Auburn Seventh-day Adventist Church History

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Recommended Citation
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Anniversaries are dates to remember. Woe to the husband who forgets to honor a wedding anniversary! Shame on that brother who overlooks his sister’s birthday! We love to celebrate the highpoints and memories of our lives with appropriate gifts and ceremonies. By doing so, we renew our attachments and commitments to one another and refresh in our minds the circumstances and events which brought us together.

In Joshua 4, God called Israel to observe a very important anniversary with Him. He directed Joshua to have twelve men, one from each tribe, to pry twelve large rocks from the muddy bed of the Jordan River and to heap them into a monument on its banks. By so doing, Israel erected a way-marker in celebration of God’s miraculous parting of the river so that they could pass through on dry ground and conquer Canaan. Then God specifically told His people to remember this anniversary miracle and to celebrate it frequently with their children. That high heap of rocks testified to a very special relationship and a watershed experience between Israel and their God.

The year 2012 marked the fiftieth anniversary for me of a very special relationship between God and me and this church, for it was in June of 1962 that I, then twelve years old, entered the cold waters of Cayuga Lake and committed my life in baptism to Christ and became a member of the Auburn SDA Church. Looking back over this half century, I am conscious of many ways in which God has led me through Red Sea crises and Jordan River troubles, helping me to grow spiritually in response to trials. In gratitude for His leading, and withthankfulness in my heart for the guidance I have received from the Christian Sabbath school teachers and pastors of the Auburn Church from 1950 to 1969, I would like to say “Thank-you” with a very special gift to this church.
That gift is also given in celebration of a much older event marking the 165th anniversary (in 2012) of the first Sabbath-keeping convert in this district in 1847 and especially the printing of the first issue of the paper *The Advent Review* right here in Auburn in the year 1850. I believe God calls the members of the Auburn Church to remember the providences of His divine guidance in your history. We are told in *Life Sketches*, p. 196, that “we have nothing to fear for the future, except as we forget how the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.” But how can you and I forget what we have never known? It is with this promise in mind, and with gratitude for God’s guidance in my life, that I have determined to undertake the mammoth task of writing the complete story of God’s leading in the history of the Auburn Church.

Most of you are familiar with the great Advent Movement of 1844, led by William Miller of Low Hampton, New York, and his intrepid disciples Charles Fitch, Josiah Litch, and Joshua V. Himes and other preachers, including Joseph Bates and Hiram Edson. Believing that Daniel 8:14 predicted the Lord’s imminent return to save His saints and destroy the earth by fire about 1843 or 1844, these men—and several women preachers as well—proclaimed the Midnight Cry message from Maine to Maryland and from Massachusetts to Michigan during 1840-1844.²

At that time, New York State west of Albany was still a backwoods region with heavily forested, rolling farmland and tiny scattered settlements connected by dirt roads or “corduroy” (split-log) highways traversed by stagecoach, horse and buggy, and ox cart. The small town of Auburn, established as Hardenberg Corners in 1793, had only 7000 citizens by 1840. If Auburn lacked the commercial importance of Buffalo and New York City, or the political significance of Albany, nonetheless, its citizens were proud of their new Theological Seminary on Nelson Street. Established in August 1818 by the Geneva Synod of the Presbyterian Church on ten acres of land

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² For a succinct summary of the Millerite movement, see Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf, *Light Bearers* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), chapters 2 and 3.
cleared by Auburn prison convicts, its cornerstone was laid in 1820, and in 1821, at a total cost of $35,000, it opened its doors to theological students, who by 1822 numbered only eleven. But by 1844, as Millerite preachers came through this area, it had grown considerably in numbers (60 students) and influence as the third oldest Presbyterian seminary in America.\(^3\)

While it is not certain that any Millerite preacher spoke in Welch Memorial Hall, these zealous evangelists did occasionally swing through Auburn, traveling on the twenty-year-old Erie Canal from Weedsport to Port Byron. They sowed spiritual seed which took root in Cayuga and Seneca counties despite the Great Disappointment and subsequent public ridicule of all Millerite Adventists when Christ did not come. In September 1845, for example, Mr. H. L. Smith of Auburn wrote to the *Day-Star*, a Millerite Adventist paper, “I pray to be kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, and am feeding on his every word, believing that I must be taught of God.” In those post-1844 days of confusion and divisions among the Adventist groups, Smith asked, “May we not…investigate truth and compare results, and at the same time do it in the love of truth and for the truth’s sake? Without strife, having no desire for vain glory?”\(^4\)

Had Brother Smith’s words been heeded, perhaps the Millerite movement would not have split into four quarreling factions, each competing for converts and press attention along with many other upstate New York reform groups such as the Mormons, Spiritualists, Anti-Slavery and Temperance crusaders, the Whig Party, Anti-Masonic proponents, and John Humphrey Noyes’ “spiritual wifery” in Oneida, to mention only a few of the best-known reform movements in what has been called New York’s “Burned-over District.” One of these four off-shoot Millerite Advent groups rediscovered the seventh-day Sabbath truth, of course, and this band of

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\(^4\) *The Day-Star*, Oct. 11, 1845, p. 50.
Sabbatarians sent James and Ellen White and Joseph Bates throughout the upstate area to preach the Third Angel’s Message in the late 1840s. As these three were traveling the Erie Canal from Port Gibson (Hiram Edson’s home) to New York City for a conference in 1847, they had to transfer at Centerville to a packet boat. Noticing that this packet refused to stop, James picked Ellen up in his arms and jumped safely to the deck of the packet boat. But Bates, with his wallet in one hand and a dollar bill in the other, caught his foot on the side of the packet and fell backwards into the canal! Bobbing to the surface and spitting muddy water, he reached for his hat and lost the dollar bill, but held onto the wallet. Eager hands soon pulled him, sopping wet, into the boat. When they docked at Centerport, the Whites and Bates found refuge with the Harris family to dry and press Joseph’s clothes of many (muddy) colors. But they did something more: While they waited for the next day’s boat, these three led the Harrises in a Bible study on the Sabbath—and this family became the first recorded Sabbath-keeping Adventists in the larger Auburn-Port Byron district. That tiny mustard seed of planted truth would bear fruit a hundred-fold in future decades.

In fact, during the summer of 1850, the Harris family again played host to James and Ellen White for three months. Shortly after James wrote a letter to Leonard Hastings explaining his plan to edit a new paper which he would call The Advent Herald, he and Ellen, with the Edson family, moved from Oswego to Centerport and resided with the Harrises. James contacted Richard Oliphant in Auburn who agreed to print 3000 copies of each issue.

On Tuesday, August 8, 1850, as the Whites with preacher Samuel Rhodes returned the two miles from Port Byron to Centerport with the proofs of that first issue in their hands, James

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and Ellen saw Rhodes off on the Erie Canal line boat and then, with merry hearts, walked up the street to the Harris home. Suddenly, Mrs. Harris, arms waving and face full of panic, burst through the front door and met them coming up the walk. “Your babe [the tiny Edson] is struck with death!” she yelled. Ellen dashed into the house, and sure enough, there lay baby Edson, unconscious, his arms already purple, eyes glassy, with “death dampness” on his brow. “Go, get Bro. Rhodes!” Ellen screamed to James. Hitching horse to wagon, James tore down the towpath in search of the line boat. Rhodes jumped off the boat and hopped into the wagon, and together they dashed back to the Harris home. There Rhodes anointed the unconscious body and all joined in prayer. From that moment, Edson began to recover. “The blessing came,” Ellen wrote, “and I began to hope.”

But those hopes collapsed when, the day before they were to pick up the 3000 copies in Auburn, James doubled over with severe cramps. Ellen prayed over him for two hours; then, placing her hands on his head, she claimed a promise of healing in Christ’s name. “A change came immediately,” she later wrote. “We were all filled with gratitude unspeakable. Never had we witnessed a more remarkable answer to prayer.” Ellen’s sister Sarah, Mrs. Harris, and Clarissa Bonfoey bore witness to this miraculous healing.

Although weak the following day, James hitched up the horse and wagon, and with Ellen by his side, rode the six miles to Auburn, “gain[ing] strength every mile,” and rented a hotel room in town. There they spent all day carting proof sheets of that first issue of August 1850 and checking for printing errors. By closing time that evening, they had their freshly printed 3000

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copies to cart back to Centerport. There they worked all the next day, folding and addressing each copy, a task that gave Ellen a cramp in her shoulder that “did not leave me for years.”

The near death experience of her child Edson, her husband James’ recent cramps, and her own aching shoulder caused Ellen for a short while to doubt God’s love and care, sinking into a deep depression that week. But the next Sabbath, as she gained strength and hope, Clarissa Bonfoey suddenly fell ill. Soon Hiram Edson arrived and, after prayer and the laying on of hands, Clarissa recovered. But then James was attacked with cholera, high fever, severe cramps, and vomiting. He, too, recovered quickly in response to prayer. Yet just as Ellen was writing to Sister Howland, “[James] is quite strong today. Praise the good Lord,” her baby Edson again endured a severe case of the colic, falling into a sound sleep only after anointing and prayer.

What in the world was going on here? Why so much sudden sickness in August of 1850? On August 24, Ellen had a vision in which God revealed to her that Satan himself had entered the Harris home to destroy James and Ellen White and their son. “But our united faith drove him back, and weakened his power.” Writing a week later to Prudence Bates, Ellen stated:

The enemy has tried hard to take some of our lives here of late. One after another of us have been afflicted almost unto death. Had it not been for the balm in Gilead and the Physician there we must [all] have perished.

But why should Satan attack four people and try to kill them on August 8-9, 1850? Ellen knew why. In her letter to Prudence Bates, she added:

Oh what battles we have had to fight with the enemy since we commenced to get out the paper. We have had to pray, pray, pray and have faith, faith, faith and that is all the way we have been enabled to live.

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10 Ellen White to Bro. and Sr. Howland, August 1850, Center for Adventist Research (CAR), James White Library (JWL), Andrews University, ms. rel. 1162, pp. 1-3.
In this same August 24 vision, Ellen saw that the “mysterious rapping” at Hydesville (near Rochester) in 1848 was really Satan’s power, and that this phenomenon would spread widely as his followers—spiritualists—increased. Miracles would be performed in Satan’s name, and soon, she said, it would be considered blasphemy to speak out against this rapping in some upstate areas. “Watch,” she warned, and put on “the whole armor, and take the shield of faith” to fight successfully the devil’s power. The devil had tried his best to stop the *Advent Herald* (later *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*) from spreading gospel truth in Auburn and Moravia (a spiritualist headquarters in upstate New York).

But God overruled him! As early as August 4, Ellen saw in another vision that her husband should republish the testimonies of the Millerite pioneer Adventists relating to the Second Coming, Sanctuary, and Sabbath truths. Soon thereafter, James declared his intention of publishing “a paper called the *Advent Review*, sixteen pages, the size of the *Present Truth* [1848-49].” He expected to mail out 3000 copies of each issue at a total cost of $250.00, adding, “I shall move as the means come in…My way is onward. Men of Israel, help. Now is the time to work for God.”

Ellen saw in her August 24 vision that God had healed James specifically so that he could publish this new paper immediately, a paper, she said, which should propagate “the plain clean truth” to “help build up God’s people in the most holy faith.” “It [is] as important to publish the truth as to preach it,” she exhorted. “I saw the flock looking to the paper…ready like hungry children to eat the truth published in it.”

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15 Ellen White, ms.-7-1850, pp. 91-94.
So before mid-August, James secured Mr. Richard Oliphant, printer, to publish the first of four issues of the *Advent Review* to come off the press in Auburn. The first publishing committee consisted of Hiram Edson, David Arnold, George Holt, Samuel Rhodes, and James White. The paper’s masthead proclaimed its purpose: “To “Call to Remembrance the Former Days (Heb. 10:32).” Its terms: “Gratis, except [as] the reader desires to give something toward its publication.” Letters to the editor were to be addressed to James White at Port Byron. In his opening editorial, James declared:

> Our design in this review is to cheer and refresh the true believer, by showing the fulfilment of prophecy in the past wonderful work of God, in calling out, and separating from the world and nominal church, a people who are looking for the second advent of the dear Saviour.

One underlying purpose of the paper was to demonstrate that the Sabbatarian Adventists of 1850 “still believe and teach [the] 1844 [Three Angels’] messages and the Sabbath,” whereas the Sunday-keeping Advent Christians have “left the original faith.”

The content of the first issue consisted largely of articles extracted from such Millerite papers as the *Voice of Truth* and *Advent Herald* and letters from William Miller, John Lindsay, James White, and Elvira Hastings. The second issue included a poem (“The Seventh Month”) and more letters, and articles on the “Shut Door,” Sabbath, and Second Advent. The third issue was much the same, except that letters from sixteen grateful readers now showed how much appreciated its message was. The fourth and final issue to come from Auburn contained articles on the “Day of Judgment,” the 144,000, the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries, as well as twenty more letters and the announcement of an upcoming conference at Sutton, Vermont, at the end of the month. So great was the demand for back copies of the *Review* that James decided to

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By late September, James and Ellen laid aside writing for the paper to travel to conferences in Vermont, Maine, and Massachusetts. Then they moved from Port Byron to Paris, Maine in November and began printing the *Second Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* there.

Although the *Review* had left Auburn, God had not, and His Spirit continued to work upon the hearts of men and women in Cayuga and Seneca counties. In fact, in November, the very month the Whites left for Maine, E. A. Hendrick of Lakeville wrote: “The truth is gaining advocates in western New York.” Perhaps one reason for the growth of the truth was the fact that lay preacher Hiram Edson moved in 1851 from Port Gibson east to Port Byron. In July and August he and the young John Andrews covered 600 miles on foot and horseback in six weeks “in search of the scattered and wandering sheep.” During only two weeks in January 1852, Edson and Bates preached in Toronto, Canada; Ulysses, Pennsylvania; and in Batavia, Buffalo, Fredonia, and Bath, New York.

Then in November 1853 the *Review* published a letter from William Harris of Centerport in which he expressed his gratitude for the Advent truth:

> The spirit of 1843, begins to arise in my breast. The comandments are shining so brilliantly, and God’s claims are so just, that I feel like exclaiming like David of old, ‘O how love I thy law.’ I will praise the Lord for what he has done for me…By the grace of God I am determined to press my way on until I reach the city.

During 1854, Hiram Edson continued to “press onward” also, bringing the Sabbath truth to Christians all over Cayuga, Oswego, Jefferson, and Lewis counties during one four-week

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20 Ibid., vol. 1, no. 4 (Sept. 1850), 49-64.
21 A. L. White, *E. G. White*, vol. 1, 184, 194.
22 *Signs of the Times* [Millerite], Nov. 1, 1850, p. 119.
23 *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* [RH], May 5, 1851, p. 80; Sept. 2, 1851, p. 24.
24 Ibid., Feb. 17, 1852, p. 95.
25 Ibid., Nov. 8, 1853, p. 142.
journey.26 Apparently he had also converted Amy Tompkins of Geneva, who died in June 1856 at 91 “in the blessed hope of coming up in the first resurrection.”27

The Harris family, now in Port Byron, must have been zealous Sabbath-keeping witnesses, despite their isolation from fellow believers. In January 1857 William Harris wrote: “We are all alone here, and are glad when any saint gets strayed this way.” While he confessed that he had for a while sunk into a Laodicean spiritual state and had “a great deal to overcome,” he resolved to “buy gold and white raiment” (Christ’s righteous character) to help improve his spiritual condition. “I want to see the church come up to her first love—the love she had in 1844.”28 Later in August, he wrote that he and his wife, Sabbath-keepers for ten years now, “have stayed here in this dark place most of the time since [1847], and kept the Sabbath all alone.” His neighbors listened politely when he spoke, but so far had not accepted the truth.29

Other lonely souls let their light shine forth in Cayuga County. E. S. Lane wrote in November 1857 from East Genoa to say, “The message to the Laodiceans in months past has made a deep impression on my mind…O that I may with the rest of the remnant, open the door and let the dear Saviour in.” Then Lane closed with this line: “Praise the Lord for the glorious light of the present truth.”30 Both husband and wife wrote in July 1858: “We are still striving to overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.” As they reviewed their past since becoming Sabbath-keepers, the Lanes said, “We can see his [God’s] providence manifested in every event of life, and we still feel to trust him for the future.” Like the Harrises in Port Byron, the Lanes of East Genoa had only the Review and their Bibles to comfort and instruct

26 Ibid., Mar. 21, 1854, p. 71.
27 Ibid., Sept. 18, 1856, p. 158.
30 Ibid., Nov. 26, 1857, p. 23.
them, for there were as yet no Adventist meetings being held in Cayuga County, and they were the only Sabbath-keepers for sixty miles around. They begged for preachers to visit them.31

The faithful witness of the Harrises soon inspired results, however, and by 1859, both Richard and Mary Ann Sawyer of Port Byron accepted the Sabbath. Although Mary died from “wasting consumption” (TB) in February, her husband wrote in April: “I feel to praise the Lord for a willing mind to hear the truth and to do his will in all things.” He asked for believers’ prayers “that I may be one of that number that shall stand on Mt. Zion having their Father’s name written in their foreheads.”32

The willingness of many believers to accept the Laodicean rebuke after 1857 not only shows the spiritual humility of most of them, but is also borne out by the realities of some intra-church factionalism and criticism. In March 1860, as national hatreds over slavery and states rights boiled over into Civil War, so E. S. Lane detected local church strife in some Adventist groups. He wrote a Review article on “Church Trials,” suggesting that local congregations should follow Matthew 18:15-17 and solve their problems first on the individual level, then on the group level, and finally on the church level, letting the deacons lead out in reaching settlements. If this biblical method were followed, he said, “I cannot help but believe that the church would come up on higher ground, and be better prepared to engage in the loud cry of the third angel.”33

Brother Sawyer of Port Byron, also concerned about church unity, wrote in March 1861 as the Civil War tore his nation apart: “Let us become more united. Union is strength.” He could testify that “present truth” had had “a purifying and saving power” in his life.34

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31 Ibid., July 29, 1858, p. 87.
33 Ibid., Mar. 1, 1860, p. 119.
34 Ibid., Mar. 12, 1861, p. 135.
This concern for church unity and “gospel order” finally led, in September 1861, to the forming of the New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists at Lyndonville, New York.\textsuperscript{35} It was not until October 1862, however, that delegates from sixteen churches at the Roosevelt Conference chose David Arnold as president, J. M. Aldrich as secretary, and J. B. Lamson as treasurer.\textsuperscript{36} Because this organization also included two Pennsylvania churches (Ulysses and Mixtown), the conference headquarters from 1862 to 1879 was at Wellsville, New York.\textsuperscript{37}

While there may not have been any Adventists in Auburn itself during the 1860s, the surrounding towns held faithful saints who kept the Sabbath. One of these, Mr. P. Cornell of Union Springs, wrote in March 1862:

I am very well satisfied that the 7th day is the Sabbath…, and I have commenced to keep it. I know of none about here that keep the Sabbath according to the Scriptures of truth. I am a lone one in these parts, but I aspire to live out the blessed truth…The Adventists are the nearest right of any society in their belief that I ever have read of. If I could live near such a class of people how cheering it would be to meet with them.\textsuperscript{38}

Another lonely voice was that of Brother J. G. Cheals of Port Byron, who in May 1863 sought “an interest in the kingdom of God” and daily prayed to “walk in the light as it is shed upon my pathway.” He exhorted believers to “take courage! The crown is just before us.”\textsuperscript{39} His article “Steadfast” urged readers “to be immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” We must be steadfast in adherence to truth despite the world’s opposition, he added, for “To us it is given to labor, and we shall reap in due time if we faint not.” Indeed, in Port Byron, the reaping had already begun in 1863, for Sister M. Beach accepted the Sabbath that year. “I

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., Sept. 24, 1861, p. 135.  
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., Nov. 4, 1862, p. 182.  
\textsuperscript{37} Atlantic Union Gleaner [AUG], Apr. 8, 1942, p. 6.  
\textsuperscript{38} RH, Mar. 11, 1862, p. 119.  
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., May 19, 1863, p. 199.
rejoice that I ever saw the all-important truth,” she wrote in 1866. All alone since her husband’s death, she had stopped using tea and coffee, and leaned on “the widow’s God” for support.⁴⁰

Over in East Genoa, Ellen Upson, a Sabbath-keeper since 1853, wrote in July 1863 that she wanted to serve the Lord more faithfully in the future and be willing “to suffer affliction with his people” so as to share that “blessed inheritance” in heaven.⁴¹ In bitterly cold and snowy January 1864, Conference evangelist Nathan Fuller gave eight lectures in East Genoa at the Methodist meeting house, then paused to wait for better sleighing before continuing the meetings.⁴² These and other meetings by 1866 had borne rich fruit, for in September, the Genoa band joined with other groups as the New York Conference’s newest church in Cayuga County.⁴³ Ellen’s husband, David Upson, a recent convert, exclaimed in February 1867: “I feel grateful to God that my ears have been saluted with the doctrine of the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I want to be found blameless at his coming.”⁴⁴

Meanwhile, back at Port Byron in 1867-68, William Harris, who loved to read the Review each week, urged its editorial staff to double its size. “You may put me down for three dollars a year,” he added, “and if that is not enough I will try to pay more.”⁴⁵ Perhaps the fact that he saw other Sabbath-keepers only once every two or three years and was too ill to attend the nearest meetings forty miles away made him love the written word all the more. “The Review comes to us weekly, laden with precious fruit. Its sermons are meat in due season…In most every paper,” he wrote, “I find something new, some new light, showing us the mileposts as we travel along.”⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Ibid., Sept. 29, 1863, pp. 138-39; June 12, 1866, p. 15.
⁴¹ Ibid., July 21, 1863, p. 63.
⁴² Ibid., Feb. 9, 1864, p. 85.
⁴³ Ibid., October 16, 1866, p. 158.
⁴⁴ Ibid., Feb. 19, 1867, p. 130.
⁴⁵ Ibid., Mar. 26, 1867, p. 190
Over in Genoa, Elder S. B. Whitney began to set up some really significant mileposts when in June and August of 1867 he returned for a series of quarterly and evangelistic meetings at the schoolhouse.\(^47\) “This is a thriving, farming community,” he wrote in October, “composed very generally of intelligent and well-informed inhabitants.” Whitney held five meetings a week for seven weeks, in addition to personally visiting local citizens’ homes. Soon, eight persons took their stand for truth.\(^48\)

One or two of these converts may have been neighbors of Mary Beach, for she loaned her *Reviews* and other papers to nearby friends who expressed interest in them. Following the new health reform message of 1863, she had given up pork in 1866 and all meats by 1867; she no longer drank tea or coffee. “I am striving to watch and pray without ceasing, that I may be prepared for the times of refreshing, pass safely through the perils of the last days, and meet Jesus in peace.”\(^49\)

Her near neighbor David Upson also described himself as “determined to serve the Lord” and “to live up to all the light we have through the *Review*, the testimonies, and the gospel.” He praised Elder Whitney for his evangelizing efforts, for five more souls had recently been converted.\(^50\) In June 1868, Upson declared that when he had accepted the Sabbath in 1852, “I then thought I should see Jesus before this time, but time is prolonged.” Nevertheless, he added, “I love God and his Son, Jesus Christ, and those who keep his commandments.” Especially did he enjoy reading the testimonial letters of believers in the *Review*. “I hope to see them in the world to come.” He signed himself, “Yours, patiently waiting.”\(^51\) There were other saints “patiently waiting” for Jesus to come as well, believers who had died in the “Blessed Hope.”

One of these was John Sawyer of Port Byron, who passed to his rest on December 21, 1861, at the age of seventy.\footnote{Ibid., Feb. 4, 1862, p. 79.} In the great resurrection morning they will come forth from all the cemeteries in upstate New York where angels mark their graves today.
Auburn Seventh-day Adventist Church History  
(Part 2: 1870-1900)

While the Third Angel’s Message gained many adherents in Cayuga, Wayne and Seneca Counties from 1844 to 1870, most of these converts lived in tiny, widely scattered settlements, not in larger cities like Auburn, where antagonistic groups of spiritualists, Catholics, and Masons prevented its taking root. Indeed, during the 1870s, the area around Genoa became the focus of the greatest evangelistic activity, with some work done in Locke, Weedsport, and Savannah.

In October 1868, Elder C. O. Taylor began a series of meetings at the newly established Genoa Church.\(^1\) Here, he enjoyed the support of faithful members like David and Ellen Upson. The former wrote in August 1870: “I still feel interested in the Advent movement… and I am striving to overcome the world as he [Christ] overcame the world, that I may finally sit down with him in his throne.”\(^2\) As 1871 dawned, he asserted that he had “a growing interest in this good and glorious cause” and longed for the soon-expected appearing of Jesus.\(^3\)

Many other newly converted ones soon shared Upson’s “blessed hope,” for in September 1871, Elder Frederick Wheeler came to Genoa for six weeks of meetings, followed by lectures at Moravia’s schoolhouse and then on to Locke. Wheeler celebrated the ordinances with Genoa’s believers, a rare treat in those days, and found their Sabbath worships “seasons of interest and profit. The church,” he added, “appear united and striving to overcome.”\(^4\) Soon regular district Tract and Missionary Society meetings were being held at Genoa while Quarterly Communion

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\(^1\) *RH*, Sept. 22, 1868, p. 184.
meetings there brought Adventists from Locke, Weedsport, and Port Byron. In 1874, the nearest organized Adventist Church to Genoa was either Rochester or Verona.

Even at Genoa, however, Elder Stephen Haskell discovered in his February 1876 visit that “our friends were few and scattered.” Yet he enjoyed warm and friendly fellowship with them despite the bitterly cold, unfavorable weather. One year later, in March 1872, Elder Dudley Canright came to Genoa, first for a weekend revival series with local Adventists, and then for evangelistic meetings at the local Methodist Church. While 30-40 persons attended each night, and area believers showed great interest in his sermons, “we did not find much outside interest,” he wrote. On Sabbath, seven youth took their stand for the truth, and their fervent testimonies inspired many more saints to testify at a social meeting. Canright rejoiced to observe that these seven youth “have praying parents who will help them.” At the Sunday business session, the Genoa Church raised its Systematic Benevolence giving from $104 to $193 a year and pledged $60 for the Tract and Missionary Fund. When Canright left, he described its twenty Adventist members as “all in harmony [with] no trial among them.”

Canright’s associate, Elder C. B. Reynolds, remained behind for a week to visit members’ homes, baptize the seven newly converted youth, and start a Bible study class. “A spirit of self-sacrifice and genuine devotion prevailed,” he wrote, and all “took hold with eagerness” of the opportunities to give of their time, talents and means for the cause.

During the 1870s many Adventist preachers opened the work at Locke, seven miles east of Genoa, in southern Cayuga County. Elder Stephen Haskell and Elder Buel Whitney, then

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5 Ibid., Feb. 4, 1873, p. 64; Oct. 13, 1873, p. 168.
6 Ibid., October 13, 1874, p. 127.
7 Ibid., Feb. 24, 1876, p. 62.
8 Ibid., Mar. 8, 1877, p. 80; Mar. 29, 1877, p. 102.
9 Ibid., Apr. 5, 1877, p. 110.
Conference president, led in a two-day series of meetings there in February 1876.\(^\text{10}\) Two months later, converts Ann Lane and Lovesa Upson each sent $10.00 from Locke as pledges for the newly established Battle Creek College.\(^\text{11}\) When M. C. Wilcox and T. M. Lane spoke in Locke to between 30 and 60 people in April 1878, they declared that “the interest is increasing.”\(^\text{12}\) So greatly did the public support these meetings, in fact, that their originally planned five lectures became twenty by May, with many tracts distributed and two listeners converted.\(^\text{13}\) As he continued preaching in Locke, Genoa, and Forks of Creek, President Whitney, joined by George Ballou in October, found public interest “deepening and extending in all this region” with three converts at Ludlowville and two more at Locke. The Genoa Church, recognizing a spiritual challenge, formed a literature club to distribute 26 Signs of the Times in the area.\(^\text{14}\) Further meetings by Whitney and Ballou in June 1879 led to more baptisms in Locke.\(^\text{15}\)

Eight miles north of Auburn in tiny Weedsport, Whitney discovered in April 1876 two sisters keeping the Sabbath. One had been a Sabbath-keeper for several years; the other, “a very refined and intelligent widow lady” with two children, had only recently begun observing the Sabbath. Both had read themselves into the truth. Both also joined the Tract and Missionary Society at the time Whitney visited them, giving of their means so that others might read the truth also.\(^\text{16}\) Despite a Methodist-Episcopal camp meeting four miles away in August 1879, George Ballou enjoyed good public interest and attendance for his meetings there. When town leaders and local ministers staged two anti-Adventist meetings to disparage Ballou’s efforts, he remained unmoved. After six weeks of meetings, he rejoiced when nearly a dozen converts took

\(^{10}\) Ibid., Feb. 3, 1876, p. 40.
\(^{11}\) Ibid., Apr. 27, 1876, p. 2.
\(^{12}\) Ibid., May 2, 1878, p. 174.
\(^{13}\) Ibid., May 30, 1878, p. 150.
\(^{14}\) Ibid., Nov. 7, 1878, p. 150.
\(^{15}\) Ibid., June 5, 1879, p. 184.
\(^{16}\) Ibid., May 11, 1876, p. 150.
their stand for truth. Brother G. J. Stevens took charge of weekly Sabbath meetings, while E. S. Lane began canvassing in the Weedsport area.17

North and west in Savannah, C. E. Ives, suddenly noticing that his Review no longer came, wrote to inquire if his subscription had expired. He gladly offered to send more money, exclaiming, “but don’t stop that paper again as long as the world stands! We are the only S.D.A.’s here, and we want the paper every week.” Back from Battle Creek came this reply: “Good! We are glad to know that when the Review is not received, its loss is felt. The ‘last three numbers’ are sent.”18

At the southern tip of Owasco Lake lay the town of Moravia, the “headquarters for spiritualism” in upstate New York in the 1870s. To Satan’s den came George Ballou in the summer of 1879. Despite the virulent opposition of many mediums and preachers, he preached for seven weeks, facing unprecedented “manifestations of the power of Satan.” When the series closed, however, eight persons were baptized, one a Baptist minister and one a spiritualist medium. Ballou set up regular Sabbath meetings at Moravia in August.19

The decade of the 1870s saw the Three Angels’ Messages rapidly expanding in upstate New York. By 1879 the Conference had eleven credentialed ministers and ten licensed ones, 33 churches with 655 members who gave almost $3000 in annual offerings.20 But as the Conference entered the 1880s, it did so without the aid of many pioneer saints who had been laid to rest in the 1870s. First to die was David Upson (24) of East Genoa from measles in April 1871.21 Then the venerable Wiliam Haris (72) of Centerport, ex-Millerite preacher and faithful Sabbath-keeper for 25 years, passed away in March 1873 of paralysis and heart disease. E. S.

17 Ibid., Oct. 23, 1879, p. 142; Aug. 28, 1879, p. 79.
18 Ibid., Oct. 26, 1876, p. 136.
19 Ibid., Aug. 28, 1879, p. 79.
20 Ibid., Dec. 4, 1879, p. 184.
21 Ibid., Apr. 25, 1871, p. 151.
Lane, who officiated at his funeral, stated that “His whole soul seemed to be filled with a sacred joy, which the world could not give nor take away.”22 Then in December 1875, Mary Upson (38) of Genoa, a faithful Adventist since age 15 in 1852 when baptized by James White, died. “She has endeavored to live a consistent Christian life,” E. S. Lane wrote, “and the evidences of her acceptance with the Lord remained with her till the close of life.”23 In October 1878, E. S. Lane’s wife, Betsy Lane (44), a Sabbath-keeper since she was 19 in 1853, died suddenly of unknown causes. Lane described his wife as “a firm, consistent believer in the third angels’ message.”24

As the decade of the 1880s opened, evangelistic work continued in the newly entered areas of Locke and Weedsport. President Whitney joined believers at Locke for a Quarterly Meeting in July 1880, promising them a baptism at its close.25 Perhaps some of those baptized included young people, for in June 1881, M. H. Brown stated that he had obtained several subscriptions to the Youth’s Instructor at Locke, where Sabbath school was now being held.26

In November 1880, Brown and George Ballou came to Weedsport and baptized two new converts. “The company here are doing well,” they reported, “and all manifest a lively interest in the work in all its departments.”27 In late February 1881, Ballou and Whitney returned to Weedsport to hold weekly meetings.28 Meanwhile, at Summer Hill near Genoa, George Bliss and E. E. Miles began a series of 39 meetings in July 1881 which resulted in two conversions and many studying their Bibles more fervently. Adventists at Genoa, always hospitable,

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22 Ibid., Apr. 22, 1873, p. 151.
23 Ibid., Jan. 13, 1876, p. 15.
25 Ibid., July 15, 1880, p. 64.
26 Ibid., June 7, 1881, p. 363.
27 Ibid., November 25, 1880, p. 348.
28 Ibid., Feb. 15, 1881, p. 112.
provided housing and food for the two men as these meeting progressed. Soon Sabbath meetings commenced.29

The 1880s witnessed a dynamic new thrust in tent evangelism in the New York Conference, especially after Elder Brown became president in 1883. In November he declared: “The time has come for an advance move in New York.” He planned to hold an institute to teach the laity how to give Bible studies effectively and thus assist the widely scattered ministers. “The great ‘Empire State’ ought not to fall behind in the closing work,” he exclaimed.30 Brown implemented a new technique of “saturation evangelism” using colporteurs and Bible workers to assist tent preachers in big city efforts. Their first campaign opened in the city of Rome in December 1883 with Elders S. N. Haskell, J. N. Loughborough, E. W. Whitney, S. N. Walsworth, and President Brown himself assisting.31

After this successful evangelistic effort in Rome, leaders scanned the map for another large city to target with the gospel message. In February 1884 they chose Auburn, a city of 25,000 people. Brother J. E. Swift, with a corps of six canvassers, blanketed the city with Adventist tracts, magazines and books and found “good prospects and providential openings.” As reports of their success reached President Brown, he exclaimed, “The work in New York is onward. The harvest truly is great.”32

By early March, Swift’s team, comprising colporteurs J. V. Wilson, L. E. Ghering, Mattie Welch, Mr. and Mrs. Elbert Lane as well as Swift and his wife, had sold many copies of Signs of the Times door to door in Auburn, had conducted several Bible studies, and had left supplies of Adventist literature at the City Hospital, Home of the Friendless, County House, State Prison,

29 Ibid., Aug. 9, 1881, p. 207.
30 Ibid., Nov. 6, 1883, p. 718.
31 Ibid., p. 735.
32 Ibid., 4 Mar. 1884, p. 156.
and the local jail. Spreading their gospel seed ever wider, the team even placed ten of the best message books at Auburn’s Seymour Library and another ten at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at 17 Nelson Street. Leaving no stone unturned, they then placed copies of Signs and Good Health at the YMCA reading rooms as well as at the Women’s Union reading rooms. Swift found very little prejudice against Adventists in Auburn, but a general “indifference in regard to eternal things.” He asked for prayers “that we may be able to gather the honest-hearted.”

