Michigan Adventist History
Self-guided Tour

Produced by the Center for Adventist Research
Andrews University
We hope you enjoy your tour of Adventist History sites in Michigan. This self-guided tour pamphlet is organized by counties within Michigan. This will help you plan your trip to visit sites near each other. Google Maps (or another online direction generator) can provide directions to these locations. GPS coordinates are included with many of the locations.

How to enter GPS coordinates into Google Maps:
The following are sample coordinates:
41 degrees 05.625 minutes North
90 degrees 12.500 minutes West
Enter the above sample coordinates into Google Maps as:
41 05.625 - 90 12.500
or 41.05625 - 90.12500

Welcome!

Allegan County

J. N. Andrews reported on the dedication services held in Allegan on May 29, 1864. Here is what he wrote:

Our brethren at this place have erected a very tasty and commodious yet plain and modest house of worship. The dedication services were a little disturbed by the owners of a church which stands within a few feet of ours. For soon after the services in our house were fairly commenced the bell of this church began to ring—though at an hour unusual with them—and was kept up till near the close of the discourse. Our windows being open and the houses immediately adjoining each other we had the full benefit of what was doubtless a preconcerted annoyance. In the evening we had a good season in worship at this house of prayer and also the following evening. (RH, vol. 24, 1864, p. 30)

Allegan Adventist Church

Allegan is also the location from which Edson White's mission boat, Morning Star, was launched.
Joseph Bates retired from a life at sea while in early mid-life with a comfortable sum of over $10,000. He built a home in Fairhaven, Massachusetts for his wife Prudence and became involved in various causes such as temperance, the abolitionist movement, and the Christian Connexion church. Most important though was his accepting the Millerite message in the fall of 1839. He used up most of his resources in these causes. After 1844 Bates was instrumental in establishing key theological foundations for the Seventh-day Adventist church, including linking the Sabbath to the end-time ministry of Jesus in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary. During the 1850s Bates was the premier evangelist of Sabbatarian Adventism. He brought the message to many of the second-generation leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist church. He retired from active labor when he moved to a little house in Monterey, Michigan. Monterey is now a part of Allegan. He purchased the property for his retirement home in 1860 from John S. Day. Bates remained active for the remainder of his life. He passed away on March 19, 1872, at the age of 79. He is buried with his wife in Poplar Hill Cemetery, in Monterey, Michigan.
At the beginning of May 1868, James and Ellen White came to Monterey. James White spoke on Luke 15:1-7 and the parable of the lost sheep. It moved the congregation. Visits were made to those who were no longer attending. Especially mentioned was George T. Lay who had a long history with the church. He took a “noble stand” after some members confessed to him and he to them.

But the revival was short-lived. “A state of backsliding came upon a large portion of the church.” Ellen White received a specific vision about individuals. This testimony was published in a tract and distributed in the region. She mentioned George T. Lay who had made a movement to come back to the church. “They stood back in their dignity, and said, ‘We will not go after him; let him come to us.’ It was impossible for him to do this as he viewed the feelings of his brethren toward him. Had they regarded the lesson taught by Christ, they would have been willing to yield their dignity and pride, and go after the wandering ones. They would have wept over them, prayed for them, implored them to be faithful to God, and the truth, and abide with the church. But the feeling of many was: If he wants to go, let him go.” (Ellen G. White, Testimony for the Churches at Allegan & Monterey (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing, 1869).
Calhoun County

Oak Hill Cemetery

When you drive through the cemetery gate and go left past the office you will notice a state historical marker about one hundred feet up the street. This marker tells about James and Ellen White and is placed near the White family burial plot. Also buried in the plot are their four sons, daughters-in-law, James’ parents, and a close family friend Clarissa M. Bonfoey.

Many others associated with the Seventh-day Adventist church are buried in this cemetery. Among them are the first General Conference President John Byington; longtime Review and Herald editor Uriah Smith; the brothers of cereal company fame William K. Kellogg and John Harvey Kellogg; Ellen White’s nephew and prolific hymn writer Frank Belden; author and professor Arthur W. Spaulding; founding professor of Battle Creek College Goodloe Harper Bell; David Hewitt the first Seventh-day Adventist in Battle Creek and many others.

