Chapter 1

IOWA BEGINNINGS

Arthur Grosvenor Daniells was a child of the Midwest. He was born on September 28, 1858, in West Union, Iowa, and grew up in the midst of the rolling hills of the northeastern portion of that state. The town was scarcely beyond its frontier days in his youth. The first rough-hewn cabin in what became the seat of Fayette County went up a decade earlier. The entire state had been Indian territory just twenty-five years previously, and tales of attacks still pervaded local folklore. Wolves continued to plague the area during his childhood.[1]

Arthur was born to Thomas Grosvenor Daniells, a stonemason born in Vermont, and Mary McQuillan Daniells, who was born in Illinois. Mary was orphaned as a girl, and at some point made her way to West Union, where she met her future husband. It is not clear why they placed themselves in this outpost of an expanding America. Perhaps Thomas found ready market for his construction skills. He was already fifty-three when their first child, Arthur, was born. Mary was but twenty-three when she became a mother. The thirty years difference in their ages was not so unusual at a time when a wife's death often occasioned a widower's remarrying someone much his junior.[2]

Iowa was staunch Union country when the Civil War came in 1861. The state contributed more soldiers per capita than any other. Patriotic fever burned hot even among the area's older men. In late 1862, a group of Iowans petitioned the War Department to form a regiment of men too old for normal enlistment. The Thirty-seventh Iowa Volunteer Infantry was styled "the Graybeards," the only such regiment on either side composed entirely of men over forty-five years of age. Thomas Daniells could not resist the opportunity of a lifetime, so he joined up in December of 1862. He entered service as an officer, first lieutenant of Company K.

Since most low-level officers were elected by their men, his selection suggests that he was deemed a man of ability and leadership.

Too old for the rigors of campaigning, the Graybeard regiment understood it would be limited to garrison and guard duty. This it did at various locations in the St. Louis area during the first half of 1863 before crossing the Mississippi to Alton, Illinois, where the regiment took up duty guarding Confederate prisoners at the large facility there. This was a grim place. It had among the highest mortality rate of any Union prison. Overcrowding exacerbated the dysentery, smallpox, pneumonia, and other contagions that were chronic wherever soldiers gathered in large numbers. Thomas Daniells shared the fate of many prisoners. He died in October of 1863 at age fifty-eight.[3]

Mary Daniells was now a widow, with not only Arthur but also twins, Charles and Jessie, three years younger. She struggled to keep the family together in a humble three-room house by doing laundry and whatever other work was available. Nonetheless, she lacked the means to support her young family. She had to place her children in an orphanage established by the government for just such circumstances. Arthur had lost not only his father, but temporarily, his mother as well.

Better times returned when Arthur's mother in 1867 married a prosperous farmer in West Union named Rememberence Lippincott. The material comfort of the family improved immediately. Under his stepfather's tutelage, Arthur, now nine, learned the hard facts about farm work: up before dawn to milk and clean stalls. The yearly cycle brought a variety of other labors. Spring ushered in maple sugar season; summer was a round of plowing and seeding; then harvest in the fall. Work lightened between November and March, during which time some schooling was accomplished. It is clear from Daniells's later comments that his stepfather was a demanding taskmaster. Lippincott, who was elderly by the time Arthur was in his mid-teens, had fallen victim to opium addiction (a not uncommon affliction in that age of no controlled substances and where few medicines existed for the accumulated pains of old age). Consequently, he relied heavily on Arthur to do the farm work.[4]

If Arthur learned useful habits of work that later served him well, his childhood also marked him in less favorable ways. In his early career, he struggled with a stammer that handicapped his public speaking. The com-

mon psychological origins of the condition are well understood. Stresses in childhood, particularly a family loss or dramatic change in family circumstances, can trigger the problem. Arthur qualified on several counts. His was a difficult childhood.

Arthur also attempted to impose order on the memory of his unsettled childhood. He did so through a selective account of his father's occupation. Daniells's associates always understood that his father was a physician. At Daniells's 1935 memorial service, for example, assembled church leaders heard that Thomas Grosvenor Daniells was a "physician and a surgeon," who had graduated from the University of Vermont. In fact, there is no record of his attending the university. And the 1860 census recorded that he was a stonemason.[5]

How do we account for his son's story to the contrary? It should be remembered that this was an age when the threshold for becoming a physician was low. Standards at medical schools were abysmal, competing theories of treatment fragmented the profession, and states lacked strong certifying boards. It is believable that Thomas may have practiced the healing arts on the side. As gruesome as it sounds, skills in dressing rock may have been good preparation for the surgical techniques of the day. He may also have told his family and others that he was a college man. On the Midwest frontier, who would check? But one must also ponder the possibility that Arthur may have sought to cultivate the public memory of his natural father as a professional. A "physician" (and an officer in the war at that) was his true father; not the hard-driving, tiller-of-the-soil stepfather. An embellished pedigree might have been thought to enhance Daniells's fitness for leadership. The psychological forces affecting a son who lost his father in early childhood can only be imagined.[6]

How did the Daniells family encounter Adventism? In the big picture, it was part of the young church's (the denomination had been formally organized in 1863) new emphasis on evangelism. Once the Shut Door belief, which had dampened evangelistic enthusiasm, had finally been laid to rest by the mid-1850s, energetic efforts to take the Advent gospel to broad swaths of the Midwest began in earnest. Iowa had proven fertile soil for the church, though its beginnings were rather backhanded. Two of the church's stalwarts, John Nevins Andrews and John Loughborough, left the East—and the ministry—in the mid-1850s to seek a living wage

in Waukon, Iowa. James and Ellen White's dash by sled across an imperfectly frozen Mississippi River in 1856 to reenlist their talents would become part of Adventist legend. A renewed Adventist community began taking the message in traditional tent meetings across rural eastern Iowa. Over the following two decades, a virtual who's who of Adventist preachers and leaders would labor there: the above-mentioned Andrews and Loughborough, Merritt Cornell, J. H. Waggoner, Dudley M. Canright (whose aggressive efforts resulted in eight new churches), and George I. Butler. Indeed, Iowa would be among the first group of state conferences organized in the early 1860s.[7]

