to Kamloops and Vernon.<sup>22</sup> In June, 1912, the local newspaper described the Adventist campmeeting as “a cotton city of impressive and orderly appearance, with its tents lined up and with its streets, and with sanitary arrangements carefully looked after.”<sup>23</sup>

Forty cents would buy a full campmeeting dinner in 1922. For that much you could have potato salad, roast, corn, peas, lemonade, bread, butter, and pudding. A breakfast of cereal, milk, fruit, toast, and Postum cost only twenty cents.<sup>24</sup> Tent rental at the 1926 meeting in Vernon was \$7.75, including a full floor. Straw cost fifty cents per tick, and a bed frame and springs could be had for \$1.25. Those who brought their own tents paid \$1.50 ground rent.<sup>25</sup>

Kathleen Bayliss remembers meeting Hubert (her future husband) at the campmeeting in 1941 at the 10th Street Church in Vancouver. Their first date was for a campmeeting meal in the



*Three loggers with friends, Shirley, BC, in 1943. Whenever the Adventist boys in the logging camps could spend a Sabbath day with the scattered church members, they found spiritually and had a wonderful fellowship with young friends, and feasted, literally, on delicious home cooking.*

church basement! At that time guests stayed in the homes of church members or in rooming houses with cooking facilities.

In the early 1940's the church acquired land at Hope, near the Fraser River, 100 miles east of Vancouver. They purchased the property from Erwin and Ellen Corbett, owners of a sawmill. The first building to go up served as conference office-cum-Book & Bible House. The church owned a few tents, but most people brought their own—going into the woods, upon their arrival, to cut tent poles. Campers prepared their meals at an outdoor kitchen. Mrs. Bayliss remembers the outhouses without plumbing and campers arriving by boat—also the straw tent. Guests brought their own ticks (cloth mattress covers) and filled them at the straw tent.<sup>26</sup>

### The First Churches

Most of the churches established in the first twenty years of the British Columbia Conference were the result of tent meetings.<sup>27</sup> People in Victoria thought a circus had come to town as they watched a large tent go up at the corner of Douglas and Herald Streets in June, 1889.<sup>28</sup> What the audience saw, of course, were the beasts of Daniel and Revelation instead of circus animals. H. W. Reid (of Portland, Oregon) and H. A. Baxter (of Tacoma, West Territories) delivered the lectures. As a result, the first Adventist church in British Columbia was organized by the North Pacific Conference in June, 1890.<sup>29</sup>

Immediately, Evangelists Isaac Morrison and V. H. Lucas opened a nine-month series of tent meetings. When the pastors of several denominations tried to drive them out of town,<sup>30</sup> they were grateful for an offer of land from Mr. Oppenheimer, the wealthy Jewish mayor of Vancouver. In the spring of 1891, the fifty attendees found a church building of their own on what is now Georgia Street.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, without leadership, this church soon disintegrated. Six years later, J. L. Wilson (later the first president of the British Columbia Conference) revived the members by holding meetings on the corner of Granville and Georgia Streets. They built a church—whose eventual replacement brought a building with six basement rooms. Here the conference office moved, after leaving Pitt Meadows in April, 1910.<sup>32</sup>

# Rest Haven

Rest Haven Hospital was the first Adventist hospital to be opened in Canada, having been preceded by sanitariums and a variety of treatment rooms.<sup>38</sup> Ever since 1908 the Church had wished to move the Alberta Sanitarium to a rural setting. At first the institution settled in Bowness Park (eight miles west of Calgary). The "dream" was not fully realized, however, until 1921 when a lovely property became available near Sidney, Vancouver Island. Built on ten acres of land in 1912, the hospital had been called Saanich Peninsula Hospital. The three-story wooden building stood on a tiny island, connected to Vancouver Island by a bridge.

With the closing of the Alberta (Bow River) Sanitarium in Calgary, some of the staff moved to Rest Haven. One dedicated church member sold his farm in Alberta for \$40,000 and gave the money to the British Columbia Conference. That was the exact amount needed to purchase "Rest Haven," as it was called. Management of the new hospital was turned over to Frank L. Hommel. A graduate nurse from Battle Creek, he had been active in the early sanitarium work in Alberta. He served Rest Haven for its first five years.

A life-time British Columbian, Evelyn Beach, who was 97 years old on October 16, 1991, can

remember when the city of Vancouver was mostly standing timber. She was a member of Rest Haven's first nursing class of ten students (two boys and eight girls). There she learned treatment techniques more reliable than those which had been recommended to her young seventeen-year-old mother. When, at three months old, Evelyn contracted whooping cough, someone advised her mother, "If you just carry your baby over running water, it'll cure the whooping cough."

Terrified of heights, the girl looked at the loose planks that had just been put down on the bridge. Trembling and dizzy, she carried her baby across. "And we both lived," Evelyn smiles.

Paradise that it may have seemed, Rest Haven could still be a challenge. Evelyn remembers the employee who went into Sidney every day to pick up the mail. He had been eying her younger sister, Peggy. One day she accepted his invitation to go along with him to town. Instead of going to the Post Office, however, he drove up to the front door of the preacher's house. He jumped out and ran around to open Peggy's door. "Well, aren't you going to get out?" He looked at her hopefully. "This is the preacher's house, you know."

Comprehending that she had, in fact, received a very

decisive marriage proposal, she collected herself, settled back into her seat, and firmly replied, "Oh, no thank you. I'm not getting out here." Rest Haven, on its picturesque little three-acre island, still has a nostalgic spot in many Canadian hearts.

Vol. XXI, No. 25

WESTERN CANADIAN TIDINGS

June 21, 1932

## Rest Haven Sanitarium and Hospital



*—is owned and operated by the Western Canadian Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. It is your institution. Rest Haven has modern hospital equipment and an efficient Staff.*

THE RATES at Rest Haven are less than at the ordinary public hospital. A fully equipped operating room is available. A qualified anesthetist and surgical staff is maintained. Christian nurses attend you.

Rest Haven Sanitarium and Hospital  
MARINE DRIVE, SIDNEY, B. C.

*Free Catalogue and Rate Card mailed on Request*

### The First work for the Indians

One of the first mission projects of the new conference was the beginning of work among the West Coast Indians. O. E. Davis, a former shoe cobbler in Michigan, travelled 700 miles by boat to Port Simpson to work among the Chinook Indians. One of the first men he met was Henry



*Obadiah Davis (1869-1911), a former shoe cobbler from Michigan, opened the conference's first mission project among the Indians at Port Simpson, British Columbia. He established the first Indian church in the Pacific Northwest in 1903. Later he pioneered in Central America, where his name was given to the early converts in Guiana—known as the "Davis Indians."*

Pierce, who had an amazing story to tell. He told about a dream he'd had several years earlier. In it, he saw a light approaching. As it came nearer, he saw a man bathed in the light. When Davis arrived in Port Simpson, Pierce immediately recognized him as the man of his dream.<sup>33</sup> After Pierce was baptized, he attended the Pitt Meadows School. Later he returned to work for his own people.<sup>34</sup>

### Times of Change

Changes, however, came. Seven of the churches established during the first two decades of the British Columbia Conference no longer exist. People moved away and some lost their jobs over the Sabbath observance.<sup>35</sup> The church schools (1902-1915), of course, disappeared at the same time, and finally only Grandview remained.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the Depression, however, the church membership doubled during the 1930's. At least eight new congregations were established in British Columbia: New Westminster, Chilliwack, Silver Creek, and Aldergrove (1931); Langley Prairie (1935); Whalley and Adams Lake (1936); Prince George (1938); and Vancouver Ukrainian (1939)

During World War II the lumber camps of British Columbia figured in Adventist history in a unique way. Canada's Mobilization Board had only limited patience with conscientious objectors who refused to bear arms. They were sent to the forestry camps in northern British Columbia to work out the war in "Alternative Service." They did very hard manual labor, at fifty cents a day, and, from time to time, Sabbath-keeping became a problem. Some form of military training

was required and recruitment officers came from time to time to remind the boys how much better off they would be in the army. In the bunk-houses there the Seventh-day Adventist boys mixed with and witnessed to young men of many other faiths—Mennonites, Hutterites, Jehovah's Witnesses, Plymouth Brethren. Unlike their veteran counterparts who now trade stories of World War II battles, a great many Adventist "veterans" remember "bunkhouse stories" from the lumber camps.<sup>37</sup>

Today the British Columbia Conference has become one of Canada's very substantial Adventist "home bases"—home of missionaries and professionals of all kinds. Moreover, its wandering sons and daughters often choose to return home. "Beautiful British Columbia" with its more compassionate climate, has had, of course, its own magnetism, often attracting retirees from other provinces and immigrants from abroad.

### Sources

<sup>1</sup>By 1887 the ministers had established a branch of the North Pacific Tract and Missionary Society in Victoria, the provincial capital. (See *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*. Rev. ed. vol. 10 (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald Pub. Assoc., 1976), 193.

### The First Two Decades of British Columbia Churches

|     |                       |      |
|-----|-----------------------|------|
| 1.  | Victoria              | 1890 |
| 2.  | Vancouver             | 1891 |
| 3.  | Mission City          | 1902 |
| 4.  | Rosland               | 1902 |
| 5.  | Cumberland            | 1902 |
| 6.  | Armstrong             | 1903 |
| 7.  | Vernon                | 1906 |
| 8.  | Bella Coola / Firvale | 1908 |
| 9.  | Abbotsford            | 1908 |
| 10. | Silver Creek          | 1908 |
| 11. | South Vancouver       | 1909 |
| 12. | Grand View            | 1910 |
| 13. | Nelson                | 1913 |
| 14. | Kamloops              | 1913 |
| 15. | Rutland               | 1919 |
| 16. | White Rock            | 1920 |

<sup>24</sup>“Proceedings of the Second Session of the Fifth Legislature—Mr. Bole’s Sunday Law,” *Daily Times* (Victoria), 18 April, 1888. Cited in Monteith, 89.

<sup>3</sup>H. H. Hall, “Progress in British Columbia,” *Pacific Union Recorder*, (March 12, 1903), 5. William Manson was a commissioner for the Maple Ridge Dyking District and eventually became a Member of Parliament. His valet, Septimus Waring, is listed on the Honor Roll of 1914-1919 inside of the old church. (See McDermott, 12-13.)

<sup>4</sup>J. L. Wilson, “Vancouver and Cumberland,” *British Columbia Visitor*, February, 1910.

<sup>5</sup>E. M. McDermott, *Pitt Meadows Through a Century of Progress* (Canadian Confederation Centennial Committee of Pitt Meadows, 1967), 21.

<sup>6</sup>*British Columbia Conference Minute Record Book*, 1902. The trustees were: James J. Dougan, Charles W. Enoch, Simon A. Wilband, and William Manson.

<sup>7</sup>McDermott, 3, 26, 13.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.* The building stood where Advent Road runs today.

<sup>9</sup>“History,” *Manson Industrial Academy Calendar* (1909-1910); *President’s Report to the Western Canadian Union Conference*, 1910.

<sup>10</sup>McDermott, 12.

<sup>11</sup>G. E. Johnson, “British Columbia,” *Pacific Union Recorder*, September 15, 1904, 4.

<sup>12</sup>J. Ernest Montieth, *The Lord is My Shepherd* (Canadian Union Conference of S.D.A.: Parkland Press, College Heights, Alberta, 1983), 207.

<sup>13</sup>McDermott, 12.

<sup>14</sup>The academy property was sold to William Aikenhead for \$10,275 (Montieth, 207). He demolished the buildings and sold off the lumber, doors, and windows (McDermott, 13).

<sup>15</sup>Interview with Stanley Stickle, July, 1991.

<sup>16</sup>J. L. Wilson, “Vancouver and Cumberland,” *British Columbia Visitor*, February, 1910.

<sup>17</sup>Montieth, 94.

<sup>18</sup>“Seventh-day Adventists—The first Annual Conference Now in Session,” *Province*, September 16, 1902.

<sup>19</sup>Montieth, 95.

<sup>20</sup>“The Churches,” *Vancouver Province*, September, 1902.

<sup>21</sup>J. L. Wilson and J. J. Dougan, “British Columbia Conference,” *Pacific Union Recorder*, October 9, 1902, 5.

<sup>22</sup>Conference policy dictated, however, that campmeeting should be held in the same place for two consecutive years. (See “British Columbia Campmeeting,” *Western Canadian Tidings*, May 25, 1926, 3.)

<sup>23</sup>“Adventists Have Ideal Encampment at Fruitland,” *Kamloops Standard*, June, 1912.

<sup>24</sup>*British Columbia Conference Minutes*, June 7, 1922.

<sup>25</sup>“British Columbia Campmeeting,” *Western Ca-*

*nadian Tidings*, May 25, 1926, 3.

<sup>26</sup>Interview with Kathleen Bayliss, July 1991.

<sup>27</sup>Exceptions to the tent-meeting start were: Firvale (where Adventists migrated from other places in Canada); Silver Creek (where the members immigrated from Great Falls, Montana); and Grandview (with German immigrants from North Dakota and Alberta.) (See Montieth, 89-95)

<sup>28</sup>“A Revival in a Tent,” *Victoria Colonist*, June 7, 1889.

<sup>29</sup>J. A. Burden, “North Pacific Conference Proceedings,” *Signs of the Times*, June 30, 1890, 395.

<sup>30</sup>The opposition notwithstanding, the *Daily Telegram* published comprehensive reports of the sermons, including thirty column inches on the Sabbath.

<sup>31</sup>The reorganized church bought land on the corner of Keefer and Gore, for \$850, and built a church before 1902. (“Elder Wilson’s Call to Vancouver Recalls Past History,” *Canadian Union Messenger*, May 11, 1937, 3,4.) Eight years later they sold the Vancouver church property for \$17,500.

<sup>32</sup>J. L. Wilson, “Vancouver and Cumberland,” *British Columbia Visitor*, February, 1910.

<sup>33</sup>O. E. Davis, “British Columbia,” *Review & Herald*, August 11, 1902, 20,21.

<sup>34</sup>Montieth, 92.

