

Register of the
William Miller Collection
Collection 25

Adventist Heritage Center
James White Library
Andrews University
Berrien Springs, Michigan
April 2002

William Miller Collection

(Collection 25)

Scope and Content

William Miller (1782-1849) was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and grew up in Low Hampton, northern New York. After his marriage to Lucy P. Smith in 1803, Miller moved to Poultney, Vermont. Here he abandoned his Christian beliefs and became a Deist. During the War of 1812 Miller served as a lieutenant and then captain. In the face of violence and death, he began to reevaluate his life and its meaning.

After the war he went back to the Bible and started studying it verse by verse which soon led to his re-conversion to Christianity. As a result of his studies, especially the prophecies of the book of Daniel, Miller concluded that Christ would return to Earth in "about 1843." Miller's message was electrifying. Many people accepted his views of the immanent return of Christ, and thus there appeared a movement popularly known as Millerism or Millerites.

Since Christ did not come as expected, the Millerite Movement fragmented into several small groups after the October 22, 1844, "Great Disappointment." Among those groups was the Sabbatarian group which later became the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This is why the Seventh-day Adventists see their immediate roots in Millerism.

The present collection contains several personal items, documents, letters and writings of William Miller. In addition, there is a compilation of written articles about Miller and the Millerite movement.

The researcher should bear in mind the presence of a large body of material available on microfilm which relates to William Miller and the Millerite Movement. The microfilm collection, *The Millerites and Early Adventist*, is available in the Adventist Heritage Center as well as numerous other libraries. The Center also holds a large amount of original documents from the Millerite and post-Millerite period. These two bodies of materials are not specifically a part of this William Miller Collection.

Arrangement

The collection came from more than one source and lacked an organic unity. Therefore its arrangement was imposed by the Adventist Heritage Center. The first part contains some of Miller's original personal documents. The second part has correspondences. Most of the letters are photocopies. There are, however, a couple of original letters written by Miller. The third part consists of writings by Miller and materials

written about him by others. Part four contains some of Miller's personal belongings plus those of some close relatives. Several miscellaneous items are placed at the end of the collection.

Provenance

This collection was received in 1983 by the Andrews University Adventist Heritage Center. This followed a long series of correspondence between Seventh-day Adventist Church representatives, including LeRoy E. Froom, and descendants of William Miller. The following individuals donated items in this collection:

William Peck Humphrey
Elizabeth Humphrey Lyday
William Earl Wright
George T. Wright (Mrs.)
Ruth Wright Williams

Use

All users of this collection will complete the "Application to Use Unpublished Record," and observe the regulations specified in the "Patron's Agreement" and "Researcher's Code of Conduct." All records in this collection are open and available for research. Citation for this collection:

Box ____, fld ____, William Miller Collection (Collection 25), Adventist Heritage Center, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

William Miller Collection (Collection 25)

Inventory:

Box1 Fld1 Correspondence regarding acquisition of items for the present collection, 1903-1983.

I. Personal Documents

William Miller's Diaries

Box1 Fld2 William Miller Diaries, 1798-1803. Photocopies received from Vermont Historical Society. Bound in one volume.

William Miller's Public Service Record (military and civil document), 1812-1825. Photocopies received from Vermont Historical Society.

Box1 Fld3 1812-13

Box1 Fld4 1814

Box1 Fld5 1815-1816

Box1 Fld6 1817-1825, plus several records without dates.

Box1 Fld7 Certificates of William Miller, (Photocopies received from the collections of Vermont Historical Society).

Elected as Lieutenant, Jul. 21, 1810.

Elected as Captain, Nov. 7, 1812.

Elected as Justice of the Peace, Mar. 10, 1821.

Legal Documents (Original and photocopies)

Box1 Fld8 Originals (Use photocopies in Box1 Fld9)

Tax Certificate, May 1, 1809.

Deed, 1835 (selling land go their son - William S. Miller).

Death Certificate of Paulina Miller, mother of William Miller, Jul. 25, 1835.

Box1 Fld9 Photocopies of the above original legal documents.

II. Correspondence (letters to and from Miller). The letters are chronologically arranged (1806-1847).

Original letters (Use photocopies in Box1 Fld11)

Box1 Fld10 William Miller to Mr. Adam K. Miller, Dec. 13, 1806.

William Miller and family to George W. Miller, Feb. 27-Mar. 7, 1837, (Letter written over weeks time by different people).

Box1 Fld11 Photocopies of the above original letters.

Photocopies of letters (originals not in the collection)

Box1 Fld12 William S. Miller to William Miller, Jan. 18, 1839
Joshua Litch to William Miller, Oct. 24, 1844
T. Greer Clayton to William Miller, Oct 26, 1844
G. F. Cox to William Miller, J. Litch and J. V. Himes, Nov. 7, 1844
J. E. Jones to William Miller, Nov. 23, 1844
N. Hervey to William Miller, Nov. 28, 1844
S. Fenton to William Miller, Dec. 10, 1844
Joseph Turner to William Miller, Jan. 20, 1844
Joseph Turner to William Miller, Feb. 7, 1845
I. E. Jones to William Miller, Feb. 15, 1845
E. C. Clemons to William Miller, Feb. 17, 1845
I. H. Shipman to William S. Miller (son of William Miller), Feb. 28, 1845
William Miller to Joshua V. Himes, Nov. 15, 1845
William Miller to Bro. Stone, Dec. 17, 1845 (copy of this letter can be found in *Review and Herald*, Jul. 15, 1880).
Otis Nichol to William Miller, Apr. 20, 1846
O. R. L. Crosier to William Miller, Sep. 20, 1847

Note: For a full collection of the correspondence of William Miller see the microfilm collection: *The Millerites and Early Adventists* (Heritage Microfilm 2, Section 5, reels 11, 12). This contains about 800 items.

