

JAMES WHITE LIBRARY

The First Seventh-day Adventist Library for Advanced Education

by Merlin Burt

THE YEAR 2013 marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of a separate library building, named the James White library. But the library actually traces its history to the beginning of Seventh-day Adventist higher education in Battle Creek, Mich. Andrews University has three phases in its history: (1) Battle Creek College: 1874–1901; (2) Emmanuel Missionary College: 1901–1960; and (3) Andrews University: 1960 to present. The first Seventh-day Adventist library of higher education has continued through these organizational changes. 857 volumes remain from the original Battle Creek College library and they are housed as a special collection at the Center for Adventist Research in the first floor of the James White Library. The books show the wear of more than a century of use.

The history of the library follows the history of the institutions with some variations.

The Battle Creek Era 1874–1901

The college library began in 1876–1877 when a college literary club, the Fide-delectians, called for gifts of books, or funds with which to purchase them.¹ This led to the 200-volume core nucleus of the college library. The next major step was a \$2,000 appropriation of the Seventh-day Adventist Educational Society Board in 1877.² A second 1877 motion by John Harvey Kellogg established a committee to purchase books consisting of Uriah Smith, Sydney Brownsberger and Kellogg. At first the library was contained in two bookcases purchased from the sanitarium. A few brief references indicate that Brownsberger, principal of the college, was making purchases for the library through various catalogues. Though \$2,000 was voted in 1877 for library books, the money was incrementally released. In July 1878, \$600 was voted for actual purchases.³ The 1879–1880 bulletin noted that “two thousand dollars” was appropriated as a “first installment of a College Library.” Half was spent at the time of the notice for 1,000 “standard volumes of the choicest selection.” The note continued, “More will soon be added.”⁴ By the next year, a library reading area was added to the already established reading

room, which contained secular newspapers and other periodicals.

A notice in *The College Record* announced the publication of a “catalogue of books in the College Library.” It continued: “The books are classified in two divisions, Reference and Circulating. Reference books are not to be taken from the building.”⁶

A librarian is mentioned but not named. The excellence of the collection was advertised. “Every volume is a standard work, so that he [the student] need not waste time and labor to find reliable information.” The library was open from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and closed for an hour and half for lunch. Use was

limited to the building and an incidental fee of up to a \$1 a year was charged to students.⁷ By 1884 they had set the library fee at “25c per term from all students except those of the Primary Department.”⁸ There were three terms per year and thus the library fee was 75 cents per year. Over the years the fee slowly increased.

After the expansion of the college building in 1886, the annual description of the library shows a slow increase in holdings until the early 1890s when acquisitions dramatically jumped. Library book holds were indicated as follows in the school bulletins: In 1887 (1,200 volumes); in 1888 (1,300 volumes); in 1891



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(1,400 volumes); 1892 (2,000 volumes); 1893 (3,000 volumes). The growth of the library seems to have stalled after 1893 and only a brief notice is given each year of the library and its 3,000 volumes.

The first named librarian was in the 1899 school bulletin. Rosma M. Whalen was also the secretary for the faculty. She continued in this role for two years until the move to Berrien Springs.

The Early EMC Era 1901–1938

Instruction began at Emmanuel Missionary College (EMC) in Berrien Springs, Mich., in July 1901. It was hard going during the early years. The first classes were held in tents within an oak grove and then moved to the old court buildings of Berrien County.⁹ Mary E. Cook is listed with the faculty as the first named librarian of EMC. The first bulletin described the library with these words: “The library will be a characteristic feature of the new College. All books and periodicals will be arranged in a commodious study room, where under the supervision of instructors, all students will spend their study hours.” The description went on to emphasize the free access to the library materials.¹⁰ This description represented a yet to be realized plan.

In 1903, the library and study room were under the supervision of various instructors. The emphasis was more on study time than on the library.¹¹ In 1903 after the construction of what would become the Administration building, the library was located in this building which became popularly known as “Study Hall.”

Up to 1915, a three-person library committee operated the library. At first the committee included two faculty members, Olen R. Cooper, the preceptress, Alma J. Graf and Olive Siemann. Siemann had no other positions and would be the presumed staff-person for the library.¹² After one year Laura F. Rathbun, who was also the English teacher, replaced Siemann.¹³ And so it went from year to year.

