

ELLEN WHITE LETTERS DISCOVERED IN HISTORICAL COLLECTION

—The Story Behind the Story

ARTHUR L. WHITE, Secretary of the Ellen G. White Estate

"THERE ARE about 2,000 letters in the collection," Susan Jaquette said.

It seemed incredible!

I was in my Washington, D.C., office talking by telephone on Tuesday, June 5, to Miss Jaquette, a nineteen-year-old junior mathematics major from Olivet College. She was at her home on a farm midway between Lansing and Battle Creek, Michigan.

She continued, "They are handwritten letters addressed to Lucinda Hall. The earliest is dated 1860 and the last 1899. Some of the letters are signed by Ellen G. White, others by James White. Others carry the names of Amadon, Kellogg, Loughborough, and Haskeil."

When I learned that the letters were addressed to Lucinda Hall, my interest was immediately sparked. Here was a hitherto-unknown collection of original documents spanning some forty years of our history, addressed to a person closely connected with denominational interests.

Before telling about the trunk in which the letters were safely kept for nearly 100 years, let me tell you about Lucinda Hall. Lucinda was one of five Abbey girls. Her father and mother, Ira and Rhoda Abbey, were among the first Adventists in central New York State to accept the Sabbath truth. The year was 1845. The family figured strongly in the development of the church in New York State.

About 1860, Lucinda, then twenty-one years of age, was drawn into the family of James and Ellen White to serve as a helper in the home and to do clerical work. A year or two later she married William Hall, a pressman at the Review and Herald. William was an earnest Seventh-day Adventist and a highly valued employee. But their marriage was cut short by William's death. His obituary, appearing in the same issue of the "Review and Herald" that carried the notice of the assassination of President Lincoln, stated that he died of the dreaded tuberculosis.

Folded the First Copy

Lucinda Hall was called back to Mrs. White's employ as an assistant in the home, a copyist, and a travelling companion. For the next fifteen years she was much with the Whites, helping in their arduous journeys. She was with them when James White established the magazine "Signs of the Times" in Oakland, California, where she served as proof-reader and assistant editor. Lucinda folded the first copies of the "Signs of the Times" to be mailed out. With the development of the Pacific Press Publishing

Association she became its secretary-treasurer.

In 1880, she was called by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg to be matron of the Battle Creek Sanitarium. In this position she



Susan Jaquette.

had charge of the food service as well as the general housekeeping. She carried these responsibilities for more than twenty years. During this period of service, she was for three years a member of the board of directors of the institution. In her spiritual life she was closely tied with the Battle Creek church and was a valued teacher in the Sabbath school.

The records indicate that the Abbey family continued their residence at Brookfield, New York, until about 1870, when in response to the request of James White, calling for men of business acumen to move into Battle Creek to give strong support to the work of the church, the Abbey family responded and moved to Battle Creek.

Lucinda was closer to Ellen White in interests and spirit than her own sisters. In her, Ellen White could confide and speak freely of her joys and sorrows. After the sanitarium fire, Ellen White sought to arrange for Lucinda to join her at Elmshaven and become a part of her family and staff. These plans never materialized. Lucinda died in 1929 at the age of ninety, and was buried close to other members of the family at Brookfield, New York.

Little wonder, then, that when I learned that a collection of 2,000 letters kept by Lucinda Hall was intact and could be seen, I was excited. With a number of

Ellen G. and James White handwritten letters in the collection, I knew that here were sources of information we did not have. Seldom were copies made of handwritten family letters. And it must be remembered that typewriters did not come into common use until the early 1880s, shortly after James White's death.

How Susan Got the Letters

Two days after the detailed information concerning this collection of letters was given to me by Susan Jaquette, I was on a plane bound for Lansing, Michigan, and the Jaquette home on a farm near Olivet. One of the first questions I asked after being ushered into the big farm kitchen, where the large oval table was well covered with handwritten letters, was this: "Susan, how did you get these letters?" Here is the story as she told it. It is a story that to me shows God's guarding hand over materials valuable to us.

Two or three years ago, an antique dealer in Battle Creek, at a sale of various and sundry items cleared out of an attic in an old home, purchased among other items an old trunk. The trunk was partially filled, and part of its contents were handwritten letters. The dealer sold the old trunk with its contents and some other items, to his wife's mother, Mrs. Marge Ormsbee. Mrs. Ormsbee, being interested in antiques, scooped out the letters, put them in cardboard cartons, and sold the trunk. A cursory glance at the letters convinced her that they might have some value, so she preserved them. When she had a little spare time she started to sort them. Later, knowing that her niece, Susan Jaquette, was interested in historical materials (her father had been an employee of the W. K. Kellogg Company, and Susan had assembled quite a collection of W. K. Kellogg documents), Mrs. Ormsbee turned over the Lucinda Hall collection to Susan.

Careful Sorting

Susan is interested in people, and she found these letters to be intensely interesting. She sorted them out in chronological order, noting particularly that there were forty Ellen G. White letters, and accounts of two visions. In her spare time during the past nine months she went over these letters, making typewritten copies of many.

