

3-1-2015

# The Center for Adventist Research at Andrews University

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## Recommended Citation

Burt, Merlin D.; Ford, Jim; and Robertson, Terry Dwain, "The Center for Adventist Research at Andrews University" (2015). *Faculty Publications*. 1.

<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/library-pubs/1>

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## ***The Center for Adventist Research at Andrews University***

### **Abstract**

The Center for Adventist Research (CAR), an Andrews University and General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist organization, seeks to promote an understanding and appreciation of the heritage and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA). It combines the resources of the James White Library's Adventist Heritage Center and the Ellen G. White Estate Branch Office to provide the most extensive collection of Adventist-related resources in the world, both physically and digitally. An introduction to the background, collections, and activities of CAR is presented. Of particular interest are the digitization projects.

### **Introduction**

The Center for Adventist Research (CAR), an Andrews University and General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist organization, seeks to promote an understanding and appreciation of the heritage and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA). It combines the resources of the James White Library's Adventist Heritage Center and the Ellen G. White Estate Branch Office to provide the most extensive collection of Adventist-related resources in the world, both physically and digitally. Located on the lower level of the James White Library at Andrews University and on the Internet at [www.centerforadventistresearch.org](http://www.centerforadventistresearch.org), it is positioned to not only facilitate the education of future SDA church leaders but to also develop academic and professional links with other Adventist heritage rooms and research centers throughout the world. Beyond the mentioned resources, CAR hosts the *Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index* (SDAPI) for the Association of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians (ASDAL), houses the Andrews University Archives and Record Center, serves as rare materials repository for the James White Library, and actively cooperates in the educational program of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and the collection activities of the Seminary library. Recently CAR became the home for the developing Adventist Digital Library which plans to open to the public around January 2016.

### **History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church**

The Seventh-day Adventist denomination began in the aftermath of the American Second Great Awakening and the Millerite movement. William Miller, following Charles Finney's methods, though not his eschatological framework, taught a pre-millennial Second Coming of Jesus that would bring destruction of the earth and a new remade and perfect world. His teaching became sensational in New England because he believed, based on the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, that Jesus would come about the year 1843 or 1844.

After the disappointment of October 22, 1844, many Millerites returned to their prior denominations. But a small, scattered, yet committed group of believers determined to understand their experience, abandoned any form of date setting, and reaffirmed their belief in a literal second coming of Jesus. The core leaders who founded the movement were Joseph Bates and James and Ellen White. Over the next fifteen years, these founders with other leaders met in a number of study conferences, and worked out the core beliefs that are currently held by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In large part, this community building was accomplished through the medium of print publishing, and the early leaders maximized the communication potential of the press to forge this identity. One of the most influential and prolific authors among the early leaders was Ellen G. White. The Ellen G. White Estate continues to preserve and promote her writings for their timely and timeless wisdom.

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As that early publishing ministry continued to expand and new technologies became viable and desirable (e.g., paper manufacture from wood pulp, the steam press), the need for a legal organization that could own and manage property became a practical necessity. The series of actions that achieved this need began with adopting a name and the incorporation of the publishing association in 1860, and culminated in the establishment of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in 1863.

The publishing ministry as a channel of communication expanded rapidly throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, including the launch of regional church magazines, as well as formal book publishing concerns, most notably in the American South and West. The original office in Battle Creek, Michigan, the Review and Herald Publishing Association, developed into a major state-of-the-art printing facility. As the church expanded outside the United States, one of the first institutions the denomination established in any new area was a publishing house. Many of these continue to serve their constituents today.

CAR endeavors to collect and preserve this publishing history, both as a complete historic archive of the earliest endeavors and also in the present. Included in the holdings are Adventist denominational materials from every part of the world and in many languages.

## History of the Center for Adventist Research

During the 1960s the White Estate Branch Office and the Adventist Heritage Center were set up on the Andrews University campus. The following is a brief outline of the respective histories and the current arrangements.