Growth in the Size of the Library Collection

In 1914 there was an initiative from the General Conference that all Seventh-day Adventist colleges were to have at least 5,000 volumes in their libraries by 1915. EMC only had about 3,800 volumes and needed to add 1,200 more. There was no money to buy the books, so on Halloween, the faculty and student body gathered and were asked to help with the

problem. The following is a description of what happened:

A little ladder with a wooden man at the foot was brought in and someone explained that for every 40 books or dollars pledged to the college library the little man would climb one step. When he should reach the top of the ladder the library would have attained that much desired goal,—5,000 volumes.¹⁴

Pledges then rang out in the room, and “up, up, up, climbed the little man on the ladder.” At the end of the meeting the little man was a few steps short of the goal. But the books poured in and 630 volumes were added in four-weeks time. One can only wonder at the quality of those volumes in terms of education, but the library was enlarged. By the time of the publication of the 1915 bulletin, it was reported that the library contained 5,400 volumes and for the first time, since the opening year of the school, a librarian was directly named—O.R. Cooper.¹⁵ Of course Cooper was not a librarian. He was a medical doctor who taught Natural and Physical Science. In 1917, Mrs. M.L. Kelley, the Commerce Department assistant was named as the librarian.¹⁶

During the next two years the library holdings are listed as follows: 1916—6,000 volumes;¹⁷ 1917—6,400 volumes;¹⁸ Publications noted that the college had 1,400 volumes more than were required. The library continued to grow and in 1922 it was announced that the library contained more than 10,000 volumes and was increasing by about 1,000 volumes per year.¹⁹ This must have lagged some, because the next statistic is 1933 with the library having 14,794 volumes. By the time of the new library building in 1938 the collection had grown to 21,876 volumes.

New Library Leadership and Academic Instruction in Library Science

Having met the 1915 requirement of 5,000 volumes, the next step was to include library education in the school curriculum. Bertha E. Allen, a 1918 literary graduate of EMC, served from 1919–1926. At first she was both registrar and librarian.²⁰ Professionally speaking, she might be considered the first librarian at EMC.

In connection with the Department of English Language and Literature, Allen taught a one-year, two-class course in “Library Science.” The course was designed to enable “a student to take charge of a small library.” It was oriented towards researchers and “teachers who have to build up academy and church

school libraries.” The class included experience in “cataloging, classifying, accessioning, and shelf-listing,” as well as reference experience.²¹ Within a few years Allen stopped her work as registrar and was only the librarian. The other “librarians” were rather transient and served out of exigency rather than qualification. Allen continued in her role until 1926 when she was forced to resign due to health issues.²²

The second professional librarian was Miss Anna L. Blackney (1900–1989) who served from 1928–1944.²³ She completed her BA from EMC and a BLS from the School of Library Science, Western Reserve University, and in 1942 completed an MA from the University of Chicago.²⁴ Previous to her years at EMC, Blackney served as librarian at Kingsford High School.²⁵

In 1933 the Library Science classes were moved to the Department of Applied Arts and Blackney was made a lecturer.²⁶ There were references in the board minutes on library faculty remuneration in relation to academic training.²⁷ The board supported Blackney’s education as a librarian and provided funding for her tuition and expenses. This included her BLS and further graduate studies at University of Chicago.²⁸

EMC James White Library Era 1938–1962

On July 31, 1934, the EMC board formed a committee to study the “future housing of the library.” It included T.W. Steen, S.E. Wight, K.F. Ambs, L.W. Foote, and J.D. Snider.²⁹ Two weeks later the board met and voted to proceed with the construction of a “separate fire-proof building” large enough to accommodate at least 150 students at one time and able to be enlarged without “destroying the symmetry and beauty of the building.”³⁰

Fund-raising efforts included each of the conferences in the Lake Union with a special offering in churches on Sabbath, January 30, 1937. The goal was for each church to raise one dollar per member.³¹

In 1937 a new library was erected at the site of the present Buller Hall for \$39,022 including furnishings.³² On December 20, a half-day holiday was declared by the school to give “an opportunity for all the students to help move the more than twenty thousand library books to their new home” from the top floor of the Administration building.³³ This was done using “trundling wooden book troughs” some of which still remain in use today.³⁴

June 5, 1938, Dedication of the James White Library Building

On June 5, 1938, the day the library building was dedicated, the College Board of Trustees voted on the following resolution: "In recognition of the pioneer education service of Elder James White, it was VOTED to name the new College Library the James White Memorial Library."³⁵ It has retained that name to this day. On Oct. 12, 2012, a new painting of James White by Harry Ahn was unveiled and now hangs in the lobby area of the James White Library. The former painting of James White is now displayed in the Center for Adventist Research next to a painting of J.N. Andrews.