Three exciting weeks later, he wrote: “The good work still goes on” in Auburn. Besides continuing to sell Adventist books and magazines, hold Bible studies, and pray with the people, the team had come up with the ingenious idea of placing book mark cards at Seymour Library with the titles of Adventist books available printed on the back. Naturally, curious patrons requested those books at the library, and they were being read. Already one English family stood on the threshold of accepting the truth. “We are trying to prepare the city for a tent effort this summer,” Swift stated, adding, “and [we] hope for a harvest of souls.” By early May, more canvassers had joined the team, and Swift described the work as “in a prosperous condition.” Many of Auburn’s citizens were becoming interested in the message. “We expect with God’s help that a good work will be accomplished,” he declared.

President Brown in June promised Auburn’s team the use of Conference Tent #1. Swift and H. E. Robinson would be the speakers, while Ghering would serve as tent master and missionary worker, with Sisters Louise Higby and Lucy Hubbard assisting Mrs. Swift as Bible

33 Ibid., Mar. 18, 1884, pp. 188-89.
34 Ibid., Apr. 1, 1884, pp. 219-20.
workers. Optimistic that the large 60’x100’ tent would not be big enough, President Brown added, “We trust that the interest in this city…will necessitate the use of the splice.”

Brown’s wildest dreams came true. At the end of June, Swift described his greatest difficulty as “the scarcity of workers” so that “we are not able to visit and hold Bible-readings with all who would be glad to welcome us.” After attending only four meetings, several citizens had already decided to keep the Sabbath. “The interest and attendance are good,” Swift stated. “Some are already deeply affected by the truth.” President Brown agreed with this optimistic report. “There seems to be quite an interest to hear the truth,” he said, “and we look for a harvest of souls.”

By the end of July, following a total of 41 meetings, Swift and Place detected a “constantly increasing interest,” not only in Auburn, but throughout the surrounding region. “Angels of God are working in connection with our efforts,” they affirmed. The seven tent company members could not keep up with demands for Bible studies. Already twelve adults and several children were observing the Sabbath.

In September Swift exclaimed, “The work here still seems to be moving forward.” At least 19 heads of households observed the Sabbath and were “very firm in the truth.” Swift laid plans to organize a church society (company), a Sabbath school, and a tract society soon. As public interest grew, he and Robinson proposed moving the big tent to another section of town to reach more of Auburn’s Roman Catholics.

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36 Ibid., June 24, 1884, p. 414.
37 Ibid., July 8m 1884, p. 445.
38 Ibid., July 22, 1884, pp. 476-77.
40 Ibid., Sept. 9, 1884, p. 587.
Perhaps Swift’s phenomenal success in Auburn led to his ordination as a minister and helped get him elected as Conference secretary in 1884.\textsuperscript{41} Then on September 6 he and Robinson began a new series of meetings in another section of Auburn. While attendance remained small due to “the Catholic element, [which] is quite strong here, and they have tried to give us some trouble,” as Swift put it, nevertheless, interest grew. Many day laborers came to hear the message, realizing that if they accepted the Sabbath truth, they could easily lose their jobs. Swift described the score of those who had been converted at the first series of meetings as “nearly all growing in grace and a knowledge of the truth.”\textsuperscript{42}

By late October, after six weeks of further meetings, Swift struck the canvass in Auburn, saying, “The field has been a hard one, yet a few have taken their stand to obey.” He expressed confidence, however, in the body of believers at Auburn. “They are nearly all workers,” he added. He planned to organize a church at Auburn soon.\textsuperscript{43}

As the New Year 1885 began, Swift, now an Auburn resident, kept in touch with his recent converts. “The work in [Auburn] is still advancing,” he wrote. “The cause does not move as rapidly as one could wish, and yet there is a steady growth all the time, which rejoices our hearts.” Since the tent effort ended, four new converts had joined the church. Brother and Sister Willson with J. E. Swift and his wife continued giving Bible studies door-to-door, finding it hard to keep up with the opportunities. After a total of eight months spent laboring in Auburn, Swift could honestly declare: “To me, this is the most encouraging season that I have ever spent in the Master’s service….There is the greatest religious awakening among the churches that has been known for twenty-five years.” The newly organized Auburn Company, filled with missionary

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., Sept. 16, 1884, p. 605. 
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., Oct. 7, 1884, p. 635. 
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., Oct. 28, 1884, p. 684.
workers, rejoiced when Elder Whitney came to form a Tract and Missionary Society there. They also held weekly prayer meetings, Friday evening Bible readings, Sabbath school and church services, as well as Sunday evening meetings for non-Adventists. That winter they rented the city’s skating rink for evangelistic meetings led by Dr. George Pentecost of Brooklyn.44

Elder Swift returned to speak at Auburn in March 1885, but found conditions much changed there. How his heart ached when he saw how “the apostasy of some” hindered the work there. “May God help these dear souls to see their mistake and return to him again,” he prayed. He rejoiced, however, to see that most of his early converts remained firm in the faith, and these active ones added new believers through their witnessing efforts. When the Swifts left to labor in Syracuse, Brother Ghering and J. V. Willson, a licensed minister from Moravia, arrived.45

Apparently Auburn’s 22 members met in private residences in the 1880s, for in June 1886, district director George Rea announced that District #10’s Quarterly Meeting would be held with the Auburn Society in his home at 24 Morris Street.46 Believers from Weedsport, Port Byron, Union Springs, Locke, Moravia, and Savannah probably joined together for this meeting.

Elder Roswell Cottrell visited Auburn in June 1888, and Adventists came from Weedsport, Waterloo, and Skaneateles to hear him preach at Sabbath school, church, and afternoon Bible reading sessions. On Sunday he baptized three persons, then held a Vigilant Missionary Society meeting (Tract Society) that evening, ending with the celebration of the ordinances, “in which all present took part,” he said. “Harmony and love prevailed, and all were of good courage to pursue the work.”47

44 Ibid., Feb. 3, 1885, p. 77; SDA Yearbook (1885), pp. 7, 12.
There were some saints, however, who could not “pursue the work” as the 1890s dawned, for God had laid them to rest. Emma Bliss (20), wife of Elder George Bliss of Locke, died a most painful death from lockjaw in April 1880 as her two tiny children looked on.\(^ {48} \) In December at East Genoa, Adelaide Rasmussen (42) passed away from illness and over-exertion.\(^ {49} \) In May 1882, faithful old Mary Upson of Locke, an Adventist since 1868, died of several diseases.\(^ {50} \) Young Ida Parker (21) of Waterloo, who had planned to be baptized and unite with the Auburn Company, died of TB in July 1887 “with full faith in the present truth.”\(^ {51} \) Finally in April 1888, the venerable saint Esther Upson (81), an Adventist since 1850, died suddenly, leaving behind her aged and almost helpless husband.\(^ {52} \)

During the 1890s, Auburn, like most cities in New York, received little regular attention from the small and widely-scattered corps of ordained Adventist ministers. Conference vice-president A. E. Place, who came through Auburn in April 1890, regretted this situation. “Because of the dearth of laborers in this Conference,” he explained, “our churches have had but little ministerial help for some time.” Suffering from a neuralgia of the heart which nearly killed him, Place was slowly recovering and expected to take a year off to recuperate.\(^ {53} \)

Place’s illness, coupled with a rapidly deteriorating leadership crisis at Auburn, created real problems for spiritual vitality here during the 1890s. In July 1890, local elder George Rea, in a letter to Conference President Sands Lane, begged for some minister to come and hold an

\(^ {48} \) Ibid., May 6, 1880, p. 302.  
\(^ {49} \) Ibid., Jan. 25, 1881, p. 62.  
\(^ {50} \) Ibid., July 4, 1882, p. 430.  
\(^ {51} \) Ibid., Aug. 9, 1887, p. 511.  
\(^ {52} \) Ibid., May 1 1888, p. 287.  
\(^ {53} \) Ibid., Apr. 15, 1890, p. 237.
election for a new local elder. “I am not fit for the position,” he asserted, adding, “[I] am not
doing my duty, and don’t know as I shall.” Citing “this wickedness of my heart,” Rea added,
“Please don’t try to labor with me in any way,” for such a course “will only…confirm me in it
[his ways].” He requested prayers and new elections “as soon as you conveniently can,”
concluding that “I am simply devilishly wicked. I can’t be a hypocrite, and the people here need
someone to lead them.”

In his reply to Elder Lane’s letter asking him to remain as elder a few more weeks, Rea
said, “I have not fulfilled its duties for some time.” Auburn had had no quarterly meetings, no
foot washing, and no Communion services for several months because, as Rea explained,
“feeling myself to be unclean I would not insult God by trying to bear any of His vessels.” He
once again urged Lane to “elect someone who at least is willing and obedient.”

When Elder Place returned to Auburn in September, he wrote Elder Lane that “The
church was in a sad state when I came”: Rea still opposed being reelected as elder and this had
badly divided church members. After holding seven meetings without success, Place advised
that the position of local elder be left vacant for one quarter with Conference men filling in as
needed and Mr. George, deacon and treasurer, leading out in meetings temporarily. Place
concluded by warning President Lane: “I feel that it will be necessary for us to look after this
time, or there will be trouble that will terminate seriously.” But on a
more hopeful note, he felt that “with the blessing of God they can all be tamed I trust. The
tongue is also an unruly member still.” Gossip about Rea’s past failures had only inflamed an

54 George Rea to Sands H. Lane, July 17, 1890, General Conference Archives [GCA].
55 George Rea to Sands H. Lane, July 27, 1890, GCA.
already tense situation. “I believe that if the brethren and sisters here will let Bro. Rea alone and keep still about the past and not urge him, he will come out all right.” Yet when Place visited Auburn in December, he still found “things look pretty dark in Bro. Rea’s case.”

Yet amidst “darkness” of another kind, Addie Parker could see some light in March 1891. Even though lay workers William Fenner and his wife were facing eviction for being $37.00 in arrears on their rent, she urged Elder Lane to help her promote the sale of “Renovating Solution” among church ladies to help pay their debts. She also suggested selling recipes and labels for the Fenner fund. Concluding her appeal, Mrs. Parker stated: “We think our church is doing quite well considering numbers.” She herself had been laboring in Seneca Falls for three weeks, selling $3.00 in tracts.

William Fenner himself wrote Elder Lane requesting that the president preach at Auburn’s quarterly meeting and “give us some spiritual food” for, he added, “we are very much in want.” He described Mr. Rea as “farther away from the truth than ever,…talk[ing] against our work,” promoting membership in the Knights of Labor and the local Printer’s Union, and waiting for the Holy Spirit to bestow the gift of healing upon all church members. The next month Fenner again begged Elder Lane to come, speak, and be “here for consultation.”

Whether Lane visited Auburn or not, the record does not say. But by early November, K. W. Vosburgh reported from Auburn that “we are all enjoying the blessings of the Lord.” Believers had a new meeting room “fixed up in good order” ready for evangelistic meetings. Even Rea had returned to church, was attending meetings, and seemed resolved to keep the

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56 A. E. Place to S. H. Lane, Sept. 29, 1890, GCA.
57 A. E. Place to S. H. Lane, December 26, 1890, GCA.
58 Addie Parker to S. H. Lane, March 11, 1891, GCA.
59 William Fenner to S. H. Lane, Sept. 24, 1891, GCA.
60 William Fenner to S. H. Lane, October 11, 1891, GCA.
Sabbath again, for, as he had told Mrs. Parker, “it would have to be one way or the other before long.” Vosburgh thought that meetings could keep him in the truth.⁶¹

As the 1890s progressed, several meetings were held with good results. In December 1891, Vosburgh (now in Weedsport) told Elder Lane that the Week of Prayer in Auburn had been “a good season” with nightly meetings, three on Sabbath and two each Sunday, with “a good turnout.” “It was a time of refreshing for us which will be remembered a long time,” he exclaimed. Brother Rea’s attendance was still sporadic, however. “[I] hope that he will soon take hold with us again,” Vosburgh wrote, so they offered special prayer for him.⁶² Evangelist D. A. Ball came in October 1892 and described his meeting as “a splendid one,” despite the fact that local elder Vosburgh “was talked to” about his not paying tithe and decided to resign. Ball also discovered that some members in Auburn opposed Elder Lane’s presidency, so he pointed out to them how the Conference had gone into debt to foster the work in Auburn.⁶³ Therefore, he urged them to be generous with tithes and offerings. When he left for Syracuse, he collected $37.76 from Auburn and $60.50 from Genoa.⁶⁴

Other zealous laborers spread the Third Angel’s Message in the regions around Auburn. In November 1892 N. S. Washbond and H. D. Church began canvassing in Waterloo; Pery Tafts in Seneca Falls; and E. B. Gaskill sold Bible Readings in Auburn.⁶⁵ In November Elder Lane preached in the Methodist meetinghouse at East Genoa to a good turnout despite muddy roads. The following evening, he spoke at the Baptist church in Locke, heard by both Methodist and

⁶¹ K. W. Vosburgh to S. H. Lane, Nov. 2, 1891, GCA.
⁶² K. W. Vosburgh to S. H. Lane, Dec. 29, 1891, GCA.
⁶³ D. A. Ball to S. H. Lane, Oct. 17, 1892, GCA.
⁶⁵ NYI, Nov. 9, 1892, p. 3; Nov. 23, 1892, p. 157; Dec. 14, 1892, p. 187; Dec. 21 1892, p. 3.
Baptists preachers.\textsuperscript{66} When Michigan’s youth leader, Luther Warren, visited Auburn and Locke believers in December, some discouraged members and some backsliders “came back to God.”\textsuperscript{67}

The years 1893-94 ushered in a revival of sorts among Auburn believers. During the Week of Prayer in December 1893, local elder Kimball met nightly with members who showed up as never before, including distant saints from Weedsport and Waterloo. They all testified to having had “a profitable season” together. The \textit{Indicator} stated that Auburn believers manifested “a good degree of missionary spirit” with several recent conversions.\textsuperscript{68} Two of these may have been the Bishop sisters of Scipio whom Elder P. Z. Kinne visited in February 1894 after holding several meetings in Auburn.\textsuperscript{69}

Perhaps another reason for conversions lay in the active lay work going on in Auburn. During the spring and summer of 1894, Sylvia Evans and Millie Thompson worked long hours canvassing for \textit{Bible Readings} in the city.\textsuperscript{70} William Fenner, also active, requested that Adventist publications be sent to him for missionary work. When D. A. Ball came through in April, therefore, he “found the church in a much better condition” than on his previous visit two years earlier.\textsuperscript{71}

Perhaps because of local members’ efforts, citizens manifested so much interest in Adventism that in July, the Conference decided to hold the state-wide camp meeting at Auburn, now a city of over 28,000 people. From July 26 through August 5, over 250 people crowded the grounds, which, unfortunately, were without any shade trees, “which the hot weather so loudly called for.” Sweating profusely in their heavy black suits and long dark dresses, men and women

\textsuperscript{66} \textit{Ibid.}, Nov. 23, 1892, p. 156.
\textsuperscript{67} \textit{Ibid.}, Dec. 28, 1892, pp. 1-2.
\textsuperscript{68} \textit{Ibid.}, Jan. 3, 1894, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{69} \textit{Ibid.}, Feb. 28, 1894, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{70} \textit{Ibid.}, May 5, 1894, p. 3; May 9, 1894, p. 3; June 13, 1894, p. 3; June 20, 1894, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Ibid.}, May 9, 1894, p. 2.
paid five cents to take the Owasco Lake electric street car out South Street to fill 30 family tents and many boarding rooms; to sleep on straw ticks and eat at the dining tent; and to hear stirring sermons by F. L. Mean, R. C. Porter, Sands Lane, as well as A. E. Place, D. A. Ballou, and I. D. Van Horn. Many local pastors urged their congregants to attend the meetings. During the final Sabbath’s revival meeting, 50 came forward for prayers and 23 new converts were baptized in Owasco Lake. Sunday’s offerings reached $56.00, a goodly sum considering that the nation was in the midst of a depression. Despite some “trouble” threatened by “the baser sort,” the “general good order that prevails at all our camp-meetings was also noticeable here,” Elder Van Horn reported, “and it was an astonishment to the people [of Auburn].”

Apparently Auburn’s residents loved Adventist preaching, for once again in 1895, the Conferenced held the state-wide camp meeting there. This time, however, they moved the dates to September 5 through 16 for cooler weather and relocated to East Genesee Street at the end of the trolley line to escape the rabble of the previous year. Many more people attended this session than the one in 1894 (perhaps due to the penny-a-mile policy on the Rome and Watertown railroads), necessitating the rental of many more tents (at $1.50-$2.25 each) and private rooms (at $2.00-$3.50) to accommodate the crowds. Meals sold for 15 cents each or seven meals for a dollar, and Battle Creek Sanitarium pitched a health foods tent on the grounds. A. E. Place reported that good weather prevailed and many of Auburn’s “intelligent people” came out to hear Pennsylvania Conference President R. A. Underwood speak on family values; R. C. Porter speak on Conference matters; and numerous others preach on doctrinal topics. “The spirit of seeking the Lord seemed to begin with the meeting,” Place enthused. On Sabbath, four men received ministerial ordination, while on Sunday, 14 were baptized and attendees gave $150.00 for a

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73 RH, July 17, 1894, p. 463; Aug. 28, 1894, pp. 555-56; NYI, June 20, 1894, p. 2; July 4, 1894, p. 2; July 18, 1894, p. 1; July 25, 1894, pp. 1-2.
missions offering. Confident that summer of a still greater work ahead, Place affirmed: “The work in New York is still progressing.” The Conference now had a total of seven evangelistic tents in the field.

These two camp meetings seemed for a while to inspire Auburn members to follow the path of right-doing and zealous missionary endeavor. When Elder Kinne returned to Auburn in October 1894, “a good spirit prevailed,” and while the Sunday business meeting disfellowshipped a few backsliders, Brother Kimble led in celebrating the Ordinances. Kinne suggested holding evangelistic meetings in town as a follow-up for interests developed at the recent camp meeting. During 1895, William Fenner also renewed his request for Adventist papers and tracts for missionary work, and in April advertised for “a first class bread and pastry baker” who “must be a good S.D.A.” lady or gentleman, perhaps to assist him in his shop.

When Conference vice-president Place returned in May, he described Auburn’s members as “of good courage” when he held “a profitable season together” with them. Along with William Fenner’s literature distribution, J. S. Frittz began canvassing in town during the summer of 1895, taking 20 orders in one 39-hour week. Others who labored here during the late 1890s included pioneer evangelist Elder J. W. Raymond in 1895; R. L. Bristol and A. R. Hyatt in 1897; and S. M. Cobb in 1898. Cobb enjoyed “a precious season of seeking the Lord” when “hearts were cheered by the refreshing showers of divine grace.” During the weekend meetings, Adventists showed a “good spirit” and several non-believers also came for whom Brother Vosburgh had labored during the winter of 1897-98. Cobb concluded that “Something should be

74 RH, Aug. 13, 1895, p. 526; Oct. 1, 1895, p. 637; NYI, July 24, 1895, p. 3; July 31, 1895, pp. 1-2; Aug. 7, 1895, p. 1; Aug. 21, 1895, pp. 1-2; Aug. 28, 1895, pp. 1-2.
75 RH, July 2, 1895, p. 428.
77 NYI, Apr. 24, 1895, p. 4.
78 NYI, June 5, 1895, p. 1.
79 NYI, Aug. 7, 1895, p. 3.
done for Auburn in the near future.” He admonished the members to be “true to God, honest with themselves, and loyal to the work committed to their hands.”

As the century closed, Mattie Kimble of Scipioville stated in a letter to Elder Kinne in 1896: “I trust the Auburn folks are trying to do better,” adding hopefully, “at least it has that appearance.” Over in Locke, however, Bert Aldrich, Sabbath school secretary, wrote Elder Place that the Genoa-Locke church “is in a needy condition” and urged him to come for a Week of Prayer soon.

Over in Geneva, prospects appeared very bright as canvasser Walter Erb sold copies of *The Coming King* to citizens to prepare them for upcoming meetings by New York’s only licensed Adventist female preacher, Lulu Wightman. When Mrs. Wightman arrived in March 1899 at this “virgin field in which little or nothing has ever been done for the truth,” as she described Geneva, she placed ads in all the newspapers, distributed handbills, and began a series of meetings lasting two months. At first she preached in a large storehouse on Linden Street donated free by a local merchant, with an organ donated by the opera house manager, and seats for 90 people, steam heat and gas lights. Her “team” included her husband John, Walter Erb, and herself. She called for “a perfect avalanche of printed matter” to distribute at meetings, giving her address as 67 Castle Street. Later, she moved the meetings to High Street Chapel as interest grew. The team sold over $100 worth of books, 150 tracts, and 621 papers, with one convert and “a harvest of good” anticipated. As the weather warmed in May, Lulu pitched a tent at the edge of town and, despite storms, continued her meetings with a “fair-sized congregation” present.

80 *NYI*, Dec. 18, 1895, p. 3; Apr. 21, 1897, pp. 2-3; May 5, 1897, p. 3; June 1, 1898, p. 4.
81 Mattie Kimble to P. Z. Kinne, May 31, 1896, GCA.
82 Bert B. Aldrich to A. E. Place, Nov. 14, 1896, GCA.
83 *NYI*, Mar. 22, 1899, p. 3; Mar. 29, 1899, p. 2; May 3, 1899, pp. 3-4; May 10, 1899, p. 2; May 31, 1899, p. 3.
Unfortunately, the full results of her efforts are not known, although the progress of her work must have converted several souls by 1900.

But if the 1890s seemed to represent the decade of progress for this area, it also witnessed the passing of most of the pioneers. The venerable old saint David Upson of Genoa, an Adventist for 41 years since 1851, “passed away in the triumphs of the faith” in January 1892 at the age of 90. But if the 1890s seemed to represent the decade of progress for this area, it also witnessed the passing of most of the pioneers. The venerable old saint David Upson of Genoa, an Adventist for 41 years since 1851, “passed away in the triumph of the faith” in January 1892 at the age of 90.84 In Scipio old Elizabeth Arnold (76) also passed to her rest that year.85 The year 1893 saw the demise of John Hicks (75) of Aurora and Betsey Lucas (76) of Locke.86 Both Mandana Cutter (58) of Aurora and William Durban (85) of Ledyard died in 1894.87 In 1896 Andrew Douglass of Moravia, a believer for 40 years since 1856, died also, “a worthy member of the little company at Moravia.”88

The passing of many senior saints, however, signaled a changing of the guard in upstate New York, for henceforth new names and faces would herald the message of the Three Angels in the twentieth century. It was my privilege to know many of these new individuals growing up in the Auburn SDA Church in the 1950s. In the next chapter, we will take up their story.

84 RH, Feb. 23, 1892, p. 126.
85 Ibid., Sept. 6, 1892, p. 575.
86 Ibid., Aug. 1, 1893, pp. 495, 499;
87 Ibid., July 3, 1894, p. 430; Dec. 18, 1894, p. 799.
88 NYI, Feb. 5, 1896, p. 4.
As Adventist churches in Albany, Utica, Syracuse, and Rochester grew by leaps and bounds during the early decades of the new century, Auburn, a city of 33,000, seemed to be locked in a holding pattern. Few district or quarterly meetings met here from 1900 to 1910 due to a widely scattered membership. When Elder S. B. Whitney arrived in 1901, he found “the brethren so scattered” that he could hold only two daytime meetings. Distance, age, infirmities, and apathy kept many away. But when Whitney visited personally with many believers, “there seemed to be a revival of the Advent spirit.” He anticipated that several would canvass Auburn with Ellen White’s new book *Christ’s Object Lessons*. During his meetings at the Upson home in Locke, the offering exceeded $20.00. Whitney returned to Auburn in 1902, finding that one man had “given up the faith.” But the Kimball sisters were having great success here selling *Christ’s Object Lessons*, as were two men in Locke and two more in Weedsport.\(^1\) In 1904 two more colporteurs—Harold Fisher and Arthur Coon—sold the book *Patriarchs and Prophets* in Auburn with some success.\(^2\)

But after 1902, the Auburn believers faced various internal problems. Widely scattered, often divided over contentious issues, and too prone to gossip about one another’s failures, gradually members slipped away. One husband left his unbelieving wife in 1905 and that created its share of scandal here, especially when she began attending the Presbyterian Church. These and other problems before 1909 had effectively cancelled much of the good done here during the 1890s and sent Auburn’s Sabbath school into a decline.\(^3\)

\(^1\) *Atlantic Union Gleaner [AUG]*, Apr. 1, 1903, p. 167; *NYI*, Jan. 16, 1901, p. 1; Nov. 26, 1902, p. 3; Dec. 24, 1902, p. 2.
\(^2\) *AUG*, July 6, 1904, p. 308.
Then in 1907, as the Conference grew too big to administer and to reach all churches from one headquarters, the delegates to the fall session divided it into three sections: Western, Eastern, and Greater New York conferences. The Western New York Conference, in which Auburn fell, had 36 churches with 900 believers, but only two licensed ministers and three ordained ministers able to labor—and one of them was 75 years old! Another, Frederick Wheeler, was 96 years old! E. W. Farnsworth wailed, “There is a famine for men—for laborers in general.” His plea brought another ordained minister and three licensed Bible workers to the Conference by the end of 1907.5

In Auburn, 1908 saw the arrival of E. W. Walker and his wife and Sister Robb to canvass the city again with Adventist papers and books.6 The Walkers experienced so much success with the book *The Coming King* that they switched to the larger book *Great Controversy* in April, anticipating good sales and greater blessings to Auburn’s eager buyers.7 Their labors brought rich fruit, for the *Gleaner* stated: “We were encouraged by reports from Auburn this week. The Lord has his people there yet who will, we believe, hold up the standard of truth in that city.”8

Although the U.S. experienced another depression in 1907-08, Auburn members’ giving remained steady. From October through December 1907, they gave $4.30 in tithes, $5.00 for the annual offering, and $12.50 for the Conference work among Blacks.9 Their Religious Liberty offering of $1.00 in May 190810 was followed from January through March of 1909 with $8.25 in tithes, $6.00 for Ingathering, $2.00 for the annual offering, and 50 cents for missions, a total of

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$17.75. Tithes fell to $1.14 from April through June 1909, but Sabbath school missions offerings more than tripled to $1.73.\footnote{Ibid., Apr. 28, 1909, p. 131.}

But as the new century dawned, many members passed to their rest. Little Charlotte Upson (4) died of peritonitis in 1901. Her last words were, “Goodnight, grandpa, we shall meet in the morning.”\footnote{Ibid., Aug. 11, 1909, p. 247.} In 1902 Mary Fenner, an Adventist for 30 years, died, followed in 1905 by Anna Upson (75) of Locke, also an Adventist for 30 years.\footnote{RH, Apr. 2, 1901, p. 222.} Then in 1907, the faithful old colporteur-patriarch of Auburn, William Fenner (85), died. A charter member of the Auburn Company since 1885, “he ever lived a humble, devoted Christian life,” Elder J. W. Raymond wrote. “He always carried the printed pages with him wherever he went.”\footnote{NYI, June 11, 1902, p. 4; March 15, 1905, p. 4.}

Canvassing continued to be one of the most successful means of witnessing in Auburn from 1910 to 1920. In 1910 Sister Clyde Baer and Ruth Mcleen, after canvassing Geneva, came to Auburn, now a city of 36,000 people, to sell Life and Health Magazines.\footnote{AUG, Nov. 21, 1907, p. 23.} Two years later, Arthur Kimble with his wife and family left Auburn to relocate near the recently established boarding academy at Tunessassa. There, in June 1912, Sister Kimble sickened and died.\footnote{Ibid., Sept. 7, 1910, p. 286.}

Many scattered saints came to Auburn for visits with friends from time to time, as did the young Ruth Mercereau, a South Lancaster Academy student, in 1913.\footnote{Ibid., Apr. 10, 1912, p. 5; June 12, 1912, p. 3.} Other believers, widely separated in Scipioville, Moravia, and Groton, received cheering calls from Elder Carr in the fall of 1913.\footnote{Ibid., June 18, 1913, p. 4.} Perhaps one reason Auburn did not see more preachers was that the headquarters for the Western New York Conference in 1911 was in Salamanca, nearly 100 miles southwest

\footnote{Ibid., Oct. 8, 1913, p. 4.}
during an era when very few Adventists had automobiles.\(^{20}\) In 1914, however, the headquarters was moved to Rochester, only 50 miles northwest, and that made a great difference to Auburn.\(^{21}\)

In 1915, as WWI raged in Europe, Conference President H. C. Hartwell stated: “There is an earnest desire on the part of the writer, as well as the whole committee, to enter new, unworked cities in the field as rapidly as possible.” The committee chose Auburn first. In May the leaders chose Miles Coon to head up a new tent effort with help from Bible workers Mr. and Mrs. William Vehorn and a tent master.\(^{22}\)

By early June, Coon began setting up his tent at “a favorable location” in the city and was soon spreading literature to prepare citizens for the meetings.\(^{23}\) Soon after he commenced preaching, Coon faced the strong and determined opposition of an Adventist apostate from 20 years before. Still hoping, however, “that the tide will turn in [our] favor before long,” he and his team kept on preaching through July.\(^{24}\) President Hartwell joined him there, preached four times, and showed colorful stereopticon slides for a week. Still, the tent effort faced rainy weather, Catholic opposition, and the harmful influence of the unnamed Adventist apostate, all of which combined to keep attendance low. But by early August, 20 people had accepted the Sabbath truth and begun to keep it, while a dozen more appeared favorable. As Coon shifted his tent elsewhere in Auburn, Elder Hartwell felt that “the outlook is encouraging for a good church to be organized in this place a little later.”\(^{25}\)

Coon’s first series of meetings closed after six weeks on August 8; one week later, he began his second series on August 15. Despite ministerial opposition (including one Baptist

\(^{22}\) *Ibid.*, May 19, 1915, p. 3.
\(^{25}\) *Ibid.*, Aug. 11, 1915, p. 2. From 1885 to 1915, Auburn had been considered a “society” or “company” rather than a church. This probably explains why no regular offerings and tithes were credited to Auburn as a “church” from 1900 to 1915.
minister’s nasty letter to the city paper claiming Adventists only taught the heresy of Ellen White’s views, not the Bible), Miles Coon believed that “the outlook is now very bright.” Whereas he had found only one Adventist still living in Auburn when he came in June, by September, a group of 35 persons met each Sabbath to worship. When President Hartwell revisited Auburn that fall, he found the tent “well filled,” a growing public interest in Adventist doctrines, and 30 converts. Brother Coon described the second effort as “excellent from the beginning.” When it closed on September 26, a total of 40 converts had taken their stand for truth. So on Sabbath, October 2, President Hartwell returned a third time to baptize these new believers in Owasco Lake and to organize them into the Auburn Seventh-day Adventist Church in a meeting in St. George’s Hall at 8 Genesee Street.

The meeting opened with singing, and then H. M. Fleming of Burt offered prayer. Elder Hartwell, after speaking briefly on “Organization,” presented the list of Adventist beliefs, including tithing, health and dress reform, to the 29 charter members. Eleven of these were newly baptized members: Isabell Burgess, Agnes Beach, Nellie and Ruth Cuddeback, Mrs. William Dawson, Harriet Johnson, Ida Kriegelstein and her young son Harold, and Pauline Perrageau, fifteen-year-old Paul Schmidt (later Smith). Four more awaited baptism: Mrs. Theodore Hemming, Oliver Hunting, Glen Kimball, and Nellie Payne. Five others transferred in by letter: Miles and Minnie Coon, Emma Rea, and William and Addie Vehorn. Nine more were accepted on profession of faith: Mary Bottoms, Margaret Bishop, Mary Dawlson, Mary Green, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Hitchcock, Mattie Kimble, Mary Kriegelstein, and Mrs. Schmidt (later Smith). These charter members at Auburn faced a rigid doctrinal examination. Then they chose six officers for the new church: Miles Coon as local elder, William Vehorn as deacon, Ida

26 Ibid., Aug. 18, 1915, pp. 5-6.
Kriegelstein as deaconess, Addie Vehorn as missionary secretary, Isabelle Burgess as clerk, and William Vehorn as treasurer. Despite the cessation of evangelistic meetings for the moment, “There is an excellent interest in this city,” Coon wrote in October, “which we trust will soon terminate in another harvest of souls.”