West Union, roughly thirty-five miles southwest of Waukon, was among the first Iowa communities to come within the Adventist orbit. This was due in part to the efforts of one of the most remarkable lay evangelists in Adventist history, Dan Shireman. Shireman was orphaned as a young boy and grew up homeless and impoverished. He learned skills as a carpenter and mason, moved to Iowa, and accepted the Sabbath message in 1858. He then proceeded to devote a long life to spreading the gospel in every free moment. His devotion (and poverty) led him in 1861 to walk eighty miles both ways from West Union to Marion in order to attend a meeting. He became a regular correspondent to the *Review and Herald,* sharing with its readers for some five decades reports of his lay efforts. Indeed, Ellen White would publicly commend Shireman's labors as a model of lay evangelism. M. E. Cornell followed with a series of evangelistic meetings at West Union in 1863, and then B. F. Snook (later one of Adventism's famous apostates) established a church there with Mary Daniells as a charter member. Having been a devout Methodist, Mary embraced Adventism about the time of her husband's death and the temporary surrendering of her children to the orphanage. No doubt she found the Advent message a special consolation during these trials. When the children returned to live with her, Arthur followed his mother's leading and was baptized at age ten by conference president G. I. Butler. Adventism appeared to have bit deep in young Arthur. Years later he recalled his first camp meeting at age twelve. Among others, James and Ellen White attended. "Their sermons filled me with deep remorse for my sins, and yet led me to hope in God for salvation." Although he experienced those moments of doubt or apathy common to growing Christians, his devotion to the church persisted through the rest of his life.[8]

The Adventism his family experienced in post–Civil War Iowa would be very different than that of later decades. Church membership was then spread thin across the landscape, with few paid clergy to nurture faith. Reports in the *Review and Herald* from the Iowa field draw a portrait of small Adventist communities that looked largely to themselves for sustenance. E. P. Wilkins, a veteran of the Millerite disappointment, wrote from West Union of his solitary persistence in evangelism: "I have been very lonely here in Iowa," he admitted. "I have visited from house to house with the paper [the *Review*] in my hand, endeavoring to do what little good I could. . . . Some have been reclaimed from a backslidden state, and embraced the Sabbath." His efforts paid off as the West Union company expanded. Gathering sometimes in meeting houses but often in members' homes, the small flocks looked forward to Quarterly Meetings, when they would often gather with neighboring churches from Waukon, Elgin, and other nearby congregations for worship and celebrating the ordinances. Often, conference officials such as Butler and Daniel T. Bordeau would join them, providing reassurance to the local congregations that they were not orphans but part of the larger Adventist fellowship. By 1871, Iowa was the third largest conference, surpassed only by Michigan and Wisconsin.[9]

But the Iowa Conference, earlier in the 1860s, had also seen the earliest important offshoot movement in the denomination's short history. B. F. Snook and W. H. Brinkerhoff, first president and secretary respectively of the conference, made public their disenchantment with the prophetic claims of Ellen White. Snook and Brinkerhoff soon resigned their posts and became the core of the faction called the Marion party. On the other hand, G. I. Butler, who became conference president, cast the mold for the strong church leader of that era: actively promoting evangelism; scouting the field for new ministerial talent; inquiring after and, if necessary, disciplining backsliders. He apparently succeeded in retaining the confidence of most Iowa believers in Ellen White, at least measured by the wide adoption of White's dress reform by women in West Union and Waukon.[10]

Thus, Arthur spent his early and mid-teenage years in a round of laborious farm work overlaid by participation in a religious community that would have set him apart from most others in his West Union circles. Whether he felt a sense of difference—with pride or regret—we do not know. His mother's firm commitment to Adventism probably precluded his imagining anything else.

Daniells later credited his youthful experience on the farm with

imparting a sound work ethic. Here Daniells's memory serves him well; he would become known as a terrifically hard worker. But it is also clear that there was tension between himself and his stepfather. At age sixteen, he essentially ran away from home, complaining to his mother that he was "learning nothing and getting no place." With his mother's blessing and scarcely more than the clothes on his back, Arthur entered the world, determined to get an education. It was common in those decades for a young man of seventeen to seek his way in the world. Daniells did not venture far, rooming with an area doctor (and doing chores for his keep) while he attended a normal school. He aspired to be a teacher. The bar for teaching was then quite low; a smattering of advanced work often sufficed. It became nearly a rite of passage for young people to devote a year to instructing children at a country school (as a year's service as a student missionary would be for later generations).[11]

INTO ADULTHOOD

Just turning seventeen in the fall of 1875, Arthur G. Daniells (probably with his mother's encouragement) determined to take a more ambitious step in his education. The establishment of Battle Creek College the previous year opened up new possibilities for Adventist youth. Daniells found 266 other students joining him on campus. He had modest savings, enhanced a bit by the government pension he received because of his father's death (which his stepfather had previously been appropriating). Not ample, but a sufficient start. Daniells's aspirations were not unusual for Iowa. It is a measure of the growth of the local Adventist community and of the hunger of young, rural Adventists for a college education that five others from West Union and Waukon joined him in the journey to Battle Creek.[12]

The Battle Creek College of the mid-1870s was a fitful establishment. It was founded upon earlier, short-lived schools in Battle Creek. Sidney Brownsberger served as president. Only thirty and sporting a University of Michigan degree, he steeped the institution in the classical curriculum then dominant across higher education. That Adventist leaders wanted a college speaks to the young denomination's felt need for educated ministers and teachers and to the confidence in its ability to staff and financially support such an institution. The confidence was only partly justified, as

future financial struggles would show. Further, the proper educational blueprint remained a matter for debate.[13]