Other people of note buried in the cemetery are C. W. Post and Sojourner Truth.
Calhoun County

Historic Adventist Village
482 Van Buren Street
Battle Creek, Michigan 49037
N 42° 19' 38.358"
W 85° 11' 53.734"

Godsmark House
Bedford, Michigan

Burlington SDA church
320 West Main Street
Burlington, Michigan 49029
(517) 765-8304
N 42° 6' 18.894"
W 85° 4' 57.138"

Cass County

E. J. Waggoner grave
Boynton Hill Road
Burlington, Michigan

Old Rugged Cross Church
33053 Crystal Springs Street
Dowagiac, Michigan

Eaton County

Irving Guilford grave
Strange Cemetery
8858 Oneida Road
Grand Ledge, Michigan
N 42° 41.721'
W 084° 46.731'
In 1831 or 1833 Miller promised the Lord that if he received an invitation to speak he would consider it a sign that he should begin a preaching career. To his amazement and chagrin, within half an hour, his nephew Irving Guilford arrived from Dresden, New York, with the invitation to speak on Sunday. Miller left Irving at the door and went into the maple grove where he wrestled with God until he found peace. His daughter, Lucy, remembered observing the gestures of intensity by her father during his time in the grove. Miller was still a farmer and Justice of the Peace in his own thinking when he went into the grove, but he came out a preacher.
It was a happy day for the Whites—James, Ellen, and Willie, now 12—when on Thursday, May 2, 1867, they could see the plow turn the rich soil on their little Greenville farm, to be followed quickly by the setting out of grapes, blackberries, raspberries, and strawberries, and incidentally starting the construction of their new home. About this time Ellen devised a plan to encourage James to engage in physical activity. He had been warned by the physicians at Dansville, New York, that physical activity could lead to another stroke. Ellen had been shown that without both mental and physical activity he could not hope to recover fully. Here is her account:

In the spring there were fruit trees to be set out and gardens to be made. “Willie,” I said, “please buy three hoes and three rakes. Be sure to buy three of each.” When he brought them to me, I told him to take one of the hoes, and Father another. Father objected, but took one. Taking one myself, we began to work; and although I blistered my hands, I led them in the hoeing. Father could not do much, but he went through the motions. It was by such methods as these that I tried to cooperate with God in restoring my husband to health. (MS 50, 1902)
Otsego County

The Hillard Home

The Hillard home was the scene of the health reform vision. Several workers from Battle Creek, including James and Ellen White, drove to Otsego on the first Friday in June, 1863, and as Ellen White was leading in the sundown worship service at the Hillard home the health reform vision was given to her. The vision lasted about 40 minutes. She soon began to present the health principles in oral discourse and in articles and pamphlets. (See Footprints, pp. 170-176.)

Ottawa County

Wright (Coopersville)

The Wright church is a charter church of the Michigan Conference, dating back to a J. B. Frisbie evangelistic effort of 1858. The present building was erected in 1872. Ephriam Root served as its first elder for 25 years and his son and grandson succeeded him. It was to this hospitable home that Ellen White brought James White in the winter of 1866-1867 when he was suffering from a severe stroke of paralysis, and here steps toward recovery were made. (See Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 571, 572; Selected Messages, Bk. 2, pp. 306-308.)

The first Seventh-day Adventist camp meeting was held in the E. H. Root maple grove in an area that formed a natural amphitheater. This is now a part of the Gavin Orchard. The site is about three quarters of the distance from the cemetery entrance (back of the church 0.2 mile) to the edge of the orchard. Meetings were held in the open air. Twenty-two tents housed the campers who came from Michigan, Wisconsin, and New York. Two large tents were used for meetings when it rained. The speakers included James and Ellen White, Joseph Bates, J. N. Andrews, and J. H. Waggoner. (See Footprints, pp. 195-201.)
In the spring of 1873 James White began to experience considerable challenges in working with three prominent SDA leaders: J. N. Andrews, J. H. Waggoner, and Uriah Smith. As president of the General Conference, G. I. Butler attempted to reconcile these men with one another. Although Butler failed in his first attempt he intensified his efforts to restore peace between the “four main.” As a result, he wrote a sixteen-page tract entitled *Leadership*. This tract was unanimously voted as the denomination's official position on leadership in November 1873.