<sup>35</sup>The three Vancouver churches amalgamated in 1925, pooling their resources to build a new church at 10th Avenue and Yukon (*S.D.A. Encyclopedia*, 166). The Grandview German united with the Grandview English in 1926. (George Toombs, “Announcement,” *Western Canadian Tidings*, January 19, 1926, 3.) Cumberland was disbanded when the members all moved away (Montieth, 90). Rossland was closed when the members, most of whom were miners, lost their jobs over Sabbath observance and moved elsewhere (Montieth, 19). Firvale disbanded in 1930 after a flood destroyed most of the farms and the families moved away (Montieth, 91; Interviews with Waterman and Astleford, July 1991). By 1920 Port Simpson had also closed. Montieth, 96.

<sup>36</sup>Montieth, 184-185. Seven church schools had begun between 1902 and 1915: Pitt Meadows, Reisswig, Bella Coola, Grandview, Penticton, Nanaimo, and Silver Creek.

<sup>37</sup>In his little booklet, *In Time of War* (1986), Alex Zapran relives not only the conversion of his Greek Orthodox family to Adventism in 1920, but also his colporteur years and his life at forced labor in the logging camps.

<sup>38</sup>Today the primary Adventist hospital in Canada is North York Branson Hospital, in the Tronoto suburb of Willowdale, Ontario. This large institution was opened in 1957.

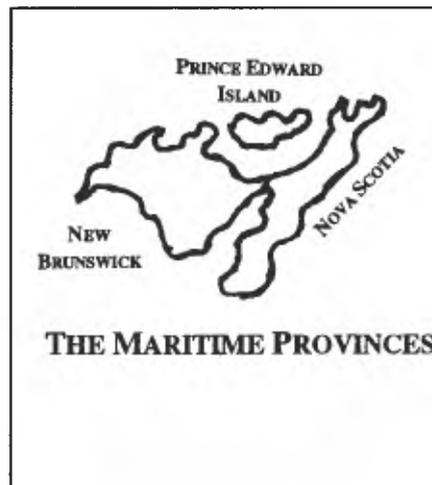
## 5. Seventh-day Adventists in the Maritime Provinces (Est. 1902)

By Douglas Hosking

**D**espite their proximity to Maine, the birthplace of Adventism, the Maritime Provinces seem to have had no church members for about two decades after 1844.

It is intriguing to note, however, that the Advent Christian Church was organized in New Brunswick along the Bay of Fundy. And stories are known of the message spreading among the fishermen. For example, a Captain Edgett accepted the Seventh-day Adventist message in the 1860's or 70's. With his wife he faithfully witnessed to their hope at Harvey Bank, Albert County.<sup>1</sup> While the two Edgett children did not remain part of the church, the son of a Mrs. Stevens who had worked for the family later became an Adventist. He, in turn, contacted a doctor who played a pivotal role in the hospital in Albert and in the church organized at Riverside.

In the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia, Mr. John R. Israel heard the message in New England. He began the first recorded public meetings at Freeport, Digby County, in 1878.<sup>2</sup> Eight years later we hear of him canvassing in Mount Denson. He told of passing



one house when he was halted by a voice saying, "Go back to that house." He found there a teacher, David Corkham.<sup>3</sup>

By 1888 David Corkham was preaching at Tantallon, Nova Scotia, where he met sharp opposition. One night, he was met by a mob and escaped only when Levi Longard whisked him away in a carriage. In spite of the

hostility, the first S.D.A. church in the Maritimes was organized in Tantallon on August 12, 1888. From this point onward, Adventism seems to have taken fire in the Maritimes. Evangelism in Indian Harbour, Halifax, New Glasgow, Truro, Hopewell Cape, Moncton,<sup>4</sup> and Saint John<sup>5</sup> produced baptisms and new churches. Meetings were held in rented school rooms or in the open air. One of the believers testified, "Some came to listen, some to scoff, but I believed." And she continued to believe as an isolated member for the rest of her

life, until her recent death at age 106.

J. B. Goodrich, followed by H. W. Cottrell, became Adventist leaders, although the organization in the Maritimes remained informal. Between 1890 and 1893, under the direction of R. S. Webber and G. E. Langdon, the area had first a Sabbath School Association, and then it became a mission field of the General Conference. In these early years the value of the colporteur ministry can hardly be overestimated.<sup>6</sup> The best evangelistic success resulted where the most books had been circulated. The work in Charlottetown, for example, began when workers followed up on the delivery of 1,400 copies of *Bible Readings*.

Still, times were hard. The Hanna family, even years later, was not allowed to buy groceries or milk in Prince Edward Island because they were Adventists. As late as 1932, PEI still had no Adventist church, despite the fact that it was a whole province of itself. The geographical detachment of the three Maritime provinces and their scattered membership over a relatively large territory posed enormous difficulties.<sup>7</sup>

On June 1, 1902, the Maritime Conference was organized.<sup>8</sup> Almost immediately the Maritime Adventists committed themselves to Christian education. They established the first church school in Saint John in the same year. The first teacher would later become well known in S.D.A. circles, George McCready Price.<sup>9</sup> Now began a series of toilsome moves. In 1903 Price transferred to Farmington, Nova Scotia, where Daniel Dimock had given his farm to establish a Maritime Academy. Located on the top of the Cobequid Range, the farm required an enormous amount of work, moving people and goods in and out. One of the

workers explained that his family wore out a team of horses in just one year, carrying goods up the hill. Soon, the decision was taken to move to Williamsdale, a location at the *bottom* of the hill. Here the Academy operated successfully until 1918.

Next an enormous debt was incurred in the dismantling of the school and moving it to Memramcook, New Brunswick.<sup>10</sup> Now Christian education had to recover slowly, through the local church schools. Innovative ideas had to work. Mrs. Kierstead, at Norton, New Brunswick, for instance operated an Adventist school in her home for nearly fifty years. Since she was a qualified teacher, no one could question the quality



*Above:* Philip and Doris Moores, with Marilyn and Biby Jeannie, the first two of their four daughters. A native Maritimer, Philip Moores, in his first year of ministry (1938) worked in five different cities. Over the next twenty-six years he served as president of five conferences. His last appointment before retirement was manager of television operations at the S.D.A. Media Center in Southern California. *Below:* William Thomas Longard (1830-1905) and his wife, Julia Ann (Dauphinee) Longard. An unidentified granddaughter stands between them. During 1889, Longard built the old Tantallon church on Longard Road. He was assisted by others, including four of his sons: Stephen, Levi, George, and Frederick.

of education. She had great influence in the area now occupied by the Hampton and Barnesville churches.

Stiff opposition faced the church well into the 1920's. When opening a new church at Lake George, near Fredericton, Elder J. A. Strickland faced mob violence, threats by firearms and attempted poisoning of the water supply. In another effort at Newcastle Creek only two converts joined the church.<sup>11</sup> Still, the membership grew. Elder Barrett, an ex-Catholic student priest, campaigned in a tent which eventually would open a church in Sydney Mines. A mob stoned the tent and rowdies tried to steal the charts—and the Riot Act had to be read. Nonetheless, new churches appeared in North Sydney, Carlingford and Barrington. Another set-back was the great Halifax explosion which destroyed the church. Although several members were miraculously saved in this disaster, the two-year-old daughter of one of the members died.

The Depression ushered in the 1930's, debilitating the Maritimes until the beginning of World War II. An exodus ensued,<sup>12</sup> which reduced the Adventist population from 400 to 33. Churches were lost at Riverton and Hopewell Cape. Despite the reduced work force, vigorous churches arose at Barnesville and Charlottetown. Better times came in the 1940's and 1950's, with the membership passing 1,000. New things began to happen. First, a Junior Camp at Buctouche (1942), and the purchase of a campground at Pugwash (1945). An Adventist hospital at Riverside (Hopewell Hill), New Brunswick (1947). A radio program by Ray Matthews called "The Listening Post" (1949). Also, in 1949, the conference office moved to new quarters in the Moncton church, New Brunswick<sup>13</sup>.



Through the 1970's and 1980's long range steady growth was punctuated by intermittent declines as Maritime "export members" sought jobs and Christian education elsewhere. The outflow has been somewhat modified by new opportunities: a large new school (with greenhouses) at Barnesville; a senior citizens' facility at Kennebec Manor, Saint John; and a new Academy (the first since 1934) at Bedford, near Halifax. The opening of the first French-speaking church at Moncton has given the church new direction also.

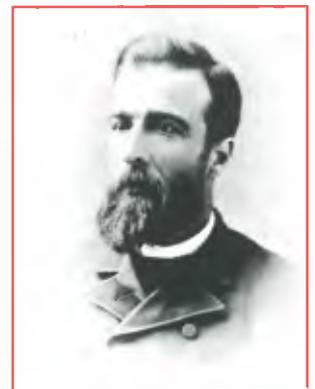
Traditional hardships in the Maritimes may seem to live on in small churches, tottering on the verge of collapse. In the spirit of the pioneers and in the new persecution-free environment, however, the Maritime Adventists have courage. They look to Christian education, a revival of the colporteur program and a deeper commitment as means to face the challenge.

#### Sources

<sup>1</sup>In 1895-1896 David Corkham and G. E. Langdon preached in Albert County, the place of beginnings.

<sup>2</sup>Also in 1878 James Sawyer and Brother Gelotte

*Clockwise: A trio of pioneer colporteurs: J. R. Israel, A. J. Rice, and Levi Longard. Nowhere was the impact of the colporteurs more strongly felt than in the Maritime provinces. This is a group of them during the year 1914-1915.*



were spreading literature and preaching in Victoria County, New Brunswick. Apparently, the first Maritimers to be baptized were the Byron Outhouse family of Tiverton, Nova Scotia. Much of the early witnessing, of course, was accomplished through the literature ministry.

<sup>3</sup>David Corkham was born “Corkum” but later changed the spelling to suit himself.

<sup>4</sup>The Moncton church was organized in 1892 as a result of the work of David Corkham and A. J. Rice, an Adventist colporteur.

<sup>5</sup>In 1889 J. B. Goodrich organized a company at Saint John, largely following the witness of A. J. Rice who had moved there and who canvassed for part of his living.

<sup>6</sup>In 1890 more than \$8,000 in books were sold—an enormous sum for the Maritimes at that time.

<sup>7</sup>F. W. Stray, *The Eastern Canadian Messenger*, June 28, 1932, 2.

<sup>8</sup>The Maritime Conference was made up of the churches of Tiverton, Tantallon, Truro, Annapolis, New Glasgow, Jeddore, and Halifax, Nova Scotia; Elgin, Hopewell Cape, Moncton, Saint John, Fredericton, and St. Martin’s, New Brunswick. (The Guthries were assigned to PEI.) Officers elected were: G. E. Langdon, president; M. S. Babcock, vice-president; and Mrs. Carrie Langdon, secretary-treasurer and Sabbath School secretary. (She became the first of several women to serve the Maritimes in executive offices.)

<sup>9</sup>George McCready Price always claimed that the earliest known Sabbath-keeper in New Brunswick was his uncle, George McCready. The old man always attributed his conversion to reading Seventh-day Baptist literature. From there he found the transition to Adventism relatively easy.

<sup>10</sup>In 1932 the Depression further crippled the Memramcook Academy, and it closed. As a final defeat, the building burned to the ground three years later.

<sup>11</sup>These two Newcastle Creek converts were the Crawford brothers. Their families have since had a large influence in the Adventist church.

<sup>12</sup>At one point people were leaving Yarmouth at the rate of 4,000 to 5,000 per month, and Saint John at 10,000 per month.

<sup>13</sup>New work in the 1960’s included churches and companies at Riverside, Oak Park, Bridgewater, Sydney, Dartmouth, Upper Kent and Zealand.



### Manitoba-Saskatchewan Sources Continued from page 47.

<sup>3</sup>While the newspaper owner later published a statement that his paper did not endorse the views expressed by the editorial in promoting the Seventh-day Sabbath, he did admit personal respect for Mr. Flaiz.

<sup>4</sup>Despite hostility, sixteen people became Sabbath keepers in McGregor. Sabbath interest spread to Gladstone, Winnipeg and Plum Coulee. Although several Adventists were brought to the courts for breaking Sunday laws, only one (John McKelvey) served a prison term.

<sup>5</sup>Among the new converts in the German congregation at Morden were the families of J. Nichols, P. Wiebe, D. Nichol, and A. A. Toews. Other churches were raised in Russell, Altamont, Scandinavia and Killamey.

<sup>6</sup>Later, a second church school opened in Winnipeg—in the old building after the Bannerman church moved on to new and larger quarters following the successful 1923 campaign by F. W. Johnson.

<sup>7</sup>Beausejour was one of the early German centers, with a group of thirteen organized in 1913. Other new churches of the time were: the Bannerman Church of Winnipeg and others at Fort William, Grandview, Erickson, and Minitonas.

<sup>8</sup>Gulbrandsen later served in Gimli and Winnipegosis.

<sup>9</sup>The city of Brandon challenged the best the workers had to offer, even after

campmeetings were held there in 1898 and 1907. The Ronlund-Stenberg evangelistic team got good news paper coverage for their tent meetings, but the churches still bitterly opposed the work.

<sup>10</sup>Workers were listed as follows: Elder White (Winnipeg); Elder Ziprick (German-speaking congregations); J. H. Zachary (part-time among the Ukrainians); and A. E. Milner doing self-supporting work in the port cities.

<sup>11</sup>The members of the early Leader Church, for example were Adventists prior to their arrival in Canada. The Weis family were part of this group.

<sup>12</sup>The Saskatchewan Conference existed for only twenty years. During that time, however, thirteen churches came into being (see box p. 47).

<sup>13</sup>Other members of the Neufeld family who were active in the work of the S. D. A. church were: Don Neufeld, Bible scholar and teacher, and editor of the church journal, *Review and Herald*; Henry Feyerabend, television evangelist and musician.

<sup>14</sup>Among the sixteen baptisms from the first evangelistic series were Frank Shearer and his mother, from Fort Carlton. They first thing they knew was that Adventists didn’t eat pork or drink tea.

<sup>15</sup>Conway later became a Bible instructor at Battleford Academy. His last work in Canada was serving as chaplain at Rest Haven Sanitarium, Sidney, British Columbia.

