

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 1 [rev. ed. 2012]
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Anniversaries are dates to remember. Woe to the husband who forgets a wedding anniversary! Shame on that brother who forgets his sister's birthday! Yes, anniversaries of holidays, birthdays, engagements, and weddings are dates packed with memories, and by remembering them and celebrating them, we renew our commitment to the ones who make those dates special to us.

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 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. Furthermore, God specifically told His people to remember this anniversary miracle and to celebrate it frequently with their children. That high heap of stones testified to a very special relationship and a watershed experience between the Israelites and their God.

Yes, anniversaries are the way markers of time, the "high heaps" of piled memories in our experience. Today I am pleased to be here with you to celebrate two anniversaries we share in common. Thirty-eight years ago in August of 1975 a rather shy young man came among you, moved in at 629 Webb Street, worshipped with you in the church on Franklin Street, and began teaching your children and grandchildren at 3600 County Farm Road. You opened your hearts and your homes to him; you entrusted your children to his care; and you involved him in Sabbath school, church, and school activities. Overtime he became to all of you a friend; to some of you

an elder brother; and to a few here this morning, an adopted son. I would not trade those three wonderful years in Jackson for anything else in all the world!

But far more important than the anniversary I share with you is the 164-year anniversary that God calls you to remember this morning as a special waymark in His leading of the Jackson Church. This year, my friends, we celebrate the 164th birthday of the Jackson SDA Church—the oldest Sabbath-keeping Adventist congregation in the world! On July 27, 1849, retired sea captain Joseph Bates, following a dream God had given him, came to Jackson and there established the very first band of Sabbath-keeping Adventists west of the Appalachian Mountains.

Imagine, if you will, a rugged frontier setting: rolling hills covered with virgin forest, numerous swamps dotting the landscape, where bears and wolverines, deer and pheasants roam freely. The soil is dark and fertile, but so are the mosquitoes, and fever (known as “the ague”) haunts the inhabitants. We see few houses, no roads to speak of, and the incoming white man mingles freely with the native Pottawatomie Indians. This describes the Michigan frontier on the eve of statehood in 1837.

By 1849 a few rough corduroy roads spanned the swamps. Made of split logs placed flat side to the earth, they provided bone-rattling transportation for travelers in wagons, carts, and stagecoaches. The twelve-year-old state now had 400,000 people, and in the town of Jackson—named after ex-U.S. President Andrew Jackson and the terminus of the Michigan Central Railroad by 1843—lived 2,363 precious souls. Among these dwelt twenty former Millerite Adventists who met every Sunday to discuss why Christ had not come on October 22, 1844, and to pray for new light.

God answered their prayers in a miraculous way. As retired sea captain Joseph Bates, former Millerite and after 1845 a firm Sabbath-keeping Adventist, held preaching services in South Bend, Indiana, in the summer of 1849, God gave him an impressive dream one night. In this dream, Bates seemed to be going northeast by stagecoach to a town whose name he did not know. But when he awoke he felt strongly impressed to go there at once. Catching the next stage, Bates paid the fare only as far as the next town. Upon arrival, he dismounted, walked up and down several streets, but failing to recognize any as those he had seen in his dream, he paid the fare to the next town. Undoubtedly passersby as well as the coach driver thought him a bit mad, but so long as he paid his fare, on he rode. On July 27 the stagecoach reached Jackson, and Bates recognized at once the town he had seen in his dream. Collecting his luggage, he found a boarding house and asked, “Are there any Adventists living in this town?” The proprietor told him that twenty former Millerite Adventists met each Sunday at the home of blacksmith Dan Palmer.

Checking his bags, Bates strode off down East Main Street and stopped near Van Dorn at Joshua and Dan Palmer’s blacksmith and carriage shop, a thriving business since 1836. Introducing himself, he hung up his prophetic chart on a convenient nail, and while Dan Palmer continued to hammer away at his anvil, Bates began hammering gospel truth into him. He covered the second coming of Christ (already a familiar doctrine to Palmer) and then launched into a discourse on the sanctuary truth—the very key to the Disappointment of 1844. At the close of the study on the Sabbath, Palmer dropped his hammer, extended a grimy hand, and said, “Brother—what did you say your name was? Bates, *you have the truth!*” He invited the preacher to board at his home, and together they walked to 1705 East Michigan Avenue to meet the lovely 26-year-old Abigail Palmer, her three-year-old daughter Adelaide, and enjoy supper.

During the next week, Palmer took Bates all over Jackson County to visit each one of the twenty Advent believers. The following rainy Sunday, as usual, they all gathered in the Palmer parlor, but this time to hear Joseph Bates present new light on the Sabbath, Sanctuary, and the Third Angel's Message. Those listening included Dan and Abigail Palmer, Mr. & Mrs. J. C. Bowles, Mr. & Mrs. C. P. Russell, Mr. & Mrs. Preston Dickinson, and old "Father Whitmore." As farmer Cyrenius Smith couldn't make it into town that day because of the rain and muddy roads, Palmer took Bates to see him on Monday. He accepted the truth and became the first deacon of the Sabbath-keeping band. Bates left by train to go east Monday afternoon, but the Advent band studied, discussed, and prayed about what they had heard all that week, and by the next Saturday (August 4), fifteen persons met at the Palmer home (with J. C. Bowles leading out) to keep their first Sabbath. Three weeks later, all twenty Adventists were observing the seventh-day Sabbath. God had sent a man with a dream to raise up the first Sabbath-keeping band of Adventists in the Midwest—and it all happened right here in Jackson 164 years ago!

You will notice that I said "Sabbath-keeping Adventists," not Seventh-day Adventists. We did not take that name until 1860; not until 1861 did the Michigan Conference organize; and not until 1863 was the General Conference formed. In fact, before the 1860s, few believers even had church buildings in which to worship, so they met in homes. Early Sabbath services in Jackson did not include preaching, for no pastors hovered over any one church; only when Adventist evangelists traveled through did believers hear sermons. So what did they do on Sabbath? They sang hymns (with no piano or organ accompaniment), read Scripture together, prayed conversational prayers as Bates had taught them, read aloud the entire *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* and discussed its articles, and held "social meetings" (later called testimony meetings). They collected no offerings, for anyone desiring to give a monetary gift sent it

straight to the Review and Herald headquarters in Rochester, New York (before 1855) or Battle Creek, Michigan (after 1855). Following the service, at Sabbath dinners in the 1850s, some Adventists ate pork and a few enjoyed an after-dinner pipe. Ellen White's 1863 health reform vision at Otsego had not yet occurred. In fact, as the church became better organized between 1860 and 1863, some proposed erecting meeting houses while others, accustomed to informal home meetings, feared that Adventists might become like other formal churches, a real "Babylon."

Joseph Bates did not erect a church building in Jackson, but he did light a torch for truth that spread like wildfire. Little did he dream how strong and significant a church Jackson would become. In an August 1849 letter to James White, J. C. Bowles wrote from Jackson: "The little band here have received the truth on the Sabbath, without exception...And we thank the Lord for ever inclining Bro. Bates' mind to come to Jackson. O, sound the alarm, and let the message fly!" He sent ten dollars to spread the message, and urged James White to "give our love to Sister White, and Bro. Bates. Tell him we are all strong in the Lord, rejoicing in the truth." Jackson farmer Cyrenius Smith, who sent fifty dollars to the *Review* in December 1850, wrote to "praise the Lord for what he has done for us, in this part of his vineyard. All that the Lord has placed in my hands is on the altar."

The early Advent band in Jackson blazed trails for the Lord. During the summer of 1850 evangelist Samuel Rhodes and Jackson lay preacher J. C. Bowles rode and hiked all over Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin spreading the Third Angel's Message. At North Plains, Michigan, they converted Herman S. Case, who exclaimed, "This truth ravishes my soul...Glory to God!...I feel the truth in my soul, like fire shut up in my bones." Case had been a Millerite Adventist preacher in 1844, but since the October Disappointment, he had "fallen into

the ‘ditch,’” as he put it. But now he resolved to “go into the field once more” and preach. He began traveling with Rhodes, an experience that greatly strengthened him in present truth and for a while, at least, made him a powerful evangelist. He converted Leander Kellogg of Saline, Michigan, who immediately began subscribing to the *Review* because, as he wrote in August 1851, “it brings to us the truth as it is in Jesus.”

The Jackson believers quickly gained a unique reputation among Adventist leaders. Case said that he had “never seen so complete and holy [a] resignation to the will of God” as existed among them. “They are all united, and their interests are one,” he wrote. When he baptized five new members in August 1850, he told James White that it had been “one of the best meetings with the Saints in Jackson” he had ever experienced. After Joseph Bates and Samuel Rhodes visited them again in 1851, Rhodes gave James White a glowing account of the Jackson church.

Bates especially loved his friends in Jackson, and from 1849 to 1863 he visited here at least a dozen times, despite a hectic schedule which took him all over New England, New York, and the Midwest. During his third visit in 1852, Dan Palmer introduced him to a fiery young Advent Christian preacher named Merritt E. Cornell. When Cornell and his wife Angeline pulled up in front of the Palmer home, Merritt didn’t even hitch the horses to the post. He told his wife it would take him only a few minutes to prove Bates wrong on this Sabbath question. So sweet Angeline stayed in the buggy, but after an hour had passed, she timidly knocked at the door. Abigail Palmer invited her to join the study group, and after another hour’s study that day and four more hours the next, both Cornells accepted the Sabbath truth. Merritt paid a price for this decision: he lost his pastorate in the Advent Christian church. But with God’s blessing, he became in time an energetic SDA preacher to Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and finally California.

No sooner did Angeline accept the Sabbath, however, than like a good daughter she thought of telling her father Henry Lyon about it. Perhaps Merritt wasn't so sure he could face his father-in-law alone, so Angie agreed to go with him. As they buggied along, Merritt saw farmer John Preston Kellogg out raking hay, so impetuously he jumped the fence and preached the Sabbath to old J. P. Within two weeks, both Kellogg and Lyon had heard Bates preach and had accepted the Sabbath. Of course, Father Kellogg had *sixteen children*, so with the conversion of that family, the church really grew! (You all know, of course, about his famous sons John Harvey, director of Battle Creek Sanitarium, and Will Keith, the cereal king.)

Old J.P. became a pillar in the Jackson Church during the early 1850s, as well as lay leader of a group of twenty who met for three weekly prayer meetings at Hartland, Michigan. In 1853 he described his conversion experience in the *Review* as "light burst[ing] into my mind." Like Cyrenius Smith, Kellogg declared, "I feel that all I have is on the altar." His son Merritt Kellogg, who in 1855 became the first Sabbath school superintendent at Battle Creek and then the first Sabbath-keeping Adventist in California in 1859, wrote to James White, "I do indeed...rejoice in the present truth...I am endeavoring to purify myself and [am] striving to overcome."

Despite this glowing picture of spiritual zeal in the Jackson church, however, Ellen White had a vision in June 1852 concerning certain problems there. After describing the state of things in Michigan as "dark" due to a lack of gospel workers, she mentions two Jackson members who were using others' money to do a work God had not commissioned them to do. Finally she counsels all the members to cease their criticism of one another, their malicious gossip, their focus on petty differences. She closes with this appeal: "Dear brethren and sisters, keep humble and follow the Bible rule for your lives. United you can stand, but divided you will fall," she

warns. Press together, and let the angels work with you. Let God show you your own faults and not your brother's faults. Let self die," she pleads, and be at peace among yourselves. Then she closes by saying "James sends much love to all the church, and so do I." Doesn't that just warm your heart? Ellen White sent her love to the Jackson Church! Despite testimonies of reproof, she and James still loved Jackson.

Happily, the majority of believers heeded her counsel. When Bates announced a four-day conference for June 1852, he admitted that the church had been "wading through manifold trials and buffetings of the Enemy," but after the meetings, "love and unity" prevailed, he said. Bates baptized five new members and celebrated the ordinances at Jackson, an event so rare in those days that one family travelled 100 miles to participate. When Bates returned for another conference in August, one member stated that the "many broken-hearted confessions rendered the fore part of the meeting a truly weeping time." Bates baptized six more souls and again celebrated the ordinances with 45 members. "It seemed to me," he wrote, "that I never before had such a glorious time...Praise the Lord"!

Even lay preacher H. S. Case felt inspired to go to Tyrone, where he gave seven lectures and celebrated the ordinances, having as he put it, "a heavenly, melting, confessing time." Soon he had more calls to preach than he could fill. Apparently some opposition developed in the community, for he wrote, "I can suffer reproach for the truth's sake." Time would test that statement.

Hearing about the wonderful spiritual turnaround in the Jackson church, James and Ellen White resolved to visit the area in 1853. This was the very first time either of them had been west of Buffalo, New York! Ellen did not particularly enjoy Michigan's bone-rattling "corduroy roads" and "mud sloughs" as they traveled to Tyrone, Jackson, Battle Creek, and nearby places.

But at a June conference in Jackson, James rejoiced that Brother Case's face "is still set towards Mount Zion" and that "the cause of truth...is advancing gloriously." James especially appreciated the liberal stewardship of the church here.

Jackson Adventists demonstrated their astounding generosity at this conference by voting to finance John Loughborough and Merritt Cornell as evangelists to cover all of Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin for a period of several months. Elder White expressed both shock and pleasure when he wrote in the *Review* that this one church raised the money "at once" to pay for these workers' transportation, food, and all other future expenses. He had never seen anything like it before—one church supporting the entire mission outreach to three states! Loughborough and Cornell travelled west to Lake Michigan by horse and buggy, caught a boat to Chicago (where they found the "Windy City" under a foot of mud!), and then set out over Illinois, stopping only long enough the first day to pick enough wild strawberries to last them for three days.

One unique feature which testifies, I think, to the prosperity, growth, and zeal of this local church is that from 1853 to 1859, Jackson was the only local congregation in Adventism to have *two Review agents* (or sales representatives). Even Battle Creek had only one agent long after it had become the General Conference headquarters. Brother A. A. Dodge and William Smith, son of Cyrenius Smith, were *Review agents* here. Things really seemed to be looking up in Jackson!

But unfortunately, the Jackson church in 1853 also became the center of the very first offshoot group of Adventist dissenters in the early movement. The whole affair centered on one woman's temper, two men's unforgiving spirit, and a single misunderstood word. Join me next time as we share in Part 2 some further "waymarks" in the exciting growth and development of the Jackson SDA Church!

Advent Waymarks in Jackson
Part 2 [rev. ed. 2012]

One day thirty-year-old Abigail Palmer began to hang out the laundry (and remember, in those days it required hours of knuckle-busting scrub board work to get the collars clean!). Between the Palmer home on East Michigan Avenue and the adjacent two-story building there stretched a vacant lot which the neighborhood women used to dry their laundry and their kids probably used for ball games. Well trampled, therefore, it could be muddy after a rain. It just so happened that one lady in an upstairs apartment next door to this lot hated Adventists and used every opportunity to annoy them. Previously she had called Abigail Palmer a “Jew.” So relationships between the Palmers and this woman were probably strained at best.

At any rate, shortly after hanging out the wash and returning to the house, Mrs. Palmer noticed her neighbor throwing pails of filthy dishwater out the window, trying to splash mud onto the Palmer sheets! Rushing outside, sweet Abigail lost her temper and yelled, “You old *witch!* Your heart is so cold, butter will not melt on your tongue!”

Unfortunately, Mrs. Palmer had a visitor at the time, the seventeen-year-old daughter of local preacher Hiram Case. This teenaged girl *thought* she had heard Mrs. Palmer use another word beginning with “B.” Rushing from the house, Miss Case ran home to tell her father. Soon Brother Case and his associate C. P. Russell arrived to counsel Abigail and urge her to confess her use of the vile epithet. She denied ever using the word. “Are you calling my daughter a liar?” Case retorted. During the ensuing days and weeks, Case and Russell gossiped the dreadful news of Mrs. Palmer’s indiscretion and impenitence all throughout the Jackson church, insisting

she be disciplined. Finally, a special church meeting convened at the Cyrenius Smith home to settle the matter.

To this meeting came James and Ellen White. The Whites knew already about certain problems Case had caused the local church over the years. But on this occasion, they detected a very determined effort by both men to censure Mrs. Palmer. During prayers at this June 3 meeting, Ellen received a vision dealing with Abigail's case. When the vision ended, she related it to the gathered believers. She had been shown that Mrs. Palmer was "proud and exalted"; that she had shown "scorn and derision" for her neighbor; and that she had wished to retaliate for the woman's dirty deed. All the time Ellen was speaking, Case and Russell kept interrupting with "Amen! Amen! I thought so!" and kept urging Abigail to confess. Still, she denied using the awful word. Finally, after Case and Russell had worn themselves out rebuking her and commending the twenty-six-year-old Ellen White for the genuineness of her gift from God, the meeting broke up. Ellen said that an angel had told her in vision that Mrs. Palmer had spoken *wrong* words, but not *vile* words. Therefore, as she left, she urged Abigail to bridle her temper and be kinder to non-Adventists.

During sundown worship that evening at the Cyrenius Smith home, Mrs. White received a second vision. She told the group, "The other side of the case is clear to me now, I will relate it tomorrow." So on Sabbath (June 4) believers once again assembled in the Palmer parlor, and Ellen told them that God had revealed to her that Mrs. Palmer had *not* used the vile word as Case charged. She also rebuked Case and Russell for being too censorious and harsh, and called upon them to forsake their unkind manner. At this point Abigail began weeping, confessed in tears her use of the word "witch," and begged all for forgiveness. Case and Russell, however, denied the validity of the second vision and left in a huff.

Within days these two men began attacking Ellen's visions, challenging the integrity of James White in handling *Review* funds, and formed a splinter group called the "Messenger Party" right here in Jackson. They spread lies and made defamatory attacks on church leaders in their new paper, *The Messenger of Truth*. They succeeded in spreading so much confusion in this area that they split the Jackson Church and halted evangelistic meetings. When in print they began accusing James White of profiteering in the sale of Bibles (he had actually gone in the hole \$1.50), calling him a charlatan and his wife Ellen a false prophet, and declared that the two horns of Revelation 13 represented France and England, James wrote in the *Review*: "We may expect from them the most gross misrepresentations, and shameful abuse." Yet he saw a blessing in disguise as well: At least the church could now be free of these apostates!

It appears that at least for a short while, Case heeded Mrs. White's warning to reform his conduct, for in an August 1853 letter to the *Review*, he admitted: "I am convinced that I have erred through wrong views." He confessed that he had been careless and wasteful with money given him for the Lord's work and had gossiped about other believers' faults. "All other faults which I have been in, I do deeply regret, and humbly ask the forgiveness of all my brethren and sisters," he added. Sadly, this confession was not followed by genuine reformation, so on February 17, 1854, a panel of eight men disfellowshipped Brother Case "with sorrow of heart and with deep feelings of regret." By December several other "disorderly spirits" had to be expelled before harmony returned to the Jackson Church.

Satan always stirs the cauldron of dissent once we set it to boiling, doesn't he? To make a longer story short, Case and Russell by 1855 had teamed up with two Wisconsin Adventist preachers, J. M. Stephenson and D. P. Hall, and began teaching "Age-to-Come" (dispensationalist) doctrines. But when they began preaching that the Ten Commandments

ended at the Cross, Adventists stopped listening to them. By 1857 the group's internal problems split it wide open and its eighteen members scattered. According to J. N. Loughborough's account, Stephenson returned to the Advent Christians, divorced his wife, remarried, and ended his life in the poorhouse a complete imbecile. Hall left preaching to sell real estate, went bankrupt, and finally became insane, suffering under the delusion that he would be flattened to the earth if he ever stepped outdoors. Case was run out of town and went fishing on the Great Lakes. Russell began school teaching, lost his temper at a student and pulled a revolver on him which failed to fire, and then he fled town to escape being lynched. By 1858 the Messenger Party no longer existed.

What lessons can we learn today from this sad tale? First, God never has a genuine truth but what Satan conjures up a counterfeit. Second, unless you and I have a daily walk with Christ, we too could be led astray by the enemy and become instruments in his hands to cause untold grief, shame and harm to God's cause. How is it with the state of your soul this morning? How close is your walk with the Lord?

The wounds caused by the Messenger Party required much time to heal, as you might imagine. But in October 1853 one Jackson member wrote that amidst "trial and afflictions, the church in Jackson...are in union with one another." Father J. P. Kellogg reported that the church appreciated Bates' Christmas sermon on the Sanctuary truth. "Our little church in Jackson," Whitmore wrote in February 1854, "is in a more healthy state; and we begin to breathe a free air."

One of the signs that Jackson believers were now "in a more healthy state" by the spring of 1854 was that they pulled together to build their very first meeting house in the midst of a great building "boom" in town. Joseph Bates, writing to the Review office from Ohio in April,

stated that “The Conference [meeting] at Jackson Mar. 31st, Apr. 1st and 2nd, was held in the new meetinghouse which the brethren are finishing for their better accommodation.” Bates saw this important step as a sign that Jackson believers were “laboring to sustain Gospel Order.”

Already, he said, “harmony and union among themselves and increasing confidence in God” have been the fruits of their efforts. This reference to the believers in Jackson building a meeting house in the spring of 1854 clearly establishes the fact that it was believers in Jackson, *not* Battle Creek, Michigan, or Bucks Bridge, New York, who erected the very first Sabbatarian Adventist church in North America. Consequently, members in Jackson today have the right to proclaim that they are part of the oldest continuously worshipping Sabbath-keeping Adventist congregation in the world! No other congregation can lay claim to being more than 164 years old!

By May of 1854, the Jackson Church appeared eager to do something else positive for the cause to erase the stigma of apostasy from their record. When Loughborough’s schoolhouse meetings in Locke overflowed the facilities, and James White timidly suggested acquiring a tent within a year or so, Jackson member Merritt Cornell exclaimed, “Why not have a tent at once?” (Have you noticed how Jackson believers liked to do everything “at once”?) James, surprised, stated that a tent would probably cost around \$200, hinting that “we don’t have that kind of money.” But when he put the idea to C. S. Glover, the latter handed him \$35, saying, “There is what I think of it. I will venture that much on it, sink or swim.” When Dan Palmer, Cyrenius Smith, and J. P. Kellogg heard of the idea, they “at once” raised the balance of \$165. The very next day, Cornell took the train for Rochester, New York, and brought a tent 60 feet in diameter back to Battle Creek. Within the next two weeks, Loughborough and Cornell conducted the first evangelistic meetings under canvass ever held by Sabbath-keeping Adventists. Over 600 people crowded in to hear them preach. By the spring of 1855, a second tent was required, and again,

Jackson generosity paid for it. The entire evangelistic tent work in the state of Michigan was being funded by this one church! No wonder in April 1855 James White called Jackson “a deep-rooted church” and applauded its generosity.

But Ellen White had been shown in vision on June 2, 1853, that some Jackson members had deep-rooted problems. Many were too carelessly generous with funds, giving them to whoever claimed to be doing gospel work and requiring no accounting for their use. They handed out money “too freely, too much, and too often.” One recipient bragged to his friends that “there is...more [money] in [Jackson] than can be used before the Lord comes.” That’s quite a boast, isn’t it? Believers here in the 1850s enjoyed a reputation as “extremely warm-hearted, generous Christians.”

Just consider their giving receipted in the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* from 1851 to 1857. During those seven years, the Jackson Church (roughly 20-30 members) gave almost \$400 to the cause—a sum well in excess of \$10,000 in today’s buying power. And who do you suppose gave 63% of that amount? None other than blacksmith Dan Palmer! I can assure you that blacksmithing was a very lucrative business in nineteenth-century America! In fact, Dan Palmer routinely gave every traveling Adventist preacher who came to Jackson a five dollar gold piece (equal to over \$125 today). Yet he never spoke about giving at all. When a need arose for funds, he would say, “I must have an *investment* in that.” He was investing his funds in the Bank of Heaven! How about you?

In 1857, while he served on the seven-man committee overseeing all the evangelistic work in Michigan, Palmer helped raise \$2000 in six months to help pay the workers. In August 1859 Dan wrote to *Review* editor Uriah Smith: “I think that those who travel with the tents should have books paid for by donations from brethren that have a surplus of this world’s

goods...I propose to give \$50 for missionary purposes.” Palmer also invested \$400 in a fund at the Review office to be used for miscellaneous expenses of the cause.

Besides giving to the cause in general, the Palmers generously gave to individuals. Sister Hammond of Eaton Rapids thanked Palmer for paying her *Review* subscription for two years. Dan and Abigail gave \$10 to help preacher Moses Hull in Iowa buy a house in 1860, and sent another \$10 to help subsidize 3000 copies of a tract printed by Elder B. F. Snook in Iowa in 1861. Abigail kept a little book showing weekly collections for the poor, orphans and widows here in Jackson. The Whites loved to visit in their home. I’m sure the latchstring at 1705 East Michigan Avenue remained open to many Adventist friends.

In fact, in May of 1854, while the Whites rested at the Palmer home, they laid plans for their first trip to Wisconsin to strengthen the cause there. When the time came to leave for the railroad station on May 23, James felt uneasy about going. “I feel strangely in regard to starting on this trip,” he said to Ellen and the Palmers. “If I had not an appointment, I should not go tonight.” Dan and Abigail and John Loughborough joined the Whites in fervent prayer for their protection. About 8 p.m. Loughborough drove them to the station. Around 10 p.m. they boarded a forward car with high-backed plush seats which reclined somewhat for sleeping. But Ellen remarked, “I can’t stay in this car, I must get out of here.” So James White and Loughborough moved all their baggage to the next car behind. Still, Ellen kept her bonnet on and her carpetbag in her lap as if waiting for something to happen.

Three miles west of Jackson at the second railroad crossing (a half mile east of M-60)), that “something” occurred. The locomotive (which had no cowcatcher in those days) hit an ox resting on the tracks, which threw the engine and one car off the tracks. The second-class car was crushed, with pieces of wreckage and groaning bodies strewn all over the area. The next

car, which the Whites had first boarded, lay broken, with one end raised above the wreckage. Four people died, including the engineer and the fireman, crushed by the falling locomotive. The car in which the Whites reposed stopped, mysteriously uncoupled, one hundred feet farther back on the tracks. Railroad officials told the Jackson *Patriot* the next day that they had no idea how this car had come uncoupled. But Ellen knew. She wrote later, “We could but feel that God had sent an angel to preserve our lives” by uncoupling the car.

Since railroad officials expected another train heading east from Battle Creek in minutes, men used pieces of the wreckage to build a huge warning bonfire ahead on the tracks. Meanwhile, James lifted his petite wife Ellen, now six months pregnant with Willie, and carried her from the car, over a fence, across swampy land and a field to a road that led to a house half a mile distant (possibly the W. Lavery home on an 1858 map). While she recuperated, James and a messenger drove a wagon back to Jackson to find physicians and another wagon for baggage. By the time he returned to his wife with the borrowed wagon and brought her back to the Cyrenius Smith home it was 2 a.m. Nonetheless, they caught the next day’s train for Wisconsin, rejoicing in God’s deliverance.

Shortly after this remarkable experience, James White and other leaders decided in 1855 that since the American people were now moving westward to Michigan, it would be best to move the Review and Herald press to Battle Creek. The entire expense of moving from Rochester, New York, and the cost of buying a lot and erecting a suitable frame building on it came to \$1200—and four Jackson area men paid it all. Both J. P. Kellogg and Henry Lyon sold their farms to raise their shares of \$300 each. Blacksmith Dan Palmer “invested” his \$300 in the project while farmer Cyrenius Smith made up the other \$300. By April the wooden building on

West Main and Washington Streets buzzed with printing activity. Director James White received the princely salary of \$4.09 a week!

The press, of course, printed the good old *Advent Review*, but at this time, it came out semi-monthly. Both Leander Kellogg and J. Whitmore of Jackson—who felt the paper constituted “food indeed to the hungry soul”—were the first Adventists to suggest publishing a weekly paper. Soon after Dan Palmer joined Henry Lyon and Cyrenius Smith on the Finance Committee, this hope became a reality. By 1859 members installed a new steam press at the Review plant at a cost of \$2500—and Dan Palmer gave the first \$100 toward its cost!

From 1855 to 1862 the Advent cause grew steadily in Michigan. Joseph Bates in May 1857 baptized three new members here. In 1859 Jackson members pleaded in the *Review* for some minister to come administer the Lord’s Supper, which they had not celebrated in over three years. One member suggested having Communion monthly or at least quarterly.

Many of Michigan’s scattered saints did not see an Adventist minister for years on end in the 1850s and early ’60s. Samira Nichols of Onondaga kept the Sabbath every week with her two daughters and a neighbor lady by reading aloud from the *Review*. In fact she loaned each copy of the church paper to twenty different individuals! It had already been three years since she had heard any Adventist preaching. “O how cheering it would be to meet in the prayer-meeting with you,” she declared. Despite her loneliness, she assured believers everywhere that “I am still pressing my way onward...and growing stronger daily in all the present truth.” In 1859 Joseph Bates and William Hutchins made a special trip to Onondaga to hold a two-week series of meetings; as a result, a dozen converts (including two school teachers) decided to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. Further services at Tompkins and Blackman brought in more souls.

Another stellar example of faithfulness amidst isolation is Sister Holford of Napoleon, who wrote in 1861: “Many years it has been my lot to suffer affliction deep and sore, but amidst it all the Lord has been my dearest friend.” All alone with a son desiring baptism, she yearned for Adventist companionship. “But if I am never to see a Sabbath-keeper again in this life,” she resolved, “I will try to live so that I can enter through the gates into the [heavenly] city.” Do you, my friends, have the kind of faith that hangs on despite trials and loneliness?

On one of her trips to Jackson by train, Ellen White planned the layout for her book *The Great Controversy*. When she arrived in the city, she began writing out the manuscript in the Palmer home. But Satan actually tried to kill her to prevent her from ever writing that book. As Ellen chatted with Abigail, her tongue suddenly swelled and became numb. An icy chill stabbed at her chest, passed over her head and down her right side, paralyzing her. As the Palmers and her husband prayed for her recovery, her left side also grew numb, her arms and legs went limp and useless. Only fifty miles from home, she never expected to see her sons again. For weeks thereafter, she could not feel any pressure on her arms nor the coldest water poured over her head. When she tried to walk she staggered and fell to the floor.

In this painful condition, Ellen White began writing *Great Controversy*. She could write only one page a day, then had to rest three days to recover. Gradually the numbness left her. Three months later in another vision, God showed her that the sudden attack of paralysis at Jackson had been Satan’s attempt on her life. When heavenly angels intervened, Satan had fled. Now God promised her even better health than she had enjoyed before the attack. Her diary testifies that she did receive robust health. On March 30, 1859 she set out several current bushes, a raspberry bush, and several strawberry plants. The next day she took a fifty-mile all-day wagon jaunt from Battle Creek to Jackson. “[I] enjoyed the day,” she wrote in her diary.

Others frequently found their way to Jackson also, for even though our church headquarters was at Battle Creek, many important people and conferences convened in Jackson. Joseph Bates, seriously ill in the fall of 1859, stayed with friends in Jackson for a month to recuperate. “I feel much indebted to our dear friends in Jackson,” he wrote, “for their kind and unremitting attention to me in my sickness, and also [for their providing for] my temporal wants.” In bitterly cold January weather in 1860, John and Mary Loughborough came to Jackson for revival meetings at the Palmer home. About 30 or 40 people crammed in to hear John preach. During 1861 Bates used Jackson as his home base as he tramped to Tompkins, Bridgewater, and nearby villages to preach. Later that year Bates was chosen the first “chairman” (or president) of the Michigan Conference. (Two other Michigan presidents—H. S. Gurney in 1869-70 and I. D. Van Horn in 1889-91—also had Jackson roots)

In 1860 the members in Jackson adopted the new denomination name of Seventh-day Adventists. On November 4, 1861, this church officially organized under that new name with blacksmiths Heman Gurney as head elder and Dan Palmer as church clerk. Then in October 1862 delegates from Jackson met with delegates from sixteen other churches to form the new Michigan Conference of SDAs. A year later in May 1863 when the General Conference was organized, Jackson blacksmith Dan Palmer was one of five men appointed to the evangelistic finance committee. As the United States of America was split by a violent and bloody Civil War during the 1860s, the Jackson SDA Church grew more united and zealous to do God’s work in troublous times.

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan Part 3 [rev. ed. 2012]

In June 1863, Jackson's church clerk, Dan Palmer, sent a report to Battle Creek headquarters stating that this church had fourteen members (many others had moved or died since 1850); that it enjoyed a regular Sabbath school and Bible class program; and that Systematic Benevolence offerings totaled \$127 for the year. "We are all united and striving to overcome in accordance with the third angel's message," he declared.

Although the locus of power and administration shifted to Battle Creek after 1863, Jackson remained a major center for evangelistic meetings, conferences, and camp meetings. In July 1863, Bates held a week-long series of "cheering and strengthening" meetings that closed with a celebration of the ordinances. In April 1864, Elder Isaac Van Horn held meetings in the area and reported: "The interest to hear is far greater than I expected." Blacksmith H. S. Gurney, who attended those meetings, exclaimed: "I still look forward with delight [to] the glorious inheritance of the saints...I love the assurance that the Lord is soon to come." Despite his trials and afflictions, Gurney could still proclaim that "the blessed hope lifts us from our anxious care, and we rejoice...My heart seems to leap with joy at the thought that we are almost home." In one letter he compared Adventists to a musical instrument vibrating harmoniously with God's power. When Bates returned in July of 1864 he rejoiced that "the youth and children [in Jackson] manifest increasing interest." When General Conference President John Byington preached here in October, he too noted the high level of interest shown by church members.

Although church membership fell to thirteen by May of 1864, Systematic Benevolence giving shot up to \$192 that year—an average of nearly \$15 per member. While that may not seem like much to us today, I can assure you that with only four exceptions, every other Michigan church averaged between \$2 and \$4 per member each year. Therefore, Jackson

members were outgiving every other churches in the conference by a ratio of four to one! It probably helped to have two blacksmiths in the congregation!

In January of 1866, only months after the Civil War ended, Elder R. J. Lawrence held “a good and interesting meeting” here. Three months later Bates returned to baptize another new convert. But the path of commitment, then as now, was no bed of roses for Jackson believers. Sister House wrote in May of 1866: “I am still striving against the world, the flesh, and the Devil; and I hope to overcome them all through the grace of God.” Despite her trials, “The way looks bright,” she wrote, “for I do not look down, but up, where it is always light.” Are you facing trials today? Have you tried the upward look?

Church workers just loved coming to Jackson in the 1860s! In August 1866 Elder John Byington held a meeting here; a month later Bates preached here also despite a terrible cold in his throat and lungs that drove him to bed. Elder John Waggoner completed Bates’ meeting schedule and focused on the new health reform message that Ellen White had received in vision in 1863. While Jackson members expressed interest in this health message, some had misgivings about its importance if Christ were coming so soon. However, during 1867 Byington reported that most of the members had adopted the dress and health reform guidelines. When Bates returned to Jackson later that fall, he held some “encouraging and interesting” meetings with members here.

Although Jackson members had built a new church in 1854, some meetings convened at Dan and Abigail Palmer’s new home on the corner of Chicago and Oak Streets. Elder Van Horn described one such gathering as a time when “we tasted some of the rich blessings of Heaven.” Many wept and openly confessed sins and faults to one another. Van Horn urged believers “to press on and obtain the victory.” When Bates held a service here in the spring of 1869, he

discovered that some had driven horse teams from nine to twelve miles to attend. After preaching and celebrating the ordinances, Bates spent four days visiting members in their homes.

Letters from Jackson believers testify of the good work going on in this area. Mary Beach in June of 1868 wrote of her love for Adventist sermons, especially on health reform. At seventy, she said, “[I] can move with the alacrity of youth.” Gideon Dunham rejoiced: “How precious the Saviour is! How good the loving kindness and mercy of God! Oh! How much I feel like watching and praying!” Huldah Holford, despite pain in her eyes and head so severe that she nearly lost her sight, wrote to rejoice that she could still *hear* the *Review* being read to her. “I can say today that I know my Redeemer lives. Blessed be His name!” She signed herself: “Yours, in affliction, hoping to overcome through the blood of the Lamb.”

Local blacksmith Heman S. Gurney, who had been such a generous financial supporter of the Adventist work in Michigan as well as an active soul-winner for twenty years, was elected Michigan Conference president in 1869. His friend and fellow blacksmith Dan Palmer continued to give generously to the cause as well. In 1870, when the General Conference called for \$2000 to help missionary Michael B. Czeckowski in Europe, the Palmers gave \$100. That same year, Dan found himself elected to the Michigan Conference committee; now his witnessing efforts encompassed the entire state. In fact, Arthur W. Spalding, one of our denomination’s foremost historians (who wrote the four-volume *Origin and History of SDAs*), credited Dan and Abigail Palmer with bringing his parents into the church in 1877. At that time the Spaldings lived in Jackson, and little Arthur used to play in the parlor of the Palmer home and listen as Joseph Bates preached. Little did Jackson members realize, however, that when Bates spoke to them in January of 1870, it would be the last sermon they ever heard from their founder’s lips!

During the 1870s, regular monthly meetings at Jackson drew scattered believers from as far as Grass Lake, Leslie, Parma, Tompkins, and Eaton Rapids. These gatherings provided times of precious fellowship for the scattered flock. Frequently traveling ministers would come here to preach, baptize, and hold Communion services. The venues of such meetings rotated around, including the Palmers' parlor, the Barnes' schoolhouse, the Bunwell's home in Parma, or the Bramhalls' home in Springport. Joining in these sessions strengthened believers' faith and confidence in "present truth," inspiring zeal for witnessing to others. Elder Van Horn described his meeting at the old school building on the corner of Ganson and Lansing Avenues in January of 1872 as "a season of victory." Later that year Elder Waggoner described his fellowship with local believers as "the best meeting I ever attended in Jackson County." He had found "inquiring souls" here. Many of those souls were not Adventists, as Elder E. R. Jones discovered when he preached here in January of 1876. Following this series and another a year later, several local citizens began keeping the Sabbath. In the fall of 1876 Elder E. P. Daniels tried something brand new: house-to-house canvassing; when he followed this up with 24 lectures, seven local citizens joined the church.

As the number of Adventists in Michigan doubled in the 1870s from 1543 in 1871 to 3258 by 1878, conference officials decided to organize the state into thirteen districts with thirteen directors. Jackson fell into District #2 with local Elder E. P. Giles as director. It was, in fact, the *only* district to enjoy two ministers: Elder Jerome Fargo (who became Michigan Conference president in 1876) and Elder M. B. Miller. Women also played a prominent role in conference leadership in those days. Miss Jane Trembley became conference secretary in 1871; Miss Addie Merriam became conference treasurer from 1871 to 1876, followed by Miss Freddie House in 1875-76, Miss Alice Canfield in 1876-77, and Mrs. F. H. Sisley after 1877. Women

also received ministerial licenses to preach in the 1870s: Sister Roby Tuttle in 1875; Ellen Lane from 1875 to the 1880s; and Ellen White received both Michigan and General Conference ministerial credentials in the 1870s and 1880s.

In addition, many Jackson members served the Michigan Conference in leadership positions. Local elder E. P. Giles and Dan Palmer served on the auditing committee. Dan Palmer also served on the nominating committee and camp meeting committee after he retired from blacksmithing in 1868. Even in retirement he continued his pattern of generous giving to the cause. As one of seven men on the board of directors of the Western Health Reform Institute in 1872 (the forerunner of Battle Creek Sanitarium), he gave \$75 to the Hygienic Book Fund to spread health pamphlets and tracts. He and seventeen others gave \$100 apiece for a new power press at Pacific Press in Oakland, California, in 1874. He and Abigail pledged \$600 (more than one-third of the Jackson Church's pledge) for Battle Creek College in 1876. When members were urged in 1878 to send dimes to help build the new Dime Tabernacle, the Palmers joined the top "club"—the twelve dime givers—in regular support.

During the 1880s, quarterly meetings here continued to draw a good attendance. Believers gathered at Alva Ture's home in 1880 and in the Palmer's parlor in 1884. They rejoiced to hear the preaching of circuit preachers like Elders Elbert Lane, E. P. Daniels, George Wellman, Alpheus W. Bather, J. N. Brant, and H. W. Miller. It was during this decade that Mary Pickell, Naomi Schoun's grandmother, was baptized into the Jackson Church at Vander Cook Lake.

District quarterly meetings, of course, served not only to enhance fellowship and camaraderie among believers, but also to infuse each member with witnessing zeal. Jackson in the 1880s became the center for several evangelistic efforts and two very grand camp meetings.

In the spring of 1882, Elder Alpheus Bather (who lived at 323 Webster Street) conducted several evangelistic efforts here and found a spirit of “unity, devotion and zeal” prevailing among believers. When Elder Miller brought eight Battle Creek College students here in 1884 to canvass with the *Signs of the Times*, they found this city of 20,000 people “a very lively place.” When Elder G. I. Butler became Michigan Conference president in 1886, he really promoted the canvassing work in the state, appointing song writer Frank Belden as superintendent of conference colporteurs.

The canvassing efforts of these eight college students prepared the way for two of Michigan’s most successful public camp meetings in September of 1884 and 1885 right here in Jackson. Situated near the eastern terminus of the streetcar line for East Main Street, the campgrounds were also conveniently near the railroad station, where men with badges identifying them as “camp meeting agents” waited to help arriving Adventists with their luggage. Since the Smith Brothers of Jackson had donated the campgrounds free of charge, the *Review* urged members to patronize their streetcar line. Editor Uriah Smith called the grounds “the most favorable place in the State” for a large gathering, because so many railway lines converged on Jackson. In addition to evangelistic meetings, the Sabbath School Association, Tract and Missionary Society, and the Health and Temperance Association held meetings on the grounds. Everyone was urged to bring a tent, three pounds of fence nails, a saw, a hammer, an axe, a spade, a shovel, and a stake driver. You pitched your own tent and trenched it in those days!

The 1885 camp meeting, described by one participant as “a city of tents for the annual feast of tabernacles,” featured 175 family tents—a “wilderness of cotton canvass”—and a central pavilion 80’x120’ to accommodate the 1500 regular members attending. Also on the grounds were a bookstand, a Health and Temperance stand, a Battle Creek Sanitarium tent, a boarding

tent (for hygienic meals), and a Ladies' Reception tent (to greet out-of-town members). "At no camp-meeting we ever attended," declared Uriah Smith, "have we listened to more clear, convincing, and powerful sermons on present truth, than were some of those delivered at this meeting." On Sunday 10,000 towns folk—literally half the population of Jackson---crowded the grounds. On the streets of town, the Jackson *Citizen* reported, one heard people exclaim: "If you want to hear some good, sensible preaching, go up to the Adventist camp-meeting." Attendees heard stirring sermons by Elders Lamson, Olsen, Farnsworth, Van Horn, Canright, Butler, and John Harvey Kellogg. At one revival meeting, 175 people came forward for prayers. The children's Sabbath school, which packed a fifty foot tent, was "the largest ever convened" among Adventists.

This "great camp-meeting," as the *Citizen* called it, witnessed 40 baptisms, \$200 worth of books sold, and added 52 members to area Adventist churches in 1885. Believers established a mission for colporteur outreach here. Another result included the tremendous good will fostered with the citizens of Jackson. The newspaper reported every meeting, summarized the sermon topics, described the baptisms, and praised Adventists for their courtesy and perfect deportment. The *Advent Review* editor replied, thanking Jackson for "so kindly receiving us." Certainly the 1880s marked an era of good feelings between Jackson Adventists and local citizens. Let us hope those good feelings still exist today!

When Elders I. D. Van Horn and H. W. Miller held evangelistic meetings here in the summer of 1885, over 150 people filled their 50'x70' tent pitched at the corner of Blackstone and Morrell Streets. Shortly thereafter, the pastors baptized eight converts in the Grand River east of town. A later effort in August harvested fifteen more converts. "The Church has been strengthened," Van Horn wrote, "not only in numbers but spiritually, and our brethren are full of

hope and courage.” Soon Jackson members outgrew their 1854 meeting house and began worshipping at the Ancient Order of United Workmen (or Masonic Hall) on Main and Jackson Streets in 1887 with Elder Alpheus W. Bather as their spiritual leader.