President and Mrs. Hartwell, as well as Miles Coon, took a deep personal interest in the fledgling church. Both men conducted the Week of Prayer services here in December 1915, then Miles Coon led in the quarterly meeting, giving a sermon on the ordinance of humility, after which three new members were received into fellowship: Clarence Bishop, Fred Green, and Richard King. The latter two were ordained as deacons, and when Coon left for Elmira, Green became the spiritual leader of the Auburn flock. Mrs. Hartwell established the first Young People’s Missionary Volunteer Society (MV) here that December, and ordered 20 new membership cards for Auburn’s youth. Marie Dawson was chosen M.V. president; Minnie Coon as vice-president; Agnes Beach as secretary-treasurer; and Ruth Cuddeback as pianist. Elder Coon (now ordained) met with members in February 1916 and found “a good interest in meetings,” including M.V. gatherings, which met at 32 Capitol Street. President Hartwell and field agent Wood preached there in March when new Sabbath school officers were chosen. That spring, William Vehorn was assigned to supervise the new church. In April Elder Coon and Brother Wood met with them for a testimony meeting, sermon, and the Communion service. That August, the new Conference president, Elder Kit Carson Russell, preached twice and

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appointed Emma Rea as spiritual guardian and leader of the church’s 32 members, for the Coons were leaving for the Niagara Falls district soon.\(^{31}\)

Despite the rationing and travel restriction imposed during the war, many spiritual activities brought nearby Adventists to Auburn. In September 1916, President Russell, with Atlantic Union’s Home Missionary Secretary A. E. Sanderson and Conference Field Secretary E. E. Covey, came by automobile to preach at Auburn. They only requested “shelter for our automobile,” but presumably found bed and board for themselves as well in members’ homes.\(^{32}\) Auburn members also enjoyed social get-togethers, as when Nellie Cuddeback as hostess invited the church to her home in August 1916 for a reception honoring Mr. and Mrs. Guy Winslow and Matilda Thaler, “whose services the church had enjoyed for several weeks.” Also that summer, Glenn Kimball joined the church fellowship as a new member.\(^{33}\)

In preparation for further evangelistic meeting in 1917, Effie Gilbert and Grace Price came to Auburn in September 1916 to canvass it with Adventist magazines and papers.\(^{34}\) That winter Elder Miles Coon also returned to the city.\(^{35}\) When he and his wife began their meetings in March, they discovered that “most of the dear members” they had converted fifteen months previously “have been faithful” in attendance, tithes, and offerings. In 17 months, the 20 members had sent over $2000 to the Conference. Members prayed that God would send more laborers into their area. “Let us remember this company [sic] at the throne of grace,” Coon asked readers. In June Conference Home Missionary Secretary J. Hottel spoke at Auburn and urged all to attend the camp meeting at Rochester that summer.\(^{36}\)

\(^{31}\) Ibid., Mar. 15, 1916, p. 8; CRB (1916).
\(^{32}\) AUG, Sept. 13, 1916, p. 5.
\(^{33}\) Ibid., Sept. 13, 1916, p. 6; CRB (1916).
\(^{34}\) Ibid., Oct. 11, 1916, p. 4.
\(^{35}\) Ibid., Feb. 28, 1917, p. 8.
\(^{36}\) Ibid., Mar. 28, 1917, p. 8; CRB (1917).
As many citizens during the Great War searched for answers to the meaning of the carnage, Adventist Bible workers and preachers pointed them to Bible prophecy and predictions of Armageddon just ahead. Bible worker Marie Bentz came to Auburn in 1917 to assist Ida Kriegelstein in leading this church. She accomplished a unifying work here until the fall of 1918, when Elder Hanson, president of the Alaskan Conference, “took her away as his bride.” “War fever” proved good for public evangelism. R. B. Clapp preached here in October 1917, while Fran Wells held Week of Prayer meetings in December. Then in 1918 D. E. H. Lindsey, Home Missionary Secretary, visited local believers. Although the long-time colporteur J. W. Friberger retired in July, witnessing in other forms continued, leading to another baptismal service at the Church of Christ’s Disciples on North Division Street when on July 27, Elder Russell immersed Fred and Mary Green, Clarence and Mary Bishop, and Hazel Bishop.

After the war reached its bloody climax in November 1918, Elder Russell returned to St. George’s Hall where members worshiped, and in July 1919 led them in celebrating the Ordinances. Russell found the church “of good courage” and recommended they prepare either for tent or hall meetings soon. To this end, Brother Friberger continued his canvassing efforts, which by December had led Louis and Mabel Kurz to join the church.

Conference workers loved to visit the Auburn members. Mrs. E. E. Prescott, Sabbath School Secretary, had “a very pleasant and profitable visit” in September 1918, while Home Missionary Secretary Joseph Capman came in January 1919 to organize a home missionary work here. Mrs. Fred Green became this church’s second Home Missionary leader, and Auburn’s 20 members were divided into two bands led by Marie Bentz and Nellie Cuddeback. For public

38 AUG, Feb. 20, 1918, p. 5.
40 AUG, Aug. 21, 1918, p. 6; CRB (1919).
distribution, they ordered 1000 copies of Present Truth. Mrs. Bentz also began giving Bible study instruction to the Bible workers’ band.\textsuperscript{41}

The first recorded wedding of an Auburn member took place at Elder Kit Russell’s home in Rochester when on February 15, 1919, Elder D. H. Hanson of Alaska took Bible worker Marie Bentz of Auburn to be his wife. Then they left New York to labor in the Northern New England Conference.\textsuperscript{42}

As the nineteen-teens came to a close, Auburn’s leadership and direction still came primarily from visiting Conference workers, not from a local elder or resident pastor. Elder Russell visited in early March 1919 and preached on Sabbath.\textsuperscript{43} He returned in July to celebrate the Ordinances and preached on Matthew 13:15-17.\textsuperscript{44} But the previous December of 1918, the Conference had sent a man and his wife from Corning to canvass in Auburn and take charge of the church here. Their names were William and Blanche Frank, and for over 50 years, they labored cheerfully and untiringly without pay to strengthen and encourage this congregation.

When the Franks, with eleven-year-old Leland, arrived, members met each Sabbath at St. George’s Hall over a store near Hunter’s Diner with one stove for heat.\textsuperscript{45} Here they gathered on January 17, 1919, for a Communion service, sang “Tell Me the Story of Jesus,” and William Frank spoke on “Humility,” followed by fervent testimonies. They met again in November for a Week of Prayer, also led by Frank.\textsuperscript{46} From 1915 to 1920, the members gathered at St. George’s Hall for Sabbath school, church, prayer meeting services, and one Home Missionary Convention in June 1920. Then in 1920, they moved to a more commodious hall on the third floor over the

\textsuperscript{41} AUG, Oct. 2, 1918, p. 5; Jan. 29, 1919, pp. 4-5.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., Feb. 26, 1919, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., Mar. 19, 1919, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., July 20, 1919, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{45} William J. Frank to Sr. Ferris, January 13, 1964; AUG, Dec. 31, 1919, p. 3; “Auburn Historical Sketch,” p. 2.
\textsuperscript{46} AUG, Dec. 3, 1919, p. 4; “Auburn Historical Sketch,” p. 3.
Cayuga National Bank building. Sometimes Blanche Frank preached, as on November 30, when she took II Peter 1 as her text and appealed for all to help with Ingathering.47

The nineteen-teens brought their share of deaths to Auburn’s ranks, although Auburn Adventists suffered fewer losses than other churches in the Conference. In June 1910, Mary Brown passed away; her daughter Catharine sent $3.56—her mother’s last offering—to the Conference.48 William Vehorn, a charter member since 1915, died in June 1916.49

The 1920s brought drastic changes to the work in New York, many of which strongly influenced the Auburn Church’s future. In 1921, Fernwood Academy and Clinton Academy were consolidated as Union Springs Academy, bringing new members and youthful talent to the Auburn-Union Springs District. Then the annual camp meetings were shifted to a permanent campgrounds in Union Springs in 1922. After that, in 1925 the headquarters of the newly consolidated New York Conference was moved from Rochester to Union Springs, taking up office space in a large white two-story house on the corner of Grove and Park streets. Shortly thereafter, Union Springs became the depot for the Conference Dorcas Welfare supplies. All of these changes brought more Adventist members, talent, and speakers to the district.

To coordinate all of these changes, the Conference chose Elder R. S. Fries as president from 1920 to 1922. Fries visited Auburn, then a city of 38,000, in April 1920.50 Then in June, Home Missionary Secretary R. B. Clapp enjoyed “a blessed occasion” at the Home Missionary convention held at Mechanics Hall in Auburn. On Sunday, Clapp led members in distributing a special anti-spiritualist issue of Signs here, finding one man who had been praying for light like this since 1895. “Auburn [church] has some excellent working members,” Clapp reported. One

48 AUG, June 22, 1910, p. 199; June 29, 1910, p. 206; CRB (1916-44).
49 CRB (1916).
50 AUG, May 5, 1920, p. 3.
woman remarked that this day of working for others “was the best day of her life.”\textsuperscript{51} In December, R. C. Taylor arrived to lead out in the Week of Prayer services. Then once again in April 1922, President Fries came and spoke on Isaiah 11:11 for the quarterly meeting in an upstairs room on Garden Street. During this meeting, local elder William Frank proposed that they move their meetings to the Ensenore Lodge Room of the Odd Fellows Hall on Garden Street so that the senior saints had no stairs to climb. After meeting there for two years, Auburn members moved once again to the Masonic Hall on South Street in 1924 because, besides being cleaner and neater than the Odd Fellow’s Hall, it also offered elevator service for the expanding membership. During 1921 Ruth Bardwell, Mabel Strauss, and Estella Bishop joined this church, followed in 1922 by Prudence Stradley, and in 1923 by Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Gibbs, Edna Mae Green, and Alice Ridley.\textsuperscript{52}

For most of the 1920s, the record is silent concerning what meetings were held or who preached here. It does show, however, that regular quarterly (Communion) services were held with the Franks leading out in October 1921; Elder Fries in April 1922; Elder Rice in April 1923; Elder Jones in August 1925; and Professor and Mrs. L. G. Sevrens from the Academy in October 1927.\textsuperscript{53} The silent but powerful statistics of steady growth in membership, offerings, tithes, and home missions work provided monthly in the \textit{Gleaner} also testify to the spiritual growth of the Auburn church.

During 1921, Auburn’s 23 members set their Ingathering goal at $200 and their “Big Week” goal at $22.50 per member. But they actually reached $29.40 per member for the Week of Sacrifice. During 1922, even though membership shrank from 23 to 21 persons, Ingathering topped $233 by January 1922, or $11.13 per member, which made Auburn the #7 church in the

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid.}, July 7, 1920, p. 5; “Auburn Historical Sketch,” p. 3; CRB (1920, 1922, 1916-44).
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{AUG}, Dec. 8, 1920, p. 5; “Auburn Historical Sketch,” p. 3; CRB (1922, 1916-44).
\textsuperscript{53} CRB (1921-1927).
Conference.\textsuperscript{54} The percentage of Auburn’s active missionary workers grew from 35\% in March to 60\% by June to 67\% by October.\textsuperscript{55} Their new Ingathering campaign, which raised $55.36 by October 7, had topped $200 by November 4—with only eighteen members to raise it.\textsuperscript{56} That same year, as previously mentioned, the Western and Eastern New York Conferences were joined at the Union Springs camp meeting in August, forming one united Conference with 60 churches and 2100 members.\textsuperscript{57}

During 1923, Auburn became an “Honor Roll” church with 71\% of its members engaged in active missionary work in their neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{58} Ingathering records of $12.38 per member also put Auburn #10 in the Conference that fall.\textsuperscript{59}

The year 1924 saw Auburn’s membership climb back from 18 to 21, and these hardworking members raised $262 in Ingathering funds ($12.48 per member), keeping the church high on the Conference “Honor Roll.”\textsuperscript{60} Members gave $1.52 each during “Big Week” in July.\textsuperscript{61} For working at least 50 hours (or for exceeding $50 in Ingathering funds), Emma Rea had her name entered in the “Golden Jubilee League” of the Conference in November; while her colleagues raised their Ingathering giving from $11.86 per member to $14.55 per member in December, placing Auburn fifteenth in the Conference.\textsuperscript{62}

Before the campaign ended in January 1925, Auburn had reached $14.81 per member.\textsuperscript{63} This church also achieved honor roll status for exceeding the weekly Conference Sabbath school

\textsuperscript{54} AUG, Jan. 19, 1921, p. 6; June 1, 1921, p. 5; Jan. 25, 1922, p. 12.  
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., Mar. 15, 1922, p. 4; June 28, 1922, p. 6; Nov. 8, 1922, p. 3.  
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., Oct. 18, 1922, p. 6; Nov. 15, 1922, p. 5.  
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., May 24, 1922, p. 4; May 31, 1922, p. 3; Sept. 13, 1920, p. 1.  
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., June 20, 1923, p. 4.  
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., Nov. 28, 1923, p. 5.  
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., Jan. 23, 1924, p. 10; June 4, 1924, p. 2.  
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., July 30, 1924, p. 4.  
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., Nov. 5, 1924, p. 2; Nov. 12, 1924, p. 5; Dec. 24, 1924, p. 3.  
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., Jan. 14, 1925, p. 2.
goal of 30 cents per member (Auburn hit 38 cents per member) in April 1925. Believers here also raised $1.29 each for “Big Week,” $7.50 each for Ingathering, and $1.67 each for the Inca Mission in Peru and Bolivia.

While their Ingathering total actually fell to $165.18 in January 1926, “Big Week” giving nearly doubled to over $2.00 per member. When President Jones visited Auburn in September, he said, “The work seems onward.” It certainly did! Personal Ingathering totals climbed from $1.56 in October to $4.67 in November and to over $5.00 by December. Auburn Adventists’ future seemed bright indeed in 1926. But that summer, tragedy struck. A fire of undetermined origin which destroyed the old Second Presbyterian Church on South Street also gutted the Masonic Temple next door. William Frank and a fireman dashed into the still smoldering building hours later, crawling through a broken window in the front door and wading through ankle-deep water. Mr. Frank found the precious church hymnbooks (Christ in Song) scorched and water-damaged, but a glass jar full of $9.00 in Investment pennies survived the heat “in perfect condition.” After the fire, members met in the Odd Fellows Hall on State Street for a year until the new Masonic Hall was finished, and then they met on the third floor in St. Paul’s Lodge rooms from 1927 until 1951.

Auburn’s active home missionary band still held honor roll status in 1927 with 56% participation, and its Sabbath school members continued to give over 32 cents per week. A group of magazine workers began selling Adventist periodicals here in April 1927 and found much interest among local citizens. Meanwhile, members raised $1.33 apiece for Thirteenth

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64 Ibid., May 6, 1925, p. 2.
65 Ibid., Aug. 12, 1925, p. 4; Oct. 8, 1925, p. 5; Nov. 4, 1925, p. 5.
66 Ibid., Jan. 20, 1926, p. 6; June 30, 1926, p. 3.
67 Ibid., Sept. 29, 1926, p. 6; June 30, 1926, p. 3.
68 Ibid., Octg. 13, 1926, p. 5; Nov. 17, 1926, p. 3; Dec. 15, 1926, p. 2; “Auburn Historical Sketch,” p. 3.
69 AUG, Jan. 12, 1927, p. 4; Feb. 23, 1927, p. 4.
70 Ibid., Apr. 20, 1927, p. 7.
Sabbath Offering in April, $6.68 each for Ingathering in November, and ranked #13 in the Conference by December for churches with over 50% of members involved in home missionary work.\(^{71}\) That same month, John Taber became district representative for Cayuga, Seneca, Ontario, Wayne, and Yates Counties.\(^{72}\)

Finding the city of Auburn still very good canvassing territory, Mr. C. Lynes came here in late 1927 to work 30 hours a week selling books. Soon he had $96.00 in deliveries by January 1928.\(^{73}\) Perhaps his labors inspired local Adventists as well, for in 1928 they exceeded all previous goals: $7.42 Ingathering per person in January; 40 cents per week Sabbath school offerings; 60% of the members involved in home missions work; and a year-end Ingathering thrust that saw individual’s goals climb steadily from $1.60 each in September to $3.50 in October, $4.79 in November, and $5.05 in December.\(^{74}\)

In 1929—the year of the Great Crash in America—Auburn members remained on the Conference honor rolls for Sabbath school giving, Ingathering ($10.45 per member in January 1929), lesson study (55%), and home missions work (65% active).\(^{75}\) Once again, Emma Rea, star colporteur, received “Big Week” honor roll recognition, while over in Seneca Falls and Geneva, canvassers for the first time began scattering gospel seeds which by May began to bear fruit in requests for more literature. Seven interested souls joined the Auburn church in 1929 as a result: Sheldon and Virginia Stevens, Sarah Taylor, Mary Dennis, Helen Fletcher, Mrs. James Rose, and Florence Tuck. But the 1920s also witnessed the loss of Margaret Bishop, who died in October 1923.\(^{76}\)

\(^{71}\) *Ibid.*, May 11, 1927, p. 3; Oct. 5, 1927, p. 3; Nov. 30, 1927, p. 4; Dec. 21, 1927, p. 3.


\(^{76}\) *Ibid.*, May 22, 1929, p. 3; May 29, 1929, p. 3; CRB (1916-44).
But largely due to the organization and encouragement of the Franks and Greens, Sabbath school and church activities continued to show spiritual growth and commitment during the 1930s despite the Great Depression. In 1930, active participation in home missions work shot up from 50% to 64% by August,\textsuperscript{77} while personal Ingathering giving rose from $9.55 in January to $10.75 in September.\textsuperscript{78} In addition, members gave nearly a dollar each for “Big Week” and $1.74 each for Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. Three new members joined the church in 1930 as well: Hazel Kincaide, Effa Gilbrit, and Kathrine Gilbrit.\textsuperscript{79}

Active missionary involvement in 1931 remained above 60%, while Ingathering giving reached over $15.00 per person. Members also rejoiced in 1931 when Charlotte Decker, Eunice Fox, and Harold and Florence Guest were baptized.\textsuperscript{80} But probably the event which stirred the greatest excitement in 1931—especially among Auburn’s Adventist youth—was the holding of New York’s first Adventist youth camp at the YMCA campsite on Owasco Lake. For only $10 for ten days (August 17-26 for boys; August 26-September 4 for girls), youth ages ten to sixteen could enjoy swimming, hiking, and playing games. Local, union, and General Conference men and women planned the program carefully to provide time for recreation, nature study, prayer, and worship, eating and sleeping, and activities to encourage right living habits, friendships, teamwork, and the development of outdoors skills. Campers stayed in 14’x16’ tents, splashed along an 800’ beach front at the base of a 400-yard slope, and crammed into the mess hall (built to hold 100) for delicious meals with their counselors, instructors, and a camp nurse.

The daily schedule called for an early dip in the lake, followed by Morning Watch worship and prayer bands. Then came a hearty breakfast, followed by camp duties, the council

\textsuperscript{77} AUG, Jan. 1, 1930, p. 5; Apr. 9, 1930, p. 4; Sept. 10, 1930, p. 6; Oct. 8, 1930, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., Feb. 12, 1930, p. 5; Oct. 15, 1930, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., Mar. 12, 1930, p. 4; July 9, 1930, p. 4; Aug. 20, 1930, p. 5; CRB (1916-1944).
\textsuperscript{80} AUG, Jan. 7, 1931, p. 5; Feb. 11, 1931, p. 3; Jan. 21, 1931, p. 5; CRB (1916-1944).
hour, and tent inspection. After flag raising and salutes came time for first aid and campcraft classes, playing or swimming. Before they knew it, the cafeteria bell summoned them to lunch. After they had finished post-lunch chores and a brief rest period, campers enjoyed hiking, nature study, camp craft, and swimming until suppertime. Then came flag lowering, campfire stories and songs, and taps, with all quiet and sleeping.

That first year, 29 boys and 40 girls attended Camp Owasco amidst warm fall weather. “The only thing the matter with this camp,” one boy exclaimed, “is that it doesn’t last long enough!” For almost 40 years, Adventist parents sent their eager youth to Camp Owasco, which continued to be the youth camp until Camp Cherokee was purchased.  

But if autumn provided excellent weather for camp activities, upstate New York’s winters could drastically hamper travel. In March 1931, a severe snowstorm prompted Elder Bohner to write: “There has been no automobile traffic between our office [Union Springs] and Auburn…since last Sunday.” If the snow blocked traffic occasionally, the Great Depression slowed giving in Auburn during the early 1930s. Sabbath school offerings fell to only 21 cents per member in July and then to 20 cents in October 1932; unable to raise their Ingathering goals, both Auburn and Union Springs churches sought expanded territory in August.  

Putting forth supreme, sacrificial effort in 1933, members raised their Sabbath school giving to 24 cents each in January and then 29 cents apiece by June. When Auburn’s home missionary participation level climbed from 63% to 70% in 1933, Auburn became the #4 church in the Conference. Their witnessing zeal also won Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Holbrit and Solucia Guppy

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81 *AUG*, June 17, 1931, p. 2; July 1, 1931, p. 3; July 15, 1931, p. 5; July 22, 1931, p. 4; Aug. 5, 1931, p. 4; Aug. 19, 1931, p. 2.
to membership in 1933. While the effects of the Depression were still evident in 1934, Auburn believers doubled their Sabbath school giving from 1933, increased their Sabbath School Investment and Thirteenth Sabbath offerings, kept their participation rate above 50%, and exceeded their “Big Week” personal goals of $1.25 per member by raising $1.73 each.

As better economic conditions returned in 1935-36, Conference leaders invited all boys and girls from the entire Atlantic Union to come to Camp Owasco from August 18 to 28. This mixing of the sexes at an Adventist youth camp may be unique to the New York Conference, as it simply was not done at Michigan’s camps until the 1960s. Back in Auburn in 1935, members—now numbering 23, including new converts Artemus and Elizabeth Green—raised $19.75 in Sabbath school offerings. Faithful Auburn colporteurs H. J. H. Albright and A. R. Evans continued in 1936 to spread gospel truth through the sale of the books *Christ's Object Lessons* and *Bible Readings*. Their efforts led George Emunick, Mrs. Jordan, and Gustav and Erna Freitag to join the church by December 1936. By April 1937, Charles Lynes had replaced Albright and was canvassing with Evans. Auburn members enjoyed hearing some distinguished speakers as well in 1937. Conference President Howard visited in October and laid plans for evangelistic meetings. In November, Elder Theodore Carcich led a prayer meeting at the Taylor home. Mr. Libby held the Week of Prayer services that December, “one of the most solemn and impressive meetings that was ever held in the Auburn church,” the clerk noted.

During the late 1930s, members’ generous giving reached spectacular levels compared with the Depression years. Their $1.35 per member Sabbath school mission offerings put

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85 Ibid., Apr. 5, 1933, p. 5; May 3, 1933, p. 4 CRB (1916-1944).
86 AUG, Jan. 31, 1934, p. 3; Mar. 21, 1934, p. 6; Sept. 26, 1934, p. 5; Mar. 28, 1934, p. 6; May 9, 1934, p. 3; Aug. 8, 1934, p. 5.
87 Ibid., June 12, 1938, p. 3.
88 Ibid., Feb. 6, 1935, p. 3; Feb. 26, 1936, p. 5; CRB (1916-1944).
89 AUG, July 26, 1936, p. 7; CRB (1916-1944).
90 AUG, Apr. 28, 1937, p. 5; CRB (1937).
Auburn on the Silver Jubilee Honor Roll with a Penant Honor in August 1937, while their Ingathering total reached $162.25 that fall.\textsuperscript{91} In April 1938, an astounding 87\% of all members here participated in home missionary activities, and by August, this figure peaked at 100\% participation!\textsuperscript{92} With 33 cents per member in Sabbath school giving, Auburn was fourth in the Conference by March 1938, while personal Ingathering giving jumped from $2.70 each in October to $4.22 each by November.\textsuperscript{93}

A variety of preachers visited during 1938 to encourage the Auburn saints. In early April, Elder Bohner spoke on prayer and recommended that members spend ten minutes daily in prayer, ten minutes in Bible study, and ten minutes witnessing for their faith. Mr. Libby “praised the good spirit” of members here who passed out 1000 leaflets across the city. When he spoke two weeks later, his wife and Mr. Russell sang a duet. Bohner, Libby, and A. G. Stregler came again in May to preach and sing. In October Mr. Jackson from the Academy preached three times, while in November and December, Jackson and Russell brought several students with them when they spoke here. In late December Elders Ruf, Russell, and Hunt from the Conference office came, preached, and a quartet sang. Also in 1938, the Auburn Dorcas Society was formed with Mary Green and Blanche Frank as leaders.\textsuperscript{94} That winter, Mr. Gerald led local members in the Week of Prayer. As the year ended, four more individuals joined this church: Mabel Sarr and her son Clarence, Agnes Steele, and Leland Frank, son of William and Blanche Frank who had guided this church for two decades already.\textsuperscript{95}

As God richly blessed their sacrificial spirit in 1939, conditions for Auburn members just seemed to get better and better. When Sabbath school giving reached 32 cents per member in

\textsuperscript{91} AUG, Aug. 4, 1937, p. 3; Nov. 10, 1937, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., Apr. 27, 1938, p. 5; Aug. 10, 1938, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., May 18, 1938, p. 4; Oct. 12, 1938, p. 3; Nov. 30, 1938, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., May 11, 1938, p. 6; CRB (1938).
\textsuperscript{95} AUG, Nov. 30, 1938, p. 5; CRB (1916-1944).
March, Auburn stood sixth in the Conference; but by May, its 42 cents per member placed it second in New York as a pennant Sabbath school. As world-shattering events led into World War II that fall, Auburn members enjoyed the cheering visits of guest speakers like Elders Russell, Jackson, and Coalbook, who came from the Academy to preach, bringing students for special music. Occasionally foreign missionaries told their stories, as E. M. Meleen, who had spent 21 years in India, did in April and August. Sometimes Conference officers dropped by, as Field Secretary W. F. Fleming in January, Home Missionary Secretary Bohner in April and December, and President Howard in July and November, when Leland Frank played a violin solo.96 Active lay witnessing remained at 67% participation in 1939, while Ingathering solicitation climbed to $10.46 per member by the end of October 1939, putting Auburn eighth on the Conference chart, despite their recent loss of charter member Isabelle Burgess in 1934, Mrs. James Rose in 1936 and her husband Jim in 1937, Mary Dennis in 1938, and Clarence Bishop in 1939.97 With only 23 members, including the 1939 converts June and Ruth Bishop,98 Auburn certainly was not a large church, but in those days there was no spiritual dead wood among them: every member had been trained, equipped, and motivated for active witnessing. Although still without a resident pastor, Adventists here had learned how to work together and how to sacrifice for spiritual advancement, and their witness would have a powerful impact upon this area in the years ahead.

96 AUG, Jan. 4, 1939, p. 3; Mar. 1, 1939, p. 4; June 7, 1939, p. 4.
97 Ibid., Mar. 8, 1939, p. 2; Oct. 18, 1939, p. 6; Nov. 15, 1939, p. 4; CRB (1916-1944).
98 CRB (1916-1944).
On September 1, 1939, the Nazi-inspired *blitzkrieg* invasion of Poland ushered in WWII, seven years of mechanized killing and finally atomic horrors over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But while Europe agonized its way through this terrible war, back in the peacetime USA, the 1940s opened as a decade of prosperity and optimism for most citizens. Here in Auburn, a city of 40,000 people, the 1940s represented a “golden decade” of outstanding spiritual and social achievements for Seventh-day Adventists.

As citizens searched for answers to the meaning of this war for them, Elder A. F. Ruf began in December 1939 the “Songs and Meditation” broadcast over radio station WMBO every Thursday afternoon at 4 p.m. His heart-to-heart talks emphasized how a sinner can come to Christ. Auburn citizens responded favorably to the program and urged WMBO to keep it on the air. By March Union Springs pastor Elder Paul Nosworthy replaced Ruf as speaker, and the Conference provided the funding.¹

Public response kept Auburn Adventists busy following up interests. In February 1940, lay witnessing participation hit 90% and by March, topped 125% as many local non-members joined in sharing tracts and Bible studies with eager listeners.² In May, Paul Smith, local Adventist tentmaker, offered to furnish the Conference with an evangelistic tent free of charge if they would send a man to hold an effort in Auburn during the coming summer. “We have most gladly accepted his kind offer,” President Howard replied. “Are there others in the conference who would like to do likewise?”³

¹ *AUG*, Jan. 24, 1940, p. 5; Mar. 27, 1940, p. 4.
² Ibid., Apr. 3, 1940, p. 5; Apr. 24, 1940, p. 3.
³ Ibid., May 29, 1940, p. 3.
Conference leaders in 1940 began to pay attention to Auburn members’ outstanding dedication and achievements. When this church in June became one of only three Ingathering “Victory” churches, Elder Bohner declared: “We wish to extend our appreciation to our loyal Auburn members for this fine achievement.” In August, he noted that “Our loyal Auburn Sabbath school heads all our good 13th Sabbath records for the second quarter…with the fine per capital of $2.55.” Their goal had been $40.00, but they actually reached $51.00. Many speakers seemed to enjoy returning for fellowship with this church in 1940. Academy teachers like William Fleming and James Russell came in January and April, while Conference officials such as Elders Strickland, Bohner, Ruf, and Howard often came twice a month to preach, sing, or help members raise their Ingathering goals. In June Dr. and Mrs. Gibbs came up from Cortland, preached on I Corinthians 13, and then sang a duet. In August Elder Howard held tent meetings on the corner of Grand and Beach Avenues, supported by both Union Springs and Auburn members. In December, Mr. Atwood and William Frank led the Week of Prayer, while three days after Christmas, Elder Theodore Carcich baptized four Auburn members at Syracuse. President Howard boasted that Auburn “is the most loyal and faithful church in the conference.”

Meanwhile, over in Seneca Falls, faithful Adventist canvassers from Union Springs had for months been distributing Present Truth to residents. Local interest grew, and President Howard planned to begin a series of meetings there in September. In Auburn, a similar campaign of blanketing the city with Present Truth prepared the way for some very successful tent meetings that summer. Six residents began attending Sabbath school and church, and Mr. Atwood started Bible studies with them.

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4 Ibid., June 26, 1940, p. 5.
5 Ibid., Aug. 7, 1940, p. 3; CRB (1940).
6 AUG, Sept. 18, 1940, p. 3.
7 Ibid., Oct. 9, 1940, p. 3; Nov. 13, 1940, p. 4.
Back in Seneca Falls, Pastor Paul Nosworthy and Wilbur Atwood and his wife began 20 Bible studies in October to follow up Elder Howard’s meetings. Public response in both towns helped Auburn members raise over $13.75 each in Ingathering funds, placing Auburn third in the Conference. At the end of the year, Auburn led the Conference with 125% lay participation in witnessing activities. Members’ witnessing efforts brought in six converts in 1940: Wilber and Mildred Atwood, Fred Green, Mrs. J. W. Malone, Florence Jayne, and Mr. C. Meyers.

Giving Bible studies and distributing tracts in Auburn and Seneca Falls accounted for much of this participation activity throughout 1941. Already several residents in Seneca Falls had begun keeping the Sabbath, and Conference leaders expected to start a regular Sabbath school there soon. In June, Elder Glen Coon, pastor at the Syracuse Church, baptized five new members for the Auburn Church, while Elder R. T. Minesinger, Academy Bible teacher, began a series of meetings in the Auburn Chamber of Commerce building which sparked great public interest. On June 7, regular Sabbath services started in Seneca Falls, led by Union Springs members, who also planned a literature distribution campaign soon for Waterloo.

That fall, Auburn once again achieved “Honor Roll” status for its Ingathering efforts when, along with 22 other churches, it went “over the top” of its goal by September. Perhaps the members sang the “Doxology” that autumn from the brand new black cloth Church Hymnals now on sale for 37.5 cents each if exchanged for old copies of Christ in Song books. Then over in Waterloo that fall, R. T. Minesinger began laying plans to conduct evangelistic meetings soon. This effort plus transfers during 1941 brought eight new members into the Auburn church:

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8 Ibid., Oct. 16, 1940, p. 3; Nov. 13, 1940, p. 4.
9 Ibid., Nov. 20, 1940, p. 4; CRB (1916-1944).
10 AUG, Feb. 26, 1941, p. 4.
11 Ibid., Apr. 30, 1941, pp. 4-5.
12 Ibid., July 2, 1941, pp. 3-4.
13 Ibid., Aug. 27, 1941, p. 6; Sept. 24, 1941, p. 3.
14 Ibid., Sept. 10, 1941, p. 6.
Charlotte Decker, Frank Burke, Mae Monroe, Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Wood, and Pauline, Wanda, and Betty Rogers.\(^{15}\)

The day before the imperial forces of Japan attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor, thus bringing America into the war on December 8, 1941, back in the Academy’s peaceful little chapel, Grace Krause wed Bob Hunt, both Auburn members. Leland Frank played two violin numbers and Mrs. W. A. Sawers sang “I Love You Truly” and “Because.”\(^{16}\)

Conference officers at the Union Springs office frequently visited Auburn’s faithful flock. Conference Secretary Oliver came with Elder Minesinger in January; President Howard spoke on January 24 and ordained Fred Green as a deacon; Atlantic Union President M. L. Rice preached in April; and Elder Butler from the Texas Conference came in May. Newly elected President Elder Owen T. Garner, stern and balding, preached at the Masonic Hall at 10 South Street in August 1942; Field Missionary Secretary C. J. Oliver spoke on canvassing that summer; and Elder Bohner also visited Auburn, thrilled to hear that members had ordered 480 copies of the new booklet “What Seventh-day Adventists Believe” for distribution to Auburn’s citizens.\(^{17}\)

Josephine Frank, a secretary at the Conference office since 1939, occasionally worshiped at Auburn before leaving for the Greater New York Conference office in the fall of 1942.\(^{18}\)

President Garner returned to preach in early April 1943, rejoicing to see how 1942 had witnessed seven new additions to this church: Herb and Millie Pratt, Bob and Ethel Curren, Mr. and Mrs. William Hayden, and Florence Tuck.\(^{19}\)

Once again in 1943, this indefatigable church went way over its Ingathering goal, with members exceeding their “Minuteman Goal” of $13.00 apiece. As for Thirteenth Sabbath

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\(^{16}\) *AUG*, Jan. 7, 1942, p. 5.