<sup>16</sup>Walter Forshaw was one of nine baptized at the Regina effort. He assisted in other public meetings in Swift Current, Markinch, Macrories, Kindersley, Weyburn and Tugaske.

<sup>17</sup>Elder Babienco also established Russian-speaking congregations in Viceroy and Lonesome Butte.

<sup>18</sup>At the point of the conference merger, Manitoba had only eight churches open.

<sup>19</sup>Whitesand serves as the base of youth camp activities. It now has a large metal auditorium and improvements are made yearly.

## 6. The Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference (Est. 1903)<sup>1</sup>

By Ruth Bodrug

**O**ur conference is spread over a huge area geographically and the membership is still small (less than 3,000). The following account cannot name all of the people who have worked untiringly over the years to establish the Adventist church on the Canadian prairies. The listings of churches and places are, unfortunately, also partial.

George Ross, of McLean, Saskatchewan has the distinction of being the first Seventh-day Adventist in Canada's mid-West. He read himself into conversion, in 1887 with his study of Seventh-day Adventist publications lent him by a friend who had been receiving papers from California. The establishment of the first Saskatchewan church at Rouleau on July 16, 1907, however, is attributable to a Roumanian family. After a triple series of meetings in Regina, the Haynals, a rather large group, were converted after being given literature in their own language. A unique feature of the church in the prairie provinces is the way in which the names of "charter-member" families have recurred in service all over the world.



### The Manitoba Conference (Est. 1903)

The beginnings of Adventism in this province resembled closely that in many other parts of the world—the colporteurs led the way. In 1889 C. H. and Addie Richards began with *Bible Readings*.<sup>2</sup> In the winter, Arthur Huntly and E. Chapman (later to become conference president) delivered their books in Winnipeg from a wooden box fitted with runners. By General Conference time in 1891, workers could report thirty or forty Manitobans observing Sabbath.

The first member, Neil McGill, attributed his conversion to the reading of Uriah Smith's *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation*. It reached him in a roundabout way. A colporteur sold the book to a man living near the Manitoba border. He in turn gave it to a farmer who bought hay from him. Then he gave it to his neighbor, McGill. After he'd studied the book carefully, he shared it with his Sunday School class at the Presbyterian church. In 1893 C. W. Flaiz organized McGill's group into the Wakopa S. D. A. Church.

A liberal-minded newspaper editor announced the first public meetings in Hamiota, describing Flaiz as a Seventh-day Adventist preacher and urging everyone to attend.<sup>3</sup> Flaiz met stiff opposition when he went to McGregor where the local municipal council had passed a bylaw requiring strict Sunday observance.<sup>4</sup> The German congregation at Morden made up the province's second Adventist church, with meetings held in the homes of the members.<sup>5</sup>

Manitoba's first general meeting convened in Austin, June 5-10, 1895. The fifty visitors camped in a nearby

grove and they, along with the thirty Austin members, dedicated the new Austin church building on the Sunday—the first in Manitoba.

After the organization of the conference in 1903, a residence school was opened at Portage la Prairie.<sup>6</sup> The constituency grew so that by the end of 1911 the Manitoba Conference consisted of seven churches, one company and 227 members. Three ministers (English, German<sup>7</sup> and Scandinavian) were required to serve the congregations. In Winnipeg David Gulbrandsen opened work for the Icelandic people.<sup>8</sup>

Still, opposition was bitter<sup>9</sup> and membership growth small, and six years later the membership had increased by only twenty-four persons. When the Depression hit Manitoba, the conference labor force was reduced by one half,<sup>10</sup>

and few churches were added. Some old ones had to be disbanded. Some other facilities opened and survived in Winnipeg, however: two personal-care homes (Park Manor and West Park Manor), and East Park Lodge, a 60-unit senior citizen facility (1986).

### The Saskatchewan Conference (Est. 1912)

Since Saskatchewan did not become a province until 1905, the earli-

est pioneers were believers before they went there.<sup>11</sup> The area was first known as the Saskatchewan Mission and was a part of the Manitoba Conference. In 1912, when delegates from seven churches came together at campmeeting in Bulyea, they established the Saskatchewan Conference.<sup>12</sup>

The beginnings of the Seventh-day Adventist church there center on immigrant families.

First, came the Rosses. Soon after the opening of the railway, George Ross, a printer, left Winnipeg with plans to go to Regina. Stopping to visit a friend in McLean, he liked what he saw and signed up for a half section of land before he returned home. That fall he learned about Adventism through a friend who had been receiving literature from California. As he and



**Above:** The prairie provinces had two pioneer workers whose names still live on in the church rolls today: (left) O. J. Ziprick, president of the Saskatchewan Conference, and (right) Dietrich Neufeld. Descended from Mennonite roots, the latter opened up the German-language work. **Below:** The church members who attended the worker's meeting for the Saskatchewan Conference in 1914.

his son were planting their crop on their new land in the spring of 1887, George Ross came under strong conviction. He asked the boy, late one Friday afternoon, "What do you think about me finishing my work before I obey the Lord?"

The lad's instant reply prompted Ross to keep the Sabbath. "I know what you would say if you told me to do something, and I said that I'd do it when I got ready." Thus the Ross family became the first Adventist believers in Saskatchewan, and they were part of the second Saskatchewan church organized on April 1, 1906.

Second were the Neufelds, a German-Mennonite family who came to America from Russia. Already Dietrich Neufeld, a studiously religious man, had found the Sabbath truth in his Bible. Upon his arrival in the United States, he and his family had already started observing the seventh day. This habit caused problems, so in 1892, he decided to look for land in Saskatchewan. He found a family in Rosthern, and the next year he brought his family north. They became part of Saskatchewan's first organized church in Waldheim.



*E. M. Chapman was president of the Manitoba Conference from 1913-1917.*

Though never well-to-do, from this humble home came two ministers, D. D. and John D. Neufeld—both of whom worked for years in the prairie provinces.<sup>13</sup>

The Hoehn family has also provided a number of notable workers to the church. In 1906 the John Henkes family came from Minnesota to settle near Canora. A vigorous colporteur she covered the district, and then her husband invited a neighbor boy, Edward Hoehn, in for Bible studies. He came with his brother and also his sister Hulda. The trio was baptized at the campmeeting and went on to Battleford Academy. They were in the first graduating class. Hulda later married Dr. Sam Crooks. In later life she has gone to other achievements of her own and is the first 95 year-old to climb Pikes Peak! Other charter families of the Canora church (organized October 17, 1916), were, in addition to the Henkes, Deer, Houck, Wimer, Jewkes and Hnatyshyn.

The first worker among Saskatchewan's German population was Elder C. Sulzle. Together with Elder Ziprick, he worked in Rosthern and Melville.

Elder Dirksen opened the first public meetings in Yorkton in 1898.<sup>14</sup> In 1906 F. H. Conway<sup>15</sup> and Paul Curtis had an evangelistic series in Regina. The effort was difficult, with the Curtis's having to live in a tent where they got showered with stones. A number of citizens advocated imprisonment for these bearers of strange doctrines.<sup>16</sup> Pastors C. J. Rider and Forshaw opened meetings in another winter-tent effort in Swift Current, where the twenty people who attended the first night huddled around a stove.

The work in Saskatchewan fell into several ethnic groups, other than the original British and German.

In 1906 Regina believers, under

the leadership of Elders Shaw and Sulzle, were able to organize a church in Rouleau. In the next generation this church produced a number of doctors, nurses, teachers and others who served the denomination well. Another hard worker in Rouleau was star-canvasser A. D. Haynal. Busy translating and writing for the Slovakian people there, he became the second Slovakian to be ordained to the ministry.

The Russian community at Beaver Creek was first reached by Elder Eugene Farnsworth and his brothers who, surprisingly, got permission to distribute their tracts at the door of the Mennonite Church as the congregation came out. Elder Babienco came in 1914 to foster the interest and a church was established there two years later.<sup>17</sup> Within three more years, despite much opposition, it became the largest in the conference with a membership of 137.

#### **Opposition:**

Elder D. D. Neufeld brought about revivals in both Rosthern and Fox Valley. When he went to Fenwood to conduct meetings, he had difficulty finding a meeting place. Finally he rented a dance hall. Then the town denied him the use of the hall, but by that time twenty-five people had decided to keep Sabbath. Since renting a church would be impossible, the members built one—with a barn large enough to hold seventeen teams of horses!

The Kaytor family had helped erect a Catholic church in Regina. Since no money remained for pews, each member bought a chair. Upon becoming Seventh-day Adventists, the Kaytors took their chairs away—all except the father. He left his chair because he hadn't decided to

leave the Catholic church. Then he became ill, and could not attend for about a month. During his absence, his fellow-members took his chair out, tied it to a post and shot it full of holes. Upon seeing the bullet-riddled chair, one of Kaytor's sons brought it home. His father immediately joined the rest

of the family in becoming a Seventh-day Adventist.

The Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference was formed on July 1, 1932.<sup>18</sup>

The years during and following the depression were plagued by drought, and life on the prairies was

stressful. People moved away and a number of church groups were disbanded. With tithe low, the Conference could afford only two workers, Elder D. D. Neufeld and Elder Balmer. During the 1940's the number of churches dropped drastically, and conference workers tended to stay for short periods—with the exception of D. D. Neufeld who served more than thirty years. Between 1950 and 1960, however, a number of new churches were organized in the conference. Another mark of prosperity during this time was the opening of two health care facilities in Saskatchewan: Sunnyside Nursing Home (Saskatoon, 1965) and the Swift Current Nursing Home (sold in 1990).

"Saskatoon Campmeeting," an annual landmark for Adventists, had long convened on the exhibition grounds in Saskatoon. Upon establishing a permanent campground there, an auditorium to seat 1,000 people was erected in 1950. This project was lovingly supervised by D. D. Neufeld who paid young folk 25¢ per hour to water the newly-planted trees. Next came the "Blackstrap Project," designed to serve the needs of church both spiritually and socially. Financial difficulties caused it to be sold and replaced by a new campground located at Whitesand, near Theodore, Saskatchewan.<sup>19</sup>

Thinly populated, the prairie provinces have made up for lack of numbers in the quality workers who have gone forth, generations of them, to distinguished careers, both in the Seventh-day Adventist church and outside of it.

| Church  | Organization | Charter Workers & Families                                 |
|---|--------------|--|
| <b>The Saskatchewan Mission</b>                         |              |  |
| Waldheim  |              | Neufeld, Feyerabend  |
| McLean  | 1906         | Ross   |
| Rouleau   | 1906         | Shaw, Sulzle   |
| <b>The Saskatchewan Conference</b>                      |              |  |
| 1. Swift Current  | 1912         | Rider, Forshaw   |
| 2. Findlater  | 1913         | Rider, Paul, Luther Long                                   |
| 3. Macrorie   | 1913         | Forshaw, Maas, Davy Bodrug                                 |
| Hodgeville  | 1912         | Sulzle, Babienco, Locker                                   |
| 4. Fox Valley   | 1913         | D. D. Neufeld  |
| 5. Rosthern   | 1914         | C. Sulzle, Ziprick, D. D. Neufeld                          |
| Regina  |              | Mackintosh, Gilbert (English)                              |
| 6. East Regina  | 1914         | Ostoics, Kranian, Theo Diminyatz (Roumanian) Bothe, Kaytor |
| 7. Beaver Creek   | 1916         | Farnworth, Babienco (Russian)                              |
| Canora  | 1916         | Henkes, Hoehn, Deer, Houck Wimer, Jewkes, Hnatyshyn        |
| Sturgis   |              | B. Iliescu (Roumanian)                                     |
| 8. Tugaske  | 1916         | Wm. Brown, Forshaw, Gilbert, Foulston, Blix, Erickson      |
| 9. Battleford   | 1917         |  |
| 10. Carlton   | 1920         |  |
| 11. Saskatoon   | 1920         |  |
| 12. Truas   | 1921         |  |
| 13. Moose Jaw   | 1922         |  |
| 14. Viceroy   |              | Babienco, Demchuk  |
| 15. Sanburg   | 1922         | Bodrug, Hrenyk, Welykholowa (Ukranian)                     |
| 16. Cymric  | 1922         | H. Berg, Wirz, Karst, Daubert, Heintz                      |
| <b>The Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference (Est. 1932)</b> |              |  |
| Quill Lake  | 1948         | W. H. R. Clark, Conrad Samograd                            |
| Battleford  | 1948         | (reopened)   |

#### Sources

<sup>1</sup>For a more complete version of the story, see J. Montcith, *History of the S. D. A. Church in Canada*.

<sup>2</sup>Dronen, 2.

(Continued on page 43.)

## 7. The Alberta Conference (Est. 1906)<sup>1</sup>

By *Dennis H. Braun and Others*

**A**s has so often been the case, Seventh-day Adventist teachings first came to Alberta in the spring of 1895 through the work of two colporteurs, Thomas R. Astleford and George W. Sowler. Working in Edmonton and the towns along the railroad to the south, Astleford brought in the first converts in the province.<sup>2</sup> Four years passed, however, before a permanent minister could be assigned to the infant church in Alberta,<sup>3</sup> so the canvassers carried on. To the south Sowler sold 200 copies of *Bible Readings* in Calgary. He canvassed to the north, toward Fort MacLeod—among the ranchers—and also along the Canadian Pacific Railroad to the east.

Alberta at the turn of the century was a great lonely country, and on one trip, Sowler travelled in the saddle for twenty-five miles without seeing even one house. A number of colorful misconceptions about Alberta existed, of course, even in sophisticated quarters. At the 1901 General Conference, one of the brethren described it as the “field . . . away up yonder, about as far as white people generally go.” Another charted it (very incorrectly) as

being 1,100 miles northwest of Manitoba. One, however, said, charitably, “Alberta reaches almost to the North Pole. . . but having been there two winters, I find that the climate there is superior to the climate of Michigan.”<sup>4</sup>

The development of the church in Alberta was to proceed along marked ethnic lines and within large family groups.

### The German Beginnings

Block’s early work stirred up lay-participation in Leduc (twenty miles south of Edmonton). Also a strong interest in health reform went along with the health lectures of Dr. Menzel of Stony Plain—one of the charter members of the Leduc church. John Gustave Litke, however, is the earliest known convert—simply because a colporteur shared his new faith with his German friends in the district. Soon H. J.