### The Adventist Heritage Center

The collecting of historical resources began at the college library of Emmanuel Missionary College (forerunner of Andrews University) during the early part of the twentieth century. Through the years diligent librarians added many resources and carefully preserved them, thus building the collection. In 1959-1960, the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary and its library relocated from Washington, D.C., to Berrien Springs, Michigan, and with Emmanuel Missionary College became Andrews University. The Seminary library with its strong collection of SDA-related materials greatly augmented the Heritage Room collection. In 1966 Louise Dederen became the first full-time Curator of the James White Library Heritage Room. By 1991, when Dederen retired, the Heritage Room had grown from 1,000 to over 5,000 square feet in size, and was one of the leading repositories for Adventist resources in the world. From 1991 onward, under the curatorship of Jim Ford, the Adventist Heritage Center continued to add resources and organize the collections.

### The White Estate Branch Office

Established in 1961, the White Estate Branch Office at Andrews University was the first branch office of the Ellen G. White Estate. The Ellen G. White Estate, Inc., is an organization that was formed by Ellen G. White through her will. She named trustees who were responsible for publishing her writings. The organization has grown to include broad responsibility for promoting an appreciation for the historical heritage of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. When the White Estate Branch office at Andrews University was first established, it was intended to be a backup location for vital historical materials. By 1965, due to demand for access to the Ellen White writings by the Seminary students, it served as a functioning office and organized collection to support the training program of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. A complete set of Ellen G. White letters and manuscripts, rich in original copies, and many other important materials were transferred to the Andrews University office and became the core of the collection. In 1982 the White Estate Branch Office was relocated from the Seminary building, where it had resided since 1961, to a much larger location on the lower level of the James White Library, near the Adventist Heritage Center. The holdings grew to include additional primary and secondary sources related to the work and writings of Ellen G. White. Of particular importance was the greatly expanded document file which contains extensive resources.

## The Center for Adventist Research Today

In 2000 the White Estate Branch office and the Adventist Heritage Center were physically integrated in the south end of the first floor of the James White library. This allowed for a more efficient use of space and centralized access to Adventist-related materials. In November 2003, CAR was officially organized through an administrative integration of the two entities under the leadership of Merlin Burt and Jim Ford, as director and associate director, respectively. With an integrated mission the new Center is positioned to be of greater service to scholars, students, and the Church than were the individual entities. The CAR manuscript collections currently exceed some 325 individual collections of varying size and nearly 60,000 books (antiquarian and contemporary) plus thousands of smaller publications, periodicals, microforms, and audio-visuals.

### Online Resources and Services

Since the 1990s CAR has engaged – to one degree or another – in digitization of its collections. First, it was photographs. Then in the middle of first decade of the 21st century, the floodgates seemed to open with audio, Adventist web, periodicals, and paper digitization all starting in fairly close time proximity to each other. Each of these initiatives is continuing, some more quickly than others, but they are still important elements in CAR’s digitization program. More information is available at the CAR website, [www.centerforadventistresearch.org](http://www.centerforadventistresearch.org).

### Digitization at the Center for Adventist Research

In the 21st century with so many people using smartphones and laptop computers, and as more and more places become “connected,” it is “in character” with the denominational founders that the Adventist Church be proactive in this move to a digital environment. One way for the libraries of the church to do this is to take the existing print, photograph, and analog audio collections and digitize them for online access. CAR is arguably one of the most active facilities of its kind within the denomination in terms of doing retrospective digitization in different formats, and this has become a significant part of what is done at CAR. With the beginning of a planned Adventist Digital Library (ADL), two full-time and one half-time staff members and up to five student workers engage exclusively in digitization.

The following statistics indicate what has been digitized and currently made available for public use. However, considerably more is digitized than this since many items still await final processing.

Print in any form, titles .....	2,192
Photographs.....	10,220
Audio recordings.....	2,480
Total .....	14,892

What follows summarizes the accomplishments of each of the digitization component areas.

### Print Collection (2009-)

The Digitization Manager has a well conceived and working system to schedule and track progress in the digitization work flow. Most of the activity in 2013/2014 were in the area of print or paper digitization. The following are the major components of our print or paper digitization efforts.