During the 1880s, many Jackson Adventists served in important positions in the Michigan Conference. E. P. Giles served on the Auditing Committee. Elder Van Horn became Conference president in 1889-90. As before in the 1870s, women continued serving as Conference leaders and preachers. Both Mrs. Jennie Owen and Ellen Lane received ministerial licenses from 1881 to 1889. Miss Jennie Thayer served as assistant Conference secretary from 1881 to 1883, followed by Mrs. Nellie Sisley (1883-85) and Mrs. A. H. Mason (1885-88). Mrs. Sisley also became the first Conference auditor in 1881. The Michigan Conference regularly renewed Ellen White’s ministerial credentials in the 1880s.

Certain resolutions voted at the 1880s Conference sessions indicate how the Adventist lifestyle was changing. Rapid church growth led delegates to plead for more ministerial candidates and colporteurs at the 1883 session, even while confessing their Laodicean condition at the 1884 session. The bumper crop of children in local churches may have inspired the 1885 resolution to cut sermons from two hours to one hour as “preferable.” Certainly Jackson’s successful camp meeting in 1885 triggered an 1886 resolution to seek favorable newspaper coverage for Adventist camp meetings in the future. The rise of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and the Anti-Saloon League inspired delegates at the 1887 session to actively support temperance and prohibition candidates at local and state elections. Their awareness that the impending Blair Amendment (Sunday closures bill) could mean tough times ahead led delegates in 1889-90 to plead for the latter rain to fall. Another sign “that we are in the last days,” as Elder J. B. Buck stated in the *Review*, involved the apostasy of Michigan evangelist

Dudley M. Canright in 1887. His defection shocked Michigan members and plagued the church for decades to come.

As the tiny Advent band of the 1840s and '50s grew into the world-wide denomination of the 1880s and '90s, ways of doing things changed. For example, in the nineteenth century, because most local Adventist groups had no large chapels or churches, weddings took place in homes or small meetinghouses. Several days before the ceremony, the Adventist minister questioned the bride and groom to see if there existed any scriptural reasons why they should not marry. He then went over the ceremony with them and checked to be sure that they had complied with Michigan law for obtaining a wedding license. If the wedding was at home, chairs were arranged so all could see and hear. After the bride and groom entered the room arm in arm and sat down at the front, the minister announced their intention to marry and preached a sermon on the sacredness of marriage. Following the sermon, the couple stood while the minister asked those present if anyone knew any reason why the couple should not be wed. He then asked the bride and groom the same question publicly. Finally, the minister asked the couple to join right hands and pronounced them husband and wife. There was no music, no tuxedos, no wedding gowns, no kissing, no rings, and no rice.

Funerals were equally simple, though not so short. The service began in the parlor of the deceased person's home with the reading of a few texts and a prayer or two as family and friends encircled the open casket. Then the procession followed the horse-drawn hearse to the local meeting house, where the mourners sat near the front facing the casket and the pulpit. The service included a hymn, scripture, prayer, another hymn, and a half-hour sermon full of biographical detail, consolation, and a "moderate amount" of Adventist doctrine. Then all joined in prayer and sang a final hymn. After viewing the deceased, the procession reformed and went

to the cemetery. The minister, standing at the head of the grave as the casket was lowered with ropes, thanked all the participants for coming and pronounced a benediction. Before leaving, he spoke words of comfort not only to each family member, but also to each mourner.

Between 1863 and 1890, ministers performed this simple service at least fifteen times for Jackson Adventists. Some of them were babies and little children, who usually died of cholera or diphtheria. Others were adolescents or teenagers who had succumbed to typhoid or tuberculosis. But by far the greatest number of Adventists here lived on into their seventies and eighties and died “in the blessed hope” of seeing Christ resurrect them very soon. Their obituaries are packed with positive, hope-filled messages. For example, old Brother J. Whitmore “died with a well-grounded hope.” When pioneer Cyrenius Smith passed away “in the triumphs of faith, feeling ready and willing to go,” *Review and Herald* editor Uriah Smith praised him as one who “sacrificed for the cause in its infancy” and who died “in the triumphs of the faith.” Of Father J. P. Kellogg it was said, “He maintained an abiding confidence in the truth he espoused, and a sustaining trust in the Lord.” May those words be spoken of you and me someday!

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan **Part 4 (rev. ed., 2012)**

As we saw in Part 3, the Advent message of Christ's soon return had by 1890 aroused considerable interest in Jackson and surrounding counties. So many converted to Adventism, in fact, that local schoolhouses and home parlors could no longer contain their numbers. New meetinghouses were therefore built in Bunker Hill, Leslie, Charlotte, and Eaton Rapids during the late nineteenth century. In Jackson, the influx of new members in the 1880s—especially after the grand camp meeting of 1885 when over fifty converts joined Adventist churches in this area—made it essential by 1890 that a new chapel be built.

Seeing that something had to be done, and soon, the Jackson Adventists, with their customary dispatch and generosity, took up a collection and built for themselves a lovely chapel on a plot of land donated by Dan and Abigail Palmer, who owned several acres of real estate in town. Local elder L. A. Bramhall announced in the *Review* on July 1 that the next quarterly meeting would be held in this new chapel on the corner of Summit Avenue and Ten Eyck Street. Michigan Conference President Isaac Van Horn came for the dedication service. Although no photos of this second church building exist today, it probably resembled the Charlotte chapel: a wooden frame structure about 26' wide, 44' long, and 16' high, with plain wooden pews, a large coal stove for heating, some coat racks and closets in the front hallway, and near-perfect acoustics. Such a church could be built for only \$1200.

In 1890, when Bunker Hill had thirty-three members, Eaton Rapids, thirty-seven, and Charlotte, forty-two, Jackson already had fifty-seven members. Only Hillsdale with sixty-six members was larger in this area. Nonetheless, the members in Jackson consistently gave more generous offerings than any other Adventist church in south central Michigan.

In 1891 Elder Van Horn urged scattered believers to come together at least four times a year for quarterly meetings at the nearest church. Jackson Adventists certainly did so. R. C. Horton and A. O. Burrill planned general meetings here in January and February of 1892. Old-timer Merritt Cornell returned for these quarterly meetings and found the new chapel well filled and Jackson members showing “a lively interest” in their Sabbath school. When once again he met Dan and Abigail Palmer, he exclaimed, “It was pleasant for us old veterans to meet and rejoice together in the same blessed hope after so many years of trial and labor—often tired in the way but never [tired] of it; and we are still hoping on for the bright and better day.”

Charles Taylor and A. J. Harris held a Christmas eve meeting at Jackson in 1892, praying that “the rain of the Holy Spirit which has commenced falling in Battle Creek [may] be experienced in these [Jackson] meetings.” In the winter of 1896, area members came to Jackson to hear R. C. Horton and C. N. Sanders’ revival preaching. By the end of 1897 Elder Harris could truthfully say, “The Lord is blessing the Jackson Church as they work for those who need help.” Bible studies, selling gospel-filled books, and helping the poor and needy occupied much of the time for Jackson’s fifty-seven members by 1898. This was obviously a growing church, both physically and spiritually.

This growth manifested itself in four ways: financial support of church programs, branch Sabbath school work, tract and missionary labor, and the new Jackson City Mission. As always, Dan Palmer led with the largest single offering in his life: in June of 1891 he pledged \$1000 for the new James White Memorial Home for Aged Persons in Battle Creek; Dan also sat on the advisory board of the Home. Jackson members regularly contributed to First Day, Christmas, and Foreign Missions offerings.

During 1891-92 Adventists here began holding a branch Sabbath school for isolated believers and interested persons in Tompkins, with Charles Giles as superintendent, his brother E. P. Giles as assistant superintendent, Frances Irwin as secretary, and Edith Kienast as assistant secretary. Other officers included Frank, Clark, and A. W. Bather and Elizabeth Pomeroy. This tiny branch Sabbath school, which consisted of between one and two dozen attendees, met three Sabbaths a month to sing, pray, hear the secretary's report, and discuss lesson topics like "the Life of Christ" and "the Sower and the Seed." Their favorite hymns included a few you might still be familiar with: "Sitting at the Feet of Jesus," "The Lord in Zion Reigneth," "What Hast Thou Done for Me," "Is My Name Written There?" "Crown Him Lord of All," and "Lovingly, Tenderly Calling." But they also sang some songs you never heard of: "Sift, Brother, Sift," "Scatter Sunshine," and "I'm a Little Pilgrim." Every week they collected a small mission offering (9-85 cents). They loved following missionaries' adventures and progress on a large world map. Indeed, the 1890s represented our greatest global mission growth as a church: missionaries entered South America, Inter-America, Africa, Australia, and many Pacific islands.

Another truly remarkable witnessing effort began in the winter of 1894 when twelve Battle Creek College students came to Jackson to sell subscriptions to the *American Sentinel* (predecessor of our *Liberty Magazine*). Despite winter blizzards, they made at least two calls on every home in town, giving out penny tracts and magazines. "As we went trembling," one wrote, "God blessed." Their efforts packed the chapel here with rich and poor, Protestants and Catholics, who came to hear Elder A. J. Olsen speak. Interest in Bible prophecy grew so rapidly that three more companies of student workers joined the first group.

Bible workers soon began visiting in the homes of interested Jackson citizens. Evening meetings, led by Elder F. M. Wilcox (future editor of the *Review*), who preached on the United

States in Bible prophecy, and Elder L. T. Nicola, who preached on the seventh-day Sabbath, jammed the chapel on Summit Street. Everyone found “candid, earnest souls” hungering for truth here. In 1894 Mrs. Peebles and several others from Battle Creek moved to Jackson to begin Bible studies here. Soon Mrs. Peebles had a list of names four feet long nailed to her wall representing those who desired Bible studies in this city! I wonder, how long is that list today in 2014? Could there be scores of citizens waiting for Bible studies all around you?

The Jackson camp meetings of 1884-85, branch Sabbath school, tract work, and home Bible studies here stirred up such a great interest that in 1898, officials at Battle Creek College established a city mission in Jackson. The only other Adventist city mission in Michigan was the Star of Hope Mission in Detroit. Located in a large three-story brick building at 245 East Main Street, the Jackson Mission had ten rooms for the college students’ living quarters, a kitchen and dining room where they prepared their meals, a hall with 200 seats, and a reception room—all for only \$15.00 rent each month. Homer R. Salisbury, Professor of History and Hebrew at the college, directed the program and recruitment from Battle Creek, but Robert Harter and his wife provided adult leadership here in Jackson. On site, a dozen students, led by Lewis Wagner and his nurse wife, ran the mission’s programs.

Pre-ministerial students came here for two to four weeks to take classes in how to give hydrotherapy treatments to the sick; they also supplied coal, food and clothing to the needy; gave Bible studies; distributed tracts; and held evening meetings in the hall. All this in addition to doing their own cooking and house-cleaning, quite a task for a dozen bachelors! In 1899 Professor Salisbury pleaded for donations of money, fuel, bedding, dishes, food, and furnishings for the mission. Students especially needed wood, flour, canned or dried fruit, dried corn, and beans (remember, this was before the days of refrigeration). Jackson members paid four dollars

for their rent. By the spring of 1899 the mission showed signs of prospering. Eight students still ran its programs under the supervision of one college teacher who commuted to this city on the weekends. So popular did this Christian Help Work (as it was then called) become that even wealthy non-Adventists donated food, coal, and money to the mission. J. E. Tenney exclaimed, “We look for good results in Jackson” as this outreach ministry continued breaking down prejudice and opening the way for Gospel truth.

Seeing students donate their time to treat the sick and help the poor made citizens eager to find out more about their religion. Soon the lecture hall was full every night. Students also pitched a Bible school tent in Jackson during the summer of 1899 and began a children’s story hour program (the predecessor of our Vacation Bible Schools now). Other students even gave Bible studies at the Jackson Penitentiary, where eight convicts took their stand for Christ. That winter, A. J. Harris, the director of a sanitarium in Jackson, joined the mission staff as a supervisor. Church members here and Battle Creek students then opened a mission school for children. This mission and school, Elder E. A. Sutherland declared, has been “an excellent training station to teach ministerial students adaptability.” The student-led canvassing program soon reaped fifteen converts; before long area Adventists were contributing \$50.00 a week for the Jackson City Mission.

As the twentieth century dawned, this amazing inner-city mission continued touching hearts and lives here. Battle Creek student Sarah Carlson wrote of helping a poor, starving mother, covered with sores and living in a city shack, to find food and receive water and medical care. Her baby had died from malnutrition, however, unable to subsist on a diet of bread and water. By July 1900 at least fifty students over two years’ time had come here to canvass, give Bible studies, share practical nursing skills, and preach at evening meetings. They had sold over

100 *Signs of the Times* and ten *Review* subscriptions every single week to support themselves, and rejoiced to see twenty citizens take a stand for truth in 1900. To show their support for the mission, Jackson members often held Sabbath school, church, and Sunday night prayer meetings there, led by Omer F. Campbell.

Another powerful new witnessing endeavor that opened in April 1900 was the Jackson SDA Sanitarium, a self-supporting medical mission. Privately directed by Dr. and Mrs. A. J. Harris and J. G. Hanna, this beautiful red brick building at 106 First Street offered patrons two suites of treatment rooms and a “pay as you go” policy. Starting with an investment of only \$500, the HARRISES soon found Jackson’s elite—lawyers, merchants, businessmen—crowding their San for hydrotherapy treatments of their aches and pains, and the business prospered. When Jackson’s better class of citizens came in sick, learned to adopt dress and dietary reforms, and left in robust health, their prejudice against Adventists magically vanished. Local Jackson grocers began stocking Adventist health foods from Battle Creek. In 1908 this San still prospered under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Kaun who treated Jackson’s seriously ill first elder, E. N. Hatt, and restored him to health that spring.

Another new method of evangelism among Adventist youth here began in 1900 when Hiram Boylan opened the first church school in Jackson. One of its first pupils was Anna Gordon, the future mother of Ruth Gordon. By 1904 this school had grown so much that it was being taught by two teachers, the “schoolmarms” Katherine Dunham and Mrs. Clarabell Fellows, both excellent, sweet teachers beloved by the little children in their care. Other teachers included Lorena Smith (1906-1908), Clinton Losey (1908-1909), J. G. Smally (1909-10), and Mildred Smith (1910-11), each of whom normally taught all the subjects to about ten to fifteen students

each year. For a short while, another school at Rives Junction also had about a dozen students between 1901 and 1910.

These students assisted their parents in selling twice as many copies of Ellen White's new book *Christ's Object Lessons* in 1902 as they had in 1901. In 1904 Elder E. K. Slade reported that "A good work is being done in Jackson"; however, he added, "an army of young people" were "waiting to be trained for the work" there. One Conference leader who was determined to train Jackson's youth was Elder E. I. Beebe, the East Michigan Conference treasurer and District #1 leader. From 1904 to 1910 he fostered small group meetings and visited members' homes to train them in witnessing techniques. Soon he rejoiced to see members eager "to hasten the glad tidings on...filled with zeal and earnestness to do God's will.

Inspired by Elder Beebe's enthusiasm, Jackson Adventists ordered 1400 sets of tracts and magazines for distribution in town. Within six months in 1905, they had sold or given away 1300 pieces of literature, conducted nineteen Bible studies, made 107 visits to the sick, 114 missionary calls, seven jail visits, written twenty-four missionary letters, and invested over 270 hours of Christian Help work to the poor in the city. As a result, Elder Butcher baptized five new converts in Vander Cook Lake in July.

Believers here also nurtured their faith by hosting frequent revival meetings. Iva Van Horn reported a lively Sabbath school convention on Christmas Eve in 1904. When Education Department superintendent E. K. Slade preached for two weekends here in February of 1906, he found the Sanitarium prospering under Mr. and Mrs. Kauns' leadership, the church school led by Marguerite Artress thriving, and the head elder, old Brother Hatt, with religious liberty secretary T. P. Butcher, also very active in the work. During 1907 Adventists from Napoleon, Hanover,

and Spring Arbor occasionally gathered at Jackson for district meetings. At these gatherings, “the spirit of consecration took hold of all,” Elder C. N. Sanders declared.

Certainly one of the most dedicated groups in this church in 1907 was its young people. Lorena Smith declared, “[We are eager] to put our hand to the wheel in earnest.” Despite a measles epidemic that sickened many teens here, she said her peers had “caught a new impetus.” They certainly had! During 1907-08 alone they held quilting bees, sewed rag rugs, collected funds, staged a “Young People’s Day,” planned M. V. meetings and missionary gatherings, and led out in a district M.V. convention at the Summit Street Church. The funds they raised by these activities helped to furnish student and guest dorm rooms at the brand new Adelphian Academy (opened in 1905).

That spring, Elder R. B. Thurber urged every Missionary Volunteer Society in southern Michigan to send delegates to Jackson for a weekend M.V. and Education convention. On Friday evening, W. D. Curtis led the teens in vigorous singing and a rousing sermon. For Sabbath school and church, the chapel was filled to capacity upstairs and down. In the afternoon delegates shared papers on many topics, interspersed with music by the much loved “Jackson Women’s Quartette.” Further meetings covered such topics as “The Church School: Why?” and “The Question of Discipline.”

Four years later in 1909 another district M.V. convention met in Jackson, led by Elders E. K. Slade and H. A. Boylan. Attendees devoured basket lunches as they enjoyed back-to-back meetings interspersed with music and discussion periods. Jackson’s chapel sported an arch and a huge banner with “The Gospel to All the World in This Generation” written on it. Topics covered included temperance, church school work, and M.V. societies. Once again, Jackson’s

famous Women's Quartette provided most of the music. Elder Boylan exclaimed, "The Jackson Church is blessed with considerable musical talent." Is that still true today?

This church also had canvassing talent, for not only had the members distributed hundreds of tracts and magazines by 1909, but young Flossie Winne became one of only nine East Michigan Conference booksellers that year. In one week she took four orders and sold \$6.30 worth of Gospel literature.

In 1909, the Jackson Church, led by head elder Eli Hatt, had forty-four members attending Sabbath school and fifty-one on its membership roll. It was still the largest church in District #1 (which included Bunker Hill with 46, Hillsdale with 42, Leslie with 20, and Rives with 16 members). To mark the sixtieth anniversary of Joseph Bates' first visit in 1849 the members planned a glorious ten-day camp meeting for that summer. Olga Arentz, then seventeen, and Coral (Losey) Purdy, then eleven, attended that camp meeting. To get there, their parents hitched the horses to wagons piled high with food, supplies, and a stove. At the campgrounds they filled straw ticks and pillow cases with free straw at the supply tent. They took cold water baths and relieved themselves at the slit trench latrines on the edge of the grounds. Amidst choking dust, squishy mud, and horse manure, they cooked their own meals on kerosene stoves before dashing off to the children's tent for meetings. Despite these primitive conditions, "I thought we were in heaven!" Olga exclaimed eighty years later. Shortly after the evening meeting ended, a bell rang out the time for silence. Girlish giggles would bring a sharp rapping on the tent post as the camp patrol enforced quiet. Tiny Coral Losey helped her big brother Clinton, camp cook, by washing dishes at the food pavilion. But since she couldn't afford food tickets, Coral herself couldn't eat there. Ah, but how her eyes sparkled when, after camp meeting ended, Clinton brought several pounds of leftover prunes and peanut butter home!

So from August 19 to 29, believers from all over the state boarded the Air Line, Grand Trunk, Lake Shore, Cincinnati Northern, and Battle Creek to Detroit Inter-Urban railways and headed to Jackson at two cents a mile; there city streetcars whisked them down tree-lined streets to the old fairgrounds at Keeley Park, one block west of the state prison. At the station, Adventist baggage-boys waited to tote their trunks (at ten cents apiece) and hand bags (at a nickel each) to the park, where a well-stocked store provided food for those adventurous souls who wished to brave flies, manure, and dust to prepare their own meals. Others chose to enjoy fifteen cent meals at Clinton Losey's cafeteria. But everybody stayed in tents and slept on straw ticks on brand new cots manufactured by Adelpian Academy students in Holly (where the Adelpian Tent Company produced the tents they slept in as well). Campers could buy new Bibles, books and tracts at the bookstand while their horses munched oats and hay at the livery stables on Crow and Jackson Streets downtown.

Elder E. K. Slade urged everyone to attend this camp meeting, promising "rich blessings to every church, family, and individual. "Dear brethren," he pleaded, "the Lord is coming very soon. We will not be permitted to have the camp meeting privileges much longer." So come, he said, and bring your rubbers, raincoats, and umbrellas, too! The "top brass" attended also: General Conference President Arthur G. Daniells, North American Division President I. H. Evans, Lake Union President Allen Moon, as well as the presidents of the East and West Michigan Conferences, Indiana Conference, and Professors W. W. Prescott and O. J. Graf of Emmanuel Missionary College. The overflow crowd soon had to rent rooms in town.

The weather was heavenly: sunny, clear, bright days with cool nights. Everyone loved smelling the huge floral triangle in the center of rows of white canvass tents and stood amazed at how brilliant the new electric lights made the camp ground at night. The piercing notes of the

bugle awoke everyone each morning and summoned them to meals and meetings. At one meeting, attendees watched amazed as their donations sent a huge paper ship gliding on a wire across the stage from “America” (at the right) to “India” (at the left): every penny given sent the boat one mile on its journey! Within one week, believers had raised over \$100 to send that ship all the way to India! On Sunday Jackson citizens flooded the grounds to attend a temperance rally, as the city had narrowly voted to go dry recently. By the time the meetings ended, Adventists had raised the astounding sum of \$1000 for missions—the largest single offering collected at one meeting in Sabbath school history prior to 1909! In addition, twenty-six converts were baptized. “This camp meeting,” Elder Slade declared, “was doubtless the largest one that has ever been held in East Michigan.”

Recognizing that Jackson was still a key center of Seventh-day Adventism in Michigan, the Conference voted to send the very first resident pastor here on the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of this church in 1849. His name was Delmer P. Wood, and during the pre-World War I years he would infuse this church with soul-winning zeal.

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 5 [rev. ed. 2012]

The 1909 Jackson camp meeting inspired members with a zeal to labor for Christ. The man who helped channel that zeal into a dynamic lay witnessing program was Jackson's very first, very own resident pastoral team, Mr. & Mrs. Delmer P. Wood, who came in November of 1909. Not yet ordained, Delmer Wood, a dark-haired man of medium height and a jovial young fellow about thirty-two, quickly became a favorite with the young people. With the help of Bible workers Marie Harriman and Beatrice Harter, he set out to evangelize the city with a series of almost continuous tent meetings that reaped baptisms and good will such as Adventists had not seen in almost twenty years. He received repeated invitations to speak at the local Baptist Church on Adventist doctrines. During his dynamic eight-year pastorate here (1909-1917), Delmer Wood infused the Jackson Church with soul-winning zeal.

By the end of 1909, Jackson had forty-nine members, Bunker Hill had forty-six, Hillsdale, twenty-two, and Leslie, twenty-four. At the local church school, Mildred Smith did a fine job of teaching the ten pupils. Conference officials praised her methods as much as they praised Pastor Wood's preaching. They even decided in 1910 to hold another state-wide camp meeting here in Jackson.

So once again, Adventists gathered in Keeley Park. Renting cots and 12'x10' tents from the conference for \$2.50, believers poured into the city expecting great blessings that August. "As a people," Conference President Slade said, "we are needy...[of] a better and richer experience than we have now. God has plainly told us that the camp meeting is an occasion for bestowing rich blessings upon His church." He called for singers and instrument players to come and join director H. A. Weaver's choir and orchestra.

During the ten days, excellent weather, including only one rainstorm to “nicely lay the dust,” provided the 700 attendees with a marvelous opportunity to enjoy thrilling sermons by General Conference President Arthur G. Daniells, Lake Union President Alan Moon, and local conference preachers. Jackson’s mayor spoke on “Educating and Agitating” for temperance. Observers described this gathering as “a most excellent camp meeting” at which “the Lord is guiding His people. The missionary spirit is being revived and the work is onward.” In addition to daily 6 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. meetings, Adventists could purchase new books at the tract tent.

When the meetings ended, many were convinced that it had been the best they had ever attended, because “a spirit of unity” had prevailed and all “experienced a refreshing.” Many Adventist youth had eagerly participated in the songs, prayers and preaching. If the cause was rising, these third generation young people were rising with it. Young J. W. Owens, newly married to Miss Belle Garland at Kaun’s Sanitarium, left with his bride to work among the blacks of Detroit.

This Sanitarium (at 106 First Street) helped make citizens’ attitudes more receptive to Adventist evangelism here. Pastor Wood enlisted the help of Bible workers Miss Harriman and Mrs. Winnie (with her five beautiful red-headed daughters) as his assistants, and soon their evenings were full giving Bible studies to local citizens.

Jackson also had zealous Sabbath school workers like Olga Arentz who taught an exciting Junior class. Using only materials she had purchased herself, she inspired twenty-five little boys and girls (including one musically inclined lass named Eleanor Bather) to love Jesus and witness for him. Olga showed Jackson’s Juniors a lovable religion, sharing in their Sabbath school fun and inviting them over to her home for Halloween costume parties, games and refreshments. Olga and Vina Miles (Sabbath school superintendent) directed a “stirring

convention” here in March of 1911 for all Sabbath school teachers, followed in May by a religious liberty institute. Their Sabbath school evangelism received the enthusiastic support of Pastor Wood, deacons Mr. Kaun and Mr. Naylor, deaconesses Sr. Kaun and Sr. Wood, as well as that of head elder Mr. Hatt and school board chairman W. P. Elmore.

Such witnessing activity by so many dedicated lay persons had in *one year* doubled Jackson’s membership to over ninety! The twenty-year-old church on Summit and Teneyck could no longer seat them by the spring of 1911, so they resolved to build a larger church with a basement school on the same lot. The Baptists on Main Street offered Adventists their chapel as a temporary church home. Meanwhile head elder Hatt began erecting six sheds for the horses and Mr. Porter tore down the old 1890 chapel and filled in the lot for rebuilding. Approving all this activity, Conference President Slade declared: “The work is progressing nicely in Jackson...The brethren and sisters [there] seem of good courage.”

In fact, before the new church had been dedicated, Pastor Wood baptized six new members there. Dedication services in November brought many guests who enjoyed the sermons by Elders W. A. Spicer, Thompson, Leland, Thuemler, and William Ostrander, who reported that “the field here was never in a more promising condition than at present.”

A brand new church just begs to be filled with meetings! So members began holding regular Communion and foot-washing services. In December of 1911 they invited all Conference canvassers to a ten-day convention at the church for classes in giving medical treatments, canvassing techniques, and revival sermons.

The pre-war years witnessed an escalation of evangelism here as active laymen kept Pastor Wood busy baptizing new converts. Colporteurs Bert Miner of Parma and Clifford Naylor of Jackson won souls for Christ in the field, while W. P. Schuster led Jackson’s forty

young people in rededicating their lives to Christ in numerous Missionary Volunteer meetings filled with rousing song services, prayers, sermons and readings. Another Sabbath school convention in July of 1912 packed the church as teachers convened to share papers, hear recitations and special music, and enjoy lunch in the park, after which they raised over \$100 for missions.

On July 27 Elder Wood baptized sixteen converts. He noted that local citizens showed a far greater interest in Adventism since the new church was built. Conference President William Guthrie exclaimed, "I am confident that a rich harvest of souls will be gathered for the Lord at this place during the present winter." He felt certain that Jackson's prosperous financial condition not only boded well for early debt retirement, but also measured members' spiritual commitment as well. Seventy Jackson members expressed their generosity by tiptoeing up to Elder Wood's door and giving him a cash gift for his thirty-fifth birthday!

The years 1910-1915 comprised one of Jackson's "golden eras." M. V. leader W. P. Schuster declared in 1913: "The Lord is greatly blessing our work here." Citizens crowded into the San for treatments; the new church filled each Sabbath; Elder Wood's Sunday cottage meetings were packed; the M.V. Society now had forty eager participants giving Bible studies. When Miss Harriman, after three years as a Bible worker here, left to do mission work in Detroit, Miss Dunham replaced her. She and Elder Wood felt that "the work in this city never seemed more encouraging than at present."

In April of 1913 Clifford Russell led Jackson's youth in a Young Peoples' Convention with "spirit-filled discourses," papers read and discussed, with choir and orchestra music "enlivening" the sessions. By this date members had installed the first church organ (at a time when few other Adventist churches had one). "The Jackson church is blessed with an unusually

large and talented company of young people,” Russell observed. Their presentations “breathed forth a spirit of consecration.” He was certain that Adventist youth here would “make their influence felt throughout the whole city.”

They certainly did, for that summer and fall, they helped Pastor Wood with evangelistic tent meetings in Jackson, Napoleon, and Spring Arbor. They also assisted at the Conference-wide Sabbath school convention here led by President William Guthrie with papers presented on Sabbath school work, recitations, and special music by Jackson’s church orchestra and choir and a mixed quartet. Mrs. Wheeler, Conference Sabbath school secretary, praised “the kindly welcome extended by the Jackson church” to so many young people.

While revival and evangelistic meetings took place upstairs in the chapel, the church school kids met downstairs in the basement. Led by teachers Geneva Holcomb (1911), Miss Miner (1912), and Clara Start (1913), about a dozen students annually enjoyed the rudiments of a Christian education, including new desks, roll-down maps, blackboards, in-door toilets, and a water fountain. Nothing but the best for Jackson’s children! In 1914, as WWI began in Europe, Miss Ethel Gordon taught the school; by 1915 Nina Martyn and Eva Butler co-taught it until Ruth Tenney replaced Miss Butler in 1916.

The war years (1914-1918) sparked a real boom in Adventist evangelism as preachers portrayed Armageddon as just around the corner. With one eye on Turkey and the other on Revelation 16, they sincerely believed the war would usher in Christ’s second coming. In such a climate, Elder Wood mobilized his 105 members for all-out evangelism. Bible worker Katherine Dunham reported in January of 1914 that citizens “are being awakened” as the *Citizen-Patriot* began advertising Wood’s Sunday-night tent meetings and printing his sermons. Emmanuel Missionary College student C. A. Fowler, canvassing in the city, remarked, “Never before have I

had the opportunity of viewing the ripening harvest as I have in the past four weeks.” People were so eager for books explaining the prophetic meaning of WWI that Fowler earned a one-year college scholarship in only ninety-eight hours with \$100 left over! Soon there were three students canvassing in Jackson.

Local members gave generously to help Adventist workers in war-torn Europe, raising \$152 in a single Sabbath meeting in response to appeals from Conference president Guthrie. “The work here is moving on to final triumph,” Elder Wood declared in December 1914. Citizens packed his evening meetings, while backsliders returned to the church in record numbers. Miss Dunham struggled to keep up with Bible study requests. “The honest in heart seem to be just waiting for the light to come to them,” she exclaimed. In the spring of 1915, Elder Wood baptized sixteen new converts, then spoke to the soldiers, Women’s Relief Corps, and two other organizations who crammed into the Adventist chapel for Memorial Day addresses. Some of these visitors began attending Sabbath services.

“Every department of the church is in active growing condition,” Katherine Dunham declared. It certainly seemed that way! Youth here held a district Young People’s Convention in January of 1915 at which fifty came forward for prayers. Conference M.V. leaders O. M. Kittle and Lotta Bell, expressing their gratitude “for the open-hearted hospitality of the Jackson people,” noted that Jackson’s M.V. society was the third largest in Michigan. Ingathering also received zealous support here. In 1915, 1916, and 1917, Jackson was first in the Conference for Ingathering funds and tithe raised—even ahead of larger churches in Flint and Detroit!

Members hosted another district Sabbath school convention in December of 1915 to benefit China and another M.V. campaign in February of 1916. One senior saint exclaimed, “This seems like old-time meetings, only there [are] more young people present.” Some of those

zealous youth baptized during the Great War included Olga Arentz (1913), Mr. and Mrs. Earnest Slayton (1914), Fred and Lyda Bliesath (1915), Glen and Inez Pomeroy (1917), and Jane Habenicht (1918).

But the war years also brought troubling times to Jackson's members. With so many men gone, the choir struggled along with twelve women and only three men; church officers became the very old, who often held two or three offices concomitantly. Sadly, disfellowshipping for Sabbath-breaking, immorality, and using tea or pork also increased. Wayward members would be put on six months' to one year's probation to reform their ways, then be reexamined by the board; if a public confession followed, the congregation usually voted that person back into full membership. Likewise, many of those baptized during the war left the church after 1918, disillusioned with Adventist legalism and the failure of Christ to come as evangelists had predicted.

Despite gas and rubber shortages during the war, evangelism did not cease. In July of 1916 Elder W. D. Parkhurst, M. Shepard, and Bible worker Clare Wood held tent meetings here. When Elder Delmer Wood left in 1917, the tall, slender-faced, white-haired Elder Parkhurst became Jackson's second pastor. He fostered evangelism and revivals here that soon led to the baptism of eighteen adults, including Margaret Freesner's mother, aunt, and grandmother. His tent meetings on the corner of Biddle and Third Streets brought 200 people—including local ministers and businessmen—to hear him speak.

Jackson's saints have always placed a high value on church music. During 1917, the choir grew to sixteen (seven men and nine women)—each of whom had to receive permission from the board to join! The board purchased forty-eight new *Christ in Song* books as well, which were put to good use when that February Jackson hosted a ten-day colporteur institute led

by Elder W. A. Bergherm. Attendees gathered in prayer bands, studied their Bibles and Ellen White's *Testimonies* together, and then took an exam on what they had learned. "The church of Jackson treated us royally in every way," Bergherm declared. "They provided well-set tables of food that brought smiles of satisfaction to the faces of all." In 2014 they still do!

When Elder Parkhurst preached at evangelistic meeting in the spring and summer of 1917, so many flocked to hear him that Bible worker Clara Wood could not keep up with the Bible study requests. So a dozen local members helped her by giving studies themselves. In May and July Elder Parkhurst baptized thirty-four "precious souls"—including Naomi Schoun's parents John and Olive Backus—in Vandercook Lake as a result of those meetings

As the war ended in November of 1918, the Jackson church returned somewhat to normalcy under its new officers, deacons W. J. Wetherbee and C. R. Webster, deaconesses M. L. Collins and Anna Gordan, and church clerk Louis Kaun. The growing importance of music to Jackson members is revealed in the fact that this church now had two church organists (Ernest Slater and Francis Miles); a chorister (Earl Miles), a violinist (Madaline Grower), and a choir of fourteen (eleven women and three men).

The end of the war also brought a change in Jackson's pastorate when Elder Parkhurst left in 1918 to be replaced by Elder O. M. Kittle, whose mother-in-law Jane Habenicht was a Jackson member. But when Elder Kittle left in 1919 to become chaplain of the Moline, Illinois, San, members welcomed Elder R. C. Gardner who came from Chicago. Placing his emphasis on evangelism, Elder Gardner began a series of tent meetings that summer that filled nearly every night. When Professor Edwin Thiele visited in August, he found members actively engaged in home missions work. Gardner's "strong pastoral leadership" maintained church unity and rapidly increased church membership. Whereas in 1918 this church had 130 members, one year

later it had 180 members who, in one year sold 870 books and gave away 523 more books and over 3,600 tracts. Part of the credit for added members is due to the zeal of no fewer than four Bible workers (Miss Alger, Mrs. Flinn, Brother Miner, and W. J. Beaman). “It is a great pleasure to be the pastor of so faithful a flock,” Elder Gardner declared. He planned a “vigorous campaign” for the winter months.

During the 1920s Jackson witnessed the baptisms of many future church officers: Eleanor Bather (1921), Marie Dunlap (1924), Ruth Gordon and Laverne Bliesath (1925), Beatrice Lamb (1927), and Bonnie Bliesath (1928). While members tried to keep irreverent youth out of the balcony, struggled to pay the school teacher’s salary, and disfellowshipped several members for Sabbath-breaking, they made progress in other areas. They started the first Dorcas Society (with six women and one man); recruited a cornetist, a violinist, and a baritone horn player for church services; and recruited six sopranos, three altos, and three tenors (but no basses) for the portly W. J. Beaman’s church choir. All in all, the spiritual outlook for the new decade seemed bright indeed here in Jackson!

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 6 [rev. ed. 2012]

In March of 1920 Jackson hosted yet another four-day Missionary Volunteer convention, this time for the entire Michigan Conference. M.V. leaders and secretaries flocked here to enjoy talks by Professor Russell, Grosvenor Fattic, Conference President Westworth, Pastor Gardner, and Professor Thiele. Conference M.V. leader Ennis Moore, discovering that Jackson members had broken new ground by establishing a Junior M.V. League, urged other churches to follow their example and to involve younger teens in Sabbath school and M.V. work. Those who attended this convention had a wonderful time. “I have enjoyed these meetings more than any other since our last camp meeting,” one said. “It was a blessed meeting we had together,” declared another. Professor Haynes led delegates in singing rousing songs. Sabbath became a day of dedication and reconsecration as five youth gave their hearts to God. Filled with zeal, thirty-six delegates spread out over the city to sell 100 books and magazines, and to distribute 500 missionary papers and 500 printed invitations to Elder Gardner’s upcoming meetings. Those evangelistic meetings, held in the Masonic Temple, reaped five new converts in February.

The first documented wedding held in Jackson’s chapel occurred in August of 1920 as Miss Vina Miles (a teacher at Cedar Lake Academy) wed Mr. Stuart Thompson (education secretary of the Southwest Union) with Elder William Guthrie (now Lake Union president) presiding. The Thompsons then left to teach at Fox River Academy in Illinois.

The 1920s may have been the wild “Flapper Era” for many of America’s youth, but among Jackson Adventists, it proved to be a decade full of evangelistic and revival meetings. Young people here donated books to the church library and led out in the fall Ingathering campaign, during which two Jackson teens learned a foreign language to communicate with the city’s foreign immigrants. When Conference President Westworth held a Week of Prayer here in

December of 1920, members raised \$1300 for foreign missions. Westworth declared that “The Jackson church is a wide-awake [church], and the Lord is blessing their efforts along home missionary lines.” He baptized five new converts when he returned later that fall.

Jackson’s church school also thrived during the 1920s, especially with the new PTA, led by the friendly Bible worker Amanda Elmore who, as chairwoman, gave enthusiastic support to summer recruiting. A very young Ethel Beamer, Jackson’s friendly and lovable teacher in 1921, was replaced by the universal favorite, Dottie McCormick, a tall, outgoing woman who wore her hair piled high around her face, and who from 1922 to 1925 enjoyed teaching kids crafts like knitting, sewing, tatting and crocheting. But when Dottie contracted pneumonia, the school closed briefly in 1923 until she recovered. By 1924 Conference education secretary Rose Herr could announce that six students here had never been late or absent from school: Allen Baker, Ruth Gordon, William Beaman, Esther Lampart, Winnie Love, and Nellie Beaman. Perhaps William Beaman’s perfect attendance helped get him appointed as the next teacher in 1925 when Dotti McCormick left.

Throughout the 1920s certain preachers returned often to speak in Jackson. Frank Dudley held Week of Prayer meetings here and at Napoleon in November of 1921, then began an evangelistic series in February of 1922, during which the *Citizen-Patriot* printed his sermons. Later that summer he and Mr. Burke, the boys’ dean at Adelphian Academy, held a tent effort here every Sunday evening. When Elder O. B. Hall of the East Michigan Conference visited in August of 1921, he declared: “A spirit of optimism prevails” among Jackson members. He predicted they would reach their \$750 Ingathering goal, for “This is one of the churches that can always be depended upon to carry a large share of the load.” In November Elder F. C. Gilbert, General Conference Field Secretary, held a two-day series of revival meetings here; he returned

in March of 1924 with exciting stories of his recent travels through the Orient. When the new Adelpian Academy Bible teacher, Elder F. L. Abbott, and his wife preached here in December of 1923, he wrote to the *Lake Union Herald* that “if the welcome and hospitality of the Jackson members indicate anything at all, we are anticipating a very pleasant stay in the East Michigan Conference.”

In the 1920s this congregation had 140 Sabbath school members whose good attendance and punctual reporting frequently placed them on the Conference Honor Roll. Many district Sabbath school conventions met here during the decade. In 1922 General Conference Sabbath School Director Elder James amazed local members with his two stereopticon (color slide) lectures in the chapel. In 1923 a Home Missionary Institute led by Conference President W. H. Holden convened here; delegates raised over \$70 for missionary literature. The following year an M.V. Institute brought delegates from the entire southern portion of the state; they voted to distribute one tract per person every day.

The fifth and last camp meeting held in Jackson convened from June 21 to July 1, 1923 at the fairgrounds. Members rented 12’x16’ khaki tents for \$5.00; wooden floors cost \$3.00; a cot and mattress was 75 cents; and chairs sold for 15 cents each. “We are confidently expecting one of the best camp meetings of our history,” President Holden asserted. Bring the kids, bring musical instruments, but leave your automobiles at home and take the interurban, he advised. Hundreds of attendees here heard the famous Meade MacGuire, General Conference Youth Director, and other preachers from the Conference and Union. They could also buy tiny Bibles for their children at the Book Tent. This camp meeting witnessed the baptism of twenty converts in the local Baptist church’s tank (which Jackson Adventists rented for \$6.00 a year).

Also in 1923, Jackson members welcomed yet another pastor. Short, heavy-set, dark-haired Elder O. L. Denslow, a slow, deliberate speaker, brought his wonderful sense of humor and his friendly wife, a singer and accomplished pianist, along with their lovely daughter Marjorie. No sooner had he arrived than he and Bible worker Vinnie Goodner began a Sunday night series of meetings that spring, followed that summer by another tent effort with his wife and Miss Goodner and two lay elders. Thirteen souls were baptized as a result. Of his Jackson members, Elder Denslow stated: "I find them a very loyal company indeed. They have extended to me whole-hearted cooperation and are ever willing to [assist] in every way possible for the advancement of the message." Olga Arentz, a sprightly young mother here in the 1920s and '30s, put it this way: "[Being at Jackson gave me] the same feeling as being home." Although Olga left Jackson for California in 1937, she would return "home" half a century later to enjoy the warm fellowship of Jackson members.

All across the East Michigan Conference, 1924-25 became a "banner year" for soul-winning with 338 converts baptized. In Jackson, Elder Denslow urged members to give sixty cents a week for evangelism and urged them to pray for the "spiritual condition of our young people" whose growing irreverence troubled the church board. The best way to help the youth, of course, is to involve them in witnessing activities. This Elder Denslow did. The youth provided the music for a revival led by Elder R. B. Thurber, Associate Editor of the *Watchman Magazine*, in April 1925; for services led by East Michigan Conference President Holden in May; for meetings of Elder William Guthrie, Lake Union President, in August; and later for East Michigan Conference Education Secretary Grosvenor Fattic's meetings in the fall of 1926.

Months later, Pastor Denslow wrote: "The work is moving forward. The spirit of brotherly love prevails in the church, and all are working together for the finishing of our great

mission.” Mission giving increased, and so did baptisms—twenty-six new members in eighteen months, bringing Jackson’s membership to 180. During the late-1920s new members included Ruth Gordon, Minnie Nichols, Helen Dornan, LaVerne Bliesath, and Olga Arentz.

In the summer of 1925, the Denslows, Vincent Tibbetts, and Bible workers Jody Kitterman and Vinnie Goodner began a tent effort in town. For six weeks, members distributed brochures, provided special music, and gave Bible studies. Later that fall, Elder Harter conducted a revival effort here which some called the best meetings they had attended in fifteen years. Backsliders returned to church and twenty-two members signed the covenant of Jeremiah 31:3 to love and be faithful to God; this church raised over \$750 for missions. They also promised in 1926 to lend their support to the new teacher, the very shy, quiet and sweet Miss Viola Boat, who expressed satisfaction at the newly painted schoolroom and freshly varnished desks filled with twenty-four students.

That fall a new pastor arrived from Detroit: the very tall, blond-haired, slender and outgoing Harry B. Taylor with his pianist wife Elsie and two boys, Bruce and Harry, Jr., whom one member described as a little “ring-tailed snorter”! Little Harry often got into mischief with young Orville Jaymes of Napoleon, whose mother tried to sweeten him up with chocolate pies. Taylor introduced members to a new sermon style, for with his booming voice and energetic preaching manners, he often used big words which sent listeners scurrying to their dictionaries after the service! His sermons, however, were solidly Bible-based, for he himself was a thorough teacher. “Study, study, study,” he once admonished Ellen Dunlap, “and never stop studying [God’s Word].”