\(^{18}\) *AUG*, Sept. 2, 1942, p. 5; Oct. 21, 1942, p. 5.

offerings, only Albion exceeded Auburn’s $3.00 per member giving in the Conference.\textsuperscript{20} Believers here even topped their quota of funds for Atlantic Union College’s new heating plant, one of 12 churches in the Union to do so. Elder Bohner visited Auburn in February 1943 to plan a distribution campaign for \textit{Present Truth} and again in November for the Week of Prayer. President Garner preached on the “Time of Trouble” in April and October as the war waging in Europe and the Pacific took hundreds of American lives. Members also designated the fourth Sabbath of each month as temperance Sabbath. The year 1943 also saw seven new members join this church: Morris (“Morrie”) and Helen Roche with their son Edward (“Ed”), Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Kimble, Mrs. Arthur Scofield, and Mr. J. B. Frank.\textsuperscript{21}

Auburn’s outstanding liberality focused widespread attention on this little church of 25 members. As WWII restrictions on travel hampered leaders’ access to local churches, Conference officials still found ways to visit Auburn. Elder L. L. Grand Pre, the new Field Missionary Secretary, spoke here in January 1944, referring to canvassers as “soldiers of the Cross” and “knights of the book.”\textsuperscript{22} Elder Adam Rudy preached here in February, followed by Elder Grand Pre in March, and Elder and Mrs. T. J. Jenkins, who as recent survivors of the shipwreck \textit{Zam-Zam}, had exciting tales to tell in April.\textsuperscript{23} Elder Rudy returned in April to speak again, followed by Mr. Bass from the Academy, while Elder Minesinger came at the end of the month for a Sabbath service. Throughout the rest of 1944, Conference workers Grand Pre, Bohner, Kent, and local pastors like Elder Nelson of Jamestown and Elder Wright of Buffalo preached often at Auburn, giving what one church clerk called “splendid talks” here. Their efforts bore good fruit: In January, Margaret and Dorothy Kimble joined the church, and in May,  

\textsuperscript{20} AUG, June 30, 1943, p. 4; Oct. 13, 1943, p. 4.  
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., Nov. 5, 1943, p. 4; CRB (1943).  
\textsuperscript{22} AUG, Jan. 28, 1944, p. 4.  
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., Mar. 10, 1944, p. 2; Mar. 32, 1944, p. 5; Apr. 14, 1944, p. 3.
Mr. L. R. Klumpp was baptized, while in November four couples asked Elder Garner to dedicate their infants to the Lord: Cheryl Kriegelstein, Lottie Curren, Wayne Pratt, and Charles Wood.\textsuperscript{24}

Probably one of 1944’s most thrilling occasions for the sweet, smiling ladies, Mrs. Green and Mrs. Frank, personally was the Onondaga Dorcas Federation convention held at the Women’s Union here in Auburn in March. A large delegation from several Dorcas societies came to hear speakers Elder A. Houghton, Elder R. T. Minesinger, and President Garner. Local society’s reports followed these speeches, and then all enjoyed “a delicious luncheon” at the cafeteria. “All enjoyed a very pleasant and interesting day,” said Elsie Hart, Dorcas Federation secretary.\textsuperscript{25} For their Christian zeal and dedication, Auburn’s church board chose Mrs. Frank and Mrs. Green, along with Mrs. Fletcher and Mrs. Hayden, as delegates to the Conference biennial session at Union Springs—the first all-female delegation!\textsuperscript{26}

Auburn members entered new avenues of outreach witnessing in the mid-1940s. In November 1944, they successfully persuaded station WMBO to air the “Voice of Prophecy” broadcast every Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m.\textsuperscript{27} Also, they cooperated with Elder Bohner, the stocky, dark-haired Conference Missionary Secretary who spoke English with a German accent, in entering Auburn’s maximum security prison to interest four inmates in studying the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century Bible Course. Heart-warming letters from these four indicated that their lives were being changed.\textsuperscript{28}

As the war in Europe neared its climax in early 1945, in Auburn believers chose a new slate of church officers: J. B. Frank, who limped, and W. J. Frank, who loved to sing, as elders; Maurice Roche and Herb Pratt as deacons; and Helen Fletcher and Blanche Frank as

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[24]{\textit{Ibid.}, Apr. 21, 1944, p. 5; May 5, 1944, p. 4; CRB (1944).}
\footnotetext[25]{\textit{AUG}, Apr. 28, 1944, p. 5.}
\footnotetext[26]{CRB (1944).}
\footnotetext[27]{\textit{AUG}, Nov. 17, 1944, p. 8.}
\footnotetext[28]{\textit{Ibid.}, Dec. 15, 1944, p. 8.}
\end{footnotes}
deaconesses. Ethel Curren served as church clerk, Mrs. Harold Kriegelstein as treasurer (with Edna Kriegelstein as her assistant), while Helen Fletcher as missionary secretary and Helen Roche as missionary leader also guided the church. Mary Green was Sabbath school superintendent, with Helen Roche as her assistant and Herb Pratt as secretary (with Maurice Roche as his assistant). Blanche Frank also filled the offices of Dorcas leader, pianist, and Home Missionary Secretary.29

During 1945, Conference officers visited Auburn to preach and encourage the saints more frequently. In January, members heard Elder Grand Pre, Mr. Shafer, former missionary to India E. M. Meleen, and former China Division president Elder Nathan Brewer, who had been interned by the Japanese in Hong Kong during WWII. Elder Bohner came frequently, as did President Garner and Academy principal C. A. Nelson, who found the believers “working enthusiastically to finish their [Ingathering] goal.”30 In October, Elder Bohner praised this church as “an exceptionally loyal group [who] rank high in their gifts to missions.” Its 30 members had given $161.00 for Thirteenth Sabbath Offering and regularly gave 55 cents apiece for Sabbath school offerings. Mrs. Frank and Green continued their Bible studies follow-up work and expected soon to see three new converts join the church.31

One of those most enjoying these 20th Century Bible Course lessons wrote from behind bars in Auburn’s Prison in February to say, “These lessons are beginning to mean a great deal to me. I read my Bible every morning and night.” In addition, this inmate had read Steps to Christ through 15 times and the tiny booklet Jesus also.32 Soon, seven prisoners were enrolled in the Bible course, and Elder Bohner planned to organize a prison Sabbath school. But growing too

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29 CRB (1944).
30 AUG, Jan. 19, 1945, p. 4; Jan. 26, 1945, p. 3; Feb. 2, 1945, p. 6; Feb. 23, 1945, p. 5; Mar. 30, 1945, p. 5; Aug. 10, 1945, p. 4; May 4, 1945, p. 5; CRB (1945).
31 AUG, Nov. 16, 1945, p. 4.
32 Ibid., Feb. 16, 1945, p. 5.
busy at the Conference office, he turned this responsibility over to the man who became Auburn’s first resident pastor in 1945: Tall, dark-haired, quiet-spoken young Academy Bible teacher Walton W. Smith was not ordained, but he proved to be a dynamic leader for both the Auburn and Union Springs churches. When in October he began preaching regularly here, he tackled sensitive subjects like Adventists and meat-eating.  

With the war ended, members stepped up their local door-to-door witnessing activities. Elder Bohner praised them in January 1946 for being the #5 church in the Conference with 10 Bible course applications turned in for one month. When Elder C. A. Nelson visited the prison in January, he found Walton Smith leading the Sabbath school there. Both men then began a class with the church members on “How to Give Bible Studies.” Soon they were taking Bible course lessons all over town. Their efforts converted Mr. and Mrs. George Austin in March 1945; in January 1946 Josephine Frank transferred back to Auburn. As the congregation grew, the board appointed a three-man team (Herb Pratt, Maurice Roche, Harold Kriegelstein) to search for a larger meeting place.

In November the Onondaga Dorcas Federation once again held its convention in Auburn. Elder Alexander Houghton and Herbert McIndoe spoke, and expressed their willingness to help the Conference raise $50,000 for famine relief by Thanksgiving. Blanche Frank, the quiet but hard-working president of the Onondaga Federation, helped plan the next meeting in February at Cortland’s YWCA, where speakers included General Conference representative Elder Butler, Mrs. Ulloth of New York City, and Elder Houghton of the Syracuse District. When elections were held in October 1947, Blanche Frank once again became Federation president, a position
she would hold for five years, while Mrs. Roger Pratt of Union Springs became vice-president and Edna Kriegelstein of Auburn became secretary.\(^{38}\)

Even though the Conference office was moved from Union Springs to Syraucse following a tragic fire at the Grove Street headquarters in 1945, pastors and workers still visited Auburn for preaching services. Old favorites like Elder Bohner and Walton Smith preached most often, but USA’s new principal, Henry T. Johnson, came in June; Gerald Greene from the Adirondacks in July; USA’s music teacher Mr. Renney and science teacher George Muller in September; while local elder Silas Raymond held Week of Prayer meetings here in November and preached again in December. But visiting speakers could not take the place of a full-time pastor. So on September 22, 1946, local elder W. J. Frank led members in praying for guidance on this matter. Then Blanche Frank, Maurice Roche, and Harold Kriegelstein drove to Syracuse to present their request to Conference officials.

While they waited for leaders to respond, Auburn’s members, led by Silas Raymond, held regular Wednesday night prayer meetings at the Kriegelstein’s cottage on Lake Cayuga. Church services, held in the afternoons in January of 1947, were switched to mornings in April. That June they rented a hall in Auburn for prayer meetings and in August, the board voted to sponsor four local youth at the church school in Union Springs (Auburn paid 80 percent and the Conference paid 20 percent of their tuition).\(^{39}\)

Some of these youth wanted to have their own kind of rally. So in May 1947, the young people from the M.V. societies of Auburn, Utica, Pulaski, Cortland, and Watertown gathered at Syracuse for the first Conference Missionary Volunteer Rally. Elder Roger Pratt, USA’s Bible teacher, and three Academy seminar students spoke Sabbath morning; Elder Walton Smith led a

\(^{38}\) Ibid., Nov. 4, 1947, p. 3.
\(^{39}\) CRB (1946).
“singspiration” service in the afternoon, after which five speakers addressed the issue of alcohol and youth. Films, games, and marches filled out the Saturday evening hours.40

Other speakers who came to Auburn to preach in 1947 included the new president of the Conference, short, commanding Elder J. J. Reiswig, who, with his wife, had driven from Bozeman, Montana over snow-clogged roads in November 1946 and who arrived in Syracuse well ahead of their furniture. Reiswig, in black overcoat and top hat, preached at Auburn in January, then returned in February to dedicate eight new babies, including Linda Pratt, Mario Frank, David Roche, Arthur Jayne, and Bob Curren of Auburn. Some workers like Carl Anderson of the Southern New England Conference and R. J. Campbell of the Canadian Union drove quite a distance to be present. Their efforts led to new conversions, including Mr. and Mrs. Herb Scott in 1947. The in October, Frank Aldridge, Conference secretary-treasurer, became Auburn’s new pastor. His presence here brought other Conference workers to preach, such as Book and Bible House manager E. L. Van Sanford in October and President Reiswig in November.41

With travel restrictions and rationing a thing of the past, even the Sabbath schools decided to have a federation meeting in November 1947 at Syracuse. This federation, which included the Auburn and Union Springs Sabbath School groups, was “the first of its kind” to be organized in the New York Conference. It aimed at promoting better Sabbath schools in the district. Newly elected officers included Mrs. J. J. Reiswig as president, Edna Kriegelstein as vice-president; Mrs. J. B. Frank as secretary; and Mrs. Van Sanford as assistant secretary. In Auburn the year closed with a Week of Prayer led by Pastor Frank Aldridge.42

40 *AUG*, May 27, 1947, p. 5.
41 *CRB* (1947)
42 *AUG*, Nov. 18, 1947, p. 3.
During the late 1940s, federation meetings became the order of the day as believers in Sabbath school, Dorcas, and M.V. groups gathered together for instruction and fellowship. In January 1948 the Sabbath schools at Auburn, Cortland, Dexterville, Onondaga Reservation, Oswego, Roosevelt, and Union Springs met at the Syracuse Church to learn methods of making their Sabbath schools soul-winning agencies. Then in March, the Onondaga Dorcas Federation, one of six state-wide, again met at Auburn for Sunday sessions.

Also that spring, the stocky, graying, deep-voiced man whom the Gleaner called “one of our latest recruits to the colporteur work,” with his sweet wife and eight children, came to live in Waterloo and attend the Auburn church. Baptized in 1928, Charles and Rowena White later drifted out of the Adventist Church. But when, in July 1947, he fell and broke his back picking cherries and was laid up in the hospital in a body cast, Charles solemnly promised God he would devote his life to full-time colporteur work if God would heal him. Once able to walk again, “C.W.” (as his friends called him) enjoyed phenomenal success in canvassing. On his very first day, he sold $127.75. Despite sub-zero weather during the winter of 1948, he led the entire Conference in book sales! He even brought three of his daughters (Elaine, Doris, and Pauline) and one son (Ivan) to his first colporteur institute. “Surely this is wonderful!” the editor exclaimed, predicting, “You will hear much more from Brother White from now on. He is determined to be a soul-winner in the colporteur ministry.” Even his children planned to be canvassers someday. “We earnestly pray that the Lord will bless the White family and give them abundance of success and many souls for their labors,” the editor added. Indeed, over the next 40 years, thousands of souls in New York and Pennsylvania owed their first contacts with Bible truth to the literature sold by Charles and Rowena White. Not only his daughters Elaine and

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43 Ibid., Jan. 6, 1948, p. 3.
44 Ibid., Mar. 9, 1948, p. 4; Nov. 2, 1948, p. 3.
Doris White, but also his grandchildren Brian and Darlene Strayer became part-time canvassers largely through his influence.

Auburn’s other members also remained active witnesses for God in 1948, and on May 22, “a happy day for the Auburn church,” they saw many new converts baptized into church fellowship: Mrs. G. Robbins; Maude Stoker; Charles and Rowena White and daughter Doris; Sally Roche; Herb Freitag; Marlene Greene; Lisle and Carmen Shelley; and Harold Greene. Elder Frank Aldridge stated that more were studying and would join in the near future. Some of these included Mary Wood in 1948 and George Strayer in 1949, as well as Carlene Kriegelstein who transferred up from Ithaca. Members also increased their Sabbath school offerings to 86 cents per member each week in March, with $178.00 raised for Thirteenth Sabbath Offering.

While Elder Aldridge, with his quiet wife Ruth and local elder William Fank, led out in most Sabbath services during 1948, visiting preachers included Conference Field Secretary Elder Nathan Russell, President Reiswig, Academy English teacher Oscar Schmidt, and Book and Bible House manager Van Sanford. As membership grew, the board, recognizing a need for encouraging greater reverence during services, voted to play organ music on a record player as members entered. Missionary-minded believers planned to distribute 1000 Prediction Series tracts that spring and to follow them up with 20th Century Bible Course cards. Already in June, five Auburn youth had decided to attend church school in the fall, encouraged in their resolution by Sabbath school secretary Rowena White and superintendent Herb Scott.

As 1949 closed out the decade, church officers from Auburn, Union Springs, Ithaca, and Penn Yan gathered at the large assembly hall at the Academy for an institute in February led by

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46 Ibid., June 15, 1948, p. 4.
47 Ibid., Apr. 6, 1948, p. 3.
48 CRB (1948)
Elder S. L. Clark of the Atlantic Union.\textsuperscript{49} The February \textit{Gleaner} carried an article by Blanche Frank, Dorcas Federation president, emphasizing how Dorcas societies could be “The Entering Wedge” for gospel truth in “dark counties” to lead people to Christ. In one such county, 36 people had joined the Adventist church largely due to local Dorcas witnessing.\textsuperscript{50}

By the spring of 1949, Elder Walton Smith once again became Auburn’s pastor as well as pastor of the Cortland and Ithaca churches. President Reiswig met with all three churches in April and found members had received Elder Smith enthusiastically.\textsuperscript{51} Elder Reiswig returned in September for the Central New York Sabbath School Improvement Association meeting at the Masonic Temple, led by Elder Lemuel Esteb of the Atlantic Union. The Auburn Dorcas ladies provided a delicious lunch. Local member Mary Green was elected assistant secretary of the Improvement Association.\textsuperscript{52}

Guest speakers for 1949 featured several Academy teachers, including Principal Virgil Bartlett, Bible teacher Robert Francis, and English teacher and librarian Oscar Schmidt. Special musical numbers from Academy duets, trios, and quartets, as well as Keith Burke, Walton Smith, and Paul Smith, delighted members that year. Global missionaries who came included Elder Morris of India and Elder and Mrs. Matthew Aqueri from Chile and Argentina. Pastor Smith led a committee of five in searching for a new church home within five miles of Auburn so that Week of Prayer meetings need not be held in such widely scattered places as Waterloo, as in the home of newlyweds Doris and George Strayer on South Seneca Street that November. Doris became Auburn church’s second church clerk in the fall of 1949.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{49} \textit{AUG}, Jan. 4, 1949, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Ibid.}, Feb. 8 1949, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid.}, Apr. 12, 1949, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Ibid.}, Sept. 13, 1949, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{53} CRB (1949).
For many years Auburn’s social horizon remained untroubled by deaths, but during the 1940s, eight saints passed to their rest. In 1940, Sarah Taylor died, followed in 1942 by Ida Kriegelstein. In 1945 Hazel Bishop-Palmer and Isabella Hayden, “a beloved and faithful member,” passed away, followed in 1946 by her husband William Hayden. In Geneva, Earnest Shelley, an Adventist since 1931, died in 1947, leaving behind his children Lisle, Marion, and Dartha. In Auburn both Alice Ridley and Edna Mae Kriegelstein, an Adventist since 1923, passed away in 1949 after weeks of battling cancer. A graduate of Union Springs Academy, for 22 years the wife of charter member Harold Kriegelstein in Cayuga, and a much-adored shepherdess of Auburn’s “little flock” of Cradle Roll children, Edna had for years served as local Dorcas leader, and with her mother and father, Mary and Fred Green, had been a pillar of the Auburn church. Elder Aldridge and Elder Wright buried her in Cayuga. Together with all the rest of Auburn’s faithful saints who have passed to their rest, these dear ones await the call of the Life-giver at the sound of the last trump. May you and I likewise be ready to join them in glad reunion on that day!

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54 AUG, Oct. 7, 1947, p. 7; Mar. 8, 1949, p. 7; CRB (1940s).
The decade of the 1950s brought more changes to the Auburn church than any previous decade in its history. After 40 years “in the wilderness,” moving from halls to Masonic temples to upstairs rooms for services, members secured a permanent chapel on 17 Nelson Street in 1957.

The 1950s also witnessed the post-war “Baby Boom” in America, and here in Auburn, the children soon overflowed the Cradle Roll through Youth Sabbath School divisions. Also, with such a large, splendid chapel and huge Sabbath school rooms attached, this church began to play the host to numerous Conference-wide Sabbath school, M.V., Dorcas, Ministerial, VBS, and other conventions. Finally, during the 1950s, three young and exceptionally talented men pastored the Auburn church: Elders Walton Smith, Sidney English, and George Valentine. Their dynamic leadership styles resulted in witnessing zeal and rapid growth, with over 30 new members joining from 1950 to 1955 alone.\(^1\)

As 1950 opened, the 43 members here were giving 12 cents more Sabbath school offering per member each week than during 1949, putting Auburn fourth in the Conference in April.\(^2\) By August, with 62 cents weekly per member, Auburn was third highest among Conference Sabbath schools, in addition to giving $201.50 (or $4.68 each) for Investment.\(^3\)

In 1950 members still held Sabbath services in the Masonic Temple on South Street, but when 21 of them met there on February 5, they discussed a new church building project, studied blueprints, and appointed a six-man committee (Elder Smith, William Frank, Harold Kriegelstein, C. W. White, Maurice Roche, and Herb Pratt). The board voted to support a “Talent Program” in which children received $5.00 and adults $10.00 to invest for the building

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\(^1\) CRB (1950s).
\(^2\) AUG, Apr. 18, 1950, p. 6.
\(^3\) Ibid., Sept. 4, 1951, p. 4; Mar. 6, 1951, p. 3.
Members also invested money in Christian education, paying $40.00 a year to sponsor two students at the Union Springs church school.\(^4\)

Believers occasionally enjoyed guest speakers in 1950. In May, the short Conference president with the commanding air, Elder J. J. Reiswig, spoke, while in November Elder J. P. Anderson, dressed in authentic Chinese costume, told stories of his 40 years as a foreign missionary. In November Pastor Smith led out in Week of Prayer meetings held in the Roche, Austin, Strayer, and Scott homes. As these and other families raised children in the church during the 1950s, Auburn diversified its Sabbath school programming. Millie Pratt, shy but always cheerful and willing, became the church’s first children’s Sabbath school leader in December 1950. At the same time, the quiet and reserved Carlene Kriegelstein served as one of the earliest Home Missionary secretaries.\(^5\)

Missionary outreach efforts during 1950 may have had much to do with the nine new members who joined in 1951: Mr. and Mrs. Paul Smith; Mr. and Mrs. Percy Griffis; Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Wallington; Mrs. Leslie Edwards; Grace Knapp; and Verna Younkin.\(^6\) Some of these new converts attended the Central New York Sabbath School Improvement Association held at Syracuse in April 1951. There they heard Elder L. E. Esteb, Atlantic Union Sabbath School Secretary, speak on ways to make the Sabbath school a more dynamic soul-winning institution.\(^7\)

Even those behind bars enjoyed the fellowship of the Word. One Auburn Prison inmate wrote: “I have found a great deal of joy in the study of the Word through the 20\(^{th}\) Century Bible Course.” Requesting yet another series of lessons, he asked, “Please pray for me, that I may gain

\(^4\) CRB (1950); “Auburn Historical Sketch” (1915-1958), p. 4.
\(^5\) CRB (1950); AUG, Oct. 17, 1950, p. 4.
\(^6\) CRB (1950s).
\(^7\) AUG, Mar. 20, 1951, p. 3.
Another inmate wrote of enjoying the Voice of Prophecy course and reading Uriah Smith’s book *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation*. “I am enthused…with both,” he exclaimed, adding that he had completed four lessons in one day. Yet a third prisoner wrote saying that he studied and prayed over [his lessons] and I trust they may be correct. I am doing all that I know how to follow the steps laid out for me by our Lord Jesus. I am in need of prayer too please. Remember me…knowing that each of us, no matter what be our race, creed or color, has each a soul to save and a God to glorify.

Although few Adventists could penetrate the somber gray walls and heavy iron doors of Auburn’s penitentiary, these prisoners could still read the Word of God, write out their Bible lessons, and listen to the weekly devotional hour program on station WMBO.

Auburn church members, meanwhile, enjoyed hearing several familiar men preach during 1951. Stocky, smiling Ed Scott replaced William Frank as elder, while Pastor Walton Smith invited Elders J. F. Bohner and Van Sanford to address believers during the fall Week of Prayer. Members’ zeal led them to support an active Dorcas Society, partially financed by a “Talent Fund” of invested money to help pay the rent of $9.00 a month in a downtown storefront. Members also chose Mrs. Green as a delegate to the Layman’s Convention at Grand Ledge, Michigan, raising $90.00 for her trip expenses.

In October, local Adventists began renting (at $35.00 a month) the beautiful white Calvary Presbyterian Church at the corner of Capitol and Franklin Streets, near Five Points, meeting in the downstairs Sunday school and fellowship rooms, where each Sabbath they set up the wicker chairs and distributed their own black *Church Hymnals* as members entered. Having

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12 CRB (1951).
a new church “home” without steps to climb was a great advantage for the senior saints, many of
whom contributed generously in 1952 toward a building fund for their own future church.\textsuperscript{14}
They also agreed in November to begin giving one Bible study each to lay the groundwork for
evangelistic meetings in March 1952, then voted to rent a larger Dorcas supply depot at $20.00 a
month (with colporteur Charles White pledging $5.00 of that each month) so that patrons could
come visit it rather than workers being obliged to take supplies to them.\textsuperscript{15}

The year 1952 saw bombastic Harry Rice and his quiet wife Mina transfer to Auburn’s
fellowship, becoming two very dynamic soul-winners here and in Waterloo, where they soon
began a branch Sabbath school.\textsuperscript{16} Tent-maker Paul Smith became a local elder, serving on the
church board where important actions for 1952 included voting that Union Springs Adventists
could Ingather in Auburn only after members here had raised their goal; sponsoring the energetic
boy Jimmy Pratt at Camp Owasco (at $16.00 a week); ordering 12 new hymnals and a new
Communion cloth; and reaching a new high of almost $1300 in the building fund.\textsuperscript{17}

Members raised many other giving goals as well in 1951. Accustomed to contributing 45
cents per member each week for Sabbath school in February, they raised this to 70 cents a week
in July when the enthusiastic Waterloo undertaker Herb Scott became Sabbath school
superintendent. This giving placed Auburn fourth among Conference Sabbath schools.\textsuperscript{18} During
the same period, Thirteenth Sabbath offerings rose from $2.55 to $2.78 per member each week,
making Auburn the third highest church in New York for giving levels.\textsuperscript{19} Blanche Frank and
Mary Green, president and secretary-treasurer respectively of the Onondaga Dorcas Federation,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[14] “Auburn Historical Sketch,” p. 4.
\item[15] CRB (1951).
\item[16] Ibid. (1950s).
\item[17] Ibid. (1952).
\item[18] AUG, Feb. 19, 1952, p. 4; Aug. 5, 1952, p. 3.
\item[19] Ibid., May 6, 1952, p. 3; Aug. 12, 1952, p. 3.
\end{footnotes}
also opened a new welfare center in Auburn in February and planned the federation meeting at Syracuse in March.\(^{20}\)

During 1953, five new members joined the Auburn church: Ruth Bishop, Margaret LiDrazzah (a black lady with three children), Willard Winchester, and Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Sweet.\(^{21}\) These converts helped this church reach even higher giving goals. By January 1953, personal Sabbath School Investment giving at $8.38 placed Auburn second only to Herkimer in the Conference, while weekly Sabbath school offerings remained high at 67 cents per member.\(^{22}\) Elder Smith led Auburn in exceeding its *Signs of the Times* subscription goal in April.\(^{23}\) Lisle Shelley and Herb Scott were voted in as new elders in 1953 to assist in the Ordinances. During the Lord’s Supper, the pastor “called the roll, asking each member, non-member, and visitor for a personal testimony. Truly it was a spiritual meeting,” church clerk Doris Strayer wrote, “as all took part.”\(^{24}\)

The board, meeting the first Thursday of each month, voted to take up a Dorcas expense offering each month; to hold prayer meetings weekly for an hour; and to authorize Rowena White and the pastor to find a suitable hall in Waterloo for a branch Sabbath school. In May they decided to send *Listen* magazine to all local officials and high schools and to have Helen Roche purchase flowers for the ill and families of deceased members. That July, the children’s Sabbath school department acquired a record player, while Mrs. Avery became secretary of the new Waterloo Branch Sabbath School. Then in October the church acquired a new film projector for missionary witness and entrusted its care to Blanche Frank.\(^{25}\)

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\(^{21}\) CRB (1950s).
\(^{22}\) *AUG*, Feb. 9, 1953, p. 4; Aug. 24, 1953, p. 3.
\(^{24}\) CRB, Jan. 17, 1953.
Perhaps this soul-winning projector helped Auburn members win many of the 12 new converts for 1954, probably the largest annual growth since 1915. Among these new members or transfers were Helen and Maurice Roche; Elota Scott; Jim Pratt; Bertha York; Lois James; Mrs. Leon Avery and daughter Sandra; Mrs. Willard Stubblebine; and Mae Prosser. These newcomers received warm welcomes from local elders Lisle Shelley and William Frank; deacons Bishop, Strayer, Kriegelstein and Winchester; and deaconesses Green, Rice, Bishop, and Austin. The church treasurer in 1953 was Mrs. Stoker; the church clerk was Doris Strayer; and the missionary leader was Stanley Sweet, with Blanche Frank (also pianist and Dorcas leader) as his secretary. Harry Rice served as chorister; Helen Roche as Sabbath school superintendent; Mildred Pratt as Sabbath school secretary; while Ruth Bishop led the children’s division. Other officers that year included medical secretary Carlene Kriegelstein and temperance and press secretary Mary Green.

These enthusiastic leaders soon inspired extraordinary efforts from Auburn members. Delegates to the January 1954 Sabbath School Association convention in Syracuse learned that Auburn stood #1 in the Conference for weekly Sabbath school offerings of 95 cents per member and was tops as well for Investment giving of $12.71 each—“a remarkable achievement,” the Gleaner editor exclaimed. “Congratulations, Auburn members.” Although other local expenses caused Sabbath school giving to drop somewhat in October, superintendent Helen Roche urged members to keep their giving at 75 cents each.

Over at the prison, several new inmates in 1954 signed up for the 20th Century Bible Course. One inmate wrote: “Since my confinement I have grown to find great comfort in

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26 Ibid. (1950s).
27 Ibid. (1953).
28 AUG, Jan. 25, 1954, p. 3; Feb. 8, 1954, p. 3; Mar. 8, 1954, p. 5.
29 Ibid., Oct. 25, 1954, p. 3; Dec. 6, 1954, p. 5.
studying the Holy Bible." Outside those grim walls, colporteurs Charles and Rowena White continued enjoying phenomenal sales and witnessing success. One couple joined the church in October due to their efforts. During one 43-hour week, “C.W.” sold $228.75, the second week in a row that he topped $200 in sales. From reading this literature, souls like Mrs. Leon Avery and daughter Sandra, Mrs. Willard Stubblebine, and Mrs. Mae Prosser—all from Waterloo—accepted Adventist truth and together, on a beautiful but chilly September afternoon, received baptism at Cayuga Lake State Park.

With so many new members flocking in by the mid 1950s, Auburn’s older members recognized the need for a larger church home. In January 1954 they gathered at the Roche home to consider the building committee’s proposal to purchase a lot on Lake Avenue and Yale Street for $2000; another lot on East Genesee Street; or a third lot on Court Street where they could build a new church. No decision was made at the time. In the meantime, members met with Elder LaGrone and Mr. Strickland to plan their Ingathering campaign in March to raise $885. At camp meeting that July, Mr. and Mrs. Sweet, Harry and Mina Rice, C. W. White, Paul Smith, and Doris Strayer received the “120 Commission” as Auburn’s most active lay witnesses.

But that fall, everyone’s attention returned to the proposed church building project. Each Sabbath, two small white church “banks” were passed to collect the building fund offering. In September the board voted not to purchase the Seminary building on Nelson Street, but rather to buy a lot in town and build their own church as Conference President Elder Capman and treasurer Elder Burchfield had counselled them. By the end of October, members had raised $2156 and pledged an additional $1500 for a lot. Their new pastor, tall, dark-haired, quiet-

31 Ibid., Oct. 25, 1954, p. 2; Dec. 6, 1954, p. 3.
32 CRB, Sept. 18, 1954.
34 Ibid., Mar. 24 and July 10, 1954.
spoken Elder Sidney English, suggested an all-out Ingathering campaign to reap a large overflow for their building fund. So that November, the church invested in a loud speaker and tape player for outdoor caroling. The public loved it, while carolers enjoyed hot chocolate at the Smith home afterwards. The board even diverted Mrs. Miller’s $500 bequest, earmarked for foreign missions, into the building fund. Members appeared reluctant that winter to give an additional one percent for the church school in Union Springs, afraid that this might divert funds from the building project. They did, however, support the forming of a Young People’s Missionary Volunteer Society; purchase new rust-proof enamel basins for foot washing; and start a lending library for the 25 cent Crisis Books.35

These zealous members also channeled their energies into soul-winning as never before, keeping their new pastor busy giving Bible studies and baptizing souls. In 1955 alone, 12 new members joined this church: Lizetta LiDrazzah, Barbara Wood, Millie Smith, Virginia Clark, John Moore, as well as Charles Schuyler, Missourian Whaley, Eugenie Piskarowa and her brother Bill Scharlemann, Bernice Milliman, and Dr. William and Margaret Hafner.36 When Elder LaGrone preached in February, he also dedicated little Linda Roche, Louise Stubblebine, Floyd and Lula Clark, Genene and Jimmie English to the Lord, and then baptized Cheryl Kriegelstein and Barbara Wood at the Disciples of Christ Church in town.37

From the autumn of 1954 onward, this red-brick First Disciples Church at Seymour and Division streets became Auburn Adventists’ new home. Its larger interior space, comfortable pews (instead of hard wicker chairs as at the Calvary Presbyterian Church), baptistery, balcony, and three pulpits pleased the congregation, who also enjoyed its gorgeous stained glass windows, burgundy carpets, and ample parking space across the street. Church services met at 9:30 a.m.,

36 CRB (1950s).
Sabbath school at 10:30, and M.V. meeting was held at 7:00 p.m. This schedule enabled Pastor English to serve the worship needs of the Academy church in Union Springs as well.\(^{38}\) For his kindness in renting the Disciples Church, Adventists presented Reverend Knight with a lovely new Bible. Privately, Knight said that he wished his members were nonsmokers like Adventists, so they would not leave cigarette butts around the sanctuary.\(^ {39}\)

Having a new church in which to meet encouraged believers to try new approaches to worship. In January 1955 the board voted to allow ten minutes between church and Sabbath school for a missionary service with Ed Roche leading out. In February William Frank began operating the P.A. system, and the song “With Reverence Let the Saints Appear” replaced the Doxology, with all standing as the deacons and elders came forward to the platform. The Doxology was now sung after the offering was received.