III. Writings

By Miller

Box1 Fld13 *William Miller's Apology and Defence* (Boston: J. V. Himes, 1845).

Box1 Fld14 Miller's Manuscript Notes for Lecture on Revelation 6:17.

Miller's Manuscript Notes for Lecture on Daniel 10:14.

A facsimile of the original 1843 chart is included.

"Lines" - a short poem written after the death of Eliza (Martin), wife of Elder Martin.

By Others

Box1 Fld15 Newspaper clippings, 1930-1975. (Articles about Miller and Millerite movement).

Box1 Fld16 A brief summary of William Miller's life adapted from the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*.

Howthorne, Julian. "Half-Forgotten Events of the Past Century," *The Booklovers Magazine*, n.d. (Copy from the Vermont Historical Society), (508-513).

Dick, Everett. "Behold, He Cometh' The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of the Advent Message in America," *Review and Herald*, Nov. 12, 1931, (4-5). This is the first of a series of articles written by Everett Dick discussing the events of the 1844 period. The subsequent articles are to be found in: *Review and Herald*, Nov. 19, 1931, (7-8); Nov. 26, 1931 (4-5); Dec. 3, 1931, (7-8); Dec. 10, 1931, (7-8); Dec. 17, 1931, (7-8); Dec. 24, 1931, (6-7); Dec. 31, 1931, (5-6); Jan. 7, 1932, (6).

Time Magazine, Dec. 31, 1956. See section on "Religion" (48-49).

Box1Fld17 Larrabee, Harold A. "The Trumpeter of Doomsday," *American Heritage*, April, 1964, (35-37, 95-100).

Box1 Fld18 Patzer, A. J. "William Miller Chapel: Annual Meeting," *Review and Herald*, Nov. 8, 1973, (1, 18).

Gale, Robert. *The Urgent Voice: The Story of William Miller*. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1975, (157-158).

Only the appendix of the book is in this folder. It gives important dates and events in William Miller's life. The whole book can be found in the Andrews University Library at: BX 6193 .M5 G35.

Watts, Kit. "SDA Heritage is Studied by Sligo Church Members," *Review and Herald*, Jan. 30, 1975, (16-17).

Holt, Russell. "What Do You Know About Seventh-day Adventists?," *These Times*, Jun. 1975, (2-5). There is a short overview of how the Seventh-day Adventist Church originated (in form of questions and answers).

Maxwell, C. Mervyn. "Preacher of the Advent," part 1, *Review and Herald*, Feb. 11, 1982, (4-5).

_____. "The Legacy of William Miller," part 2, *Review and Herald*, Feb. 18, 1982, (8-9).

Sifakis, Carl. *American Eccentrics*. New York: Facts on File Publications, 1984, (63-66).

"Cult Leader Made a Fortune by Predicting The End of the World," *Limbole*, Feb. 16, 1985, (5?).

Chicago Tribune, Nov. 15, 1987. "Sunday Comics.

Note: For a wide selection of writings related to the Millerite Movement consult the Andrews University, James White Library online catalog at www.andrews.edu/library. See also the microfilm, *The Millerites and Early Adventists* (Heritage microfilm 2).

IV. Artifacts

Personal Articles of William Miller

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| Box2 Fld1 | Eyeglasses (2 pairs)
Sun Glass (magnifying glass)
Pen holder
Pen of William Miller
Pocket watch |
| Box2 Fld2 | Murray, Lindley. <i>Abridgment of Murray's English Grammar</i> . Albany: G. J. Loomis and Co., 1817. |
| Box2 Fld3 | <i>Redemption</i> . Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1836. |

Box2 *The Holy Bible* (Oxford: Samuel Collingwood and Co. At the University Press, 1838). [This is William Miller's preaching Bible. There are a lot of stains along the edge of the pages where one would hold a book by its leading edge while preaching. Most stains occur in the book of Daniel. To accumulate this much stain would require considerable use such as Miller would have done.] *The Bible* was later owned by William M. Peck.
[DO NOT TAKE THIS BOOK FROM THE BOX WITHOUT CURATOR'S AUTHORIZATION.]

Other Articles (Owned by other people)

The Holy Bible. The first pages are missing. The *Bible* bears the name of Charles Miller ?????

The New Testament (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1849).

Box3 *The Holy Bible* (Edinburgh: Sir D. Hunter Blair and M. T. Bruce, 1836). This *Bible* was given to Lucy P. Miller (wife of William Miller) by Joshua V. Himes in 1845. Later Lucy Miller gave the *Bible* to their son George W. Miller.

V. Miscellaneous

- Box3 Fld1 William Miller Genealogies (written by William Peck Humphrey).
- Box3 Fld2 Advertisement poster: "Lectures on the Second Advent, at the North Christian Chapel, in New Bedford, by William Miller." (Mar. 20, 18-).
- Box3 Fld3 Amanda M. Bosworth's Personal Album, Low Hampton, NY. (Miller and other family member plus other Millerites have written autographs in this album).
- Box3 Fld4 Song: "Death in Hope of Heaven." This song was sung at Miller's bedside before his death.
- Box3 Fld5 Sabbath Service bulletin, William Miller Chapel, Low Hampton, NY, Sept. 4, 1982.
- Box3 Fld6 Announcements by "Adventist Historical Properties" regarding the purchase of William Miller property in Low Hampton, NY. Two letters and a picture of William Miller's home included. (Jun. 19, 1984; Jul. 1, 1984).

The End