Dirksen was sent from Manitoba to organize Alberta’s first church, in Leduc on May 14, 1898.<sup>5</sup> Though isolated, the membership thrived on published church papers and faithfully attended prayer-meetings, Bible readings and Sabbath Schools. The

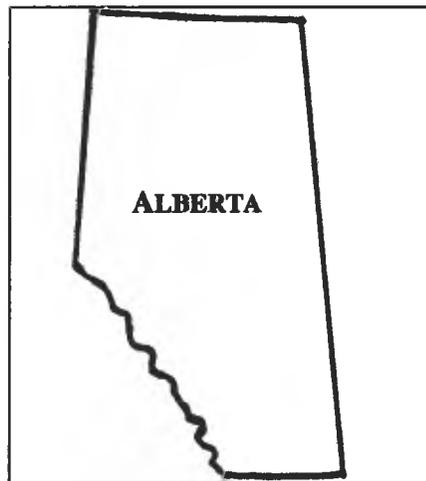
far-reaching effects of literature distribution throughout Alberta can hardly be overestimated.

The climate notwithstanding, Alberta became an abundant land for settlers, and people would come in groups.

In May of 1906,

for instance, twenty-three people from Oklahoma arrived in Leduc. Particularly in the case of this province, some of the immigrants were already Seventh-day Adventists when they arrived.<sup>6</sup>

By the 1870’s the hundred-year-old promise of Catherine the Great to



the German immigrants had expired. She had brought them into Russia to settle the land and “tame” the Turks and Cossacks. But now they saw the need to move on, especially as the “Russia-for-the-Russians” fever mounted, escalating toward the Bolshevik Revolution. The German colonists, however, had been exempt from the prohibitions imposed by the Greek Orthodox Church. Thus the earliest seeds of eastern European Adventism were to be found among them.

As these immigrants to America became Seventh-day Adventists,<sup>7</sup> they sent back German-language books, tracts and magazines to their friends in Russia.<sup>8</sup> Sixty-year-old Philipp Reiswig proved to be a case in point. As a missionary-minded German settler in the American mid-west, he could not wait for the mail service. Therefore, he returned to Russia in November, 1883, with his trunk full of Adventist tracts and papers. Travelling at his own expense, he had to sell his good leather boots to pay his fare down into the Crimea. Fortunately, his speech impediment prevented his preaching openly—that would probably have led to his exile. Instead, he sat daily in the market place. Assuming that he could not read, people humored the old man, consenting to read his tracts to him. Reiswig would make a few remarks about the subject and then let the reader take the tract away with him, if he showed any interest in the matter. He also visited homes and called upon Lutheran pastors. Within two years this public-square evangelist had thirteen

people keeping Sabbath. Following a two-year absence in the United States, Reiswig returned, working among the German settlers in Russia until he died.<sup>9</sup>

After the turn of the century, Adventism spread into the English-speaking community. Arriving in 1901 John W. Boynton (1855-1940) was the first English speaking minister.<sup>10</sup> He immediately set about (on horseback) visiting isolated believers.<sup>11</sup> Sabbath Schools sprang up all the way south to Calgary. Still, church growth was shadowed by persecution. Alberta Sunday laws were strict.<sup>12</sup> The town of Wetaskwin in November, 1902, fined J. L. Hamren \$2.00 (plus \$3.45 costs) for doing his farm work on Sunday. In the debate over the failure of the legislation to define which was the “Lord’s Day,” this case went to the Supreme Court. The Mounted Police at Regina dismissed the case and ordered the citizens “not to disturb Seventh-day Adventists or Jews for doing work on Sunday.”<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, Brother Gebanus was fined \$10.70 for working in his blacksmith shop on Sunday (and he paid the fine). So “the Lord’s Day people” continued to agitate their cause,<sup>14</sup> often with the disgruntled tracts of Canright despite



*Above: the Hryhirchuk family were pioneer Ukrainian believers in Beauvallon. This picture was taken on the day of their baptism. (L-R: William Hryhirchuk and his wife, Nancy; Mary stands on the right; Anne (Mrs. Peter Samograd) is in front of her mother on the right, while Father holds Helen on his knee. Nick Kotenko, a friend of the family, stands at the back. Below: Jake Gimbel, operating his hay baler on his farm in the Level Lands, Alberta (1950), exemplifies the entire story of the immigrant Adventist settlers in Canada’s West. (Gimbel was a pioneer member of the Rosebud Church near Beiseker.) Incredible hardships, bitter cold, endless hours working the harvest fields, under the high-domed, clear skies by day and under the “midnight sun” by night—but at the same time they built a firm foundation for the faith they loved.*



the fact that the law-makers often took the Adventist side.

In 1903 the first general meeting of Seventh-day Adventists in the territory was held at the home of J. H. Lowry in Ponoka.<sup>15</sup> The next year Alberta campmeeting convened in Ponoka also (July 12-17, 1904), with about one-third of the 150 believers present.<sup>16</sup>

### Medical Work in Alberta

The health work in Alberta began with the lectures of Dr. Menzel (based on *The Testimonies*) in the earliest days in Leduc and the wide distribution of tracts. The arrival of Frank Lewis Hommel (1875-1964), a graduate nurse from Battle Creek Sanitarium, marked its formal phase with the establishment of a sanitarium in Edmonton.<sup>17</sup> Although it began in

a rented house but soon expanded to a larger, modern facility. The fame of the sanitarium spread, and one patient is known to have come from 1,200 miles up north. "The doctors are recommending our treatments in every direction," the credentialed, five-nurse staff announced with pride.<sup>18</sup> Not only did this private institution do great service in preventive medicine, but

it did much to break down prejudice. In 1906 Calgary acquired a sanitarium of its own. The urge to locate a sanitarium-hospital in a rural location, however, would not be fully realized until the establishment of Rest Haven Hospital in British Columbia in 1921.

### The Ukrainian Community

Outstanding advances were made among the Ukrainian settlers in the Beauvallon District (east of Edmonton) in the 1920's. It all began with the 1917 visit of a Ukrainian Baptist named Ripka to the home of Elia Tkachuk. Unrestrained by tact, Ripka roundly condemned them for their idol worship, recommended burning the Catholic pictures on the walls, and kept Tkachuk up until 3 a.m. arguing his point. The next day, Tkachuk told his neighbors, the George Soloniuks, what he'd learned, and they borrowed a Bible from another neighbor, Mrs. Tym. Until T. T. Babienco arrived the next year, however, no Ukrainian minister had been available. The first church was at Pobida (Victory), to be pastored for the next nine years by Peter Yakovenko.

Actually, the first Ukrainian Adventist believer was M. H. Philbrick.<sup>19</sup> A cruelly mistreated eight-year-old boy, he took refuge in the home of the Philbricks, Adventist members of the Vermilion Lake church. Since they brought him up as their own son, he became an Adventist a number of years before the Soloniuks.

William and Nancy Hryirchuk were among the first Seventh-day Adventist families to be baptized in the Beauvallon area in 1919. Reared in a very devout Greek Orthodox family, Nancy listened cautiously to the Bible studies, for no Bible had ever been permitted in her home. Then their little daughter, Anne, became violently and inexplicably ill. Having lost one child the previous year, the Hryirchuks despaired, for the nearest hospital was in Edmonton, 100 miles away. With almost the little one's last breath, an Adventist colporteur appeared at the door. He couldn't sell a book in the middle of this crisis, of course, but he dropped to his knees by the cradle and prayed for the healing of the little girl. As soon as the man departed, Nancy saw that her baby had completely recovered from whatever the illness had been. Now the Hryirchuks could delay no longer and joined the Beauvallon church in 1919.<sup>20</sup>

In 1920 Mike and Kathryn Melnechuk, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, traded farms—sight unseen—for land in Beauvallon, Alberta. Soon after their coming, a neighbor revealed community prejudice,<sup>21</sup> warning the Melnechuks, "There are a few families here who keep Saturday (*soo-bot-nekey*). They have very peculiar ideas, so don't have anything to do with them." The *soo-bot-necks*, however, knew what worked. They came to get acquainted and brought gifts of food. Then when spring work began, one of

### Early Campmeetings in Peace River

|              |                 |                |                     |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Old Bluesky  | 1920-1925, 1828 | Wanham         | 1931                |
| Whitelaw     | 1926, 1937      | Grande Prairie | 1932, 1933          |
| Waterhole    | 1927            | Rycroft        | 1934-36, 1940, 1941 |
| Spirit River | 1929, 1930      | Sexsmith       | 1938, 1939          |
| Peoria       | 1942-Present    |                |                     |

*Being far to the north over near-impassable roads, the members in Peace River convened their own campmeetings.*

them (Eli Tkachuk, the local Adventist church elder) gave Mike Melnechuk a horse, so that he could make up a team of four. Poverty-stricken and unable to read or write at the time, Melnechuk never forgot this kindness.

Large families with no church school meant that the members had to devise other social diversions. In Beauvallon they went to “singing meetings” in various homes. (Eli Tkachuk taught everyone to sing in harmony—and even to read music.) Then after the vespers, followed by games, the young men got to walk their girlfriends home!

Mike Melnechuk’s early reading disabilities did not prevent his witnessing for his faith adequately enough. One day a team of horses he’d just bought ran away. He walked more

than ten miles looking for them, eventually finding that they had returned to their previous owners. During his search he stopped, hot, tired and hungry, at a non-Seventh-day Adventist home to inquire after his horses. The farmer invited him to stay for dinner. Soon his wife set before him a large plate of *perogies* with fried onion-and-pork-rinds. His explanation for avoiding the pork and onions really impressed his hosts. “There must be something to that faith that makes an illiterate, hungry and tired man refuse the best part of his dinner.” They asked for cottage meetings and later joined the church. Indeed, the Adventist emphasis on education and clean living did ulti-

mately have results. A lawyer in Mannville said, “Oh, I will always give (Ingathering) to the Adventist church. It’s a miracle, the change they’ve made in this place.”<sup>22</sup>

### The Peace River District

Cornelius D. Holdeman, yet another colporteur, began work in the Peace River district in 1904, travelling the long lonely roads on foot, or, if the distance was very great, on horseback. The way there had been prepared for him, since some families had already been reading papers distributed by a former Seventh-day Adventist, Doc Chase, who operated a stopping place on Lesser Slave River. By 1918 several Adventist families were scattered throughout the district.<sup>23</sup>

Elders Calvin D. Smith and Peter Rick<sup>24</sup> were the first ministers to work



*Above:* Recently from mission service in India, Peter Rick and his wife concentrated their evangelistic efforts (between 1928 and 1935) in Peace River and later in Edmonton. *Below:* The “new” Seventh-day Adventist church in Leduc, Alberta, was built on farmland in 1951. Later this German church merged with the English one in town.

*Opposite Page Above:* When the Edmonton house was sold to the YWCA, the Alberta Sanitarium moved south to Bowness Park, Calgary. An nursing school was started, with the first class (of eight) graduating in 1921. It was later known as Bethel Sanitarium (1917-1925). *Below:* Cornelius L. Holdeman and his wife, pioneer colporteurs to the Peace River Country.



in Peace River—and the memories of their Christian witness still live on.<sup>25</sup> Joe and Ruth French of Grande Prairie remember his ministry well. When they first moved to Waterhole in 1919, Joe had already, as a boy, become acquainted with Adventists. Having attended meetings with his parents (the Sam Frenchs) in Stettler, he knew one when he saw one. So when a young Russian colporteur sold them *Bible Readings for the Home Circle* and *The Home Physician* and then spent the next Saturday alone in a grove of trees, Joe said, “He’s got to be either a Jew or an Adventist.”

The next Adventists they met were Bert Bailey and his hired man, Mr. Wilson. (Because of a drought in the Edmonton area, Mr. Philbrick had shipped all his cattle to Waterhole.) During his wife’s absence on a visit to Stettler, Joe became friends with the two men, and by the time Ruth returned her husband was convinced of the Adventist faith. Reluctant to give in to a church that would make them so peculiar among their neighbors, she held back. Learning of the French’s interest, Peter Rick and his wife came over from Bluesky where a small church had been formed. Since Joe and Ruth had but one bed, the Ricks slept on the floor of the one-room log cabin. Over the quantity of good food which Mrs. Rick brought along, they all became well acquainted.

The Frenchs, and others, were baptized at the next campmeeting. Peter Rick dug a pool out of the spring but could supply no heater! Yet, for

*In 1905 the Adventists opened treatment rooms in Edmonton, a second attempt (after Knowlton Sanitarium in Quebec) to operate a hospital. In 1907, having had great success, the Alberta Sanitarium moved to the largest dwelling in the city, a 28-room house on 3rd Avenue. in Edmonton. This modern house was replete with electric lights and baths!*

the pioneers, the snow on the ground and the icy spring water made no difference on that March day. Now Joe and Ruth met their new brethren—the Fergusons, Knutsons, Keillors, Joe Miller and Mr. Stone (an eighty-two-year-old gentleman who was sure that he would live to see Jesus come.) The neighbors noticed, however, that Joe and Ruth didn’t “hang out” about town on Saturday as usual. “Aren’t we good enough?” one farmer asked. “You have to go all the way to Bluesky to find friends!”<sup>26</sup>

The Reiswigs were the first Adventists in Clairmont, where they hauled coal and firewood to keep alive. Then, in 1926 three Reiswig brothers (George, Dan, and Fred) homesteaded in Grizzly Bear Flats (now known as Peoria)—a district approached in a two-day journey by wagon through “The Badheart.” Settlers<sup>27</sup> here carved their farms out of the woodlands and created a distinctive community, two thirds of which were Adventists. As a young man, Son Harold Reiswig opened what for decades was to be the only general store in the area. In 1929 a group of young farmers, newly arrived from northern Germany slashed

the first trail from Peoria through to Belloy. Other immigrants followed,<sup>28</sup> and in August, 1931, the Alberta Conference president, Arthur V. Rhoads, organized a thirteen-member church there. Five years later, husky farmers dug out the basement for a new church building by hand. They worked far into the night, for that far north the sun hardly sets in summer. Short, rich growing-and-harvest seasons punctuate the long, severe winters under the Northern Lights, and still make farming in the Peace River a viable option.

