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Millerite Sabbath Camp Meeting?

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Keeping the Vision Alive

by Merlin D. Burt

During the spring of 1844, Elder Fredrick Wheeler accepted the Sabbath through the efforts of a Seventh Day Baptist widow named Rachael Oaks.

He was probably the first 7th day Sabbath-keeping Adventist minister in North America.

Soon after he accepted the Sabbath a Millerite camp meeting was held just south of Washington in Hillsboro, New Hampshire. George Wheeler, eldest son of Fredrick, was 10 years old at the time and recollected how the primitive camp was set up in a grove of trees with between 300 and 400 people present. The seats were made by stringing long tree trunks on the ground and attaching rough hemlock boards for seating. The only musical accompaniment, if it could be called musical, was provided by about a dozen "song leaders" who beat the time using poles. The tents were made of staked coarse sheeting over forked poles. Lydia Wheeler, Frederick's wife, had relatives who

owned a nearby farm. They sold or gave biscuits and other necessities to the campers and a local farmer provided milk. Little is known of the details of this camp meeting but it may have been the first where the Sabbath was presented to Millerite Adventists by Fredrick Wheeler. During the summer of 1844, another Adventist minister in Nashua, New Hampshire, named T. M. Preble also ac-



cepted the Sabbath perhaps under the influence of Frederick Wheeler.

Preble in turn wrote an article and tract on the Sabbath in February and March 1845 that convinced Joseph Bates. Bates then wrote tracts which convinced others such as James and Ellen White and Hiram Edson to keep the Sabbath. Thus the Sabbatarian Adventist movement was formed which later became the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Today, Seventh-day Adventists in many places enjoy camp meeting and God still blesses His people as they gather to hear His word. ■



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GETTING INVOLVED

by Thomas R. Neslund

Pulling my jacket on to cut the chill that hung in the air as I departed the Kalamazoo Airport, I asked Stanley Cottrell, "What is the weather going to be like during this week?" "It could snow!" he replied. "Great!" I responded, as I pondered our up-coming work bee at Historic Adventist Village.

I had left 70 degree weather in Mission

Viejo, California, and flown into Battle Creek to accomplish four objectives, two of which now seemed doubtful. Dwain Ford was bringing two or three helpers with him from Berrien Springs so that we could paint and replace bad and broken boards on HAV's newest acquisition, the Snow Barn, named after Mr. Snow who built it in 1850.

The second objective was to meet with the members of our construction committee to select and stake out the location for the carriage shed / public restrooms. Snow on the ground would keep my shiny Southern California loafers inside, of that I was certain.

The other two *continued on page 2*



Thomas R. Neslund
President, Adventist Heritage Ministry