Pastor Taylor accepted the charge of Matthew 28:19-20 with great zeal and led many evangelistic efforts. The M.V. Society, revived by Elsie Taylor’s leadership, soon had to order

100 new membership cards and jumped to the #2 position in size for the entire Conference! President G. A. Piper returned twice in 1927 to baptize twenty-two new converts (since Pastor Taylor was not yet ordained).

During the 1920s Jackson members' generosity increased. One member donated a lovely pony to missions, and when Elder Piper loaded it into a truck, he hoped "that those who buy it will find it a truly missionary pony." In the fall of 1927 members here topped all previous Ingathering goals by raising over \$1000 for missions. This church also adopted the 3% Plan in support of local church expense; this soon netted them \$3000 to repaint, redecorate, and build an addition to their church. "We feel that the work at Jackson is on a solid footing for expansion," Pastor Taylor declared.

With ample space and new pews to fill, the newly ordained Elder Taylor began Sunday night meetings in town. Working closely with Bible worker Amanda Elmore, he baptized thirty-seven souls in the spring of 1928; by 1929 he had more than a dozen more baptismal candidates and 100 interested persons to visit. Teaming up with several other Adventist pastors for evangelistic meetings in this area, Taylor had added thirty-six more converts—for a total of ninety new members during his two-year pastorate here.

In fact, during the prosperous late-1920s, Jackson hosted many regional meetings, inviting area Adventists from Prattville, Adrian, and Hillsdale to join with them in revivals, business sessions, quarterly meetings and other gatherings. Visitors noted a "deep spirit of consecration" at these worship services.

On the brink of the Great Depression in 1929, Jackson Adventists loved to Ingather. They may, in fact, have pioneered one of the most enjoyable Ingathering practices—Saturday night gospel singing bands. During a single one-hour foray around town, they garnered ten

dollars. When they tried this method again, it brought such “gratifying results” that the churches at Lansing, Pontiac, Flint, and Ann Arbor jumped on the singing bandwagon. Within two months, Jackson had \$600 of its goal. At one church missionary service, they raised enough funds to pay for 100 *Signs of the Times* subscriptions.

They also sent their enthusiastic youth to the first Adventist summer camp held anywhere in the world—at Cedar Hills Park between Jackson and Adrian on M-112 nine miles west of Clinton. “This is one of the most beautiful of all Michigan’s state parks,” enthused M.V. Secretary Grosvenor Fattic in July of 1928, for it has “every convenience and comfort that we could want or ask for.” He reassured hesitant parents that at Irish Hills, “we have provided excellent and ample chaperonage,” plus life guards at the lake to prevent accidents in the water. “No children are ever allowed to go in alone,” he emphasized. “Our swimming, as a matter of fact, is more play in the water than [actual] swimming,” he add. Furthermore, boys’ camp and girls’ camp were held separately for ten days each. By the summer of 1929, however, the schedule did include swimming classes, hiking, nature and health talks, as well as religious, M.V., Sabbath school, and church services, in addition to the brand new campfire story hour. Over 100 girls and 89 boys eagerly participated that summer.

Back in Jackson, Elder Taylor helped to plan a state-wide teachers’ convention here in October of 1929. He assisted in raising funds to buy forty-three new *Christ in Song* books. He also expressed his joy at being able to work with such zealous church officers as Olga Arentz (Junior Sabbath School superintendent), the small but friendly Louis Kaun (Senior Sabbath School superintendent), Ruth Gordon (church pianist), her mother Anna Gordon (Dorcas leader and Bible worker), and Fred Bliesath (deacon). But in the fall of 1930, the much-loved Elder Taylor accepted a call to pastor the churches at Bay City and Saginaw.

His replacement was the small, dark-haired, pleasant-mannered fishing enthusiast Elder B. F. Williams, who preached lively and powerful sermons, and who, with his wife and daughter Evelyn, came from Hillsdale to live at 702 Second Street. Members found him very consoling at funerals and the life of the party at church socials. But Elder Williams found Jackson's congested traffic—so much busier than Hillsdale's calm streets—so disconcerting that he sometimes drove right through stop signs! But Jackson believers loved this nervous, godly man, for he encouraged social get-togethers and occasionally organized harvesting groups to help short-handed farmers bring in their corn, tomatoes, or potatoes. "He was [also] very understanding of young mothers with small, squalling kids in church," Olga Arentz declared. One Sabbath when her tiny tots attracted a deacon's scowl and harsh rebuke during a sermon, Olga was relieved to hear Pastor Williams reassure her at the door that he had not been perturbed at all by their restless commotion.

This "lovely man," as Olga remembered him decades later, put members to work even as Elder Taylor had done before him. Despite the bitter cold and snow in November of 1930, he led the church in reaching its \$500 Ingathering goal using both singing bands and the now popular cans. Praising his flock, he exclaimed, "[Their] cooperation and enthusiasm is growing." In fact, he reported in the *Lake Union Herald* that "The year 1930 was one of good cheer and progress with the brethren and sisters of the Jackson church." The members, he said, were pleasant and "well organized for service."

So he put them to work. Members adopted the "apportionment plan" of paying for church expenses; they formed cleaning bees once a month to spic-and-span the church; and they organized a Sabbath school orchestra. He put the Juniors to work washing cars and mowing lawns to earn summer camp money. He raised funds for a new church vacuum cleaner so that he

and his wife could take theirs back home. As a jack-of-all-trades, Elder Williams even repaired the church furnace, oiled the school floors, and installed new drinking fountains (or “bubblers” as they were called then) downstairs.

Also in 1930 members welcomed a new school teacher. Miss Viola Boat, tall and slender, put on such good programs with her students that the church board raised her salary to \$80.00 a month. Then when a reckless driver ran her over downtown that spring, the board gave her an extra \$10.00—and the careless driver paid her doctor’s bill, her glasses repair bill, and provided her with one week’s lost pay! Tuition during those Depression years was two dollars a month for grades one through three; three dollars a month for grades four through six; and four dollars a month for grades seven and eight.

Although the United States faced a severe depression during the 1930s, this church would demonstrate that spiritual zeal and hard work could overcome a lack of money when hearts and minds are united to serve the Lord.

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 7 [rev. ed. 2012]

Pastor Williams, a firm believer in what was then called “Uplift Work,” fostered Jackson’s first active welfare program, which, in cooperation with the City Welfare Commission, “responded nobly” to help needy families in January of 1931. Many of those helped, of course, were African Americans, but Jackson Adventists in the segregationist 1930s exhibited remarkable open-mindedness toward the Negro. In an era when even black and white Adventists did not worship together, this church had at least one black family—Mr. and Mrs. Charles Parker. The board heartily approved the visit of Detroit’s black choir in March and more than once welcomed Mrs. Jones’ singing boys, also from Detroit, to perform in this church. In short, Jackson Adventists took Isaiah 56:7 to heart that their church should be “a house of prayer for *all* peoples.”

During the 1930s Jackson hosted many conventions. In February of 1931 the editor of the *Signs of the Times* directed a magazine subscription campaign here. Members ordered 152 *Signs* subscriptions and organized groups of twenty-eight persons to distribute tracts, a dozen more to visit isolated members, nine to pray with families, sixteen to visit the sick, seven to give hydrotherapy treatments, eighteen to join the M.V. Sunshine Band, and eight more to give Bible studies. A Home Missionary gathering here promoted effective literature ministry in the East Michigan Conference. Like a mighty army, this church equipped itself for effective witnessing. One sister conducted Sunday school classes with forty-five attending while others opened their homes for free public vegetarian cooking demonstrations. Vowing to distribute one tract per member each day, believers ordered 1000 Leaves of Autumn pamphlets that spring.

Jackson’s M.V. Society seemed especially filled with enthusiastic youth. With Elder Williams’ encouragement, the society rented Camp Te-Ton-Ka at Wolf Lake in the summer of

1931, “the best equipped scout camp in this territory,” and sent thirty-five JMV’s there (including three girls’ and two boys’ units). This appears to have been the first mixing of the sexes in Michigan summer camps! Boys and girls stayed in separate cabins with Emmanuel Missionary College students as counselors. They ate two meals a day, swam, hiked, and sang songs around the campfire. No single M.V. Society had ever undertaken such a campout before. That fall Jackson’s youth held a “Court of Honor” with a fake campfire on the platform of the darkened church as seventeen missionary volunteers, including Olga Arentz and Ruth Gordon, surrounded by vines and trees, received Friend, Companion, Comrade and Master Comrade pins and badges in an impressive ceremony led by Pastor Williams and M.V. leader Dale Castle. General Conference M.V. Secretary H. T. Elliott praised the M.V. society here, which later that fall raised \$1700—the largest Ingathering goal in this church’s history to that time.

But the Great Depression forced some economies across America and here in Jackson. In 1932 the church school teacher’s salary—already \$70 in arrears—was cut by five dollars a month; parents fell months behind in paying their children’s tuition; Ingathering funds barely trickled in. Unable to afford coal for the winter, the church board accepted Fred Bliesath’s offer of donated wood.

But witnessing and evangelism continued, for while Jackson Adventists were *in* a Depression, they were not depressed. During 1931-32 they wrote 300 missionary letters, made 3000 spiritual visits, and gave away 9000 papers and tracts. The M.V. Society alone made over 1000 missionary visits, distributed 400 articles of clothing, and gave away over 4000 papers. The youth signed pledge cards promising to be more reverent in church, and the two organists agreed to play a postlude for dismissal. The M.V. Society held meetings on Friday nights to allow more time for Sunshine Band activities on Sabbath afternoons.

Pastor Williams also began a regular ministry at the State Prison, ordering books, tracts and magazines for the prisoners and holding a Week of Prayer, “a precious season,” as he described it, in which “real victories have been gained.” In the fall of 1932 Adventists from Adrian, Lansing and Bunker Hill came here for a weekend M.V. Rally featuring Lake Union President H. J. Sheldon, whose sermon focused on “The Hour of Youth.” Meetings focused on problems facing Adventist young people, including proper Sabbath observance. In the 1930s Adventist youth were discouraged from such entertainments as bowling, billiards and pool, Rook and Flinch, chess and checkers, movie and theatre attendance, as well as boxing and wrestling matches, dancing and other “worldly” forms of amusement. But Jackson’s youth did enjoy ten days of fun at Camp Michialpha on Half Moon Lake that summer for only ten dollars apiece.

The year 1933 only deepened the Depression cutbacks for Adventists here. Tithes-giving shrank; mission offerings declined; the church janitor took a cut in pay to only eight dollars a month and parents fell farther behind in school tuition. To raise money for the school, the Dorcas Society began holding “penny suppers” once a month. Somehow this church raised \$50 for its share of the cost of buying the new Grand Ledge campgrounds; members also scraped together enough money to buy a church sign for the front lawn and pay six dollars a ton for coal. With so many new mothers in the church, Fedelma Hart in 1933 started a Mother’s Society here.

Despite these Depression cutbacks, Elder Williams declared: “While prosperity is computed in dollars and cents...these are but secondary to the winning of souls; for if the church prospers spiritually, there is likewise prosperity in dollars and cents.” Ellen Dunlap recalled that the Jackson Church during the Depression *did prosper* spiritually; for example, members never absented themselves from the Communion service, for it meant too much to them. As the

women met in the schoolroom downstairs and the men in the chapel, embraces, tears, and fervent testimonies demonstrated the love members shared for Christ and one another.

They shared this love with others as well, and soon twenty-two baptisms resulted in 1933. Pastor Williams testified: "The work is progressing nicely in the Jackson Church." His Sunday night meetings filled regularly with interested souls; his cottage meetings saw fourteen persons stand for the truth. Thirty-three more members enrolled in the Bible Reader Training Course and twenty-seven of them earned certificates. Within months they had won eleven more souls for Christ. The *Lake Union Herald* commented: "How different the statistics would look at the close of the next year if every church had a similar group." Doubtless Lorene Bather, now a stenographer at the Conference office, was justifiably proud to brag a bit about her home church. Public esteem for Adventists here inspired the Women's Reserve Corps and the Grand Army of the Republic to donate a new silk flag for the chapel.

By 1934 the Jackson church could afford to buy stereopticon slides for evangelistic meetings, travel farther for school picnics, buy seven tons of coal through Fred Bliesath of Napoleon, spend \$25.00 for new school textbooks for the nineteen students in eight grades, and acquire a new mimeograph machine for duplicating church bulletins. Jackson's 209 members formed a Home and School Association that fall with Fedelma Hart in charge. They also commissioned Mr. Ward to make new Communion cups at his Bakelite Company and hired prison inmates to craft a new bulletin board cabinet.

Adventists' witnessing efforts here so impressed Elder H. K. Halladay that he published the statistics in the *Herald*: 21 baptisms, 30 M.V. Society members, 20 reading course certificates earned, 45 Bible studies given, 338 missionary visits, nearly 400 persons taken to meetings, 360 people helped, 67 missionary letters written, over 1800 pieces of literature

distributed in *one year*! Jackson's new three-year church budget plan amazed Elder Halladay. This church had made no calls for expense funds from the pulpit for *three years*, he exclaimed. "All their debts are paid," he asserted, "and Elder and Mrs. Williams are doing a good work."

But in October of 1933 there was standing room only as local Adventists threw a farewell party for the Williams, sharing letters and telegrams from every former pastor of this church. Pastor Williams thanked his flock for "the spirit of love, harmony and cooperation" they had always shown their pastors. That fall, the pastoral "changing of the guard" brought the very tall, thin, humble yet powerful young speaker Arthur J. Gordon to the pulpit here. The Gordons chose to live on Jackson's east side because, he said, "I want to be near the poor people." His down-to-earth sermons thrilled members' hearts; his testimony and prayer meetings were times of weeping, confessing wrongs to one another, and of deeply spiritual homilies. "We had real, true brotherhood then," Ellen Dunlap recalled.

Elder Gordon challenged the Sabbath school to raise its Investment goal to \$130; purchased more stereopticon slides for evangelism; put a literature rack in the railroad depot; and organized work bees in 1935 to paint, shingle, stain, and otherwise refurbish the twenty-five-year-old church. But a church expense fund with less than seven dollars in it could not pay bills totaling fifty-two dollars, nor meet church school teacher Miss Smith's salary of \$45.00 a month (down from \$80.00 before the Depression). But somehow members did obtain a new electric clock for the church wall, perhaps in hopes of shortening Pastor Gordon's lengthy sermons.

In 1931 soldiers of the Imperial Army of Japan had invaded Manchuria in northern China and pressed southward toward Peking. A few years later Germany's new Reich-Chancellor Adolf Hitler annexed the Saar region to the Third Reich. In 1935 the Italian dictator Mussolini's Fascist troops occupied Ethiopia. Against this ominous background of world-wide aggression,

Elder Gordon began a Sunday series of meetings with the title “Is Another War Brewing?”

Using color stereopticon slides for his lectures, he packed the Summit Street church with Jackson citizens and explained to them the future in the light of Bible prophecy in February of 1935.

Indeed, the late-1930s presented many opportunities for Adventist evangelism. People were searching for answers to puzzling questions: Could the Depression happen again? Will present international tensions lead to war? Explaining the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, Adventist evangelists pointed men and women to the God behind history and prepared them for His soon coming.

Then in August of 1936 a new pastor arrived in Jackson. Tall, husky, round-faced, and shy, Elder Carl Pruitt, formerly a pastor at Lansing, brought his extroverted wife Ruby, a wonderful Sabbath school teacher, with him to serve not only Jackson’s 230 members, but also to superintend the needs of District #2 churches. Pastor Pruitt’s talent lay in administration. In his first year here, he welcomed deaconesses to the church board; began the first monthly newsletter; set up one emergency fund for a new furnace and another to pay church school teacher Ada Dean’s salary on time. He also arranged to have special seating for mothers with small children near the basement door.

“Expansion” and “Improvement” were the watchwords at Jackson during the late-1930s and ’40s. Elder Pruitt spearheaded a campaign to improve the basement school by installing a new Rexair air conditioner to fight the musty dampness; the board also hired Miss Effie Bell in 1938 to be the new teacher. When she discovered that the school room was poorly lighted, the playground neglected, and the library had only sixty-seven books in it (sixty-one of them old M.V. books), she persuaded the board to take immediate corrective measures. To pay for needed improvements, they doubled tuition from two to four dollars a month; began spending a dollar

per pupil each year on new books; and formed the first Home and School Society here with Mrs. Lucille Frank (the Dorcas director) as leader. As prosperity returned, the board in 1939 raised teacher Margaret Benedict's salary from \$55 to \$68 a month. Despite her repaired hare-lip, diminutive size, and tremendous homework burden for twenty-five pupils, Miss Benedict became one of Jackson's best-loved teachers. She later served as a missionary teacher in Africa for twenty-five years.

The late-1930s also witnessed many improvements at the Summit Street church. Regular church board meetings on the first Sunday night of each month doubled as school board sessions. The board members now evaluated students' qualifications to enter the school rather than allowing the teachers to do so as they had done for decades. The board also raised funds to put asbestos shingles on their thirty-year-old church and began scouting around for a larger church to purchase.

As money and other conveniences became easier to obtain after 1935, area Adventists flocked to Jackson for district meetings and social gatherings. A Sabbath school convention in February of 1936 brought members from ten area churches; many returned in July to hear the exciting mission stories that Elder G. F. Enoch (who had spent twenty years in India) had to tell. In the summer of 1937, responding to Lake Union President Carlyle B. Haynes' plea for 100 campgrounds laborers, many loaded their cars with mason's and carpenter's tools and sped north to put the roof on the new auditorium. Free meals and lodging plus social camaraderie made their hard work pleasant. In 1938 Jackson hosted a District #3 gathering for officers from ten area churches and a few months later, the M.V. officers convened here as well.

But Adventists here also reached out to Jackson's citizens. In the spring of 1937 they knocked on the doors of sixty homes with *Present Truth* pamphlets; weeks later they distributed

100 *Signs of the Times* subscriptions. Two new converts—Naomi and Charles Schoun—joined this church as a result of that campaign. Ever innovative, Pastor Pruitt received board approval in March of 1938 to begin regular religious radio broadcasts over station WIBM—probably the first Michigan Adventist pastor to use the radio for evangelism—and barely eight years after H.M.S. Richards had pioneered the Voice of Prophecy in California.

As war clouds gathered over Europe in 1939, Jackson members continued hosting rallies and conventions. M.V. and Dorcas officers from eighteen nearby churches came that winter for a weekend of special addresses, music, and panel discussions, and thrilled to hear the master story-teller himself—“Uncle” Arthur S. Maxwell—speak in the evening to wide-eyed youth. Also that spring believers here began a campaign to distribute 1000 sets of the New Era tracts all over the city.

Yet within the church, worldliness in many forms began to tempt the youth. One survey of 500 Adventist youth in 1939 revealed that forming friendships with non-Christian friends, reading novels, participating in competitive sports, attending movie theaters, going to public schools, listening to secular radio “thrillers,” or indulging in sexual impurity constituted the leading temptations for our young people. Sadly, a few Adventist youth in Jackson became involved in one or more of these temptations, leading the church board to remove their names from the church books—but always reluctantly. “We are always made sorrowful,” the church clerk wrote in April of 1938, “to have to take our members’ names from our books, and it is our earnest desire that they will someday return to the Lord.” “A revival of true godliness among our youth,” Elder Heppenstall had written, and adult examples of true Christianity, would solve these problems.

In 1940 as Hitler's war machine changed the political map of Europe, many changes came to the Jackson church as well. That fall the young Miss Hilda Habenicht, fresh from her medical training at the College of Medical Evangelists (now Loma Linda University), transferred her membership to Jackson, where she began her internship at Mercy Hospital. As a girl many years before, the frustration of watching her brother break his arm cranking up the family Model T Ford, and not being able to relieve his pain, had inspired her to take medicine to alleviate people's hurts. Other new faces in new positions included Helen Dornan as church music director; Beatrice Lamb as Sabbath school secretary; Eleanor Bather as Sabbath school and M.V. pianist; Minnie Nichols as Christian Home Council leader and Primary Sabbath School leader; and Fedelma Hart who assisted in both the new Cradle Roll and the new Kindergarten Sabbath Schools.

As the decade of the '40s dawned, new policies and practices were adopted here. Three ushers now seated and dismissed members before and after church. The "Blanket Plan" allowed each family to pay two dollars a month for tuition regardless of how many children they had in the church school. "Tin Can Bands" sallied forth to Ingather using the colorful new collection cans. For the first time in 1941, members voted by secret ballot for church officers. They started a Branch Sabbath School in Leslie that summer and formed a Bible Doctrines Class (led by Sister Mahrle on Wednesday evenings) to prepare themselves for giving Bible studies.

The year 1940 also saw a changing of the pastoral guard as Elder Pruitt left that spring for his new post in New Albany, Indiana. That summer the former pastor at Kalamazoo, Elder Arthur Lien, the small, blond-haired brother-in-law of former Jackson pastor Elder Gordon, arrived to shepherd the flock here. A deeply spiritual man, Elder Lien reminded members of the

importance of “living close to the standards of our church” so that our lives will influence others for good.

Pastor Lien was also a very friendly, gregarious man who loved social get-togethers. He loved to preside at weddings, and he invited Mr. Allen and his “Singing Policemen” to perform at Webb Hall for the benefit of Jackson’s church building fund. He also persuaded the board to form a junior deacons group; the youthful Walter Kyes and Elwin Drake were set aside for this ministry. To involve more youth in the church service, he encouraged the young, enthusiastic Eleanor Bather to form a junior choir as an addition to the senior choir of twelve members. Likewise, Anna Gordon’s Dorcas ladies sponsored a Junior Dorcas Society in 1942 on the thirty-fourth anniversary of Jackson’s first Dorcas Society, founded in 1908. Dorcas members included Fedelma Hart, Helen Dornan, Beatrice Lamb, and Anna Gordon. In the fall of 1940, these ladies hosted a district Dorcas Federation convention here.

As we shall see in Part 8, during the 1940s this church would devote increased attention to its youth, who would begin to play a more significant role in Sabbath school, church, and school activities for decades to come.

Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 8 [rev. ed. 2012]

“Progress” seemed to be the watchword for the Jackson church in the 1940s. Elder Lien reported in the *Herald* that “progress is being made” in the remodeling program. New buff-colored brick siding, new eaves troughs, and new cream-colored paint had been added to the Summit Street church; new window shades, desks, and bathroom fixtures had been installed in the school downstairs as well. “Our courage is good,” he declared. Thirteen recent baptisms raised church membership to 200 by the spring of 1941. On Sabbath, May 10, Adventists here sang hymns from their brand new black *Church Hymnals*, which quickly replaced the tattered *Christ in Song* books. With new pew racks to hold these hymnals, new curtains, tables, and chairs in the children’s Sabbath school rooms, and fresh paint throughout the building, Jackson Adventists felt proud indeed of their progress to date. Soon the Juniors, squeezed between the coal bin and the furnace room downstairs, installed a new piano in their department.

Inspired to witness, members started a Branch Sabbath School in Grass Lake which won two new converts (one of them Helen Good) in the fall of 1941. A book display at the YMCA sold over \$100 worth of Adventist literature a few weeks later. For Christmas that year, Eleanor Bather’s Junior Choir, attired in their new robes, shared a musical program with local citizens with songs and readings drawn from the *Desire of Ages*.

Despite the fact that the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7 had brought the U.S. into WWII, Jackson continued to be a quiet haven for spiritual convocations. Michigan M.V. and Youth Secretary R. R. Bietz awarded 73 honor badges and 12 pins to Jackson youth. In 1942 Elder G. M. Matthews led out in a Parents’ Institute showing what may have been the first motion pictures here in the evening. He gathered the young men into a “cadet meeting” to give them wise counsel about enlisting in President Franklin Roosevelt’s army.

During WWII, Jackson believers made several changes to their buildings and services. Improvements to their school—including installing new seats and desks and raising tuition to three dollars a month—raised their “D” rating to a “C” rating. Helen Dornan raised the money for a new electric reed organ that fall, while the board finally installed a good thermostat on the old furnace to regulate the heat. As war raged across Europe and the Pacific, Adventists here sent *Liberty Magazine* and 1000 *Present Truth* tracts to Jackson County’s thought leaders.

But in the spring of 1942, Elder Lien left to serve in the Alabama-Mississippi Conference. Taking his place in the pulpit was Lansing’s long-time pastor, Elder Harvey Shoup, a man who at sixty-two, still had a sprightly walk and a youthful air, and who, with his wife Marian and daughter Eunice, arrived just in time to acknowledge former pastor Carl Pruitt’s beautiful gift of a large painting of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. Elder Shoup’s forte was personal work with his members. “Pastoral visitation was recreation to him,” his son Max later recalled. He encouraged local M.V. leader Ruth Gordon to attend the Pan-American Youth Congress in San Francisco and to share her exciting reports with Jackson’s young people.

With local citizens seeking meaning to the carnage they read about in the papers, Elder Shoup began using the *Citizen-Patriot* to advertise his Bible prophecy lectures over radio station WIBM that spring. Despite gas rationing, an overflow crowd of Dorcas ladies also crammed the chapel in October of 1942 when W. A. Higgins spoke, necessitating the installation of a loud speaker in the basement for all to hear.

District meetings also continued despite wartime hardships. Jackson hosted Sabbath school and Ingathering groups. Conference Sabbath School secretary Edith Shepard awarded the Jackson Sabbath school a coveted “A” rating. Meanwhile the youth here mounted brand new

speakers on their automobiles and pushed this church way over its Ingathering goals. In the fall of 1942, Elder Shoup baptized twelve souls from Adrian and Helen Good in Jackson.

The war brought about further changes in 1943-44. The school board consented to pay teacher Margaret Benedict's "Victory Tax" (\$3.75) and voted \$40.00 to mail literature to soldiers at Camp Berkley, Texas; they also accepted War Bonds donated for the church building fund. For the first time, this church installed a public address system, and with the economy booming, raised school tuition to five dollars a month.

"Expansion" and "improvement" were the watchwords here in the mid-1940s. Growth in the Primary Department required twenty-five new songbooks in 1943. Miss Benedict's salary now topped \$82.00 a month as she faced a classroom crammed with twenty-six pupils (despite the fact that the city code permitted only twenty-two per classroom). Members invested \$1400 in a new Hammond organ to replace their worn-out reed organ; visitors declared that it lent an "atmosphere of reverence" to divine services.

As the war drew to its close in 1945, Jackson members hosted conventions for canvassers, home mission work, the parent-teacher association, and temperance. Adventists discovered that their government-issued ration stamps would also buy groceries at camp meeting that summer! Their children, however, expressed disappointment that Lake Union President Carlyle Haynes had vetoed all sales of ice cream and candy until the war ended—and had forbidden them to bring their dogs and radios onto the grounds. The young Beatrice Lamb recalled that rainy summer: living in leaky tents, heating meals on Coleman gas stoves, spooning down soup and applesauce ("always soup and applesauce!" she exclaimed), racing for those morning showers (only the early birds got the warm water!), and slogging through endless mud to attend the children's tent meetings. But at least there was a camp meeting that summer of

1944. Because of government restrictions on travel in 1945, the Lake Union held only small, regional camp meetings.

That spring, however, Jackson members were delighted by the visit of President Taylor Bunch, who brought with him Elder and Mrs. Sherman, former medical missionaries to Venezuela for thirty-four years and now en route to Cuba. The Shermans shared marvelous mission stories, including tales of the 40,000 human teeth they had extracted in 1944 alone (over 100 teeth a day!). That fall the local Dorcas Federation hosted a district meeting at which Elder W. A. Butler of the General Conference and Elder Rankin Wentland from the Michigan Conference spoke.

With war-time restrictions removed in 1945, the church board voted to have the chapel entirely rewired and to install an automatic oil heater in the school, which was growing by leaps and bounds in the post-war “baby boom” era. The school board voted to bid \$5200 for some school property on West Michigan and West Avenue, then raised school teacher Esther Alkire’s salary to \$114 a month. Meanwhile, the church board voted to make a bid on a church lot (70’x124’) at West Franklin and Seventh Streets. With a church full of generous members and a school bulging with eager students, Jackson members faced the post-war era with confidence and optimism.

Consequently, Jackson’s 193 members looked forward to the year 1946 with relief and joy. M.V. and Investiture meetings as well as church and school picnics at Pleasant Lake continued to be great fun for everyone. Hilda and Frederica Habenicht and Bill and Helen Dornan loved to have the youth over for winter sleigh rides and hot chocolate or for summer picnics at Cascades Park. At their country home, Wendell and Eleanor Bather with daughter Nancy treated their Sabbath school friends to delicious meals of tomatoes and gravy and toast

and took them roller skating. “It was heaven!” Evi Stiles remembered. “She was a saint! She was the absolute salvation of us kids!”

In the spring of 1946, Michigan Sabbath School director Edith Shepard filled both church and Sabbath school services, rejoicing to see that the children’s divisions already had \$24.00 of Investment funds on hand and that the new Jackson Bible Correspondence School had 6000 people enrolled with 136 letters every day pouring in. Jackson Adventists’ reputation for zealous witnessing brought frequent speakers from the Michigan, Lake Union, and General Conference here. Occasionally, the Adelpian Academy choir sang for services, and local believers hosted a weekend Child Evangelism Institute that spring. In short order, Elder Shoup baptized six youth.

But those six baptisms could not compare with the amazing results wrought by the arrival in June of 1946 of a tall, slim, smiling gentleman with a British accent. Emmanuel Missionary College teacher and budding evangelist George Vandeman began his very first series of meetings that summer at the Masonic Temple next to the Baptist Church. Those meetings would forever change the Jackson Church in many ways. With Vandeman came a really sharp, dedicated team of fourteen college students and adults who led out in the song services, played the piano and Hammond organ, visited attendees, and gave Bible studies. All the women dressed in spotless white outfits; the men dressed in black suits. Soon 775 citizens packed the Masonic hall to capacity each Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday evening to hear about the image of Daniel 2 and the “beasts” of Daniel 7, 8, and 9.

Desperate for additional help, Elder Vandeman called William Harbour from La Sierra College and Jackson pastor Shoup to assist him in preaching. The stocky, red-faced Robert Boothby, Beatrice Lamb’s cousin, led the rousing song service every night, his booming baritone voice filling the hall, and tiny Evi Stiles (nicknamed “half-pint”) sang for the meetings.

By late July, despite fierce Baptist opposition to the meetings next door, the hall proved too small for the capacity crowds, so the board voted to rent St. John's Evangelical Congregational Church in town. Leaders also began a series of cottage (or home) meetings all over the city. As the meetings continued into September, October, and November, baptisms mounted: 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 new members joined the church! Incredulous, Michigan Conference President Taylor Bunch rushed down from Lansing to see this phenomenon for himself; he told Elder Shoup that he'd better start building a new church, since the Summit Street chapel could never hold 250 people! In December Elder Vandeman concluded his seven-month evangelistic spectacular with a resounding chorus from the Emmanuel Missionary College choir.

The results of this one evangelistic campaign surpassed anything ever seen in the history of the Jackson Church: fifty-six baptisms at Grass Lake in 1946 and 1947. New converts in 1946 included Bill Dornan, Iva Hamisfar, and Vivian Bliesath; during 1947 Gordon Harris, Bill and Lola Rockwell, and Stella La Mott joined this church. Within the next four or five years, teenagers like Merlin and Cynthia Hart, John Lamb, Don and Dianna Harris, Loveva Rockwell, Jeanette Hamisfar, and Rex Waters also joined this church.

Sandwiched among the commitments to evangelism in 1946, local members hosted a cooking school at the YMCA. Guests sat at tables decorated with scarlet gladiolas; they enjoyed informative lectures and plenty of good eating, including Choplets, roasts, patties, chili, and chop suey. Many of these succulent recipes were gathered together and published in a new booklet entitled "Our Community Exchange of Favorite Recipes" that fall.

But the really pressing issue facing members in 1947 was when and where and how to build the desperately needed church. It had taken thirty-six years (1854-1890) to outgrow their first church, twenty-one years (1890-1911) to outgrow their second church, and thirty-five years

(1911-1946) to outgrow their third chapel. The board voted to purchase two lots on the corner of Bowen and Franklin Streets for \$2800, thankful that “Providence has made this possible.” They also agreed to put \$800 down on three lots at Washington and Eighteenth Streets for building a new school. They divided themselves into nine bands—masons, landscapers, builders, furnishers, plumbers, painters, carpenters, roofers, and electricians—to raise money for the building fund. By March they had over \$3500, but with Elder Vandeman’s personal help, they had surpassed \$14,800 by November. To raise money, they sold nearly everything not nailed down: the lot on Seventh Street, old jewelry, fresh fruit, quilts, government bonds, even old Bibles.

Meanwhile, they devoted ever more attention to their youth. They hired as teachers Effie Bell, then Charles Felton, and then the beautiful Esther Alkire (whom two pupils once caught holding hands with her boyfriend during prayer in church!). Teachers now received \$150 a month. In the Sabbath school rooms, dedicated teachers like Olga Arentz taught her Kindergarten kids to love Jesus. In the spring of 1947, Jackson’s young people even planned their own Week of Prayer.

In 1948 Jackson members blazed new trails and tried new methods. The board chose Helen Dornan to prepare the first church bulletins so that all announcements could be printed and not read from the front. Alfred McCauley became the first “News Reporter” (or P.R. secretary) for this church. The building fund topped \$11,000 just as members said goodbye to Elder Shoup and hello to the friendly, outgoing Elder A. K. Phillips, an excellent public speaker, who became their new pastor that spring. With him came his wife Austa and their three sons Monty, Max, and Marshall. A family “dearly loved by all,” the Phillips were active in church work and were all “lots of fun.” That winter, Adventists opened a new health food store—Dewey’s Health

Foods—at 320 Fernwood Avenue. It marketed a wide variety of meat substitutes from Loma Linda, Worthington, Madison, and Battle Creek, plus unsulfured molasses and whole grain cereals to please the palates of everyone.

But the really big news in 1948 concerned the drawing up of blueprints for a new church and school. After Elder Phillips had surpassed this church's Ingathering goal of \$2000 in only two weeks (by organizing singing, tin can, field day, and Sunday morning bands), there appeared to be nothing he could not accomplish. Additional funds for building the church and school came from the Veterans of the Civil War, who purchased the old Summit Church. This enabled the school board to put \$4400 down for the Madison-Clinton Street property. They also raised tuition to \$4.50 a month (grades 1-4), \$5.50 (grades 5 & 6), and \$6.50 (grades 7 & 8)—with non-Adventists paying twice those rates—and hired Mr. and Mrs. Henry Williams as the new teachers that fall at the princely salaries of \$233 a month. While architect Holmes of Lansing drew up the blueprints for a new school, Jackson's youth attended the rented Harrington School on McCain Road for 1948-49, where third grader Loveva Rockwell enjoyed ice skating on a pond across the road with her friends at recess time.

Planning for this new school interested just about everyone, it seems. Elder Phillips met with Lake Union President W. A. Nelson, Michigan President G. E. Hutches, and other Conference officials to discuss the blueprints, which called for a two-room school. Inevitable delays (doesn't "SDA" mean "some delay always"?) postponed ground-breaking ceremonies until October of 1948 when church elder William Videto and Pastor A. K. Phillips turned the first two shovelfuls of sod for the new 45'x100' school. A choir sang "God Bless America," Mr. Videto read the forty-nine-year history of Adventist education in Jackson (1899-1948), and the

mayor of Jackson spoke on the need for Christian schools. But new plans soon called for three classrooms, an office, kitchen, utility room, and a gymnasium at a cost of \$50,000.

Soon the entire town grew excited about the new school rising in its midst. The *Citizen-Patriot* gave it full photo-coverage in 33,000 homes. The pastor of St. James Cathedral commended Adventists for building the school, for its fine press relations, and for Adventists' tithe-paying habits. A fund-raising committee, led by the pastor with help from Fedelma Hart, Bill Dornan, and others, raised \$25,000 to complete the first two-classroom unit by January of 1949. By now Jackson's 265 members had scores of school-age children who could hardly wait to enter the spacious new building.

With excitement mounting, the Jackson church became not only "the talk of the town and of the Michigan Conference, [but also] of the Lake Union as well." Four local widows gave \$500 apiece for the building fund, leading church clerk Fedelma Hart to exclaim, "Our hats off to the widows. May the Lord bless them." On Thursday, April 28, 1949, the board met for the first time inside the roughly completed school. They voted to begin building the new church on Franklin Street the following week! As we've seen many times from 1849 to 1949, "let there be no delay" has always been Jackson's motto! Members formed work bees to paint the school's interior rooms.

In the spring of 1949, the church board hired a Grand Rapids architect to draw up blueprints for the new \$80,000 church. Members adopted the 2% church expense plan to help pay for it. By the end of the summer, they had over \$4500 on hand and no unpaid bills.

That fall, sixty-six students enrolled in the new school—double the number who had matriculated in 1948—and classes began in a building now absolutely free of debt. How proud students felt of its red brick exterior with white trim, its spacious halls and two-tone green walls,

its asphalt tile floors, steam-heated rooms, and remote-controlled lighting system (a first in the city of Jackson). The students reveled in their huge playground lot for softball games and twirled on the new merry-go-round. Miss Grace Francisco (grades 1-4), Mrs. Church (grades 5-8), and Mr. J. B. Church (grades 9 & 10) also rejoiced in the modern facilities in which they taught, as did Mrs. Wilkinson when she came a year later.

Everyone who visited the area commended Adventists for their zeal in raising so much money so quickly. These included such General Conference figures as African missionary Elder Henry Brown, Sabbath School director Elder L. L. Moffitt, and the world-famous former head-hunter and cannibal Kata Rangoso. This six-and-a-half foot tall son of a Solomon Island chief, with his black fuzzy hair and bare feet, came to the school to share exciting stories of his brave actions during WWII to save American lives from the Japanese. Then the king of story-tellers himself—Elder Arthur S. Maxwell—made a second visit here to share stories with students at the new school.

As the 1950s dawned, the Jackson SDA Church and school entered a “golden era” of rapid growth, spiritual zeal, and financial prosperity never before witnessed in its 100-year history. That will be the focus of our attention in Part 9.

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 9 [rev. ed. 2012]

The biggest attention-getter in Jackson for 1949-50, of course, was the new church going up at 1101 West Franklin Street. During 1949, members raised \$2000 *every month* toward this church, and at *one* September business meeting, they pledged \$5,350 more! By Christmas the structure stood tall, lacking only a roof, which superintendent Charles Mattingly said two weeks' labor would complete.

Meanwhile, all other facets of witnessing went forward. Elder Phillips taught a baptismal class of twenty students at the school following his week of prayer meetings in November; five church ladies, burdened for unconverted husbands, met in private homes to pray half an hour before evening Week of Prayer meetings; a young mother's group met at Fedelma Hart's home to discuss Ellen White's principles on rearing children (here Neva Harris often brought up problems she faced with little Don and Dianne, and older mothers gave her sage advice). The Dorcas Society, led by Fedelma Hart, packed fifteen food baskets for Thanksgiving and raised \$260 at "penny suppers," where members enjoyed dinners, singing around the piano, and marches. Elder Phillip's regular "Sunday Vesper Hour" radio broadcasts on Station WIBM at the Hayes Hotel studio continued winning souls; and members distributed 1000 *Signs of the Times* that year and planned to send out 3000 Voice of Prophecy Radio Logs in 1950.

Impressed with the new school, the Veterans of Foreign Wars donated a flagpole, while local businessmen gave four flags. The schoolchildren, led by teachers Jane Van Arsdale and Virgil Lewis, raised over \$300 with films, refreshments, and Christmas card sales to pay for new window shades, while their parents joined one of twelve Ingathering bands (named for the twelve tribes of Israel), sang the four stanzas of a new song composed by Eliza Kaun, and set out to raise \$2500 in the spring of 1950.

Meanwhile, as builders continued making interior refinements at the new church, believers met at the local Masonic Hall throughout 1950. They led a Teachers Training Course with Elder H. K. Halladay that spring; hosted two Sabbath school training courses later that fall; and once again welcomed evangelist George Vandeman who began a week-long campaign at the First Baptist Church on South Jackson Street in October. In the summer of 1951, thirteen of Jackson's youth were baptized as members prepared to occupy their new church soon.

That spring the board voted to buy new dark brown pews and furniture, but allowed Hilda Habenicht and Helen Dornan to choose the light fixtures. Finally, on July 7, 1951, the new church hosted an all-day, open-door service inviting guests to see their newly installed pews, freshly sanded oak floors, Hammond organ, and the new P.A. system, making "the acoustics in this building...as nearly perfect as mechanically possible." Even the *Citizen-Patriot* bragged about its newest church in town: pews for 300 people, a rear balcony, a choir loft and side rooms, the pastor's large study, a book and Bible library, a Dorcas room, several children's Sabbath school rooms, and the glassed-in "cry room" for mothers with small children. The newspaper called special attention to the \$2000 stained glass windows with real marble sills and the gas-fired hot water heating system, the best of its kind in the city.

The summer of 1951 also witnessed two baptismal services in Grass Lake with sixteen baptized; \$265 raised in one Dorcas rummage sale; a Youth Crusade meeting which was described as "an inspiration to [all] the church." Members rejoiced when the church school, led by the very strict principal Mr. Wilkinson (who taught grades 7-10) and Miss Louise Unruh (who taught grades 1-6), passed Michigan superintendent H. R. Nelson's inspection that fall.

Also that fall, Pastor Phillips was elected secretary of the Jackson Ministerial Association. He began a series of evangelistic meetings at the new church with music by Mr.

and Mrs. Reo Clyde and short talks by Dr. L. G. Sevens. Many non-Adventists attended these meetings, especially after Pastor Phillips personally visited all the families in the church neighborhood and gave them a copy of the book *Your Friends the Adventists*.

Elder Phillip's reputation as a builder-promoter-evangelist soon earned him a promotion in Lansing—as Michigan Conference Home Missionary Secretary. On his last Sabbath in Jackson, he baptized ten new members into this church. Yet for years to come, weddings and funerals would bring him back to the church that loved him so much.

From St. Paul, Minnesota, came the black walnut fudge man, Elder Clyde B. Newmyer, to take his place in February of 1952. Clyde brought his wife Mable and sons Clyde, Jr., George, and Walter, and daughters Mable, Loretta, and Marjorie. To help their six children through academy and college, the Newmyers made rich, succulent, chocolate brown fudge loaded with black walnuts and sold it along the roadside. As pastor of a 260-member church, Elder Newmyer had plenty to do. He met every month with the church board (in the basement to save heating expense); organized "penny suppers" and vanilla sales for the building fund; exhorted members to reach their high Ingathering goal of nearly \$5000; arranged the purchase of 125 folding chairs from Grand Ledge for Jackson's booming children's Sabbath school population; and helped install the new P.A. system.

In fact Elder Newmyer had so many responsibilities here that in October he asked young Stuart Snyder to come as assistant pastor. Snyder was the first of a long line of pastoral assistants which soon included Louis Brown, Jim Wyckoff, Clarence Bracebridge, Stanley Schlemaker, George Belleau, and Milo Sawvell. Each added something unique to the church's witnessing program. George and Barb Belleau, for example, started summer Ingathering at the resort areas with church youth in 1954-55. The Belleaus also planned special prayer meetings,

swimming picnics, and home parties for the young people on Saturday evenings. Stan Schlembaker sang tenor in the Michigan Conference Quartet in 1956-57, while Milo and Marion Sawvell began one of Jackson's most active Pathfinder clubs. Soon Conference M.V. Secretary Fred Beaven was making frequent trips here to invest boys and girls with pins, badges, and scarves. That summer Lloyd Kidder and his family, who had given up a large, lucrative Ohio farm managerial position, arrived to begin canvassing in Jackson. Early in the fall, Elder Newmyer's evangelistic campaign in town had already converted three new members.

During 1953 the church split itself once again into the twelve tribes of Israel to raise another \$5000 for the building fund as the church debt hit \$20,000, a new high. For many, that year brought many happy memories: the lovely musical program by the Adelpian Girls' Glee Club; beautiful and impressive weddings of Marjory Ford and Gordon Harris in June and Beverly Newman and Max Barton in July—with Elder Phillips presiding at both. Certainly everyone rejoiced at the fifteen baptismal candidates (including Glen and Mary Dunlap and Eugene Harris) whom Elder Newmyer and Stuart Snyder added to the church that year, raising the membership tally to 260 and making Jackson the ninth largest church in the Conference.