Although the Alberta Conference was the last to be added to the Union, its membership has remained committed and generous. The youngest in the “family,” but in no way lesser for that accident of history! The founding of the early churches, naturally, is to be tied to the settlement of the province itself.

## Sources

<sup>1</sup>Much of this article is abstracted from Dennis H. Braun, “A History of the Alberta Conference up to 1910” (Andrews University, Unpub. manuscript, 1974). Other sources are: J. Ernest Monteith,



## Alberta's Charter Churches

| Place                            | Date of Organization<br>(Church / Companies) | Ethnic Group       | Administration            |
|----------------------------------|--|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Leduc                         | 1898   | German             | Northern Union Conference |
| 2. Harmattan                     | 1902   | German             | (Manitoba Mission)        |
| 3. Ponoka                        | 1902   | German             | (1899-1904)               |
| 4. Rush Lake                     | 1904-1907                                    | (Nebraska group)   |                           |
| 5. Leavings<br>(or Granum)       | 1905   | Scandinavian       | The Alberta Mission       |
| Leduc                            | 1906   | English            | Mission Field (1904-1906) |
| Edmonton                         | 1907   | English            |                           |
| Calgary                          | 1907   | German             |                           |
| Vermillion Lake                  | 1907   | Ukrainian          |                           |
| Sullivan Lake<br>(or Coronation) | 1908<br>(1906-Present)                       | Alberta Conference |                           |
| Sedgwick                         | 1909   | Scandinavian       |                           |
| Rosebud                          | 1909   | German             |                           |
| Lacombe                          | 1909   | English            |                           |
| (Alberta Academy)                | (1908)                                       |                    |                           |
| (Alberta Sanitarium)             | (1908)                                       |                    |                           |

*A survey of the early Alberta churches emphasizes not only the diversity but also the rather marked "segregation" among the ethnic groups to which the first Adventists belonged.*

in 1877. While in exile, he accepted the truth of the Second Coming and kept the seventh-day Sabbath, though he knew nothing of Seventh-day Adventists.

<sup>9</sup>"Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," *S.D.A. Encyclopedia*, 1520-1521.

<sup>10</sup>J. W. Boynton, *Review & Herald*, July 30, 1901.

<sup>11</sup>J. W. Boynton, "Personal Incidents in the Life of J. W. Boynton." (Newberg, OR: Private publication, 1938). In Calgary, Boynton found four Sabbath-keepers. In Olds, slightly to the north, he found three families: Edgertons, Skadsheims and Bergeys.

<sup>12</sup>*Missionary Magazine*, May, 1902.

<sup>13</sup>*Review & Herald*, May 19, 1903.

<sup>14</sup>*Northern Union Reaper*, May 8, 1906.

<sup>15</sup>The only workers present were Boynton,

Block and two colporteurs. At this time, however, the Alberta Tract and Missionary Society was formed, with Stella Lowry as secretary—a necessary step since the nearest office was almost 1,000 miles away.

<sup>16</sup>*Review & Herald*, June 30, 1904. "Alberta Mission Field Council was formed on July 15, with Boynton as chairman. Three other ministers represented the entire work-force for the province: H. Block, R. S. Greaves, and A. C. Anderson. The next year Paul Curtis arrived from south of the border, with the Iowa Conference promising to pay \$10.00 per week for his support in this northern missionfield.

(Continued on page 13.)

*The Lord is My Shepherd* (Oshawa: Canadian Union Conference, 1983); Wolfram Hackenberg, *A Light in the Peace* (Grande Prairie: Menzies Printers, 1980); personal interviews by Myrna Tetz; and other sources.

<sup>2</sup>*Northern Union Reaper*, August 14, 1906.

<sup>3</sup>Henry Block, a German worker of College View, Nebraska, received the call to Alberta on a Friday. "On the following Monday he and his family started out for Alberta, not even taking time to lock the door to the old home." (*Northern Union Reaper*, August 14, 1906). He was joined in 1901 by another Nebraska minister, J. W. Boynton, who built a house in Ponoka.

<sup>4</sup>*General Conference Bulletin*, April 17, 1901.

<sup>5</sup>*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*

(Washington D.C. *Review & Herald*, 1976), 21. (See Church Clerk Records of the Leduc church). Charter members of the Leduc church were the Litkes, Sticles, Klatts, Kuhns, Comms, Louisa Ergang, Elisabet Geick and William Reidman.

<sup>6</sup>*Northern Union Reaper*, May 1, 1906.

<sup>7</sup>August Kunz was in charge of German correspondence at the denominational headquarters in Battle Creek, Michigan. He communicated with a number of would-be Sabbath keepers in southern Russia.

<sup>8</sup>Concurrently some Russians shared the interest in Adventism, as was the case of Theofil A. Babienco of Tarashcha, Ukraine, south of Kiev. Having secured a Bible, he and a company calling themselves "A Community of Brethren, Believers in the Bible," left the state church

## Looking at the Beginning of Seventh-day Adventist Education in Canada

By Myrna Tetz and Others

**W**hen Seventh-day Adventists discuss sacrifice, there is, at the top of the “sacrifice list” Christian education. Probably no other one focus in the church receives more funding or employs more workers than the educational departments of Adventist Christians, worldwide. Education in Canada has been no exception.

### Quebec

Adventist concerns about young people and problems of associations, examination schedules, peer-hostility, Friday night social events, and the general undermining of religious faith are universal. And they gave impetus to the growth of Canadian schools. Not surprisingly, the first S.D.A. school in Canada opened at South Stukely, Quebec, in 1885, coinciding with the founding of the first Adventist church there. In fact, before the school was established, R. S. Owen

reported that the members of the fledgling church voted, out of their \$6,000-budget, \$2,000 for an education fund. This money was lent to students without interest so that they could “take a special drill at South Lancaster Academy, then enter the work of God and pay the money back.”

After tent meetings had been held at Fitch Bay, Quebec, in 1884 Benjamin Woodard (a new Adventist) built a church and a school on the lot where the tent had been pitched—the second school in Quebec and the first operated exclusively for secondary students.



**Above:** Caleb L. Gladden (right), a teacher, poses informally with his principal, Carroll H. Drown (Fitch Bay Seventh-day Adventist High School, Fitch Bay, Quebec, in 1894), and then formally with his wife. Gladden married one of his students, Matilda E. Hiller. **Below:** The high school students at Fitch Bay (no date).

## Newfoundland

The first church school began in 1895, only a year after the arrival of the first missionaries, and it opened in the living room of the house of the first baptized Adventist in St. John's, Mrs. Anna Pippy. Elizabeth Milley, a Newfoundlander, taught the first pupils.<sup>1</sup>

Newfoundland is the only province in Canada where the census shows a larger number of Seventh-day Adventists than those listed on the church records. Because of Newfoundland's denominational system of education, many non-Adventist students have attended the Adventist schools in the province (and many have been led to the Church through these means.)<sup>2</sup> Originally the schools in Newfoundland were started by the churches as missionary ventures. Since Adventists, at the turn of the century, were not even considered a sect, they could not, at first, get the government aid that all the other church

schools received. Hence, the founding of the school in St. John's represented real sacrifice.

After an interlude in the basement of the Cookstown Road church, the academy moved to two-room quarters in the Manse, in 1920. By 1938 a three-storey addition had to be built, followed by an auditorium for 150 students in 1944. Soon 250 students thronged the place, and even "evicting" the mission president to another residence failed to make enough space for the school.<sup>3</sup> The school has been sustained through the years by some outstanding grandchildren of the charter-member Adventists in St. John's.

Newfoundland's economy has always made it necessary for many young people to leave the island to seek employment. Thus the graduates of the Adventist schools can be found in leadership positions in the church across Canada, in the United States and overseas.

## Ontario

Church members took children of Adventists who lived at a distance into their homes so that they might have a religious education. Salaries for Adventist teachers, however, have never made

*Above left:* The home of Mrs. Anna Pippy at 92 Freshwater Road, St. John's, Newfoundland. Here, in 1905, the Adventists opened their first day school in Newfoundland. This church school, held in her living room, continued for about ten years. *Above Right:* After the intermission Doug Dowden creates a "pretend Indian" hunting among "pretend trees." *Below left:* Christmas programs were an old and beloved tradition in Adventist schools back in less complex times. Here Grades 3 to 6 at Newfoundland Mission Academy sing a carol to candlelight (1953, under the principalship of Emmerson Hillock). *Below right:* The Corner Brook School, Newfoundland, 1951. Coated with icicles and snow, many a small Canadian school, like this one, housed within four walls: the church, the classroom, a social hall, and a drafty two-room apartment for the teacher.



anyone rich or increased in goods. In 1915 Howard Capman earned \$5.00 a week, teaching in Toronto. Board and room took up \$3.50, and then he paid tithes. That left him with \$1.00 a week for all of the other necessities a teacher in Grandview, British Columbia, might have.<sup>4</sup>

Poverty-stricken they were, but those early church school teachers had enormous commitment to their work. One at Ontario's first elementary school in Selton (1895-about 1903) slanted everything in the classroom to the Bible: "Instead of learning that "J" stands for Johnny...the beginners learned "J" stands for Joseph who was sold into Egypt. In their arithmetic no problems ever concerned tobacco or pigs. Pupils estimate

at current prices the cost of constructing Solomon's Temple. Even the morning roll call was taken differently. Each student responded to his name by repeating a verse of Scripture beginning with his initial."<sup>5</sup>

In 1901 Ontario church members voted for the opening of an industrial school in order to train workers to staff their own province. Two years later Eugene Leland and one other teacher opened the doors of Lornedale Academy to eight students. Both members and students were



**Above left:** Mrs. Anna Dybdahl (nee Nelson) was the first church school teacher in the Ontario Conference. **Middle Left:** Daniel Dimock's family in whose home a church school was started in 1899. Later they donated land for the Farmington Industrial Academy. (L-R, standing): Daniel Dimock, E. Eimock, a grandmother, Joan Dimock and Mrs. Lettie Dimock; (seated) Mrs. R. A. Hubley and an unidentified boy. **Below left:** The main building at Williamsdale, Nova Scotia. **Above right:** The faculty and graduates of Williamsdale Academy in 1915. Front row (L-R, seated): Elsie Forward-Hartin, Lewis Hartin, and Violet Morgan. At the sides and behind: Charlie Joyce, Mr. Machlan, Gladys Machlan, Oliver Stevens, Mr. and Mrs. N. H. Sanders. **Middle right:** Maritime Academy at Memramcook where it functioned for sixteen years. A suspicious fire in 1932 destroyed the entire school plant, and the school was not reopened. **Below right:** The faculty and Student body at Williamsdale Academy.

**Opposite Page:** Battleford Academy remained vigorous to the end of its career. **Above:** The dormitory girls of 1927. **Below:** The Junior Class of 1928.

urged to sell *Christ's Object Lessons* to fund the new school. Desiring a more central location, church leaders moved the academy to the present site of Kingsway College, Oshawa, in 1912.<sup>6</sup>

### Manitoba-Saskatchewan

Along with the establishment of church groups came the interest in having children in church schools, with many members creating "family schools" in their own homes

By 1904 Manitoban members attending campmeeting planned to open a school at the end of the summer and requested "a Bible teacher and an educator in practical missionary work. . ." In November O. A. Hall of Nebraska arrived to take charge of the "Northwestern Training School" located near Portage la Prairie. Of the twenty-three students who enrolled, none could speak English. Unfortunately the school closed in 1908, not be replaced until the academy in Winnipeg opened in 1930. Nonetheless, by 1912 Saskatchewan had eight church schools in operation.<sup>7</sup>

George Foulston and Peter Blix of Tugaske, Saskatchewan, had a vision of a church school for their children long before the church in general took up the idea. In 1915 they opened a school in

the Foulston home. The next summer they built a school house about halfway between their two homes. Financing the project themselves, the men kept the school open until 1928.<sup>8</sup>

Battleford was the captial of the Northwest Territory, until the area became the province of Saskatchewan. When headquarters moved in 1915, the Adventists purchased the governor's house, the legislative buildings, a hospital and some other government property—this was the birth of Battleford Academy. With students coming in from all three of the prairie provinces, the Academy prospered until 1931—when it was closed in favor of Canadian Junior College in Lacombe, Alberta. The closure was a blow, however, to the mid-western Canadian churches.

### Maritime Provinces

Influenced by Adventists from across the line in Maine, believers in St. John, New Brunswick, opened a school in the winter of 1901. Administered by three different teachers in one winter, however, the project was abandoned.<sup>9</sup> In 1903, A. G. Daniels appealed to the Canadian Maritime constituency to open a school because "the young people of our Sabbath keepers in Canada have been coming to our schools in the States but very few have returned home." This, he declared, was a "disaster."