Though styled a college, like many such institutions of the nineteenth century, much of Battle Creek College's classwork was more properly secondary level. This was unavoidable, since secondary education was still a luxury enjoyed by few young Americans. Daniells never received a high school diploma (though his attendance at a normal school was a partial substitute). At the college, students chose among several curricular tracks. A classical track, involving intensive immersion in Latin and Greek; a theology track; a normal track—the most popular—a less demanding curriculum preparing students to enter the public school teaching ranks; and an English track. Arthur chose the latter, for which he would have studied in his first year algebra, physiology, history, rhetoric, and biology. Oddly, there were no required Bible courses for students in most of the curricula. This absence may not have been from oversight. Battle Creek, like nearly all religious colleges of that time, downplayed denominational identity. An early college catalogue notes that its doors were open "to all worthy persons desiring an education," and that it was to be an aim of instructors to "discountenance in students the spirit of sectarian exclusiveness."[14]

College founders had not considered the housing of students from afar to be a cause of great concern; they would board with local families. Arthur found himself in the home of young president Brownsberger. Sharing the same house was another West Union native, Mary Hoyt. Although Arthur soon took up residence elsewhere, his friendship with Mary blossomed through the school term. He also worked in G. H. Bell's garden and took "plunged baths" in the Kalamazoo River with friends. But these activities were not at the expense of his studies. It was clear even at this stage that whatever A. G. Daniells took up, he did so with energy and purpose. This trait could be to his detriment. Back at West Union the following summer and working on a farm, he labored so intensely that he suffered a heat stroke that included a seizure. Then back at Battle Creek for the fall session of 1876 (this time with his twin siblings in tow, who at fourteen illustrate the range of ages at the institution), the chronic headaches and fainting spells continued. He left school and entered the Battle Creek Sanitarium. Despite ministrations from John Harvey Kellogg, he showed little improvement. Kellogg despaired of any full recovery.

Thus, Arthur went back to Iowa, not to return to Battle Creek until 1900, when, so to speak, he returned in triumph after nearly a decade and a half of outstanding church service in New Zealand and Australia. His Battle Creek College experience certainly served him better than it did his brother. "Although I was blest in the Battle Creek school my brother went to ruin," Daniells told a colleague a quarter century later. "He became an infidel and a drunkard."[15]

If Arthur Daniells never earned a degree, he nonetheless took away from Battle Creek a notable consolation prize: Mary Ellen Hoyt. Mary was the daughter of Nason and Mariam Hoyt, a farm couple who had immigrated to Iowa from Canada in the mid-1850s. Her father, a veteran of the 1844 disappointment, joined the Adventist Church following the same Cornell evangelistic series that Arthur's mother had, perhaps the result of the same evangelistic effort. Mary stayed in Battle Creek when Arthur returned to West Union, and the two maintained an active correspondence. But he reported distressing news. His stepfather's scoldings set off his recurring fits. Mary became so worried that after several months she likewise returned to Iowa.[16]

Mary hoped to nurse him to health but found him in worse condition than she had expected. Arthur's mother was not doing well herself and could provide only limited care for her son. What to do? They had talked of marriage after completing college but now decided on an immediate wedding. Only that way could Mary devote full time to Arthur. Who knew how long they had together.[17]

Thus, on Thanksgiving Day 1876, Mary's twenty-second birthday, they wed. Arthur had just turned eighteen (at a time when the average age for American males at first marriage was over twenty-five). With no Adventist pastor available nearby, a United Brethren minister performed the service before a church full of relatives. If Mary's family had anything to say about it, the knot would never have been tied. Her father thought it odd to link herself to a poor, sick boy four years her junior. Her mother told her flatly not to ask her consent. And her relatives openly scoffed at her decision. But Mary persisted in a decision that resulted in a marriage of nearly sixty years, enabled her to see the world, and later made her the first lady of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.[18]

Although young and sickly, Arthur seemed to possess a maturity be-

yond his years. In a sense, the preternaturally serious Daniells was never young. If any eighteen-year-old was ready for early marriage, it was him. At twenty-two, Mary was already a year older than the average American bride at that time. No doubt she felt ready for her own home. One might also speculate about the influence of Arthur's long-departed father, who was well into late middle age when Arthur was born and died but five years later. Did Arthur, at some subconscious level (and especially in light of his recent illness) determine to get on with adulthood and parenthood before the uncertainties of life overtook him?

Although lacking any formal training, Mary served as Arthur's nurse, utilizing the water treatments (and even some electric therapy) popular in the day. They began to sell books together. Mary then returned to teaching in country schools, which she had done for several years before attending college (not unusual in that age). Arthur continued colporteuring for a time but then decided to try his hand at teaching when winter came. He faced a hurdle, though. Having so little advanced education, he could not obtain even the lowest level teaching certificate. Only when Mary's brother, the county superintendent of schools, intervened was a license obtained. They landed jobs at country schools four miles apart. Renting a room in a farmhouse for seventy-five cents a month, they experienced the hardships common to young couples of that age. On Fridays, they closed their schools early and took their horse and buggy the fourteen miles to her father's house, often singing hymns along the way.[19]

What would Arthur Daniells have experienced as teacher of a one-room school in the 1870s? We have no firsthand testimony from him. But he labored in a state where local control of schools was a defining feature. This also meant that the length of school terms often was determined by abundance of the harvest. Daniells worked in a rural culture where hard work and striving were axiomatic. One imagines that his discipline and intelligence would make him a successful teacher, though what his interpersonal skills were with children remains anyone's guess. Certainly, he, like all other teachers of that age, did not have to compete with television or video games for the attention of students. Curriculum centered on the basics, the "three Rs," with particular emphasis on spelling. Recitation was the lackluster backbone of instruction, but pedagogy was spiced up with debates, orations, spelldowns, and arithmetic competitions.[20]

For the fall of 1878, the Daniellses obtained a new position in a town. Arthur was to serve as principal as well as an upper-grade teacher, with Mary handling the lower grades. As it turned out, it never happened.

