

Register of the
William Miller Collection
Collection 25

Center for Adventist Research
James White Library
Andrews University
Berrien Springs, Michigan
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William Miller Collection

(Collection 25)

Scope and Content

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

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

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

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

There are a quantity of letters sent and received from 1831 to 1849. These are available as photostatic copies with considerable duplication in the form of one negative and one positive copy of quite a few letters. Many letters occupy multiple pages. A number of them are between William and his family while he is traveling. There is a description of some of his meetings.

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

Arrangement

The collection came from more than one source and lacked an organic unity. Therefore its arrangement was imposed by the Center for Adventist Research. The first part contains some of Miller's original personal documents. The second part has correspondences. Most of the letters are photocopies or photostatic copies. There are, however, a couple of original letters written by Miller. The third part consists of writings by Miller and materials written about him by others. Part four contains some of Miller's personal belongings plus those of some close relatives. Several miscellaneous items are placed at the end of the collection.

Provenance

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

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

The letters in box 4 may have come from the F. D. Nichols Collections at the Center for Adventist Research.

Use

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

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

William Miller Collection (Collection 25)

Inventory:

Box 1 Fld 1 Correspondence regarding acquisition of items for the present collection, 1903-1983.

I. Personal Documents

William Miller's Diaries

Box 1 Fld 2 William Miller Diaries, 1798-1803. Photocopies received from Vermont Historical Society. Bound in one volume.

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

Box 1 Fld 3 1812-13

Box 1 Fld 4 1814

Box 1 Fld 5 1815-1816

Box 1 Fld 6 1817-1825, plus several records without dates.

Box 1 Fld 6a 1831-1832. 3 documents signed by Miller as Justice of the Peace related to matters by Paulinus Millard
[originals + photocopy. Originals from the Paul Gordon Collection (Collection 281)]

Box 1 Fld 7 Certificates of William Miller, (Photocopies received from the collections of Vermont Historical Society).

Elected as Lieutenant, Jul. 21, 1810.

Elected as Captain, Nov. 7, 1812.

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

Legal Documents (Original and photocopies)

Box 1 Fld 8 Originals (Use photocopies in Box1 Fld 9)

Tax Certificate, May 1, 1809.

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

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

Box 1 Fld 9 Photocopies of the above original legal documents.

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

Original letters (Use photocopies in Box1 Fld11)

Box 1 Fld 10 William Miller to Mr. Adam K. Miller, Dec. 13, 1806.
William Miller and family to George W. Miller, Feb. 27-Mar. 7, 1837, (Letter written over weeks time by different people).

Box 1 Fld 11 Photocopies of the above original letters.

Photocopies of letters (originals not in the collection)

Box 1 Fld 12 William S. Miller to William Miller, Jan. 18, 1839
Joshua Litch to William Miller, Oct. 24, 1844
T. Greer Clayton to William Miller, Oct 26, 1844
G. F. Cox to William Miller, J. Litch and J. V. Himes, Nov. 7, 1844
J. E. Jones to William Miller, Nov. 23, 1844
N. Hervey to William Miller, Nov. 28, 1844
S. Fenton to William Miller, Dec. 10, 1844
Joseph Turner to William Miller, Jan. 20, 1844
Joseph Turner to William Miller, Feb. 7, 1845
I. E. Jones to William Miller, Feb. 15, 1845
E. C. Clemons to William Miller, Feb. 17, 1845
I. H. Shipman to William S. Miller (son of William Miller), Feb. 28, 1845
William Miller to Joshua V. Himes, Nov. 15, 1845
William Miller to Bro. Stone, Dec. 17, 1845 (copy of this letter can be found in *Review and Herald*, Jul. 15, 1880).
Otis Nichol to William Miller, Apr. 20, 1846
O. R. L. Crosier to William Miller, Sep. 20, 1847

Photostatic copies of letters sent by William Miller, 1832 to 1846.

[There is considerable duplication in the form of one negative and one positive copy of quite a few letters. Many letters occupy multiple pages.]

Box 4 Fld 1 1832. 5 letters
Box 4 Fld 2 1833. 2 letters
Box 4 Fld 3 1834. 5 letters
Box 4 Fld 4 1835. 4 letters
Box 4 Fld 5 1836. 3 letters
Box 4 Fld 6 1837. 2 letters
Box 4 Fld 7 1838. 4 letters
Box 4 Fld 8 1839. 4 letters
Box 4 Fld 9 1840. 1 letter
Box 4 Fld 10 1841. 5 letters
Box 4 Fld 11 1843. 3 letters
Box 4 Fld 12 1844. 6 letters
Box 4 Fld 13 1845. 1 letter
Box 4 Fld 14 1846. 4 letters

Photostatic copies of letters received by William Miller, 1831 to 1849.

[There is considerable duplication in the form of one negative and one positive copy of quite a few letters. Many letters occupy multiple pages.]