The dedication service for the new library was during the school Commencement Week. June 5, 1938, had three major events, the dedication of the library at 10:30 a.m., an alumni banquet at 11:45 a.m., and the school convocation/commencement service at 3:30 p.m. The dignitaries included the president of the General Conference, J.L. McElhany; the General Conference Education Secretary, H.A. Morrison; and associate editor of the *Review and Herald*, F.D. Nichol. Morrison spoke for the dedication and T.W. Steen was a special guest.³⁶ Steen had been the president of Emmanuel Missionary College (EMC) from 1934–1937.³⁷ As the first president and also an alum of the school, he had been instrumental in planning the new library.³⁸ Of course the librarian, Anna L. Blackney was also in attendance.³⁹

The completed library could accommodate 200 readers and served the college well until the transition to Andrews University.

The Library Science program 1938–1962

After Anna Blackney's retirement in 1944, Arlene Marks became the new librarian. She continued in this role until 1955. Marks had both a BA and a BLS from the University of Illinois and had previous experience as a librarian at Broadview Academy. In 1947 Marks earned a MALS from the University of Michigan.⁴⁰ During Marks' tenure, various assistant librarians were appointed.⁴¹

1950 saw an expansion of the library courses. Besides the longstanding four-hours in Library methods, a two-hour School Library Administration class was added.⁴² In 1953, Arlene Marks became the first librarian to gain assistant professor rank in the college.⁴³

After Marks departure in 1955, Richard Schwarz was appointed for two years as ac-



ing librarian, though his academic standing was in social science. He had been librarian at Broadview Academy (1949–1953) and Adelphian Academy (1953–1955).

Between 1959 and 1961 Barbara Phipps served as librarian. She reorganized and expanded the library science program to include the following courses: Introduction to Library Usage; Reference; Subject Reference and Bibliography; Classification and Cataloging; Book Selection and Ordering; and School Library Administration. In 1960 a Department of Library Science was established. The purpose was to "fulfill the state requirements for teacher-librarians and to provide the core curriculum toward the Master's degree in Library Science." A minor in Library Science was also offered for those seeking certification.⁴⁴ The faculty included Barbara H. Phipps, Marilyn Wein-Fivash, and Jo Ann Perkins-Stevens. In 1961 Fivash became the librarian with the Library Science department including Stevens and a new faculty member Leonard Hill.

The library grew steadily during the period from 1938–1962 from nearly 22,000 volumes to nearly 62,000 volumes. Periodical and other resources also expanded dramatically. But nothing compared with the expansion that would occur with the establishment of Andrews University in 1960⁴⁵ and the building of the new James White Library building in 1962.

Andrews University and the New James White Library

On February 15, 1961, the Andrews University Board of Trustees voted to proceed with the construction of the new James White library. Due to various factors, including a doubling of the total cost to more than \$900,000, the structure was not completed until the late summer of 1962.

On April 2, 1962, the board voted "that the

new library be designated the James White Library." This maintained continuity with the name of the previous library. The former library building was renamed "Griggs Hall."⁴⁶ The dedication for the new library was voted for Oct. 24, 1962, with Walter R. Beach, secretary of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, as the speaker.⁴⁷

Plans for an addition to the library began in 1971. When completed in 1976, it doubled the capacity from about 400,000 to 800,000 volumes. The cost of the addition was more than 1.25 million dollars.⁴⁸ With compact shelving and other adjustments the library has further increased its capacity. Today the collection contains in excess of 1,000,000 cataloged items.

At the time of the construction of the new 1962 university library, there were a total of about 122,000 volumes with a staff of seven librarians.⁴⁹ The new library was managed through the long leadership of the new head librarian, Mary Jane Mitchell, who had previously been the librarian for the Seminary in Takoma Park, Md. and Potomac University. She would continue for 20 years, though her title was changed to "director" at the May 6, 1973 board meeting, until her retirement in 1982.

In 1982, Marley H. Soper became director of the library and chair of the library science program, a position he held until 1993. His leadership saw a transition from a card catalog system to an electronic online catalog in 1992. This was the beginning of a paradigm shift for Adventist education in information technology from paper to digital. This shift is still in process and is transforming many aspects of life in during the 21st century.