- Special Collection monographs: digitization of all antiquarian special collection publications stored in the CAR vault is largely done.
- Periodicals: all titles from the Millerite period (1830s-1850s), all SDA titles in English pre-1900, and all of the pre-1946 titles in non-English languages (about 15% complete at the time of the writing).
- Any other books and manuscripts requested by the Ellen G. White Estate. One example is the official correspondence of W. C. White, Ellen G. White’s son and first director of the Estate. It is in preparation for publication in 2015.

### ***Manuscript Collections and Small Documents (2012-)***

The digitization of small documents began in 2009 and continues upon request. These include pamphlets, tracts, organizational reports, curriculum materials, term papers — anything less than 100 pages in length. Most of these small documents are considered unpublished and account for much of the print collections.

CAR has also begun digitizing a few of their manuscript collections in 2012. These are a challenge for digitization in that they require much effort to prepare. They usually have a large number of small items which require considerably more time and effort to digitize compared to a book. Despite the challenge, this year we digitized nine manuscript collections.

### ***Photograph Collection (1998-)***

A good share of CAR's photographs are now available via a separate photograph database, [www.centerforadventistresearch.org/photos](http://www.centerforadventistresearch.org/photos). All together CAR has over 14,000 photographs scanned though not all are yet available online. Work continues on editing the metadata for the photographs that were scanned earliest. The standard of description has matured since these early efforts, so many are not up to current expectations. This updating is essential. There are about 3,000 photographs left in this incomplete metadata group. Current work consists largely of processing photographs from manuscript collections and newly acquired historic images.

### ***Sound Archives (2007-)***

Two thousand audio recordings are available. These include sermons, radio talks, etc. As with the photographs, some of the earliest attempts at sound digitization do not measure up to current practice, so some re-digitizing is underway.

### ***Periodicals (2011-)***

CAR continues to download as many digital issues of SDA periodicals as possible, saving them to an archival server. Current holdings include nearly 400 titles and 24,000 issues or articles. This work is, in part, done in conjunction with the SDAPI. Some of the titles are linked in the Index to the digital copy of the magazine on the server.

This year sixteen full periodical titles from the pre-1900 era were digitized, so they will make a strong contribution to the corpus of historical SDA resources.

## **The Adventist Digital Library**

Concurrent with CAR's growing digitization efforts were the beginnings of the presence of historic SDA materials on the Internet. ASDAL, in 2008, set in motion a working committee to develop a central database of Adventist digital materials. It eventually came to be known as [AdventistResources.org](http://AdventistResources.org). For the next two and one-half years it made some progress toward establishing an online presence. This effort floundered in the fall of 2010 over finances and software issues.

In 2011 the directors of the Ellen G. White Estate, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, and CAR began talking among themselves about setting up a central database to begin providing access to historical Adventist resources for the world church. Over the span of two years they -- along with the General Conference Department of Education director -- were successful in securing funds to begin developing an online SDA library of digitized historical materials. These funds were used for software development, some personnel costs, and to purchase the digitizing machines which are currently located at CAR. This has enabled much of the CAR vault to be digitized as content for the Adventist Digital Library (ADL). Since then, sustainable funding initiatives have been achieved that include additional denominational entities including ASDAL.

Though CAR serves as the home of the ADL, the ADL has separate funding and its own board with representation from all the partners.

## Research at the Center for Adventist Research

Research at Andrews University is taken seriously. Faculty engage in research and publish the results. Students do research as part of the learning process. CAR is an important resource in the universe of SDA related research. As the largest repository of SDA materials it means that on-campus as well as off-campus scholars utilize CAR regularly for their research needs on a wide variety of topics.

In 2014 scholars from across the country, and the world, came to CAR to do research. In September, for example, Brian Strayer's new book<sup>1</sup> on John Loughborough, an early SDA denominational leader, arrived from the press. Much of the research for that work was done at CAR. In October, Renato Stencel from Brazil did research for a book on the 100th anniversary of the SDA college there. As a result of our Internet presence, many requests for access to resources are received from around the world.

In 2014 CAR served nearly 2,500 researchers and provided over 4,000 items for their use. Over 8,000 scans and photocopies were made by researchers and other patrons. CAR also provided about 3,000 pages of digitized documents to meet the research needs of off-campus researchers.