Box 4 Fld 15 1831. 3 letters
Box 4 Fld 16 1832. 1 letter
Box 4 Fld 17 1833. 3 letters
Box 4 Fld 18 1834. 2 letters
Box 4 Fld 19 1835. 6 letters
Box 4 Fld 20 1838. 1 letter
Box 4 Fld 21 1839. 6 letters
Box 4 Fld 22 1840. 5 letters
Box 4 Fld 23 1841. 1 letter
Box 4 Fld 24 1842. 6 letters
Box 4 Fld 25 1843. 7 letters
Box 4 Fld 26 1844. 19 letters
Box 4 Fld 27 1845. 14 letters
Box 4 Fld 28 1846. 3 letters
Box 4 Fld 29 1847. 1 letter
Box 4 Fld 30 1849. 3 letters

Note: For a full collection of the correspondence of William Miller see the microfilm collection: *The Millerites and Early Adventists* (Heritage Microfilm 2, Section 5, reels 11, 12). This contains about 800 items. The Index to the microfilm collection is at: BX 6115 .M54.

III. Writings

By Miller

Box 4 Fld 31 Several manuscripts and notes. Six different documents.

Box 1 Fld 13 *William Miller's Apology and Defence* (Boston: J. V. Himes, 1845).

Box 1 Fld 14 Miller's Manuscript Notes for Lecture on Revelation 6:17.

Miller's Manuscript Notes for Lecture on Daniel 10:14.
A facsimile of the original 1843 chart is included.
"Lines" - a short poem written after the death of Eliza (Martin), wife of Elder Martin.

By Others

Box 1 Fld 15 Newspaper clippings, 1930-1975. (Articles about Miller and Millerite movement).

Box 1 Fld 16 A brief summary of William Miller's life adapted from the *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*.

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

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

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

Box 1 Fld 17 Larrabee, Harold A. "The Trumpeter of Doomsday," *American Heritage*, April, 1964, (35-37, 95-100).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IV. Artifacts

Personal Articles of William Miller

Box 2 Fld 1 Eyeglasses (2 pairs)
Sun Glass (magnifying glass)
Pen holder
Pen of William Miller
Pocket watch

Box 2 Fld 2 Murray, Lindley. *Abridgment of Murray's English Grammar*. Albany: G. J. Loomis and Co., 1817.

Box 2 Fld 3 *Redemption*. Philadelphia: American Sunday-School

Union, 1836.

Box 2 Fld 4 *The Holy Bible* (Oxford: Samuel Collingwood and Co. At the University Press, 1838). [This is William Miller's preaching *Bible*. There are a lot of stains along the edge of the pages where one would hold a book by its leading edge while preaching. Most stains occur in the book of Daniel. To accumulate this much stain would require considerable use such as Miller would have done.] *The Bible* was later owned by William M. Peck. The Bible is housed at Vault BS 185 1838 .O91.

Other Articles (Owned by other people)

Box 2 Fld 5 *The Holy Bible*. The first pages are missing. The *Bible* bears the name of Charles Miller. Between the Old and New Testaments are several pages containing birth and death dates for Miller family members. Note: William does not appear so this may be a brother or cousin of William.

Box 2 Fld 6 *The New Testament* (Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1849). This is the New Testament translation done by N. N. Whiting, a Millerite.

Box 3 Fld 1a *The Holy Bible* (Hartford : William Andrus, 1841). Gold stamped on front cover: Mrs. Lucy Miller, Low Hampton N.Y. Presented by friends in Boston MS. (Mass.?)
The Bible is housed at: Vault BS 185 1841 .H27.

Box 3 Fld 1b *The Holy Bible* (Edinburgh: Sir D. Hunter Blair and M. T. Bruce, 1836). This *Bible* was given to Lucy P. Miller (wife of William Miller) by Joshua V. Himes in 1845. Later Lucy Miller gave the *Bible* to their son George W. Miller.

V. Miscellaneous

Box 3 Fld 1 William Miller Genealogies (written by William Peck Humphrey).

Box 3 Fld 2 Advertisement poster: "Lectures on the Second Advent, at the North Christian Chapel, in New Bedford, by William Miller." (Mar. 20, 18-).

- Box 3 Fld 3 Amanda M. Bosworth's Personal Album, Low Hampton, NY. (Miller and other family member plus other Millerites have written autographs in this album).
- Box 3 Fld 4 Song: "Death in Hope of Heaven." This song was sung at Miller's bedside before his death.
- Box3 Fld 5 Sabbath Service bulletin, William Miller Chapel, Low Hampton, NY, Sept. 4, 1982.
- Box 3 Fld 6 Announcements by "Adventist Historical Properties" regarding the purchase of William Miller property in Low Hampton, NY. Two letters and a picture of William Miller's home included. (Jun. 19, 1984; Jul. 1, 1984).

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