That winter the board also purchased a new Communion set with funds from Mrs. Bailey’s memorial gift; offered to assist Alex Boyd, Union Springs Pathfinder leader, with camporee expenses; and asked Elder Burchfield to show some slides at an MV meeting to benefit the building fund. Harry Rice, the gravelly-voiced farmer-chorister, became the exuberant superintendent of the Waterloo Branch Sabbath School in February, and a month later, expected soon to organize his Grange Hall company of 35 people into a full-fledged church.\(^ {40}\)

Conference President H. J. Capman visited both Auburn and the Waterloo Company in March, rejoicing at their progress and dedication, and hoping soon to establish a church in Waterloo. Elder English, whose vast parish covered all the territory from Auburn in the east to Geneva in the west, and from South Butler in the north to Cortland in the south, hoped not only

\(^{38}\) *AUG*, Jan. 31, 1955, p. 5.
\(^{40}\) CRB, Jan. 29 and Feb. 28, 1955. It would be nearly sixty years before an Adventist church was established in Waterloo around 2012.
to erect a chapel in Waterloo but also to build a church on the newly purchased Lake Avenue property in Auburn. He felt that these plans represented “a progressive program…by faith and conviction [and] that this is God’s will for Auburn.” That winter, the Conference leaders detached Auburn from the Cortland district and formed a new district including Auburn, Waterloo, and Union Springs.\(^{41}\)

To help swell the building fund, the board bought 100 pounds of salt water toffee to sell that spring. Then in April members planned a bake sale for camp meeting to raise more money. Later that fall, believers enjoyed the new film “Martin Luther,” the one dollar ticket fee going toward the building fund, and began selling *The Golden Treasures* book for $10.75, $2.50 of which reverted to their fund and the rest to the Academy boys’ dorm project. In November, William and Blanche Frank created a goal device with weekly levels indicated to show progress in the building project.\(^{42}\)

But while they raised funds, the Auburn saints also enjoyed many new activities together. They held a Victory Social in April to celebrate reaching their Ingathering goal; voted Blanche Frank and Lillian (Susie) Roche as delegates to the Grand Ledge, Michigan, Layman’s Convention; gathered in March for a special Pathfinder Sabbath program (including Auburn’s Pathfinders Cheryl Kriegelstein, Barb Wood, and Genene English); chorused their “amens” as Conference President Elder Capman sang “Meet Me at the Throne of Grace” as he accompanied himself at the piano in March; and heard Elder Dilts, colporteur director, speak in April. But they also translated this enjoyment into missionary action. In September missionary leader Ed Roche

\(^{42}\) *CRB* (1955).
organized Home Visitation teams to distribute literature. In November the board voted to begin printing the first church bulletins and also ordered 24 new hymnals.\textsuperscript{43}

Elder English had much to be optimistic about with his Auburn members. Their “cordial reception” of him and his family, he said, “makes us feel much at home among friends.” He applauded the active Dorcas Society led by Blanche Frank and Mary Green, whose downtown headquarters on the corner of Genesee and Williams Streets (above P.B.J.’s in 1987) spread goodwill and influenced some local residents to attend church. “It is a real pleasure to serve in the Auburn district,” Elder English concluded. “With God’s help and guidance there is no limit to the success in soul-winning that can be expected as we labor together to finish the work in this area.”\textsuperscript{44}

Some of the pastor’s most diligent workers included Blanche Frank, given the “Grade A” award in January 1955 for faithfulness as Home Missionary secretary in 1954; and Mildred Pratt, a “Grade A” Sabbath school secretary for always getting her reports in on time.\textsuperscript{45} Sabbath school members at Auburn reached 85 cents per member weekly giving during 1955, ranking fourth among Conference churches.\textsuperscript{46} They also exceeded their 1955 Ingathering goal by $501.00, with children raising $561.00 and adults over $1500, the largest amount in their history, placing them fifth among New York churches. To celebrate, they joined with Union Springs for a “victory jubilee” in June.\textsuperscript{47}

There was jubilation also in 1956 as six new members joined the church: Bill and Marie Hafner, Henry Whaley, Janene English, Wayne Pratt, and Mary Daugherty.\textsuperscript{48} As the church

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Ibid.}, interview with Ed and Susie Roche, Aug. 25, 1987.
\textsuperscript{44} \textit{AUG}, Feb. 21, 1955, pp. 6-7; interview with Ed and Susie Roche, Aug. 25, 1987.
\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Ibid.}, Feb. 7, 1955, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Ibid.}, June 27, 1955, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{48} CRB (1950s).
kiddie population exploded, the board voted to establish three separate Sabbath school divisions: Cradle Roll-Kindergarten with Carlene Kriegelstein; Primary with Edna Bishop; and Juniors with Mary Green.\(^{49}\) Other key leaders in 1956 included church clerk Mina Rice; Home and School representative Helen Roche; MV leader Marie Hafner; and Grace Knapp, who sent bulletins to shutins.\(^{50}\)

As the membership grew, the board spent more time discussing property lots, pre-fabricated church designs, and building fund drives, which by January 1956 had raised over $4300. In April they voted that on the first Sabbath of each month, an offering would be taken for the building fund. Members that year chose the Franks, Paul Smith, Ed Roche, and Stanley Sweet as delegates to the Conference business session in February; purchased a 9’x12’ rug for the Kindergarten Sabbath school and a new Communion set and towels for church services; and acquired 37 copies of Desire of Ages for the church library in November. In late May the board had discussed starting a Vacation Bible School, but no action was taken in 1956. Their building fund reached nearly $5850 by Thanksgiving 1956.\(^{51}\)

But members gave more than money to their building fund in 1955-56. Their soul-winning efforts enabled Elder English to baptize 20 souls—nearly ten percent of the entire Conference total of 228.\(^{52}\) In March believers took Bible course enrollment cards and other literature door-to-door in the city; placed 13 Steps to Christ in area homes; and blanketed the area with Faith for Today cards and “Welfare Approach” pamphlets. Many reported having good experiences as they shared their faith.\(^{53}\) Certainly one good experience for all came in the form of a sacred concert at the Second Presbyterian Church in December when Robert Pound led

\(^{49}\) Ibid. (1955).
\(^{50}\) Ibid. (1956).
\(^{51}\) Ibid.
\(^{52}\) AUG, Mar. 19, 1956, p. 2.
the Academy choir in singing sacred songs. Also by the end of 1956, Auburn church had raised over $1200 for Ingathering, once again exceeding its goal.

The loving contacts these believers made in 1956 paid off in 12 souls won in 1957: Barbara Warden; Linda and Leroy Pratt; Edward and Luella Alnutt with their daughter Lula; John and Pearl Raymond; Helen Fletcher and her daughter Bonnie; Connie Winchester; Sally Roche; and Fred Videan. As newcomers, these converts were welcomed by Auburn’s members and officers, including the smiling black Sabbath school teacher Margaret LiDrazzah (with her children Tashie, Loretta, and Lizetta); in addition to being Primary and Junior Sabbath School supervisor, she served as assistant organist.

For “Spirit of Prophecy Day” in February, Elder Capman spoke on “Confirming the Testimony of Jesus” for the church service, after which a panel consisting of Elder Capman, R. G. Burchfield, E. L. Van Sanford, Dr. Joseph Trefz, Bill Hafner, and Elder Sidney English answered questions about Ellen White and her writings. After sundown, local Book and Bible House representative Blanche Frank prepared a special display of Ellen White’s books for sale.

Another White whose name was closely associated with books—colporteur Charles White—sold volume 8 of Uncle Arthur’s Bible Story set to an Evangelical Church pastor in Lisbon. The pastor’s wife admitted to White that she simply could not keep the previous seven volumes on the shelf at one time, so great was the local demand for them. Mr. White’s canvassing efforts and local members’ witnessing endeavors enabled Elder English to baptize 17 more souls on March 23 (12 of them into the Auburn church).

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54 Ibid., Dec. 31, 1956, p. 3.
55 Ibid., Jan. 21, 1957, p. 4.
56 CRB (1957).
57 AUG, Feb. 4, 1957, p. 3.
58 Ibid., p. 4.
59 AUG, May 6, 1957, p. 4.
The Dorcas Welfare Society, another means of public outreach work, sent 19 needy families food boxes at Christmas time, while church members did caroling two nights to raise money for the food. Women from Auburn’s Junior Chamber of Commerce collected toys for these boxes.\footnote{Ibid., Mar. 11, 1957, p. 4.} By mid-1957, Blanche Frank and Mary Green, feeling age creeping up on them, resigned as president and secretary of the Conference Dorcas Welfare Society.\footnote{Ibid., Aug. 12, 1957, p. 3.} Their stepping down signaled the end of an era of selfless service for both women.

But 1957 also signaled the beginning of a new era for the Auburn church as the congregation moved into their superb new chapel and hall on 17 Nelson Street. The expansive rooms of Welch Hall (built in 1821) and the Romanesque beauty of Willard Memorial Chapel (built in 1892) had once been a part of Auburn’s Presbyterian Theological Seminary until 1939, when due to a lack of funds, the Seminary closed its doors and moved to the campus of Union Theological Seminary in New York City. During WWII, these large rooms, each equipped with a fireplace, had been opened to black Air Force veterans and their families; then after the war, the State Housing Administration had purchased the property. In June 1957, Auburn’s Adventists offered to buy it for $10,000, selling all their previously purchased lots to raise another $3000. At first their offer was rejected, but in September, they rallied and offered $12,000. In a miracle that Elder English described as “an answer to prayers,” this offer was accepted.

This did not mean, however, that the hall and rooms were ready for immediate occupancy. There remained a tremendous amount of work for Auburn’s now 80 members to do: interior walls must be cleaned and painted; exterior woodwork repainted; old partitions removed; woodwork varnished; broken window glass replaced; pigeon droppings cleaned up; and so much
more! But members could not help feeling awed at this providential gift as they stared up at the chapel’s 65-foot ceiling, fingered the hand-carved wooden pews, marveled at the ornate delicateness of the old chandeliers, and gasped at the golden splendor of the bas-relief mural of an angel with outspread wings on the rear wall. The floors were made of tiny mosaic tiles inlaid by hand in cement, while even the platform chairs had inlaid mosaics. The windows were made of real Tiffany opalescent stained glass—worth a fortune—designed by J. A. Halzer of New York City.

And oh, that magnificent tracker organ! Manufactured around 1850 by Steere and Turner in Massachusetts and originally equipped with hand-pumped bellows (later altered for water power and then electricity), its huge golden diapason pipes soared upwards towards the light blue ceiling. Its wonderful tonal colors and voice balances made it a superb instrument to listen to. It was also “one of the largest and best preserved tracker organs in upstate New York,” with 20 ranks and two mutations which delighted the world-famous organist E. Power Biggs when he played it for a concert a decade later.

But in addition to this marvelous chapel, Adventists acquired a large hall with ample rooms for a pastor’s study, Dorcas Society storage room and work room, and every Sabbath school class—from Cradle Roll through Youth departments—could now enjoy its own room complete with tiled fireplaces, huge windows, chairs, pianos, and storage closets. Even the Conference sequestered one room for its clothing depot. Other rooms provided space for social gatherings, board meetings, and VBS craft classes.

The Romanesque interior décor was matched by the Romanesque exterior architectural design using local gray limestone trimmed with red Portage stone from Indiana, while the steep
timber roof was covered with black slate trimmed with copper ridges, gutters, and gable ends. Auburn members had quite a time adjusting to the sound of ice and snow roaring off this roof!

The symbol of the old Seminary had been a capital “A” in motion, representing that “Auburn Seminary is Alive, Aware, and Active.” This symbol also seemed appropriate now that Auburn Adventists, who believed in a three-fold angelic message, owned the chapel. With a wonderful, large new church “home” free of all debt, Auburn Adventists were ready to face the future confidently.  

One of their future aims, articulated in an anonymous “Historical Sketch” (c. 1958), was “to fill the vacant seats with new converts…as a monument to the glory of God in the City of Auburn.” God answered their prayers, for in 1958 alone, 16 new converts joined this church, the largest annual growth in their history to date. New members included Loren and Alice Raymond; George and Nora Shumate and daughter Joanne; Mancel Daugherty; Mr. and Mrs. Hornell Shreve; Paula and Gaylord Smith; as well as Beatrice Kisor; Nileta Raymond; Anne Leubner; Sally Roche and army private Edwin Demerritt.

Only one day after the members had worshipped in their new chapel for the first time on April 5, 1958, 350 delegates to the 19th Biennial Session of the New York Conference convened at Willard Memorial Chapel. Included among the notables were Atlantic Union Treasurer T. R. Gardenes, General Conference Vice-President W. B. Ochs, Atlantic Union President Louis Lenheim, New York Conference PR Secretary Carl Anderson, and Secretary-Treasurer Raleigh Burchfield.

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62 CRB (1957); “Auburn Historical Sketch,” p. 5; “The Tracker Organ of Auburn S.D.A. Church” (undated one-page sheet); Auburn Citizen-Advertiser, Oct. 8, 1957, p. 6 and Aug. 30, 1974, p. 10; Syracuse Herald American, May 19, 1974, p. 70; Auburn Citizen, Nov. 19, 1976, p. 10; Arch Merrill, Slim Fingers Beckon, p. 32.
63 “Auburn Historical Sketch,” p. 5.
64 CRB (1950s).
The 350 delegates were suitably impressed with the restoration work already underway. This included cleaning and polishing the terrozzo-tiled floor; overhauling the Skinner Organ and cleaning its 1400 pipes; plastering the dark magenta-colored walls and painting them a soft rose beige; polishing the wooden paneling, pews, and dark oaken woodwork; cleaning the nine heavy glass chandeliers; replacing $600 worth of broken window glass; lowering the 16 foot ceilings to 12 feet in the Sabbath school rooms and painting their walls; and replacing the old organ key felts which moths had damaged. The Auburn paper praised Adventists, whose “industry and enthusiasm are now at high pitch,” it said, for their restoration efforts, in which Elder and Mrs. English, in sweatshirts and jeans, worked as hard as anyone else.66 By April 19, the chapel looked splendid enough to host the Central New York Youth Rally, featuring mixed academy choirs, the Binghamton “Voice of Youth” group, and Syracuse’s drama “Prisoner at the Bar.”67

Although the Auburn congregation had already grown from 25 to 75 or more under Elder English’s pastorate, eight further baptisms in May 1958 raised that number to 83, and put him #1 in the Conference for total number of baptisms.68 Even he, however, recognized the impossibility of reaching these people without help from such faithful members as Dorcas Federation secretary Helen Roche, local “Dorcas Welfare Queens” Blanche Frank and Mary Green (both crowned at camp meeting beside the new Welfare and Disaster Relief depot at Union Springs), and all the faithful Sabbath school teachers, leaders, deacons, and deaconesses.69

In October Auburn’s gallant efforts to restore its new church received a significant boost from the Conference when the Home Missionary offering was relegated for the Auburn Church project. The Gleaner praised local members for being so astute as to buy the $400,000 building

67 AUG, Apr. 14, 1958, p. 5.
68 Ibid., May 26, 1958, p. 3.
69 Ibid., June 9, 1958, p. 4; Sept. 10, 1958, p. 3.
complex for only $12,000, including its chandeliers and stained glass windows which alone were valued at $50,000, to say nothing of its 22-rank organ valued at $40,000. Members had already sacrificed both hundreds of hours and dollars to clean and repair it, install a new heating plant, rewire it throughout, and do the plaster work. “The Auburn church has always stood high in the conference in per capita giving in tithe and mission offerings,” Elder English told readers, confident that they would raise needed repair funds.\textsuperscript{70}

As one would expect, most board and business meetings in 1958 were concerned with making improvements in the new church: cleaning it, insuring it, insulating its rooms, carpeting its aisles, finishing its floors, and supplying its Sabbath school rooms with pianos. The first mention of Cradle Roll as a separate division from Kindergarten appears in the board minutes for March 1958.

The new church needed so many things to make it truly “home”: cleaning mops and buffers; organ tuning; offering plates; Dorcas storage areas; and a kitchenette, to mention only a few. It had to be cleaned constantly to be in readiness for weekly services; for the May 10 Central Dorcas Federation meeting with poet Adlai Esteb speaking; and for the Academy’s baccalaureate service in June. Deacons, deaconesses, and teachers doubled as cleaning crews during the week. In 1958 Ed Roche led the Youth Division with Helen Roche as teacher; Margaret LiDrazzah directed the Juniors and Primaries; while Doris Strayer superintended the Kindergarten and Cradle Roll Division. Petite Joanne Shumate loved playing the huge organ for church, but its stiff keyboard required her to press very hard on the ivories, appearing almost to jump up and down as she did so!\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., Oct. 6, 1958, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{71} CRB (1958).
But it was Alva English who played the organ at that first service on April 5, 1958. Church clerk Mina Rice’s notes describe the “great feeling of joy and thanksgiving” which filled members’ hearts as they listened to the organ play “soft, restful music” as the choir filed in and sang. After Stanley Sweet had prayed in his colorful, quaint style, Elder English welcomed the many guests, especially the Reverend Knight of the Disciples of Christ Church, who read Matthew 28 and prayed. Then the choir sang, “Praise Ye the Lord,” followed by Elder English reading a short historical sketch written by Mary Green. The 29 charter members of 1915 had grown to 78 members now, with four charter saints still living: Mary Green, Paul Smith, Nellie Cuddeback, and Harold Kriegelstein. Margaret Hafner sang “Open the Gates of the Temple” in her soaring soprano voice. Then Elder English preached on the Resurrection. The service closed with the singing of Hymn #135 (“The Day of Resurrection”) and a prayer by Elder Burchfield, Conference Secretary-Treasurer. “All felt that it was good to have been there,” Mina Rice said.72

But before 1958 closed, Auburn members heard some bad news—that their dear pastor was leaving. His replacement—tall, slim, mild-mannered trumpet player George Valentine of Pennsylvania—brought his lovely dark-haired wife Gladys, son Merwin (9), and daughter Joan (8) to live in Union Springs at 2 Homer Street, the elegant red-brick “parish” house where the Englishes had lived before them. Now the Strayer kids next door had two new playmates.73

Although pastors changed in 1959, Auburn’s faithful lay leadership did not. Blanche Frank continued as local Book and Bible House secretary and helped plan the Central New York Dorcas Federation meeting in October at the Welch Chapel, including the potluck to follow.74 Her husband, William Frank, continued as head church elder as he had for decades already, although lapses of memory required him to read his public prayers. Other outstanding lay

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72 Ibid., Apr. 5, 1958.
73 AUG, Jan. 5, 1959, pp. 5-6.
74 Ibid., Feb. 9, 1959, p. 4; Sept. 21, 1959, p. 4.
members included Irving Ferris, Paul Smith, and Maurice Roche, active on the building committee for repairs; George Strayer, Gordon Palmer, Lisle Shelley, and Leland Frank, perpetual deacons; Nora Shumate, Doris Strayer, Carlene Kriegelstein, Millie Pratt, and Susie Roche, tireless deaconesses and children’s Sabbath school teachers; and Margaret Hafner, church organist and junior choir director.

Several new members joined this church in 1959 as Elder Valentine reached out to souls in love, always smiling, gently chuckling, quietly speaking. Mr. and Mrs. Irving Ferris transferred here in March; Gene and Mary Lou Wilson and Gordon Palmer joined that fall. The pastor’s mischievous son Merwin was also baptized here.\textsuperscript{75}

During 1959, Elder Valentine led this church to accomplish many things. Members planned a Visitation Day for non-Adventist guests to worship with them; prepared for evangelistic meetings soon and a VBS that summer; and helped rebuild the basement wall of the Alnutt home in Union Springs. Millie Smith, Joanne Shumate, and Elota Scott formed a church social committee to plan parties and programs that summer, and Herb Scott revitalized the MV program that fall. In November eight new baptismal robes were purchased and the board voted to pay for \textit{Review} subscriptions for those unable to afford them. Also, the church started a fund to pave the driveway to Nelson Street (with $400 in it by early August). The board even discussed the possibility of opening a church school in Auburn, but decided that “the time was not right at present.”\textsuperscript{76}

If the 1950s was a decade of rapid growth and progress for the Auburn church, it was not without its sad moments as well. Those who passed to their rest included Emma Freitag (1951),

\textsuperscript{75} CRB (1950s).
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid. (1959).
Leroy Pratt (1957), Anna Marie Hafner, Sr. (1958), and Mr. C. Meyers (1959). These saints await the call of the Life-giver at the sound of the Second Advent trumpets. May you and I live now as faithful watchmen that we too may join them in saying at that day, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will deliver us.”

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Having a large, well-furnished church complex opened the way for the Auburn congregation to host many spiritual conventions, weddings and receptions, as well as concerts during the 1960s. This decade became one of church fellowship, both socially and spiritually, as members, with their flock of little children and youth, came often together.

As 1960 began, the 89 members raised over $100 for the Religious Liberty offering in January. Then in April, the church hosted the Conference Biennial Session, with hundreds of delegates filling Willard Memorial Chapel to hear reports and elect officers. The chapel’s golden mosaics sparkled that spring as Sarah (Sally) Roche wed Pfc. Edwin DeMeritt, Jr., the first Adventist wedding at the church. Elder Valentine presided. Baptisms, however, were still held at the Disciples of Christ Church, for Willard Chapel had no baptistery. In 1960 Elder Valentine baptized 17 new converts, including Gertrude Vincent; Mr. and Mrs. Bill English, Sr.; Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Shannon and Ruth; Mrs. Robert Contiguglia; Mary Parsons; Elma Evans; David Roche; Bob and Wilma Davies; and Richard, Paul and Alice Thompson.

Yet another kind of social and spiritual gathering occurred here when in August, neighborhood children assembled for the second VBS (the first was held in 1959) sponsored by Adventists in this district. Led by Margaret Hafner, 23 lay workers taught songs and crafts and Bible lessons to 75 children (33 non-Adventists) representing 10 different denominations. During the closing program, 64 children received certificates, and the free-will offering covered

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1 AUG, Feb. 15, 1960, p. 6.
3 Ibid., Apr. 25, 1960, p. 11.
one-third of the week’s expenses. P.R. Secretary Gladys Valentine stated that a Sabbath afternoon story hour would follow up the local interest created by the VBS.\(^5\)

Probably the highlight event of 1960, however, was the dedication and open house services of Willard Memorial Chapel on Sabbath and Sunday, October 8 and 9. Preparations for this high day required laying new tile in the hallways in January; putting up a new church sign in February; buying some pew cushions in June; putting in fire extinguishers and finishing the front driveway in August. Mildred Smith supervised the cleaning; William Frank refinished the floors; Blanche Frank purchased flowers for the platform; and Margaret Hafner had the organ and piano tuned.

Notable speakers included Atlantic Union President Willis Hackett; New York Conference President Roscoe Moore; Auburn mayor Maurice Schwartz; Conference treasurer Robert Mills; as well as former pastors Walton Smith and Sidney English along with George Valentine. Neil Tilkins from Washington Missionary College (now Washington Adventist University) provided a public organ concert; Leland Frank played the viola and several violin pieces; the Tilkins gave an organ-piano duet; Elders Smith and Valentine sang a duet; and the old Adelphian Quartet sang several numbers. The Academy choir, the Auburn church choir, and the Junior Choir (looking cute in their starched white smocks with red bows) provided additional musical numbers.

Elder Valentine led members in reciting the Act of Dedication: “For the defense of liberty, the training of conscience, and for aggression against evil, we dedicate this church.” What special joy and pride must have filled the hearts of Auburn’s three remaining charter members—Nellie Cuddeback, Harold Kriegelstein, and Paul Smith—as they reflected on the way the Lord had led this church! Over a period of 45 years from the first tent meetings of Elder

Miles Coon in 1915 to the dedication service, God had led. Restoration work, instead of taking one year as planned, had required over two and a half years, but now it was finished.  

But while they rejoiced, they also labored. During 1960, the board voted to ordain Ed Roche as a deacon; appoint Mrs. Ferris as a Dorcas leader (following Mary Green’s fatal auto accident); send Joanne Shumate as a delegate to the Youth Congress in Atlantic City; and appoint Paul Smith as a representative on the Academy board. They also erected a wooden fence along the property line in back; used $76.00 from the Fred and Mary Green Memorial Fund to put up the new church sign; purchased 2000 tracts on the “Empty Tomb” for Visitation Day and new church bulletins (at $1.75 per 100) with a photo of the chapel on front. 

As Elder Valentine neared the end of his pastorate here in 1961, he led members at prayer meetings in studying the new Prophetic Vision Guidance Course. Herb Scott led the Youth Sabbath School in preparing a new basement recreation center. Then Elder Valentine started a special doctrinal Sabbath school class to prepare members for the evangelistic meetings to begin in April. Special events that year included Gladys Valentine’s very successful VBS that summer, followed by church organist Joanne Shumate’s wedding to Gary Evans in August. That fall a committee priced new pew cushions, voting to pay up to $1000 to replace the old ones. On October 21, Auburn’s citizens flocked here for the outstanding organ concert by the world-famous E. Power Biggs, sponsored by the Music Guild, which packed the chapel, its aisles, and the hallway as well. Maestro Biggs filled the rafters with glorious renditions of Baroque pieces. This church also attracted local Ukrainians who rented the Youth Room for $10.00 a week until their new church was completed. 

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7 CRB (1960).  
8 Ibid. (1961).
Members rejoiced in 1961 when Gary Raymond and Ivan White, Jr., were baptized at the YMCA. These baptisms were followed in 1962 by ten more converts joining the church, six of them immersed in Cayuga Lake near Kriegelstein’s cottage in June: Virginia and Helen Rotunda, Anna Belle Martin, John Kriegelstein, Brian Strayer, and Joan Valentine, the pastor’s daughter. At various times that summer and fall, four more souls joined the church: Mr. and Mrs. Paul Cummings, Roy Shannon, and Marjorie Bacon.

These new believers soon became a part of Auburn’s vibrant church life. Willard Chapel and its spacious adjacent rooms witnessed many special events in 1962: A First Aid course taught by Drs. Trefz and Hafner; a concert by the Syracuse Black Choir and further musical programs by the Mt. Carmel Choir and by a Mexican group; the Conference Biennial Session that spring, followed by a ministerial convention; and, of course, an exciting two-week VBS in August. To prepare the building for so many guests, the board voted to tune the Sabbath school room pianos; purchase more MV songbooks; pay Mrs. Jane $5.00 a month for cleaning; install cupboards in the pastor’s study; apply ten gallons of paint to all the windowsills; and complete the east side fence before winter came (Mildred Smith gave $800 for that project).

Along with these new projects, members welcomed a new pastoral family in the fall of 1962 after the Valentines left for Grand Rapids, Michigan. Young, energetic, laughing Elder Rankin Wentland, with his beautiful wife Shirley and sons Tim (13), Danny (11), and Paul (4), moved in on the corner of Grove and Homer Street in Union Springs. Having grown up in Vietnam with his missionary parents, Elder Wentland knew Vietnamese well and thrilled members with his stories of life in the Far East—of dressing in silk gowns, eating with chopsticks, and walking dangerous jungle paths to save souls. No one who knew them could

9 Ibid. (1960s).
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid. (1962).
ever forget their love, their enthusiasm, or their harmonious blend in singing for church socials (especially Woody Guthrie’s “This Land Is My Land” with color slides of the United States). The youth especially loved this down-to-earth pastor who made religion come alive for them.\textsuperscript{12}

Under Elder Wentland’s leadership, Auburn developed many new activities and programs. Once again, in October 1962, the Central Dorcas Federation, led by Elder V. A. LaGrone, met in Auburn.\textsuperscript{13} Sabbath School Investment leader Joann Evans, a short but dynamic go-getter, created colorful new goal devices and placed them in the hallway to inspire members to plan Investment projects. Investment giving really shot up in 1963!\textsuperscript{14}

Baptisms and membership transfers also climbed during the 1960s. In January 1963 Dr. Malcolm and Elizabeth Bourne moved to Geneva and joined Auburn church, followed in May with the baptisms of Joe and Mary Shaben; Barb Rotunda; Penny, Louise and Karen Daugherty; Bill and Arthur Jayne; Danny Wentland and Darlene Strayer; and that fall, Francis and Marion Bartlett transferred here.\textsuperscript{15} They all found work to do. Mancel Daugherty became deputy director of Pathfinders. After Elder H. J. Harris taught members how to give Bible studies, the board voted to purchase a filmstrip on how to witness through literature distribution. At Auburn’s first Five-Day Plan to Quit Smoking in June, 80 people attended at the Auburn Inn. Members enjoyed a church picnic in August. That fall, a new Social Committee was formed with Mrs. Contiguglia, Carlene Kriegelstein, and Doris Strayer to plan creative social events.\textsuperscript{16}

With genuine hospitality, members opened their hearts and doors to all kinds of convocations during 1963. The Central New York area church officers convened here in

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\textsuperscript{12} \textit{AUG}, Oct. 29, 1962, pp. 4-5.
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid.}, Sept. 10, 1962, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{15} CRB (1963).
\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{flushleft}
February to enjoy meetings, a book display, and Disney’s film “White Wilderness.” Members purchased a new guest book to remember the visitors who came. In April M.V. delegates from all over the Conference came here for a Friday vespers with Elder Vernon Hoffman, Conference M.V. leader. On Sabbath they met at Auburn Community College (now Cayuga County College) with Elder Clark Smith, General Conference M.V. leader. Also that spring, a Youth’s Rally convened here, followed by a Sabbath school and a VBS workshop with General Conference speakers Curtis Barger and Louise Meyer emphasizing fun crafts, interesting Branch Sabbath schools, sparkling VBS programs, and soul-saving children’s Sabbath school programs. In August, Auburn’s own VBS turned out to be the largest in five years—131 children (101 non-Adventists) representing 45 homes and 13 denominations—quite a handful for the 32 full-time church workers!

With Ed Roche as leader and Wayne Pratt as his assistant, the M.V. Society began putting on some fascinating programs. But all of these activities could be worthless, Elder Wentland emphasized in his October 7 Gleaner article, unless each member kept his or her “Communication with Heaven” open through Bible study, prayer, and personal meditation.

During the mid-1960s, Elder Wentland helped this church reach a higher spiritual plain.

Dedicated believers here responded to the pastor’s call for zealous witnesses in 1964. They discussed how to place the Adventist message books into area motels; they began planning for another successful August VBS, led by Susie Roche with M.V. leader Carlene Kriegelstein helping her. That spring the deacons and deaconesses began an every-member visitation

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17 AUG, Jan. 21, 1963, p. 5.
19 AUG, Apr. 29, 1963, p. 5.
program with the pastor. That summer the board agreed to buy 50 sets of “It Is Written” tracts for distribution in the city and rejected an offer from the nearby Loblaws department store to buy the church property. July saw busy plans being laid for a fall evangelistic series at the Auburn Hall on 25 South Street from October 20 to November 11. These meetings featured speaker Elder Folkenberg and the tenor Sunny Liu. “Some interest in our message was aroused,” the church clerk wrote, “[but] results [are] unseen as yet.”

But some of those results became evident in greater diligence among members to carry on the work of the church. They purchased an adding machine to assist the treasurer in her work; organized a work bee to trim the hedges; promoted the new Camp Cherokee program; advanced the youth $20 toward their recreation projects; authorized Cheryl Kriegelstein to use the chapel for her wedding to Charles Tremper; and that fall, appointed Bob Davies as boiler custodian and Mr. Jayne and Mrs. Ferris as janitorial staff. Mrs. Ferris and Doris Strayer also directed the Community Service Center (as Dorcas societies were now known) in 1964.

During 1965, at least nine individuals joined this church: Lottie Carr; Charlene Mason; Elwood, Bill and Ginger Raymond; Patty Rotunda; John Schwarz; Mary Young; and Jerry Strayer. They found many varied programs to interest them. In January, they saw the film “On the Threshold of Eternity,” after which Lee Jayne, Dave Roche, Esther Allen, Tim Wentland, and Virginia Rotunda were elected delegates to the spring Youth’s Congress. They also heard the Syracuse Black Choir perform here for an M.V. meeting, and a few weeks later, the Academy’s chorale sang for Sabbath morning services and enjoyed a picnic lunch with members afterwards. In May the first church newsletter was begun. Later that fall, the board authorized

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23 CRB (1964).
24 Ibid.
26 CRB (1960s).
the formation of a Couples’ Club for young married youth in the church, while the teens group received permission to play games in the basement recreation room until 10 p.m.\textsuperscript{27}

In January the board voted to install a P.A. system in the Primary Sabbath School room so that parents with small, squabbling children could enjoy the church service there. The Junior Sabbath School room next door received a fresh coat of paint, and Bob Davies installed speakers in the hallway. That spring the Kindergarten Sabbath School room was redecorated and remodeled. In May Doris Strayer volunteered to do the janitorial work if she received some help (she did—her three kids—Brian, Darlene, and Jerry—pushed dust mops and sprayed dust cloths every week for months!). That fall, the church acquired a film projector (for $150) for social occasions and ordered $20.00 worth of \textit{Steps to Christ} to distribute to prison inmates.\textsuperscript{28}

All the love and guidance members had given their children began to show tangible results in spiritual commitments during 1966 and long afterwards. That year, at least 11 youth received baptism, besides three adults (Margaret Cochrane, Pearl White, Florence Lowell). The youth included Tom and Randy Bacon; Eddie Paul and Linda Roche; Alan, Nicky, Ron and Robbin White; Sharon English and Cindy Kline—all baptized on June 11.\textsuperscript{29} Most of them had grown up in the church, second- and third-generation Adventists now taking their personal stand for Christ. The church needed their youthful talents and sought to put them to work.

Some of the activities in which young people contributed that year included the Ingathering Victory dinner planned by Doris Strayer; the new Couples Club formed by Sally DeMeritt and Susie Roche; helping raise funds to send soldier Dave Roche a new Bible and hymnal set; and joining the reorganized Pathfinder Club. Church improvement activities that year included appointing five receptionists (Dora Shumate, Susie Roche, Helen Roche, Irving

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Ibid.} (1965); \textit{AUG,} Feb. 8, 1965, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{28} \textit{CRB} (1965).
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Ibid.} (1960s).
Ferris, and Joe Shaben) to rotate each week in greeting visitors; putting up three more road signs around Auburn to guide people to the church; purchasing 12,000 new bulletins; authorizing Susie Roche to send flowers to the sick and to new mothers; and in June, starting a very successful Dial-a-Prayer program. The Sabbath school rooms’ floors also received a new coat of varnish, while Lisle Shelley obtained 60 feet of galvanized downspout for better roof drainage. To promote reverence, a deacon began patrolling the hallways, shushing up tiny tots who ran and yelled during services.30

The year 1967, when Elder David Prest, the Academy Bible teacher, became temporarily Auburn’s pastor as well, witnessed another spurt of membership growth when 15 new members joined: Bill and Elaine Ferry; Richard, Arlene and Nancy Quay; Millie Smith; Barb DeCamp; Dick and Jean Raymond; as well as Duane and Debra Ingersoll; Herb Pratt, Jr.; Gwen Bourne; and Emma Irmert.31 In March, all Conference ministers gathered here for state-wide evangelistic planning. They heard the thrilling camp meeting revivalist Elder Theodore Carcich speak, and in response to his challenge, set a goal of 723 baptisms for 1967.32 In April Auburn hosted the Central Federation meetings with Elder M. H. Jensen, manager of the Eastern Welfare depot, and Lucille Rodman, Conference federation president, speaking.33

That fall, Auburn hosted a memorable 60th wedding anniversary celebration for William and Blanche Frank at Kriegelsteins’ home, complete with poems, humorous readings, songs, and a real surrey with fringe on top. Almost 50 years ago, Mr. Frank had read himself into the truth from a tract someone had left in his barbershop. Over the next half-century, he and Blanche had been Bible workers and tent masters for evangelistic meetings; he had served as an Auburn elder

31 Ibid. (1960s).
for 46 years (1921-1967) and she as Dorcas leader for 25 years (1942-1967), in addition to having been Conference federation president for five years.\textsuperscript{34}

Active laymen and women such as they galvanized Auburn members for accomplishing many important tasks in 1967. In January they ordered 1000 pieces of literature for the rack in the hall, organized visitation teams to encourage the sick and despondent, and formed small prayer bands in several homes. The board invited Elder Jim Everetts to come for Youth Counsel meetings that winter and Elder Karolyi in the spring for revival meetings. In April they spent $67.00 for Bibles and Gift Bible Plan lessons, while in June, Ed Roche and Dr. Bourne used M.V. programs to inspire the youth for active witnessing endeavors. That fall Sharon English went to the Camp Berkshire “Bible College” as Auburn’s M.V. delegate. Finally, in December, members from Union Springs and Auburn celebrated their Ingathering Victory Banquet.\textsuperscript{35}

In the area of church improvements, deacon George Strayer searched for shatter-proof glass to frame the Nelson Street sign and got board approval to purchase a new riding lawnmower; Mrs. Ferris purchased new kitchenette utensils for church socials; Bob Davies and Irving Ferris drew up a church budget to plan ahead for 1968; and the board decided to rip up the flagstone walks and remove all the bushes around the base of the church.\textsuperscript{36} The board also discussed building a new church school in Union Springs.\textsuperscript{37}

In the fall of 1967, Auburn experienced the changing of the pastoral guard once again. As the Wentlands left for Oregon, in came the tall, slim, jovial cowboy pastor from Texas, Elder Thomas Hicks, with his svelte wife and four children, Jody Ann (10), Tammy (8), Danny (7),

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., Nov. 24, 1967, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{35} CRB (1967).
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., Mar. 19, 1967.
and Adam (5). Besides pastoring at Auburn and Union Springs, he also taught senior Bible at the Academy.  