In 1954 over at the church school, teacher Arlene Moore transferred from Saginaw to replace Irma Martin, and from 1954 to 1957, "Tiny" (as her friends at EMC called her) taught grades 3-6 here. The pastoral assistants also played musical chairs as Stuart Snyder left for Cheboygan; Mar Allred left to become Conference publishing secretary; and Paul Muffo, an Adrian schoolteacher, came to replace him. That spring of 1954, Elder H. K. Halladay and Mrs. Burbank directed a Dorcas Federation here for district leaders and Elder Newmyer began evangelistic meetings with Mr. and Mrs. Georges Belleau assisting. That June, Mercedes

Habenicht and Fred Dyer became the first couple to be married in the new Franklin Street church.

Older Sabbath school leaders will probably recall the establishment that spring of JATE—the Jackson Area Teachers’ Exchange, possibly the first regular district Sabbath school teachers’ convention in Michigan. Under the leadership of chairwoman Mrs. Frank Fiebelkorn, JATE invited all Sabbath school teachers (Cradle Roll through Senior divisions) from within a fifty-mile radius to come to Jackson to hear interesting presentations by Elder and Mrs. Grau, Elder Halladay, and Everett Johnson from the Michigan Conference office. “The kind hospitality and assistance of the Jackson members and officers,” Mrs. Fiebelkorn wrote, “helped to make these meetings a huge success with a large attendance.” Even more teachers came in July to see the new display of Sabbath school teaching aids; then returned in September to hear how birthday and mission stories could be made more interesting with audio-visual aids; then they scissored their way through felts and pictures at Fedelma Hart’s Sabbath school “lab” in December, enjoying once more the delicious hospitality of the supper served by the Junior Ladies Sabbath School. More delicious food was served that fall at the weddings of EMC student Nancy Bather and South Bend teacher Robert Greve (all dressed in white) and Shirley Bishop and Louis Gordon; again, Elder Phillips presided at both weddings.

Under the dynamic leadership of Jackson’s new pastor, Elder Clyde Newmyer, the watchword for the late-1950s was “Go forth and baptize!” With the help of assistant pastor George Belleau and then William Brown, Newmyer baptized over forty converts, bringing the church membership up to 256. These new members included John Backus, Mr. and Mrs. Harold West, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Kidder, and youth like Stan Stilson, Larry Stark, and Carl LaRoe. Other Adventists who moved to Jackson in the late-1950s included Charles and Naomi Schoun,

Joan LaRoe, and Ola Robinson, the much-loved new church school teacher, who brought his wife Grace from Plymouth, Indiana.

The Jackson Area Teachers' Exchange met quarterly at the church to acquaint Sabbath school teachers with new audio-visual materials, songs, and spiritual exercises for all the children's divisions. Area leaders included the stern but excellent Wilma Titus of Bunker Hill; the ever-smiling favorite Fedelma Hart of Jackson; and the intellectual chemist Clarence Sarr of Midland. They met on Sabbath afternoons to discuss how to make the Bible lovable for kids; they watched inspiring films like "This Way to Heaven" and "Treasure for the Saviour"; and they shared creative ideas for bulletin boards, flannel graphs, and lesson helps. Sessions often emphasized mission, as in the spring of 1957 when the film "Our Unfinished Business in Africa" was shown; sometimes children's choirs—like the junior choir from Grand Ledge—visited and sang. These sessions provided much spiritual fellowship for area Sabbath school teachers, inspiring them to use their talents to win boys and girls to Jesus. Some of Jackson's best teachers in the 1950s included Doris Slayton (who spent hours and hours and literally thousands of dollars of her own money in preparing Cradle Roll, Kindergarten, and Primary materials for thirty years, assisted by the young and charming Loveva Rockwell); Neva Harris, excellent Kindergarten teacher; Fedelma Hart (whose home was always open for Sabbath school potlucks and who made Junior Sabbath school so fascinating); and Mel and Elizabeth St. John. Of course, everyone loved "Sunshine," as Eleanor Bather was nicknamed, for her piano and organ music and choir leadership. She was, as John and Roberta Ross put it, "Queen of Music at Jackson. We couldn't do without her."

Boys and girls who know and love Jesus first in their lives become young men and women committed to Christ and to His church, so that when they make commitments to each

other in marriage, Jesus is a permanent partner. In no period of Jackson's history did so many couples join hands in Christian matrimony as during the 1950s and 1960s: Ruth Gordon and Clayton Kinney in 1955; Barbara Herr and John Lamb in 1956; Nancy Johnston and Harold Rachine, Marian Greanya and Merlin Hart, Arlene Moore and Bob Bliesath--all in 1957; Marjorie Newmyer and Lucas Camp in 1958. In 1961, the ever-smiling Barbara Sanderson, baptized months earlier by Elder Williams, wed the quiet artist Donald Harris. 1962 witnessed the unions of Betty Decamp and John Paradis, Jerilou Johnston and Nels Hill, Cynthia Hart and William Moors. In 1964 Roberta Bliesath wed Bradley Litchfield, followed a year later by the wedding of Judith Ellingwood to Melvin St. John.

In addition to the fellowship they enjoyed at baptisms, teachers exchange meetings, and weddings, Jackson members followed Paul's admonition not "to forsake the assembling of themselves together" for spiritual feasts and sharing as well. They gathered in the spring of 1956 to hear Elder W. A. Scharffenberg, executive secretary of the American Temperance Society, speak on the dangers of smoking and drinking and the great benefits to be gained by living a healthful life. Elder Scharffenberg, by the way, chose to speak *only* at Battle Creek, Andrews University, and Jackson! Elder Ernest Edwards, associate secretary of the General Conference Home Missionary Department, addressed area pastors in February of 1957 on winning souls more effectively. No doubt Elder Newmyer paid special attention to those remarks, for in April of 1959 he baptized nineteen new members on one Sabbath.

The church bulletins for this era show that Jackson had an active M.V. Society meeting Sabbath afternoons at the Madison School, with rousing song services led by Bud Patchin; a regular Wednesday evening prayer meeting group studying *Ministry of Healing* led by George Belleau with candles lit and soft music in the background; frequent social gatherings for youth

and young married couples led by the St. Johns and Belleaus; as well as occasional baby dedications and home and school recitations with Loveva Rockwell and friends giving poems and readings.

Then on May 16, 1959, this chapel was solemnly dedicated to God's service debt-free. Those of you who were here have fond memories of that high day. J. C. Wyckoff led a rousing song service with Helen Dornan at the organ; Elder A. K. Phillips gave the invocation and Elder Clyde Newmyer welcomed members and guests. After Elder Robert Williams offered prayer, the Michigan Quartet (Bob Williams, Charles Danforth, William Brown, and Tedford Rasmussen) sang. Elder Phillips then gave a brief history of the Jackson Church, followed by the mortgage burning ceremony, led by Mrs. Frederica Habenicht. Lake Union Conference President Jere Smith preached the sermon. Then Elder Newmyer led the congregation in reciting the dedicatory vow. After an organ and piano duet by Helen Dornan and Sylvia Neu and the sharing of Minnie Nichols' original poem "Dedication Prayer," Dr. Perry called for a thank offering and Elder Shoup closed with the benediction.

For four years, Jackson members had given \$20,000 every year in anticipation of this great day of dedicating their church to God debt-free. Mrs. Phillips called this sacrifice of \$80,000—at the same time they were erecting a new church school and furnishing it—a "miracle indeed!" Amazingly, while those saints of Jackson sixty years ago raised funds for a new school and a new church, their tithes and regular offerings continued to go up also! "Not one felt that he had less (for this sacrifice)," Mrs. Phillips wrote, "but many expressed feeling greatly blessed spiritually, physically, and financially." Is there any project, plan, or program too big for the Jackson Church? Look at your past history and with confidence in Christ, go forward with holy boldness into your future!

Rededicating themselves as well as their church to the unfinished task of spreading the gospel, Adventists here in the 1950s and '60s freely gave of their time and funds. "We have found the Jackson Church," wrote Elder Phillips at the Lansing office, "always [eager] and ready to reach all conference goals." During the summer of 1956, for example, members had pledged to send 240 subscriptions to *Liberty Magazine* to area thought leaders. In January of 1960 they helped change Michigan Governor Williams' mind so that Adventist engineers would not have to take their qualifying exams on Sabbath.

In the spring of 1960, Jackson's new pastor, first tenor Robert Williams of Ann Arbor, invited evangelists Robert Boothby and Charles Hendrixson to begin intensive evangelistic meetings six nights weekly at the County Building on South Jackson and Wesley Streets. Their team also included Elder Tedford Rassmussen and Norman Middag as well as the young intern Milo Sawvel. Public interest in Adventism ran so high that before the month ended, TRV Channel 10 began airing "Faith for Today" every Sabbath morning at 8:30 a.m. Shortly thereafter, Elden Walters and Gordon Henderson erected a "bubble tent" (an air conditioned balloon auditorium) on the Madison school grounds and held a series of meetings during which Marlene Cooper and little Patsy Ross were baptized.

During the 1960s, Jackson Adventists would continue using some traditional methods of following up these evangelistic interests, but they also pioneered new techniques of outreach as well. Ingathering, as always, continued each fall and winter. The Rosses loved to pack couples and their kids in automobiles, go out for two hours, then have a party afterwards. At the end of the campaign, the new, indefatigable PR secretary, Marlene Cooper, thanked local citizens for helping to raise \$6300 in the 1964 campaign. Jackson also continued emphasizing good health and temperance, inviting Elder Michael Jones of the General Conference Temperance

Department here in the fall of 1963 to show the shocking film “Becky,” a real tear-jerker about a little girl struck and killed by a drunk driver while peddling home on her bike with a new puppy.

Yet as we will see in Part 10, the 1960s—a decade of radical changes across America—demanded new church outreach programs as well, and Jackson Adventists were ready to move with the times and innovate many creative witnessing programs.

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 10 [rev. ed. 2012]

The 1960s—a decade of radical changes across America—demanded new church outreach programs as well. Adapting to these demands, the Jackson Church sponsored its first local Vacation Bible School from June 15 to 19, 1964, with the theme, “The Bible—God’s Word.” Daily meetings from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. featured rousing song services, a flag ceremony, a story hour with the soft-spoken, ever-smiling, silver-haired new pastor Elder Orville Scully, as well as Bible study, games, and crafts. Nearly 120 wiggly children showed up! They were divided into 10 nursery children (with Mrs. Scully), 51 Kindergarteners (with Mrs. Brueggeman), 46 Primaries (with Fedelma Hart), and 12 Juniors (with Arlene Bliesath). To continue this excellent neighborhood witness, the 25 teachers and helpers planned a Tuesday morning crafts and Bible school session for the rest of the summer.

The other innovative witnessing program, first begun in August of 1965, featured the church and school booths at the Jackson County Fair. Exhibits on temperance, smoking, and cancer were planned that summer with Marlene Cooper, Don Harris, Cecil and Carol DeLong, and Glen Dunlap forming the organizing committee. Over 1100 people saw at least one of the three temperance films shown, 100 signed up for Bible studies, and over 2400 pieces of free literature were distributed. Mrs. Cooper, herself a smoker for twelve years before becoming an Adventist, urged the church to follow this fairgrounds outreach with a Five-Day Plan.

These marvelous Five-Day Plans, whereby physicians and pastors cooperated to save men and women from smoking habits and point them to Jesus, often took place at Health and Welfare Centers, which Elder Scully firmly believed in and supported. Certainly Jackson members could be proud of their new center at 109 Lydia Street after spending \$5000 to remodel this old house in 1965.

Here active Dorcas women, including Mrs. Lloyd Keenen, Dema Simot, and Stella LaMott, packed 22 cartons of clothing in January and drove to Kentucky to distribute them personally to 20 needy families. “What we’ve done so far is just a drop in the bucket,” they wrote in the *Citizen-Patriot*, urging local residents to send clothing, shoes, and kitchen items for their next trip. Donations poured in, and on the next trip, Mrs. Simot took 800 food and clothing items plus 150 pieces of literature and Bible course lessons with her. But the desperate needs of Appalachian families compelled her to go once more in February of 1965 with 1800 food and clothing items for 45 families. Then in May she drove the lonely 1000-mile trip again, this time with 2000 articles of clothing, 325 pieces of literature, and 44 Bible study guides, helping 273 members of 60 families.

For their unselfish ministry to Appalachia’s poverty-stricken unemployed families, these four women received in writing United States President Lyndon B. Johnson’s personal commendations, for as the President waged a “War on Poverty” in the 1960s, he recognized in the Adventist Dorcas Associations an ally to relieve “the plight of others less fortunate.” Central Michigan Federation leader Fedelma Hart also received Conference awards as one of the outstanding “Laymen of the Year” in 1961 and 1965.

Yet amidst all this doing of good works to help others, Adventists here did not forget to give their own children high priority, for they knew that to neglect the spiritual and social welfare of their youth would jeopardize the future of this church. Every summer, members helped boys and girls go to Camp Au Sable to hike, swim, and worship with other Christian boys and girls, and in the fall, families returned there for church camps as well. Since 1957 Jackson had sponsored an active Junior Choir, dressed in new choir robes and singing from new songbooks.

During the 1960s, they sacrificed to give their youth the best in social, educational, and spiritual guidance. Sabbath school teachers in February of 1960 invited Elder Vernon Flory of the Lake Union to teach them how to make senior youth Sabbath school more appealing to young adults. He spoke to teachers who had come from a 50-mile radius to participate in this four-day session. Sabbath school leaders also invited the man with all the best films—Elder Grau—to bring mission films like “Cry of New Guinea” and “Our Unfinished Business in Africa” to inspire their youth with missionary zeal. And they provided generously for the local Pathfinder Club, the Dan Palmer Blacksmiths, led by George and Barb Belleau in the 1950s and John and Roberta Ross in the 1960s. In fact, John and Roberta became Pathfinder leaders here in 1965 even before their membership had been transferred from Hillsdale. They led in many memorable campouts, including one at Pleasant Lake where the preaching service took place from a boat on the lake and the day ended with a roaring campfire. With Bill Moors’ help, the Pathfinders also executed precision marching drills in the new gym. During one such drill, they shocked Carol Delong by marching right up to her seat and presenting her with a dozen red roses in gratitude for her help in their crafts projects! In May 1965, under Juanita Ashlock’s leadership, the Dan Palmer Blacksmiths took the trophy and fourteen first-place ribbons at the Pathfinder Fair in Lansing’s Civic Center.

But most of all, Jackson members, seeing Christian education as preparation for heavenly citizenship, gave and gave for their church school, which by the fall of 1956 had reached its peak enrollment of over 100 students. Principal and ninth grade teacher Neal VanderWall and teacher Dean Flint, a really persuasive “go-getter” (who helped pay for four new buses out of his own pocket funds) led their pupils in outreach witnessing activities to the neighborhood around Clinton and Madison Streets. In the fall of 1962 the 40 students of grades 4-9, “armed with litter

bags and home-made spears to spike scrap paper, blitzed the area” of all debris, winning citizens commendations. At Christmas time, the students chose to “adopt” a local poor family rather than to exchange gifts, showering \$45.00 in presents, clothing, and a food basket on this adopted family at a school party. The *Citizen-Patriot* gave full photo coverage to this unselfish action.

In the spring of 1963, Pastor Bob Williams left for Lodi, California, and a new pastor from Detroit, the short, balding Elder Don Copsey, arrived to preach plain, forthright sermons here. He also raised funds for a new school and had the church completely redecorated. For Halloween that year, he had the schoolchildren gather, not candy and cookies, but 556 cans of food and 144 articles of clothing, learning how to deny their own appetites to do good for others more needy. As this is the first time the *Lake Union Herald* published an article on can-gooding at Halloween time, it may show that Jackson’s youth pioneered this form of outreach in Michigan. The top can gatherers in the 1960s were Terry Copsey, Martha Schoun, John and Beth Pawson, Mark Brown, Don West, Jodi Blackerby, and Carol Bliesath.

The 1960s also saw the rise of some of Jackson’s newest and most talented members to positions of responsibility. Donna Mayo, who with her husband Bob and their three adorable kids (Ricky, Sandy, and Patty) joined this church in 1965, soon became known as “an excellent” Sabbath school leader in both children’s and senior divisions. John Ross—a Sabbath school leader, lay activities leader, and Pathfinder director—with his wife Roberta—by turns church clerk, Sabbath school superintendent, teacher, deaconess, and treasurer—provided warm-hearted, uplifting examples for our youth, and often blended their voices in songs that, quite honestly, brought tears to many eyes.

When the talented teenager Donny Harris—who had, you may recall, once given his mother growing pains—matured and married Barb Sanderson, others began to take note of his

God-given artistic talents. Sometime in 1965, Elder Scully told Don that the church board had chosen him to paint a colorful backdrop for the new baptismal tank installed upstairs in the chapel as a part of an ambitious \$10,000 project to paint, panel, and carpet the chapel and Sabbath school rooms, add new chandeliers, a new PA system, and a new organ with chimes. Church treasurer Inez Morris, in fact, offered to pay all the expenses of the renovation project, which required weeks of careful planning, ordering a special linen from Belgium, a special primer, and wood for a frame. Glen Dunlap helped Don construct this 6.5'x9' frame, which was so large that it barely fit into the basement of the new home the newlyweds had rented.

As the next step, Don painted a prototype painting 12"x16" and submitted this to the board for their approval. Elder Scully liked this miniature so well that he kept it. After the board approved it, Don studied the beautiful paintings of heaven done by Harry Anderson and Clyde Provonsha in Arthur Maxwell's *Bible Story* books for inspiration. He wanted to emphasize a mood of serenity; to use clean, fresh colors, mainly blues and greens. So he painted a truly heavenly scene with the River of Life diminishing in perspective, rolling green hills in the background, a large tree in the foreground to add depth, and colorful flowers to accent the blues and greens of the water, hills, and trees.

"The technique I used was a first for me," he explained. It required the use of tin cans to mix my oil paints, along with a thinning mix of turpentine, linseed oil and varnish." Because of the large surface to be covered, Don used house-painting brushes. Frequently, he had to stand far back from the canvas to get the perspective of the work. The 30 hours required to apply the paint constituted but a small segment of the weeks involved in the whole project. Don added:

I felt good about taking on this project, feeling that I would like to do all I could to help add to the beauty of such precious moments witnessed during baptisms. Baptisms are so touching. I will always remember my children's baptisms [Craig and Lisa]...As they were lifted up out of the water, how the chills came over me and the tears flowed down

my cheeks as I felt the cleansing of the Holy Spirit right along with them. I was so proud of their decisions to give their hearts to the Lord...

But to Don Harris, artist, church elder, family man, “the painting is but a means to add favorable atmosphere through color and perspectives [while]...the true beauty [is] taking place in the foreground, in witnessing the cleansing of souls in the living waters.”

Those who joined the Jackson Church during these years remember it fondly as “a generous, caring fellowship,” with a big “family” atmosphere. “I felt needed in Sabbath school,” Arlene Bliesath recalls. “It was [my] family!” Marlene Cooper exclaimed. Arlene Kleinert added, “I was always greeted with loving smiles by church members...I have always felt loved here. This is my haven of rest after a hectic week or periods of backsliding and discouragement. There are still those who care and I know it.” “[In] my struggling times,” Don Harris said, “there were always outstretched hands and warm, sincere hearts, reflecting Christ, to help guide me. My good qualities were always accented [by church members]...encouraging me to step forward into greater positions [in] the church through the years...truly the Lord has strengthened me and led me.” John and Roberta Ross called Jackson “a friendly church.” With its Sabbath school and church fellowship and visitors’ potlucks, it has always welcomed people into its family atmosphere. Roberta recalled one Sabbath when a stranger—Sarah Humphries—slipped outside after the sermon and nearly got away. But Roberta chased after her down the sidewalk and invited her home to Sabbath dinner; Bible studies followed, then baptism, and Sarah joined the Jackson Church—all because friendly people reached out to her in love.

As we saw in Part 9, the large number of weddings here in the 1950s and early ’60s created a “baby boom” which demanded new programs, new techniques, new witnessing activities to involve everyone from the toddling baby to the tottering saint. The theme for this period seemed to be “creative diversity.” Church leaders promoted many new activities, both

“outreach” (pastoral evangelism, prison ministry, cooking schools, Five-Day Plans, Dorcas and Community Welfare work, Vacation Bible School, Jackson Fair) and “inreach” (including Sabbath schools, church school, MV, Weeks of Prayer, Pathfinders, and social activities).

This era of dynamic church growth saw the arrival of three of Jackson’s most beloved pastors: Orval Scully (1964-66), Arthur Covell (1966-71), and Ola Robinson (1971-76). The ever-smiling, soft-spoken Elder Scully, a returned missionary from South America, is remembered for his pleasant family of singers and for the decision to build a new school on County Farm Road. Elder Covell, despite his booming voice and long-winded sermon vocabulary, was a friendly, loving, outgoing man, empathetic and understanding. He led deeply spiritual prayer meetings attended by 35-40 saints every Wednesday evening, and showed real talent for bringing unbelieving spouses back into church fellowship, sometimes by means of Sabbath dinner invitations. No wonder this church grew in size and spiritual strength with such loving Christian leaders! The “very gentle, soft-spoken” and shy Elder Ola Robinson is remembered for his good organization, for his loving ministry to Jackson’s school children (with whom he spent much time playing ball, skating, praying and giving Bible studies), and for the way he and his silver-haired wife, “amazing Grace,” always greeted members at the church door before Sabbath school. Despite real turmoil concerning issues of the wedding ring and divorce and remarriage which sometimes split this church, the Robinsons sought to bind up wounds and promote spiritual harmony.

Former school teacher Helen Hyde and pupils Debby Slayton and Bill Tiff, Jr., recall those days with real warmth. Mrs. Hyde noted the “spirit of love, helpfulness, and concern for others” which prevailed here in the 1960s, while Bill Tiff recalls the choir practices and programs. “This church,” he explained, “always felt strongly about its children.” Debby Slayton

found Jackson “one of the warmest churches in this area,” adding, “whenever I come back to visit I am always greeted with hugs, smiles and handshakes. I always feel welcome.” Jackson—the smiling, generous, hugging church; it’s a historic tradition!

The work of the church after 1966 went forward under Elder Covell, ably assisted by church elders Eugene Harris, Wayne Hyde, Rex Walters, Carl Kidder, and John Ross, who themselves received the support of thirteen deacons, including some (like Carl LaRoe, Glen Dunlap, Don Harris, and Charles Schoun) who would serve for more than twenty years each. Also thirteen talented deaconesses, including Beatrice Lamb, Frederica Habenicht, Minnie Nichols, and Naomi Schoun, would also continue to serve for decades. In 1967 the church elected Geraldine Dornan as clerk, Marlene Cooper as PR secretary, and Eleanor Bather as Home and School leader and perpetual choir director, the “Queen of Music” at Jackson. Other outstanding leaders included Dr. Clayton Whitmore, who, as church elder, “went out of his way to help people,” and Doris Slayton, probably one of the most outstanding Cradle Roll, Kindergarten, and Primary Sabbath school teachers this church has ever seen.

During his short stay here, Elder Scully initiated many important programs. He began a special “Studies in Revelation” series on Sunday evenings, a chapter-by-chapter study of the book of Revelation with lectures and films. His daily morning devotional, “Pathways to Faith,” reached thousands of local citizens through TV Channel 10 in 1966. He also organized a Religious Liberty Rally here in the spring of 1966, erecting seven large billboards around the city to guide visitors to the church on Franklin Street.

But in the fall of 1966 the General Conference called Scully to go to La Paz as the president of the Bolivian Mission. On October 15, 250 church members gathered for a farewell dinner at the new gym, where John and Roberta Ross sang “May the Good Lord Bless and Keep

You” as tears fell from many eyes. The school children sang a new song composed by teacher Duane Barnett. After receiving a gift of \$150, the Scully’s cut a large cake.

That fall, Donna Mayo helped put together this church’s first pictorial directory. The first pastor whose picture appeared in it was that of Arthur Covell and his good-humored wife Mary with their children Douglas, Dennis, and Debra. The Covells moved into the new parsonage on Herbert J. Street (the Conference having sold the older home on 3405 Hilda Street). Soon Elder Covell’s deeply spiritual talks witnessed record high attendance at prayer meetings. Non-Adventists as well heard about the dynamic new pastor as Editor Hillis Johnson of the *Citizen-Patriot* spread the good word by printing many of Marlene Cooper’s articles concerning church activities. For his “exceptional coverage and accurate reporting of religious news,” Mrs. Johnson received the two books *Seventh-day Adventists Today* and *Seventh-day Adventist Fact Book* from Elder Covell.

Many of the memorable meetings Elder Covell sponsored made news and created lasting memories for area believers. In the fall of 1967, Elder A. R. Mazat of Pacific Press spoke to the youth on the dangers of cigarettes, alcohol, and narcotics. In the winter of 1968 Elder Spiva led a Literature Evangelism Rally here in Jackson, during which Bill Tiff, Sr., agreed to become a literature evangelist in East Lansing. In the new local church paper, the *Reporter*, Elder Covell described the recent death of “Mrs. Prayermeeting” and urged members to attend more faithfully. His spiritual one-liners (including this one: “Truth like iodine hurts when it helps”) inspired readers each week.

But in April of 1970 members learned that their beloved pastor would be leaving for Grand Rapids shortly. “Even though we know partings [inevitably] come,” Marlene Cooper wrote in the *Reporter*, “we should have to search a long time to find a harder working and

dedicated and loyal Christian pastor.” Members didn’t have to search far, however, for from Midland came their new pastor, former Jackson church school teachers Ola and Grace Robinson, to occupy the parsonage at 1121 Herbert J. Street that summer. Despite Grace’s new job with Michigan Bell, she and her husband set aside time each week to get to know the Jackson believers.

Under the Robinson’s caring ministry, church membership topped 300 by 1971. That fall the Ways and Means Committee began discussing plans to build a new church, possibly on the County Farm Road property. Meanwhile, Elder Robinson urged all members to adopt the nine percent plan to get the school out of the red; he also established a Library Committee to superintend the dispersal of the growing church book and cassette tape collection in 1972. Then in Christian fellowship, the Jackson members joined their Black brothers and sisters at the Summit Church for a joint service around Christmas time in 1972.

This spirit of amity and reaching out to others would characterize the Jackson SDA Church during the 1970s, as we shall see in Part 11.

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 11 [rev. ed. 2012]

While believers worshiped together in amity here in the 1970s, Elder Robinson grew increasingly alarmed at the trend among members not to attend board meetings. Due to a lack of quorums, neither the church nor the school boards could conduct business in January of 1974! He wondered if members would miss their church if it were taken away from them. It almost was, in fact, for one Sunday night an arsonist poured gasoline on the front steps and tried to burn the Franklin Street church down. Flames scorched the steps, but a quick-thinking neighbor extinguished the blaze before firemen arrived.

That was fortunate, for believers here opened their chapel for many Conference and district meetings. In the fall of 1974 the Michigan Chapter of the SDA Church Musicians' Guild convened at the school. Elder Robinson spoke on "Music and Salvation," the Battle Creek Tabernacle Singers performed, and Dr. and Mrs. Norman Moll of Midland lectured on the need for early childhood musical training using their five-year-old daughter Susan as a prime example. A month later, Jackson believers joined with those from Ann Arbor, Hillsdale, Adrian, Monroe, and Prattville for a wonderful weekend at Camp Au Sable. Cold weather combined with hot chocolate and log fires left many with warm memories of these annual church camps. Christmas memories included a concert by the Voices of Praise from Andrews University and a Christmas Cantata by Jackson's own church choir.

If Jackson members were standing tall for God, their pastor had to sit down, especially after he broke his leg. Writing from Mercy Hospital in the winter of 1975, he addressed his flock with "Greetings from the crippled pastor!" That spring after he progressed from a body cast to a walking cast to crutches, Elder Robinson began a prayer meeting study group to examine the

charismatic movement using Roland Hegstad's book *Rattling the Gates*. Participants met at Dr. Habenicht's office to save fuel costs, for 1974-75 was the year of Arab embargoes on oil.

In June 1975, Conference secretary Charles Keymer made Jackson his 156th and final church in a four-year effort to preach at every Michigan Adventist church. Members here began studying last-day events at prayer meetings, inviting others to join them. That fall the church began sponsoring the Voice of Prophecy on station WKHM-FM every Monday evening to prepare for the upcoming evangelistic meetings with Elder Joe Melashenko.

Evangelism in many forms has always been an outstanding feature of this church, and never more so than under the pastorates of Elders Scully, Covell, and Robinson. Whether as preaching, prison work, cooking schools, or Five-Day Plans, all three pastors actively involved members in these witnessing activities. In February of 1966 the church held its first Five-Day Plan at the County Building with films, lectures, and group therapy sessions designed to help men and women kick the smoking habit. Directed by Elder Scully, Dr. Earl Parker, Dr. Stewart Erhard, and Dr. Peter Medrano, this first series gained city-wide attention when news reporter Charles Wrzesinski successfully cut down from 40 cigarettes a day to only four a day. His victory (along with that of eight other participants) gave Adventists two weeks of free publicity as he praised the merits of their Plan in the *Citizen-Patriot*.

Elder Scully also led members in pioneer outreach to the local Juvenile Home in the spring of 1966, bringing Sabbath school papers, Voice of Prophecy Bible course lessons, and a set of *Bible Story* books to the home's thirty-five youth. Yet another innovation was Jackson's first four-day cooking school, led by Eunice and John Hnatyshyn at the school. The 45 attendees learned how to make soy mayonnaise, wholesome all-grain bread, and other healthful items.

That summer Elder Scully began a series of Sabbath afternoon meetings at the prison chapel, reaching out to men seared by sin and crime with hope in Jesus.

In the spring of 1967 Adventists distributed 2000 pieces of literature on one Sabbath, but according to reports, the older folks “had quite a time keeping up with the younger generation” in this effort. Elders Covell and Wayne Hyde took 286 books and twelve Bibles to the prison as a gift from Andrews University’s “Help Others Club.” Soon Wayne Hyde was giving many Bible studies at the prison and at the Juvenile Home where he showed the film “The Prodigal Son” to 30 youth. So impressed was the warden with Covell’s and Hyde’s ministry to the prisoners that he lengthened the time allotted for their Sabbath afternoon programs by an hour; shortly Bill Moors and Bob and Almeda Marsh would assist them in this ministry by visiting, typing letters, and recording the “Tell-A-Friend” phone messages. Covell and Hyde also shared Adventist beliefs with an English class at Jackson Community College in 1968.

In the spring of 1969 lay activities leader Buford Cook and song leader Bill Moors started a two-week evangelistic series in Brooklyn’s Masonic Hall. Soon 49 non-Adventists crowded the room to hear Buford speak on the theme “Man to the Moon in 1969—Christ to Earth in ---?” This series covered all the key Adventist doctrines in two weeks. Later that fall the “country boy” evangelist Robert Collar and his family came to Jackson for a three-week series. His heart-warming messages, colorful black-light drawings, and musical talents (including a musical saw, 96 bells, Oriental chimes, sleigh bells, vibra-harp, and real “musical rocks”) soon brought 26 converts into the church—a phenomenon almost unheard of since the great Vandemann Crusade of 1946. Church youth Jim Ross and Martha Schoun then launched Jackson’s first-ever youth crusade, a ten-day soul-winning effort in the Masonic Hall featuring sermonettes by young

people, music by Grand Ledge Academy's "Youth for Eternity" quartet, and challenges for teens to finish the work so that Jesus might soon come.

During the 1970s, the prison ministry grew by leaps and bounds. Bible study groups led by Bill Moors, Don Woodward, and Bill Tifft, Sr. saw three inmates baptized in the spring of 1970. "Never before in the history of the prison had any inmate been baptized behind its walls." Regular visits by prison bands provided books, Sabbath school quarterlies, and other literature for detainees. That spring inmates began enjoying "Faith for Today" broadcasts over closed circuit TV; that summer 200 of them signed up for a Five-Day Plan led by Stewart Erhard and Loren Bishop. Of the 75 who attended, 60 quit smoking that week, including several guards. To celebrate, the "Youth for Eternity" chorale sang at the prison for 230 men, many of whom said that this concert had been the highlight of their year. 1970 became a high point for Sandy and Patty Mayo, Shelly Blackerby, Jimmy Kidder, Curt Cooper, Robert Kelly, and Debra Covell as well when they entered the waters of baptism on June 6.

The Robinsons also encouraged lay evangelism here in the 1970s. They rallied members to distribute Amazing Facts pamphlets in preparation for Stuart Harrison's 1971 crusade, followed by another successful Five-Day Plan attended by 26 citizens. In fact, during the 1970s Jackson Adventists' forte seemed to be holding Five-Day Plans. Usually led by Elder Robinson and Doctors Hilda Habenicht, Dan and Stewart Erhard, they even featured a Smoker's Dial with sixty-second upbeat messages prepared by Bob Marsh at 784-7151. That telephone number received over 1000 calls in only 30 days! Soon Bob was preparing "Slim Line" messages to help quitters regulate their diets as well. These smoking cessation programs were held in a variety of venues: at the Adventist school, the prison, Hunt Junior High School, and at the Red Cross Building.

Back at the prison, Adventist outreach drew public attention both in the *Lake Union Herald* and the *Citizen-Patriot*. Bill Moors led regular Wednesday evening and Sabbath afternoon Bible study groups. Within three years, fifteen inmates had been baptized; soon twenty more signed up for Bible studies. Hundreds of men began attending Woodward and Moors' song services, prayer sessions, Sabbath school lessons, and preaching services; Elder Robinson even began holding quarterly Communion services at the prison. Soon Bill Moors was writing to over 300 prisoners and spending \$750 of his own money to provide them with literature. In 1973 inmates Wayne Tucker and Joseph Pennington, Adventist correspondents on the inside, sent regular prison reports to the church newsletter concerning the eight men who regularly met for Sabbath services there, directed by Rex Waters and Bill Tiff from Jackson and Elder Mackintosh from Marshall. Jackson even hosted a Prison Retreat at the school for all Adventist laymen in prison and jail ministries.

Yet wonderful victories for Christ were also being gained that year in the hearts and minds of Jackson's youth. In the summer of 1973 nine entered the waters of baptism: Bobby Bliesath, Erwin Tompkins, Cheryl Kittrell, Wendy Alfred, Brenda LaRoe, Marla and Eric Marsh, Judy Miller, and Cheri Lehmkuhle. Pastor Robinson's effective ministry among the youth reaped more baptisms in 1974: Judy and Melinda Corser, Ken and Bill Tiff, Cheri and Craig Harris, Brad Marsh, Eric Cooper, and Marty Slayton.

Another form of public outreach began in the fall of 1973 when Mae West directed a Nutrition and Vegetarian Cooking school using films, slides, recipes, and discussion to promote good breakfasts and issue cautions regarding sugar, carbohydrates, enzymes, and wild plants. This series proved so popular that again in February 1974, West directed another cooking school

with 60 attending. Elder Robinson gave talks on the Bible's dietary plan; Dan Erhard demonstrated his chop suey special, and Alice DeMan, Emma Mahrle, and Helen Good assisted.

Certainly one of Jackson's best-known and much-appreciated outreach services has been its Community Services Center, whose six regular female workers met on the first and third Tuesdays of each month. But they always needed more help than they received and more space than they had to work with. In the fall of 1967 they suggested building a new center next to the school on County Farm Road—a plan twenty years ahead of its time which was not adopted.

During 1968 the Center's staff prepared 27 food baskets for 112 people at Christmas, besides sending huge boxes of clothing to the New York City warehouse. Director Alice DeMan was always calling for help: to prepare packets for the Disaster Relief Van; to distribute 60 pairs of Hush Puppy shoes; to pack 1200 garments for overseas shipment; to send eyeglasses to the mission fields. Finally in 1969, the new Center opened on Steward and Oakhill Streets. At last these overworked women had the space they desired! Now the Center could stock health foods for sale, prepare dozens of food baskets for Christmas sharing, stock reams of Adventist literature to distribute, and have more room to pack the 70-plus boxes of clothing they sent to the New York City depot every year.

In addition, these ambitious ladies started a number of creative projects during the 1970s. They collected old Christmas cards for crafts projects in Japan (where workers used them to create decorative fans and lampshades). They started tying quilts at the DeLong's home; prepared layettes for unwed mothers at the Crittenden Home; and turned their Center into an emergency welfare depot that greatly impressed County Red Cross administrative assistant Eda Bell. They urged church members to "bring a can next Sabbath" to restock their shelves at the Center and to join sewing sessions twice a month. In 1972 alone these women helped 652

persons with 6231 articles of clothing, \$1562 in cash and food, 207 bedding items, and 14 articles of furniture. Their successful recruiting efforts soon raised the number of volunteers from six to forty, including occasional help from the Singles Club in making quilts and boxing clothing for the 10,000 homeless in Monroe's flood crisis in 1973. They closed every year with a memorable Christmas program for dozens of needy kids. Soon the local newspapers and radio stations began taking notice of how Adventists were helping out in disasters. For example, in 1974 the Center cooperated with the Red Cross in assisting tornado victims in Hillsdale and Jerome.

At long last, in the fall of 1974 the church purchased the Haven Methodist Church at 1423 East Michigan Avenue and renovated it into its new Community Service Center at a cost of over \$37,000. Weeks later, the ladies hosted the Central Michigan Federation meetings in their new Center. Many were the hours spent scrubbing, painting, and cleaning the Center, not to mention the hours of plumbing work done by Ray Cooper and Larry Stark and the new PA system installed by Bill Dornan so that Donna Mayo's 1974 Christmas program for 25 foster children could go off without a hitch.

In addition to helping the needy, Jackson members also hosted Teachers' Exchange meetings, branch Sabbath schools, and Vacation Bible schools in the 1960s and '70s. With the ever artistic Carol Delong as investment secretary, Sabbath school programs provided more color and creativity, with new goal devices (including jeeps, monkeys, goldfish bowls, and African huts). The Primary kids sold Delong honey and candy bars; others sold vanilla for Sabbath school investment; still others planted investment gardens or sold Arlene Bliesath's gladiola bulbs (30 for one dollar)—and everybody who raised five dollars received a free turtle from Carol Delong! How parents must have loved her! Meanwhile, Arlene rallied the teachers and

helpers to put on the ever popular Vacation Bible Schools for 110-125 squirmy kids, with Donna Mayo leading the singing, Elder Covell telling stories, and others leading out in crafts or serving snacks. To draw in the adults, Elder Hyde began a Branch Sabbath School that met in the Alfred's home in Grass Lake with sixteen attendees. Arlene Bliesath taught the children's class there while Mildred Cornforth taught the adults. The spacious County Farm Road property, with its thirteen rolling acres, proved ideal space for Vacation Bible Schools, and throughout the 1970s, Cynthia Moores, Loveva Slayton, Helen Hyde, Donna Mayo, Carol Delong, Cynthia Hart, Barb Stark, and Arlene Bliesath taught youngsters of all ages with Lynn Winters directing crafts. So many parents accompanied their kids to the closing programs that Barb Stark and Laura Stilson started a Sabbath afternoon Bible Story Hour in 1975 to develop these interests.

Over at the church school, the youth were guided toward heaven in the 1960s and '70s by the "forceful but pleasant" Duane Barnett; the hard-working Dean Flint; the vivacious redhead Laura Stilson; the ever-smiling Helen Hyde; the firm disciplinarian Ed Kittrell; the quiet Shirley Pulcer; the friendly Karl Kidder; and the talented, lovable Fedelma Hart (who celebrated her 72nd birthday in the classroom teaching!). With the dynamic Home and School leader Eleanor Bather supporting these teachers with suppers and Tupperware parties to help pay for four new buses and a film projector, the new school's future looked sunny indeed.

And it was! By the fall of 1966, 95 students had registered, a fifty percent increase over 1965's enrollment of 65. The Home and School Association raised over \$2000 towards the \$5000 needed to pave the drive and parking lot. On Sunday, October 23, architect John Dabbert presented Principal Duane Barnett with the Golden Master Key at a very impressive dedication ceremony. Lake Union Education Secretary J. E. Hutches spoke, as did Jackson Mayor Mary Bennett, Michigan Conference secretary-treasurer L. G. Wartzok, education superintendent B. G.

Butherus, and temperance secretary A. K. Philips. Members showed quiet pride in their magnificent school, with its huge 60'x90' gym, four large sunny classrooms, a cafeteria, two offices, a band room, storage area, and acres of playground. "Many good gifts, sacrifices, and prayers made this new school a reality," Marlene Cooper wrote in the *Herald*. Fifth and sixth grade teacher Dean Flint received special recognition during a "This Is Your Life" M.V. program that year for his Christ-like influence on boys and girls.

This outstanding school continued its good work in training Christian youth in the late '60s and '70s despite many changes. Karl Kidder and Ed Kittrell came in 1967. Many volunteers helped to broaden the school's curriculum. For example, Arlene Bliesath taught Home Economics; Carol Delong, art; Donna Flint, typing; and Karl Kidder, auto mechanics. Buford Cook and Arthur Wallace invested many unpaid hours painting and doing carpentry work. In 1967 the first school yearbook was issued, beginning a ten-year tradition. Within months the students had raised enough money to buy a new overhead projector, a new Thermofax copier, and new auto mechanics tools. During 1968 kids sold ballpoint pens and Christmas cards to finish the newly tiled gym floor and buy gym equipment. The nearly 90 students kept bus drivers Cooper, Carpenter, Leigh, Hamerick, and later Tiff busy toting them in from all directions of the compass. Dedicated youth in 1969 raised over \$100 for Faith for Today's children's broadcasts and a new T.V. camera; various church members donated a slide-filmstrip projector and pull-down screens to the school.

During 1969-70, when a new ball diamond and backstop were installed, enrollment began to slide: from 88 to 80 and then to 66 by the fall of 1970. The board cut back to three school buses (run by Loveva Slayton, Nancy Tiff and Marlene Cooper). Nonetheless, 63 students raised \$415 for Ingathering that fall. Years later they praised the teachers who led them in this

successful campaign: Fedelma Hart (“She was very patient, but if you got noisy, she would thump you on the head with her eraser or pull your ear”); Shirley Pulcer (“Good with kids”); and Helen Hyde (She “had interesting ideas. [She] let students help with bulletin boards, grading papers, and booths at the fair”).

During the 1971-72 school term, Gene Harris improved the school’s bus service and Carl LaRoe and Lloyd Keeney repainted all the buses to look like new. Glen Dunlap painted all the new school cupboards and Bill Moors built new choir racks. In 1972-73 the 55 students participated in a cleaning bee and dedicated a new flag donated by the Coopers. The active Home and School Association raised nearly \$150 from a fabric sale to help fund various school needs and a year later, began selling oranges and grapefruit, starting a tradition which over the years would raise thousands of dollars to benefit the school.

However, in the fall of 1974-75, only 48 students registered. “Sad to say,” Marlene Cooper wrote, “many familiar faces...have not returned.” Equally sad, long-time teacher Fedelma Hart retired; Irene Erhard temporarily stepped into the breach to teach grades one to three until Lorene Yackley of Maryland arrived to finish the year for her. In the spring of 1975 Principal Ed Kittrell left to teach at Battle Creek. The board, hoping to add a ninth grade, asked Michigan Education Superintendent Ken Hutchins to find them two qualified teachers. He recommended two: for principal and ninth grade teacher, Welton Ingram, a jovial, balding fruit farmer and college teacher with graduate degrees in math and engineering, a gorgeous wife Shirlee, and four delightful children (Sherri, Greg, Pam and Geoff); and for grades 7 and 8, Brian Strayer, who at twenty-five had a newly minted M.A. Degree in History. Since both men had never taught church school before, some parents wondered what the future would hold for their

children. Everyone seemed to sense that the fall of 1975 would bring many changes and new challenges to their school program.

However, before we tell that delightful story, we must return to 1101 West Franklin Street to follow the amazing growth and witnessing activities of the church members there during the late 1960s and '70s. This will be our focus in Part 12.

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 12 [rev. ed. 2012]

Historically, Jackson Adventists have always been generous in giving of their time and means for the Lord's work. It should come as no surprise, then, that during the late 1960s and '70s they eagerly supported Tag Days, Ingathering, and other fund drives. In the fall of 1965, the *Citizen-Patriot* gave ample coverage to the fall Ingathering campaign, noting that these funds had already helped 900 tornado victims in the area, supplying them with 6800 pieces of clothing, 1600 sheets and 630 blankets, besides 930 pieces of furniture and \$4500 in cash. Jackson citizens really gave that year---almost \$6500—enabling this church to celebrate its victory with a candlelit banquet (including Florence Lemkuhl's magnificent "Victory Cake") in February 1966.