Accounts differ regarding Daniells's decision to enter the ministry. The early book on his life credited an inspirational series of meetings held by E. W. Farnsworth, newly chosen Iowa Conference president. These, said author May Kuhn, first got Arthur thinking about a ministerial career. Then, as he later testified, while walking to his normal school class, a sort of Damascus road experience occurred. He heard a voice tell him, "Go work today in My vineyard." It was not a change of career he agreed to easily; only after retreating to a straw stack for an intense season of prayer did he surrender to the call.[21]

But Mary Daniells, late in her life, gave an account that, if not completely incompatible with the above, at least added a new dynamic. She stated that it was she herself who encouraged a resistant Arthur to consider the ministry even before Farnsworth put out his call for Iowa youth to take up the Lord's work. Mary said she took her advocacy a step further, buttonholing Farnsworth and promoting her young husband. But the conference president demurred; he would offer no encouragement (probably because of Arthur's stammer). Farnsworth repeated his skepticism over several days. The conference committee even refused Daniells's offer to assist a traveling evangelist in Iowa (that the conference was running five tents that year and needed help suggests how deeply ran suspicion of Daniells's fitness). Doubts about the divine origin of his call must certainly have afflicted him. Thus, A. G. Daniells's ministerial career nearly ended before it started. Farnsworth certainly never envisioned the apparently limited young Iowan as General Conference president material. Even his wife later admitted that she "didn't dream he would make a talented worker," but simply an "earnest, good worker."[22]

A second chance came when R. M. Kilgore, who had left Iowa for Texas, gave him a chance to prove himself. Kilgore, who rose from private to captain in the Union army during the Civil War, would have preferred to stay in Iowa, but when implored by church leaders to consider moving his family to Texas, he showed himself still the good soldier. This was unorganized territory, with a scattering of believers. Kilgore's task was first to bring unity to an evidently fractious collection of believers, then to champion

evangelism, and finally to organize a conference. He did so with unflagging energy and disregard for storms and flooding, religious opposition, and even several threats to his life. He labored in Texas for eight years, leaving a conference of some eight hundred members when he left.[23]

At their own expense, Mary and Arthur traveled to Texas toward the end of June 1878 to sign on with Kilgore. He would be Kilgore's new tent master, a task often assigned to young ministerial interns. This was strenuous work. Tents were large and cumbersome, and the fight against mildew was unending. Worse, a summer did not pass without a storm felling tents and ripping canvas. Arthur and Mary essentially camped out for months, living in a small tent pitched on plowed ground. Their only furniture were boards nailed together for a table and bench and a wooden frame for straw ticks. Mary did the cooking over an outdoor pit. Their tent tore easily in the unceasing Texas wind, and the pitiless summer sun threatened to give Arthur another sunstroke.[24]

Kilgore's and Daniells's work centered on the Plano-Dallas-Cleburne axis, an area of farms, ranches, and small towns. The team traveled about the region holding tent efforts of up to two months in duration. These were aimed at both the small band of Adventist believers scattered about the large area and at prospective converts. Typically, as with the effort in Rockwall County (Daniells's initial Texas experience), tracts on the Sabbath doctrine were widely scattered about the region to stir up interest. Local Protestant ministers often fulminated against the Sabbatarians, but this only served to heighten interest. Kilgore was not one to duck such challenges. He engaged in doctrinal disputes with relish.[25]

Daniells, though, continued to struggle with his stammer and acute discomfort in public speaking. But Kilgore, a rigorous taskmaster, was in this matter patient and encouraging to his charge. His assurance that Daniells would overcome his handicap instilled confidence in the fledgling preacher. Further, when Arthur later held his own meetings, Mary provided unsparing tutoring. His preaching voice, gentle and slow, was unsuited for the sawdust trail. The couple devised a system whereby, when his voice began to die down, Mary, sitting immediately in front of him, would give an unobtrusive hand signal to raise his pitch. She also recorded his grammatical errors and verbal tics for future correction. Ultimately, A. G. Daniells would become an effective, forceful, if not necessarily eloquent public speaker.[26]

The Texas camp meeting in early August posed different sorts of challenges to Daniells. He had to find a way to help the 125 to 150 attendees cope with the midsummer Texas heat. His answer was to construct an arbor on the south side of the ample twenty-eight-by-seventy-feet main tent, a haven from the unrelenting great-plains sun. In the fall, during meetings in Plano, Daniells had a chance to see his mentor Kilgore handle the local clergy's "holy war against the new evangelist," as a local newspaper described it. The paper admitted that the Adventists were "having a good hearing from our best citizens." Mary had a gratifying experience, one that bore fruit in later years. The first effort the Daniellses were involved in, held in Rockwall, Texas, apparently had no success. At its conclusion, with Kilgore away, Mary befriended two young men recently moved to the area. She gave them Bible studies, and they embraced the Advent message. But the full reach of her efforts would only be clear late in Daniells's career.[27]

In the midst of the itinerant tent evangelism, Arthur and Mary Daniells got a sudden reassignment. In November of 1878 James and Ellen White took up temporary residence in Denison, Texas, just south of the Red River boundary of Texas and Oklahoma. James White, his health sadly taxed by the unremitting pace of his work, needed to get away from Battle Creek. Northern Texas filled that bill nicely. Kilgore lent Arthur to the Whites to serve as secretary and general assistant. Mary, who had been teaching at a local school, took up cooking duties and copying Ellen White's writings.[28]

Not a great deal is known about the few months the Daniellses served the Whites. We do know that Mary helped restore James's strength through a regular diet of venison. Arthur served as James's amanuensis and valet. White would walk the floor dictating articles to Daniells, who scrawled them as best he could in longhand. Daniells also accompanied White on outings, driving the team of horses for him. Among the details remembered by Mary is an important first for her husband: In the evenings Arthur walked four miles to a country schoolhouse, where he held his first solo evangelistic efforts. In true Adventist fashion, the inaugural sermon concerned Daniel 2. Baptisms ensued from his meetings, and a new Adventist family became local pillars of the faith.[29]