Under Elder Hick’s enthusiastic leadership, the church accomplished much for the Lord in 1968. In January the board considered buying fifteen minutes of daily radio time on an Auburn, Syracuse or Ithaca station for “Amazing Facts” programs. By February the choice lay between two Auburn stations: WMBO at $62.50 and WAUB at $52.50. Ten delegates from Auburn attended the Conference Biennial Session that spring. In March, in lieu of buying radio time, the board voted to support Elder Hicks’ upcoming evangelistic meetings with $1750 for advertising and other expenses, while Union Springs paid $1250 and the Conference contributed $2500. This series, which convened in a blue and white striped “bubble tent” in the parking lot of the Grant Avenue Mall, featured Elder Hicks in flashy tuxedos preaching; Dick LaJoie and the Country Gospel Singers providing special music; and local church members as greeters, ushers, and literature distributors. Interesting films were shown and colorful “Amazing Facts” pamphlets given away. By the end of the series, the total expenses of $2700 had been fully paid, and 29 baptisms soon followed. To follow up the interest created, members put copies of Your Bible and You in area hotels and motels and gave away literature door to door in town.

By 1968 the church had 29 new members to help distribute this literature. Some of them were adults, like Hortense Boundy, Dean Ingersoll, Charles Sweet, and Elma Schlist. But by far the greatest number constituted the cream of Auburn’s youthful crop: Tim English, Jonathan Bourne, Lyle and David Bacon, Nancy Kriegelstein, Norman Boundy, as well as Lorie Gravatt, Evelyn Stotler, Carol Jean Shelley, Ninette Roche, and Irene McAdams. On May 25 alone, Earnestine, Penny and Susan Kahler; Hildreth and Lisa Martino; Steve Roche; and Wanda

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Shannon were baptized. Throughout the summer baptisms continued: Brad Fish, Joe Shaben, Philip Marlin, and Deborah Covey. That fall Martin and Shannon Turner joined the church.\textsuperscript{39}

Members also thought of new ways to improve their sanctuary, Sabbath school rooms, and yard. Because the new carpet for the rostrum burned up in the Hicks’ family fire at Levanna, the board voted in January to put a runner carpet on stage instead. New letterhead stationery was purchased for official business use. In April a work bee trimmed the bushes down to 20 inches in height, while a cleaning bee that summer left the chapel, Sabbath school rooms, and hallways sparkling. Lisle Shelley hauled away the unsightly telephone poles along the parking lot, and Mr. Winchester refinished the front church door and the Dorcas room floor. That fall water fountains were installed in both restrooms. Freezing blasts that winter caused the board to discuss buying a new furnace to heat the vast interior spaces.\textsuperscript{40}

Auburn members have always gone quickly about doing the Lord’s business, but rarely have they received public recognition for doing so. The \textit{Gleaner} in December 1968 featured an interview with Brian Strayer, Academy senior, who had spent the previous two summers canvassing in Auburn, Waterloo, and Seneca Falls. “The act of going door to door for eight to ten hours a day,” Brian said, “develops a lot of self-discipline and a sense of urgency to bring a saving knowledge of Jesus to those who know Him not.” Both a third-generation Adventist and literature evangelist (his mother Doris and his grandfather C. W. White had sold books before him), Brian would eventually canvass four summers, one of them as a Conference-paid supervisor of ten youth in Canton, New York.\textsuperscript{41} In the May 29, 1969 \textit{Citizen-Advertiser}, Brian and his friend John Kriegelstein of Cayuga, were honored as valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively, of the Class of 1969 at Union Springs Academy. While Brian planned to begin

\textsuperscript{39} CRB (1968).
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} AUG, Dec. 24, 1968, p. 7.
ministerial studies in the fall at Southern Missionary College in Tennessee, John would take up physics and math at Atlantic Union College in Massachusetts.42

These hometown boys left behind them a church still very active as the 1960s came to a close. Despite the fact that furnace problems caused the members to abandon Willard Memorial Chapel that winter and worship at Union Springs, once the new boiler was installed, they warmed up to engage in many activities. They purchased 48 copies of Your Bible and You (at a dollar each) to distribute to local motels; sent a service-men’s kit to Ken Dodsworth at Fort Dix; revived the Dial-a-Prayer with new messages of comfort and cheer that summer; and planned for a Five-Day non-smoking seminar that fall, something Pastor Odell really enjoyed doing.43

Erling and Leona Odell pitched right in and helped their parishioners with many church improvement plans. Several doors received new locks and the kitchenette was enlarged. Members banded together for a cleaning bee that spring and erected new church signs at the city line on Clark and South Streets. The chapel Bible was rebound in honor of Gary Evans and the two platform flags replaced with new ones, while the pastor received two framed pictures for his office. That summer new Communion linens were purchased. That fall Mrs. Kahler planned a Harvest M.V. supper, while Linda Pratt and Jim Everhart received board approval for their wedding in the chapel. Newly baptized converts in 1969 included Bonnie Quay, Michael Bilak, Fern Schwarz, and Crystal Lake. Others who transferred their membership here that year included Leland and Josephine Frank, David and Ruth Chisholm, and the Odells.44

The 1960s brought many joyous moments to the members, but this decade also witnessed the passing of ten individuals. In January 1960, charter members Fred and Mary Green were killed in an automobile accident; in February Mrs. Jordan also died. Mary Parsons and Charles

44 Ibid.
Schuyler passed away. Long-time Dorcas worker Mrs. David Coon died in 1965, followed in 1966 by Leon Palmer and in 1968 by Eugenia Piskarowa. The youthful (only 31), quiet-spoken Gary Evans died of a heart attack in 1969.\(^\text{45}\)

Then in June 1969, the aged patriarch of the church, William J. Frank (87), former barber, colporteur, tent master, farmer, pastoral assistant and radio speaker, passed away. Elder V. A. LaGrone came all the way from the Atlantic Union office in South Lancaster to preach his funeral sermon, assisted by Auburn’s pastor Erling Odell.\(^\text{46}\) The founder of the Auburn Seventh-day Adventist Church was dead, exactly 50 years to the summer after he and Blanche had arrived here. In a January 13, 1964 letter to Mrs. Irving Ferris, Frank had written these words after reflecting on the history of the Auburn congregation in his lifetime:

That [Welch Hall and Willard Memorial Chapel] is my present home. I’m looking forward to a still better home and there the gates we enter will be of solid pearl and the streets will be pure gold and the Tree of Life will be there and I not only hope to eat of the fruit but I rather expect to. But then there will be just one more move to make and that will be [to] the New Earth. By God’s grace I shall be there, and I would love to see all the members of the Auburn Church there to \([\text{sic}].\(^\text{47}\)

Let us all resolve today to join Mr. Frank around that Tree of Life in heaven above!


The Auburn church entered the decade of the 1970s with 135 members grouped in 71 family units. At the end of the decade, over 90 new persons had joined this fellowship, while at least 23 individuals had died and many more had transferred elsewhere. During 1970, six new members were added: Rhoda Nelson, Wilfred and Diane Bratt, Robert and Dorothy Brown, and Jim Quay.¹

These new members found much to do in service to their church. Mr. Bratt became Auburn’s Pathfinder director; others assisted Elder Odell as he planned for evangelistic meetings in April; some gained rich blessings from the Testimony Count-down begun at prayer meetings that spring. Among the youth, several helped Lee Jayne raise $125 to send delegates to Atlantic City, New Jersey, for the Youth’s Congress, and participated in special summer recreational activities Lee planned. To reach Auburn’s diverse ethnic population, the board ordered Ingathering papers in foreign languages in May. The Youth Sabbath School took charge of one Sabbath service in August, then helped distribute over 100 Signs of the Times in September.

Church improvements and progress for 1970 included establishing a local Poor Fund to help needy members; installing bookshelves in the new pastor’s study; remodeling the kitchenette (with donations from the Ferris and Knapp Memorial Funds); repairing the gutters and downspouts; and acquiring new Communion linens and glasses (with money from the Frank and Evans Memorial Funds).²

When Elder Erling Odell, tall, balding, with a gentle smile, arrived in 1969 with his schoolteacher wife Leona and two adorable little daughters, Dianne and Carol, he galvanized members for an evangelistic outreach in April 1970. These Voice of Youth meetings, directed

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¹ CRB (1970s).
by Academy Bible teacher Richard Cadavero, featured 75 Academy students, 25 of whom gave sermonettes on such topics as “Jesus, Our Only Hope,” “Jesus Is Coming Again,” “Radiant Health,” and “How to Have a Happy Christian Life.” With the help of Laura Torkelson, Academy Principal Oscar Torkelson’s wife, students prepared short messages for the phone service “Teen Dial,” which soon received over 1,850 responses in two weeks. Youth trekked door to door with Bible in the Hand lessons and distributed uncounted thousands of tracts at homes and plazas. Twelve artistic students prepared posters to advertise the meetings; others provided special music, assisted in the nursery, ran the audio-visual equipment, or ushered. These meetings brought such an enthusiastic public response that Pastor Odell and Conference Youth leader Elder Jim Everts held a Five-Day Plan to Quit Smoking as a follow-up.³

With so many of its own boys and girls growing up now, Auburn church organized its own Pathfinder Club separate from the Frontenac Church School club in Union Springs. Led by James Williams, Grace Hunt, and Wilfred Bratt, the club began selling light bulbs to purchase uniforms and equipment. Impressed with their esprit de corps, Auburn’s Mayor Tom Lattimore named March 8-14 “Pathfinder Week.” The group planned to sponsor a Red Cross First Aid course soon.⁴ That summer Auburn’s youth Gidget Keech and David Rathbun demonstrated the harmful effects of smoking with Smoking Sam right out on the city streets as Roland Burpee and Steve Roche gave literature to curious bystanders.⁵ Other youth like Bill Raymond, Doug Kriegelstein, and Jerry Strayer repaired the old steeple bell and started a new tradition of ringing the bell at 11:00 a.m. each Sabbath.⁶

⁵ Ibid., Sept. 29, 1970, p. 11.  
⁶ Ibid., Nov. 10, 1970, p. 11.
Meanwhile, 16,000 calls came in on the “Teen Dial” and “Dial-a-Prayer” lines in only six or seven months, as Academy students continued to prepare messages for it. Then when Elder Odell began a series of Wednesday evening meetings featuring “Testimony Countdown,” an unprecedented number of members attended prayer meetings that fall. Four of them were baptized in Cayuga Lake that summer: Barb and Ray Couden, Jr., Jim Quay, and Jim Yeary.7

Under Odell’s gentle ministry, many, both old and young, gave their hearts to the Lord. During 1971 the aging Walter Clark, Gerald McKelvey, Paul and Diane Pichot, and Eva Rector received baptism, while the beloved Herb and Lucille Scott transferred back “home” to Auburn after years at Kettering, Ohio.8 They discovered that many changes had occurred among Auburn members during their absence. For one, on average, 40 members absented themselves from Sabbath services each week, and the Combined Budget need for $1200 a month was far behind being met; so, due to lack of heat, members held services in the Primary Sabbath School room that winter. Pastor Odell reminded them, however, that 1971 was Layman’s Year, and urged each one to become active in a witnessing activity.

To prepare them for sharing their faith, the pastor began a “Training Lightbearers” class each Tuesday evening, teaching the art of giving Bible studies. In March, five Auburn delegates (Ed Roche, Bob Davies, Dick Raymond, Bob Lake, and Lee Jayne) attended the Layman’s Seminar in Syracuse and returned full of enthusiasm to organize members for witnessing. The “Code-a-Phone” (“Dial-a-Prayer”) had proved such a successful neighborhood witness that the board purchased new equipment (at $29.70 a month) rather than continue renting it. Arlene Quay was sent off that spring to study how to direct cooking schools. In August church women and youth held another successful VBS. That fall, in preparation for “Mission ’72,” the board

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7 Ibid.
8 CRB (1970s).
bought scores of tracts and “how to” materials for the local evangelistic meetings in March 1972. Several local Sabbath school superintendents, secretaries, and teachers attended the Sabbath school workshop at Syracuse in October, where they learned that every member should be receiving the Review and Herald, even if the local church had to pay for it.\textsuperscript{9}

Church programs and progress in 1971 included starting a mixed swimming time at the YMCA; finishing the kitchenette remodeling just in time for the Bournes’ welcome home party; attending the Patty Rotunda-Miles Robinson wedding in July; and purchasing an upright freezer for frozen health foods in Dorcas in September.\textsuperscript{10}

Evangelism occupied much of Pastor Odell’s time during 1972 and 1973 as he involved members in preparing for “Mission ‘72” and “Mission ’73.” Blanche Heck and Valerie Hutchinson accepted baptism in 1972, while at least 30 people joined the church in 1973. Some of these new members were young people like Myles Robinson, Virginia Bourne, Jim and Linda Everhart, Cindy Lake, and Patty Matthews, as well as Bernice Palmer, Diantha and Wayne Pratt, and the Raymond brothers (Brian, David, Mark, Tim, and Richard, Jr.). Others were adults like Erma Clark, Joseph Ray, Mary Bell Rice, Ken Rotunda, Ernest Slaughter, as well as Lucinda Tagni, Maude Worley, and Richard and Anita Westen. In two cases, entire families joined in 1973, including the Wheeler family (Maynard, Betty, Marilee, and Robin) and the Wilson family (Jay, Julie, and Mark).\textsuperscript{10}

It was not Elder Odell, however, but the incoming pastor Elder Maynard Wheeler who completed “Mission ’73” in Auburn.\textsuperscript{11} Of medium height, balding, with a perpetual twinkle in his eyes and a ready smile, Elder Wheeler, his tall wife Betty, and their four children (Robin, \textsuperscript{9} Ibid. (1971).
\textsuperscript{10} CRB (1970s); AUG, Feb. 22, 1972, p. 13.
Marylee, Wendy, and Maynard, Jr.) brought a real exuberance and a desire for fun-filled fellowship to the church. Frequent potlucks, socials, and church get-togethers highlighted his ministry here. Sabbath afternoons were typically filled with a potluck dinner, literature distribution around town, and an occasional board meeting back at the church.12

During 1972 the church board took many progressive steps to improve the program here. They voted to send $50.00 to the Academy to help pay for their new mimeograph machine on which Auburn’s bulletins were now printed; agreed to cooperate with Union Springs Adventists in finally building a new church school on Spring Street Road; allocated $1200 to repair the chapel roof and plaster and repaint the back wall; gave approval for members with state patients to bring them to church; authorized Mrs. Ferris to purchase 25 new Communion towels and Elizabeth Bourne to speak to all Sabbath school teachers about the wedding ring issue. In August the board’s budget allocated 41 percent of offerings for church expense, 28 percent for the new Academy building, 25.5 percent for the new church school, and 5.5 percent for Sabbath school expense. That fall furnace repairs had already totaled over $1300 while church school needs exceeded $4000 a year. But on at least one occasion that fall—Harry and Mina Rice’s 75th wedding anniversary—members forgot the bills and celebrated this waymark with joy and lots of good food.13

Speaking of good food, Auburn Adventists held another cooking school in the fall of 1973. Led by Linda Caviness, wife of the Conference MV and Youth director Larry Caviness, and Betty Wheeler, this cooking and nutrition seminar at the Public Service Building featured vegetarian-style dishes and protein foods. The public was urged to attend.14

\[13\] CRB (1972).
During 1973, as Auburn church’s financial needs changed, the board altered the budget allocations as well. Now 45 percent of all loose offerings went for church expense; 14 percent to the Academy; 35.5 percent to the new church school; and 5.5 percent to Sabbath school expense. In February Paul Smith attached hard wire mesh to all the church windows to protect them from careless balls and malicious rocks; John Norzow repaired many cracks in the building’s masonry. Also that spring, ladies brought in artificial ferns for the platform, the Lake family refinshed the hallway floors, and other members repainted all the Sabbath school room ceilings. The board considered acquiring a larger freezer for health foods and bought a tape recorder and 12 tapes to record board meetings.\footnote{CRB (1973).}

Busy as believers were with building repairs, however, they did not allow routine chores to stop their witnessing endeavors. In March 1973 the church sent nine delegates to the Conference Triennial session; in May another successful Five-Day Plan began; and that summer members began preparing for Elder Gorenson’s evangelistic meetings. The board agreed to purchase 5000 tracts (for $193) in addition to 100 copies of \textit{Steps to Christ}, 50 copies of \textit{Great Controversy}, and 50 copies of \textit{Desire of Ages} to distribute to attendees. For a more effective church school fundraising effort, Union Springs and Auburn combined their school boards, with Gordon Palmer as Auburn’s representative on the new board.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}

In 1974 there were four baptisms—Adriana and Dan Age, Billy Mowland, and Emil Richardson\footnote{\textit{Ibid.} (1970s).}—and two weddings in the chapel. In August 1973, Darlene Strayer, daughter of George and Doris Strayer, wed Jan Hempel, son of the Conference treasurer, with great-uncle “Bishop” A. A. Leiske presiding.\footnote{\textit{AUG}, Feb. 12, 1974, p. 22.} Then in June 1974 Cindi Kline wed David Randall with
Elder T. V. Zytkoskee presiding.\textsuperscript{19} There could be no doubt about it: the “baby boomers” of the 1950s were growing up. During the 1970s and 1980s, however, many of them would move away.

Sadly, some who remained behind stopped attending church; others were dropped or censored, a situation that so concerned the board that they appointed nine couples in January 1974 to visit absentee members and inquire into their spiritual well-being. Despite declining attendance, the M.V. Society continued holding meetings, but its members appeared more interested in swimming parties. In April, Elaine Ferr\textsuperscript{y} and Ruth Chisholm attended the United Community Service Convention at Camp Berkshire, while in October, Lee Jayne, Jim Pratt, and Nancy Kriegelstein went there for a Youth Leadership Conference.\textsuperscript{20}

Among the improvements made in 1974 to the church’s physical plant, the new cleaning schedule voted by the board had the deacons rotating monthly. Paul Smith brought in four loads of stone for spreading on the parking lot, while Mr. Potter tuned the organ in preparation for Eddie Paul Roche’s upcoming wedding in August. That fall, roof repairs took $525 and the Dorcas rooms were repainted and had new venetian blinds and shelves installed. The church also purchased a new adding machine ($79.50) for the treasurer.\textsuperscript{21} To help the saints develop good giving habits, Elder Henry Uhl, Conference Stewardship Secretary, began a stewardship revival program here that winter, preparatory to launching the Frontenac School building fund.\textsuperscript{22}

Auburn had at least ten new members in 1975 to support this school: Leon and Len Hewitt; Luella Horseler; Debbie Roche; Maggie Williams; Lewis McGregor; as well as James...

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., July 16, 1974, p. 19.
\textsuperscript{20} CRB (1974).
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} AUG, Feb. 26, 1974, p. 16.
Scott; William Wiggins; Mildred Shepler; and Lincoln Bourne.\textsuperscript{23} After groundbreaking ceremonies in April 1975, this new school became the focus of much Conference-wide attention.\textsuperscript{24}

Although the school project would occupy much of the board’s time in coming years, during 1975, other concerns filled their agenda. They urged the deacons to be better organized in posting the hymns and then considered allowing the Fingerlakes Janitor Service to take over the deacons’ weekly chores (at $17.60 a week). That spring the deacons refinished and buffed the hallway floors, and Elaine Ferry purchased new garment bags for the baptismal robes. Lee Jayne and Perry Pratt agreed to clean the church each week that summer, joined by Mrs. Ferris a few weeks later. The board also voted to reverse the order of Sabbath school and church services.\textsuperscript{25}

The year 1975 also witnessed advances in the church’s outreach programs. Marion Lake and Norman Boundy attended the Layman’s Soul Winning Seminar at Syracuse, returning with many ideas to share to help members prepare for evangelistic efforts in Auburn that spring and in Savannah that summer. Union Springs and Auburn members agreed to share the cost of airing “Dateline Religion” over station WMBO. That fall the board voted to buy 4000 copies of \textit{Steps to Christ} for Ingathering distribution, while the new Branch Sabbath school begun at Charles and Rowena White’s home in Savannah in October planned to use the “Pastor’s Quarterly” for lesson study. The M.V. society led by Linda Everhart continued during 1975, but members’ conflicting interests and schedules often cut attendance to a handful.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{23} CRB (1970s).
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{AUG}, June 24, 1975, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{25} CRB (1975).
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Ibid.}
During 1976 Auburn welcomed eight new members into its fellowship: Andrew Bourne; Charles Williams; Ernestine Burpee; John Severize; and Olive, Tim, Gerrie, and Jeff Burnette. Many of these believers became active in the various church programs and projects for 1976. Auburn sent 10 delegates to the Conference Triennial session that spring; loaned Doug Kriegelstein 10 *Christ in Song* books for his “dark county” singing group; and sent Dr. Bourne, Tim English, Ed and David Roche as delegates to the Youth Congress in Springfield, Massachusetts in August. That fall, Debbie Roche chaired a new social committee to plan entertaining get-togethers for the members.

But the greatest share of the board’s time in 1976 seemed to be filled with discussions of how to repair and restore their deteriorating 150-year-old building. They asked a heating expert to check and see why some rooms were cool while others overheated. The church expense fund by March stood at $2000 in arrears, with only 71 members giving full or partial tithes and offerings, so the board considered not heating one end of Welch Hall. That spring Mr. Ferris priced carpeting for Sabbath school rooms and the chapel, while Carlene Kriegelstein donated funds for new Communion linens. That summer, as expenses rose, the board dropped the Dial-a-Prayer program, shut off the heat and lights, and nailed plywood boards up to keep the pigeons from infesting the building’s nooks and crannies. Maurice Roche began looking for someone to repair the slate roof shingles. As temperatures dropped that fall, the board voted to cover all the Sabbath school rooms’ windows with heavy plastic insulation, while Mr. Guy began repairing roof slates and members applied silicone sealer to the stone walls. Meanwhile, cleaning efforts by local members continued to be a problem. It seemed that just when the church most needed generous hearts and willing hands, they were in short supply.

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At least over in Union Springs, the new Frontenac Church School rapidly took form as the two church groups volunteered their labor and expertise to slash costs of building the 9000 square foot edifice, whose unique architectural design generated much comment. At long last, by the summer of 1977, the school stood ready for occupation. Conference President C. W. Skantz preached at its opening on Proverbs 14:26 and Auburn youth led out in the service.

Much of the driving force and inspiration behind Frontenac’s unique design and continuous progress curriculum lay with educator Dr. Margaret Hafner, professor of education at the State University of New York at Brockport. During 1977 she led out in a Continuous Progress Workshop at the Academy. Teachers came from all over the United States and Canada to attend, greatly benefiting from the extensive materials Dr. Hafner had prepared.

Besides its growing educational program, Auburn church also benefited from its evangelistic outreach. Seven persons joined their fellowship that year: Dan and Lorraine Heusler, Perry Pratt, Stewart Burpee, Lori Catherman, Bradley Lake, and Ruth Olschewske. They became an active part of church activities in 1977. Some of these programs included Elder Karolyi’s spring revival series on “Righteousness by Faith” and the ongoing Savannah Sabbath school with Richard Quay and C. W. White. Mildred Shepler attended the Communications Workshop at Camp Berkshire that fall while Eddie Paul Roche went to the Youth Ministry Seminar there in November to learn how to conduct a “Witnessing Training Program” here. That fall the board also discussed starting a Five-Day Plan, a Cooking School, and sponsoring

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33 CRB (1970s).
“Your Radio Doctor” and “Help in the Home” radio programs locally. Eddie Paul Roche, Lori Catherman, and Cindy Lake also attended the “Festival of Faith” in November.34

But during this decade, the overwhelming issue that brought gray hair to board members’ heads was money: how to finance building, heating, and repair costs? Already in January of 1977, this church was far behind on its church school operating fund. Some members suggested selling Florida citrus fruit to help with expenses; others felt we should meet in the basement to save on the heat bills. To Gordon Palmer, the church school finances appeared to be in a hopeless situation. So in March, various projects were considered to raise money. Renting to the First Baptist Congregation would help, some felt; Conference President Skantz approved and so did the church board, but in August the Baptists declined to rent. One year’s church expenses in 1977 totaled over $5000, while the church school debt had reached $10,500 by August. So that September, at a joint meeting of both church boards, it was voted that each church be responsible for the tuition costs of its own students if parents could not pay. To their credit, Auburn members had given thousands of dollars to support the Christian training of at least a dozen youth there. The members of each church even discussed merging their congregations to save on maintenance expenses, but nothing ever came of it.35

In the meantime, however pressed for funds they might be, believers here continued seeking ways to preserve their sesquicentennial chapel. They applied silicone sealer to the exterior stone walls; they nailed more plastic coverings on exterior window frames. When the cheerful, blond, quiet new pastor, Elder Michael Lay, arrived that fall, he urged the installation of three huge ceiling fans in the chapel to prevent the heat from escaping to the high rafters. These proved a great benefit. A huge, aging building; a declining membership; and an expensive

34 Ibid. (1977).
35 Ibid.
church school program combined to create a formula for disaster unless the members did something drastic soon. The board addressed these problems during 1978 by authorizing Cayuga Glass Company to repair broken windows; by listing the church property with Leo Stack for sale; by twice repairing the broken church sign and replacing microphones and speakers stolen from the chapel; and by voting to cover the stained glass windows with plexiglass and closing off the end hallway with a partition to save heat and add more insulation.

But these nagging problems did not occupy all the time of Auburn members that year, for spiritual growth and outreach also received due emphasis. In January 1978 three delegates were chosen to attend the Festival of Faith in Greenboro, North Carolina, while ten more delegates attended the Conference constituency meeting the following month. That spring members laid plans for evangelistic meetings in January 1979 and began a visitation program for non-attending members. In May the board voted $171 for two Dukane projectors for the Encounter Series of 10 lessons with filmstrips. Elder Karolyi came and held a stewardship seminar here that fall during which the Sabbath schools began meeting at 9:10 a.m. to allow more lesson study time. In November the church established a prison ministry fund from inmates’ donations to supply them with materials, and Dan Age requested permission to revive the defunct M.V. society and begin a Friday evening “Our Daily Bread” vespers for youth. In December Dr. Margaret Hafner began upgrading the church music library.36

Despite some problems, therefore, Auburn church’s 11 baptisms in 1978 seemed to bode well for future growth, since many of them were young people. These converts included Ed, Esther, and Rhonda Hayes; Jeffrey and Amy Jayne; Paul and Margaret Whitaker; Brian and Sue Chapin; Alan Pitcher; and John Vidmasko.37 Weddings also spotlighted some of Auburn’s long-

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36 Ibid. (1977-78).
37 Ibid. (1970s).
time members. In 1978 Jerry Strayer wed Natalie Rigby, with Auburn’s new pastor Michael Lay assisting.\(^{38}\) Then in May 1979, at a quiet ceremony in the Strayer parlor at Union Springs, widow Ruth Olschewski wed widower Charles White, with Academy principal Ralph Trecartin presiding.\(^{39}\) Public attention also came to Dr. Malcolm Bourne, for years Auburn’s Youth Sabbath School leader and a chemist and food science researcher at Cornell University, when during the summer of 1979 he presented some food and nutrition lectures at the camp meeting.\(^{40}\)

The year 1979 also witnessed a spectacular rise in baptisms here, with 30 people joining the church. In February Ken Crowel, Florence Diego, Brenda Lopez, Jason Roche, and Dan Shepler joined, followed in March by C. W. White, Peter and Danisha Satelmajer, Beverly Crowell, and Lois and Angela Stotler. In May Gerald McKelvey and the whole Herrington family (Charles, Andrea, Lester, and Jimmy) were baptized, followed in July by Dale and Suzanne Wahley, Kenyon Pruya, Randolph Lockwood, Jessie Chandler, and Harold Best. August saw Thomas and Rhonda Smith transfer in and Pam Cardinale take her stand, while in September, Leon and Lena Hewitt and Anna Norzow joined. Elder and Mrs. C. W. Skantz also transferred their membership here that fall.

These new believers soon began enjoying the diverse range of programs and events offered for the 131 members. In January Elder Dudney began a tremendously successful evangelistic series in town, while lay activities secretary Doris Strayer stocked the literature racks with pamphlets appealing to youth. The board decided in February to send the Review and children’s Sabbath school papers free for one year to all new members. That spring Elder Skantz and Dale Wakley became the spiritual overseers of this church, facing tough issues such as the wedding ring for church officers, the Social Services Department’s wish to run a daily feeding

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\(^{39}\) *AUG*, July 10, 1979, p. 16.  
program in Willard Hall, refinancing the church school deb, and paying the astronomical heat bills. But they also ordered 1000 tracts (“What Do SDAs Believe?”) for distribution; voted one Auburn member a $300 college scholarship; decided to paint the chapel and carpet the platform; and set out to raise the $1500 Ingathering goal in December. They also shivered as they turned the church thermostat down to 40 degrees during the week.\(^\text{41}\)

Other Auburn members, senior saints old and full of good works, passed to their rest during the 1970s. In 1970 Grace Knapp, Clinton Shannon, charter member Nellie Cuddeback, and Blanche Frank passed away, followed in 1971 by Helen Fletcher. The year 1972 witnessed the deaths of Florence Lowell and Herb Pratt, Sr., while in 1973 Mae Monroe, Gertrude Vincent, and Erma Clark died. Earnest Slaughter expired in 1974, but 1975 saw the losses of seven dear saints: charter member Harold Kriegelstein, Mina Rice, Maude Stoker, Rowena White, Joseph Ray, and Eva Rector. During 1976 members lost Wanda Shannon and charter member Paul Smith, followed in 1977 by church elder Irving Ferris, deacon Bill Scharleman, Verna Younkin, and Lewis McGregor. In November 1978, the aged patriarch Harry Rice (100), farmer, schoolteacher, singer, and active lay evangelist, passed to his rest, followed in 1979 by the demise of Arthur Jayne, Nora and George Shumate.\(^\text{42}\) Today they all sleep in Jesus, awaiting His resurrection call. Let us prepare now to join them in that glorious Second Advent morning!

\(^{41}\) CRB (1979).

The 1980s were a dynamic decade of evangelistic outreach for the Auburn church in the establishment of the Geneva Company as well as other witnessing endeavors like Revelation Seminars, Prison Ministry bands, and youth activities. At the same time, however, this decade witnessed the transfer or death of many dedicated and talented lay workers, as well as the rising costs of maintaining, heating, and repairing the large edifice at 17 Nelson Street.

In 1980, led by Pastor Tom Smith, church members began a regular twice-monthly outreach to the inmates of Auburn’s State prison. Directed by lay preacher Dick Raymond, participants gave Bible studies to 14 inmates, preached, sang, and prayed with the men. Over the years, 17 men have come to Christ and been baptized through this ministry.\(^1\) Members also participated in a Focus on Life series with Elder G. S. Dudney from October through December.\(^2\)

But while feeding their own souls, they did not neglect those of their children. Many of these, eager fourth graders at the Frontenac Church School, made a ten-foot tall replica of Goliath for the classroom wall after studying about him under teacher Andrea Harrington.\(^3\) Through exceptional sacrificial giving, especially on the part of C. W. White (who sold his house), the $55,000 mortgage on the school at last could be burned in July 1980, only five years after construction began. What joy this brought not only to building committee chair Oliver Clayburn and operating committee chair Dr. Margaret Hafner, but also to every parent in both Auburn and Union Springs churches!

This joy was tempered, however, by the realization that other problems awaited solutions, some of them expensive. To save on fuel bills, the board discussed building Sabbath school

\(^{1}\text{AUG, May 27, 1980, p. 15.}\)
\(^{2}\text{Ibid., Oct. 28 1980, p. 13.}\)
\(^{3}\text{Ibid., July 8, 1980, pp. 10-11.}\)
rooms in the basement in January 1980. They voted in April to paint the chapel; in May to have
the children take up a weekly church school offering; in September to tune the organ and paint
the chapel window frames. By November the board faced a total of $1128 in vandalism repairs
needed, borrowing money from a growing number of memorial funds (Leubner, Rice, and
Shumate) to meet these expenses. Outreach activities begun that year included contributing to
the Interfaith Ministries Chaplaincy program; purchasing $100 worth of blankets for Dorcas;
starting a cooking class at Dan Age’s store; and inviting the public to an organ concert.4

Lay evangelism throughout this region had, by 1981, stirred considerable interest in
building a church somewhere in the Seneca Falls/Waterloo/Geneva area. That August, East
Palmyra’s Pastor Michael Pizar and literature evangelist Beatty Sisler began contacting souls for
Christ all over this territory. These efforts and transfers brought at least three new members into
church fellowship that year: Bryan and Sue Chapin and Connie Hafner. These believers gave of
their time and talents to support many new programs. The church reactivated its Dial-A-Prayer
program. Sue Chapin became the new VBS leader and Tom Smith began a Junior Deacons
group here. In July the board voted to continue the Mission Spotlight program (at $26.00 a
quarter), and that fall started sending out cheery “Your New Baby” cards to all parents listed in
the local newspaper, as well as Bible reading guides. But the board also continued wrestling
with the expensive problems of maintaining such a huge old building. They discussed switching
to hot air heat (a $5000 expense), then listened to one man’s proposal to buy the church. Mr.
Guy was authorized to repair the roof, while that fall the idea of two hot air furnaces gained
appeal.5

Sue Chapin’s group did hold a successful VBS that summer, one of only ten held throughout the Conference. Auburn also rejoiced in 1982 to receive three new members: Richard and Arlene Quay and Lori Crook, all active participants in the church’s programs that year. Some helped with “The Personal Touch” slide witnessing program; others packed fruit baskets for shut-ins at Thanksgiving. Auburn believers bade farewell to their pastor, Tom Smith, that spring; they resisted Conference efforts to unite them with Dexterville under Elder Herb Coe in May; and they welcomed Elder and Mrs. Leonard and Caroline Tessier as their new pastor in September. Elder Tessier immediately set to work to “clean up” the church books, dropping 16 names that fall, and he also promoted the Worthy Student Fund program. Billy Roche was hired to mow the church lawns that hot summer, and he enjoyed the coolness of Welch Hall’s corridors when his weekly job was done.  