Forthwith, T. W. Dimock gave 100 acres of improved land and 150 acres of timber for an industrial school in Farmington, Nova Scotia. In 1905 the school relocated in Williamsdale, Nova Scotia. Strict religious training and discipline was given, and perhaps the nineteen students could accept that fact that very little time or money was devoted to sports and amusements. Another move took the Maritime Conference Academy to Memramcook in 1919.<sup>10</sup>

### Alberta

Alberta's first (short-lived) school opened in Tees (1903-1905), with Miss Lorena Carpenter (later Mrs. Hommel) as its teacher. It occupied an upstairs room in the home of L. D. House. For the 1906 school opening in Leavings (later called Granum), V. D. Hawley came up from South Dakota as teacher. His work was "quite a load for



a twenty-three-year-old lad to carry,” he recalled. “The denomination at that time had nothing to offer church schools. There was no course of study and no textbooks to speak of. There were thirty-four students, and I received \$15 or \$20 per month and was ‘boarded around.’ Besides teaching all the grades from 1 through 9, I was voted the following responsibilities at the church: elder, Sabbath School superintendent, young people’s leader and a pinch-hit class teacher. . . . I didn’t see a believer outside of the local church from the time I started school in the fall until I arrived at campmeeting the next year.”<sup>11</sup>

### British Columbia

The first school was opened in Pitt Meadows in 1907. After a period of indifferent success, the second one (the work of many hands) was established in Firvale. In 1904 an Adventist, F. A. Johnson, had homesteaded in Upper Bella Coola Valley.<sup>12</sup> His land, some thirty miles from town<sup>13</sup> was in an area that was later named “Firvale.”<sup>14</sup> Other Adventist families, also looking for a remote area that would serve as a refuge in the last days, soon joined the Johnsons. The homesteaders arrived by boat and had to make the two-day trip to Firvale by wagons pulled by oxen or horses.<sup>15</sup> By 1907 the Firvale church was organized,<sup>16</sup> and two years later the third church school in the conference was opened by Ed Phelps in a house donated by William Stein.<sup>17</sup> A barn stood behind the house where students could leave the horses

they’d ridden to school. John Hober, the local postmaster, built swings for the school children. He set metal rings in two fir trees and strung cable between the trees to hold the swings. He also built a ramp behind the swings that could be used as a launching pad for a wonderful ride through the air.<sup>18</sup>

The students at Bella Coola proved to be capable of mischief whenever left alone. On one occasion, one of the older boys said, “Wouldn’t it be fun if all the chairs were turned upside down?” Soon everyone was busy turning over the furniture. As soon as the grown-ups returned, however, the children were equally busy setting things right again. On another occasion, the children took a collie and clipped its hair short, like a lion. The parents found the guilt-ridden youngsters behind the barn, trying to glue the hair back onto



**Above:** At their teacher’s knee, pupils of the Stettler Adventist School (about 1915).

**Middle:** Church and school often occupied the same premises, at different times and on different days of the week. This building was the original Brooks Seventh-day Adventist church as well as the Stettler school (1915-1916). **Below:** Often one or two families made up the entire school enrollment. In the case of the first year of the Stettler school (1914-1915), the Patterson family was the the mainstay of the enterprise.

**Opposite Page:** **Above left:** Teacher and students at the Stettler School in its third year (1916-1917). The McCarty and Zumwakt families were well represented. **Above right:** The nurses, the pre-meds—they all like to pose with the laboratory’s resident skeleton. **Below left:** Students at the Rutland School (progenitor of Okanagan Academy) cluster around their teacher, R. Clayton. **Below right:** The original campus Oshawa Missionary College. The first building of any consequence to be constructed was an all-purpose building (left) which later served as the girls’ dormitory, plus kitchen dining room, laboratory, offices, chapel, and classrooms. Next (right), came the administration. In between was the president’s cottage. All of these buildings have now been demolished.

the dog—with paste made from flour and water.<sup>19</sup> Out of this lively school came twelve church workers from among twenty-three pupils attending Bella Coola School (1909-1920).<sup>20</sup>

The Stickle and Reiswig families formed the nucleus of the Adventist community at Grandview. In the early 1900's the Stickles, with their eleven children, had been living in the Pitt Meadows community. They moved to Grandview Flats about the time the conference office transferred to Vancouver. The Reiswigs had come from Lumby where there had been, briefly, a church school (1906-1908)—the third in the province. In 1911 Lydia Stickle became the first teacher of the Grandview School,<sup>21</sup> which was amply supplied with pupils from the two families.

At the first campmeeting in the Okanagan in 1916, the brethren began to consider the valley as a center for education. First they bought an old hotel building where the students could live in the hotel rooms and attend classes in the parlor. In 1920 the church purchased ten acres of land in Rutland, near Kelowna. For \$300.00 worth of used lumber they put up a modest, two-room school—Okanagan Academy.<sup>22</sup>

Although times have indeed changed since the early days, Adventist teachers are still

characterized by commitment, resourcefulness, creativity and love—love of God and of the young.

### Part I KINGSWAY COLLEGE<sup>23</sup>

Lornedale Academy, known as an “industrial school” because of its self-supporting farm base, was the immediate ancestor of Kingsway College. C. D. Terwillegar, an Adventist member in Oshawa, ONT., donated a 128-acre farm to the school. That, combined with the purchase of an adjoining property provided 240 acres for the school which was renamed Buena Vista Academy (for its magnificent hill-view).

During the building of the campus, the water supply from a little local spring dried up in the middle of cement-mixing. The Ontario Conference president, M. O. Kirkendall, betook himself to his prayer retreat under the trees behind the old chicken coop. When he reappeared he told the workmen, “Just continue with your task because there's going to be plenty of water.” And, in fact, the flow from the spring continued unabated from then on.



Later in that summer of 1913, a bricklayer was needed to install the boiler. Once again Kirkendall retired to his prayer place. He asked the Lord specifically to send Nathan Wagar who was, at the moment canvassing some thirty miles east of Oshawa. Wagar, meanwhile, on the road distinctly heard an insistent voice ordering him to return to Oshawa. When he arrived back on campus he turned into Kirkendall's house. The president greeted him warmly. "Well, thank the Lord you're here." When the men compared times, they found that the time when Wagar heard the voice coincided to the minute with the time when Kirkendall prayed.

By 1916, the school now called "Eastern Canadian Missionary Seminar,"<sup>24</sup> offered college level work for the first time in Canada, included a training program for French workers, and started a teacher training course.<sup>25</sup> The Normal Course became the strongest program, preparing candidates for secondary teaching.<sup>26</sup> Non-Adventist youth were admitted, provided they would "conduct themselves in accordance with the principles upon which the school was founded."

While it remained small the French Department played an important role in training church workers, until the Depression brought it to an end. Thus Oshawa Missionary College was the only church institution in North America offering French-language programs.

Now known as Kingsway College, the school has lived for eighty-eight years. It averages a 250-student enrolment and offers provincially accredited high school diplomas and the academic requirements needed for Ontario university entrance.

## Part II CANADIAN UNION COLLEGE<sup>27</sup>

Among the settlers arriving in Alberta at the turn of the century were a few Adventist members from the United States. Assigned to the Alberta mission field in 1901, J. W. Boynton from Nebraska faced the new settlers' demand for schools.

By 1907 the log-cabin church school at Hartmann was surpassed by a "canvassers school" for workers, Alberta Industrial Academy. C. A.

**Above left:** President H. M. Johnson as a young man. **Above right:** C. A. Burman, the first president of Alberta Industrial Academy (1907-1909; 1914-1915). **Below left:** The Music Class at Canadian Junior College (about 1914). L-R—Front Row: Miss Bisegar, Flora Champagne, Lydia Christiansen, Ethel Wallace, Pearl Rick; Second Row: Blanche Hippach, Lizzie Burgess, Susie Haynal, Addie Adams, Eva Haynal, Alma Anderson; Third Row: Anna Neufeld, Ruby Rick, Ida Ranchett, John Haynal, Julia Hanse, Sr. Van Buskirk, Miss Carlson; Back Row: Almeda Willett, Ruth Wallace, Sam Leiske, Br. Pond, P. O. Adams, Adolph Bernhard, Mary Goerlitz. **Below right:** The "May Day Girls" of Canadian Junior College (1924).



Burman had observed the sincerity of the young people he had met at the annual campmeeting in Red Deer, so he pressed for the opening of a school. Facing the usual lack of funds, the conference committee voted a three-month experiment. They rented the Record Building in Leduc,<sup>28</sup> and opened the doors to nine students on January 1, 1907. Mrs. L. Burman taught the basics and W. O. James gave instruction in colporteurage. Enrollment tripled before the end of the three-month term.

Pleased with the success of the “salesmanship school,” church members raised funds to relocate



the school. The 200 members attending the 1907 campmeeting raised the huge sum of \$20,000 for the project, giving farms, cattle, horses, and cash pledges.<sup>29</sup> Now not only could they save \$400 in rent, but also the pupils would be where they could “work on the farm and be free from distracting influences.” At the new 160-acre farm-location three miles west of Leduc, space was planned not only for Alberta Industrial Academy but also for the sanitarium.<sup>30</sup>

The sixty-five students from various ethnic backgrounds emphasized the international flavor of the church membership in Alberta, and, indeed, of Western Canada itself: English, Scotch, French, Swedish, and German, plus mixtures from the United States.

*Left: Three scenes from Canadian Junior College 1941-1942, (top to bottom): The dining room (basement of the girls' dormitory); The college store (basement of the Administration Building); and the College Laundry. Right: A 1929 picnic at Lake Barnett (bottom to top), on the campus—first the games and then the line-up for dinner.*



By the end of the first term, a new school building was required, so all the able bodied people took to the woods, some thirty miles distant, to cut logs almost-free on government land. There were eighteen men two women (as cooks),<sup>31</sup> eighteen horses, three bobsleds and a cutter. Choosing a site near the Saskatchewan River, the school workers planned to float the logs to Strathcona when the ice broke up in the spring. When the party left on April 1, 1907, the snow was three feet deep. In three weeks they had 1,700 logs piled on the ice, awaiting the river journey to a sawmill in Edmonton where the lumber would be prepared. Some logs, unfortunately were lost in the spring floods.

The Leduc period of the school, however, proved to be difficult. When the temperature dropped fifty and sixty degrees below zero outdoors, the temperature in the sleeping rooms ran at about twenty degrees below zero, to say nothing of the conditions for several families living in tents on the school farm.<sup>32</sup> Boys in the log-house dormitory often awoke in the morning to find their blankets covered with snow. The new frame building erected in 1903 offered a couple of amenities— wood stoves for heating, a water system in a barrel behind the kitchen stove. In 1908 a lean-to was attached to the boys' log dormitory for the new preceptor and his wife. It proved very drafty in the winter, but, by throwing water over the walls, the cracks were almost instantly sealed with ice.

*Canadian Junior College. The Old Administration Building of 1927. The fifth-floor annex housed boys— some of whom use it for a backdrop for a fifteen-man pyramid.*



The rules and regulations were few but were well enforced. Students were expected “to abstain from indecent or disorderly behavior, from profane and unbecoming language; from the use of tobacco and all alcoholic drinks; . . . and from all improper associations.” The institution restricted associations between the sexes “to the ordinary forms of civility.”

The cost of operating Alberta Industrial Academy was low, but expansion appeared to be almost impossible. To finance this “growth scheme,” each member was asked to sell three copies of *Christ's Object Lessons*.<sup>33</sup> Now the vision included finding a location large enough to build a school *and* a sanitarium (to provide work for the academy students). During the visit of W. A. Spicer (from the General Conference) to Alberta in 1909 the decision was made to purchase a farm two miles north of Lacombe.



Decrease in land values, however, made it impossible to build a sanitarium as well. Plans had to be reduced from \$28,000.00 to just \$10,000.00. The conference could afford only two buildings: a girls' dormitory (with kitchen and dining room) and a boys' dormitory (with chapel and classrooms). Eighty students enrolled for the first school year of 1910.

An old barn (the only building on the new site) was remodelled to make four floors—for classrooms and living quarters. The Bible teacher, P. P. Adams, remembered teaching with potatoes all around his feet. The top floor was turned into a dormitory for the boys. Since there was no stairway, a ladder was nailed on the wall on the outside, and the boys climbed up to bed that way. The next floor was divided into classrooms. (no one was allowed to sweep his room during classes

because dust would fall through on the students below.

The slender girls were housed in a small laundry building. Thirteen of the plump ones stayed in a tent until February, crowding around a wood stove in the center of the tent for warmth. (Someone was appointed to refuel the fire several times a night during the winter.) The tent had a floor, and the sides were banked up with soil. Tar paper sealed the space around the bottom edges. Even so, 1909 was a severe winter. J. L. Stanbury wrote: "The weather has been very severe. For several nights the thermometer registered 50 or 60 degrees below zero, and we were not well protected from the cold...[Sometimes] it registered as low as 20 below zero in our sleeping rooms."

The new three-floor dormitory was a great event, but even then the girls wore their overcoats and wrapped in blankets to study in the evening. There was no running water, and water in the rooms froze



*Above left: In the spring of 1931, Harry Lopp painted Lake Louise at the front of the chapel. For generations of students the painting meant "CUC." Above right: The Great Fire at Canadian Junior College. The conflagration at 2 a.m., May 28, 1930, destroyed the main building and the boys' dormitory. Of the 200 students who escaped, five boys were seriously injured. The acting principal, C. W. Shankel, suspected, correctly, that this was a case of arson. In due time two bright, promising students were arrested, charged and sentenced to four-five years hard labor in the prison in Prince Albert Penitentiary the career. One of the "fire-bugs" confessed that he hated the school because he had been expelled and thwarted in his ambition to be a doctor. Below: The faculty of Alberta Industrial Academy (1914-1915) remind us again that the pioneers were so very young!. Front Row (L-R): F. L. Hommel, Elder Beane, C. A. Burman, and two unidentified men.*

overnight. The one luxury was a boy making rounds and leaving a pitcher of warm water at each door. Water was brought in a wooden barrel on a stone-boat, drawn by the school bull and driven by a student, Max Popow. One day the bull ran away, but fortunately Alfred Pond came to school that year with two oxen. Finally, five years later, in 1914, water was piped into the rooms in East Hall, and the first bath tub was installed. (Baths were permitted once a week, on a schedule.) The only piano on "The Hilltop" was one brought to the school by Pastor and Mrs. P. O. Adams in 1910. That same year West Hall, the boys' dormitory was built, and construction of the administration building began in 1912. W. A. Clemenson (later the president of four Canadian conferences) was the first graduate of Alberta Industrial Academy.

By 1919 the school had become a Western Canadian Union Conference institution, bringing about the name change: Canadian Junior College. The fourteen -grade status enabled the faculty to offer three curricula: pre-nursing, ministerial and literary. Senior-college status was attained in 1946 and a Bachelor of Theology degree was offered. Today, the high school division is fully accredited with the Province of Alberta. Under the administration of the new college president J. D. Victor Fitch, Canadian Union College attained the long-sought-after accreditation with the Province of Alberta for three-year Bachelor of Arts degrees: English, Music, and Religious Studies. To be sure, this 500-student campus has come along way since it occupied rented quarters in Leduc in 1907.



Rosie Florence Madsen. Around Nov.-Dec. 1930. Age 16. Canadian Junior College entrance not finished.

## Sources

<sup>1</sup>*Eastern Canadian Messenger*, September 2, 1914,

<sup>2</sup>Montieth, 214-215. Everyone in Newfoundland thus identifies with *some* church, and the government pays teacher salaries.

<sup>3</sup>It was not until the mid-1960's that new land was purchased and Newfoundland Academy came into its own.