Jackson Adventists' personal giving made headlines that spring when the newspaper reported that each Adventist here gave more than \$345 a year to this church and that Adventists nationwide ranked #1 in per capita giving. Citizens therefore responded generously on Tag Day when twenty members brought in \$400 on the first day. After another successful Ingathering campaign, Carol Delong decorated the gym for a Victory Banquet with pictures of children saying "thank you" in the major languages of the world. Then 160 members enjoyed good food, speeches, music, and a film on Opportunity Camps.

During the 1967 campaign, Grand Ledge and Jackson youth together raised over \$500 on one Tag Day! By Christmas, members here had raised nearly \$34,000 toward the Church Development Fund goal of \$45,000. Typically, Jackson members raised about \$14.00 per member for Ingathering; by 1969 their personal annual giving amounted to \$250 per member—as compared to only \$102 for Lutherans, \$90 for Presbyterians, \$76 for Episcopalians, and \$67 for United Brethren members. In 1971 members began dropping dimes and quarters into "bread banks," loaf-shaped receptacles with slits in the top for the Disaster Relief Offering. That fall

members set about enthusiastically to raise their \$8000 Ingathering goal under the leadership of Pastor Ola Robinson, who had always led his churches to Ingathering victories since graduating from college. Eleanor Bather and Martha Churchill organized the Tag Day campaign, and over \$960 came in on one day. By Christmas, the Sabbath schools had raised more than \$100 above their Investment goal of \$1200, so they set a new goal of \$1600! They also collected over four pounds of broaches, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and locket for the Voice of Prophecy jewelry offering in 1972.

In 1973 believers here exceeded their \$25 personal Ingathering goals by ten percent—becoming one of only five Michigan churches to do so. Altogether they raised over \$8600 that year—about \$700 over their goal—bringing in \$1400 in reversion funds to their Community Service Center in 1974. In 1975 Jackson, Midland, and Grand Rapids were the only Vanguard Churches in the Conference. In addition, members donated their income tax refunds for the “Adventures in Faith” offering that year; some even agreed to fast once a week or once a month or give up eating desserts and donate the funds saved to the SDA World Services offering.

This church also sponsored active M.V. programs and Pathfinder activities to draw their youth closer to Jesus. The M.V. Society, led by Elaine Pitcher, Connie Blackerby, Marion Hart, and Roberta Ross, met on Sabbath afternoons to watch inspiring films, form Sunshine Bands to visit rest homes, have panel discussions, and sponsor weeks of prayer. The Pathfinder Club—then called the Dan Palmer Blacksmiths—was led by the Brueggemans and met two Sundays a month at the school. The fourteen young people enjoyed studying first aid, baking, marching drill, and camp outs, using their twelve pup tents and mess kits. They learned leather craft from Don Woodward, photography from Walter Brueggeman, and cloth painting from Roberta Ross. These kids also formed three singing groups in the fall of 1966—Daughters of Zion, King’s

Men, and Master's Maidens—for Elder James Wilson's Week of Prayer meetings at the school. Just for fun they enjoyed attending parties at the Jordan's home.

During the late 1960s, the M.V. Society started a monthly Bible Bowl quiz program and enjoyed missionary stories told by Garth Thompson and William Van Arsdale. Under Jeannette Brown's leadership, they also brought Pontiac's "Flying Four" Quartet and Felix Lorenz' "Lighthouse Singers" here with his fascinating magic program in the evening. When Ray Lemon led an M.V. Week of Prayer, "it was heartwarming to hear our young children...praying for their families," one observer noted. The society, led by Marion Hart, purchased new songbooks for the school, began a Worthy Student Fund for Jackson's academy and college youth, and sponsored Benefit Progressive Parties to raise money for worthy projects. It also invited musical groups such as the Adelpian Academy Band and the Grand Ledge Academy Band to perform here; the members also took a historic tour of Battle Creek in 1968. That year fifty-eight boys and girls received investiture pins and scarves—including Jackson's first two Pioneers, eight grade honors students Jim Ross and Jeanette Hyde. These youth also distributed 700 pieces of literature in one day. "They really hustled," reports said. Led by Carol Delong, Helen Hyde, and John Ross in 1968-69, they started a Bible Marking Class, enjoyed a trip to Frankenmuth, prepared county fair booths, and worked on new honors in swimming, hiking, electricity, glass painting, and camp cookery; every year they enjoyed their time spent at Camp Au Sable. In 1970 they planned a three-weekend youth evangelism rally with Conference executive secretary John Hayward, M.V. Secretary Larry Caviness, and PMC Pastor Anthony ("pizza man") Castlebuono; Chuck Winters led the combined youth choirs in soul-stirring music.

In the spring of 1967 the Blacksmiths of Jackson joined other Lake Union clubs for a mammoth "Campfairoree" at which Jeannette Hyde won the 100-yard dash. They also began

collecting canned goods on Halloween for Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets. The Hydes had the eighteen members come to their home for games, donuts, a weiner roast, and a “ghostly operation.” In 1968 Jodi Blackerby and Jim Ross received Conference Pathfinder of the Year awards while Mickey Kidder and Jeannette Hyde received good conduct awards. During 1969-70 the Blacksmiths took two trophies at the Charlotte Fair and became one of the “Top 20” clubs in Michigan. For Halloween they collected 640 cans for Christmas baskets and took trips to Point Pelee National Park in Canada, Warren Dunes State Park in Michigan, and Andrews University. In 1971, led by Bill and Cynthia Moores, the twenty-one club members began studying plastics and collected 600 food and clothing items in their “Treats for the Needy” program. They also studied cooking with Almeda Marsh and Connie Blackerby, bicycling with Walter Brueggeman, doll dressmaking with Joan LaRoe, model airplanes with Carl LaRoe, plaster craft with Roberta Ross, and marching drills with Bill Moores. The Pathfinder parade float in 1972—decorated by Bob Marsh and Carol Delong—drew county-wide attention to the eighteen Pathfinders who marched. “We are very proud of them,” Marlene Cooper wrote.

The club became even more active in the mid-1970s, with camporees, a fifty-mile bike ride, and collecting hundreds of canned goods every year. Its members attended the Lansing Pathfinder Fair every spring, hiked across the Mackinac Bridge every fall, and enjoyed corn roasts and Norm Luttmann’s vigorous marching drills. Led by Barb Stark, in 1974 they raised \$200 for a school bus to take them on trips. Increasingly, archery, signaling, and camp craft occupied much of their time. By 1975 they ranked among the top point clubs at the Lansing Fair. Every summer they helped at the Jackson County Fair and prepared a Pathfinder float (the 1974 theme was “No Energy Crisis with Christ”). That fall they joined 800 other Lake Union Pathfinders for a twenty-fifth anniversary camporee in Crete, Illinois, where they participated in

knot-tying, Morse Code, flapjack cooking, and flint and steel fire-building contests, winning 90 of the 100 points possible. They bivouacked at the Cooper farm one summer, learning how to start two kinds of fires and how to build grassy beds in the great outdoors. By 1975 they had cleaned and painted their new clubhouse at the Community Center downtown; Michigan Pathfinder Director Merrill Fleming dedicated this new clubhouse that spring.

Certainly one of the most outstanding witnessing activities sponsored by the Jackson Church youth since 1965 has been the Adventist booth at the Jackson Fair. P.R. Secretary Marlene Cooper for more than two decades fostered this outreach ministry, encouraging Sabbath school and church school teachers to help their youth prepare exhibits. The 1967 booth, entitled “The Wages of Sin Is Death,” distributed over 600 pieces of literature and won a first prize ribbon and cash awards. The 1968 booth also won a blue ribbon and a cash award. The following year Carol Delong led the church school students in preparing four exhibits which won nearly \$100 in awards; the Pathfinder float that summer also brought in \$75 and youth gave out 400 pieces of literature.

During the 1970s these fair booths continued to be a popular activity. Every year, thanks to the creative talent of Carol Delong and the encouragement of Marlene Cooper, Jackson’s youth took prizes ranging from \$25 to \$150 for themed exhibits like “Jesus, the Solution to Soul Pollution” and “Thou Shalt Not Kill” and “God Made Everything.” By 1972 these eager young people were actually sponsoring four Sabbath school and four church school exhibits, winning a grand total of \$200. They won first prize in *every category*: the Kindergarteners’ Creation week theme, the Primaries’ Bible inspiration theme, the Juniors’ angels theme, and the youths’ Second Advent theme. Annually about 4500 people viewed these exhibits, and about 3000 of them received Quiet Hour logs, special issues of *These Times*, and Voice of Prophecy Way Out cards.

The *Jackson Citizen-Patriot* regularly covered these exhibits. In 1973 workers at the “Health and Nutrition” booth served 6500 health food samples and sold Loma Linda and Worthington foods to fairgoers—80% of whom refused to believe they contained no meat. Thousands of recipe slips and 1500 pieces of gospel literature were also distributed. The four Sabbath school booths won \$90 in prizes, the Pathfinders took \$70, while the school kids gleaned over \$180—for a total of nearly \$350! Never had any Lake Union SDA church group done better! Because the Dorcas Welfare work celebrated its centennial in 1974, the ladies here featured a booth with the theme “100 Years of Community Service,” emphasizing camps, disaster work, clothing and food distribution, as well as the Five-Day Plan and cooking classes.

Preparing these booths provided good times not only for witnessing but also for socializing—and Jackson Adventists have always loved a good social time! To help members enjoy fellowship over good food, Mrs. Merlin Hart and the Dorcas ladies prepared “What’s Cookin’” in 1976, a new cookbook with illustrations by Carol Delong, crammed with 200 healthful recipes. Also that spring the church compiled its first pictorial directory to help everybody get to know everyone else. Those black and white photos of forty years ago mirror the warmth and friendliness which have always been a part of Jackson’s fellowship.

To promote this fellowship, Don Harris and Dean Flint formed a new Men’s Club in 1968; the newlyweds Laura and Stan Stilson started a “Teens and Twenties Club” for fifteen to thirty-year olds; and the church board organized a Social Committee to provide wholesome entertainment twice a month. The church began sponsoring Father and Son banquets at Sveden House and Senior spaghetti suppers at the Community Service Center. At the latter, Homer Hills, the oldest member, and Olive Backus, the one with the longest membership record, received gifts. These groups also reached out to help the boys at the Juvenile Home.

During the 1970s the Social Committee sponsored hay rides, campfires and pizza feeds at the Coopers, and sloppy joes, punch and pies at the fall Investment sales. Roberta Ross planned pancake breakfasts and Love Banquets at the school gym, where 200 people enjoyed good food, duets, recitations, and puppet shows put on by the school kids. This proved so popular that soon socials were being held four times a year. In addition, Family Fun Nights were held at the gym at which church members threw balls and played table games for hours.

In the “Who’s Who Department” for the 1960s and ’70s, Connie Blackerby and Marlene Cooper deserve kudos for the herculean task of editing a new monthly newsletter, the *Jackson Adventist Reporter* (sometimes called the *Recorder*), which Marlene kept going for more than twenty years. A weekly publication of four single-spaced pages, this primary source enables us to know more detailed information about the activities of this church in the 1960s and 1970s than during any other period of its history. Fedelma Hart won a missionary book of the year prize for suggesting the winning title.

Among the youth, the lovely blonde, Christine Hyde, certainly did not hide her talents. In 1968 alone she won Cedar Lake Academy’s Betty Crocker Homemaker of Tomorrow Award for the highest test score among all the senior girls; she became one of ten CLA students elected to the National Honor Society; she earned a four-year GPA of 4.00; became valedictorian of her graduating class; and won a \$500 scholarship to Andrews University. In addition to all that, she won the annual *Reader’s Digest* Award in leadership potential.

The following year, Marlene Cooper received the Conference Public Relations Secretary of the Year Award in a special ceremony with Elder E. N. Wendth at camp meeting. Shortly thereafter, Marlene also won first prize at the Jackson Fair for her photo entry on her sons’ various birthdays. Among Jackson’s youth, in 1970 Elwyn Hyde (14) and Brad marsh (10) set

out alone in March to clean up Jackson with their litter bags; although Almeda Marsh had no idea where her boy had disappeared to, the *Citizen-Patriot* praised their efforts. “If everyone will join youth such as Elwyn and Bradley in doing their own little bit toward improving the environment, the results will be dramatic.” Shortly thereafter, Brad won a temperance award for his poster “Don’t Race for Trouble—Don’t Smoke.” When he took first prize in the 1974 Michigan Conference temperance poster contest, Brad won an all-expenses paid week at Camp Au Sable. Meanwhile, John and Jim Ross, basses in the twenty-five-member “Youth for Eternity Chorale,” also received attention in the local newspaper, which declared that they sang “for the sheer enjoyment it brings to others.”

Shortly after the dynamic duo Chuck and Lynn Winters arrived from Rockford, Illinois, in 1970, Chuck became the director of Jackson’s church choir. Soon its members aspired to ‘be the best in the state.’ As carpenters modified the church platform to seat more members, Chuck placed the following ad in the January 1972 *Reporter*:

Choir: Employment opportunities: Positions open for Choir Members: Soprano, Alto, Tenor or Base [bass]. Physical qualification: Must be able to carry light musical notes part way across the sanctuary. Must have vision good enough to see the director 5 to 10 feet away. Experience: No applications accepted from persons who have not at some time sung, hummed or whistled in the tub or shower. Beginning wages: Guaranteed satisfaction and joy in the service of the Lord. Advancement opportunity: Members who demonstrate unusual ability and courage, who are willing, may become soloists. Fringe benefits: Social security in the fellowship of other choir members...Hours: 7:30 p.m. each Friday, and 11 a.m. on Sabbath.

For many years the church’s choir loft would be filled with a dozen or more men and women, boys and girls eager to sing the music of Bill and Gloria Gaither under Chuck’s expert direction.

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 13 [rev. ed. 2012]

During the late 1970s and '80s as bombings, hijackings, and terrorism stalked many areas of the world, Jackson provided a haven of calm wherein the Lord's work progressed. Although declining births threatened the future of their church school, and growing apathy endangered the prayer meeting and the church budget, many dedicated members fostered a diverse range of spiritual and social activities. Today we will focus on outreach endeavors, especially pastoral evangelism, prison ministry, cooking schools, Five-Day Plans, Community Welfare work, and Vacation Bible Schools, all of which witnessed to the larger community.

One prominent characteristic of the 1970s and '80s was the rapid turnover of pastors here. While the decade from 1965 to 1975 saw three pastors (Elders Scully, Covell, and Robinson), the following decade (1975-85) witnessed the comings and goings of five pastors: Elder Robinson, who left in 1976, was followed by Elder Clarence Larson (1976-78), Elder Don Eckenroth (1978-80), Elder Don Dronen (1980-85), and Elder Don Siewert (1985-90). Pastor Larson, tall, quiet, and dignified, personified the expert business administrator, being well organized, methodical, and friendly. He held high the church standards, preached sermons which, if sometimes dry, were nevertheless organized as tight Bible studies to emphasize church beliefs and doctrines. Despite his shyness, he and his wife Letha often invited members home for Sabbath dinner and gave them a peak into his woodworking shop.

The first of Jackson's three "Dons"—Elder Don Eckenroth, who with his wife Gloria and daughter Peggy came here from Battle Creek—also had experience as a carpenter and builder. Tall and darkly handsome, he “preached straight and pointed sermons,” using merely his Bible and a roving mike as he paced back and forth across the platform. While his leadership style and firm church discipline aroused some resistance, some members appreciated his innovations in the

order of church services, his zeal to improve the physical church and school plants, and his emphasis on committee planning.

The blond pastor Don Dronen, of medium height with a charming smile and slight Scandinavian accent, came next with his wonderful wife Carol. He emphasized a strong program of non-member visitation and evangelism. His sermons usually touched hearts and sometimes brought tears. When he left for Holly in 1985, Don Siewert, with his marvelous story-telling wife, "Aunt Myrtle," arrived from Midland. A loving, sincere, silver-haired man, Pastor Siewert impressed members with his grass-roots humility, his good, Christ-centered sermons, and his friendly administrative approach. "I like to be well 'boarded up,'" he once quipped, referring to his policy of having church board backing before making major decisions.

During the late 1970s, Jackson Adventists escalated their evangelistic and witnessing activities. Judy St. John and Marlene Cooper led a Five-Day Plan in the fall of 1975, showing an anti-smoking film for an Adult Living Class at the local high school. In the spring of 1976, Drs. Stewart and Erhard, medical personnel Jean Bermingham, Pauline Hoag, Marvin Spilovoy, and church school teachers Welton Ingram and Brian Strayer conducted another Five-Day Plan at the Community Services Center. Shirley Tate, Camille DeMan, and Mrs. Mahrle directed an equally popular vegetarian cooking school during which they demonstrated how to make such low-sugar desserts as mouth-watering Dutch apple pie.

Under Clarence Larson, public evangelism really blossomed. He invited Elder Joe Melashenko, the tall, smiling Russian with the booming bass voice, to begin a series of meetings at the church in the fall of 1976. Joe's marvelous singing, his hugging personality, and his fascinating lectures on "Russia's Race for Time," "Outer Space Invasion," and the "Coming World Blackout" had wide appeal. Joe spent much time counseling youth at the church school

as well, and at the close of his meetings, twelve converts joined the church, including Debby Slayton, Shelly and Todd Stark, and Ray Cooper. At the close of his series, he and Elder Larson led the church in a spectacular “Love at Home” service—a three-hour meeting that included a wedding, twelve baptisms, twenty babies dedicated, a candlelit service during which fifty couples renewed their wedding vows, and a closing song (“Blest Be the Tie that Binds”) that brought many tears.

During 1977 Don Woodward continued his outreach to the twenty-five men in Jackson’s prison who regularly attended Sabbath afternoon meetings. Letha Larson conducted an enormously popular cooking school that fall, with sixty people learning about the benefits of the Adventist meatless diet. These cooking schools and follow-up Bible studies helped develop public interest for Arnold Kraner’s spring 1978 evangelistic series. A short, graying man, Elder Kraner certainly could sing. His music, nightly black light board, and films, and heart-searching sermons made his “Panorama of Prophecy” series intensely interesting. Those who came every night received free Bibles. This series galvanized members to form their own Lay Witnessing Teams that summer to conduct twelve Bible studies and to blanket Jackson with copies of *Steps to Christ* at twenty cents each.

As the decade of the 1980s dawned, the Adventist outreach to Jackson’s citizens via radio and TV included the “Voice of Prophecy” over station WKHM, “The Quiet Hour” on station CKLW, “Your Story Hour” on station WDJD, and “It Is Written” on TV Channel 2. Over at the prison, Tom Waters and the “Gospel Truth Singers” presented a program which the inmates taped in the fall of 1979 for later broadcast over the prison’s P.A. system. Meanwhile Beverly Ross, Irene Erhard, and Priscilla Campbell continued the delicious nutrition seminar tradition with four sessions on carbohydrates and fibers, proteins, the four food groups, and food faddism.

Pastor Eckenroth led members in forming ten teams to reach 500 homes in the winter of 1980. In 1981 the choir's Easter Cantata, "The Greatest Story Ever Told," drew many non-Adventists from Jackson and Adrian. While the children enjoyed the VBS program that summer, their parents were invited to Irene Erhard and Caryn Jordan's vegetarian cooking school to learn about home bread-making and meatless cooking.

Despite awful blizzards in the winter of 1982, the evangelistic team of Leighton Holly and Sam Woods brought a warm message of hope from Daniel and Revelation during their series at the National Guard Armory. They featured husband and wife duets and films on the life of Christ as over 300 people packed the meetings; seventeen asked for baptism that spring. Helen Cook, a Baptist for twenty-five years, took seriously Holly and Woods' offer of \$5000 for a Sunday-Sabbath text, but finding none and convinced that these men preached "according to the Bible," she became an Adventist instead. That summer Elders Dronen and Glenn Hill helped members grasp the significance of Christ's ministry in the sanctuary by donning the garments of Israel's high priest for a revival series.

In the spring of 1983, the "rousing spirit" and forceful, straight-laced preaching of Dan Collins, "Amazing Facts Crusade" speaker, came to Jackson. Using health presentations, outstanding music, and a heart-warming sermon style, Dan made a special effort to reach the growing number of backsliders. God blessed those efforts, for when his series closed, sixteen new members and twenty-five former members had committed their lives anew to the Master's service. During 1984, Jack and Donna Bohannon conducted a Paka-Plaza series emphasizing the biblical-historical parallels to be found in God's Word by showing films on the Holy Land.

When the Siewert's arrived in 1985, they focused their efforts on sponsoring Stop Smoking clinics, Vacation Bible Schools, and vegetarian cooking classes. In the spring of 1986,

assisted by the Sharpe's, they demonstrated in four seminars how to prepare succulent dishes without meat. Elder Siewert also revived the Wednesday evening prayer meeting and encouraged his laity to give Bible studies. By the spring of 1987 nine members were conducting twelve Bible studies, while others attended nearby Lay Bible Training Seminars at Grand Ledge and Camp Au Sable. To encourage Jackson's youth to shun alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, the board voted to send *Listen Magazine* to each young person in the church that spring. Don and Myrtle also planned family weekend retreats at Au Sable, a Revelation Seminar with Elder Fred Adams in 1987, and another evangelistic series with Dan Collins in 1988.

The church's Community Services Center at the former Old Haven Methodist Church also continued its ministry to the needy. Over one two-week period in the fall of 1975, seventy-two persons received clothing, food, and other help. Members worked continually to renovate its interior into storage, meeting, kitchen, and Pathfinder rooms; in part this work was paid for by selling the century-old stained glass windows for \$2000.

But these faithful women faced a crisis: with only four to six workers each week, "we are unable to even try to keep even with the heavy demands," Marlene Cooper stated. She called for more volunteers as well as more boots and coats. At the Christmas Party in 1976, thirty-six children and their parents enjoyed a song-fest of carols with guitarist Elwin Hyde and pianist Edith Luttman, ate a delicious hot meal, watched Camille DeMan's poodle Pepi do its tricks, and received gloves, a toy, a book, and food baskets. Parents received Voice of Prophecy Bible course subscriptions while their children got *Good Deeder* magazines.

That winter the "faithful five"—Ema Mahrle, Erma Brewer, Camille DeMan, Shirley Tate, and Fedelma Hart—prepared boxes of clothing for the Guatemalan earthquake victims. The Hurst Foundation gave them a check for \$15,000 to help meet inspections needs; this

resulted in so many improvements that Elder Buckman awarded the Center 182 out of a possible 200 points that spring. Cooking schools were also held at the Center, where forty or so guests showed up to learn how to make bread, gluten, chicken croquettes, soy cheese, and low-sugar apple pie. By the end of the year, the Center had helped over 900 persons with more than 7000 pieces of clothing and had shipped 92 boxes to the New York City warehouse for overseas use.

After months of scraping, painting, and landscaping, the new Center was ready for its official open house on October 9, 1977. Pastor Larson and Eric Cooper had invested many hours in landscaping, while schoolteacher Brian Strayer and his students spread sealer on the parking lot, a “rash act” during which he learned to his painful dismay that he was allergic to the oil-based tar. At the opening service Elder Larson welcomed thirty guests, Elder Watson Buckman (Michigan’s Community Services Director) gave an address, and Marlene Cooper introduced visitors to the various services offered at the Center. Both Anthony Hurst (of the Hurst Foundation) and Forrest Yeakey (of the Higby Camp Foundation) received plaques of appreciation for their generous support of the Center. Edith Luttmann, local director, then introduced each of the Center’s staff. Three years of hard labor and over \$15,000 had gone into preparing the 22-room Center for this grand day. For Christmas 1977, Dorcas women prepared thirty food boxes and seventeen fruit plates and planned a party for thirty kids at which the Pathfinders sang carols and Brian Strayer told the story of the Wise Men’s gifts as Carol Delong sketched color chalk drawings on a blackboard. Each child received a pair of mittens, a Bible story book, and a food box.

Throughout any typical year, the Center hosted health education programs, a Five-Day Plan, and First Aid classes. By the end of 1978, workers had fifty boxes—double their usual number—packed and ready to ship to the Eastern depot; during the winter of 1979 this number

rose to eighty-four boxes. At the same time these ladies prepared seventeen Christmas baskets and twenty-one fruit plates for shut-ins. The Center also began to stock Worthington, Loma Linda, Cedar Lake, and DeHan food products and pecans. The ladies also hosted “Your Story Hour” sessions for thirty neighborhood kids led by Laura Stilson, and Bible classes for adults met there each Sabbath afternoon. But that fall, the board voted to sell the Center for \$70,000 to a Spanish Roman Catholic group, reserving the right to rent the east side for one year while they built their own new Center next to the church school. That winter, the Center sheltered a Vietnamese refugee family while members provided meals and hospitality.

In the spring of 1980 the new Center at 3600 County Farm Road began to take shape, with Buford Cook’s crew laying footings, pouring concrete, and hammering walls into place. By fall, with walls up and a roof overhead, workers began painting the Center’s interior. With Pastor Dronen’s encouragement and help, workers began laying carpet and installing plumbing and electrical wiring that fall; then dozens of members helped move the new furnishings into their spacious Center, including new cupboards for which some generous soul had donated \$1000. Within a year the ladies had established the Jackson Area SDA Co-op with Shirley Stringham, Pat Holman, and Roberta Ross as coordinators. Members paid a \$25.00 annual fee. This co-op stocked 150 items, including several kinds of beans and legumes, cheeses, fruit, flour, as well as grains and cereals, nuts, pasta and vegetables.

When this new Center underwent inspection that spring, it received an excellent rating. For Christmas 1981, the staff packed twenty-four boxes for seventy-eight persons and twenty-four fruit plates for shut-ins. During 1982, as the Federal Government began sending free cheese to the Center for distribution to the needy, Alice DeMan issued an urgent SOS for volunteers as calls for food and clothing increased. These faithful women also knitted bandages for the lepers

in Africa, while the men in the church formed work bees to finish the brick facing, blacktopping the drive and parking area, and installing more cabinets and cupboards. During 1981-82, workers helped 1200 persons, sent 62 boxes of clothing to SAWS, gave out almost 3200 articles of clothing, 65 pieces of bedding, 155 food boxes, and 343 pieces of literature.

Even while they planned for a summer 1983 open house, the ladies continued serving the needs of over 900 people in 108 families—nearly 100 persons every month. The *Jackson Citizen-Patriot* covered the Open House on Sunday, June 26. Much painting, planting flowers, hanging drapes, and putting up shelves led to that wonderful day. Many members hoped this would be Jackson's last Community Services open house for years to come. During the last six months of 1983, 521 persons received almost 5000 articles of clothing and nearly \$2000 in cash and food at the Center, besides 42 pieces of bedding and 400 other household items. For Christmas, workers invited ten families to the Center, gave them a hot meal, and sent them home with 24 food boxes.

It is a testimony to their dedication that many women sacrificed time and even job promotions to volunteer at the Center during the 1980s. Margurete Purple gave up a job offer on Tuesdays and Thursdays so that she could continue to help at the Center. Stella LaMott and Pearl Losey spent countless hours producing quilts, while Emma Mahrle and Naomi Schoun knitted mittens and Elaine Pitcher even took mending home to complete on her own time. I have absolutely no doubt that there is a record kept in heaven of these dedicated women's unselfish efforts day after day!

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 14 [rev. ed. 2012]

During the 1970s and '80s, the Jackson church reached not only people's physical needs, but also their spiritual needs through such programs as the Sabbath school and Vacation Bible School. In October 1975 Dan Erhard organized Jackson's first Earliteens group, providing a Sabbath school class for those thirteen to fifteen year olds not yet ready for the Youth Sabbath School. In 1976 as the Youth collected funds for a needy student in India, the Earliteens redecorated their room in gold and yellow, while the Juniors learned lessons in reverence. In 1977 Fedelma Hart sold potted African violets for Sabbath School Investment; these fit nicely inside Marlene Cooper's macramé plant holders. Two years later Elaine Pitcher and Kim Longoria repainted walls, recovered chairs, and put frilly skirts around the tables in Cradle Roll. Also that winter the Youth group held meetings at the Luttmann's, a potluck at Erhard's, and reached out to the teens of the City Youth Home by sharing Bibles, games, and Christian books. Although the Youth Sabbath School went into hibernation during the 1980s, Arlene Bliesath, seeking to draw many of Jackson's non-attending young people back to God and His church, revived it in 1987.

That summer, Barb Stark once again directed a fine Vacation Bible School. By 1978 the Pathfinders were assisting VBS teachers in all departments, "a very good opportunity...to share their love for Jesus." Over 90 children attended this ten-day "Share Your Faith" program. In place of a VBS in 1980, Laura Stilson directed a Story Hour at Sherman Oaks Trailer Park, a creative and popular innovation. For 1981, Almeda Marsh and Helen Hyde held an evening VBS from 6:30 to 8:45 p.m. with the theme "God's Loyal Friends." While the children sang, studied and prayed, their mothers attended cooking classes taught by Irene Erhard. Although members held no Vacation Bible Schools from 1981 to 1985, Myrtle Siewert revived this

summer program here in 1986. For the 1987 VBS, she set up a split-week schedule (June 22-26 and June 29-July 2) to accommodate varying vacation schedules. Neighborhood children crowded the meetings from 9:30 a.m. to noon to enjoy songs, crafts, and Bible stories.

Equally as popular as the VBS, the Sabbath School Investment Fairs provided fun, funds and fellowship for Jackson believers. In February 1983, members enjoyed good food, crafts, and white elephant booths in the gym. Led by Unabelle Pawson, this fair raised over \$400, swelling the Investment total to \$734 that spring. The 1986 Investment Fair featured a country western hoedown theme with Dorothy Thomas leading out. Various booths featured Wayne Hyde grinding fresh corn meal, crafts, food, and pony rides. The 200 attendees enjoyed musical selections, magical tricks by Felix Lorenz, and an old-fashioned grand march led by Ralph Benedict of Battle Creek. The hoedown raised \$480 for Sabbath School Investment.

These occasions especially appealed to Jackson's young people, who loved to socialize at the school with their new teachers. The four instructors that fall included grades one through three teacher Lorene Yackley, soft-spoken and well-organized, with beautiful blackboard handwriting and firm discipline; grades four through six teacher Helen Hyde, usually smiling, with a bustling and happily active classroom of restless adolescents; grades seven and eight teacher Brian Strayer, who has been remembered as a horrible punnist and a "very thorough and demanding" scholar who taught excellent note-taking skills, interesting history classes, and put up with almost daily teasing from his female students; and ninth grade teacher and principal Welton Ingram, often tough in his science and math classes, but inventive with lab equipment, and a man who "liked to kid and clown" outside the classroom. As a school administrator, Mr. Ingram was well-liked by the staff, students and parents for his efficient ways and friendly,

informal style. From 1975 to 1978, this team of four did their best to prepare Christian intellectuals at the Jackson SDA School.

That fall, Marla Marsh and Pat Mayo, always game for more fun, talked their teachers into sponsoring a “Spirit Week” to boost school spirit. Activities included songs, skits, and certain days designated as “Tie Day,” “Color Day,” “1950s Day,” “Hobo Day,” and “Hat Day.” A few parents visited the school that week to see how the teacher taught amid such controlled mirth. Also that fall, the Community Services Center provided new chairs for the ninth grade classroom, much to the comfort of its six students.

That year’s Halloween can-gooding saw grades four through nine youth collect over 500 cans for Christmas baskets, after which they enjoyed a rubber-band shooting contest seeking to snuff out a candle in two shots. Spurred on by their teachers, the pupils raised \$925 for Ingathering—over \$225 more than their goal.

Believing that the two newest teachers might be worth their salt yet another year, the school board voted to add a tenth grade for the 1976-77 year. Enrollment rose to forty-eight as the ninth graders agreed to stay another year. That winter the “Old Men” (fathers’ basketball team) beat the “Panthers” (their sons) by four baskets in the eighth grade benefit program. Shirley Ingram helped youth to see that witnessing could be fun as she formed small groups to perform “Your Story Hour” skits in Jackson, Adrian, Eaton Rapids, and Ann Arbor—with positive responses everywhere. In the spring of 1976, at least one parent attended parent-Teacher Conferences for every student at the school—an unprecedented vote of confidence for the teachers. Despite receiving the outstanding support of parents and students, pastor and board, Welton Ingram liked to remind the teachers that “we’re still in the honeymoon period...next year they will tell us what we’ve done wrong *this year!*” But “they” never did!

During the reception that followed the 1976 eighth grade graduation service, Mr. Strayer thanked chairman Bob Marsh for his support that year. Remarking that he enjoyed teaching very much, he added, "I can hardly believe they pay me for having so much fun." "Well, Brian," the chairman replied, "we can change that if you'd like!"

That summer, as Miss Yackley vacationed in Canada and Mrs. Hyde and Mr. Ingram took education courses at Andrews University, Mr. Strayer spent a memorable three months traveling about Europe, sending many postcards to his Jackson friends and growing a mustache which he would wear for the next twenty years. While the editor of the *Reporter* mistakenly said that "Mrs." Strayer would teach grades 7 and 8 that fall, in fact "Mr." Strayer did so once again!

As the new school year began, Cheri Harris, for her world history project, painted a beautiful unfurled flag on the far wall of the ninth and tenth grade classroom, repainted in patriotic red, white, and blue for the Bicentennial. Starting from a 2"x2" drawing, Cheri gradually enlarged her sketch and then blocked it out on the wall. The completed picture drew gasps of delight from visitors. Other students wrote book reports, assembled models of historic ships or planes or cars, and drew maps for their history projects, helping them see that history could really be fun.

During the 1976-77 school year, students enjoyed evangelist Joe Melashenko's frequent visits for Week of Prayer; helped Bill Tiff, Sr., haul in hundreds of cases of oranges and grapefruit for the Home and School citrus program; and reveled in the added storage space Bill Dornan's newly constructed cupboards gave them. That winter grades eight to ten students attended Bible camp at Au Sable, where they heard John Glass talk about "How to Survive Being Religious." They ate hearty meals, played ping pong, skied, and got to know other junior academy young people in small group sessions. Some had teary eyes during the beautiful

Communion service Sabbath evening. But long after lights out that night, much rowdy fun continued in Cabin 3-B where Strayer's boys just could not settle in! When they left Sunday morning, all participants agreed that this had been "a very worthwhile experience."

The 1977-78 school year brought many improvements at 3600 County Farm Road, including three very popular ping pong tables, a new snow blower, a stove and other kitchen equipment, blown insulation in the gym, and new carpeting in the offices and band room—all made possible by booming citrus sales. Also that year the board formed a new Recreation Committee chaired by PE teacher Brian Strayer to plan Saturday night recreational activities for families, including basketball, ping pong, and volleyball games. That spring the entire school body enjoyed concerts by the Jackson Symphony and the Battle Creek Academy band. Then Mr. Strayer took the upper grades to Ella Sharpe Museum, Dearborn's Greenfield Village, and Henry Ford Museum—and actually quizzed them on it!—and occasionally to Loudan Jackson's ice cream parlor to soak up the quaint historical atmosphere of the place. In addition, grades eight to ten annually visited Grand Ledge Academy and Adelphian Academy for Academy Days each spring.

By June 1978, enrollment had reached 55 students, the highest in three years. The graduating class that year invited Mr. Strayer to address them, knowing this would be his last year in Jackson. In the *Recorder*, Marlene Cooper had announced "that we are losing three of our teachers next year. The Ingram family is moving to the Berrien Springs area where they have a fruit farm. Lorene Yackley will be teaching church school in Waukegan, Ill., and Brian Strayer will move to Iowa in the fall to attend [the University of Iowa] to study for his doctorate in history... We shall miss you very much and wish you God's richest blessings."

To assist grades 4-6 teacher Helen Hyde in 1978, the board hired Bill and Linda Worth, a jovial couple from Munising. Linda, ever-smiling and well-organized, taught grades one through three, while Bill, ever teasing and laughing, taught grades seven through nine and served as principal. A real train fanatic, Bill made sure their new home in Leslie bordered the railroad tracks, where he was often observed dashing from the table with camera in hand to snap pictures of passing trains!

In November Jackson's forty-seven pupils and their parents participated in a work bee to install storm windows, put up outside lights on the gym, and clean the school. The citrus program, now between 260 and 280 cases a month, provided needed funds for these improvements. The Home and School Association also fostered a parent study group to discuss the book *Child Guidance* on the first Tuesday of each month. Mr. Worth also began a new tradition: "The State of the School" address, paralleling the President of the United States' speech to the nation. That spring, following Elder Archa Dart's Week of Prayer, Marti Bliesath and Ed Reesz won the local temperance poster contest. In June of 1979 the school graduated its last large group of eighth graders: Chris Carpenter, Tami Underwood, Barb La Roe, Annette Reesz, Jeff Moore, Bill Jones, and Ron Mayo.

Before the 1979-80 term began, parents and students gathered for a "get-acquainted" corn roast at the school. Also that fall, each home room chose a "room mother" to assist their teacher in planning field trips, parties, and other activities. Home and School members studied the book *Adventist Home* together each month. But only thirty-five students registered in September of 1979, a trend that worried board members. Continuing a tasty tradition begun by chefs Barb Stark in 1975 and Shirlee Ingram from 1976 to 1978, Judy Jennings revived the hot lunch program at the school two days a week. That winter, to offer visitors spiritual as well as physical

food (through the citrus program), the board placed a free literature rack in the outer office. In the spring of 1980, Rich Atkeson painted the classroom walls and cabinets; two months later an eighth grade class of only five students (Dale Delong, Lisa Harris, Carol Richardson, Mark Nazaruk, and Jerry Pratt) graduated.

The 1980-81 school year witnessed many improvements in all areas except the enrollment, which fell to thirty-seven. The Home and School Association began showing James Dobson's "Focus on the Family" film series; Mr. Worth started a twice weekly assembly program for all students, inviting community people to address the student body; and the school acquired new desks for all pupils, comfortable new chairs for the teachers, and a new Smith Corona copier machine to replace the old spirit master duplicator. Marleen Swan also became the secretary at the school, helping teachers with paper work, phone calls, and tutoring. Linda Worth's students began a "Walking Across America" program of jogging that fall, hoping to reach New England soon. Meanwhile the citrus program, which hit an all-time high of 415 cases that December, added Red Delicious apples trucked in by Shirlee Ingram from Ingco Orchards. In January 1981 the school kids "saw history in the making" as they watched on TV President Reagan's inaugural address and the release of 52 hostages in Iran. Later that spring they enjoyed watching Grand Ledge Academy's "Aeronautics" team perform acrobatics in the gym. But that summer, Bill and Linda Worth departed for Atlanta, Georgia, to teach at the new Atlanta Adventist Academy.

Their replacements in August of 1981 were Cathy Lybarger for grades one to three and Ken Hallam for grades seven to nine; Helen Hyde continued teaching grades four to six. Mr. Hallam organized a school choir whose concerts were greatly enjoyed; he also trained his pupils to clear the building in thirty-seven seconds flat during fire drills. The New Year 1982 brought

with it a new constitution for the school; a marvelous spring Week of Prayer with Elder Leighton Holly and Sam Woods on the “Joy of Living”; and a memorable trip to the Pontiac Junior Academy Choir Festival. That spring students planted evergreen seedlings around the traffic circle for a scenic windbreak and perhaps future Christmas trees; alas, careless mowers insured these saplings enjoyed short life spans! In April Todd Erhard’s temperance poster won first prize and a five dollar discount at Camp Au Sable. The following month, in a musical exchange program, Grand Ledge Academy’s choir and band performed in Jackson while Jackson’s school choir sang at the Summit Church.

During the 1982-83 school year, Mr. Hallam begged members to donate old soft-ball mitts for the school’s recreation program. Reportedly only one mitt arrived, postmarked Collegedale, Tennessee! Purchased at Sears and Roebuck in Jackson in 1976, Brian Strayer’s mitt had at last come home! At the end of the school term, long-time Jackson teacher Helen Hyde retired; so Miss Lybarger and Mr. Hallam split grades one through four and five through eight between themselves as the enrollment continued to drop.

During the 1983-84 school year, Michael Lowe of Missouri taught grades five through eight as Cathy Lybarger continued teaching grades one through four. Many of the twenty-six students that year played in the new band conducted by Keith Burk. The board also discussed starting a student work-study program in 1984, hoping thereby to offset the rising tuition costs and declining enrollment.

But enrollment plummeted below twenty by the mid-1980s. Hoping to stem this downward slide, the board brought in a husband-wife team. Harvey and Dolly Retterer, with their rosy-cheeked and energetic children Virginia, Frank, and Marla, provided more than teaching skills at the school. Dolly served as church organist and Sabbath school teacher, while

Harvey, a church elder, organized an extremely popular Saturday night volleyball program at the gym which, through Christian fellowship and recreation, won souls for Christ over the years. Mr. Retterer also encouraged the kids to bring Campbell Soup labels to help purchase new equipment for the school. By the spring of 1987, students had gathered over 200 labels. They especially sought the more valuable mushroom and tomato soup labels, leading many Jackson members to alter their eating habits just a bit!

Despite everyone's best efforts, however, by 1987 the enrollment at the school had slipped to only seventeen students. Faced with roof repairs of between \$13,000 and \$50,000, with maintenance and other repair costs totaling \$1200, and with a student population so low as to make four classrooms and two full-time teachers hardly cost-effective, the members decided to increase the enrollment by providing transportation for distant students and ease the debt burden with a church subsidy of \$2100 a month. The eighth-grade class for 1987 comprised only three students (Matt Jordan and Sandra and Sonya Swan) while the eighth-grade class of 1988 was only one girl—Becky Marsh. Jackson, like most other Adventist schools in the 1980s, faced the effects of over-building at a time when birthrates, church giving, and Adventist commitment to Christian education all seemed to be declining.

Yet in other areas of church activities, as we shall see in Part 15, the 1980s witnessed brighter days ahead as God continued to bless the outreach activities of this congregation.

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 15 [rev. ed. 2012]

Historically, Jackson Adventists have always been extremely generous with their means. From the era of Dan Palmer and H. S. Gurney in the 1850s and 1860s to the present, this church has been widely known as a sacrificing group. For example, a cursory look at annual tithe receipts reveals that giving doubled from roughly \$15,000 in 1945 to \$32,000 in 1955; tithe doubled again from \$44,000 in 1965 to \$89,000 in 1975. Over the next decade, it increased 150% from \$89,000 to \$140,000. It is remarkable to note that the greatest increase in tithes and offerings (213%) occurred when this church was building a new school and a new church from 1945 to 1955 and therefore theoretically when members should have had less money to give for other purposes. God still blesses the cheerful giver, doesn't He? Remember that with God, 10-1=11.

The one item *not consistent* with Jackson generosity has been the decline in mission offerings. Although giving to missions grew from \$4000 in 1945 to \$13,000 in 1970 (a 325% growth in twenty-five years), mission offerings fell to below \$8600 a year after 1970. Granted, this follows a national trend among Adventist churches in North America, but it is *not* consistent with Jackson's generous heritage! The rapid rise in tithes contrasted with the rapid decline in offerings give us cause to pause and reexamine our personal commitment to the world-wide mission work of the church.

When it comes to Tag Days and Ingathering, however, Jackson Adventists gave their all. In the fall of 1976, members raised over \$1000 in one day for disaster relief, handing out yellow daisies and leaflets. Four years later, however, the Ingathering campaign fell \$890 behind by January 1981, an unprecedented trend in the Jackson Church. So that spring Lake Union Stewardship Secretary Elder Don Copsey came here to conduct a stewardship seminar.

During the 1982-83 Ingathering campaign, members worked hard to raise \$7100. The *Citizen-Patriot* pointed out how these funds helped local citizens through Five-Day Plans to stop smoking, cooking classes, disaster and poor relief, and other benefits. For their 75th annual campaign in 1985, members donned aprons labeled “People Helping People” and circulated in malls and downtown shopping areas, attracting much favorable attention. For the 1986-87 Ingathering appeal, solicitors received four typed speeches to memorize in approaching people and asking for funds. These typed words helped the tongue-tied articulate their appeal better.