While Welch Hall seemed cool enough in summer, however, the cost of heating its high-ceilinged halls all winter soon reached $5000 and badly strained members’ budgets. Therefore, during the winter of 1982, the board voted to put up more insulation, storm windows, and planned to install two new, more efficient furnaces. These measures dropped gas usage from 21,700 therms to only 7700 therms at a savings of almost $3000. It also better heated the most used portions of the vast church complex while enabling members to close the doors on unused rooms and hallways.  

In February Auburn’s young people led out in all Sabbath school and church service roles for Youth Day. Shawn and Jim Crowell, Sharon Gorenflo, Dawn Huesler and Amy Jayne, as well as Danny Palmer and Mark Raymond did all the preaching, praying, and singing, directed by Susie Roche. During 1983 and 1984, Elder Tessier led the church in many other witnessing
activities. In February 1983 the board voted to buy a $250 Dukane projector to help prepare for the upcoming evangelistic meetings in the spring. In December $100 was approved for the evangelistic meetings over at the prison. In March 1984 Dan and Joan Cruze sponsored a dramatic program, “Six Christians on Fire,” for a vespers.

But most of the board’s time was spent wrestling with the perennial problems of maintenance expenses. In April 1983 they discussed adding a baptistery in the chapel, but decided instead to spend money on fence repairs and a pole light and a new P.A. system. Jim Pratt battled the poison ivy infestation behind the church, and members bought new locks for the doors opening onto the hallway and two new speakers (at $270) for the chapel. In February 1984 an excessive water bill led to the discovery of a leak in the plumbing system. That spring local carpenter Jerry Strayer repaired the Youth Room windows. These and other repairs drove the church expense budget into the red that fall, necessitating weekly bulletin appeals for funds. By November Auburn stood $5350 in arrears for the church school. That December the board decided to merge the Auburn and Union Springs Pathfinder groups for greater efficiency. But financial hard times did not prevent benevolent acts such as distributing 16 food and fruit baskets from the nearby P&C grocery store and helping give the Wilson family—burned out that fall—a memorable Christmas.8

The challenges of 1985 continued to be financial ones: $531 a month needed for the church school, with the church falling behind on the school subsidy and church expense that spring. Improvement costs also escalated: $850 in furnace repairs; replacing windows broken by vandals; repainting chapel walls; erecting a front entrance light against further vandalism. Yet evangelistic outreach also went forward: A Revelation Seminar was held in April; two youth

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were sponsored at Friendship Camp in June; and new leaders chosen for the Primary (John Cardinale) and Junior (Hortense Boundy) Sabbath schools in October.⁹

Despite several expensive repairs and projects in 1986, zealous outreach programs continued. In January the board laid plans for a 5-Day Smoking Clinic soon and for evangelistic meetings in April; in February they discussed advertising a Revelation Seminar in the Penn Ssaver, the Auburn Citizen, and over radio station WMHR. That spring 12 people were receiving Signs of the Times subscriptions and perhaps scores more listening to the Voice of Prophecy programs sponsored at $30 a month by this church. That fall Ingatherers began distributing the Missionary Book of the Year all over the city. In December 13 souls in Weedsport began receiving the Signs Digest. Baptisms and new members for 1986 included Bill Roche, Larry and Sheila Herr, and Glen and Ellen Greenfield.

Yet the challenges of keeping up an aging, crumbling building at times seemed to stretch the patience and the finances of Auburn’s saints! In January 1986 Ed Roche urged the installation of programmable thermostats to click on automatically and pre-heat the cold chapel and halls; Cheryl Stryker obtained a commercial sander to improve the Sabbath school rooms’ floors, while Eldon Reiswig agreed to install a dusk-to-dawn light (at $108) over the front steps. Mina Gravatt did her best all summer to keep the lawn trimmed, while Emmerson Ingersoll kept up a constant inspection of the perpetually leaking roof and helped install plexiglass window coverings (at $100 each) with the help of a work bee crew that summer. By fall, roof repairs entailed a $1000 expense, in addition to winterizing the chapel and painting the crumbling entrance archway stones. Some, about to despair at such expenses, voted to sell the church, but

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⁹ CRB (1985).
the “nays” prevailed. Both the Church of the Nazarene and the Church of God congregations expressed a desire to rent the chapel that autumn.¹⁰

As the Tessiers retired in May 1987 and moved to Ellijay, Georgia, the board voted in June to ask the Conference to let former president Elder Conrad Skantz be Auburn’s interim pastor, then agreed that summer to make him their permanent pastor until he wished to retire. Elder Skantz, a stocky farmer of medium height, graying hair, and perpetual smile, gained a reputation as a man of action, a doer and completer of many projects. With his and Elder Tessier’s joint efforts, the Geneva Adventist Church was completed; the Auburn church parking lot blacktopped by the Vitale Company; and the front church doors refinished. That fall Emerson Ingersoll continued plugging roof leaks. In October a private donor gave funds for plush seat cushions on the platform chairs, and 20 new Communion basins were purchased from the Anna Norzow and Walter Clark Funds in November. Also that month, the Church of the Nazarene received permission to rent the chapel at $400 a month. In December, Ed Roche checked into obtaining better chapel microphones to help the hearing impaired and someone suggested that it really was time the church purchased 100 of the Adventist Hymnals now over two years old on the Adventist market (at $1165 with the ten percent discount).

Amidst all of this busy repair and build activity, however, one saint expressed the opinion that “The Auburn church seems to be standing still. We need to grow!” The clerk recorded that a lively discussion followed concerning how Auburn could become known as “a caring, interested church.” Good PR with the Church of the Nazarene certainly helped, as did the decision to allow the Comfort Care Office of the local YMCA to store seven hospital beds in the attic for lending use. In December the board also decided to contact Dr. Dieter Eppel about

¹⁰ CRB (1986).
conducting a 5-Day Plan for the community in 1988. That May the church grew by one when Linda Calkins joined.¹¹

But the major focus of the 1980s, even in Auburn, was the establishing of a new church in Geneva. In May 1982, Conference Ministerial Secretary Elder Nikalaus Satelmajer, Pastor Michael Pizar, and colporteur Beatty Sisler began planning for evangelistic meetings in Geneva.¹² So successfully did this series proceed, that by July 24, the first Sabbath school and church services were held at the First Presbyterian Church with 23 persons present. Led by Elder Satelmajer, they formed the Geneva Lake Country Company with members from Geneva, Canandaigua, and nearby towns. This became the “opening wedge” in the city of 30,000 people. But someone with experience in opening up work in “dark counties” was needed to foster this fledgling group. For this task, the Conference in September 1982 called on the enthusiastic Elder Leonard Tessier, former missionary to Pakistan and India. He and his wife Caroline came from Brocton and Perrysburg that fall with plans to buy land near Geneva and build a church.¹³

Soon, the Tessiers’ untiring labors resulted in numerous baptisms: 10 souls on April 16, 1983 alone (including Sandy and Jim Pratt, Beverly and Jim Crowell, Alton and Danny Palmer, Dean Mabe, and in November, Pearl Everhart. Three of these joined the Lake Country Company in Geneva (which now had 16 members). In November the Penn Yan Church disbanded and its members joined with Geneva to form the Geneva Seventh-day Adventist Church.¹⁴ Then four more converts on January 7, 1984, joined this newly organized church: Jim and Sue Whitelow, Lynda and David Carfora.¹⁵ These Geneva members embarked on an ambitious building project in July 1984, holding a fellowship dinner at the Academy to plan and raise funds. David

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¹¹ CRB (1987).
Johnson chaired the building committee while Dr. Malcolm Bourne chaired the Initial Gifts Drive. Members from both Geneva and Penn Yan cooperated in this $120,000 project, and Elder Hardy Loomis, a retired fund raiser, came from Ohio to assist in the effort. The group bought four acres of land on the corner of Highway 5 and 20 and No. 9 Road in Seneca Township.\textsuperscript{16}

On a bright, clear Sunday morning, April 21, 1985, members broke sod in a cornfield to begin building their new church. Notables present included Conference President Norman Doss, Ministerial Secretary Nikolaus Satelmajer, Communications Director Donald Wright, as well as Town of Seneca Supervisor John Malyj and Ontario County administrator John Hicks. Members hoped to occupy their church before winter set in.\textsuperscript{17}

Back in Auburn, Elder Tessier led out in an exciting Revelation Seminar at the 4-H Club building in April 1985. At a fellowship supper for 51 persons in May, 12 individuals received certificates for completing all the lessons. Special musical numbers included a vocal solo by Betty Ingersoll, accompanied by her husband Emmerson on the harmonica, and a song by Betty Turner with Caroline Tessier at the piano. After a solemn testimony meeting, the Tessiers sang “No Not One” in the Bengali dialect of Pakistan. Further Revelation Seminars in Geneva brought Bob Wilson, Mildred Smith, Lawrence King, and Diane Martin into the Geneva Church, while John and Lucille Cardinell joined Auburn.\textsuperscript{18}

As fall approached, Geneva’s members hastened on with their new church building project, which Elder Tessier hoped would have a roof on it by September and be ready for worship in December. The faithful labor of Conference workers Doss, Wright, Neigel, Daum and Lauterbach helped greatly.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.; “Services of Dedication” bulletin.
\textsuperscript{17} AUG, June 11, 1985, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., July 23, 1985, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., Dec. 10, 1985, p. 8.
As Geneva’s members hurried to beat winter—and lost the race—Auburn members welcomed the 40 Conference Pathfinder directors from ten clubs for a Pathfinder staff workshop in November 1985. Led by Elder Mike Ortel, Conference Youth Director, leaders pondered the need to control youthful TV viewing, then heard talks by Cherri Roberts (on fundraising), Margaret Ahles (on program planning), Dr. Bob Wielt (on lay-members’ involvement in Pathfinders), as well as Vernon Hill (campouts and field trips), Dee Knwltan (on interesting club programs), and George Silver (on small club activities).

As Elder Tessier conducted another Revelation Seminar at Auburn in March 1986, the members at Geneva excitedly laid plans for their long-awaited first service in the new church on May 10. While the edifice was not really complete yet, they began holding services in the basement that summer, as Adventists from Penn Yan, Seneca Falls, Waterloo, and Canandaigua joined them.

Two of the spiritual and financial pillars of this new church were Malcolm and Elizabeth Bourne. As early as 1980, Malcolm had been appointed to sit on the Conference Executive Committee. His untiring zeal and dedication in establishing the Geneva Church, as well as the Bourne family’s long-time support of Adventist education, led the Gleaner to run a six-page color feature on them in February 1986.

Finally the day came—May 9, 1987—when the Bournes, with their friends in the Geneva church, dedicated their chapel debt-free and fully furnished. As the 33 charter members gathered on that cool spring day, they knew from experience the truth of Pastor Tessier’s words: “Every new church home built is a miracle of effort, sacrifice and love.” On that memorable Sabbath

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morning, Mary Allen led the song service, after which superintendent Elizabeth Bourne made a few remarks and Elder Satelmajer offered prayer. Mrs. Doss, the Conference president’s wife, gave the mission story, and then the Ladies’ Quartette sang. When Dr. Bourne had taught the lesson, Pastor Tessier made some announcements and William Allen closed with prayer.

Members convened once again for the 11:00 a.m. service as Bob Pound played the organ. When Mr. Johnson had offered the invocation, the congregation stood and sang “To God Be the Glory,” followed by a prayer from Mr. Botticelli. After the offering, Elder Tessier welcomed everyone, and then the Geneva Men’s Quartet sang. Conference President Elder Norman Doss preached the first sermon in the newly dedicated chapel, and Elder Satelmajer closed with the benediction. Following a delicious potluck dinner, believers reassembled for a baptism at 1:30 p.m. As Bob Pound again played the organ, Elder Don Wright led the song service, followed by Eldon Reiswig’s prayer. Then Elder Tessier introduced the eight baptismal candidates: Ron and Sue Allen, Esther Parsons, Linda Calkins, and Delbert, Cathy, Rany and Todd Rohring. Mr. Johnson closed with prayer.

The 2:30 p.m. special dedication service began with Mrs. Fanda at the organ and a prayer by Elder Loomis. Once again Elder Tessier welcomed everyone, including local guests John Malyj, town supervisor, and Frances Cecere, Geneva’s mayor. Dr. Bourne read a sketch of Geneva’s recent Adventist history and then an offering was taken. After Mr. Johnson had read the Scripture, Elder Fred Thomas preached. Then Elder Tessier led the members in reciting the “Act of Dedication” and Elder Doss gave a challenge to the newly organized saints. The double quartette sang a special number and Mr. Johnson offered the benediction. It had been a memorable day for Geneva’s Adventist members.24

24 “Service of Dedication” bulletin. The 33 charter members at Geneva were Mary and William Allen; Henrietta Arnold; Vince and Charlotte Botticelli; Malcolm, Elizabeth and Andrew Bourne; David and Lynda Carfora; Chris,

Like giant oaks that fall in the forest, these saints left a gap in Auburn’s ranks with their passing. But soon, if faithful, we shall join them and with Jesus go to the Land where death and sorrow, tears and suffering, are not known. Won’t you prepare your hearts today for that great homecoming?

Gail, Jacob, Lorraine, Mark and Scott Fonda; Darwin and Ora Hammond; David and Nancy Johnson; Lawrence King; Diane Martin; Tyre Palladino; Maude Parish; Winifred Rotunda; Doris and Mildred Smith; Howard and Deborah Teets; James and Susan Whitelow; and Pastor Leonard and Carolyn Tessier.

Seven ministers pastored the Auburn church from 1987 to 1998. When the exuberant Elder Tessier and his wife Carolyn moved to Ellijay, Georgia, in June 1987, the Conference asked former president C. W. Skantz, officially retired with his wife Thelma in Weedsport, to become Auburn’s interim pastor. In Geneva and Union Springs, meanwhile, Elder Glen Wade became the pastor following Academy principal Clyde Newmyer’s untimely death. But in the fall of 1987, the quiet-spoken Elder Wade and his wife Connie transferred to the Auburn church where they served until 1993.

Then the tall George Kretschmar with his lovely Puerto Rican wife Marilyn came to Auburn in June 1993, shortly before his ordination at the summer New York camp meeting. Members delighted in his short, parable sermons, full of creative imagery and based on Bible stories masterfully retold. In July 1994 Elder Kretschmar joined the Academy faculty as Bible teacher and chaplain. Then came the enthusiastic bachelor intern Bill Largo, fresh from college, who married the delightful big-city girl Christine Santos and then left for the Theological Seminary at Andrews University in September of 1995 to begin his Master of Divinity degree and Christine her nursing degree. That fall, members welcomed the ever-smiling, gray-haired Elder Dick Dale and his charming wife Nina, who served here until his transfer to Geneva and

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1 *AUG*, Nov. 5, 1987, p. 15.
Wayland churches in April 1998. Age was followed by youth in July 1998 when the outgoing James Patrick O’Connor (“JP”) arrived fresh from Atlantic Union College with his wife Anibel and their baby Amber. Members greatly enjoyed “JP’s” enthusiastic preaching and the couple’s wonderful singing voices.4

Because of the rising costs involved in maintaining Willard Memorial Chapel for an aging, dwindling membership, Auburn Adventists in 1987 decided to place their property on the market. That summer and fall, the building committee looked at properties near the Seward School and around the Columbia Rope Company, but found them unsatisfactory. Finally, they discovered their field of dreams on Prospect Street halfway between Grant Avenue and Franklin Street. So in the summer of 1998, after worshiping for 30 years at 17 Nelson Street, they sold their property to a wealthy Auburn antique dealer for $250,000—exactly the amount needed to purchase two lots (one acre) on Prospect Street. Isn’t it wonderful how God works things out?

A five-man building committee was chosen to function as the church’s general contractors. They hired Edwin DeMeritt, former Auburn member and now an architect in New Orleans, to draw up a blueprint for their new church, which would include a chapel with a baptistery and balcony, four Sabbath school rooms, a fellowship hall, pastor’s office, community services center, and lots of closet space. On June 5, 1988, church members gathered for the groundbreaking ceremony as Elder Wade led in a short service of commitment. Clear, sunny days that fall enabled the Roger Grainger Construction Company of Hannibal to pour the concrete and finish all the masonry work while Shortsleft Construction Company of Auburn framed in the walls and roof. Then it was time for Gregory & Picciano Electric Company to install the electrical fixtures and wiring that winter, followed by E. M. Roche with the heating ducts and furnace that winter.

Meanwhile, Auburn’s members pitched in to paint interior walls, sand and stain doors and trim, anchor pews, install kitchen cabinets, vacuum carpets, and do exterior landscaping. Work bees usually drew a dozen or more Roches, Ingersolls, Palmers, Pratts, Strayers, Greenfields, Shannons and Skantzes for muscle-stretching days of labor. They fretted about adequate roof supports over the chapel and fellowship room and disagreed over whether to have outside windows along the chapel ceiling. During one memorable work bee, the Ingersoll family split many a box of pizza as they painted the chapel walls and ceiling. To beautify the chapel, one member donated $750 for a painted glass window of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane.

With their old church home sold and their new one not quite ready for worship, Auburn Adventists gladly accepted the offer of St. Luke’s United Church of Christ on Seminary Avenue to meet in their chapel. Years before, Adventists had done the same for the St. Luke’s congregation, and now they were happy to reciprocate the favor. From the summer of 1988 to December 1989, Adventists worshiped at St. Luke’s. Finally, on the first Sabbath in January 1990, they set up folding chairs and held their first service in the Prospect Street Chapel. Five months later on May 9, Conference treasurer Jim Glass arrived to participate in the grand opening day celebration, which included wonderful music and a potluck.

Then began months of sacrificial giving to pay off the mortgage of some $60,000 borrowed from the Conference Revolving Fund. Finally, on November 6, 1994, Pastor Bill Largo and building committee chair Ed Roche held up the mortgage in the fellowship room and burned it as members cheered. Their new building had cost about $330,000--$250,000 from the sale of the Nelson Street property, $20,000 given by members, and $60,000 borrowed from the Conference. It contained several unique features: handrails along the baptistery to comply with
new insurance codes, a $2000 antique Communion table from Willard Memorial Chapel, a beautiful circular painted glass window, and 47 different doors.\(^5\)

Auburn members enjoyed their new church building and found new ways to improve it. During 1992 they bought several wireless hearing aids for the hearing impaired to better enjoy services. Two dusk-to-dawn overhead night lights increased visual acuity and provided security in the parking lot and near the utility shed which held the new John Deere lawn mower and snow blower. Emerson Ingersoll gave the fellowship room a coat of pale green paint.\(^6\)

Plans were laid during 1993 to have Gary Hunt design an appropriate road sign for the Community Services Center and to install hand rails and shelves near the baptistery. The beautiful plaque given by the caretakers of the Welch Memorial Building was hung over the old Communion table in the foyer. Three new baptismal robes and two Communion table cloths were purchased from Sacred Melody Shop in Syracuse and new Communion kits acquired for visiting shut-ins. Anticipating future church needs, the board voted to purchase a Xerox machine with a sorter and an answering machine for the church phone, and to investigate the cost of better recording equipment to make cassette tapes of services for those who wanted them. Minor repairs included replacing burned out exit lights, patching the roof, and installing fire extinguishers. But for months, no one could explain why the fire alarm kept going off!\(^7\)

Further improvements during 1994 involved adding 12 outside lights to the church entrance area and a new pole light near the utility shed. The board began securing bids from Wimmer Paving, Jonas Trenching, and Vitalie for paving the driveway either with crushed

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\(^5\) Interviews with Ed and Susie Roche, George and Doris Strayer, July 28, 1998; “Auburn SDA Church” photograph album at Prospect Street Church, Auburn, New York; Conference Accountant Carol Allen to Auburn SDA Church treasurer Betty Ingersoll, Sept. 12, 1994; Installment Promissory Note, Atlantic Union Revolving Fund, Sept. 19, 1989.


\(^7\) Ibid., Jan.-Dec. 1993.
gravel or with blacktop. Charles Zacharias promoted harmony in the chapel by tuning the piano and organ. Meanwhile, mirrors were installed in the baptismal readying room, shelves in the pastor’s closet, and two parking places were designated for handicapped use. But no one could figure out why that fire alarm still kept going off!\(^8\)

Exasperated, the board called in Doyle Alarms in 1995 and had the system dismantled, since the fire chief declared it unnecessary. Now members could focus on such needed improvements as drafting enough helpers to clean the church, planning Sunday work bees, repairing the organ, and getting the church sign repainted. The board also discussed whether to finish the driveway and parking lot with cement or blacktop. Having settled the matter in favor of cement, they started a paving fund. Sensitive to the hearing problems of aging members, they purchased lapel mikes for Sabbath school teachers and public speakers to use.\(^9\)

To improve the musical quality of church services in 1996, Dr. Margaret Hafner suggested moving the piano from Room #3 to the chapel. Once refinished, its gentler touch made it easier for accompanists to play. An aging church membership also grappled with finding able workers to clean the chapel and side rooms. Should the church hire a full-time janitor? Could everyone come fifteen minutes early to prayer meeting and form a work bee?\(^10\)

Although barely seven years old in 1997-98, the church had already begun to show signs of aging. A crack appeared in the wall near where the flowers were set. Carpenter Carl Ballweber was summoned to make repairs, to install a vent and drop ceiling in the Community Services restroom to meet code specifications, to attach chair rails along the wall in Room #4, to paint all the Sabbath school rooms and the fellowship room. When the paving fund topped

\(^10\) Ibid., March-Dec. 1996.
$3500, the board decided to have the circular drive paved with concrete, which would be less slippery in winter than blacktop.\textsuperscript{11}

All these improvements, however, had one ultimate purpose: to prepare the sanctuary for private worship and public evangelism. Despite the physical limitations of an aging membership, this church promoted evangelism in many forms. In May 1992 the board began laying plans for an extensive seven-week Prophecy Seminar later in the year. Lacking Conference funding, they established a Revelation Seminar Fund to meet expenses, postponing the meetings until the spring of 1993. Meanwhile, members supported Stephen Apatow’s new program for youth evangelism that summer, providing books and pamphlets to local churches, schools, libraries, police and fire departments.\textsuperscript{12}

Although the Conference sent a check for $1600 to support evangelism in June 1993, members appeared to be dragging their feet. To forestall having to return the money, Elder Kretschmar suggested using Academy students to help with the meetings from January 31 to April 9, 1994. Conference President Skip Bell offered his preaching help.\textsuperscript{13} By the second week of meetings, four non-members were attending regularly. During 1993-94 members welcomed Olive and Nina Burnette and Eleanore Moore into church fellowship. Encouraged, the board began talking about purchasing a $4000 satellite dish to participate in NET’96 evangelism with Mark Finley, but found insufficient interest or funds. Instead, they planned for a four-week evangelistic crusade in the spring of 1995.\textsuperscript{14}

Encouraged by Auburn members’ fervor, the Conference promised $3000 (about half the cost) for the meetings, now scheduled for May 5 through June 3. Preparation included sending

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., June 1997-Apr. 1998.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., June-Dec. 1993.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., Feb.-Oct. 1994.
out thousands of advertising flyers (at $160/1000), door-to-door solicitation by members, giving Bible studies (Pastor Largo soon had seven studies going with four interested in baptism), and seeking volunteers for special music, greeting, ushering, and registering guests. Two weeks before the crusade began, however, the Evangelistic Fund contained only $130, so the board transferred $950 from one Annuity and from another Bequest Fund into evangelism. By July the Evangelism Fund equaled $1934 in addition to the Conference support of another $3000—exceeding total expenses of $4064 by $870, which was tucked away in the Lay Activities Fund. Members had spent nearly $3000 blanketing the city with ads through the *Citizen, Penny Saver,* and handbills. As a result of these meetings, members welcomed Isabella Mellen, Jeff Spriggs, and Sharon Lares into church fellowship.\(^{15}\)

As they prayed for the spiritual growth of these new brothers and sisters in Christ, members also laid plans for revival meetings in the fall of 1996, hoping to participate in NET’96 evangelism with Mark Finley.\(^{16}\) When this proved impossible, the board committed themselves to active involvement in NET’98 with either Dwight Nelson’s focus on Generation X or Doug Batchelor’s emphasis on last-day prophecies. Many wondered if perhaps the church should acquire a satellite dish. Instead, the board discussed purchasing a projector for $5000 to show video tapes of NET’98 from the balcony onto a giant screen. But this proved impractical because the screen was not large enough to encompass the entire image. But members could cover Auburn like the leaves of autumn with Bible study cards placed inside the *Penny Saver.* During 1996-97, seven new members joined the Auburn fellowship: Karen Bohman, Mary

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During the 1990s, 17 members transferred in to this church, 10 transferred out, and 13 were baptized, giving a net gain of 20 members. But there were also eight deaths, and it is fitting that we remember how those saints touched our lives: Ed Hayes passed away in 1993; Helen and Maurie Roche and Josephine Frank in 1994; Leland Frank in 1995; Annabelle Martin in 1996; Eleanor Moore in 1997; and Mildred Smith in 1998. Five of these had been members for over half a century.¹⁸

Members also participated in quite a remarkable variety of outreach programs, demonstrating, I think, that what this church lacks in youthful vigor, it makes up for in generous funding of numerous witnessing and philanthropic endeavors. They sent Bible lessons, 17 Sabbath school quarterlies, sermon tapes, and a subscription to *Liberty Magazine* to the prison.¹⁹ Union Springs and Auburn churches cooperated in taping “It Is Written” programs for their church libraries in 1993. They organized Church Life Planning sessions around potlucks and allotted each department leader $50 to use in improving church programs. Some of those programs included raising $1200 for Ingathering, elders’ training sessions, Breathe Free (stop smoking) seminars, and Community Services outreach (serving the needs of 16 families each month and providing Thanksgiving baskets). The faithful few—Susie Roche, Lois Greenfield, Doris and George Strayer—who kept the Dorcas work going each Wednesday fulfilled the Gospel commission to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and care for the needy.²⁰

Pastor Largo encouraged deacons and elders to do more visiting with members and to give more Bible studies to non-members. “If we are spiritual[ly] in tune with the Lord,” he declared, “our outreach will be a good one.” In Spiritual Growth sessions, members discussed holding a cooking school, a Breathe Free seminar, an open house for nearby neighbors, an all-member visitation plan, and other outreach ideas. Would Dr. Dieter Eppel and Dr. Bill Hafner direct a non-smoking program? the board wondered. Could Thelma Skantz, Marilyn Kretschmar, Christen Rigby or Millie Shepler lead out in a cooking school?21 During 1994-95, the church raised $1050 of its $1200 Ingathering goal, thanks to the Burpees’ and Lois Greenfield’s leadership. It also supported the new Lay Preachers’ Association established to train and credential lay leaders. To foster closer fellowship, the board adopted the parish plan for frequent visitation by deacons and elders and urged members to remember one another’s birthdays and anniversaries with cards and special tokens. When a Church Action Plan was drawn up that summer, the board concluded there was insufficient support for a Vacation Bible School or a Story Hour on Sabbath afternoons, but that members would give for the Worthy Student Fund if the need arose. Their commitment to youth came through in their annual sponsorship of a non-Adventist child in the Union Springs Pathfinder Club.22

When their Ingathering goal was raised, one historic tradition prevailed here: the Ingathering Reversion funds always went to the Community Services Center to assist the needy. This amount totaled $86.00 in 1996, but no funds were returned in 1997 because only $419 of the $1200 goal was met.23 But the late 1990s witnessed other forms of lay activities which became quite successful, notably women’s ministries gatherings, led by Carmen Gonzalez.

These provided Adventist women with opportunities to network, to fellowship at potlucks and prayer breakfasts, and to share their concerns about women’s roles in church and family life.\(^{24}\)

Although this church might be described as liturgically conservative, emphasizing a traditional order of service, high church music, and limited congregational interaction, from time to time, members have tried something new and been blessed thereby. In June 1992 they enjoyed a special Passover service which helped them understand the deeper symbolism of the old Jewish holy day.\(^{25}\) During the summer of 1993, reluctantly they changed their order of service (church at 9:30 a.m. and Sabbath school at 11:20 a.m.) so that Elder Kretschmar could preach at both the Academy and in Auburn each week. But when Bill Largo came the following summer, the old schedule was restored. The board decided to have greeters at the entrance during both services, and late that fall took the unprecedented step of appointing Auburn’s first woman elder (Doris Strayer), about whom “good reports” were being heard by Christmas.\(^{26}\)

With evangelistic meetings on the horizon in 1995, the saints agreed that they needed to present a more “user-friendly” order of service to the community. So they agreed to print more bulletins and make sure everyone got one; to have a song leader (Millie Shepler or the pastor) conduct the hymns from the pulpit; have the elders sit with their families during the services; provide nursery care; and appoint more ushers and greeters. Another innovation begun in 1997 was establishing the Benevolent Fund (renamed the Love Fund in 1998), a voluntary offering taken after the Communion service and used for those in need, either in the church or in the community.\(^{27}\) Having already paid off the church building debt and burned the mortgage, the board suddenly realized that the church had missed a very important event—a service of

\(^{24}\) Ibid., June 1997.


dedication! By early 1998 a committee of five had been appointed to recruit speakers, musical groups, and potluck providers for just such a service to be held on August 29. Special guests to be invited included former pastors and members, Conference officials, and Andrews University Professor of History (and local church historian) Dr. Brian Strayer.  

During all these times of spiritual labor, however, members have also taken time to have fun in social get-togethers. In the 1990s, church picnics were regularly held at Emerson Park on Owasco Lake, while finger-licking good corn roasts at Betty and Emerson Ingersoll’s country home provided hours of fellowship. Sabbath potlucks occurred once a month in the fellowship room, which was also the venue for birthday, baby, Christmas, wedding and anniversary parties. Pastor Bill and Christine Largo’s wedding shower was held there, as were the 50th anniversary party for Bill and Margaret Hafner and the 60th for C. W. and Thelma Skantz. Highlights of these gatherings included great food, side-splitting readings by Malcolm and Elizabeth Bourne, comical anecdotes by Ray Couden, and several musical numbers by local vocalists.

Yet while members have participated in these many activities for their own social enjoyment, they have never forgotten the needs of the nearly 40,000 citizens of Auburn. This has always been their mission field. During the 1990s, hundreds of copies of *Listen, Signs of the Times*, and other literature were spread like the leaves of autumn in Finger Lakes Plaza, laundromats, physicians’ and dentists’ offices. They also sent *Liberty Magazine* to leading judges and attorneys in Auburn, Seneca Falls, and Waterloo. They supported an active Community Services outreach by giving the Ingathering Reversion funds to the Center: $88 in 1992 and $187 in 1994, two of the best years. Such funding and volunteer labor enabled the Center to distribute food and clothing to scores of needy families every year, including $100 in

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29 Auburn SDA Church photo album at Prospect Street, Auburn.
cash given away in 1993, several Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets taken door-to-door, and hundreds of copies of *Signs of the Times* distributed.\(^{31}\)

Indeed, it is impressive when a church of retirees gives so often and so much over the years! During 1992, members gave to send four children to Friendship Camp for a week. They opened their church doors for neighborhood meetings, Union Springs business meetings, and camp meeting youth who wanted to make strawberry shortcake for the city police.\(^{32}\) 1993 saw believers involved in the Auburn Seminary and Community Preservation Committee meetings at Willard Memorial Chapel, hosting a district pastors’ meeting and a Conference-wide elders’ training session, sending the Jones girls off to junior camp, and cooperating with Union Springs to produce church bulletins and a newsletter.\(^{33}\)

During 1994, their giving included sending five delegates to the Triennial Session at the Academy, hosting a Conference-wide women’s prayer breakfast, and joining the 100 Club to give the Academy $1000 a year.\(^{34}\) To these good works, they added others in 1995: Giving the Senior Class at the Academy $150 to build a church in the Dominican Republic; ordering 14,000 “Something Wonderful for You” cards to blanket Auburn that spring; spending over $1500 for evangelistic advertising; and sending two more girls to Camp Cherokee that summer. Although this church had sent no students to the Frontenac Church School for many years, members continued to support its programs and its worthy student fund. As Good Samaritans, they also paid for Yugoslavian Pastor Supere’s hospital stay later that fall. Through the kind hospitality of

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Dr. Eppel and the surgical skills of Dr. Ryan (given free of charge), Pastor Supere was able to return to Chechnya a healed man.35

For decades members have supported outreach programs to the inmates of Auburn’s correctional facility. During 1996, for example, this church spent $65 to provide 29 quarterlies for Brother Bergamine’s Sabbath school group.36 During 1997-98, members sent more children to camp and participated in numerous Conference-wide meetings: for women’s ministries, for a prayer conference at the Academy, for deacons and deaconesses, for the New York constituency, for Adventist singles, and at the “Especially for You” weekend in February 1998.38

Over the years many people—some Adventists, some not—have given generously to support the programs and outreach of the Auburn church. Pleased with his in-home care by Auburn member Doris Strayer, retired Wells College professor Dr. Markees gave $100 to the Community Services Center in 1992. The Whitten Estate sent a check for almost $1750 that spring, while the Ferris family sent $4443 in honor of long-time members Irving and Louise Ferris that fall.39 In 1995 Olive Burnett’s son Robert, director of Native American Ministries for the North American Division, sent a new set of the Testimonies for the church library.40

As the Auburn Seventh-day Adventist Church approached the new millennium, what challenges lay ahead for its members? Based on the church’s past history, three big ones presented themselves. First, how can an aging membership find ways to evangelize so that an influx of younger converts, families with children, can offset the mortality rate of older members? Second, can a tradition-bound church develop programs appealing to these young people (the Gen-Xers and Millennials), thus fulfilling Pastor J. P. O’Connor’s vision of

36 Ibid., Mar. and Apr. 1996.
40 Ibid., July 1995.
becoming a healthy, caring church whose members live the gospel of Christ and reach out to others in acts of kindness? Third, how can a church full of retirees fund the increasing cost of maintenance and repairs that will be necessary over the next decade or two? On the answer to these questions depends the future of the 100-year-old Auburn Seventh-day Adventist Church!\(^4\)

May God give each one of you the grace and courage to carry forward His work in this part of His vineyard until the day of His return!