<sup>4</sup>In the same year a teacher in Grandview, British Columbia offered to pay his landlord \$10.00 per week, with a supply of potatoes and apples.

<sup>5</sup>Montieth.

<sup>6</sup>Other Ontario schools included Windsor, Fort William, Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Paris and Haileybury. Today seventeen schools (including Kingsway College) operate in Ontario.

<sup>7</sup>Schools opened in Findlater and Macrorie in the 1920's and in Regina and Brockington in the 1930's. In the next decade schools appeared in Saskatoon and Moose Jaw. Others have opened, closed, and sometimes reopened in: Yorkton, Rosthern, Rabbit Lake, Battleford, and Quill Lake.

<sup>8</sup>Other Saskatchewan church schools included: Findlater (1926); Macrorie (1927); Moose Jaw (1949); and Saskatoon (1947). Today seven schools serve Saskatchewan. After many fluctuations of fortune, today seven schools are in operation.

<sup>9</sup>St. John, New Brunswick, did not have a school again until 1946.

<sup>10</sup>Other Maritime schools: Dickie Mountain, NB (operated by Mrs. Martin Kierstead in her home for forty years—with no salary); Halifax, NS (1927, Sandy Lake Academy). Other early schools opened in Carlingford, Moncton, and North Sydney. Today the Maritime Conference has eight schools.

<sup>11</sup>The Stettler School (taught by Mrs. T. E. Bowett) remained open for only three years. Peoria had the first Adventist school in the Peace River district (1934). Other early Alberta schools opened in Belloy, Rocky Mountain House, and Edmonton. Today the Alberta Conference operates eleven elementary and secondary schools.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>13</sup>Interviews with James and Marvin Astleford, July, 1991.

<sup>14</sup>Montieth, 184.

<sup>15</sup>Interviews, Astleford.

<sup>16</sup>*S.D.A. Encyclopedia*, 165. Lorna Waterman recalls that John Hober, her grandfather, was the one who gave the community its name. The Firvale church was disbanded in 1930.

<sup>17</sup>Montieth, 184.

<sup>18</sup>Even after the school was closed and the prop-

erty purchased by Crown Zellerbach, this area was used as a community playground for many years.

<sup>19</sup>Interview with Lorna Waterman, July, 1991.

<sup>20</sup>Montieth, 184.

<sup>21</sup>Montieth, 184. Grandview was the fourth school begun in the first decade of the conference's existence. (S.D.A. *Encyclopedia*, 166.)

<sup>22</sup>Other British Columbia schools: Grandview Flats (1914, classes taught entirely in German); Sydney (1922, in connection with Rest Haven Hospital). Also beginnings in Victoria, White Rock, Silber Creek, Langley and Creston. Today British Columbia has more schools than any other Canadian Conference: twenty-five elementary and secondary schools and about ninety teachers, as well as four self-supporting schools.

<sup>23</sup>Information for this section was taken from: M. Coolen, "History of Kingsway College"; J. Ernest Monteith, *The Lord is My Shepherd; The Eastern Canadian Messenger*; Robert Obradovic, "Adventist Colleges in Canada, 1916-1982".

<sup>24</sup>In 1920 the name "Seminary" was dropped and the school was renamed "Oshawa Missionary College."

<sup>25</sup>Although young Canadian Adventists had been attending Battle Creek College in Michigan, many of them did not return to Canada. The church could not afford this loss.

<sup>26</sup>The first graduate from the Normal Department finished in 1914, with two more graduating the following year. Two additional college programs were inaugurated during the 1918-1919 academic year: The Literary Course and a Ministerial and Bible Training Course. In 1920 a pre-medical curriculum and a commerce program were added.

<sup>27</sup>Information for this section was taken from: J. R. Bowett, "A History of Canadian Union College"; D. E. Tinkler, "Canadian Union College Through the Years"; Lawrence E. Smart, "A Brief History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Schools in the Dominion of Canada"; *Adventist Colleges in Canada: 1916-1982*; and *Edmonton News-Bulletin*, February 17, 1951.

<sup>28</sup>The school had several living rooms upstairs. Downstairs was a kitchen and two classrooms, which also served as chapel and dining room.

<sup>29</sup>*Review & Herald*, August 13, 1908.

<sup>30</sup>*Northern Union Reaper*, October 30, 1906.

<sup>31</sup>The women of the Leduc S.D.A. Church provided 150 loaves of bread, plus large quantities of cookies, pies, cakes and baked beans. Since these items quickly froze, they could be preserved until needed.

<sup>32</sup>*Review & Herald*, March 4, 1909.

<sup>33</sup>*Review & Herald*, September 2, 1909.



In 1913, a large group of Seventh-day Adventist believers attended the campmeeting held at Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada, (near Vancouver).

# Living the Gospel, Canada East and Canada West: (Personal Sketches of Two Pioneer Families)

## I. We Remember "Nannie" Moyst

By Dorothy Minchin-Comm

**W**hile a number of the Newfoundland pioneers could be sketched, perhaps the story of "Nannie Moyst" will serve as a memorial to *all* of those who solidly laid, upon their rocky island and along the eastern seaboard, the foundation of early Adventism. Born into a devout Anglican home in Burgeo, she was christened Amelia Ford and was the youngest of twelve children. Her father owned a schooner and her mother was "an English lady from the Channel Islands" (also the daughter of a sea captain). She had a typical outport upbringing, never out of sight of her heritage, the sea.

At eighteen, while living in Port-aux-Basques, she married a seaman from St. John's, Thomas Moyst. He was an engineer with the Newfoundland Railways Steamship Division. An ardent subscriber to the belief that "idle hands are the devil's workshop," she convinced her 10 children, 20 grandchildren and 32 great-grandchildren that



the devil should have no inroads around where *she* lived. To friends and family she was "Minnie," and her grandchildren called her "Nannie"—and both titles became community property. She kept a kitchen garden, raised hens, goats, pigs and sheep—shearing and butchering, as the case demanded. Moreover, she knitted, sewed and mended ceaselessly. Anyone sick always sent for Aunt Minnie, and once she arrived she took

charge and everyone felt better.

On one occasion, when she was but a girl of sixteen, a schooner put in to Port-aux-Basques. The captain was agonizing with a violent toothache and was much chagrined to find that the town had neither dentist nor doctor. He couldn't bear the pain of waiting another day to cross over to Sidney, Nova Scotia. So, when someone suggested, "Why don't you go see Minnie Ford?" he went. The great burly sea captain was chagrined to be seated in the presence of a snappy little teen-

ager, barely five feet tall. But he waited while she sterilized her father's best pliers and then pulled the tooth. "Hardly felt a thing," he told everyone he met. "She's as good as any doctor!"

After a time in Placentia, Tom Moyst was transferred to St. John's—a city which none of the family could really love. For the first few months the irrepressible Minnie was bedridden with rheumatic fever. Despite her slow recovery, when she heard of the opening of Grace Hospital (Newfoundland's first maternity facility) on LeMarchant Road, she enrolled in the first three-month class for midwives which they offered. Her teenaged daughter, Violet, managed the house while mother attended classes and worked on the maternity ward twelve hours a day. (Along with all her other work, Minnie, as the "Newfie" saying goes, *borned* more than 300 babies.)

In 1919 a life-changing event occurred. A large tent was pitched in the next-door meadow,

called "The Nun's Field." Out of curiosity the whole family went to the first evangelistic meeting. Her husband was away on a voyage when Minnie and her daughter Violet decided to be baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist church. When she



**Opposite page: Left:** Amelia Ford-Moyst (1882-1982), the daughter of a sea captain, may serve as an exemplar of all the pioneers who solidly laid, upon their rocky island of Newfoundland, the foundations of early Adventism. **Right:** Thomas F. Moyst, the husband of Amelia Moyst, was 2nd Engineer of the S. S. Caribou, a ferry on the gulf run between Port-aux-Basques, Newfoundland, and Sydney, Nova Scotia. He served the Newfoundland Railway Steamship Company from 1923-1942. He and all of his shipmates died on October 14, 1942, when their ship was sunk by an enemy submarine.

**Above:** Affectionately known as "Nannie" Moyst, Amelia lived to be almost 100 years old. In later years she lived in Port-aux-Basques, but after the death of her husband she moved to Corner Brook with her daughter Mabel Moyst-Dingwell and son Ralph. **Below:** Graduation day for the midwifery class in St. John's, Newfoundland, with the instructor seated center front. Barely five feet tall, energetic and practical Minnie Moyst stands at the right in the back row.

wrote to him about the matter, he shot back a sharp warning that he would leave her if she abandoned the Church of England. Patiently she replied, "If it be God's will that the Sabbath should come between you and me, then I must not let our parting stop me from obeying God."

Within days, his repentant reply came, "I didn't mean what I said. I couldn't bear to lose you and the children. Min, do whatever the Lord tells you to do."<sup>1</sup>

So now the Moyst family went to the Cookstown Seventh-day Adventist church and Minnie's seven surviving children went to school on Freshwater Road. In 1923 Tom Moyst was transferred to the Gulf Ferry run between Sidney and Port-aux-Basque—a boat link between the railway in Nova Scotia and the desperately slow, narrow gauge railway in Newfoundland—with a train (known as the "Newfie Bullet") which was wont to get snowbound in the middle of the island and which, passengers testified, ran on square wheels.

Back among family and friends, the Moysts were happy, except for the fact that they were the only Seventh-day Adventists on the west coast. They held church services in their own living room. They rejoiced whenever a travelling minister or church member passed through en route to "Canada,"<sup>2</sup> but in the main Minnie Moyst presided. The older children loved to meet the train and escort the visitors home while they awaited the departure of the ferry.

Tragedy struck on October 14, 1942—on what was to have been Tom Moyst's last trip before retirement. He had volunteered for more service in order to help out in the war effort. Tom's ship,

The *Caribou*, had been carrying American and Canadian servicemen and women to the military bases in Newfoundland and was, therefore, fair game for enemy action. (Ships were going down constantly in the surrounding Atlantic.) Tom Moyst, along with the rest of the crew, lived perilously, day and night, in anticipation of being victims to the enemy submarines. He was on duty in the engine room when the German torpedo hit his ship. Two days later his body was found floating in the Gulf.<sup>3</sup>

After that Minnie didn't want to return to Port-aux-Basques, so she and her bachelor son, Ralph, made a new home in the paper town of Corner Brook. Now usually called Nannie Moyst, she became the unofficial leader of the tiny Adventist church, which convened in the one-room school house (built in 1937 at 9 Carmen Avenue).<sup>4</sup>

In her latter years, when the church grew and there were other hands to share the work, Nannie Moyst continued to knit and crochet to raise her money for Sabbath School Investment.<sup>5</sup> Still, ministers, teachers and members of all ages deferred to her wisdom and counsel.<sup>6</sup>

## II. Old Fashioned Adventism: The Gimbel Family

By Dorothy Minchin-Comm  
and Hervey Gimbel

**W**hile the basics of doctrine run as a common denominator to Adventism around the world, cultural differences have always produced a wonderful mosaic of the experience. In Canada, for instance, take rural Alberta. If you had walked into the church near Beiseker as late as the 1940's, you would still have found much of the old-world mind-set. Indeed, where else could you have re-captured more of ethnic German worship than here in the prairie-flat wheat country of southern Alberta.

What were the components of the bedrock faith to be found in the little country churches in the Canadian and American mid-west? First, the warm, dry air around the centrally placed pot-bellied stove would ring with the lively singing of old German hymns from the *Zions Lieder*—and no



one was at liberty to skip any of the numerous stanzas. The members studied their Sabbath School lessons seven times a week and put in hours of “Christian Help Work” (the reporting of which was duly entered into the appropriate records). Earnest testimonies mileposted the path of each member’s Christian experience. And, amid tears, men and women put all their wrongs right before partaking of communion service. Besides, people actually went to mid-week prayer meeting, in either blizzard or *chinook*, as the case might be. The farmers made camp meeting an annual “vacation” event. There they thrilled to the stories of visiting ministers and missionaries and gave, with incredible generosity, to projects in distant lands which they would never see.

The founding of the Rosebud church truly exemplifies Adventist pioneering in Alberta. A number of families<sup>7</sup> living in North Dakota were already Sabbathkeepers when they decided to take up land in southern Alberta—a place of which they’d heard good reports. Loading their machinery, livestock and household effects into a train of freight cars, they headed west. From Crossfield, the station nearest their land, they unloaded and headed off overland, through roadless country. But the season overtook them, and they spent their first Canadian winter in tents. Amazingly, no one sickened or died.<sup>8</sup>

Jake Gimbel was among the children of those pioneers of the new, raw country of the “Level Land” community, ten miles east of the town of Beiseker. Jake had arrived in Canada with his

parents, Jacob and Maria Gimbel from North Dakota in 1909.<sup>9</sup> When he was twenty-two years old, his parents moved to the Bridgeland district of Calgary. After twelve years of homesteading, they felt (very properly) entitled to some of the amenities of city living and retired to a home in Calgary.

While Jake made a pretty self-sufficient bachelor, he still appreciated his sister Bertha’s coming out once in a while to treat him to some home-cooking. Not being at all committed to the single life, however, his mind kept running back to a girl he’d met at camp meeting in Lacombe. But she was Swedish, not German. Worse still, she lived near Wetaskwin, all of 150 miles away. Nonetheless, his eye would often follow the two-rut wagon trail from Carbon that cut across the Tetz land and the Gimbel land. Then it straggled through great stretches of prairie wool, thousands of years old, and stumbled on to Calgary. He would gaze, dream, and want to journey forth. The length of the trip and the demands of farm chores, however, kept him at home.

The daughter of a preacher recently moved to Alberta<sup>10</sup> from Nebraska, Ruth Johnson was used to city life—street cars, indoor bathrooms, trees and . . . well, “civilization.” After she finished normal school in Edmonton, she was appointed to complete the unfinished school year in the Advent Public School, eight miles east of Beiseker. The vast snow-covered expanse of prairie didn’t compare very favorably with her home in the parkland of Alberta,. She could only be grateful that the assignment was temporary. “I hope I never have to live in a place like this!” Even though her sister Dorothy had taught in the same district and had stayed to marry Jake Gimbel’s cousin, Dave Kindopp, Ruth felt sure that her time would be only temporary.