One of the groups most enthusiastic about Ingathering—the youth and children—also proved active in the Pathfinder Club. Under new directors Stan and Laura Stilson after 1975, the nineteen Dan Palmer Blacksmiths held a contest to update their name, choosing the title Jackson “Giants” that fall. In the spring of 1976 as Cheryl Delong and Brad Marsh joined the club as counselors, the group went outdoors for archery and physical fitness routines and also studied electricity with Ray Cooper, cake decorating with Laura Stilson, and string art honors with Welton Ingram. They enjoyed a winter weekend campout at Burns Frontier in December and participated in the Palm Sunday “March for Christ” parade with twenty church groups in honor of the nation’s Bicentennial.

By 1978 Pathfinder membership stood at only thirteen, but these energetic youth held garage sales, a paper drive, and a portrait photo program to raise \$255 for their new tents, which they pitched at Sleeping Bear Dunes that summer. Later that fall when Judy Wright and Jim Holman became co-directors, Carl La Roe taught them the art of pitching horse shoes and Donna Mayo instructed them in the latest baking techniques. At Christmas time, the club regularly sang for nursing home patients.

During 1979 club membership rose to sixteen as Don Woodward, Ed Longoria, and Judy Jennings reorganized it. The youth studied macramé and wood carving honors that year; they also earned an incredible 229 points at the Lansing Pathfinder Fair that spring. Every member got at least one blue ribbon in addition to two red ones for their photography and cake decorating exhibits. That fall Stan Stilson taught them Indian lore and his wife Laura gave lessons in cake decorating.

The decade of the 1980s found the Pathfinders selling family portraits for \$5.95 to raise \$300 for their winter campout at Waterloo Recreation Area. In the spring they tied themselves up in knots and studied lashing techniques. In 1981 the charming redhead Crystal Heistand joined Judy and Jim as their assistant director and Brenda La Roe joined as girls' counselor. Although she was not thrilled about the insect honor they were studying, she enjoyed helping with the weekend campout at the Cassopolis Camporee. In the fall, the club planned a spaghetti supper with group games and activities. At a Craft Seminar, Ken Hallam and Sharon Stringham won the trail contest in orienteering; Irene Erhard and Sue Hallam took basketry; Brenda La Roe studied glass painting; Pat Holman took felt craft; and Judy Wright and Crystal Heistand learned plaster sculpturing.

In the winter of 1982 the eighteen members enjoyed a winter trip to Camp Au Sable for snowmobiling, skiing, and tobogganing. The following spring, as Crystal drilled them in marching and helped them prepare for the Lansing Pathfinder Fair, she kept her eye on Curt Cooper, for whom she had definite plans that November. The following year, Jackson's Giants joined other clubs for a weekend campout. Members studied cake decorating with Jeanette Weems, woodworking with Don Woodward, glass painting with Maxine Alfred and Sharon Stringham, and braiding and felt craft with Marlene Cooper and Pat Holman. Under Jim

Holman's leadership that fall, the club worked on honors in tumbling *and* first aid, which ironically, seemed an appropriate combination, especially since Rick Jordan, who taught them, had twice broken his leg skiing!

Members, anticipating receiving their new uniforms in 1984, studied animal tracking in the snow and enjoyed Michigan Pathfinder Director Elder Fleming's film on Australia. They also began a Bible marking class to prepare for giving Bible studies. In the spring of 1987, sixteen of the Giants, having received craft and nature honor patches, were invested in an impressive ceremony led by Elder Fleming and Youth Director Jerry LaFave. Members Matt Jordan and Becky Marsh staged a baking demonstration while other youth performed skits. Then Elder Fleming showed an exciting film on Camp Au Sable's new facilities for family camping.

As always, these Pathfinder youth continued to enjoy planning school and church exhibits at the Jackson County Youth Fair air during the 1970s and '80s. Exhibits at the 1975 fair won twelve awards and \$285 for the Sabbath school and church school, while 485 people signed up for Wayout Bible studies. In 1976 the Kindergarten theme, "Jesus Loves the Children of the World," won first prize; the Primary theme, "Caring for Our Bodies," also won first prize. The Juniors featured "Jesus, the Light of the World" as their theme, while the Youth had "Ten Signs of Christ's Soon Return" as their motif. The Earliteens planned a temperance exhibit and the adults, a Voice of Prophecy theme. Awards that year totaled nearly \$100.

In 1979 the Sabbath school and grade school kids prepared five exhibits which won four second place awards and one third place award in addition to \$135. In the summer of 1980, the *Lake Union Herald* printed *three photos* of the Jackson Church's Fair exhibits—while the combined total for all other churches in the Lake Union was *only four photos!* Themes that

summer included “Jesus Loves You” (with the paper *Our Little Friend* given out), the “Four Seasons,” and food caloric models, which won more cash and ribbons.

In 1981 Dan and Crystal Heistand helped Marlene Cooper set up the fair booth with the theme “Jesus...the Answer” inside the Commercial Building. This church’s five exhibits won two first prizes, three second prizes, and one third prize, plus nearly \$170 in cash. In fact, since 1964 when Mrs. Cooper had organized the first church booth at the County Fair, the Jackson Church had reaped over \$1000 in cash awards.

If earlier booths had featured primarily religious themes, by 1985, Clarence Kirkby manned the booth which featured good dietary habits. Amidst all the caramel corn, corn dogs, cotton candy, and French fries at the fair, Adventists offered a drawing for twenty-five free vegetarian meals, gave out vegetarian recipes, and provided tips on how to quit smoking. At the follow-up vegetarian banquet in August, twenty-two guests came and enjoyed the meal and a film on vegetarianism. Caryn Jordan also taught a whole-wheat Bread-Bake class.

Jackson Adventists always enjoyed a good social time and shared their fun with others. In the spring of 1976 the school kids planned a party for patients at the Medical Care Facility, and ninth grader Cheri Harris presented John Lamb, an Adventist muscular dystrophy resident, with a birthday cake. In the spring of 1977 the internationally loved Swiss accordionist Andy Ferrier performed sacred and secular concerts at the church and school, delighting the audience with musical stunts on his twelve foot Alpine horn, harmonica, and accordion. Then he showed a colorful film of Swiss landscapes and demonstrated the art of yodeling, which several students practiced for days thereafter to mixed reviews from parents and teachers.

The year 1978 saw the debut of the famous “Bong Show,” a talent program with prizes for contestants and a gong to be rung to cut off the “turkey” numbers. But when the quartet (Don

Harris, Norm Luttmann, Brian Strayer, and Chuck Winters) sang their ditty about “Superspuds,” audience enjoyment made the judges forget to “bong” it as planned! Other numbers included the patriotic song “I’m a Yankee Doodle Dandy” by the adorable sisters Cathy and Lori Weems, a spoof on “The Origins of Tobacco” by Principal Ingram, variations on “Chopsticks” with Bruce and Judy Wright, the hilarious skit “Little People” with Eric Marsh and Craig Harris, and a romantic solo-duet by Almeda Marsh, dressed half as a man and half as a woman.

During the winter of 1979 the Social Committee began opening the gym for Monday night basketball and volleyball. As non-Adventist friends and spouses came out in record numbers, this activity promoted family and Christian fellowship. Hayrides and sledding parties at the Alfred’s in Grass Lake also encouraged this fellowship. At Christmas 1976 the new Fine Arts Committee invited the Jackson Symphony Ensemble to play Baroque music and Christmas carols at the chapel.

As the decade of the 1980s opened, the church women started a monthly “Ladies’ Night Out” program, meeting in private homes for refreshments and pleasant conversation. Meanwhile, the Social Committee planned a “Love Banquet” for Rex and Maxine Waters, soon to leave for Hinsdale. In the summer of 1983, members enjoyed a special treat when the Navajo Singers from La Vida Mission in New Mexico came to sing for them. Their colorful costumes and unique musical style delighted both young and old. Equally colorful and entertaining, the local Banjo Club led members in a sing-along concert at the gym in the spring of 1987. Athletically inclined members signed up for the first church summer recreation program featuring volleyball and softball teams from June to August.

For their unselfish service to others, for their outstanding talents and achievements, many

Jackson Adventists made headlines in the *Lake Union Herald* or the *Jackson Citizen-Patriot* during the 1970s and 1980s. We will spotlight just a handful of them.

In 1975 the super-energetic blonde, Shirlee Ingram, received kudos for her contributions as school chef, her superb cider and delicious apples which improved the health of members here, and for her “Your Story Hour” tapes that helped students put on delightful Sabbath plays and programs. Church PR Secretary Marlene Cooper, the original “Energizer Bunny,” made headlines many times as director of the Community Services Center, the church’s head janitor, school car-pool leader, and editor of the church paper, the *Recorder*. In her “spare time,” she taught a Primary Sabbath School class, served on the church board, filled the office of assistant temperance leader, directed the church fair booth each summer, and participated in Five Day Plans to help local citizens quit smoking. In 1977 she became one of eighteen “Laymen of the Year” and while her mother Iva Hamisfar, confined to a wheelchair, received special recognition for raising the Jasper Wayne Ingathering Award (\$130) at Paka Plaza Mall and for spending twenty hours a week sewing and mending garments at the Community Service Center despite severe rheumatoid arthritis in her hands.

Many of the youth also received special mention for their achievements. In 1976 Sandy Mayo and Marla Marsh became the church’s youngest ever librarians. During the summer of 1979, Eric Marsh (a senior at Adelpian Academy), Barb LaRoe (a freshman at Grand Ledge Academy), Wendy Alfred (a senior at Cedar Lake Academy), and Peggy Eckenroth (also a senior at Cedar Lake Academy) received widespread recognition for praising the benefits of the work-study programs at their schools. Paying his way by working at the wood mill, Eric said, “was good work experience.” Barb worked in the school’s kitchen and in its plastics industry, while Wendy and Peggy worked at Bake-n-Serv (a frozen foods factory). In the fall of 1982,

fourth grader David Wollett took first prize in the Jackson County temperance contest; his classmate Cathy Weems received second prize. Youth and adults jogged over ten miles each in October to help fly the fourteen-year-old Lyrea Luzadder to the Dominican Republic to assist Dr. Jim Holman for two weeks in a health clinic there.

During the 1980s Arlene Bliesath and her helpers sewed new baptismal robes while Jeanette Weems and Gladys Davis organized a children's choir. Meanwhile Dan and Irene Erhard sponsored four Indo-Chinese refugees, providing them with a furnished apartment and transportation. On his own time, Don Harris drew up the blueprints for the new Community Service Center on County Farm Road. With help from Rick and Donna Clark, Don and Barb Harris also jumpstarted a dynamic and creative Youth Sabbath School program in 1980 that really appealed to the church's teens. A year later, Linda Worth started an Adventist youth Society.

Wider public fame came to a few of Jackson's professionals as well. In 1981 dentist Dan Erhard opened a "One-Day Denture Service" in Paka Plaza, a place where a patient could be "toothless in [the] morning, [and] dentured by night." Five full-time employees and his wife Irene assisted Dan there. That summer Dr. Hilda Habenicht was elected president of the Altrusa Club in Jackson, having been a charter member of that group since 1944. Shortly after Dr. Jim Holman was elected president of the Eye-Openers Lions Club, he participated with twenty-three other professionals in a trip to Honduras to help 1500 people in village clinics. Months later, Jim took thirteen-year-old Jeff Wright to Haiti and the Dominican Republic for two weeks as a "mini-missionary," a trip that changed the boy's life. While there, Jeff helped dentist Gerry Wolf extract teeth, helped clean up after hurricane damage, strained his muscles sledge-

hammering concrete, sang in a local choir, performed marching drills, and enjoyed snorkeling in the shallow ocean reefs. Later in life Jeff would become a missionary to several Asian countries.

In closing our “Who’s Who in the Jackson SDA Church Hall of Fame,” did you know that this church has a resident poet? For many years Joan LaRoe shared her poetry in the church *Record* and at other special occasions. If you ask her, she might recite some of her poems for you!

In 1982 when the Eaton Rapids home of Sharon Parker and her daughter Kitty burned to the ground, Buford Cook and Ray Cooper organized a team of ten men who rebuilt the house and raised over \$2000 in donations to pay for the project. The *Citizen-Patriot* stated: “Laurels to some compassionate people who are helping to replace an Onondaga Township woman’s home...” Jesus said, “As ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.”

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 16 [rev. ed. 2012]

During the late 1980s, several Jackson Adventists received public recognition in the *Lake Union Herald* or the *Citizen-Patriot* for their outstanding service to the church, community, and world. In the spring of 1986 Dr. Bruce Wright and Hampton Walker conducted a weekly stress seminar in the Jackson Osteopathic Hospital, teaching hospital personnel how to control or even eliminate bad stress in their lives. During the winter of 1987, Dr. Jim Holman cooperated with the optician Mike Wise and the optometrist Gilbert Blanks in directing twenty-six Pathfinders in the sixth annual Teen Mission to Hispaniola. There, medical, dental, and optical professionals conducted nine clinics in two weeks, helping 3500 Dominicans, distributing 2000 pairs of glasses, treating 320 dental patients, and providing over \$70,000 worth of medical aid and \$6000 in building assistance at the Gaspar Hernandez Youth Camp. After sorting thousands of pairs of glasses, Jim admitted that he was “almost sick of seeing them,” but, he added, “I discovered that [going there] helped me as much or more than it did them. The work helps me keep my priorities straight.” He felt the trip also helped the Pathfinder youth “get a vision of service.”

Also in 1987 long-time pillar of Jackson’s Dorcas Welfare work Stella La Mott, now ninety-two years young, witnessed to the senior citizens of the Park Forest Apartments complex where she lived by giving them Adventist books on their birthdays. Don Woodward continued his faithful ministry to inmates at the prison, four of whom were now Sabbath-keepers. That summer Carl La Roe donated his carpentry and painting talents for a week to help restore Andrews University’s historic 1902 Sutherland House.

The decade of the 1980s also witnessed the faithful long-time service of many “unsung heroes”: the smiling, hugging Barb Harris as perpetual head deaconess and Sabbath school

secretary; the untiring Priscilla Campbell, talented singer and faithful Primary Sabbath School teacher, along with her colleague Claudette Woods, a leader in the Primary division since 1970; the ever-competent and unruffled Donna Mayo, church clerk and pastor's secretary. As new faces came and went in the '80s, everyone loved the ubiquitous, witty, and willing "Sunshine saint," Eleanor Bather, who, despite failing health, continued to play the piano for the choir as she had done for half a century.

In the spring of 1987 Pat Holman re-launched the defunct Jackson Church *Reporter* with the help of poetess Joanne La Roe and her daughter Brenda. Its new features included "From the Pastor's Desk" with Elder Siewert's homilies; "Homemade Happiness" with Aunt Myrtle's stories; "Bits and Pieces," Pathfinder News, the "School Scrapbook," and "Community Services News."

The meticulous record-keeping of choir director Chuck Winters also enables us to reconstruct some of the highpoints in the history of Jackson's famous choir from the 1960s to the 1980s. For years before that, of course, Eleanor Bather had built up and directed the choir, often conducting rehearsals from the piano bench where she played. By 1965 her choir had twenty members: Sopranos included Norma Jordan, Jean Scully, Patsy Ross, Susan St. John, Christine Good, and Alice DeMan. Altos featured Maxine Burdick, Roberta Ross, Elaine Pitcher, and Anna Gordon. In the tenor section, Orval Scully, Don Harris, Jim Ross, and both John Ross senior and junior sang. Basses—always hard to find—included Homer Hills, Duane Barnett, Brian St. John, and Merlin Hart. During one Sabbath afternoon choir program, Homer sang a solo, "Faith of Our Fathers," while Norma Jordan and Jim Ross joined in a duet for "Calvary." The choir sang ten numbers, among them "The Lord Is My Shepherd," "The Stranger of Galilee," "O Love that Will Not Let Me Go," and "Lead On, O King Eternal."

By 1968, as the choir grew to nearly thirty members, the church board authorized the purchase of new choir robes of “desert gold” trimmed with collars of “forest green.” With all of her other Sabbath school duties also increasing, Eleanor Bather found directing such a large choir to be a major responsibility. When Lynn and Chuck Winters arrived in 1969, “Sunshine” almost exuberantly passed the torch to Chuck as soon as she heard that he had conducted other church choirs. So for twenty years thereafter, Chuck became the official choir director, with Eleanor as music director, and Marvin Blackerby as president of the choir, Norma Jordan as sheet music coordinator, and Don Harris as secretary-treasurer. Don kept meticulous records of all receipts, including \$1.30 each for choir dues. At the end of the year, bass Bill Tiff, Sr., received the “Choir Progressive Achievement Award” for making the most progress in the vocal arts. For 1970 bass Dan Erhard made the greatest singing progress and thus earned the coveted plaque; for 1971 tenor Don Harris won the Achievement Award, following in 1972 by John and Roberta Ross.

During the 1970s Jackson’s choir improved so much that Chuck began taking it out on the road. Members gave sacred concerts at Bunker Hill, Grand Rapids, and in Southfield, near Detroit. The free-will offering at Bunker Hill alone contributed over \$34 for the choir’s coffers; that at Grand Rapids brought in nearly \$40. The choir’s repertoire included such well-known pieces as “Lead Me Lord,” “Hide Not Thy Face,” “Calvary,” and “Bless the Lord, O My Soul,” as well as choir favorites “The Greatest Story Yet Untold,” “I Want to be Ready,” and “Jesus Is Coming Again.” Solos often included Norma Jordan’s “Near the Cross” and Dan Erhard’s “Holy, Holy.” The male quartet—Don Harris, Dan Erhard, Ola Robinson, and Chuck Winters—sang “Lo He Comes” and the stirring “We Have This Hope.” In her soaring soprano, Priscilla

Campbell sang “Come, Holy Spirit” as a solo, while Elwyn Hyde and Don De Camp sang “Day by Day” as a duet.

Sometimes, however, Chuck had problems assembling all the choir members for Friday evening practice sessions. To solve this dilemma, he had humorous little reminder cards printed up and distributed. One, showing a cracked egg, said, “Well, everybody makes mistakes! But you be a good egg and come on back to CHOIR!” Another, with a jigsaw puzzle, stated: “Our choir needs YOU to complete the picture! Sometimes the empty places in the choir are a little puzzling.” A third, showing a clown face, warned: “Don’t clown around—we need you in the choir!” Another urged members to “Hop a plane, grab a train...or whatever [picture of a tricycle]. We need *you* in choir.” One with a fish jumping at the top asked: “Don’t you feel sorta like ‘a fish out of water’ when you’re away from choir rehearsal?”

The quality of Jackson’s choral music received a significant boost in the fall of 1973 when the church board purchased a seven-foot Baldwin Grand Piano with ebony finish and adjustable concert bench with the \$5,600 donated from the Billeter Estate. This beautiful instrument enhanced the Christmas 1974 program, at which the congregation joined the choir in singing five familiar carols. Chuck sang the “Lord’s Prayer” and the choir performed “Fanfare for Christmas,” “In the Stillness of the Night,” “Glory to God,” “O Come All Ye Faithful,” and “The Advent of Our God.” By 1975 the choir included twenty members: sopranos Priscilla Campbell, Irene Erhard, Fedelma Hart, Helen Hyde, and Almeda Marsh; altos Connie Blackerby, Maxine Burdick, Grace Robinson, Roberta Ross, and Lynn Winters; tenors Don Harris, Wayne Hyde, Bill Moors, Mel St. John, and John Ross; and bases Marv Blackerby, Dan Erhard, Homer Hills, Ola Robinson, and Bill Tiff, Sr. That fall a new quartet formed consisting of Don Harris (first tenor), Norm Luttmann (second tenor), Chuck Winters (baritone), and Brian

Strayer (bass), while Priscilla Campbell, Grace Robinson, and Roberta Ross joined in a ladies' trio. Keeping up with the times, the choir began to sing a number of Bill Gaither's songs, including tunes like "I Will Serve Thee," "I Am Because," "Redeeming Love," and "Jesus, We Just Want to Thank You."

One memorable concert at Christmas 1977 included quartet numbers "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and "Jesus Is Coming Again." Then as Elder Robinson read passages from the *Desire of Ages*, the choir softly sang "O Come, O Come, Immanuel," "A Child This Day Is Born," "O Sleep, My Fairest One," "Angels We Have Heard on High," as well as "What Child Is This?", "A Child of Hope," and "Silent Night." At the 1980 Christmas program, Helen Hyde led the children's choir in a rousing rendition of "Go Tell It on the Mountain." Student Jeff Wright, French hornist, played "Redeeming Love," after which his dad Bruce awakened the sleepy saints with the "Fanfare for Christmas Trumpet." A ladies' trio—Maxine Alfred, Maxine Burdick, and Edith Luttman—sang "No Room." The choir, now boasting thirty-two members, sang several familiar Christmas carols.

However, during the late-1980s, as some of Jackson's pastors frowned on Gaither music, as various choir members moved away, and as church believers' schedules filled with other activities, the choir at Jackson declined and eventually ceased to sing at all. Many felt that this was regrettable and longed for the day when choral music would once again be a regular part of Jackson's Church worship service.

As the decade of the 1980s merged into the 1990s and renewed violence and war erupted in Iraq, Ireland, and India, the Jackson Church continued to provide a haven of calm wherein the Lord's work progressed. Despite a rapidly declining church school enrollment, the end of the church choir and Youth Sabbath School, and expensive repairs and upgrades to equipment,

Jackson's dedicated members fostered a diverse range of spiritual and social activities. Their most noteworthy outreach endeavors included evangelistic meetings, cooking schools, Breathe Free clinics, the Community Services Center, summer Vacation Bible Schools, county fair booths, and Maranatha trips. In-reach activities included the church school, Pathfinder Club, church music, Sabbath schools, and upgrades on equipment, all of which added to the nurture and comfort of those within the church.

Five pastoral families shepherded the Jackson flock during this period: Elder Don and Myrtle Siewert (1985-90); Elder Charles and Annette Hanlon (1990-95); Elder Harold DeWitt (1995-96); Pastor Ted and Lisa Struntz (1996-97); and Elder Patrick and Tammy Milligan (1998-?). A very loving, sincere, silver-haired man, Don Siewert—the “I’m happy” man—arrived from Midland with his marvelous story-telling wife “Aunt” Myrtle. He impressed members with his grass-roots humility, his Christ-centered sermons, and his friendly administrative approach. “I like to be well ‘boarded up,’” he once quipped, referring to his democratic policy of having church board backing before making major decisions. The Hanlons were young and energetic; their four sons added new life to the Sabbath school and church school, where Nettie was a dynamic Home and School leader. The widower Harold De Witt, dark-haired and soft-spoken, having recently lost his wife in an auto accident, really knew how to sympathize with grieving members. As many as sixty people regularly flocked to his deeply spiritual prayer meetings. Ted Struntz—bold, unassuming, courageous as a lion—had the opposite temperament; he was full of strength and commitment, a sergeant in the Lord’s army ready to convict the world of sin and warn souls of coming judgment—quite unlike his quiet wife Lisa who served as organist and medical doctor here. Together they built up the church school and developed a field school handbook for “The Jackson Ten.” Members saw the

vigorous, youthful Pat Milligan as a genuine, down-to-earth pastor with energy galore to reach this city for “Christ using a video lending library and 30,000 brochures. His wife Tammy, the Irish ginger head, could preach as good a sermon as he—or so it was said!

Evangelism was Pastor Siewert’s first love, and he passed that enthusiasm along to his flock. For seven weeks in the fall of 1987, Elder Fred Adams directed a Revelation Seminar here. Evangelist Dan Collins came in the fall of 1988. To prepare for his series, the board appointed a four-man Evangelism Committee; its members worked long hours advertising for “It Is Written.” During the month-long series, members gave over \$2000 for public relations and distributed 1500 pieces of literature. Thrilled with the results of this series, the church requested Elder Collins to return in the fall of 1990 for more meetings. Meanwhile, in the winter of 1989 Elder Henry Feyerabend held an enormously successful five-week series here, resulting in thirty baptisms. Jackson had not seen its equal in forty years! Church members began running “Discovery in Daniel” ads in the *Citizen-Patriot* and pledged to raise \$6400 for evangelism in 1992. The board devoted half of all interest earned on church bank accounts to evangelism and the other half to Vacation Bible Schools.

Some members even traveled abroad in search of evangelistic opportunities! In the fall of 1992 choir director Chuck Winters assisted in Czechoslovakian evangelism near Prague for five weeks; he then joined evangelists Ron and Yvonne Feely for meetings in Gobles, Michigan, in the spring of 1993. Later that fall, the Feelys came to Jackson for another series, during which seven Pathfinders earned their merit honor in evangelism by assisting with the meetings. In 1994 believers here spread 5000 leaflets around Jackson and during NET’96 they purchased a case of Bibles to give away. A year later, Pastor Struntz held meetings for the public. But it was really the “Jackson Ten”—ten Andrews University students—who turned this city upside down during

the summer of 1997. Led by religion professor Keith Mattingly (son of the builder of the Franklin Street church) from June 12 to August 30, these students knocked on 15,000 doors, gave Real Truth Bible Studies, preached sermons, and visited converts. Staying in the homes of church members, they prayed a lot, ate a lot, cried a lot, and worked a lot—every day from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.—following their motto, “Pass No One By.” At the end of the summer, they had worn soles and won ten souls!

These students planted spiritual seeds for Jackson members to cultivate during NET’98. In preparation for meetings at the church that fall, members fasted, prayed, and formed six committees to coordinate their efforts. About thirty visitors came nightly and twelve joined the church through baptism, making the investment of over \$5000 and hundreds of volunteer hours well worth the effort. Thrilled with what God had done for them, the board ordered 2000 handbills for NET’99.

Although it was receiving less public recognition than formerly, the thirty-five-year-old ministry of this church to the inmates of the prison continued every Sabbath afternoon with coordinator Don Woodward and assistance from the Summit and Bunker Hill churches. Other participants included Dan Purple, business manager, and Dr. Bruce Wright, psychologist. Who can say what the long-term impact of their witness will be?

Three community out-reach activities still going strong in the late-1980s and ’90s were the cooking schools, stress management seminars, and Breathe-Free clinics helping people kick the smoking habit, reduce stress in their lives, and follow more nutritious diets. How Don and Myrtle Siewert loved those programs! During the winter and spring of 1988, Aunt Myrtle taught a vegetarian cooking class, Bruce Wright directed a stress management seminar, and Dan Erhard led a Five-Day Stop Smoking clinic. Over fifty persons attended Myrtle’s cooking school held at

the Community Services Center, where they learned how to prepare vegetarian entrees, salads, soups, and desserts. Each evening sample preparations were used as prizes. Another Breathe-Free seminar was held in the spring of 1993 and an Oriental cooking class followed in the fall of 1995.

Vacation Bible Schools also remained popular in Jackson. Summer coordinators have included Helen Hyde (1983), Molly Jordan (1984), and Myrtle Siewert (1986-89). Volunteer staff members attended workshops to learn new methods and purchase new materials for the ten-day sessions. In those days, teachers worked miracles with only a \$225 budget! But when Jan Benedict became leader in 1990, the budget doubled to \$450. Was it really worth the effort? The thirty-one kids who attended Marcia Workman's 1992 VBS told her and their teachers YES! One boy exclaimed, "I've had so much fun! What are we going to do tomorrow?" Bill and Pat Lykins led the 1993 VBS and Marcia Workman led the 1994 one, taking her staff to Camp Au Sable for a workshop on the latest methods and materials. There they were especially impressed by the new Earthmaker Mysteries series, a super way of involving teens which gave them clues each day to the identity of the "Earthmaker." The "Good Life Team" skits elicited many positive comments from parents and grandparents, who said that their offspring "just can't wait for next year." Jackson's VBS teachers were really *too good*, however, for the kids guessed the Earthmaker was Jesus on the very first day! When Margurete Purple led the 1995 VBS, fifty-nine kids registered; this series had the best parents' attendance ever at the closing program. Sue Berridge directed the 1996 VBS on a \$500 budget, taking four of her staff to Camp Au Sable for another workshop that spring. In the summer of 1997 Marcia Workman led the VBS, while Marilyn Purple did so in 1998, with fifty-six eager kids meeting at the church school. They got

even more excited when a snake slithered from a bale of hay that had been brought into the nursery one evening!

Yet another long-standing tradition, pioneered by Marlene Cooper in the summer of 1967, is the annual Adventist booth at the Jackson County Youth Fair. By the summer of 1987 rent for display space had risen to \$165. Did that discourage church members? Absolutely not! Summer after summer, they taped, tacked, nailed, glued, and painted award-winning displays on temperance, Christ's soon return, healthful living, family life, and other themes. In 1986, for example, Helen Hyde's Kindergarten booth won a blue ribbon for its display. In 1992 members distributed 1450 pieces of literature and 730 flyers about Breathe Free, cooking, weight control, time management, and stress seminars at the county fair, in addition to 1300 other pieces of literature and 250 flyers. This 1992 fair represented Marlene Cooper's 25th anniversary of directing these Adventist exhibits (1967-1992). During the summer of 1993, Carol Craig organized the fair display, while in 1994, Don Harris led the Primary Sabbath School in preparing the exhibit. In 1995 both the Primaries and Kindergarteners prepared the booth; the former were awarded \$30 and a blue ribbon; the latter received \$20 each for their interesting display. Using the church's best equipment, Bill and Pat Lykins prepared the Adventist exhibit for the 1998 Fair.

Finally, in 1989 Pacific Press published the only book written by a Jackson Adventist woman. Madlyn Lewis Hamblin's *Promise in the Cornfield* is the gripping story of faith and sacrifice by which Chessie and Ray Harris of Huntsville, Alabama, transformed the lives of hundreds of abandoned children, turning them into healthy, educated Christian citizens. I recommend having a handkerchief nearby as you read this thrilling book!

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 17 [rev. ed. 2012]

There is certainly one award-winning institution in the Jackson Church which has never been stronger: the Community Service Center! For 110 years (since 1908), Adventists have sponsored a Dorcas Welfare work in this city. The records show that decade after decade, this church has devoted between 50% and 100% of its Ingathering reversion funds to the welfare ministry in Jackson County. By the late-1980s and early '90s, the Center was so busy helping people that it opened two days a week. Led by Helen Good in the late 1980s and Helen Cook, Bill and Pat Lykins, Marguerete Purple, and Gloria Kidder in the 1990s, the ladies at the Center transformed the 1000 cans of food collected by Pathfinders into Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for widows and the poor and needy families in the area. Aided by generous donations, volunteer labor, and the philanthropy of the Marhle and Lamb family estates, Helen Cook began allowing clients to choose clothes from the racks instead of hauling boxes of clothing for them to examine. The Lykins widened the scope of the Center's ministry to include sponsoring time management, weight control, and cooking classes. The staff emphasized kindness, patience, helpfulness, love, and friendliness in meeting their clients' physical, spiritual, and emotional needs. As a result, some visitors requested Bible studies. One such couple, Ken and Cathy Taylor, was baptized in Clark Lake as a result of these studies in the fall of 1992. To reflect its new mission statement, the staff wrote a new constitution for the Center in the summer of 1993.

But in the winter of 1994, disaster struck. Overhead pipes froze and burst, flooding the Center for four days beneath several inches of cold water which ruined the ceilings, insulation, carpets, cupboards, clothing, and other supplies, causing over \$39,000 in damages. Chuck Winters directed the cleanup crew and Jordan Construction Company rebuilt the interior that spring in preparation for a grand reopening. That fall the ladies called on church members to

replace damaged food items and to donate funds for more clothing. With their Center rebuilt, repainted, and restocked, the ladies hosted a buffet luncheon for Jackson's top business and professional people that fall, giving them tours and explaining the services offered to Jackson's needy citizens. In 1995 Margurete Purple became the director, aided by Almeda Marsh and Barb Harris, with Darlene Bristol as secretary. They issued frequent requests for canned fruits and vegetables, packages of macaroni and cheese, baby blankets, and bed pillows.

For Jackson believers, lay activities also encompassed a wide variety of other outreach programs such as distributing *Signs of the Times* and *Listen* magazines, sponsoring young people on Maranatha trips and to Bible camps at Au Sable. In 1987 the board sent *Listen* magazine to all its Adventist youth, sponsored 2000 copies of *Signs Digest* for distribution in town, bought 90 Lay Bible Study books, and sent several members to the Lay Bible Training sessions at Au Sable. The following year, members sent copies of *Listen* to all Adventist youth in area high schools, placed 1000 tracts on family life in the church foyer, and purchased more books to aid in giving Bible studies. Recognizing a mission field in its midst, the church sent nearly 100 *Signs of the Times* subscriptions to former and non-attending members, and sponsored six high school youth to Bible Camp. Always Good Samaritans, the board assisted one Jackson family with emergency roof repair, gave \$400 to another family in need, paid for appliance repairs for yet another, and donated \$75 to the Michigan Disaster Unit. During 1989 ten members attended a Lay Bible Ministries workshop, helped mail 1500 pieces of literature for the fall evangelistic meetings, and sent more youth to Camp Au Sable.

The 1990s witnessed an expansion in Jackson's literature ministry with an ever-growing variety of family-related material being shared. In addition to generous subscriptions to *Signs* and *Listen* magazines, all Adventist youth received *Inside Out Magazine* in 1990, while all new

members were given copies of Ellen White's book *Counsels on Stewardship*. In 1991 "Right to Life" pamphlets were distributed; in 1992, 100 *Family Happiness Digests* were purchased. During 1993 members watched the new video "Reclaiming Former Members" and sent more *Signs* subscriptions to newly baptized members and Bible study prospects. They also acquired eighty copies of the book *They're Coming Home* and 100 Vibrant Life Health Planners to assist with health-related seminars. Focusing on end-time events in 1995, they purchased 50 *Last Day Events* books and 200 sets of *Cosmic Conflict* brochures for members to read. New members eighteen to twenty-five years of age also received the paper *Adventist View* to acquaint them with Adventist lifestyle issues. Addressing one of these key issues—jewelry—in 1997, the board distributed to its youth and new members a booklet on Adventist adornment and slipped "Family Concern" tracts into the weekly church bulletins. To give every member "a faith lift," the board in 1998 distributed cards promoting the "Faith Comes by Hearing" tapes.

Putting their children first, members sponsored a variety of fun-filled spiritual growth activities. They sent four to six high school youth to Camp Au Sable every summer for Teen, Tween, and Horseback camps. They helped pay their way on a Maranatha church building trip to the Dominican Republic in 1992 (with Buford Cook) and on another "Teen Mission" in 1994 (with Dennis Benedict and Dan Erhard). Also that year, Joe Badgley and Buford Cook directed a Maranatha building expedition to Murray, Kentucky. The church also sent four young people that fall to the Great Lakes Adventist Academy Youth Camp Meeting where they joined 200 other young people from Michigan and Ohio in revival meetings.

The church board quietly, often secretly, continued its good works toward the youth during the 1990s. They sent financial aid to a needy academy student in 1991; provided eye glasses for another member in 1992; paid tuition for two students at the church school in 1993;

sent food to a poor family in 1995; gave cash from the Family Assistance Fund to another family in 1996; and helped yet another with car engine repairs. It was all done behind the scenes, with no blaring trumpets, but some day those who participated will hear the Master's "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!"

In the area of church in-reach activities for the spiritual growth and nurture of members, certainly none outranked the consistent, sacrificial giving of this congregation for the maintenance of the church school. For over 100 years (since 1900), this church had supported a school! After 1987, the school board chairperson also sat on the church board, demonstrating the close relationship between the two institutions. Many students of this era fondly recall the well-organized Harvey and Dolly Retterer (1984-88); the model airplane buff Jim Howard with Lori Rowden (1989-91); the athletic Roger Mann and the quiet, unassuming Karen Marsa (1991-93); Roger and his shy, much-beloved wife Gail Mann (1993-96); Brad Hinman with Gail Mann and Francine Bergmann (1996-97); and the very creative Linda Ritzenthaler (1997-2000), who turned a vacant classroom into a rain forest and loved taking her students on field trips. Along the way, Jan Benedict, Crystal Cooper, and Aimee Newman served as teachers' aides.

Yet the consistent headache facing the school continued to be a declining enrollment, which fell steadily from fifty-three in 1978 to thirteen in 1999. During the late '80s and '90s, thousands of dollars were given through the Worthy Student Fund and Project Assist to help specific students at the school. The church members regularly subsidized the school from \$2100 a month to \$2850 a month—nearly \$400,000 in support. As treasurer Helen Hyde once exclaimed, "We have invested a veritable gold mine in our school!" Thanks to the generosity of the Dornan and Lamb family estate funds, their unrestricted gifts continued to support quality Christian education. Home and garage sales, the sale of Florida citrus fruit and nuts, and \$3000

worth of Meijers' coupons helped provide much-needed equipment and furnishings for the school. These needed upgrades included a new boiler (1988), asbestos removal (1991), new carpeting (1992), playground equipment, and several new computers (1991-99).

Yet declining numbers and financial hardships could not curtail the creative activities at 3600 County Farm Road! Every school year, delighted students attended worships and assemblies, investiture services and school picnics, and engaged in a variety of sports. They took art classes like ceramics and basket-weaving from Crystal Cooper and computer classes from Pat Lykens. On field trips they went to Binder Park Zoo in Battle Creek for a Native American Indian Festival (1993); to Ella Sharpe Park's planetarium to scan the winter sky; to Dahlem Nature Center to see maple syrup made; to Dinosaur Dig in Brooklyn, Michigan (1994); to Grand Ledge and Charlotte SDA schools for gymnastic performances (1995); to the Twelfth District Court (1996); and to historic Greenfield Village (1998). The upper grade students also donated time once a week to help in the Community Services Center next door.

Perhaps the most outstanding achievement in sportsmanship occurred when principal Roger Mann started the Jackson Junior Gymnics in the fall of 1992. Himself a former Andrews University Gymnic, Roger taught his eighteen students how to do forward and backward flips, three-high pyramids, and other tumbling routines. Attired in dark pants and blue pullover shirts with "Jackson SDA School" in white letters, the students really looked sharp. They soon hit the road for performances in Grand Ledge and Charlotte. Their leapfrog, centipede, splits, head stands, and one- and two-hand stands delighted cheering crowds, while their three-high towers and running leaps over ten gymnasts drew enthusiastic applause wherever they performed. Impressed with their dedication, the Cross Coon Foundation donated \$700 for three new gym mats and \$800 for the school library.

These same students also reached new heights of academic achievement. Results from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in 1992 showed the seventh and eighth graders achieving 35%-40% **above** the 50% norm in all subjects compared with school children across America! Godliness *and* good learning do go hand in hand! Proud of this achievement, the board began advertising its school registration in the *Citizen-Patriot* and on local radio stations in the fall of 1993.

Another strong program for children and youth in the 1990s was the Pathfinder club (which had earlier changed its name from the Dan Palmer Blacksmiths to the Giants and then to the Jaguars), whose activities included both witnessing and fun-filled social events. Its directors, Pat and Jim Holman, had served for years not only as leaders of the local club but also for six years as area coordinators of Pathfinder activities. Jim loved taking youth on Teen Mission trips to Haiti and the Dominican Republic where they assisted him in distributing 4000 prescription glasses to the natives. Back home, they loved collecting canned goods (over 1400 cans in 1991 and 1992) and going camping in their new tents. Under Joe Badgley's leadership, they even camped out in the winter time! When Dennis Benedict directed them in 1993, the Pathfinders enjoyed Teen Outings at Camp Au Sable, swimming, roller skating, gymnastics, and fantastic pancake breakfasts. They also studied optics and sign language and completed honors in hiking, biking, cooking, and nature lore. They loved marching and competing in various skills at the Lansing Pathfinder Fair.

But they also witnessed in "Share Your Faith" visits to care homes, on Teen Mission trips, and in taking door-to-door religious surveys of Jackson area homes. During 1995 they collected 730 canned goods to feed thirty families, attended the Conference Bible Bowl in Battle Creek (and took second prize by answering 80 questions on the Gospel of John), and enjoyed several "lock-ins" at the school gym while working on honors. For their unselfish work for the

Community Services Center, these youth received much thanks and many smiles. In 1996 they even planned the church service, impressing members with their enthusiasm and dedication. In 1998-99 they distributed literature and participated in Interfaith Shelters. Finally, at Christmas in 1998, twenty-five Pathfinders, led by two physicians, a dentist, and two optometrists, brought renewed vision to 300 individuals in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, as part of a Mission Impact trip that helped over 4000 people in some significant way.

But if the Pathfinders were still going strong, the church choir, for twenty years an integral part of the worship service, died a quiet death in the mid-1980s after years of vibrant leadership by Chuck Winters. In 1991 the Choir Fund was eliminated and its \$200 merged with the church budget. This did not mean, however, that members did not appreciate good sacred music. They enjoyed an Andrews Academy Choir program in 1987; a concert by Gospel singer Jeff Hunt in 1989; and a band concert by Great Lakes Adventist Academy in 1993. The following year, GLAA's hand bell Choir (in which local member Jeanie Jewel played) performed here. Wishing to include only the finest in sacred music in their worship services, the board in 1995 appointed a music coordinator to screen all selections and banned "canned" or prerecorded music from Sabbath school and church worship. In 1995 they welcomed Christian Country Music singer Steve Hamby; in 1998 and 1999, the "Four For the Master" quartet sang here; and in preparation for their sesquicentennial in 1999, members began learning several old Advent hymns—especially when Dr. Brian Strayer came to preach. They may be "oldies," but as long as we believe their message, they're still "goodies," aren't they?

Amidst their outreach and in-reach activities, Jackson Adventists never forgot how to pause for some good Christian recreation. They retreated to Camp Au Sable for church camp each fall, where they enjoyed boating, hiking, horseback riding, and swimming. Any excuse

would do for a fellowship dinner, of course, and this church was known for its potlucks modeled after the Great Banquet Table in heaven. During the 1990s youth and the young-at-heart played volleyball and basketball at the gym on Saturday nights. Because the Social Committee's annual budget was only \$250 then, members volunteered their time and resources to keep these fellowship activities going. They gathered for Investment Fairs and Festivals, wedding receptions, funeral dinners, Valentine's banquets, ice cream socials, Food-a-Rama Festivals, evening hayrides with cider and donuts by the bonfire, and a first New Year's Eve party in 1995. Sabbath school leaders involved their young people in progressive parties, snow outings, pancake suppers, annual Love Banquets, and of course everyone joined in the fun at church school picnics every June.

Even work became play when everyone cooperated, as at garage sales, cleaning bees, bike-a-thons, walk-a-thons, and Pathfinder workshops. The 1990s witnessed the rise of special interest groups whose gatherings ministered to particular needs: elders' retreats, senior citizens' outings, Women's Ministries, Secret Pals, Survivors of Abuse, Men's Ministries, Family Ministries—each had its own time and place and agenda for fellowship. Coming closer together with others who shared their needs and interests brought many members closer to Christ as well. Some of these groups used videos in their search for help with marriage enrichment, money management, women's roles in the church, male bonding, and remembering one another's birthdays and anniversaries. And then there was Judy Wright, who was *so creative* with her surprise gifts at Christmas, Easter, birthdays, and other special occasions! Her Easter baskets each spring were a delight to the eyes and the stomachs of those who received them!

The line between social and spiritual activities became blurred when youth and adults found enjoyment in witnessing. During the 1990s, members enjoyed inviting former and non-

attending members to return for “Homecoming Sabbaths,” weekends full of smiles, hugs, potlucks, and friendly, more interactive services. In 1990 Arlene Bliesath started the “Prayer and Share” time on Wednesday nights. Sabbath School Action Groups formed in 1991 to promote “Revival and Reformation” in small group interaction. One such group, the Young Adults Sabbath School, began meeting in 1992 off the rostrum, taking turns teaching the lesson, while the Earliteens traveled to Plymouth to see a model of the Old Testament sanctuary and better grasp its symbolism. In 1993 they began studying their twelve New King James Versions of the Bible with greater comprehension. Meanwhile the Primaries visited nursing homes and medical care facilities to sing and pray with the patients. After they serenaded Stella La Mott on her 98th birthday, she lived to be 100—so they sang for her again!