The library science program, which had its beginning in 1960 under Barbara Phipps' administration, is last listed in the 1989 Andrews

University bulletin. The faculty included one person who is still a part of the library faculty, Cynthia M. Helms. The end of formal library education at Andrews University has slowly refocused library energies more completely toward student and patron services.

Keith Clouten followed Marley Soper as library director from 1993 to 2003. Since 2003, Larry Onsager has been director and dean. During the tenures of Clouten and Onsager, the shift to digital resources has continued and will likely continue to accelerate. Collection includes not only paper resources but also electronic resources and cooperation with other libraries to share electronic resources. One of the major challenges has been the need for increased resources to maintain both paper and electronic materials and the tools to access them. The world will remain in transition from paper to electronic into the foreseeable future. Paradigm changes of this nature take a generation or more and are in some ways comparable to the transition from handwritten manuscripts to printing during the 15th and 16th centuries.

Conclusion

So what do we learn from this brief history of the first and most extensive library of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

The Battle Creek period saw a foundation laid that emphasized the importance of selectivity and building a strong reference col-

lection. It is also a period of relatively limited library resources.

The early EMC era at first gave little attention to the library except to continue what had been available at Battle Creek. This changed under the leadership of the first real librarian, Bertha E. Allen. She established two courses to prepare teachers and others to develop school libraries. During this period, librarians became a part of the EMC instructional faculty. This role would continue in teaching library science until 1990. Of course librarians have continued to be involved in instruction to the present, but not in teaching their own discipline.

The James White Library era, which has reached the time-marker of 75 years, brought the first major concentration of school resources toward library excellence. The construction of the new library was a major investment. The building of resources leading up to 1960 and the establishment of Andrews University paved the way for this expansion.

The Andrews University era was a paradigm shift. The investment that occurred previously was multiplied to support a full university that included the granting of advanced degrees. The foresight of the first University presidents and the board of trustees to make significant investments in the library has been a foundation for the instructional program at Andrews University. Thankfully, subsequent administrators have continued this focus on

instructional resources to make Andrews University the premier humanities university for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The James White Library remains a precious treasure of educational support for the world church and at 150 years of church organization, it inspires other Adventist universities to excellence. It also remains one of the truly significant theological libraries in the world.

One thing is certain. The Seventh-day Adventist Christian faith and mission, that led to the establishment of Battle Creek College and all the other Adventist universities around the world, is the foundation for the remarkable libraries at this University. The libraries give emphasis to the various branches of the humanities, theology, Adventist studies, architecture, music, technology and science.

The unique focus of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on taking the gospel to the world in light of the soon coming of Jesus has driven the need for an educational program. This has facilitated the training of missionaries and workers who have taken the three angels' message around the world. May this 75th-year mile-marker for the James White Library lead to a renewed commitment to academic resources to support the mission of this University to Seek Knowledge, Affirm Faith, and Change the World. ■

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¹ Mary Jane Mitchell, "Background of the James White Library," Dedication remarks at the dedication of the James White Library, October 24, 1962; Sakae Kubo, "History of the James White Library," Term Paper, June 1968, Center for Adventist Research, Berrien Springs, MI.

² Seventh-day Adventist Educational Society Board Minutes, November 27, 1877, Andrews University Archives; "College Pledges," Battle Creek College, December 1877, 31.

³ *Ibid.*, July 21, 1878.

⁴ Fifth Annual Announcement of the Battle Creek College, Containing General Information Concerning Courses of Study, Instruction, Cost of Tuition and Board, Special Advantages, Etc., for College Year 1879-'80 (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald Publishing, 1879), 10.

⁵ Board Minutes, August 7, 1879; October 2, 1879.

⁶ "College Notes," *The College Record*, Jan-Feb, 1881, 8.

⁷ Sixth Annual Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Battle Creek College Located at Battle Creek, Michigan, for the College Year 1879, with a full Announcement for 1880-'81 (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald Job Press, 1880), 15-16.

⁸ Ninth Annual Catalogue of Battle Creek College Located at Battle Creek, Michigan, for the College Year 1879, with a full Announcement for 1884-85 (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald Publishing, 1884), 15.

⁹ Emmanuel Missionary College, Successor to Battle Creek College, Fall Announcement 1904 Berrien Springs, Michigan (Berrien Springs, MI: Advocate Publishing), 6.

¹⁰ First Annual Calendar of Emmanuel Missionary College (Berrien Springs, MI: n.p., 1901-1902), 5, 17.