We also know something of the Whites' perspective on their time in Texas from a candid letter Ellen White penned a few months after they

moved out of state. She considered the Texas sojourn an unmitigated disaster. "I have no faith that it was our duty to go there when we did. It looks to me as though our time was lost." Not only were results meager but local newspapers were harsh. "I have no desire to know anything more of southern chivalry," she wrote with a tinge of sarcasm. Just as bad, she was embarrassed by the behavior of James. Her husband's penchant for entrepreneurship was indulged fully during these months—buffalo skins, brooms, and notably mules, which could be had cheap in Texas and sold dear in Colorado. In the young Daniells, James White had someone who could be tasked with rounding up a herd of mules who escaped from a corral. But James's ambitions could make him difficult, and for this his wife had to apologize. "I hope you will not have a very unfavorable impression of my husband," she wrote from South Dakota. "He was surfeited while in Texas with the cares of business which he should never have had." Ellen assured them that James was now "not the same man he was in Texas. He is more gentle, subdued, courteous, and kind." She went on to express her fondness for the Daniellses. "I love you both and earnestly desire to see you." Arthur Daniells's response a few months later was a model of graciousness. "I have all confidence in him," Daniells proclaimed of James. "I am sorry I did not do more for him last winter." He hastened to add that Mary had no hard feelings toward Elder White. This brief encounter was enough to lay a foundation of amity and trust between the Daniellses and the soon-to-be widowed Ellen White, upon which their close association in Australia twelve years later was built.[30]

When the Whites left for Colorado, Daniells found himself partnered with R. M. Kilgore's brother, Scott, in north Texas evangelism. Scott, Daniells soon learned, was a pale imitation of his stout-hearted brother. After some time with him on the evangelistic trail, Daniells had had enough. He penned a letter to the Whites, bitterly complaining of Scott's behavior and why he felt he must leave.[31]

The Daniellses' Texas sojourn, an exhilarating if stressful introduction to church work, was largely a volunteer endeavor. The Texas Conference, as R. M. Kilgore admitted, had "an empty treasury." So they received only sustenance pay. At some point the couple decided Mary would return to her parents in Iowa while Arthur ventured into colporteuring (they had money for only one train ticket to Iowa). For some months he

accompanied a blind Adventist named Baylor across the Texas plains, offering the public an inspirational brochure on the latter's life. Daniells learned lessons only acquired through days of trudging door to door. Still, he must have been relieved when G. I. Butler, Iowa Conference president, called him to be a minister in his home state.[32]

IOWA EVANGELISM

Daniells returned to a thriving state. Iowa's booming population would reach the two million mark by the middle of the decade (a population considerably greater than its neighboring states to the north, west, or southwest). The Hawkeye state's largely farming inhabitants were dispersed across ninety-nine counties, hundreds of small communities, and innumerable farmsteads. Evangelism required frequent use of Iowa's extensive train network, but also a horse and buggy for more local travel.

Iowa Adventism enjoyed similar prosperity. Ever since the arrival of Adventism at Waukon twenty-five years earlier, Iowa had been a center of the church's Midwestern efforts. By 1880 the conference had just over twelve hundred members, slightly more than Minnesota and far more than other immediate states to the south or west. Indeed, Iowa was something of a repository of leaders and members who furthered the gospel in surrounding states. George I. Butler, for example, alternated between Iowa Conference and General Conference presidencies, an indication of the state's prominence.[33]

As a hub of late-century Adventism, Iowa provides a window into the nature of the denomination. Several characteristics stand out. First, Adventism was a collection of scores of small churches, fifty-eight in 1880. To this must be added scattered believers who lacked a church but, if at least two families shared the Sabbath message, might gather in one another's homes. Overwhelmingly, the Iowa Conference was peopled by new members. Many were of native American stock, but significant numbers also came from the abundant German, Swedish, and Danish immigration to the state.[34]

Daniells was a five-dollar-a-week licensed minister in the Iowa Conference. He was not a "pastor." Adventism did not have pastors in the modern sense of the word. Early Adventism was an evangelistic machine; all efforts, lay and ministerial, were directed toward proselytism. It

could hardly have been any other way. The conviction of a soon Second Coming remained strong. Thus, to be a minister meant not an assignment to nurture one or several congregations but to work as an itinerant, holding tent meetings across the state. He also trained young Bible workers in techniques of holding Bible studies.[35]

The clearest window into the life of a Midwestern evangelist of this time comes from the memoirs of W. B. Hill, who labored for years in southern Minnesota. Hill tells a story of remarkable dedication; he persevered through hardships of travel, severe weather, and the death of two children from diphtheria. Evangelism was highly doctrinal, distinguishing Adventism from other denominations, particularly through the fourth commandment. Hill's favorite rhetorical device (especially when a clergyman was present) was to ask his hearers to stand if they believed in the Ten Commandments. Naturally, any attending clergymen would be embarrassed not to stand; but if he did, Hill would inquire why he did not keep the Sabbath. This good-natured yet confrontational style marked Adventist proselytism.[36]

One can get a sense of Daniells's early career through the reports he sent to the *Review and Herald*. His first reported meetings, appropriately, were near West Union. Over the next few years he went on (usually accompanied by another minister) to hold meetings in Sumner, Correctionville, Hazleton, Odebolt, Elgin, Battle Creek, and other small (and still small) communities. These efforts could last up to seven weeks. At Correctionville, for example, Daniells shared with readers the results of a six-week effort. "Interest and attendance were good from the beginning until the close. At our closing service the tent was filled with attentive hearers. We . . . would have remained longer, but we were obliged to move the tent to the Smithland camp-meeting. . . . We preached forty-seven sermons, sold $15.27 worth of books, and obtained one yearly and fifty monthly subscriptions for the *Signs*. Fourteen signed the covenant, five of whom had previously kept the Sabbath. We organized a Sabbath-school and established regular Sabbath meetings." This constituted a successful effort.[37]