With so many zealous young people, the board appointed a youth coordinator in 1994 to plan and unify their activities. The church’s tiny tots were ecstatic when the much-loved Gail Mann became the children’s story coordinator in 1995, for she was one super story teller. And when the Lamb’s Offering was revived in 1996, these little ones loved collecting crisp dollar bills from smiling believers. That summer Becki Bowman and Cherie Stock started the first nursery care, supervising tots from birth to three years so that their parents could enjoy the worship service. Meanwhile, the board began involving its youth in church services as ushers, Scripture readers, and Sabbath afternoon program planners. “Use them or lose them” is still a useful maxim to remember, isn’t it? If we want to save our young people for God’s kingdom, we must involve them in every facet of the church program.

During the 1980s and ’90s the Jackson Church also embraced innovative technology, entering the computer, CD, and electronic era with enthusiasm. In the fall of 1987 a committee of six formed to purchase the church’s first computer. The following year, they bought the

church's first videocassette recorder and added a larger TV monitor and stand in 1990. Then in 1989 the decision was made to acquire an IBM PC286 micro-processor with 20 MHz hard disk drive, an EGA color monitor, and a printer to facilitate using Conference software for church accountants when the church financial records were entered into its memory. The church school followed two years later, purchasing its first computer in 1991 and a second one in 1996. Back in 1990 the church had procured its first compact disc system in order to play CDs with hymns from the *SDA Hymnal*. By 1994, thanks to the Dornan Estate funds, they were able to acquire a second computer and a bubble-jet printer to replace their antiquated mimeograph machine.

Over at the Community Services Center, 1995 saw the installation of a new alarm system and a new microwave oven for the kitchen. Then the Home and School Association bought another new computer for the school that winter. That same year, this church made a major investment when it bought its first satellite dish in preparation for NET'96 meetings. The Adult Sabbath School began showing "Mission Spotlight" on a video projector and a big-screen TV rather than using its outdated slide projector in 1996. Meanwhile the school purchased a new Sharp Copier machine. Thanks to the generosity of retired school teacher Helen Hyde, the church also replaced its aging electronic organ with a new one. Jackson's members were keen to be on the cutting edge of technology when it could enhance the Lord's work!

Yet while the church, school, and Community Service Center exhibited the latest and best electronic devices, the aging building in which these machines were kept showed definite signs of deterioration during the 1990s. The school required hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars for the repair of its roof and drains, furnace, air compressor, windows, and pump house, besides hundreds more to remove the asbestos around pipes and ceilings. The church spent thousands more to replace its eaves, fight the musty dampness of the basement with new

humidifiers, and repair sidewalks. Long-time custodians Ray and Marlene Cooper kept the church as neat and clean as they could. Yet everywhere one looked, aging buildings continued to require endless hours of painting, carpet installation, roof repairs, grub removal, and so forth. Given the number of work bees during this decade, one gets the impression that some Jackson Adventists practically slept with paint brushes in their hands!

By the mid-1990s, therefore, some board members felt that the Franklin Street property should be sold and the profits used to build a new church. Others felt that the program of “patch and repair” should continue awhile longer. And so the endless cycle of repainting, replacing, and repairing continued for another decade until the board decided in 1999 to put the fifty-year-old Franklin Street Church on the market and build another church adjacent to the school on County Farm Road.

But they put those plans on hold long enough to celebrate their sesquicentennial—the first SDA congregation to do so—throughout the months of 1999. Taking the slogan “In the Spirit of the Pioneers,” they laid plans for inviting speakers from the Michigan Conference, the Lake Union, the North American Division, and even the General Conference to highlight the Adventist heritage at monthly meetings. Members decided that a new pictorial church directory was in order for this celebration so that they could look their best for the guests. With Bob Ritzenthaler and Don Harris’s help, they produced a video on their 150-year history and asked Vicki Nunez-Cudanin of Berrien Springs to write a drama for them. The capstone event came in mid-July when hundreds gathered at the large striped tent beside the gym to celebrate how God had led the Jackson Church over the past century and a half. Many members sported the new T-shirts and special baseball caps that had been ordered for the occasion; others dressed up in nineteenth-century costumes. Altogether it was an unforgettable year!

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 18 [rev. ed. 2012]

As the twenty-first century dawned, Jackson Adventists, led by Pastors Pat Milligan (to 2001) and Gene Hall (2001-10), struggled with the financial challenges of a shrinking membership and aging church and school buildings, but expressed a growing desire to be a vibrant witness to their community and to nurture their members as well. Their outreach (or witnessing) activities included a renewed emphasis on evangelism, cooking schools, the community service center, summer Vacation Bible Schools, the annual Jackson County Fair booth, Maranatha mission trips and Friendship Camps, and the prison ministry. Their in-reach (or nurturing) activities included the church school, Pathfinder club, Sabbath school classes, musical programs, social activities, and raising funds to build a new church facility.

This church devoted huge amounts of time and money to evangelism after 2000. In the year before the Milligans left for Hood River, Oregon, in December 2001, members gave between \$200 and \$225 every month to distribute 2000 copies of the booklet *Left Behind* prior to the series of meetings in Albion. Within months of Pastor Gene and Cindy Hall's arrival in the winter of 2001, members laid plans for evangelistic meetings in Bunker Hill in 2002. They mailed out Bible Study lessons, ordered 50 Prophecy CDs, and organized members into Greeter, Visitation, P.A., Registration, Children's Programs, Health Nuggets, and Preaching teams. In 2004 Jackson members organized a Holy Spirit Seminar, voted \$2000 for the Hope for Our Day series, and spent hundreds of dollars on newspaper ads and purchasing 450 leaflets on the 10 Commandments which they distributed door to door. In 2005 Gordon Fellows and four families initiated the Chelsea Project of community outreach. By 2006 this church's budget for evangelism had skyrocketed to \$10,000, including mailing out Bible studies and regular meetings to train members how to conduct such studies.

During the second half of the decade, the pace of revival and evangelistic meetings increased. In 2005-06 members watched the inspiring DVDs of “The Appearing” and of Elder David Asscherick (director of ARISE Institute) before attending Pastor Hall’s Hope for the Future seminar. In the spring of 2007 Pastor Dan and his lovely wife Patsy Towar held a Discover Revelation Seminar here, seeking to win former Adventists and inspire current members to witness for their faith. Later that summer Tom Waters presented his Restoration International Seminar and Staci Osterman conducted a Bible Study Training class with the help of Pat Daugherty, the local Bible Labs coordinator. In addition, Shawn Boonstra and Elder Earles conducted weekend revival meetings to prepare members for assisting in Doug Batchelor’s Lansing evangelistic series that fall. In 2008 this church sponsored a Prophecy Seminar prior to inviting Dan and Patsy Towar to return for a two-month Discover Revelation Seminar attended by 40 non-Adventists. This investment of thousands of dollars and hundreds of human hours reaped a harvest of at least 54 souls—about five new members each year from 2000 to 2010!

Cooking schools and anti-alcohol and tobacco seminars provided yet another form of witnessing to the community by providing healthful guidelines for better living. Typically held at the Community Service Center, members sponsored a cooking school in 2000, a Health Fair and a Tasting Fair in 2003, and a Food for Thought Seminar in 2004. But in 2006 they moved to Foote Hospital for Vicky Griffin’s Health Seminar, which focused attention on overcoming food addictions and encouraging attendees to eat more fiber. Written responses showed that the public loved these health series; consequently, for the first time in its history, the board voted in 2007 to devote the Ingathering reversion funds to support health classes. That summer Tami Martindale held a cooking school, followed in the fall by a free body shape testing class (using a

Bioimpedance Shapescan Machine) and a nutritional protein program. Meanwhile, Dr. Vicki Griffin and Dr. Arthur Weaver, Detroit's leading anti-smoking crusader for 40 years, directed a Breathe Free Seminar and an Addictions Seminar in the spring of 2008 at the newly renamed Allegiance Health Hospital; later that fall, a Foods for Thought Seminar was held at the Hospital (for which attendees paid \$15 each) and free vegetarian cooking classes convened at the Center. In April 2009, a year before the Halls left Jackson, Cindy directed a cooking school at the Center, followed by another led by Eddye Benedict that focused on holiday entrees and salads in the fall of 2010. As the decade closed, members decided to pool their culinary wisdom by producing a vegetarian and vegan cookbook for Christmas.

If the church was the locus of worship and the school was the locus of learning, then the Community Service Center was the locus of outreach to the public in numerous ways. For decades the church board had voted to send 100% of the Ingathering Reversion Funds (between \$400 and \$800 annually) to the Center to assist its many programs. Led by directors Barb Harris and Gloria Kidder (2000-2009) and Leola Goodin (after 2010), the Center opened every Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Each year its twelve dedicated women filled many food and fruit baskets for the needy at Christmas; packed dozens of boxes with clothing, shoes, and toys; and helped scores of local citizens who stopped by for assistance. In addition, the Center hosted cooking schools and sold vegetarian canned and frozen foods throughout the year. Inspired by its noble outreach efforts, Todd and Ena Erhard donated 30 new coats during the winter of 2009 and the Jackson Lunch Bunch, a group of business and professional individuals, gave \$5000—*ten times* their normal donation—to boost its food pantry in 2010. Enthusiastic about the Center's witness, Joyce Smith, wife of a local non-Adventist pastor, came every week to assist the women there.

During the summers, of course, Jackson Adventists reached out to the children and youth in their neighborhood through the annual Vacation Bible School, which by 2002 had a budget of \$2500. Each year the church board paid the expenses for half a dozen leaders (mostly women) to attend VBS workshops at Camp Au Sable to learn about new methods, materials, and techniques for making these summer schools soul-witnessing programs. Now held for only five days in June or July, these VBS were led by Ann Bieszke and Jay McGee. The 2008 one, which drew 30 children, followed the theme “Bird Tales” and featured all kinds of bird-related paraphernalia.

Another popular summer outreach activity designed to appeal to children and youth has been the Adventist booth at the Jackson County Fair. Often designed by the children in the school or Pathfinder club, these exhibits have a history stretching back more than half a century. Because of the rising costs, however, in 2001 the Jackson and Bunker Hill churches agreed to share the expense of sponsoring a booth. Between 2002 and 2008, however, no written evidence attests that this church actually sponsored a fair booth. But in 2008, the board voted to revive that tradition, and head elder Don Harris called for volunteers to staff the booth. During that one week in August, visitors filled out hundreds of information cards; scores of them expressed an interest in receiving Bible studies and knowing more about Adventists; many others signed up for a prophecy seminar or asked for help in breaking their smoking addiction.

Two other summer witnessing programs this church has sponsored are the Maranatha mission trips and Friendship Camp weekends at Au Sable. Typically these activities involve Adventist youth in public schools and non-Adventist Christians who wish to associate more closely with Adventist youth. In 2000 this church sent Stephanie Littlejohn to Friendship Camp; in 2002 several Adventist youth attended a Bible Camp at Au Sable. By 2005 it cost \$100 to send one person to Au Sable for a week and \$40 for a weekend. But mission trips cost hundreds

of dollars more. During 2006, Brandi Ratliff earned her expenses for a trip to Mexico by babysitting and doing house and yard work; in 2008 Jay McGee also earned her expenses to go to Mexico to witness.

Yet another behind-the-scenes form of witnessing which over the years has involved a handful of Jackson members is the outreach to the prisoners of the Jackson State Penitentiary. The church Personal Ministries leaders purchased books, tapes, and other materials to distribute there, and Prison Ministries Director Todd Erhard visited the penitentiary for a couple hours every Sabbath afternoon. In 2000 inmate Robert Perry joined this church by profession of faith; two more prisoners were baptized in 2004. However, after the Erhards left the district, this outreach ministry lapsed for several years until it was revived in 2012.

In the area of church nurturing activities, certainly none outranked the consistent, sacrificial giving of this congregation for over a century on behalf of its church school. During the first decade of the 21st century, the children enjoyed the teaching of the enthusiastic Rosemary Bauer, later Bailey (2000-2005); the creative Linda Ritzenthaler (1997-2005); principal Ryan Hill (2005-2007); the youthful Kristi Steele (2005-2007); as well as teacher-principals Ashley Johnson (2007-2009) and Lisa Fellows (2009-2010).

These six teachers led their pupils in many exciting learning experiences. During 2004 Jackson, Prattville, and Tekonsha students collaborated in sponsoring a science fair. In 2006 students here sang action songs about U.S. History, practiced hockey teamwork, learned how to recycle and compost, compiled worship books, made tepees, and packed frozen fruits and veggies for the Home and School. Their service orientation earned them a notice in the “Class Act” section of the *Citizen Patriot* praising their good deeds. But they also had barrels of fun on pajama day, outdoor school day, dress up day, reading day, and green eggs and wham day! For

her creative teaching, Kristi Steele received the Teacher of the Month Award from Family Life Radio Station 96.7. Students went on fascinating—and often delicious—field trips to Fazoli’s, Gilbert’s Chocolate factory, the King Tut exhibit in Chicago, and Outdoor Education Camp at Au Sable where they saw Jack Pines, bald eagles, and a freshwater bog. They made and launched seven rockets, created tornadoes in plastic bottles, went geocaching in Jackson, and fresco painted gifts for Mother’s Day. In 2007 they made get well cards, studied conflict resolution, and raked leaves across the city to develop skills of helping others. In 2008 they converted their reading loft to a medieval castle, studied the fruits of the Spirit in Bible class, and packed Christmas boxes for needy kids overseas. Finally, during 2010 they studied Adventist history and church structure, learned to write descriptively, and traveled to Lansing to visit the state capitol and Michigan Conference offices.

Yet the consistent headache facing the school board continued to be a declining enrollment. Whereas the school had two teachers and nineteen students in 2000, this number fell to sixteen by 2002, ten by 2007, eight by 2008, five by 2009, and only three for 2009-10. Clearly the writing was on the wall for Jackson’s church school. To offset the growing financial burden, the board began advertising in the local newspaper and increased tuition; meanwhile, church members rallied to raise money through a variety of creative endeavors to keep the school going. Thanks to funding from the Kirkby and Bliesath Memorials, the board regularly granted subsidies to worthy students, both at the elementary school and through Project Assist, at Battle Creek and Great Lakes Adventist academies. In addition, the Home and School Association, led by Rhonda Daugherty, provided thousands of dollars for books, hot lunches, and new computers through its citrus fruit and frozen veggies sales and Helen Hyde’s box tops collecting efforts. Other members raised money through Magabook sales and fundraisers like food and craft fairs,

open houses, and frozen fruit sales. Terri Siegle even contemplated operating a day care center there. Meanwhile, the forty-year-old building required a seemingly endless list of repairs, updates, and renovations, which the board struggled to meet by establishing a School Improvement Fund and asking for pledges from members. By 2006 this fund had raised over \$254,000 in cash, pledges, and projects for a new roof, drop ceilings, insulation, and energy efficient lighting, windows, and a heating and cooling system. In short order the walls were painted, new bathrooms installed, and new carpet put down. It was hoped that these efforts would cut utility costs by one third.

Perhaps they did, but by 2009, the school—now with only three pupils and one teacher—was drowning in red ink with debts exceeding \$21,000. After considering all the options, and following months of prayer and discussion, in the summer of 2010 the board reluctantly voted to close the 110-year-old Jackson SDA School. Its last teacher—Lisa Fellows—transferred to the Dexter school. In the fall, the board appointed three women to inventory the furnishings and other usable items at the school preparatory to selling them to liquidate the school's debts.

But another popular institution for Adventist youth—the Pathfinder Club—continued to thrive in the 21st century. Led by Vince Wilson, Jeff Ricks, and Charleen Ellig (2000-2001), Ann Bieszke and Marilyn Purple (2001-2002), Sue Boehmer and Ann Bieszke (2002-2007), Steve McGee (2007-2009), and Ronda Daugherty (2009-10), the Giants (who became the Jaguars by 2009) met two Sundays a month in the Community Service Center. Every year they enjoyed snow outings and camporees, attended the all-day Pathfinder Fair in Lansing, participated in colorful investiture ceremonies, and planned the Pathfinder Sabbath service. In the fall of 2003, this church invested \$150 in an Adventurers program for children aged seven to ten. In December 2006, the Giants spent a weekend in The Fort at Camp Au Sable where they

staged a snowball fight; that winter they built bat houses, studied table settings, and camped out in the snow. In 2007 the Giants placed third in the Bible Achievement contest in Lansing. During 2010 they practiced archery, earned honors in String Art, and took a Leadership Training course. In addition, they regularly enjoyed summer camp-outs (at Waterloo State Park in 2006), Teen Snow Outings at Camp Au Sable (2006, 2008, 2010), and fun-filled lock-ins at the school (2008).

Besides having lots of fun, however, the Giants/Jaguars engaged in many service activities. Every year they collected between 1400 and 1600 canned goods around Halloween for distribution to the needy at Christmas time. In 2005 they helped out at the Interfaith Shelter. At Thanksgiving in 2007, they even cooked dinner for their parents in order to raise funds to attend the 2009 World-wide Pathfinder Camporee in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. By 2008 they were having so much fun that under director McGee they met every week to plan such fundraising activities as car washes, selling scented candles, and showing films with snacks for sale. As their numbers increased, urgent calls went forth for more counselors to guide them.

Many of these same children and youth, of course, were active in the Sabbath school classes every week. The Kindergarteners, led by Ryan Johns (2001), Chris Wilson and Cookie Martinez (2003), worshiped in a newly refurbished classroom downstairs; the Primaries, taught by Tami Martindale, Vicki Rick, and Simone Adams (2003), and the Juniors, led by Ted Briningstool (2006), also met downstairs. The youth, directed by Karl Bailey (2001), Joe Wineland, Jim Ettig, Mallory Hile, and Jeff Rick (2004), and Sue Boehmer (2006), met in the pastor's office; while the young adults, led by Pat Daugherty and Vince Wilson, met in various locations. Meanwhile, two adult classes met in the sanctuary and an interactive Sabbath school class met in the balcony. During this decade, the board voted to have the youth help collect the

offerings during church; they also selected several girls (over the course of the decade) to be junior deaconesses. To build faith and encourage Bible study, church members gave a copy of the inspiring book *College Faith* to each one of its young people and a *Clear Word Bible* to everyone who had been a member for at least two years. In 2006 the church also sent its youth to attend the Michigan Conference Youth Rally at Saginaw.

That same year the board granted each Sabbath school department \$25 per quarter for expenses and told the leaders that Sabbath school was a mission, not a voluntary position. All teachers were invited to attend regular Sabbath School Council meetings at the Community Service Center to plan soul-winning strategies for the church's young people. They also attended frequent workshops led by Conference officials to hone their teaching skills and learn about new strategies and materials. The various children's departments regularly planned Thirteenth Sabbath programs for the entire congregation.

But by 2007, the Sabbath schools faced a crisis: there were not enough adult leaders and piano players for the children's departments. Urgent calls were issued in the church newsletter for helpers in the Cradle Roll and Kindergarten room. Finally, Arlene Bliesath, already in her 70s, volunteered to teach the Cradle Roll, Kindergarten, and Primary kids with the help of Mary Ann Kobb, while Rosario Tanguay and Ronda Daugherty led the Juniors, and Nels Thompson and Ray Hamblin co-taught the one adult class. Toward the end of the decade, a new class emerged: the Bible Seekers Class, which met in the boardroom to study the Bible and read James Sheldon's classic *In His Steps*. Members who arrived at 9:30 a.m. enjoyed fifteen minutes of beautiful nature slides and meditative music in the sanctuary before family reunion time began at 9:45 (a few minutes devoted to Mission Spotlight, Bible trivia games, or Those Yoopers) and classes convened at 10 a.m.

A big part of Sabbath school and church programs, of course, has always been music and singing, and for 150 years Jackson Adventists have enjoyed the best in musical performances. Although the church choir had disbanded in the mid-1980s and the era of quartets had long since passed, members occasionally invited amateur and professional musicians here for special programs. Greg Best explained the “History of Gospel Music” to church members in the winter of 2005. In 2006 Herman and Sonnie Harp, well-known Chapel and 3 ABN recording artists, sang solos and duets at a Sabbath service and Joe Pearl, nationally famous country gospel singer, shared his talents later that fall. The Great Lakes Adventist Academy choir performed Christmas concerts in December 2006 and 2007 and a sacred concert in the spring of 2007, followed by vesper programs featuring “Strings the Wise” and “Simply His” in the fall.

Amidst their outreach and in-reach activities, Jackson Adventists also took time out for some good Christian recreation. The Family Life, Social, Men’s and Women’s committees planned frequent get-togethers each year. The first decade of the 21st century saw the Family Life Ministry (led by Laurie Snyman) plan numerous seminars around the themes of family unity, stress reduction, marriage enrichment, and ethical living. In addition, church members gathered for food, fun and games after vesper programs; they played volleyball in the school gym on Saturday nights; and they gathered at the Martindale’s for chili, baked potatoes, cider, and pumpkin pie around the bonfire. Regularly the Social Committee (led by the Martindale’s, Blackerby’s, Tanguay’s, and Hall’s) organized birthday parties, Valentine’s Banquets at the Cascade Manor House, Agape Feasts at Easter time, roller skating parties, softball games at Cooperstown Field during the summers, married couples retreats at Crystal Mountain, and Singles Retreats at Au Sable.

In 2007 a new group—the Encouragers—began meeting the third Sabbath of every month at McGees’ home for dinner, Bible games, and planning programs to encourage church families to do what’s right. The Women’s Ministries team (Madlyn Hamblin, Cindy Hall, and Barb Harris) planned spring getaways for the ladies at Camp Au Sable, Mothers’ Day dinners, Women’s Sabbath programs, Ladies Nights Out at the Olive Garden Restaurant, mother-daughter retreats at Au Sable, Sunday brunches, and Christmas Teas and parties at the Community Service Center. They formed a Prayer Basket Ministry to pack food and gift baskets for the needy each Christmas season, when they also traded home-baked cookies and recipes. In 2010 Laury Johns started the Secret Sisters program to encourage female friendships and gift-giving.

By comparison with the women, the Men’s Ministries Team (led by Nels Thompson and Jim Ettig) appeared to be much less active. They sponsored at least one Elders’ Retreat at Au Sable, a few breakfasts at the school, a couple of father/son/big brother/buddy retreats at Camp Au Sable, and occasional bowling parties in town. Some of them assisted in planning the Health Professionals Retreat in the fall of 2010 and in the formation of the new Youth for Christ group, which met every Wednesday night at the Gagnon’s home for vespers, hotdogs around the bonfire, or pizza parties. At other times, they convened in the Youth Room at the church to study *Steps to Christ* and practice their self-defense moves under the leadership of Bob Barland, a fifth degree black belt recipient. In the summer of 2010 they participated in a four-day Young Adults’ Retreat at Au Sable.

The main challenge faced by all of these groups in the 21st century, of course, was a financial one: how to meet the skyrocketing cost of repairing and renovating their aging church and school buildings. Church and board minutes, business meetings, and the monthly

newsletters were filled with appeals for volunteers and funds to repair roofs, upgrade boilers, repaint old rooms, install air conditioning, replace old wiring and insulation, refurbish bathrooms, and install more handicapped railings and wheelchair access for an aging congregation. Despite several successful work bees, church leaders by 2006 had concluded that perhaps the time had come to sell the sixty-year-old church and the forty-year-old school.

Once members learned that no Michigan Advance Program funds would be available to them, their first plan envisioned building a church and worship spaces inside the existing school, perhaps in the gymnasium itself. The church board therefore voted in the fall of 2006 to sell or rent the church building on Franklin Street and renovate the school gymnasium as a chapel. The board, after inviting architect Tom Yaste to draw up the blueprints for a rectangular or an octangular sanctuary in 2007, called for members' pledges that fall. At a subsequent business meeting, members voted that the old church must be sold first before building a new one. Meanwhile, they proceeded to make certain necessary improvements, including air conditioning upstairs and in the board room, installing new carpet and a new sound system, and repainting the walls. Over at the school, workers replaced the gym floor and renovated the bathrooms.

By 2009, however, the old church had not sold, so members were encouraged to withdraw their pledges and apply the money to other worthy projects. Since members' giving had dropped almost thirteen per cent and the budget had been cut by about one-third to \$49,000 a year, there were certainly plenty of programs needing funding. By 2010 even janitorial work was being handled by the members themselves rather than subcontracted to professionals.

Yet an aging membership faced with depreciating buildings continued to embrace innovative technology to accomplish the Lord's work more efficiently. In 2001 they purchased a new Xerox machine and printer and added voice mail to the office phone. In 2002 the oldest

Seventh-day Adventist congregation in the world finally created its own website (at a cost of \$30 annually): www.jacksonsdachurch.org. In 2006 it erected its first satellite dish; the following year, it installed a new computer system at the church and added another website: www.jacksonsdaschool.org. By 2008 members who could not attend church regularly could send their tithes and offerings via their PCs or laptops at www.jacksonsdachurch.org or keep themselves informed of health tips by logging onto www.hopeforbetterliving.com. In 2010 the board purchased new microphones and headsets to improve the sound system during worship. But not all new technology promoted a worshipful atmosphere, for by 2009 bulletins warned members to “Please turn your cell phone off while in the sanctuary.” It seems that progress came with a price attached!

Despite physical and financial challenges, Jackson Adventists faced the 2010s, which many believed would be the last decade of their history, with faith and courage. After all, they were about to build the fifth church in their 170-year history!

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 19 [rev. ed. 2019]

Between 2010 and 2019, this church, led by pastors Kevin Scott (2010-14), Moise Ratsara (2014-18), and Raymond Torres (after 2018) focused on two primary goals: increasing membership through evangelism and building a new church. Whereas Gene Hall had baptized 54 new members in ten years (about five each year), Kevin Scott baptized 52 new members in his first two years alone (about twenty-six each year), devoting \$52,000 (or one-third of the church budget) to evangelism. But in the summer of 2014, Kevin and Cindy Scott left to pastor a four-church district in Nova Scotia. On August 16, members welcomed the Madagascan-born, twenty-six-year-old Moise Ratsara, Jackson's first non-white pastor in 170 years and certainly one of its youngest. Ratsara had a burning desire to "do evangelism" in this city. He held at least one and sometimes two evangelistic series each year, despite making frequent trips to Lansing to spend time with his fiancée, Amy Shepherd, a city attorney. Two years after their wedding in 2015, Mikeal David was born on July 11, 2017. Then in the fall of 2018 the congregation welcomed Pastor Torres, who had a bachelor's degree in religion from Ouachita Hills College in Arkansas and had been a Bible worker in the Ukraine, Hungary, and Kentucky for several years. In December he and his wife Marietta moved to nearby Leslie.

Pastor Ratsara certainly began his ministry on the right foot by focusing his first "Pastor's Page" in the church newsletter on John 3:16. During his tenure, he implemented several new policies that brought the church into the 21st Century. In March 2015, the church developed its first website (www.jacksonsdachurch.org) and appeared on Facebook. Within a year, one could access the weekly bulletins on this website; by 2017, the monthly church calendar (prepared by Gin Donna and Judy Jennings) was also included on the website as well as in the monthly newsletter. The board created a Personal Ministries Council that spring as a clearing house for

all church-related activities. Ratsara also expanded the job description for deaconesses to include helping with baptisms, hospital and nursing home visitation, and assisting with funerals, wedding and baby showers. Impressed with his zeal and dedication, the Conference ordained him at the camp meeting in June, appointing him pastor over the Jackson and Bunker Hill congregations. But a year later in August 2018, the Ratsara family accepted a call to ministry in the Kalamazoo District. Following his last sermon on August 11, Jackson and Bunker Hill members held a potluck farewell party for them with good food, generous gifts, and heart-felt speeches. When Pastor Torres arrived that fall, he also agreed to be Prison Ministry Leader; his assistants were Andrew Watson and Alex Martinez.

Jackson's pastors prepared members for doing evangelism by equipping them for all-out witnessing efforts. During 2011, Pastor Scott conducted Bible study classes every other Sabbath afternoon and organized the members to mail out hundreds of Bible Study cards; by the spring of 2012, about 80 per cent of the members followed a Bible study program. In February 2013 his prayer meetings focused on the Prophetic Revelations Bible Study series; a month later, Ray Hamblin led attendees in the Walking through the Bible set and studying Ellen White's book *Prayer*. One weekend prior to the weeks of prayer in April and September, members held a 48-hour prayer vigil. Beginning in March 2014 at prayer meetings, Elder Scott taught members how to mark their Bibles in preparation for giving Bible studies; after Scott left, Joe Donna continued teaching the group.

Pastor Ratsara built upon this foundation for witnessing when he arrived that August. Emphasizing the need for Bible study and prayer, he started the RAIN program—"Reach After Individual Needs"—with regular Sabbath afternoon training sessions. He also started a "prayer chain" with 20 individuals (led by Pam Little and Barb Donohue) praying for members' requests.

To nurture spiritual growth during the week, he began holding vespers one hour prior to sunset on Sabbath evenings. Furthermore, he challenged each member to give away one GLOW tract every day. To prepare them for this outreach, Ratsara began showing videos about building relationships for Wednesday evening prayer meetings in June of 2015; that fall the vespers theme was “Growing in Christ.” When attendance at the biweekly vespers declined in 2016, Andrew Watson introduced after-meeting snacks on the premise that if you feed them, they will come. In the fall of 2017, attendees began studying Ellen White’s book *The Great Controversy*; in the spring of 2018 they focused on “Keys to Daniel”; that fall members watched the colorful and inspirational Thunder in the Holy Land series. Meanwhile, Joe and Gin Donna hosted a Friday night prayer meeting series at their home focusing on the book *Child Guidance*. Andrew Watson led another group in praying for the church’s youth every Sabbath morning, while Judy Jennings, Personal Ministries Director, started “Compassion Sabbaths” that winter during which members reached out to local citizens and former Adventists to show them Jesus’ love.

In the spring of 2016, Pastor Ratsara welcomed his new assistant, Larry Sendow, a ministerial intern who focused his efforts on youth and young adult ministry in Jackson and Bunker Hill. With additional help from Ed Painter, members began their training to give Bible studies in the winter of 2016-17. They blanketed the city with cards containing the website Biblestudyoffer.com; soon Ed and his team were scrambling to keep up with 38 requests for Bible studies. In the spring of 2017, members organized yet another outreach endeavor to the Ganton Assisted Living Center where they sang, prayed, and preached to about 20 residents on the first Sabbath afternoon each month. Later that fall, Arlene Bliesath started a visitation ministry on the fourth Sabbath of each month to cheer the 18 elderly members whose disabilities prevented them from attending church services regularly. Then in February of 2018, local

elders, teachers, and department leaders joined their pastor at Camp Au Sable for a Personal Ministries Weekend to learn how to witness more effectively. By that summer, thirteen members were scrambling to keep up with 20 Bible study requests. Later that fall believers watched the “Thunder in the Holy Land” DVD series every Wednesday night.

The arrival of Pastor Torres and his wife Marietta saw an increase of witnessing activities. In February 2019 Joe Badgley led a Bible memorization program on Mondays and Wednesdays while Gin Donna hosted Bible Study training sessions. Believing that prayer was of paramount importance, Dan Henning directed a Sabbath after-potluck prayer group and Pastor Torres led in a Ten Days of Prayer focus on “A Deeper Experience.” During the spring, members enjoyed watching “The Appearing,” a five-part series produced by the Voice of Prophecy. At prayer meetings singles watched the “Thunder in the Holy Land” set while married couples studied the Art of Marriage videos “to build stronger, healthier marriages.” On the fourth Sabbath of every month (called “Compassion Sabbath”), Judy Jennings galvanized members to reach out to shut-ins, missing, and former members. By 2019 members could attend three weekly witnessing meetings: “Landmarks of Prophecy” at Gin and Joe Donna’s home on Mondays, “Forty Days to Revive Your Experience with God” at the church on Wednesdays (“In Step with Jesus” beginning that fall), and “Revelation for Today” at the Community Service Center and later at the Donna’s home on Fridays. By the fall of 2019 members had 45 active Bible studies going.

All of the attention that Pastors Scott and Ratsara placed on witnessing, of course, was designed to prepare members for active evangelism. After Kevin Scott’s ordination at the summer 2011 camp meeting, he led members in preparing for a three-week evangelistic campaign that fall that resulted in two dozen baptisms—including that of Janet Allen, the first

convert to be invited to the meetings via Facebook (thanks to Gin Donna). Following Scott's evangelistic meetings in the fall of 2012, another 40 individuals joined the church by baptism or profession of faith, including six men at the Jackson Penitentiary. By the end of July 2013, another 43 converts had been baptized. That fall Elder Scott held another three-week evangelistic series which 50 non-Adventists attended; 15 of them joined his new baptismal class in October. Then in April of 2014, his follow-up presentations focused on eleven topics on prophetic revelations. Before the Scott's left that July, he had baptized 14 more converts.

Within two months of his arrival, Moise Ratsara began a two-week evening evangelistic series in September entitled "Unlocking Revelation" that drew 37 non-Adventists, four of whom soon requested baptism (including Ed and Wendy Pointer). The following spring, Fred and Judy Goliath and Andrew Watson transferred their membership from Tecumseh and East Lansing respectively. Then Alvin Adams, Sharla Davis, Du Vaughn Lowden, Dorothy Maxon, Michael Jennings, and Dianne Blossom joined in June. In the fall of 2015, Elder Ted Struntz, the Conference evangelist, and Vicki Griffin, Conference Health Ministries Director, held a five-week series of meetings in town. In preparation for these, members paid for advertising on nine large billboards, 800 TV ads, 76,204 handbills, 1000 Save-the-Date cards, and 300 jumbo postcards to reach nearly 70,000 households—the most widely cross-channel ad program in the church's history. While Struntz focused on the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation, Griffin lectured on Fit and Free, Building Brain and Body Health, and other Lifestyle Matters topics. Among the 14 individuals baptized afterwards were Michael Belknap, Thelma Painter, and George, Robyn, and Zella Rose.

In the spring of 2016, Pastor Ratsara teamed up with Vicki Griffin for another prophecy-oriented and health-related series of meetings at the Community Services Center. One convert,

Roger Fassbender, quickly became “an inspiration to all” who knew him in the church; others baptized in 2017 included Emily Cecil and Michael Hellner. Then in May Elder Ratsara began a two-week “May Reaping Series” focusing on “Revelation Hope 2017” which attracted eight non-Adventists, three of whom requested baptism. Ratsara followed this effort up with another “Unlock Revelation” series in September which drew 14 non-Adventists every night. Six of them—Joe Dunning, Kimberley Robinson, Teresa Rudd, Alicia and Andrew Swisher, and Jackie Beland—were baptized that winter. During two weeks in April 2018, Ratsara and Griffin once again teamed up for a Revelation of Hope and Healing series that focused on spiritual and health-related topics. By summer’s end, Alex Martinez and Toyai Caudill had requested baptism. Also that summer the Jackson Church website received a makeover, giving it a most appealing “new look” to witness to a world-wide community. In the spring of 2019 members participated in the “Jesus on Prophecy” evangelistic training course to prepare them for the Conference-wide evangelistic effort in September and October in which 100 Conference congregations participated. Members pledged to distribute 50,000 fliers to all the homes within fourteen miles of the church—more than five times the 10,000 fliers they had previously handed out. Evening sessions were held Wednesdays through Saturdays. During the first three meetings, Pastor Torres preached about “Jesus Unfolds Prophecy for Today,” “Prophecy’s Final World Super Power,” and “Jesus’ Answer to Evil & Earth’s Suffering.” Betty Wozniak provided “Health Nuggets,” Marietta Torres provided special music, and Kim Smith led the children’s class every night. Soon fourteen guests began attending, ten of whom never missed a single meeting; two of these—Diane Kampman and Alyssa Martinez, were baptized. To sharpen members’ Bible study skills, prayer meetings focused on “40 Days in the Word” while Joe and Gin Donna hosted small study groups at their home under the theme “Hope for the Future—Revelation for Today.”

While Ingathering as an outreach activity continued in the church, it received less attention among an aging membership than it had in decades past. Members usually canvassed their neighbors for mission funds between October and December of each year, although after 2018 they concentrated their door-to-door caroling outreach on two Sabbaths in December. Routinely about 25% of funds raised reverted to the local church, most of which was entrusted to the Community Services Center to assist local citizens with food and clothing needs. The Center also became the locus of a variety of seminars to which the public were invited.

Because many citizens struggled with tobacco or alcohol addictions, Pastor Scott teamed up with area physicians in the fall of 2011 to hold two week-long Stop Smoking Seminars using Health Connections PowerPoint presentations. To help these men and women develop better dietary habits, Vicki Griffin hosted two Lifestyle Matters Seminars (at Allegiance Health Hospital and Commonwealth Commerce Center) in the winter of 2011. More than 50 attendees (primarily professional people) learned how to prepare vegan entrees, salads, tacos, and desserts. Follow-up cooking schools that spring led by Connie Vail (owner of The Vegetarian Express, a vegan restaurant) and Dr. Evelyn Kissinger (Professor of Nutrition at Andrews University) drew 41 attendees who requested monthly health seminars. So Dr. Kissinger and LuAnn Bermeo (a chef and cookbook author) held another cooking school in December with 40 attendees. During 2012, Vicki Griffin's Health Emphasis Workshop in March and gourmet chef Melody Prettyman's Lifestyle Matters Seminar in July earned perfect tens from 35 attendees. Later that fall, the Community Services Center hosted several Vegetarian Buffet Potlucks in preparation for Emmanuel Institute chef Stephanie Howard's delightful "How to Live to be 100" cooking school that winter and celebrity chef Mark Anthony's two "vegetarian performing arts cooking" and "cooking at its funniest" shows in August, which drew 150 people. That summer, members

noticed that these health classes inspired 29 attendees to come for Sabbath worship services, so members invited Dr. Evelyn Kissinger from Andrews University to present “Creating Healthy Holiday Traditions” later that winter.

Others who hosted popular cooking classes included Cassandra McNaulty with “How to take recipes and make them healthier” (July 2014), Mark Anthony with his weight loss and increased energy seminar (November 2014), Evelyn Kissinger’s health seminar (February 2015), Vicki Griffin’s “Meatless Menus for Sunny Day Dining” (August 2015) and the “Healing the Broken Brain—Beating Bad Habits for Good” program (March 2017) jointly presented by Vicki Griffin and Bonnie Carlson, which attracted 27 non-Adventists, two of whom requested Bible studies. In August 2017, Vicki and Emily Griffin presented “Fun Foods for Better Health,” a cooking seminar with prizes, demonstrations, and free recipes for all who attended. Fourteen non-Adventists signed up for the monthly magazine *Balance* afterwards. In May 2019 Lee Willard, Master Herbalist and Botanical Medicine Professor at Andrews University, lectured on the topic “Introduction to Herbal Remedies” while Patsy Towar, a registered nurse, led a cooking class and lifestyles seminar in November entitled “Getting Every Bite Right!” with plant-based recipes to help prevent heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes; 47 individuals (including 15 non-Adventists) attended.

Other seminars focused on a wide variety of needs. In the winter of 2013 Doris Gothard led a Finances and Spirituality Seminar, teaching attendees the seven steps to spiritual and financial health. The following month the church offered a Marriage Commitment Retreat. In the spring of 2014 over 60 locals attended a program sponsored by Michael Nickless (a former Alaskan bush pilot who changed his diet to overcome Type II Diabetes) called “Overcoming Diabetes and Heart Disease.” In August 2015 Janet Allen, director of the Center, led a Disaster

Preparedness Seminar, followed in December 2016 by Ed Painter's support group for those suffering from food, video games, or other addictions. In August 2017 the Center sponsored a roof repair training class, followed in the fall of 2018 by Lee Wellard and Elizabeth Faust's Journey to Wholeness, Adventist Recovery Ministries 12-step program for better health series which focused attention on herbal remedies. The 50 attendees expressed further interest in having a Natural Lifestyle Cooking class, a Stress Management class, and a Wellness Class.

Often, of course, these health-related seminars were held at the Community Service Center, which, under the leadership of Leola Goodin and her team, continued its generous outreach to the needy—so much so, in fact, that Leola pleaded with church members to donate more clothing to meet the needs. Recognizing the Center's value to the community, the *Citizen-Patriot* donated \$5000 in 2011; the Pathfinders also contributed over 1000 cans of food for Christmas baskets. In 2012 Darlene Stilson, using Facebook, led the ladies in collecting teddy bears, dolls, games, scrapbook kits, candy, bikes, and balls. Open every Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Center's skeleton staff of women annually organized community food drives every spring and again in the fall (for Christmas distribution) that typically brought in over 2000 items weighing over a ton.

Under Janet Allen's leadership, however, the ladies expanded their job descriptions to include giving Bible studies (November 2013) and offering stress seminars (January 2014). In July of 2014, however, their shelves were empty after distributing 550 pounds of food each week (about 13 tons a year). In addition to canned goods, Allen sent out an urgent S.O.S. for gloves, coats, hats, blankets, and boots during the winter of 2014-15. During the winter of 2016, the Center was helping an average of 1200 families each year—an average of five every single day—with roughly 315 pounds of food distributed each week. To maintain this level of giving,

they requested monthly donations of pasta, canned fruit, soups, peanut butter, jelly, boxed potatoes and canned vegetables.

To help raise funds to meet these growing needs, during 2015 the ladies, led by Beth Faust, sold RADA cutlery, cookbooks, stoneware, candles, and other items, 40% of whose profits returned to the Center. They also began offering canned and frozen vegetarian foods and meat substitutes. In the summer of 2017 they held their first of many yard sales, splitting the profits between the Center and the church building fund. Andrew Watson and Dr. Caleb Lee spearheaded yet another creative idea when in the spring of 2017 they started a raised-bed garden behind the church to provide the Center with fresh vegetables to share with people. Later that fall, members gave Juanita Kretschmar \$800 to assist families in Florida who had been displaced by Hurricane Irma earlier that summer. In the winter of 2018, the Sandstone Congregational Church donated 970 pounds of food while Jackson members gave almost \$1140 to supply food and meet operations expenses, especially on the fourth Sabbath of every month which was designated as CSC donation Sabbath. But beyond food and funds, the ladies at the Center pleaded for more volunteers to assist them on Tuesdays.

Another popular (but increasingly infrequent) outreach to the public were the Vacation Bible Schools for the children of Jackson, usually held in July. Although the record does not show them being hosted every summer, Gin Donna led a large group VBS in 2011. In 2013 Laura Stilson directed a smaller one with the theme “Antioch 49 A.D.” focusing on the culture and events during Paul’s life and the early Christian church. She followed this up with a Sabbath afternoon children’s story hour that fall with crafts, singing, and Bible stories for kids aged four to twelve. The first Jackson male to lead a VBS was Andrew Watson in 2016. His team mailed 1500 large postcards throughout the city advertising the summer’s theme “Kidsville: Where

Jesus Loves Others.” Wendy Painter directed the 2017 VBS with the theme “A Week on the Farm,” which featured joyful singing, fun games, lovely prizes, and Bible stories. She also coordinated the 2018 VBS (with its theme of “A Week in the Forest”), during which about 20 children met for two hours every evening, and with Wendy Painter’s and Kim Smith’s help, they directed a very successful 2019 VBS in July under the theme of “A Week at the Ocean.”

Summers also provided an opportunity for Adventists to witness at the Jackson County Fair, usually held in early August. The church’s booth in 2011, organized by literature evangelist Ron Newcomb, distributed 24 Bibles, 250 final Events DVDs, over 100 copies of *Great Controversy*, 250 magazines, 100 copies of *Steps to Christ*, 65 Magabooks, more than 40 copies of *Desire of Ages*, and many GLOW tracts and Kids for Jesus pamphlets. By 2012, however, the cost of a booth had increased to \$225, but this did not stop Ron and his team from handing out 600 more books that summer; their 210 lead cards led to ten Bible studies as well. Church head elder Ray Hamblin and the pastor’s wife, Cindy Scott, designed the booth in 2013, but this task was delegated to Bunker Hill member Ron Newcomb in 2014 with Jackson members working four-hour shifts during the week. While twenty requests for Bible studies came in that year, at least 70 such requests resulted from the two church booths in 2015. One, designed by Ron Newcomb, distributed evangelistic literature while the other, prepared by Janet Allen, focused on “Your Best Pathway to Physical, Spiritual, and Mental Health.”

Probably the youngest helper in Jackson’s history, however, was Promise In Power, a precocious five-year-old first grader who passed out literature at the two church booths that August. Standing in the middle of the walkway, this cute girl with the big brown eyes gave out a health book, several Ellen White books, ads for children’s bedtime stories, and flyers for upcoming cooking schools and evangelistic meetings—100s of pieces of literature in all! Janet

Allen designed the fair booths for 2016 (focusing on the Community Services Center's ministry), 2017 (promoting the BibleStudy.com website), 2018 and 2019 (inviting people to the upcoming Jesus on Prophecy meetings that fall).