¹¹ Emmanuel Missionary College, Successor to Battle Creek College, Fall Announcement 1903-04 (Berrien Springs, MI: n.p.), 8.

¹² "Calendar of Emmanuel Missionary College: 1912-13," *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin*, 3rd quarter, 1912, 7.

¹³ "Calendar of Emmanuel Missionary College: 1913-14," *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin*, 3rd quarter, 1913, 7.

¹⁴ Edna Fitton, "The Library," *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin*, 4th quarter, 1914, 9.

¹⁵ Calendar of Emmanuel Missionary College: 1915-16," *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin*, 3rd quarter, 1915, 7, 15.

¹⁶ Calendar of Emmanuel Missionary College: 1917-18," *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin*, 1st quarter, 1917, 5-8.

¹⁷ Calendar of Emmanuel Missionary College: 1916-17," *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin*, 2nd quarter, 1916, 15.

¹⁸ Calendar of Emmanuel Missionary College: 1917-18," *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin*, 1st quarter, 1917, 14.

¹⁹ *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin*, 4th quarter, 1922, 2.

²⁰ "Annual Calendar: 1919-1920," *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin*, 1st quarter, 1919, 7-9.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 61; "Annual Calendar: 1920-1921," *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin*, 1st quarter, 1920, 12, 76-77.

²² EMC Board Minutes, February 1, 1926.

²³ Catalog of Emmanuel Missionary College for 1929-1930 (Berrien Springs, MI: Published by the College, 1929), 11; Catalog of Emmanuel

Missionary College for 1930-1931 (Berrien Springs, MI: Published by the College, 1930), 11, 61-62.

²⁴ *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin: College of Liberal Arts, 1942-1943* (Berrien Springs, MI: Published by the College, [1942]), 12.

²⁵ She is last listed in the 1943-1944 bulletin.

²⁶ *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin for 1933-1934: College of Arts and Sciences* (Berrien Springs, MI: Published by the College, 1933), 10-11, 70; *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin: College of Arts and Sciences 1935-1936* (Berrien Springs, MI: Published by the College, 1933), 14.

²⁷ EMC Board Minutes, January 7, 1934, Center for Adventist Research, Berrien Springs, MI.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, March 20, 1935; March 16, 1937.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, July 31, 1934.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, August 14, 1934.

³¹ *Ibid.*, November 5, 1936.

³² "Emmanuel Missionary College Board Minutes," March 7-8, 1938, Andrews University Archives. Special appreciation is due to Alice Williams, University archivist, for her research assistance in finding original records to support this presentation.

³³ *Cardinal* (Berrien Springs, MI: EMC Senior Class, 1938), 65.

³⁴ Meredith Jones Gray, *As We Set Forth* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 2002), 231.

³⁵ Emmanuel Missionary College Board Minutes," June 5, 1938, Andrews University Archives.

³⁶ "Commencement Week," *Lake Union Herald*, May 10, 1938, 8; Emmanuel Missionary College News Notes, *Lake Union Herald*, May 24, 1938, 6.

³⁷ Gray, *As We Set Forth*, 248-249.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 249. His successor, H.J. Klooster, had been instrumental in finding donations to pay for the building.

³⁹ *Cardinal*, 1938, 25.

⁴⁰ *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin: College of Liberal Arts, 1947-1948* (Berrien Springs, MI: Published by the College, [1947]), 12.

⁴¹ Barbara Phipps and Audrey Stockton who had BLS degrees. During the 1950s other names included Dorothy Ferren, Marilyn Fivash, and Lois Flory. All had either bachelor's or master's degrees.

⁴² *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin: College of Liberal Arts, 1950-1951* (Berrien Springs, MI: Published by the College, [1950]), 92.

⁴³ *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin: College of Liberal Arts, 1953-1954* (Berrien Springs, MI: Published by the College, [1943]), 13.

⁴⁴ *Emmanuel Missionary College Bulletin: College of Liberal Arts, 1960-1961* (Berrien Springs, MI: Published by the College, 1960), 124-125.

⁴⁵ The General Conference Spring Council agreed on the name Andrews University April 4-6, 1960 and the charter was altered to form Andrews University November 21-23, 1960; Emmett K. Vande Vere, *The Wisdom Seekers* (Nashville: Southern Publishing, 1972), 251.

⁴⁶ Andrews University Board of Trustees Minutes, September 6, 1962.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Andrews University Board of Trustees minutes, November 7, 1973.

⁴⁹ President's Report, Andrews University Constituency Meeting, May 2, 1963.