But things did not always go smoothly. Spring and summer storms were perpetual threats to the canvas tents. Human opposition was even more difficult. Daniells's reports are filled with accounts of overt resistence from local clergy who were angry over what they saw as sheep stealing

by an alien belief. Daniells was occasionally called on to debate doctrine (normally the Sabbath). Although ministers were advised to avoid public debates if possible, fleeing the field was not advised. Indeed, the Adventist pioneers seemed to relish battle. In Battle Creek, Iowa, Daniells and a local pastor dedicated two hours a night for four consecutive nights on the topic. On rare occasions a local pastor showed support, as did the Congregational minister in Correctionville, who attended Daniells's meetings, once even giving the opening prayer.[38]

During these early years Daniells also wore an organizational hat. He headed up one of Iowa's thirteen Tract and Missionary Society districts. The "T. and M." societies, as they were often called, were the organizational legacy of a group of four Massachusetts women who, in the late 1860s, met regularly in the home of Mary and Stephen Haskell. Their interest in lay evangelism led to an ambitious program of tract distribution. Stephen Haskell caught a vision for the larger church. He organized the first Tract and Missionary Society in 1870, dividing the New England Conference into districts to facilitate efforts. Haskell, supported by James White, went on to promote similar societies throughout the country. Headed locally by ministers, these T. and M. societies became the backbone lay movement to advance the Adventist message.[39]

The tracts were distributed freely, but the sale of Adventist books and periodicals was another key component of missionary advance. Daniells was a tireless promoter of Adventist literature. He frequently reported the value of the books he had sold. The work of the colporteur was regarded as frontline efforts for the church. The colporteur "should be kind and courteous," instructed Stephen Haskell in 1880, "always affable and never taking offense." Subscriptions to the *Signs of the Times* were encouraged. The publication of *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation* led to a particularly focused effort. Daniells both exhorted and organized Iowa colleagues to "circulate this most excellent work."[40]

By all appearances, A. G. Daniells made a smooth transition into the ministry. Dedicated, with an unflagging work ethic, he fit comfortably into the Iowa landscape in which he had grown up. Daniells proved himself sufficiently well so that in Iowa's spring camp meeting of 1882 he was ordained to the ministry.[41]

Nonetheless, all was not well with Iowa Adventism. In the early

morning hours of October 23, 1879 (the anniversary of a devastating night thirty-five years earlier), Ellen White experienced God's presence. Testimony No. 29 delivered a graphic vision of God's judging some people who had been "traitors to their holy trust." The testimony decried the neglect in "getting our publications before the public," the inadequacy of the ministry, and the spiritual lethargy at Battle Creek College. But for the Adventist community in Iowa the testimony had particular punch, for White singled out "The Cause in Iowa" for particular comment.[42]

What and from whom White had heard talk about the state of Iowan Adventism is not known. A couple of things, however, are clear. She saw problems among the young ministers of the state (this just before Daniells returned to Iowa); and certain of the young men had been seriously misbehaving while at Battle Creek College. The fruits of this behavior not only compromised Iowa evangelism but also besmirched the reputation of the young Michigan college (whose very real problems would lead in just two years to its temporary closing). In the common manner of her testimonies, Mrs. White singled out individuals for reproof. "Brother F is not fitted for his work. He has nearly everything to learn. His character is defective." Collectively, matters added up to a crisis of leadership. "We have a dwarfed and defective ministry. . . . Not having experimental godliness themselves, how can they lead the people to that Fountain with which they themselves are unacquainted?" Worrisome to her as well were attitudes toward her writings. "A prevailing skepticism is continually increasing in reference to the *Testimonies* of the Spirit of God."[43]

Iowa leaders might have wondered at the intensity of the criticism, given the healthy growth of the conference. In 1879, the state's T. and M. Society had, next to mother conference Michigan, by far the largest membership in America and the most cash received (though not always near the top in quantity of material distributed). Still, Iowa leaders took her criticism to heart. A directive went out to tract society leaders, instructing each one to "see that every family and scattered member in his district has Testimony No. 29."[44]

If overall numbers were comparatively impressive, the decline of churches in northern Iowa, particularly the landmark congregation at Waukon, was disturbing. Nothing could be done about members moving away, but leaders recognized a broader problem. Dudley M. Canright, then a shining light of Adventism, stated it plainly: It was one thing to

plant a church; it was "quite another thing to water it and cultivate it." Some churches in Iowa had not benefitted from preaching for two years. This would be addressed over the following decades, as the church embraced a more pastoral model for the ministry.[45]

But for the moment, evangelism ruled. Local members were expected to gather on Sabbath and worship—in the manner of New Testament churches—on their own. The Bible and Adventist literature would suffice for study. Four times a year, local churches held quarterly meetings; occasionally a conference minister would be present to preside over celebration of the ordinances. These were to be occasions of reaffirmation to the cause. Annually, a conference camp meeting provided opportunity to gather and gain a sense of comradeship and collective strength. For a provincial church these occasions were very important, and members were always encouraged to attend. "Let this be the largest meeting of Sabbathkeepers ever held in the State of Iowa," conference president George I. Butler exhorted in 1881. This particular camp meeting, held as usual in centrally located Des Moines, was highlighted by the unexpected appearance of the Whites. To have in one's presence a person acknowledged to be a modern prophet of God must have been a glorious experience to most, fearful perhaps to others. Yet even a prophet could not forestall a terrific hail and rain storm the very afternoon she was scheduled to speak, nearly tearing down the tent and postponing the meeting.[46]

PREPARING FOR A LARGER STAGE

In sum, the Adventist Church for which A. G. Daniells labored so tirelessly during the 1880s was one utterly confident of its message and mission. It held the truth about the Sabbath, Christ's heavenly work, and the nearness of the end. It was charged with alerting the entire world to these truths. This self-assurance was empowering. The message energized capable individuals to create an organizational framework that, while not perfect, was nonetheless impressively effective. It enabled laymen and evangelists to spread the Advent truth across vast swaths of the American Midwest.