During the months that followed, W. H. Littlejohn, a well-known denominational author and minister in the Michigan Conference, began voicing his concerns to Ellen White. Within the (extant) letters, Ellen White seemed to show support of Butler’s tract, while also admitting that she might not fully understand his views. In order to bring about reconciliation, Ellen White agreed to facilitate a meeting in Allegan, Michigan between Butler and Littlejohn.

This meeting took place in November 1874. Unfortunately, neither man was willing to surrender his position. At this point, Ellen White realized that neither of them had full light in regard to leadership. Whereas Butler believed that every man’s judgment should be submitted to the one leader, Littlejohn believed that the one leader should submit to the judgment of every man. They both carried their views to the extreme. Sadly the battle continued for three more years. Butler held tightly to his position, which eventually led to his resignation from all leadership roles. Likewise, Littlejohn touted his views until he eventually left the Church.

Thankfully, both men were restored to the work and on September 28, 1877, and the General Conference voted to remove support for one-man leadership.
**Leadership.**

[The following essay was adopted by the Oranged Conference, at Battle Creek, Mich., Nov. 15, 1877.]

"There never was any great movement in this world without a leader, and in the nature of things there cannot be. As nature bestows upon men a variety of gifts, it follows that some have power over others of what half advances the interests of any cause. And the best good of all interested in any given object will be attained by intelligently following the counsel of those best qualified to guide. There can be real union of counsel and action without the judgment of some person is regarded of importance and weight. While the minds of men are various and contradictory, and while the counsel of some would lead to destruction, success will be apt to attend that movement which closely follows the suggestions of those whose experience teaches give intelligent and judicious advice."

A true leader represents and embodies the years and will of those who follow his counsel. His success is their success. The difference between the true leader and the tyrant is this: While the latter exercises influence and authority to gratify his own wishes or caprice, the former bas for the good of those he represents, and to carry into effect their wishes.

Never run much be accomplished in any movement until those interested become settled in their minds that the one of their choice is worthy of their confidence and support. Confusion will mar their counsel, and their strength will be wasted in bickering to no purpose, or in opposite directions. Efficiency is the result of wise leadership. All, therefore, who are interested in the success of any cause are interested in the success of the ones they have chosen to lead out. They represent

to time in cloister. I think the time has come when there should be a better understanding of the principles which should govern us in our mutual relations in reference to the position that God has assigned us. This is written in the hope of aiding in this. I look forward with eager interest to a period in the future when perfect union will exist among those whose God has called to leading positions, when we shall move on in perfect order and harmony in our several spheres of action, like a well-trained army, each officer and private in his place, with the leaders of God’s appointed guiding by their counsel, and Christ our captain over all and above all, giving us the victory. From hence will God’s people be “terrible as an army with banners.”

Our great Southern rebellion serves as a good illustration. In the first stage of the war, there was no real head, no general to whom all looked with respect. The army was divided, commands instilling at cross-purposes, and slow progress. When Gen. Grant was appointed commandant-in-chief, and the different corps officered by those who would bend his councils, there was union of effort, general success, and final victory.

What we must need is real union among leading men. This must be an intelligent union upon principle. We must put away distrust, draw together, that the devil, out of the camp, by following the light God has given us, feel an interest in the other’s reputation, and especially for those who stand in the front lines of the battle, cordially support the leaders God has appointed, and then victory will come upon our efforts.

Amen."

*Battle Creek, Mich., Nov. 15, 1877.*

*We hereby concur in the sentiments of this essay.*


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First and last pages of the tract, Leadership, by G. I. Butler.