\(^4\) Although an Adventist company existed in Auburn from 1885 to about 1900, no official church was established until 1915 following tent meetings by Elder Miles Coon.
Only two ministers—both of them young men with new wives—led the Auburn church between 1998 and 2010. James P. O’Connor, short, slim, and perpetually smiling, with his musician wife Anibel, arrived in 1998 and remained until 2001. Then Bill Hrovat—the longest serving minister in Auburn’s Adventist history—came in 2002 with his wife Jennifer. During his nine-year term, Elder Hrovat enjoyed the assistance of three associate pastors: Londa Bishop (2004-2007), her husband Tim Bishop (2007-2008), and Scott Morton (2010-2011).\(^1\) During the first decade of the twenty-first century, church membership, which had stood at 78 in 1998, gradually declined to around 45 as members moved away, transferred their membership elsewhere, or died.\(^2\)

An aging membership also struggled to adapt to changing times and technology as they sought to maintain the attractiveness of their church building and reach out to Auburn’s citizens. In September 1999 they created a website—www.auburnsda.org—to attract internet attention to their presence and message.\(^3\) Frequent work bees brought members together to clean rooms, paint walls, wash windows, mow lawns, and plant flowers and bushes. Calling on local carpenter Carl Ballweber, they lowered the Sabbath school room ceilings and repaired the stained glass window. In the fall of 1999, the Vitale Company paved the parking lot (for $16,500); in the spring of 2003 Signs Plus of Sarasota, Florida, created a special new sign for the front entrance (for $4855) so that members could announce services and share inspirational thoughts with passersby. To enhance worship services, the board purchased a new compact disc player and 33 music CDs and a new cassette tape player with over $100 worth of tapes so that

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1 CRB, 1998-2011.
Danny Palmer could record sermons. But then the City of Auburn—which for decades had collected church trash free of charge—started billing them $18.00 a month for that service, while a local snow removal company charged $850 a year to plow the parking lot (and $45 each time they salted it). By 2008, although the church building was only eighteen years old, its roof was already leaking and needed repairs.⁴

Despite these necessary expenses, however, members invested far more time and money sponsoring evangelism between 1998 and 2010. Although these aging saints and their young pastors (whose district now included Auburn, Union Springs, and Geneva) could not do conventional evangelism by erecting canvas tents or hiring halls, they utilized their new satellite hookup to invite the public to the church for NET’98 meetings in the fall of 1998 and NET’99 services and “Power UP 2001” gatherings at the Holiday Inn in the spring of 1999. In addition, they blanketed the city with Signs of the Times, Discover Bible Course cards, and Ingathering leaflets, besides sending Liberty magazine to more than a dozen of Auburn’s thought leaders each year. As requests for Bible studies poured in, the board purchased special videos to train members in how to give Bible studies in the winter of 2001. In 2003 the board, voting to invest $45 a month in evangelism and outreach activities, purchased the “Friend-2-Friend” video kit (at $99) and attendees at the Wednesday night prayer meetings used them for Bible study training. In addition, nearly every year, the board sent ten to twelve members to attend the Lay Training Weekends at the Holiday Inn.⁵

In 2005, the church spent over $2000 (and requested $2000 more from the Conference) to sponsor the satellite series “The Appearing”; students in Tim Raymond’s revival class at the

Academy led out in the meetings. Again in 2006 these students distributed 1000 hand bills for the “New Beginnings” evangelistic meetings with TV host Shawn Boonstra, and Auburn’s saints “were so thankful” for their assistance. In 2007 the board voted to give them $100 for helping to distribute 5000 handbills for Doug Batchelor’s satellite series and Shawn Boonstra’s “Out of Thin Air” TV series for which the board voted to spend $1275. Thanks to the persistence of church member Donna Jones, local cable networks agreed to air the 3ABN channel in the spring of 2008, offering renewed potential for church growth here. Resolving that “doing evangelism” should still be a top priority, the board voted in December 2009 to distribute 2000 Free Bible Study Guides throughout the city; the Conference agreed to provide $750 for upcoming evangelistic meetings in the fall of 2010.6

Continuing a thirty-five-year tradition, members also reached out to the inmates of the State Penitentiary in Auburn. Pioneered by Dick and Jean Raymond, who had visited the prison nearly every Sabbath afternoon in the 1960s, this ministry provided the inmates with weekly worship services, warm fellowship, and Ellen White’s Spirit of Prophecy Library in 1999. That fall, inmate Harold Mims thanked Auburn members for their loving care. “We do appreciate all that the church has done for us in the past and what you continue to do for us now,” he wrote. “Thank you and may our [heavenly] Father bless you.” As the new century dawned, the, quiet church elder Armin Simpson led Bible studies at the prison; soon her ministry led several men to request baptism. She persuaded the church board to give regular financial support to provide food for the Prison Ministry Festival.7

Yet another decades-old outreach program was the holding of summer Vacation Bible Schools. While this had been a strong witness to the city’s children from the 1950s through the

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1980s, the aging saints struggled to keep it going at the turn of the century. Sometimes it was cancelled for lack of support; at other times, it was reduced to a youth-oriented Sabbath sermonette given by the pastor; occasionally it was held for three or four days in the spring. In 2007 the board, voting to have VBS once a month at the church, sent members out with the “Seven in Seven” outreach to distribute seven pieces of literature every day for seven days. Remembering the 1960s when they had regularly attended the summer VBS at Willard Memorial Chapel, Faye Wilson and Dolly Brown revived this tradition in August of 2007. Granted $200 by the board, Faye, Dolly, and Londa Bishop taught eight children for several days, sharing Bible stories, songs, pledges, bags of goodies, and crafts with them.8

Although Auburn’s dwindling membership could no longer support the wide variety of outreach efforts—such as cooking and nutrition seminars, stop smoking clinics, and weight-loss programs—as they once had done, they did not entirely abandon these methods. In the summer and fall of 2008, for example, this church sponsored a two-month series of cooking classes in the fellowship hall which four families completed.9

Between 1997 and 2010, these outreach efforts attracted several new members into Church fellowship, a few by conversion but most through membership transfers. Newly baptized converts Ted and Addie Holdren joined in 1997; Dolly Brown and Wayne and Bob Willard in 2006; and several prisoners at the Auburn and Moravian penitentiaries in 2007-2008. Those who transferred in from other districts and states included Cheryl Stryker, Janet Penird, Laura Cummings, and Londa Bishop’s parents Bill and Pat Edsell in 2006; Donna Jones in 2007; and Millie and Dan Shepler in 2009.10

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9 Bulletins, July 9 and Sept. 20, 2008.
These new members were immediately put to work in a variety of outreach and in-reach ministries—some of them before they were actually baptized or before the ink was dry on their transfer documents! The Community Services Center, one of this church’s longest-running and most appreciated outreach ministries to the city of Auburn, had for decades attracted female members. But between 1998 and 2010 its leaders included both men and women: Sandi Pratt, Don and Joyce Burpee, Annabelle Cuatt, Bob and Wayne Willard, Carl Grovner, and Ed and Susie Roche, to mention a few. In addition to being open to the public on Mondays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., each year at Christmas these workers provided gifts of money, food and clothing for especially needy families. Such generous gifts were made possible through cash given to the Love Fund for the Needy at Communion services; canned goods collected by Pathfinders every fall; and clothing donated by church members and other social service organizations. In addition, the Center responded to annual appeals from the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) to help victims of floods, droughts, fires, and other natural and manmade disasters around the world. After 2006 the church board authorized the staff to spend up to $100 without board approval, a move that permitted them to respond more quickly to emergency needs in the community. These hard-working souls, standing on concrete floors for hours at a time, have assembled innumerable “sunshine bags” and “Thanksgiving baskets” for distribution around the city. Frequent pleas for more volunteer laborers filled church bulletins in the early twenty-first century.¹¹

In addition to their work at the Center, these men and women also cooperated with various civic and community health organizations to benefit Auburn’s citizens. In 1998 the board had voted to list the church’s address in the new Cayuga County tourist guidebook and to

advertise church events in the Auburn *Citizen* newspaper. This soon attracted the public’s attention to Adventists. Beginning in 2006, for example, the local Red Cross began collecting pints of blood and plasma when the church opened its doors for blood drives here. Also that year, the board voted to donate $25 a year to Auburn Memorial Hospital to assist them in their chaplaincy program. This sharing of time, money, and church facilities generated much goodwill in the city.\(^\text{12}\)

Yet while witnessing to non-Adventists was a high priority with Auburn members, they also supported a number of in-reach activities to nurture their faith. One of the newest of these programs was women’s ministries. Beginning around 1997, Carmen Gonzalez, the Conference women’s ministries director, began bringing female members from the Auburn and Syracuse churches together for luncheons, parties, and programs. By 1998 the board had created a new office here—women’s ministries leader—and elected Doris Strayer to the position. Although that title disappeared from the nominating committee’s roster early in the new century, in 2006 Pat Edsell gathered 21 women together for what she called “Heart-to-Heart” Sunday brunches in the fellowship room. A year later, Robin and Laura Lee led the women’s group meetings. By 2009-2010, Lucille Cardinell and an assistant took over this ministry, which the board voted to support with $50 a month. Although at least one pastor wanted to begin a Men’s Ministry group, no one has yet succeeded at doing that.\(^\text{13}\)

If the Auburn church had almost no children, adolescents, or youth attending its services at the turn of the new century, that did not mean that its members stopped caring about the welfare of the handful of young people who sometimes came. With what might be described as “hopeful optimism,” the nominating committees routinely appointed leaders for the now empty


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Cradle Roll/Kindergarten and Primary/Junior Sabbath School rooms. If (as the English poet John Milton once wrote in his epic poem *Paradise Lost*) “they also serve who only stand and wait,” then these brave souls deserve our praise. For the Cradle Roll and Kindergarten children, they chose Lois Greenfield, Joyce Burpee, and Ann Leubner. For the Primary and Junior kids, they nominated Sandi Pratt, Doris Strayer, and Kim Bishop. Personal ministries and lay activities leaders such as Marge Shannon, J. P. O’Connor, Ruth Palmer, C. W. Skantz, and Faye Wilson likewise appealed for funds to assist students attending the Frontenac Church School and the Academy. As the need arose, the board voted to send monthly support to deserving youth attending these schools.\(^{14}\)

Likewise, although it became increasingly difficult for some aged members to attend prayer meetings and Bible study groups, nonetheless such gatherings for spiritual enrichment continued here. In the summer of 1997, the Tuesday prayer meetings followed the theme of “Spiritual Warfare.” By 2000, finding it difficult sometimes to assemble more than two or three members, the church suspended the prayer meetings for almost two years, reviving them again in September 2002. When for the first time in decades the congregation started a vespers program in the fall of 2002, they planned a social get-together afterwards hoping that it would attract more members. Bible study groups also proved popular in the twenty-first century. Led by Pastor Hrovat, Wayne and Bob Willard, and Laura Lee Cummings, these study groups by 2005 had taken over the prayer meetings which typically met at the church on Wednesday nights.\(^{15}\)

Although the Auburn church might be described as a very traditional, conservative group in its worship style, nonetheless, during the twenty-first century, as younger pastors led the flock and new members transferred in, some innovations occurred. If the order of service for Sabbath

\(^{14}\) See the Auburn Church nominating committee reports for 1998-2010.

school and church worships remained pretty much the same throughout the decade, a wide variety of speakers brought fresh blessings to the congregation. The aging pastors Dick Dale, C. W. Skantz, Erling Odell, and Bill Edsell were much loved for their gentle, devotional messages. By contrast, the younger J. P. O’Connor, Bill Largo, and Bill Hrovat often preached hard-hitting sermons that made some of the saints uncomfortable. Londa Bishop, the first female associate pastor here, delivered 15-20-minute homilies that consisted of creative retellings of Bible stories with heart-touching morals. Frequent guest speakers included Dr. Malcolm Bourne, Dan Kelly, Elder Lawrence Maxwell, and Jim Everhart. When local pastors and guest speakers were not available, church elders Dan Sheppler, Ed Roche, and Gordon Palmer delivered the Sabbath morning messages. Between 2008 and 2010 when the church had no associate pastors (both Londa and Tim Bishop had returned to full-time teaching at the Academy), the board voted to ask some of its young people to preach. On one rare occasion in the fall of 2002, missionaries to Bolivia Duane and Karen Glassford occupied the pulpit.¹⁶

With a deep love for sacred music, the congregation warmly welcomed the Westvale SDA Church choir in the spring of 2004 and the Academy’s choir who presented a Christmas musical program each year. But if church pianist Lois Greenfield and church organist Millie Sheppler did not show up for services, members sang anyway, accompanied by a CD player playing hymns from the *Adventist Hymnal*. As one would expect, the special dedication service held in the chapel on August 29, 1998 was filled with music and praise. Dr. Margaret Hafner played the organ prelude and postlude and sang the familiar song “Sweet Hour of Prayer” for special music. Members sang “Higher Ground,” “Seeking the Lost,” and “Before Jehovah’s Awful Throne” during the morning worship service. In the afternoon dedication program, Jennie

Lee Herndon and Mary Belle Rice gave a rousing piano rendition of “Open the Gates of the Temple” and Ray Couden sang “Because of Thy Great Bounty.” Both services included prayers and scripture readings by former pastors Glen Wade, Dick Dale, J. P. O’Connor, and C. W. Skantz; O’Connor preached on the subject of “The City or Salt,” while Dr. Brian Strayer of Andrews University provided a sketch of the Auburn Seventh-day Adventist Church’s history. Following an abundant and delicious potluck dinner, Elder Erling Odell led the congregation in the act of dedication while Elder Glen Wade issued the call to commitment. It was indeed a high and holy Sabbath.  

In addition to their commitment to evangelism and spiritual nurture, the saints in Auburn continued to enjoy a wide spectrum of social get-togethers on Sabbaths and during the week. Indeed, the largest group appointed by the nominating committee every year was the social committee (later renamed the hospitality committee), which normally consisted of about six to nine women and one or two men. Frequently from 1998 to 2010, weddings, receptions, baby showers, and anniversary parties brought members together for warm fellowship and delicious food. Sabbath potlucks occurred once or twice a month in the fellowship room. In 2006 associate pastor Londa Bishop introduced members to the practice of holding Agape Meals (or “love feasts”) with bread, fruit, peanut butter, and cream cheese either on Friday nights or after Communion services. As the twenty-first century dawned, the members in Auburn and Union Springs occasionally came together for joint picnics at Frontenac Park in Union Springs or Emerson Park and Hoopes Park in Auburn in the late spring or early summer; at other times these picnics convened in the fellowship room. The ever hospitable Betty and Emerson Ingersoll regularly invited everyone over to their house for outdoor corn roasts, potlucks, and singalongs in the fall. Church socials often included pizza, salads, drinks, and table games for everyone.

Every December they gathered for their Christmas party replete with sandwiches, fruit, snacks, cookies, and drink.\textsuperscript{18}

While most of the saints who attended these social occasions after 2000 seemed to be in their sixties, seventies, and even eighties, the church also sought to encourage, nurture, and involve the handful of younger members in its midst. Although this church no longer had a sufficient number of children to support a Pathfinder Club, the board regularly voted financial support (usually $50 a month) through the Worthy Student Fund for those youthful members attending the Frontenac SDA School and the Academy. It also routinely sent one or two youth to Camp Cherokee for Teen Camp each July, providing as much as $335 a week for them. In addition, the nominating committee sought to enlist the talents of those in their twenties, thirties, and forties in filling church offices. Especially has this been true in recruiting younger deacons (Dan Palmer, Herb Pratt, and Lance Charles), deaconesses (Robin Knight and Bernice Palmer), audio-visual personnel (Danny Palmer and Herb Pratt), and Sabbath school leaders and teachers (Jennifer Hrovat, Tim and Londa Bishop, Dolly Brown and Faye Wilson). Yet a lack of qualified (or willing) individuals after 2005 often left some church offices (such as lay activities, communications, religious liberty, health and temperance) vacant for a year or more. This church, which at its peak in the 1960s had boasted a membership approaching 150, now had about 45 members on its books, with two dozen of those coming to church services regularly and barely six or eight arriving on time for Sabbath school.\textsuperscript{19}


In part, of course, these declining numbers were due to the fact that so many of the senior saints had passed to their rest as the second millennium came to a close: the violinist Leland Frank (87), son of William J. and Blanche Frank, the founders of the Auburn church, passed away in 1995; Elder Dick Dale’s wife Nina (59) died in an automobile accident in 1998; Hortense Boundy (86) expired in 1999; and the perfectionist carpenter Willard Winchester (85) died in 2000. Between 2000 and 2005, this congregation bade farewell to eight more members: Ralph Cuatt, Olive Burnette, and Carmen Shelley in 2001; Elizabeth Ware in 2002; the aged saints Mary Belle Rice, Mildred Pratt, and Lisle Shelley—all in their 80s and 90s—in 2003; and Barbara Perry in 2004. Between 2005 and 2010, seven more members left their ranks: Emerson Ingersoll, harmonica player, and Raiford Couden, tuba and bagpipes man, in 2006; Elizabeth Bourne (80), the woman whose side-splitting readings (“When the Preacher Came to Call” and “Alfred and the Lion”) always brought down the house at church socials, died in 2007; Glenn Greenfield (92), Beverly Crowells (70), and her son Shawn (only 38) in 2008. Today, as we stand at the century marker for this church, let us resolve to follow their example of Christian dedication so that someday soon we can join them in welcoming Jesus in the clouds of glory and go home with Him for all eternity!

Three pastors ministered to the Auburn church after 2011: Elder C. W. Skantz with his wife Thelma served for a few months in 2011-12 after the Hrovats left. Elder Tim Bailey, who had been a religion teacher at the Academy, came in 2012-14 with his wife Liz. Dr. Gary Wagner (D. Min.) with his wife Deena arrived in 2014. During their tenure, church membership, which has stood at around 75 in 2010, steadily dropped into the 40s by 2015 as many members transferred to other churches, moved away, or died.¹

An aging membership also struggled to adapt to changing times and technology as they sought to maintain the attractiveness of their church building and reach out to Auburn’s citizens. After the old Xerox machine broke down repeatedly in 2010, the board decided to sell it for parts on e-bay; they finally purchased a new one at Staples in 2013. They also voted to supply the audio-visual team, led by Dan Palmer, with $1075 worth of new equipment to amplify and record church services. A perpetually leaking roof cried out for repairs that ran between $20,000 and $30,000 by the summer of 2011. Meanwhile, sticky fingers in the Community Services Center required that new locks be put on their doors.²

Regular work bees saw the members planting bushes and shrubs, painting doors, erecting a welcome sign in the foyer, and installing FM transmitters (donated by Russ and Tresa Striffler) in the parents’ room in 2012. Indeed, between 2012 and 2015, “the Striffler Touch” transformed the church building. In March 2013 they painted the Cradle Roll/Kindergarten Sabbath School room, where Tresa’s artistic Mom painted a colorful wall mural of Noah’s Ark. That summer the Strifflers painted all the other Sabbath school and meeting rooms as well. Other projects

² CRB, July 8, Aug. 26, Nov. 18, 2010; Sept. 11, Nov. 8, Dec. 10, 2011; July 16, Sept. 18, Nov. 27, 2012; May 21, 2013.
included painting the lines for five handicapped parking spaces; extensive landscaping work on the back lot; and installing new carpet lights in the sanctuary.\(^3\)

As older machines wore out, they needed to be replaced with newer technology. Treasurer Marge Shannon received a new adding machine in 2013 to replace a far older one that broke down; by 2015, however, Trisa Striffler, the new treasurer, dispensed with the adding machine altogether and did her accounting on the computer. In 2014 Russ Striffler became the church’s new webmaster; in addition, he purchased a new screen for the chapel and persuaded the board to replace the old hymn CDs with an I-Pod. Meanwhile, Trisa regularly added inspirational sayings to the church sign and helped obtain new table cloths for the fellowship room. Technology even played a role in outreach ministries when Carol Baxter took charge of the One Call Now phone message service. Church officers certainly benefited from the four-drawer filing cabinets that the Sheplers donated in the summer of 2015 as paperwork increased and storage space became tight. Continued roof repairs and battles with mold in the balcony walls and ceilings in 2015 prompted the purchase of a snow rake to keep the snow and ice from piling up on the roof and causing future leaks. Meanwhile the cost of removing the white stuff from the parking lot rose to over $1025 each winter as the Hoskins Farm crew tried to keep ahead of the Finger Lakes’ winter weather.\(^4\)

The fact that church membership was shrinking after 2010 did not mean, however, that interest in evangelism and other forms of outreach diminished as well. As early as January of that year, the board voted to pay $500 a month for a Bible worker to come for a whole year (February 2010-February 2011), plus over $400 for a new set of Bible Study Guides to prepare members for a fall series of evangelistic meetings. Once again, Tim Raymond’s “This

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\(^3\) CRB, July 16, Sept. 18, 2012; Mar. 26, Sept. 16, 2013.

Generation” student team distributed hundreds of brochures around the city of Auburn that summer. By October members had fifteen Bible studies going, one of which was Bernice Palmer’s witness to Ralph Clump at the Auburn Memorial Hospital. When he died in 2011, Ralph left this church $5000 in his will, which provided a tremendous boost for outreach activities. In the summer of 2011 Bruce Wilkinson presented his “Project Win-A Friend” series to prepare members for evangelistic meetings that fall when they invited the public to watch the “Astonishing Discoveries on Bible Archaeology” DVDs. In the spring of 2012, this church once again invited the public to attend their Easter program entitled “The Story of Our Christ.”

As in years past, the board continued sponsoring members to attend the Lay Training Institutes held at the Holiday Inn. Here attendees learned how to witness to the public through a variety of outreach activities, including the new “Creation Health Series” held in January and February 2013, which eight non-Adventists attended. Members also distributed “Something Wonderful” cards that summer and sent Signs of the Times subscriptions to the Auburn High School, the East Middle School, and the Cayuga County Community College. In 2014 the board voted to purchase 500 copies of Steps to Christ and hundreds of little “Glow Tracts” for the Academy students to distribute around the city, sowing spiritual seeds in preparation for another evangelistic series. In addition, in 2015 they sent seven Liberty magazine subscriptions to Auburn’s thought leaders. Before the winter snows receded they also invited Candy Herbest to hold a “Stop Smoking Seminar” in January and February of 2016 and gave $500 to Bill Buffet, a church growth specialist, to give them expert advice on how to increase the number of converts to the Auburn, Union Springs, and Geneva churches. Following Buffet’s advice, they invested $500 to distribute copies of “Your Friends the Adventists” and Bible Study cards during the

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heated political campaign of 2015-16 when the Seventh-day Adventist neurosurgeon Dr. Ben Carson was one of the Republican Party’s presidential candidates.⁶

Despite its aging membership, Auburn church also continued the decades-old tradition of inviting the city’s children in for Vacation Bible Schools. However, unlike the former week-long summer series of the 1960s and 1970s, these schools were held for only three or four hours over three days. Indeed, between 2010 and 2015, the records show only two Vacation Bible Schools were held. In July 2010 about 25 kids enjoyed singing, praying, hearing stories, doing crafts, and eating sandwiches and fruit. Such a great turnout inspired Elaine Holdren to lead a children’s ministries follow-up that fall. In 2013, the board voted to give $300 to Faye Wilson, who had attended several VBS programs in her childhood, to direct the summer school here.⁷

Thanks to the quiet persistence of Armin Simpson, the church also continued ministering to the spiritual needs of thousands of prisoners at the Auburn Penitentiary. In April 2010, with support from several members, Armin conducted an evangelistic series attended by nearly 2000 inmates. The ripples of these meetings even reached the Attica Prison and touched the life of Michael Tillman. Frequently moved from prison to prison, Tillman wrote a letter to Elder Bailey in 2011 full of gratitude to this church for helping him grow closer to God. In return, Michael was working every day to show his fellow inmates God’s love and to lead them to Christ. He asked Auburn members to pray for him and his prison ministry; in return, he promised to pray for this congregation. Year after year, Auburn members paid for Sabbath school quarterlies for

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⁷ CRB, May 27, July 8, July 29, 2010; May 21, 2013.
the inmates who requested them. By the summer of 2015, at least five prisoners had joined the Auburn church through baptism or profession of faith.8

Another more silent witness that drew the public’s attention to the Adventist message in this area was the church sign facing Prospect Street. Sometime in 2010 or 2011, an anonymous passerby sent a letter to “Dear Signboard Person at the Church” (that person was Armin Simpson) thanking her for the inspiring quotations she displayed every week. Some of the sayings—“Come on in for a faith lift”; “You are never alone”; “God answers his ‘kneemails’”; and “Faith is the victory”—had particularly touched this person’s heart. “Thanks again for your much appreciated daily input into my life,” this individual wrote. “Please don’t ever stop; I’m sure it means so very much to so many people.”9 Let’s hope someone in this congregation will always keep that silent witness alive!

Even though the Auburn church’s membership shrank almost fifty percent by 2014, a handful of active souls continued to transfer here. In 2010 Diantha Pratt, Dawn Heuster, and Elaine Holdren joined this congregation. In 2011 Albert Weber came, and in 2012 long-time members George and Doris Strayer transferred in from the Athol Seventh-day Adventist Church in Idaho. During 2013 Russ and Tresa Striffler and Myra Harper became members here, and in 2015 Candy Herbert joined this church.10

Naturally, these new members were immediately put to work! Some joined the Community Services Center team which distributed food and clothing to the public every Wednesday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. In March 2010 they donated $50 to the Chaplain’s Fund at the Auburn Memorial Hospital and sent more funds to ADRA to assist the victims of the terrible earthquake in Haiti. Every Thanksgiving and Christmas season, they filled boxes with

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gifts, toys, canned goods and clothing for needy children throughout the city. In the fall of 2011 they purchased $900 worth of food for one desperately needy family and another $200 to provide ten gift baskets for absent members. During 2012, the hard-working staff provided another $100 worth of food to one family and gave gift books to the handful of children in their midst. In 2013 the board donated $200 to the Ononda Park Project. To help keep patrons’ kids from running all over their facility, the ladies in 2014 bought coloring books and a VCR to show Bible-based and character-building films to these little tykes; a year later they added a set of My Little Friends books. To streamline their record-keeping efforts, Dolly Brown and Susie Roche also prepared a one-page form asking patrons for their names, addresses, and phone numbers, followed by a checklist of the clothing (by gender, type, and size) they received from the Center. The board expressed their satisfaction with the efficiency, cooperativeness, and friendly spirit displayed by these dedicated women.11

Other new members led out in various in-reach activities and groups. In the summer of 2010, for example, a group began meeting after church to pray with those who requested special prayer on their behalf; a year later, Steve Millahn led out in this prayer ministry. A frequent refrain in their prayer circle was requests for God to bless the elderly and home-bound members. In the spring of 2011, John Cardinell purchased a van to bring some of these elderly, widely scattered members to church. Bible study groups also met regularly at the church (led by Russ and Tresa Striffler on Thursday nights) and at private homes, such as at Steven Millahn’s house on Friday evenings with Academy Bible teacher Tim Raymond leading out. To keep worshipers literally “on the same page” during Bible readings in church, the board asked Russ Striffler to purchase New King James Versions for the pew racks in the spring of 2012. From January 6 to

16, 2016, many of these dear saints participated in the Ten Days of Prayer effort sponsored by the General Conference.\(^\text{12}\)

Although Pastor Hrovat in 2010 had expressed a desire to start a men’s ministry here and Pastor Bailey in 2013 felt that a singles ministry was also needed, neither of these worthy endeavors gained support from the membership. By contrast, the women’s ministry group continued to be very active, generally meeting at the fellowship hall for three hours one Sunday a month for a potluck and gift exchange. In August 2011, Donna Jones and Diantha Pratt, with generous funding from the board, planned a Women’s Fall Retreat. Every December they assembled Christmas baskets for the needy with the $25 a month provided by the board.\(^\text{13}\)

Members also gathered together for parties, potlucks, and games, although the bad winter weather and the physical infirmities of some elderly members kept them away. At least once and sometimes twice a month, they enjoyed Sabbath afternoon potlucks at the fellowship hall. In the fall of 2011, the Millahn’s began hosting game nights on Saturday evenings, inviting their guests to bring snacks and table games for several hours of fun. Later that winter, Elaine Holdren started a newsletter to keep members informed of these social gatherings. This newsletter often included the pastor’s column, Ellen White quotations, announcements, prayer requests, letters, the monthly church calendar, mini-biographies entitled “Family Portraits,” and upcoming events. Dolly Brown and her hospitality team also began organizing Sunday pancake breakfasts (occasionally with fresh blueberries!) in the fellowship hall.\(^\text{14}\)

The fact that many of Auburn’s saints were aged, feeble, and often unable to attend significantly affected Sabbath school and worship services. For example, when pianist Jennie


Lee Herndon turned 90 and stopped driving and organist Millie Shepplar needed to stay home to care for her husband Dan, members sang hymns accompanied by CDs or I-Pods. However, they continued to enjoy occasional sacred concerts sponsored by such visiting groups as the South Lancaster Academy Choir in the spring of 2011, the Rochester Singers later that winter, the McClean Family Singers in the spring of 2012, and the Union Springs Academy Choir almost every Christmas. As the Grim Reaper took many of the church’s male officers, the board ordained Armin Simpson as the church’s second woman elder (Doris Strayer was the first) in the fall of 2011. Armin joined a growing list of Sabbath speakers that included Dr. Malcolm Bourne, Wayne Edwards, Rod Wright, and occasionally Conference officials. With almost no children in sight after 2010, the nominating committee sometimes (as in 2012-13) did not appoint anyone to direct the Cradle Roll, Kindergarten, Primary, Junior, and Youth Sabbath school groups. At other times (2013-14) they asked Faye Wilson, Tresa Striffler, Susie Roche, and Dolly Brown to have programs ready just in case a child showed up. With so few members showing up for Sabbath school (sometimes only six or eight had arrived by 9:30 a.m.), Sabbath school leaders sometimes shared only one mission story a month.15

Despite the fact that the Auburn church had no children or youth regularly attending services after 2010, its senior saints still continued helping young people whenever they could. The board voted to collect the children’s offering for the support of children’s outreach ministry. In addition, it allocated thousands of dollars each year to help church members’ children attending Frontenac SDA School or Union Springs Academy when such students needed financial help. When USA alumna Pearl Everhart died in 2013, the board sent a check for $100

15 CRB, Aug. 26, Nov. 18, 2010; Apr. 7, Sept. 27, 2011; Dec. 15, 2015; for guest speakers, see bulletins for 2010-15; for musical concerts, see bulletins for Nov. 26, 2011; May 26, 2012; see nominating committee reports for 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015.
to the Academy in her honor; they sent another $50 check to the Academy in 2015 to honor the memory of former member and Kindergarten Sabbath School teacher Carlene Kriegelstein.¹⁶

Sadly, as the second decade of the twenty-first century came to a close, the Auburn members bade tearful farewells to a growing number of their senior saints. Nina Hadsell (92) died in 2011, followed by Pearl Everhart (92) and Theo Culver (69) in 2013. Their beloved former pastor Elder Dick Dale passed to his rest in 2014 (79). The year 2015 marked the passing of four members: Joyce Burpee (79), active in the Community Services Center for many years; Kenneth Crowell (87), a faithful deacon; Karen Warren (68); and George Strayer (90), a deacon for over half a century.¹⁷ Today, as you and I eagerly anticipate the return of Jesus in the clouds of glory, let us resolve to be ready to join with these departed friends and go home with our Savior to the heavenly mansions He has prepared for each one of us!

Pastors of the Auburn SDA Company & Church  
(1885-2016+)

Auburn SDA Company

1885-90  J. E. Swift & J. V. Willson (elders)
1890-1900 Mr. Kimball (elder) & his sisters
1900-1915 Unknown elders; members widely scattered

Auburn SDA Church (1915-2016+)

1915-18  Miles Coon [Millie] & Emma Rea (colporteur)
1918-45  William (elder) and Blanche Frank
1945-48  Walton W. Smith [Flora]
1948-49  Frank Aldridge [Ruth]
1949-54  Walton W. Smith [Flora]
1954-58  Sidney English [Alva]
1958-62  George W. Valentine [Gladys]
1962-67  Rankin Wentland [Shirley]
Fall 1967  David Prest [Barbara], interim pastor
1967-69  Thomas Hicks [?]
1969-73  Erling Odell [Leona]
1973-77  Maynard Wheeler [Betty]
1977-79  Michael Lay [Marilyn]
1979-80  C. W. Skantz [Thelma], interim pastor
1980-81  Tom Smith [Ronda]
1981-87  Leonard Tessier [Carolyn]
Summer 1987 C. W. Skantz [Thelma], interim pastor
1987-93  Glen Wade [Connie]
1993-94  George Kretschmar [Marilyn]
1994-95  Bill Largo [Christine]
1995-98  Dick Dale [Nina]
1998-2001 James P. O’Connor [Anibel]
2001-2002 C. W. Skantz [Thelma], interim pastor
2002-2011 Bill Hrovat [Jennifer]
        2004-07—Londa Bishop [Tim] (assoc. pastor)
        2007-08—Tim Bishop [Londa] (assoc. pastor)
        2010-11—Scott Morton [?] (assoc. pastor)
2011-12  C. W. Skantz [Thelma], interim pastor
2012-14  Tim Bailey [Liz]
2014-17+  Gary Wagner [Deena]
Places of Worship for the Auburn SDA Company & Church
(1885-2016+)

Auburn SDA Company

1885-86 Unknown private homes
1886-90 George Rea’s Home, 24 Morris Street
1890-1915 Unknown private homes

Auburn SDA Church

1915-16 St. George’s Hall, 8 Genesee Street [29 members]
1916-18 32 Capitol Street [32 members]
1918-20 St. George’s Hall, 8 Genesee Street [22 members]
1920-22 Upstairs in the Cayuga National Bank [23 members]
1922-24 Ensenore Lodge Room, Odd Fellows Hall, Garden Street [18 members]
1924-26 Masonic Hall, South Street [21 members]
1926-27 Odd Fellow’s Hall, State Street [28 members]
1927-51 St. Paul’s Lodge Room, Masonic Hall, South Street [23-43 members]
1951-54 Calvary Presbyterian Church, corner of Capitol and Franklin Streets
1954-57 Disciples of Christ Church, Seymour & Division Streets [83 members]
1957-88 Welch Hall & Willard Memorial Chapel, 17 Nelson Street [135 members]
1988-89 St. Luke’s United Church of Christ (while building new church)
1990- SDA Church, 56 Prospect Street [73 members in 1999; 45 members in 2015]