This achievement came at some cost. The call from leadership to unremitting labor on everyone's part, though intended to inspire, at times passed over into hectoring. "A fearful responsibility rests upon those who have received the light of present truth," Stephen Haskell lectured in the

Review, a sentiment that in untold variations appeared again and again in church publications—and doubtless in camp meeting addresses. A sense that no amount of effort was ever quite enough contributed to a bickering leadership and a pervasive undertow of guilt.[47]

The still-young church also preached a gospel message that was light on the gospel. One can find messages of assurance and hope in the *Review*, but they are obscured by what leaders considered the church's real task of the remnant: to correct doctrine and lifestyle. Evangelists, after all, preached to a largely Christian Iowa audience. It was a matter of convincing Lutherans, Disciples of Christ, or Methodists of new light on a few key issues. Conversion stories focused not on an abiding sense of salvation and acceptance but on promise to put away tobacco and other vices, and especially on embrace of a Saturday Sabbath. Adventist evangelism also developed a culture of counting. Conference reports to the *Review* quantified book sales, pages of pamphlets distributed, letters written, families visited, members added. A fondness for statistics reflected a need to objectify the progress of the kingdom. There was a dry literalism about Adventist teaching well-suited to agricultural life. Sturdy yeoman, bound to the demands of planting and harvest, responded less to emotional matters of spirit than to solid matters of doctrinal fact.

This quality of Adventism, which Ellen White repeatedly decried, received a severe challenge at the landmark Minneapolis General Conference Session in 1888. The meaning of the contentious two-week session has been long debated. It seems fair to say, though, that Ellet J. Waggoner's sermons on the law in Galatians prompted a reconsideration of the balance between law and grace within Adventism.[48]

Daniells would not witness these struggles, however. Iowa seemed a state that Adventists went out from. Some went out from Adventism altogether. Its Marion Party was among the first major offshoots of the church in the 1860s. D. M. Canright, who became the denomination's most infamous apostate, was preparing to debate the president of Drake University in Des Moines in 1886 when he finally decided he could support Adventist beliefs no longer. A. G. Daniells, on the other hand, left Iowa that same year on quite different terms. After seven years in the state, and just as he and Mary established a city mission in Des Moines, he received a call from the General Conference to travel halfway around the

world to New Zealand. As Daniells recounted to the General Conference sessions in 1901 and 1922 (the years he was first elected and then not returned to the presidency), it was a very difficult decision. His first reaction was begrudging. He knew nothing of New Zealand or the South Pacific. Then, after an intense season of prayer in a haymow, he became persuaded that God indeed was making the call. He wrote another letter to Battle Creek accepting the invitation, but this time with enthusiasm. "I cut the tethering line," he said. In his mind, he and Mary were heading for the South Pacific, never to return. A decisive man, A. G. Daniells had made his decision. His mother supported his course of action, despite knowing she might never see him again. In early October 1886 the Daniellses headed by train to San Francisco, where on October 24 they boarded a steamer bound for New Zealand. Not yet thirty years old, Arthur Daniells was to be a missionary.[49]

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[1] Information on his Iowa community found in *The History of Fayette County, Iowa* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1878).

[2] United States Census, 1860. I'm indebted to the Fayette County Historical and Genealogical Society staff for providing information on Daniells's family. Mary Daniells's obituary (written by her son Arthur) is found in *RH*, February 23, 1922, p. 22.

[3] Guy E. Logan, *Roster and Record of Iowa Troops in the Rebellion*, vol. 5, http://iagenweb.org/civilwar/books/logan/mil706.htm.

[4] Everett N. Dick, "Arthur G. Daniells, Organizer," *Youth's Instructor*, Oct. 24, 1944, 4.

[5] Percy T. Magan, "Life Sketch of Arthur Grosvenor Daniells," *RH,* April 18, 1935, 1. Regarding Thomas Daniells's nonattendance at the University of Vermont, phone conversation with reference librarian, University of Vermont Special Collections, May 23, 2007.

[6] On medical training in the antebellum era, see Ronald Numbers, "The Rise and Fall of the American Medical Profession," in Nathan O. Hatch, ed., *The Professions in American History* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 52–54.

[7] This story is well told in Richard W. Schwarz and Floyd Greenleaf's *Light Bearers: A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church,* rev. ed. (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press®, 2000), 85–87.

[8] Information on Shireman found in Bert Haloviak, "The Orphan, the Angel, and the Long Walk," *RH,* May 31, 1990, 19, 20. In *RH,* April 9, 1861, 167, Shireman tells of his Iowa walk. Mary Daniells's obituary, *RH*, February 23, 1922, 23. AGD to "Brethren and Sisters," May 16, 1904, ASTR. An alternative story of her conversion is told by May Cole Kuhn in *Leader of Men: The Life of Arthur G. Daniells* (Takoma Park, MD: Review and Herald®, 1946), 18. In this version, a neighbor (apparently influenced by Shireman), in an old-fashioned act of personal evangelism, lent her a copy of J. N. Andrews's *A History of*

the Sabbath. Despite her Methodist friends' disappointment and her husband's disapproval (Rememberence never accepted her new faith, casting a pall over the family's religious life), Mary embraced Adventism. However, the version told by Mary seems close to the truth.

[9] *RH,* November 6, 1860, 199; March 29, 1860, 151; October 6, 1863, 151; August 14, 1866, 84. Description of the early days of the church's work in Iowa can be found in Emmett K. Vande Vere, *Rugged Heart: The Story of George I. Butler* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1979), 18–28.

[10] Vande Vere, *Rugged Heart*, 18–28; on dress reform adoption, see *RH*, July 9, 1867, 60.

[11] Dick, "Arthur G. Daniells," 4.

[12] Kuhn, *Leader of Men*, 27, 28; Emmett K. Vande Vere, *The Wisdom Seekers* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1972), 33.