## Unique Collections

As noted above, CAR includes many unique collections. Two notable examples are John N. Andrews and Grace Amadon. J. N. Andrews is the namesake for our University and an early pioneer of our denomination. The collection contains twenty-nine original letters written by Andrews. The collection also documents the connection between the Andrews and the Spicer family, both of them leaders in the church. There is also an extensive collection of letters sent home from Dorothy Spicer-Andrews recounting her life and adventures in the mission field of southwestern China in the 1920s. The family members were pioneer missionaries and their letters are quite insightful about the life they lived.

Grace Amadon was interested in calendars and things related. She collected and wrote widely on the topic of the Biblical calendar and the dating of certain events including the October 22, 1844, Great Disappointment, ancient Jewish calendars (including the Kararite), calendar reform, and Turkey and the trumpets of Revelation. She was a member of the 1939 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist committee looking at the various calendars used by William Miller and his followers to determine the date of Christ's assumed second coming in 1843/1844. This collection is additionally interesting because it is the Center's first attempt at digitizing a larger collection. There is ongoing interest in certain aspects of calendation within the church and some groups outside the church. Digitizing the collection was an effort to provide in-demand resources.

The Center for Adventist Research holds well over 300 manuscript or personal collections. Not all of them are processed and ready for research use. Those that are available may be located via the library catalog, <http://www.andrews.edu/library/index.cgi>, and CAR's web page [<http://www.centerforadventistresearch.org/>].

## Exhibits

The year 2014 was an unusual year for exhibits at CAR. In early January the unthinkable happened. Water flooded one of the exhibit cases that contained important original materials. Over the Christmas holidays, some renovation work was done upstairs in the Library. In the course of jostling the plumbing, a tiny crack developed in a corroded water supply pipe. The insidious results of several weeks of water leaking became obvious when the Bible exhibit was found to have water dripping across the inside of the twenty-foot display case.

All affected items were processed immediately to a deep freezer for preservation. Over the course of the next weeks, five of the most significant Bibles were sent to the Conservation Center in Chicago, one of the top restoration facilities in the country, for professional restoration work. The Bibles impacted are a 10th century Greek codex on vellum; a 1553

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<sup>1</sup> Strayer, Brian Eugene. *J. N. Loughborough: The Last of the Adventist Pioneers* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2014).



Tyndale N.T.; a 1617 3rd edition of the King James Version; an 1840 Douay version; and a fine-art facsimile of the Codex Vaticanus. As of this writing, it will likely be some months before the conservation work is completed.

## Ellen G. White Issues Symposium

The Ellen G. White Issues Symposium, held annually in the spring, is held to present formal papers on topics that provide new understanding of Ellen G. White, her ministry, and writings from a faith perspective. CAR publishes an annual journal containing the presented papers. Attendees include students, pastors, scholars, and community members.

The presentations from the 2014 symposium will be printed in volume ten of the journal. Also planned is an anthology of selected articles from the ten years of symposium journals.

## Selected Services of the Center for Adventist Research

### Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index

CAR serves as the editorial office for the SDAPI. Jim Ford is the Managing Editor with Dan Drazen as Editor. The Index contains over 350,000 citations to articles appearing in about sixty different Adventist magazines from 1974 to the present. This is a service that benefits Adventist researchers around the world. The Index is supported by contributions from the ASDAL member institutions in North America plus the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and the North American Division Office of Education. Dan Drazen indexes the current issues and also retrospectively indexes the *Review and Herald*, the general church paper for the Seventh-day Adventist church. SDAPI includes links to about twenty magazines, enabling users to click to see the full text of the articles. Many of the titles indexed do not have a digital presence so a link is not possible for them.

### Obituary Index Project

CAR coordinates an ongoing obituary index project run in conjunction with ASDAL. Metadata from a select list of Adventist periodicals is added. The index is complete through fall 2013. It is a particularly useful tool for historians and genealogists. A link to the full text of the obituaries is not yet available.

## Conclusion

The Center for Adventist Research, through its collections, is an integral resource in understanding the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Adventist-related denominations and organizations, and historical theological publications related to Seventh-day Adventist doctrines. These collections of books, periodicals, audiovisual items, manuscripts, and photographs serve the Andrews University community and beyond. Through the active and growing digitization projects, CAR will increasingly serve the global community.