But Providence had made other provisions for her. As the local school teacher, she boarded at the home of Rosie and Fred Braunberger. Jake now began making surprisingly frequent visits to



**Above:** Jacob (“Jake”) Gimbel and Ruth Johnson at the time of their engagement (1923).

**Opposite Page:** *Left:* Jake and Ruth with their teenagers. Family pictures with the family car used to be very significant. *Standing (L-R):* Jake, Ruth, Naida, Glenda, Courtney, Elaine. *Front (L-R):* Hervey and Howard. **Right:** Jake Gimbel operating his side-delivery power rake to windrow hay on his farm near Beiseker, Alberta.

the home of Rosie, who was his older sister. By the time Ruth went home for the summer, he'd acquired a Model-T Ford roadster for just \$125. Now Jake could pursue his case in earnest. On his first visit to the Johnson farm, he found Ruth carrying two heavy buckets of water in from the well. Her mother had always told her, "Don't marry a farmer. You'll have to work too hard." But, since Ruth was *already* working hard, Jake saw no reason for giving up his quest.

Happily Ruth returned to the Advent Public School in September. Jake's courtship had progressed well enough so that he didn't have to resort to the methods of his friend, Emil Gramms. The latter, in pursuit of another schoolteacher, had saved his fencing tasks along the road for times when he knew she would be walking by. (An occasionally inconvenient device, but it worked.)

Sometimes Jake took Ruth out on horseback-riding dates. The next spring Jake and Ruth one day galloped the ponies, Billie and Longshanks, into a grove of trees in a field. In that secluded spot Jake gathered enough courage to propose. Then, on a blistering summer day, July 2, 1924, Jake and Ruth celebrated their small family wedding in Father and Mother Gimbel's house in Calgary. Chicken noodle soup for the reception and then away to the city's St. George's Island Park for the honeymoon. Three hours later, wilted in the heat, they bumped down the trail back to Beiseker and to the making of their new home. Already they knew that they wanted to make it a training ground for Heaven.

No Beiseker housewife, of course, could be ignorant of the fine points of German cuisine, so Ruth very quickly learned how to make *dumfnoodles*, *strudel*, *kuchen*, and *kass knepfle*. Life prospered for the young couple with two babies in the first two years, Averil Kay and Hervey. After buying the car, a piano, most importantly, came next. (That piano was to become a focal point for all the music education in the community—the Gimbel kids as well as many other children. Friday nights the male quartet gathered at the piano too.) Next came a dining room set, a mohair sofa and two arm chairs. All furnishings, however, kept to a frugal minimum for Jake and Ruth had placed their priorities elsewhere.

While in California attending to the medical needs of their baby boy, the Gimbels' two-and-a-half year-old Averil died of spinal meningitis. Heartbroken, Jake and Ruth left their little one in Babyland, at Forest Lawn Cemetery, Glendale, and headed back to Alberta. Then, before they could reach home, they learned that Ruth's youngest sister, Blanche (in nurses training), had also died of meningitis in San Diego.

Back in their familiar Rosebud church (named for nearby Rosebud Creek), Ruth and Jake sat on Sabbaths between two comforting mottos and were comforted. On the west wall: "The Love of Christ Constraineth Us," and, on the east: "The Lord is my Shepherd." The rest of the week, they fought to wrest a living from the land—a struggle which escalated with the Great Depression of 1929, followed by the drought years of the "Dirty 30's." Dust storms roiled through the brazen sky and blotted out the sun, while dry winds whisked away the precious topsoil and deposited it in the next township. Some people began to drift along with the tumbleweeds that blew into the fences. Farm sales and auctions increased, as the doubters, in despair, migrated to British Columbia and California.

Still, believing that things couldn't get worse—only better—Jake and Ruth Gimbel hung on. One



year, in the dead of winter, they even scraped together enough money to drive into Calgary and hear the violinist Fritz Kreisler play a concert. Things like that helped. And in good times at the dairy in Acme, a five-gallon can of cream brought a four-dollar check. Eventually, "Model Dairies" in Calgary brought a small economic boom to the Level Land District. So Jake could ship milk into the city, and that was the beginning of brighter days. The 1925 Chev was fifteen years old, however, before he could afford to trade it in on a newer used car.

Neighborly visits shortened the long winters, and even in the worst years, the Beiseker farmers found ways to have a good time. The neighbors met almost every Saturday night in winter in one house or another. Weatherbeaten men joined the games, pinning the tail on the donkey, stuffing pillows back into their cases, playing anagrams, telling stories and—above all—eating ice-cream which, with all natural ingredients, spared no calories. They made it by the gallon in several home freezers, and the women served it up in great man-sized soup bowls.

One evening Henry and Alice Stern brought their twins to the Gimbels' house. Jake having just finished the separating, a five-gallon pail of skim milk stood in the kitchen. One of the look-alike kids backed into the bucket and sank up to his ears in milk. In typical Germanic dialogue, the parents

disagreed over which child had created the milk-lake rapidly spreading over the floor.

Surveying his offspring, Henry said, "That's Allen, not?"

"No, it's Alois," Alice snapped, mop in hand.

"Don't you even know your own kids apart?" Henry pontificated.

"Ach!" Alice looked aggrieved. "It's you that don't know the difference!"

Farm kitchens have always been the heartbeat of country communities. Unless she were careful, a housewife might be rebuked for buying Watkins vanilla instead of cow salve. Those conversations today would not be reproducible. Committed to a spotless floor, Mother fought an endless battle with her man and the hired hands. "What's that smell? Jake, you got a big pile of manure on your boot! *Ishta!* Get it out of here!"

One day Ruth handed Jake an old Eaton's catalog. "Take this to the backhouse when you go. We got a new one this afternoon."

Jake smiled. "Know what the hired man said today when I teased him about not having a wife? He just grinned and said, 'I think I'll order one of dem girls in the Eaton's catalog. They're only \$7.95.'"

Being an essentially Adventist community, both secular and religious life centered on the church. As the children came along, everyone realized that better Sabbath School rooms were needed. Only a dozen kids could fit into each of the cloak rooms under the stairs. In the winter, the children almost vanished un-



*The Gimbels' 65th wedding anniversary (1989). They know now how rich they have become—both in themselves and in their six children: Seated (L-R): Jacob Gimbel (Beiseker farmer, church elder and treasurer) and Ruth Gimbel (school teacher, pianist and organist) Standing (L-R): Howard, M.D. (Ophthalmologist, Director of the Gimble Eye Center, Calgary); Courtney (retired from family farm to become a marketing representative at the Gimble Eye Center); Glenda (married to Donald Schafer, M.D., pathologist in Portland, ORE); Naida (married to Bill Oliver, a builder in Kelowna, BC); Elaine (married to Elder Daniel Skoretz, pastor in Hemet, CA); and Hervey, M.D. (Preventive Medicine, Redlands, CA).*

**Opposite Page:** Jake and Ruth Gimbel, retirement in Calgary.

der the bulk of the buffalo robes off the sleighs and the bear skin coats. Jake and Ruth also agitated for classes in *English*, as a means of getting in touch with the young Canada which was growing up around them.

The winter weather, however, could cause more inconvenience than just the matter of the provisions for the children's Sabbath School. Aunt Florence Openshaw can remember the day at the Rosebud church when she was baptized by Elder J. J. Reiswig in March, 1926. The minister cut a hole in the foot-thick ice, just big enough for the two of them to get in. (And afterwards there was no tent or shelter for changing into dry clothes.) When asked why she couldn't wait until at least June, she replied, "When my mind is made up that's it."<sup>11</sup>

When it came to education, Jake and Ruth spared no effort. In 1941 they began the eighteen-year-long marathon of paying tuition and dormitory expenses for their six children. First, came Canadian Union College (Lacombe, Alberta), followed by Walla Walla College, (Washington)—and, for some, Loma Linda University (California). Had they chosen other priorities, the Gimbels could by now have enjoyed quite a comfortable standard of living. But Jake and Ruth had set their sights on the Kingdom far too long for that. In 1967 they retired to the "Cromwell Hotel" (the name familiarly given to their house on Cromwell Avenue in Calgary). That's where the door forever stood open, where another potato could always be added to the soup and where a stranger from church or a utility man on the street had an equal chance of being invited home to lunch.

In the 1950's the college graduations began, followed by the weddings. Shortly after, came the grandchildren—great flocks of them. By the 1970's a new crop of Gimbel parents had begun paying tuition bills, providing a Christian education and giving music lessons. They could hardly do otherwise, given the role models they had in Jake and Ruth.

The Seventh-day Adventist church need never apologize for its little frontier churches. The sturdy, single-minded, and determined pioneers kept their faith the same way they kept their land—with love and hope, sacrifice and courage.



## Sources

<sup>1</sup>For a more complete account of the conversion of Minnie Moyst, see Ray A. Matthews, "Woman Preacher," in *Gospel Anchors Aweigh: Adventist Beginnings in Newfoundland* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assoc., 1980, 81-87.

<sup>2</sup>Newfoundland joined the Confederation of Canada as the tenth province in 1949.

<sup>3</sup>See H. Thornhill, *The Tragic Sinking of the S. S. Caribou*, and *It Happened in October* (1945).

<sup>4</sup>The little church had been kept alive mainly by a series of school teachers, beginning with Gerald Dolan and then by Elder L. A. Astleford. When Walter O. and Dorothy Minchin-Comm served their ministerial internship in the Corner Brook pastorate (1951-1952), Nannie Moyst was, as she always had been, a great comfort to all the young arrivals. A new church building was put up in Corner Brook during the pastoral tenure of Frank and Caroline Knutson, in the mid-1950's.

<sup>5</sup>In 1976, with the help of her daughter Mabel (Dingwell) and her daughter-in-law Violet (Moyst), Nannie Moyst made \$500 for Investment. The three women knitted cushion covers and slippers and other beautiful pieces of craftwork—as well as dressing dolls for gifts.

<sup>6</sup>Adapted from George Morgan (grandson of Minnie Moyst), "Nannie Moyst," in Kennedy, 31-35.

<sup>7</sup>Among the emigrant families to Alberta were the Kindopps, Humanns, Gimbels, Tetzts, Roths, Leiskes, Bechtholds, Treibwassers, and others.

<sup>8</sup>Adam Roth, "Gold Wedding," Beiseker, Alberta, June 30, 1955. (Letter and article are now in the Heritage Room, Andrews University) Cited in J. W., Monteith, *The Lord is my Shepherd*. (College Heights, AB: Canadian Union Conference, 1983), 105.

<sup>9</sup>In 1887-88 the Gimbels, along with other German families from Odessa, Russia, emigrated to mid-America, settling in Kansas and the Dakotas.

<sup>10</sup>Ruth's father, Fred Johnson, a Swede, first worked among the Scandinavian communities east of the Calgary-Edmonton Trail. Perhaps no other Canadian province had more strongly delineated ethnic lines than did the church in Alberta—differences which persisted until relatively recent times.

<sup>11</sup>Aileen Albersworth, ed., *A Light in the Peace*. (Grande Prairie: Menzies Printers, 1980), 33.

# Contributors

**RUTH BODRUG**, after thirty years of teaching in church schools in Saskatchewan, has returned to the classroom. She and her husband, who farms at Macrorie, Saskatchewan, have two children.

**DENNIS H. BRAUN**, pastors the churches in Ponoka and Wetaskiwin. He holds an M. Div. from Andrews University and has almost finished the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry at the same institution. He has pastored in Alberta since 1975.

**GEORGE DRONEN** is currently the Publishing Director of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada. He came to Canada from similar work in the Lake Union Michigan. He has been involved in publishing ever since he became an Adventist in 1964. Prior to that, he worked in communications with the Great Northern Railroad and in the U.S. Navy.

**DENIS FORTIN** is pastor of the Quebec City Seventh-day Adventist Church and is currently working on a doctorate in Adventist history at Laval University in Quebec City.

**HERVEY GIMBEL**, a physician, and his wife Anne have lived in Redlands California for the past ten years. Previously he practiced medicine in Calgary, Alberta, for twenty-five years. A specialist in preventive and occupational medicine, he has recently served as a health consultant to the government in China.

**ELSWORTH HETKE** is presently Director of Personnel and Student Employment at Southern College, TN. His mission service in India ranged from hospital chaplain to editor at the Watchman Press, from mission president to secretary of the Southern Asia Division. He is married to Eleanor Brady of Walla Walla, WA.

**DOROTHY EATON-WATTS**, a free-lance writer living in Abbotsford, British Columbia, is the author of seven books. Until June, 1990, she was Communications Director of the Alaska Conference. She has also been an editor of *Mission*, *Cornerstone*, *Connections* and the *South*

*India Union Observer*. Other positions have included teaching, principalship and orphanage director.

**DOUGLAS HOSKING** teaches Grades 2 to 8 in the Seventh-day Adventist school in St. George, New Brunswick. He has also served as the Educational Superintendent for the Maritime Conference.

**DOROTHY MINCHIN-COMM** is Professor of English at La Sierra University (formerly the La Sierra Campus of Loma Linda University), where she teaches 18th-century English literature and creative writing. She is currently editor of *Adventist Heritage*

**TRUDY MORGAN** teaches English at Parkview Adventist Academy, Alberta. She came from St. John's, Newfoundland, and is working on a Masters in English at Memorial University. Her third book will be published in the spring of 1992, *The Man of Lancer Avenue*.

**FERN PENSTOCK** and her husband, Floyd, spent ten years of service in the Adventist schools in Newfoundland, followed by service in the British Columbia Conference, the Far East, and Southern California. At present they are serving as missionaries to The Gambia, West Africa.

**JACK THORPE** was born in Penticton, British Columbia, in 1915. He and his wife have lived in the Okanagan area most of their lives and raised a family of five children there. An active layman, he has served as chairman of the Okanagan Academy Board and as a member of the British Columbia Conference executive Committee for ten years.

**MYRNA JOHNSON-TETZ** is Vice-President for Advancement at Canadian Union College, Alberta. She previously served as Communications and Health Director for the British Columbia Conference. For this issue of *Adventist Heritage* she has gathered in the articles and written our guest editorial.