Historically, the Jackson SDA Church has also participated in mission activities through its support of Maranatha trips, sending young people to Friendship Camps, and sponsoring needy children at Adventist academies. Although the records do not show any Jackson youth going on Maranatha trips or to Friendship Camps after 2010, church members continued their generous support of those who needed help with tuition at Great Lakes Adventist Academy through a program called Academy Assist. This financial assistance consisted of \$1200 for one student and \$1500 for another in 2013 and rose to \$750 a month in 2014-15. However, since 2015 the church newsletter has made no reference to Academy Assist, perhaps an indication that there are no students from Jackson attending GLAA or that they have not needed financial assistance.

Although for several years after 2008 (when the Erhards left the district), the Adventist outreach to the Jackson Penitentiary appears to have lapsed, in the fall of 2012, Bible studies there led to several inmates requesting baptism. Before the year ended, six men had joined the church. In August of 2014 the board voted to include Prison Ministries in the church budget, and Pam Little regularly sent 40 Sabbath School quarterlies to inmates there and to another prison. Later that fall, prisoner Greg Owen, recently baptized by Elder Scott, wrote a letter expressing appreciation for these quarterlies and for the influence of George and Ruth Cheeseman on his life. Beginning in 2015 Adventist inmates also received the church bulletins as well as monthly, birthday, and holiday cards.

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan
Part 20 [rev. ed. 2019]

In our final chapter, we will look at such in-reach or nurturing activities as physical improvements to the campus, Pathfinders, Sabbath Schools, church music, budgetary concerns, and the effort to raise funds to build a new church.

While the church and school boards had voted in 2010 to close the Jackson SDA School, there was still much work left to be done there. During the winter of 2011, a three-woman team sorted, packed, and disposed of the remaining furnishings. Old textbooks were shipped to Liberia; newer ones were sold for \$800. Church members could buy the computers, teaching materials, and supplies at cut-rate prices. Library books, desks, chairs, and tables were placed in storage for future use. In the summer of 2011, the school was rented to Father's House International, a non-denominational Christian group, for weekend services and recreation.

But beginning in the winter of 2013, members decided to begin holding church services in the renovated gymnasium. The front office became the parents' room; the back office served as the pastor's office; the former ninth and tenth grade classroom became the church library and board room, while the Cradle Roll, Kindergarten, Earliteens, and Youth Sabbath Schools met in the other classrooms. In June new padded chairs were purchased for the sanctuary, and many repairs and renovations were required to bring the old gym, kitchen, hallway, and classrooms up to code and comfort level. In addition, hours of landscaping labor by Beth Faust, Tom Goodin, and Wayne Gagan greatly improved the entranceway and grounds. The following year, a handicapped access ramp was added to the Community Services Center. In June of 2015 a new lighted church sign was installed by Huron Signs and Watchfire Signs at a cost of \$54,241 to advertise church services, upcoming events, and weekly activities to the public.

In February 2016, Joe Donna and Rich Atkeson built safety railings leading to the chapel platform and Carol and David Craig painted and decorated the interior for worship, often adding seasonal flowers. Occasional work bees during 2017 further improved the interior and exterior of this renovated facility. Then in February of 2018, a former Adventist driving by the church was attracted by the flashing sign. She started taking Bible studies with Elder Ratsara and was soon enjoying the warm fellowship of church members. Yet anyone who examined the church entrance saw the rust spots in the old metal doors and window frames and the holes that allowed the wind, rain, and snow to enter the hallway. During 2018 the newsletter pleaded for donations to repair these weather hazards; the cost was estimated at \$9250.00. By January 2019, however, money from the Home and School fund paid for the completion of the new entrance.

If youthful voices no longer echoed down the hallway at 3600 County Farm Road, they could be heard wherever the ten Pathfinders—now known as Jaguars—convened on Tuesday evenings. Led by Ronda Daugherty (2011-13), members earned honors in leather craft, ceramics, genealogy, evangelism, cooking, Christian grooming, and camp craft, and studied the Book of Isaiah for Bible Achievement competition. Demonstrating a commitment to service, they collected over 1100 food items, helped the ladies at the Center pack food boxes and school supply gift packs, prepared a Thanksgiving meal for church members, and raised funds for an Indonesian Mission pilot project. Every year, of course, they enjoyed investing new members and attending the all-day Pathfinder Fair in Lansing, where they ranked as a 200-Point Club. To pay for their trip to the Lake Union Camporee in Berrien Springs, Michigan (where they gave special music before 2200 Pathfinders), they held garage sales and sold citrus fruit and Worthington and Loma Linda canned foods. Special trips included a visit to Pine Ranch to hone their camping skills, to Battle Creek’s Historic Adventist Village, and Teen Snow Outings. In

the spring of 2013, Kelli, the daughter of Pathfinder director Ronda Daugherty, was a member of one of the winning teams at the North American Division Bible Bowl finals in Lincoln, Nebraska. In the fall of 2014, she was invested as a Master Guide at the global gathering of Pathfinder clubs in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

However, as the number of young people in the church continued to decline, the Pathfinder club ceased to meet for a couple of years. But in the fall of 2016, the Jaguars were revived and began meeting the first Sabbath and every other Tuesday of the month. Kelli Daugherty was director, Jonathan Rhotynski was deputy director, and Andrew Watson, Ronda Daugherty, and Raquel Cecil were counselors. In September the Jaguars attended the Lake Union Camporee; in October, they visited a cider mill; and throughout the year, they studied for honors in Christian grooming and manners, knot tying, camping skills, cooking, nature, and crafts. By the fall of 2017, somewhat less active, they met only one Tuesday a month.

Members also trained their Sabbath School children and youth as active participants in worship services. Although their numbers seemed to be dwindling (the Junior and Earliteen Sabbath Schools were combined as were the Youth and Young Adults, who met in the balcony), beginning in 2011, the youth received training as deacons, greeters, and distributors of materials. The board urged them to “dress appropriately [not in torn jeans or t-shirts], arrive early and contact the deacon-in-charge.” Frequent notices in the newsletters begging parents to bring their children on time for Sabbath school (which now met at 10 a.m.) indicated that there were many more boys and girls who could have attended on Sabbath morning. In the summer of 2012, Arlene Bliesath, who had taught in Cradle Roll for an incredible 50 years, pleaded for someone to teach the under-seven age group which met in the end room near the back stairs, a task she had fulfilled for decades, but now, at 78, could no longer do. A year later, Gin Donna was still

pleading for help with the Cradle Roll and Kindergarten kids. Meanwhile the Primaries and Juniors needed teachers as well, especially after Laura Tressler left the area in the spring of 2014 and Karl Kidder retired at the end of that year. Meanwhile Dan Henning led the Youth Sabbath School members in giving door-to-door Bible studies in the winter of 2013-14. Finally, in 2015 Wendy Painter agreed to lead the Primary and Junior kids while Vicki Rick led the Cradle Roll and Kindergarten Sabbath School group.

In 2013 the schedule for the adult Sabbath School began at 9:30 a.m. with “Spiritual Connection” (a PowerPoint of nature slides and music), followed by “Family and Friends Weekly Reunion” at 9:45 a.m., and then study classes convened at 10:00 a.m. A new Praise Team, led by Anna Larsen, led the singing that fall. But a new Michigan Conference Child Protection Policy, which went into effect in August 2013, required that any adults teaching in the children’s Sabbath Schools must receive special on-line training via a video on the website www.shieldthevulnerable.org. A year later, the church board voted that *all* church officers would take this on-line class.

Each quarter the adult Sabbath School adopted themes such as “Praying for the World Next Door” (2014), “Jackson Is God’s City—My City” (2015), “Jesus Is Coming: Are You Ready?” and “Kindness Campaign” (2015), during which members were encouraged to perform one kind deed each week and to go on “spiritual adventures” for Christ in preparation for the upcoming evangelistic series entitled “Thirteen Weeks to Welcome Christ to Our Church.” Three adult classes, led by Dave Bycraft, Cheryl Brown, and Ray Hamblin, met in the sanctuary and the board room in 2015. To promote the theme of “Total Member Involvement” in 2016, Janet Aldea, assistant to North American Division President Dan Jackson presented special programs for children, youth, and adults. Two adult classes met every Sabbath: the one in the

chapel was co-led by Ray Hamblin, Andrew Watson and Eric Pletcher, while the one that met in the board room was co-led by Dave Bycroft and Joe Badgley.

But by 2016, as the number of children regularly attending Sabbath School declined, so did the ranks of those adults willing to lead them. In February the Newsletter issued new pleas for helpers in the Cradle Roll/Kindergarten, Primary, and Junior Sabbath Schools. The Youth Sabbath School, led by Raquel Cecil in 2017, now welcomed children as young as twelve and older to attend its gatherings. Those who did volunteer their services were especially honored on April 15, 2017 (“Sabbath School Emphasis Day”) during the Personal Ministries time. Finally, in the spring of 2018, Kim Smith stepped forward to lead the Cradle Roll/Kindergarten Sabbath School. Yet on most Sabbaths, only one or two children under eighteen years of age visited the church, presenting new challenges for those who had faithfully prepared programs, lessons, and children’s stories. Was the Jackson SDA Church becoming a geriatric congregation? In January and February 2019 Craig Rodala taught Sabbath School members how to defend their faith “without being argumentative.” Later that spring, they could also download their Sabbath School lessons on their smart phones by going to www.ssnet.org and clicking on “Adult S.S.” and “Weekly Lesson.” In the fall members created a Sabbath School Mission Statement and adopted four goals: every member attending on time for enriching programs and finding recruits to teach the children and youth departments. As the year 2020 dawned, three adult classes met in the sanctuary: Craig Radala’s in the front right; Ray Hamblin’s in the left corner; and Dave Bycraft’s in the library.

Likewise, when Donna Mayo, church organist for half a century, announced in 2012 that due to declining health, she no longer felt capable of handling that responsibility, the church’s decades old music program also declined. On many Sabbaths, members sang hymns with CD

accompaniment, at least until Madlyn Hamblin began playing the piano.

Gospel music performers continued to be the most frequently invited musicians. In the fall of 2011, Buddy Houghtaling gave a concert during the evangelistic meetings. Don and Donna Mohl, Folk Mountain Gospel artists from Fair Grove, Missouri, presented memorable concerts featuring a bowed psaltery, hammered dulcimer, mandolin, zither, guitar, and harmonica in 2012, 2013, and 2014. Shortly after Christmas 2013, Scott Bennett, a singer and recording artist, gave a concert as well. In 2014 Alison Brook sang for a vesper program in the spring, followed by Chaplin and Gwen Hardy's concert that summer, and Great Lakes Adventist Academy's 55-voice choir who came in the fall of 2014 and the winter of 2015, and were given bed and breakfast in church members' homes. Then in the spring of 2016, the Lansing Chorale, directed by Vic Hilbert, a former member of the Faith For Today Quartet, shared their prayer and praise program. A year later, Craig Cleveland brought Great Lakes Adventist Academy's delightful choir for another concert in February 2017; trumpeter and composer Carlot Drove from Haiti came in August; and the 3 ABN recording artist Calvin Taylor's outstanding piano concert of Gospel music took place in September. A year later in August 2018, the international Christian recording artist Scott Michal Bennett put on a concert for both Sabbath School and church services.

As they had done for decades, Jackson Adventists loved planning social activities. Every year they enjoyed family camp at Au Sable and marriage retreats at Crystal Mountain. In March 2013 members posed for Lifetouch Photography to compile yet another church directory. Beginning that summer, they provided weekly (rather than quarterly) potlucks for visitors (renamed "Guest Fellowship Dinners" under Janet Allen after 2017) and sponsored funeral meals when necessary. At Christmas time, members enjoyed Saturday night socials complete with fun,

food, and games, followed by New Year's Eve parties with table games, snacks, "Adventist drinks," and "surprises." Beginning in the summer of 2016, Chad Emig started "Bridge," a new group to provide fellowship and fun activities for young adults. Meanwhile the social committee inaugurated the popular "Member Appreciation Month" in September during which individuals called, wrote notes, texted, or visited the person whose name they drew from a bucket. Every summer, of course, the church picnic in one of the city's parks drew both regular and absentee members for mountains of food, fun games, and stimulating conversation around the picnic tables. In August they gathered for a campfire and corn roast on Sunday afternoon. Also that summer Andrew Watson corralled several willing workers to help with his Garden Project, planting tomatoes, beets, kale, melons, and other vegetables behind the church. In October 2018 Lee Welland, a professor of applied physiology and nutrition at Andrews University, led out in a Healthy Living Supper Club free spaghetti meal and lecture at the Center; then in December everyone enjoyed a Holiday Fellowship dinner with entrée, stuffing, and potatoes provided, followed at the end of the month by a New Year's Eve party featuring table games, snacks, popcorn, cocoa, and "surprises" with donations going to child care services. In 2019 members celebrated the weddings of Alex and Alyssa Martinez (May) and Macayla Raney and Wesley Statler (December) by giving them showers at the Center.

While the Men's Ministries entered a period of hiatus once Nels Thompsen left the district in 2012 (with only two events, a breakfast and golf meet at Hickory Hills' Golf Course in August 2017 and a convocation at Great Lakes Adventist Academy with Pastor Samuel Thomas, Jr., in September 2018), the Women's Ministries, led by Charline Hile, Connie Blackerby, and Almeda Marsh, adopted new themes (such as "Growing in God's Beauty," "Lessons on Loss," "So Long Insecurity," "De-cluttering Heart and Home," "Branded in Christ," and "New Year,

New You!”) and planned new programs and activities almost every month. These activities included retreats at Camp Au Sable; dinners at Olive Garden; farewell galas for departing members; wedding showers; Summer Fellowship Teas; pumpkin decorating contests; Christmas and Valentine’s Day parties with food, games, discussions, and gift exchanges (limited to \$15.00). In addition, they collected used books for the children’s ward at Allegiance Health Hospital and made Bags of Love gifts for abused kids taken from their homes by Protective Services (a project to which the Kiwanis Club donated \$500 every year). When Rachel Rick enrolled in Andrews University in the fall of 2014, they collected personal items to send with her.

When Cheryl Brown became Women’s Ministries leader in the fall of 2014, she led the ladies in several new activities at the Community Services Center. They enjoyed card-making gatherings; Christmas dinners at Olive Garden; retreats to scenic places; and Women’s Day programs with guest speakers. In June 2015 the women dressed in white, lime green, pink, or lilac to listen to Dr. Edna Rose from the Department of Neurology at the University of Michigan speak about “When Women Pray: What Happens?”; all female church officers received a “bag of wonderful treasures” and blue and gold certificates of appreciation. In 2016, with Beth Faust as leader, they gathered at Camp Au Sable to hear Ginny Allen talk about “Faith Not Fear” and to enjoy delicious food, warm fellowship, and relaxation. Occasionally on Sabbaths the ladies gathered for a Day of Prayer, planned by the Women’s Ministry Prayer Team who met every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. Every year on Women’s Sabbath, the ladies led out in Sabbath School and church worship, including preaching the sermon—something the congregation had not seen since Ellen White spoke from the pulpit here a century and a half ago! Every Christmas, of course, the ladies gathered for a variety of activities: a Baked Potato Bar Luncheon in December 2018

followed by a carol sing-a-long and donating winter gloves to the Center. During the first three weekends in April 2019, the women's retreat theme was "Reflecting Christ" with Jill Morikone (general manager of 3ABN) as the featured speaker.

As the 21st Century progressed, the Jackson church's aging congregation struggled with growing financial challenges. The church budget, which required donations of \$1000 each week, was already \$2300 behind in April and \$4000 short by August 2013. Throughout 2014, an average of only \$800 a week came in instead of the \$885 needed. By the fall of 2015, the budget was \$3200 in the red. Members were encouraged to give on line through the church website at www.jacksonsdachurch.org. Yet they could also take comfort in knowing that their heat bills (about \$2800 a month) were still less than those at the old Franklin Street Church.

Some fundraising efforts, such as the citrus fruit program, had to be suspended in 2013 due to a lack of personnel to oversee it, but members created new ones that summer, including a gigantic Indoor Yard Sale (coordinated by George and Ruth Cheeseman), a Spaghetti Dinner, a Valentine's Celebration and Game Night, a Mother's Day Brunch, a Spring Flower Bulb Sale, a Shrub, Plant and Herb Sale, and selling \$50 engraved bricks to raise needed money. In 2015 Arlene Bliesath notified her friends that she was collecting Cedar Lake, Worthington, and Loma Linda labels to turn into cash for church projects. Janet Allen's hugely successful metal fundraiser in June 2015 also garnered \$1557 for the building fund.

The major challenge for Jackson Adventists, of course, was trying to sell the old church and raise money to build a new one in an economy with eight per cent unemployment and church giving down by \$1200 a month (2011). After rejecting several offers for the church, the board created a lean budget with no appropriations for the school, Community Services Center, building maintenance, or social activities. The budget for 2013 was even more Spartan: no funds

were allocated for Sabbath school expense, Pathfinders, Men's and Women's Ministries, the school, maintenance, or social activities.

In January 2012, the board voted to build the new church adjacent to the school on County Farm Road. That summer, when the building fund topped \$25,000, members were urged to give on-line at www.jacksonsdachurch.org by clicking the "On-Line Giving" tab on the top menu. That fall a yard sale raised \$2600; in addition, members were contributing over \$700 monthly to the project. But their pastor's New Year's message called for much greater sacrifice: Elder Scott envisioned raising \$300,000 *a month* in 2013. In January 2013, after closing the old Franklin Street Church, members began worshiping at the school. However, their monthly giving that year was less than \$3000—only one percent of their pastor's expectations. Nonetheless, the board approved an outlay of about \$20,000 for building-related expenses in August.

Ever so slowly, the new church building fund grew. It received a huge boost in November 2015 when the Franklin Street church finally sold for \$121,000 with the help of Pat Lykins, realtor and former Jackson member. After expenses, the fund stood at \$209,301 by July 2016. To help garner support, Judy Jennings and Janet Allen hosted Tupperware parties in 2016, raising \$209 for the building fund; a huge yard sale the following year contributed \$1537. By May 2017, members had given over \$276,000; in November the fund exceeded \$300,000; then in January 2019 it topped \$305,000 and by June, over \$312,000.

Yet there were some long-time members and faithful supporters who would never see the new church completed. In 2013 Pearl Losey, at 108 years the oldest Jackson Adventist and the oldest Andrews University alumna, passed to her rest. In 2016 the former member Judy Goliath, now of Western Springs, Illinois, passed away, leaving her husband Fred to mourn her passing. The chapel was packed on August 6, 2017 for the memorial service of Lola Rockwell, who at

101.5 years, was the second oldest Jackson Adventist; later that fall the church also lost long-time deacon Carl La Roe and Pauline Herrington. In 2018 members mourned the deaths of Jeff Rick and Jeanette Weems, followed by the passing of long-time church organist Donna Mayo and schoolboard chair Bob Marsh in 2019. Yet each of these dear saints died in that “Blessed Hope” of being one day resurrected at the second coming of Jesus. My prayer today is that you and I will be ready to join them—and all the Jackson pioneers—in our heavenly home on that great getting up morning!

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan: Lest We Forget, Part 1
Part 21 [rev. ed. 2020]

What has the story of God's leading in your church's past meant to you personally? Have you allowed God to speak to your heart and conscience, telling you what He would have you do? Have you gleaned any spiritual lessons from this 170-year story which could be applied to us as a church collectively? These are serious, probing questions. Ellen White wrote years ago 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."

Now you know how God has led your church since 1849. So what concrete, practical lessons can you and I learn from this that will help us do the Lord's work in Jackson more effectively and prepare our hearts and families for Christ's coming? I believe God has been speaking very clearly to you through your history, which is also His-story. What has He been saying for 170 years? I have prayed much about this final two-part overview that what I say will be as close to what Jesus might say to you if He were here this morning.

If there were another church in Revelation 3 after Laodicea, and if that church were to be called Jackson, what would the message of the angel be to your church? I've been impressed that it might be a blend of the commendations to Philadelphia and the warnings to Laodicea.

Let's take the positive points first. When I first began researching and sharing your church's history in 1987, Don and Barb Harris informed me that someone had told them that Ellen White had said that "the Jackson Church is a troublesome church and always will be." Quite a damaging statement—if it's true! But because the Center for Adventist Research at Andrews University has on-line access to everything Mrs. White wrote and published—books, articles, letters, diary accounts, etc.—it was easy for me to enter "Jackson" into the computer and get a printout of every time she referred to this church. After reading all of the passages, I know

that Ellen White never made that statement at all! In fact, the real criticism, which stated that “Jackson is a dead church,” was made in 1963 by a minister who spent only nine months as pastor of this parish. But we can test the validity of his criticism by quickly reviewing what others have said about this church. I will share with you just one statement per decade from 1849 onwards.

In an August 1849 letter to James White, J. C. Bowles of Jackson wrote: “The little band here have received the truth on the Sabbath, without exception...Give our love to Sister White, and Bro. Bates. Tell him we are all strong in the Lord, rejoicing in the truth.” In April 1854, Elder Joseph Bates wrote in the *Review*: “[Jackson members] have for some time past been laboring to sustain Gospel Order and are now reaping the fruit of their united labors, viz., harmony and union among themselves and increasing confidence in God.”

In June 1868, Elder I. D. Van Horn wrote that he “enjoyed a free time in the worship of God” and “tasted some of the rich blessings of Heaven” when he met with local believers at the Palmers’ home. Elder J. H. Waggoner called his February 1872 visit “the best meeting I ever attended in Jackson County.” After summer tent meetings in 1885, Elder Van Horn stated: “The church has been strengthened, not only in numbers but spiritually, and our brethren are full of hope and courage.”

At the end of 1897, preacher A. J. Harris remarked, “The Lord is blessing the Jackson Church as they work for those who need help [in the city mission].” When East Michigan Conference treasurer E. I. Beebe visited in December 1905, he found members’ hearts “wrapped up in the three angels’ messages” and in August 1906, he rejoiced to see members eager “to hasten the glad tidings on...filled with zeal and earnestness to do God’s will.”

After the April 1913 Missionary Volunteer Convention here, Conference M.V. leader Clifford Russell remarked: “The Jackson Church is blessed with an unusually large and talented company of young people” in whose presentations he found “unusual literary merit [that] breathed forth a spirit of consecration.” He felt Jackson’s Adventist youth would “make their influence felt throughout the whole city.” In August 1921 Elder O. B. Hall of the East Michigan Conference predicted that Jackson would reach its \$750 Ingathering goal easily, for “This is one of the churches that can always be depended upon to carry a large share of the load.”

Jackson’s new pastor in 1930, Elder B. F. Williams, called his new congregation “well-organized for service...[Their] cooperation and enthusiasm is growing.” In May 1948, after Jackson members had raised over \$2000 for Ingathering in only two weeks, the *Lake Union Herald* stated: “Elder A. K. Phillips...deserves special commendation for the success of that church.” Following a district Sabbath School teachers’ convention here in April 1954, Mrs. Fiebelkorn praised Jackson in the *Herald*, saying, “The kind hospitality and assistance of the Jackson members and officers helped to make these meetings a huge success with a large attendance.”

For their unselfish welfare ministry to Appalachia’s poor in 1965, U. S. President Lyndon Johnson praised Jackson’s Dorcas Society in a personal letter as an ally to relieve “the plight of others less fortunate.” In 1973, state penitentiary inmate Wayne Tucker was lavish in praising those Jackson members involved in the weekly prison ministry, stating, “Those of us who know these [Jackson Adventist] men know that we would have to search the world over to find anyone who exhibits greater faith.”

In May 1986, 94-year-old Olga Arentz, the oldest church member here at that time, responded to a question about the special qualities she saw in the Jackson Church by saying,

“Friendliness. Returning to the Jackson church [after visits to California] is like being home again.” Finally, during my interviews with former school teacher Helen Hyde in 1998 and 1999, she enthusiastically exclaimed that the members of this church “Have invested a veritable gold mine in our school!”

Does this sound like the Jackson Church has been a troublesome and much-criticized group of people? On the contrary, I believe God has been commending you for 170 years for being loving, zealous, kind, generous, and hospitable. Historically speaking, you have an *awesome* reputation to uphold! Will you covenant with God to maintain this high standard so that when people speak of the Jackson Church, words like “friendly, loving, active, and hospitable” will come easily to mind?

Secondly, I believe God would commend the Jackson saints for pioneering many new ideas, programs, institutions, and practices within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I believe God has called you to be innovators, leaders, developers of pilot programs for the Michigan Conference. Your history bears witness to this.

From the very beginning in July 1849, God told Joseph Bates in a dream to leave his South Bend, Indiana, meetings and catch a stagecoach to a new town where God had a dozen Millerite Adventists searching for new truth. *God chose Jackson to become the first Sabbath-keeping band west of the Appalachian Mountains.* Don’t ever forget that fact: *God chose YOU!* It has awesome significance for your present and future. YOU are the chosen ones!

In its past, the Jackson Church has always responded enthusiastically to the needs of the Advent cause. Let’s quickly survey fifty of the famous “firsts” in Jackson’s Adventist history:

1. The *first* Sabbath-keeping Advent band west of Buffalo, New York, established here in August 1849.
2. Jackson lay preacher J. C. Bowles became in 1850 the *first* to preach the Sabbath in

Illinois, Wisconsin, and Indiana.

3. The *first* Midwestern church to receive a testimony vision from Ellen White in 1852.
4. The *first* Midwestern church the Whites visited in their first trip West in 1853.
5. The *first* Sabbath-keeping Advent band anywhere in the U.S. to build a meetinghouse in April 1854, one whole year ahead of Battle Creek, Michigan, and Bucks Bridge, New York, in 1855.
6. The *first* Adventist church anywhere to have two *Review* agents as local sales representatives in the 1850s.
7. The site of the *first* off-shoot movement with Case and Russell's "Messenger Party" from 1853 to 1857.
8. The *first* group to support two tents for Michigan evangelism in 1854-55, paid for by members here.
9. The site of James and Ellen White's *first* train accident in 1854.
10. The *only* church to pay for the entire cost of moving the *Review* and *Herald* Press from Rochester, New York, to Battle Creek in 1855.
11. The Palmer home became the battleground for one of Ellen White's *first* and most dramatic struggles with Satan as he tried to paralyze and kill her in 1858.
12. The first center of district monthly and quarterly meetings of area Adventists in the early 1860s and beyond.
13. The site of the *largest* camp meeting ever held among Adventists up to 1884: over 10,000 Jackson citizens attended!
14. The church that consistently gave the *largest* offerings in the Conference in the 1850s and 1860s and, outside Battle Creek, into the 1870s and 1880s as well.
15. The *only* Michigan Adventist city mission (outside Detroit) was established here in 1899 to serve as a witnessing and welfare training center for Battle Creek College youth.
16. One of the *earliest* and longest-lasting Conference church schools was established here in 1899.
17. The site of the *only* Michigan Adventist Sanitarium outside Battle Creek after 1900, led at first by the Harrises and then by the Kauns.

18. One of Michigan's *earliest* and longest-serving Dorcas Societies began here in 1908.
19. By 1909, one of the Conference churches with the *greatest* musical talent in its youth.
20. Possibly the site of Michigan's *first* camp meeting to feature electricity in 1910, and again, the largest gathering of Adventists up to that time in the this state.
21. The *first* Adventist church to have a full-time resident pastor in 1909—Delmer P. Wood.
22. Possibly one of Michigan's *first* churches to have an organ in 1913.
23. The *first*-place church in Michigan for tithe-giving from 1915 to 1917.
24. The *first* Conference church to form a Junior Missionary Volunteer League in 1920.
25. The *only* church in which two youth learned a foreign language to help them Ingather among Jackson's foreign immigrants in 1920.
26. Probably the *first* Adventist group to sponsor a co-ed summer camp in 1928 (at Cedar Hills Park near Clinton)
27. The *first* church to use singing bands for Ingathering in 1929.
28. Possibly one of the *few* integrated churches in Michigan in the 1930s, this church welcomed the Parkers, a black family, and various black singers here.
29. Probably the *first* Michigan Adventist group to begin a prison ministry in 1932.
30. One of the *first* churches in Michigan to adopt a three-year church budget plan in 1934 so that no more calls for money needed to be made from the pulpit.
31. One of the *first* groups to put deaconesses on the church board in 1936.
32. Pastor Carl Pruitt's radio broadcasts over WIBM in 1938 were the *first* such witnessing attempts by any local Michigan Adventist pastor.
33. The *first* Adventist church to welcome Jackson's first woman physician in town, Dr. Hilda Habenicht, in 1940.
34. One of the *first* congregations to form a junior deacons group in 1940 and a junior choir also that year.
35. Probably one of the *first* churches in Michigan to start a Bible Correspondence School in 1946, with 6000 people enrolled and 136 letters rolling in every day.

36. The *first* church to host a Child Evangelism Institute to foster lay activities among children in 1946.
37. The most *outstanding* example of successful public advertising for evangelistic results with George Vandeman's 1946 Masonic Hall meetings which led to sixty baptisms and pushed Jackson membership up from 190 to 250.
38. Possibly the *only* Adventist church in Michigan up to that time to build a new school and a new church at the same time between 1948 and 1950.
39. The *first* Conference annual Adventist teachers' convention, the Jackson Area Teachers' Exchange, was established here in 1954.
40. Probably the *first* Adventist church in Michigan to sponsor a county fair booth in 1965.
41. The *first* local Dorcas Society to be personally thanked by a President of the United States (Lyndon Johnson) in the Lake Union, at least, when in 1965 he wrote them a grateful letter for helping the poor of Appalachia.
42. The *first* Lake Union church to go can-gooding at Halloween time in 1963; members gathered 556 cans of food and 144 articles of clothing.
43. Probably the church whose elementary school had the *largest* gymnasium in the Michigan Conference in 1964 (60'x90').
44. The *Number One* Ingathering church and district in Michigan for 1968.
45. Perhaps the *first* Michigan church to have an original piece of art, painted by a local member, behind its baptistry—Don Harris's oil painting of heaven, finished in 1965-66.
46. Probably the *only* Adventist elementary school with a fleet of four new buses in 1966.
47. The *first* church to baptize new members at the Jackson State Prison in 1970.
48. The *only* Adventist church anywhere to have a prison inmate for a church newsletter reporter (Wayne Tucker in 1973).
49. The *first* Adventist church in the Lake Union to have a copy of its detailed history written by 1987.
50. The *first* church in the Lake Union to have an audio-visual record of its history on hand in more than 400 slide pictures in 1987.

Based upon this historical overview, I believe the Lord wants the Jackson Seventh-day Adventist Church to be bold, creative, innovative! Why not run some pilot programs for the Conference? Why not volunteer to try something totally new? That has been your tradition!

Thirdly, I think God would commend the Jackson church for its social and spiritual enthusiasm fostered throughout the past 170 years by camp meetings, testimony meetings, revival meetings, Sabbath school, temperance, and M.V. district meetings held here. These gatherings—far too numerous to mention in a brief review—have served to strengthen members' faith, bind heart to heart in real fellowship, develop deep and meaningful friendships, and prepare individuals for effective witnessing and sharing activities. This church has always been known as an active, vibrant, talented spiritual and social center in this Conference. Young people flocked here in buggies and wagons from the 1860s to 1890s, and continued coming by car and truck, train and plane during the twentieth century. Their testimonies glow with the joy of fellowship they found here.

Conference leaders, recognizing Jackson members' talents and hospitality, chose this city and this church for five state-wide camp meetings (1884, 1885, 1909, 1910, and 1923), besides scores of district Sabbath School, M.V., and Teachers' Exchange conventions, and literally hundreds of monthly and quarterly meetings among area believers. If hospitality is one of the spiritual gifts, you have always had an over-supply! This is your historical heritage! Why not reverse the current trend of provincialism and insularity in local Adventist church congregations and ask the Hillsdale or Bunker Hill or Eaton Rapids or Charlotte church groups to join with you in some meaningful activity. The rewards would be a richer, deeper fellowship bond.

Fourthly, Jackson has always been the center of a vibrant, enthusiastic evangelistic thrust. Camp meetings, Sunday-night cottage meetings, tent meetings, Masonic Hall meetings,

Ingathering, county fair exhibits, cooking schools, Five-Day Plans, and Prison Outreach are only a few of the many witnessing endeavors this church has carried on, many of them for over a century. Are you ready to try something big and bold for God in the twenty-first century?

With His blessing you will soon build a larger new church. You built your first church in 1854; thirty-six years later in 1890 it was full so you built a second church. Within thirty-five years it, too, could hold no more so you built the Franklin Street church in 1950. Well, friends, it's been 70 years since then. The Jackson Church *Reporter* shows that you actually began talking of building a new church in 1971; in 1976-78 while I was a teacher here, you were *still* talking about it! I believe God is calling you to arise now, to sacrifice now, as you did in the 1940s and 1960s, to erect a larger chapel with plenty of empty pews to encourage you to become more active in public evangelism? I feel so convicted on this issue that I have given \$1000 toward this project, and I am not even a member here. Evangelism in our *raison d'être*, the real reason for our existence in this world.

In our final section, Part 22, we will look more closely at the roles that Adventist youth have played in the history of this church.

Advent Waymarks in Jackson, Michigan, Part 2
Part 22 [rev. ed. 2013]

I'm sure Christ would commend the youth of the Jackson Church for the active role they have always played in church organizations and witnessing activities. He would also probably urge today's youth to become more involved in the church's programs. Speaking especially now to those sixteen to forty years of age, I would like to challenge you to become more involved by reviewing with you some of the amazing things young people have done for this church.

1. Thirty-year-old Abigail Palmer played host to the founder of the Jackson Church, Joseph Bates, and many times boarded James and Ellen White. We need hospitable young people today to reach out and help Adventist workers feel at home with a simple meal and perhaps lodging when they visit, and God will reward such generosity.
2. Twenty-five-year-old Merritt Cornell, converted by Bates in 1852, became one of Adventism's dynamic evangelistic preachers and a missionary to California in 1868. Have you ever thought about preaching for God or being a student missionary?
3. Ellen White, a frequent Jackson visitor, was only twenty-four when she wrote *Great Controversy* in 1852. Do you have writing talent you could dedicate to God, to write poetry, articles, or hymns to His glory?
4. Would you like to make your Christianity practical? Remember teenager Sarah Carlson, who in 1900 sought out Jackson families with food, coal, and clothing needs and ministered to them. Why not partner with your Community Services Center one afternoon a week and put your Christian experience to work helping those more needy than yourself?
5. Do little children love you? Remembering that almost all of Jackson's school teachers and Sabbath school teachers were young single women from 1900 to 1950, why not volunteer to teach a Cradle Roll or Kindergarten class? Why don't some of you young fathers get involved in children's Sabbath School as well? Isn't it better if boys and girls associate religion with fathers, too?
6. The youth of this church in the 1910s and 1920s had projects to raise funds for worthy goals—quilting bees, sewing rag rugs, hosting penny suppers, etc. Although these are outdated now, perhaps for Investment or raising Pathfinder funds, you could wash cars, mow lawns, collect cereal box tops, or any one of dozens of ideas you can imagine.

7. For many years after 1913 Jackson had a youth choir and a youth orchestra to play for church and Sabbath school. Do you play an instrument? Do you sing? Why not revive the famous Jackson brass quintet or the junior choir and add your praises to God in song? You'll have fun, gain a rich blessing, and help your church worship God.
8. C. A. Fowler, in his twenties, may have been the first student colporteur in Jackson in 1914. Canvassing is challenging but very rewarding work for God. Do you like to meet people and sell things? Have you ever thought of joining the army of Maga-Book representatives for the summer? Having done it myself for four summers, I guarantee you'll draw closer to Jesus each day.
9. In the 1920s Jackson's young people led the Ingathering campaigns. Two students even learned a foreign language to help them reach more immigrants in town. Do you like Ingathering? Perhaps you could find a more creative way to do this work. Some church members have given their goal and then gone door to door passing out small loaves of bread to show their gratitude for their neighbors' past support.
10. Well into the 1940s and 1950s, most Bible workers were young single women in our church. Pastors then—and perhaps now—couldn't keep up with all the requests for Bible studies. Would you like to get to know your Bible better? Why not tag along with a church member who is already giving Bible studies and learn how to do it yourself? People here in Jackson are dying for lack of the "Blessed Hope" that you know.
11. Jackson youth helped pioneer Adventist summer camps in 1928. Do you enjoy camping? If you're sixteen or older, why not serve as a junior or senior counselor at Camp Au Sable? The experience will challenge and mature you—and you'll earn money while serving your church.
12. In the 1930s Jackson boys and girls enjoyed listening to the Detroit Black Adventist choir and other Black groups who sang or performed here. Are there Black children in your neighborhood? Why not offer to bring them to Vacation Bible School or Sabbath School? Jesus loves boys and girls of all colors—do *you*?
13. Jackson initiated a junior deacons program in 1940 and may have had a junior deaconesses group as well. Would you be willing today to help take up the offering, prepare for Communion services, mow the church lawn and shovel snow around the church? Why not contact the church board and volunteer your help? They'd be glad to use your services!
14. Almost all the teens and twenties youth who married in this church in the 1950s and 1960s joined hands with deeply-committed Christian Seventh-day Adventists and established strong religious homes for rearing Adventist children. If you're between sixteen and forty, are you dating a Christian Seventh-day Adventist committed to the doctrines and goals of this church? If you're wondering about the emotional costs of a

divided or broken home, look around you, my young friend: there are many such aching hearts in this church. Learn from them!

15. In 1965 this church sponsored its first county fair booth. Since then, scores of children and youth have helped prepare the Adventist booths each summer. Why don't you get involved this year? It's hard work, but so much fun as well!
16. In 1962 the church school children "blitzed" the downtown area with spiked sticks and bags to collect trash along the streets. The newspaper praised them for this. With so much emphasis today on ecology and the environment, why not work with other youth in planning an Ecology Cleanup Day for Earth Day? It'll be a real witness to the community of how concerned Adventists are for their environment.
17. In 1966 this church had at least three male and female youth quartets: "The Daughters of Zion," "The King's Men," and "The Master's Maidens." Do you sing well? Quartet singing is so much fun! Besides camaraderie and good times, you could provide special music for Sabbath School and church. Why not form a quartet yourself?
18. In 1969 Jackson teenagers, led by Jim Ross and Martha Schoun, conducted a ten-day Youth for Christ crusade in the Masonic Hall. Sounds scary, you say? Me preach, you say? Maybe not, but could you lead song service, play the piano, or greet people? Did you know that 70% of all Adventists in South America are under twenty-five years of age—and *they* conduct evangelistic meetings? You're as well-informed and probably better-educated than they are. Why not see your pastor and try it? You have nothing to lose but your shyness. What about all the citizens of Jackson who don't know Jesus? What have *they* got to lose?
19. In 1976 the Jackson Pathfinders were the only uniformed group in the Palm Sunday "March for Christ" parade—and did *they* get attention! Are you active in Pathfinders? They have great fun learning crafts, marching, singing, practicing first aid skills, and camping. If you're over sixteen, do you know that counselors are always needed? Or you could teach some craft or honor badge skill.
20. In the 1980s Jeff Wright and Lori Weems became Jackson's first student missionaries to Haiti, helping Dr. Jim Holman dispense and fit eye glasses. The experience thrilled, frightened, and matured them. How would you like to go to some of the places you've seen on "Mission Spotlight"? The experience could change your life!

And now a word to our adult members: Your children, youth and young adults can serve this church only if you'll let them. In fact, your young people will remain in the church only if

you provide opportunities for them to serve. If Jesus were speaking to this church today, I believe at this point He'd issue a rebuke or two—in love, of course.

You have all seen how very active the youth of this church have been from the 1850s to the 1980s. But we're in the twenty-first century now, and where are they, friends? Where are the youth from sixteen to thirty years of age? You no longer have a church choir for them to join; you have no Adventist Youth Association for them to learn leadership skills in; you have no Youth Sabbath school to nurture their social and spiritual needs. Do you even have any junior deacons or deaconesses today? Do you ever wonder why they don't come regularly to church or Sabbath School? Do you ever think why they date non-Adventists and then marry them? Have you ever taken the time to ask them what their concerns are and how you can help involve them in church activities? Are you praying for them? God may be waiting to answer those prayers through you. What answer will you give Him on the Judgment Day when He inquires of you, "Where is my flock, my precious flock?"

But let us end this series on a positive note by reviewing some of the lessons I see delineated in Jackson's history. First, generosity with time, talents and funds is the only way to keep faith alive and active in service to God and His church. If we grow stingy in these areas with God' we'll shrivel up spiritually. Let's all keep the Jackson tradition of liberality alive!

Second, genuine faith must be shared to be kept alive. The Dead Sea is rank and salty because it receives fresh water from the Jordan River but never lets any of it flow out. It merely evaporates in the hot, briny desert air. If you don't share your Christian experience somehow, you soon won't have anything to share, and you'll die spiritually.

Third, as I've emphasized already, the youth are the future of this church; they're its gold and silver. Lose them and your spiritual witness to this city will greatly diminish. We have only

to look at the examples of Leslie and Rives and Tompkins and Napoleon to see what happens when the youth leave. Fourth, practically anything is possible for this congregation to achieve. In the past 170 years of your history, I have not found *a single* example of *failure* anywhere in the records. Any project, program or goal you set your sights on with God's blessing has got to succeed—it *always has*! So dream big, aim high, and go for the gold!

Fifth, one such project is building a new church. In 1946 you began building both a new school and a new church—and *both* were completed by the 1950s. In fact, the school was opened in 1948 absolutely free of debt; the church debt was liquidated in 1959. If God so impressed you, would you be willing to sacrifice once more as you did so readily in 1854, 1890, 1911, and 1950? Remember the message of Haggai to the people of his day, so caught up in beautifying their own homes that for years they neglected God's temple. You would not want that charge to be laid at your door today, would you?

Finally, you have all seen how very, very precious the "Blessed Hope" of Christ's soon coming was to our spiritual ancestors from the 1840s to the turn of the last century. Their letters, reports, sermons, and even their obituaries spoke of this truth constantly. But something has changed in the rhetoric of the Second Advent, hasn't it? On October 21, 1844, Millerite Adventists spoke of Christ's coming as "tomorrow for sure"! But Christ didn't come on October 22. Nonetheless, believing that they had erred in their calculations, Adventists of the 1850s still wrote of His coming as "really very, very soon." However, by the 1860s and 1870s, as they formed a new church and established institutions, Adventists began to "dig in" for a longer wait. They began to emphasize the "occupy until I come" part of the message, didn't they?

By the 1880s and 1890s, now a world-wide church with many complex institutions, Adventists preached that Christ was coming "very soon," but with their higher education,

professional careers, and buildings of brick and stone, they didn't act very much as if they expected His advent all that soon. From 1900 to the 1940s (the two World Wars raised hopes of Armageddon and a hasty Second Coming), Adventists preached the Lord's return as "possibly soon" and urged others to get ready, but they themselves bought new autos, earned graduate degrees, and made investments in property and stocks and bonds. From the 1950s onward, we've been preaching the Lord's coming, but for many, it's no longer soon, just "someday." Although Adventists still believe Christ is coming, sometimes by their lifestyles they testify otherwise.

True, it is probably impossible emotionally to live on the edge of the Advent every day—at least not with the same intensity of feeling that our Millerite ancestors felt. But does that mean that we should not frequently review our priorities and check our lifestyles to see whether they testify for or against our faith in His coming? I believe it is all too easy to slip into the world's mode of thinking without realizing we're doing it. Does the Cross, the empty Tomb, and the Blessed Hope make any difference in *your* priorities, *your* lifestyle, *your* commitment to this church and its everlasting Gospel? Would you be willing to die for your faith and principles? If so, why not *really live* for them today?

In November 1905 the *East Michigan Banner* declared: "[Jackson] has been a great battle ground. When the redeemed shall come to Zion, will not some rise from their dusty beds here, and will not this place be remembered as a place where victories were won?" I want to be among that number of victorious saints, don't you? Looking back at how God has led us and His teachings in our past history can help you and me go forward with confidence wherever Jesus Christ may lead us in the future!