But the deeper Susan got into this survey of the materials, the more she sensed that they would be of value to the organizations with which Lucinda Hall had been connected, and this led her to make the initial contact. Because a number of the letters were either in envelopes with the Battle Creek Sanitarium imprint, or were on Battle Creek Sanitarium stationery, Susan went to the Battle Creek Sanitarium to discuss the letters with officers of the institution. There she was directed to Harold L. Flynt, the chaplain. Pastor Flynt, with Susan Jaquette in his office, made contact with us at the White Estate office in Washington.

As I explained to Susan how these documents would help to fill out our files, touching especially early historical periods



Pastor Harold Flynt examining the letters in nineteen-year-old Susan Jaquette's home.

not too well documented, the conviction deepened in her heart that the letters should be in our hands. Although she would have liked to keep the collection for its interest from the standpoint of sociological studies as the interplay between people was revealed in them, she was willing to part with her find in order that it might serve a broader, greater cause. Susan is to be commended for her gracious gesture. She will be allowed continued access to the collection as she continues her studies. I was able to bring the collection back with me.

The letters are from many writers, and they deal largely with newsworthy and family matters. Nonetheless, they tie in with the development of the church between 1860 and 1900.

The reader may have a question in his mind as to the authenticity of the documents and the possibility of their being forgeries. I hasten to give assurance that with our familiarity with many documents of this early period, with dates, people, handwriting, signatures, paper, and the like, there is no ground for questions

of this character. The letters are genuine beyond question.

One of the two Ellen White visions in the collection deals in a personal way with the experience of someone to whom Ellen White wrote; the other, bearing the date of 1853, is typical of many copies of visions we have of those early years when someone with the original before him made a copy of the vision. The internal evidence of these accounts of the visions and the subject matter gives every assurance of authenticity. The 1853 document does not deal with doctrine but with missionary activity. The vision is referred to in "Early Writings," pages 95, 96, but only brief excerpts are given there.

The Ellen White letters, newsy in their character, will be of real service in the development of the biography of Ellen G. White, now in preparation. Other letters will contribute to background statements.

Next week will appear choice excerpts from some of these Ellen White letters, now for the first time in the possession of the White Estate.

that he speaks to more than half a million students a year. He presents a moral analysis of rock music, backed up with many true-life illustrations from his own experience and much from research. Few observers of "Christian rock" are as qualified to evaluate its sinister effect upon youth and the church as he is.

Bob Larson, the rock star, was only thirteen years old when his first hit tune was published. At fifteen he had his own rock-and-roll band, and thereafter performed on radio and television, and entertained capacity audiences at such places as Convention Hall, Atlantic City. He received numerous offers of recording contracts. During this time, he had also entered university to study for a medical career.

But in 1963 Bob Larson was converted; and in 1964 he abandoned the study of medicine to enter the ministry. Because of his intimate knowledge of the rock-and-roll scene, he has been able to write with authority on these subjects. One of his first books published was "Rock-and-Roll: The Devil's Diversion." Since then he has written "Rock and the Church."

Both these books are most informative and very timely in view of the all-pervading popularity of rock and its current entry into the realms of religious music. I have recently read "Rock and the Church," and was staggered at what was revealed concerning the background of some of the so-called "religious" pop songs and religious musicals like the rock opera, "Jesus Christ, Superstar." I took special note of this statement on page 27: "Anytime the world begins to sing about Jesus, Christians should beware. If it's to his advantage, Satan will allow rock to have religious overtones. . . ."

Yesterday I was given Bob Larson's latest book, "The Day Music Died," which is a larger volume than the others. Last night I read it through in one sitting—I couldn't put it down.

This book is an astounding revelation of all that is involved in the appeal of rock-and-roll, and tells how the devil is using rock to gain control of the emotions and minds of millions. It is backed up with indisputable facts, as well as the author's first-hand experience. It also gives a frank and startling insight into the life-styles and backgrounds of scores of famous rock-group entertainers.

In the chapter, "Dangers of the Dance," Bob Larson says bluntly (page 184): "Satan knows that if he is to be effective in these last days before the imminent return of Christ, he must gain control of youth. Hard rock is the agency which Satan is using to possess this generation en masse. I have seen with my own eyes teenagers who have become demon-possessed while dancing to rock music. . . ."

We hope you will read these penetrating books for yourself. They contain facts every Adventist should know. They are obtainable from all Adventist Book Centres.

More About Bob Larson

PEARL McRORIE

WARBURTON, VICTORIA. We have just heard some news that we feel will concern all our readers who are interested in music, and especially those who give attention to religious music. Former hard-rock star, Bob Larson, is hoping to visit Australia to conduct a series of lectures in the near future.

Bob Larson is now a minister, but not an Adventist minister as was incorrectly

stated in NEWS FROM ALL OVER (RECORD, 13/8/73).

He travels extensively, and has visited more than thirty countries, though the greater part of his ministry is given in North America. He lectures to high schools and colleges (both public and denominational), civic organizations and youth rallies, in addition to his schedule of evangelistic crusades. It is estimated