[13] Information on Battle Creek College found in Vande Vere, *The Wisdom Seekers*. For a more recent and detailed history of Andrews University, including its origin in Battle Creek, see Meredith Jones-Gray, *As We Set Forth: Battle Creek College & Emmanuel Missionary College* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002).

[14] Despite claims to the contrary by his earliest biographer, Daniells did not finish high school. Fayette County had no high school–level work until the 1890s. My thanks to the Fayette County (Iowa) Historical Society for information on local public education. *Second Annual Catalogue of Officers and Students of the Battle Creek College* (1875), 30, 20; *Third Annual Catalogue of Officers and Students of the Battle Creek College* (1876), 10.

[15] Kuhn, *Leader of Men*, 27–29; on Daniells's student life, see George B. Avery, diary, vol. 10, CAR; AGD to "Brother" Colcord, January 16, 1900, CAR. Daniells also told Colcord that his half brother who attended Healdsburg "was not benefitted by the school." In late life, Mary Daniells wrote a reminiscence of her husband's early life that includes the Battle Creek incidents ("Story of the Early Life of A. G. Daniells"). Unpublished, it is in the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Records.

[16] Clippings regarding the Hoyt family courtesy of the Fayette County Historical and Genealogical Society; Mary Daniells, "Story of the Early Life"; *RH*, November 11, 1890, 14.

[17] Mary Daniells, "Story of Early Life."

[18] *West Union Gazette*, May 5, 1883; April 11, 1896. Clippings regarding the Hoyt family courtesy of the Fayette County Historical and Genealogical Society.

[19] Dick, "Arthur G. Daniells," 12; Mary Daniells, "Story of Early Life."

[20] Information on nineteenth-century schooling found in Wayne E. Fuller, *The Old Country School: The Story of Rural Education in the Middle West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

[21] Kuhn, *Leader of Men*, 29, 30. This dramatic account may have been encouraged by the young audience Kuhn wrote for.

[22] Mary Daniells, "Story of Early Life."

[23] *RH*, March 29, 1877, 104; June 7, 1877, 182; September 6, 1877, 86; September 20, 1877, 102; October 25, 1877, 131; a short sketch of his life is found in *RH,* August 1, 1912, 13.

[24] In his early days in Texas, Kilgore had put out a plea to church members via the *Review* for funds to purchase a tent. *RH,* May 24, 1877, 166; June 14, 1877, 190; July 11,

1878, 23; Mary Daniells, "Story of Early Life."

[25] *RH*, August 1, 1878, 46.

[26] Kuhn, *Leader of Men*, 32, 33; Mary Daniells, "Story of Early Life."

[27] *RH*, August 29, 1878, 79; November 7, 1878, 150; May 8, 1930, 24.

[28] Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: The Lonely Years, 1876–1891* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald®, 1984), 106, 107.

[29] "Report of [1919] Bible Conference," transcript, July 16, 943, 944; July 30, 1920, ASTR; Mary Daniells, "Story of Early Life."

[30] EGW to Arthur and Mary Daniells, July 17, 1879, CAR; Gerald Wheeler, *James White: Innovator and Overcomer* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald®, 2003), 204, 205; AGD to EGW, October 22, 1879, Ellen G. White Research Center, SWAU.

[31] AGD to EGW, October 22, 1879.

[32] Kuhn, *Leader of Men*, 35; *RH*, October 9, 1879, 127.

[33] Vande Vere, *Rugged Heart*, 46.

[34] Evangelistic work among immigrants was often noted in the *Review and Herald* column entitled "Progress of the Cause." See, for example, *RH,* April 22, 1880, 269, and June 24, 1884, 411, on work with Swedes and Germans.

[35] Mary Daniells, "Story of Early Life." Bert Haloviak provides a fine sense of the ministry in this age in "Longing for the Pastorate: Ministry in 19th Century Adventism," unpublished paper, http://www.camelbackchurch.net/assets/391783.

[36] W. B. Hill, *Experiences of a Pioneer Evangelist of the Northwest* (published by author, 1902).

[37] *RH*, September 11, 1883, 588.

[38] *RH*, May 6, 1884, 301; March 20, 1883, 188; July 31, 1883, 493.

[39] Schwarz and Greenleaf, *Light Bearers,* 147, 148; *RH*, May 27, 1880, 344.

[40] Stephen Haskell, "Hints to Colporteurs," *RH*, January 8, 1880, 27; E. W. Farnsworth, "Intelligent Canvassers," *RH*, October 10, 1882, 634; AGD, "To 'Thoughts' Canvassers in Iowa," *RH*, October 13, 1885, 638.

[41] *RH*, June 13, 1882, 377.

[42] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press®, 1948 [first published in 1880]), 4:384–522.

[43] Ibid., 430–441.

[44] Church statistics found in *RH*, Supplement, August 21, 1879, 3; January 1, 1880, 12.

[45] *RH*, April 1, 1880, 220; D. M. Canright, "Planting and Watering Churches," *RH*, August 9, 1881, 99; Haloviak, "Longing for the Pastorate."

[46] *RH*, May 17, 1881, 313; June 21, 1881, 393.

[47] Haskell, "Our Work," *RH,* Supplement, August 21, 1879, 1.

[48] George Knight, *From 1888 to Apostasy: The Case of A. T. Jones* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald®, 1987) provides an insightful discussion of Minneapolis.

[49] The General Conference had first extended the call to Iowa Conference president E. A. Farnsworth, but he felt the job too big for one couple. Church leaders felt they could not afford to send two pairs, however, and then turned to the less experienced Daniellses.

Mary Daniells, "Story of Early Life"; *RH*, October 5, 1886, 624; January 4, 1887, 12; Dick, "Arthur G. Daniells," 4; *The Seventh-day Adventist Year Book* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald®, 1887), 135; *GCB*, Extra No. 2, April 4, 1901, 49; *RH*, June 5, 1922, 20–26.