

PIONEER WOMEN ADMINISTRATORS IN THE INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION OF THE ADVENTIST CHURCH (1906–1940)

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Abstract

This article focuses on previously unpublished data concerning pioneer women who helped establish and govern different levels of the Adventist Church between 1906 and 1940 in what is now the Inter-American Division. The article begins with information obtained from different yearbooks, and then traces the identity and work of pioneer Adventist women in documents such as General Conference minutes, newspapers, civil registries, and through information provided by their descendants. It also highlights the contributions of these women as the first local missionaries and founders of the Sabbath School (1880s) and Young People’s Missionary Volunteer (YPMV) (1900s) departments. It also highlights how these pioneer women served missions, conferences, and unions in various capacities. This historical review of Adventist pioneer women in Latin America and the Caribbean is divided into two periods: 1902 to 1921, and 1922 to the 1940s.

Keywords: Inter-American Division, Women in Ministry, Pioneers, Female Administrators, Adventist Mission.

Introduction¹

The thirtieth General Conference Session of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was held in 1909. In his presidential address to the delegates, Arthur G. Daniells recalled the names of Adventist missionaries and church leaders who had died, including “Mrs. E. T. Nowlen, of the Central American [Conference].”² Before ending his discourse, Daniells said the names of these

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² William A. Spicer, “The Secretary’s Report,” *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, May 14, 1909, 12.

missionaries “will be remembered by others, as of the company of those who rest from their labors, while their works follow them.”³ Yet, after 113 years, the names of Ethel Nowlen and dozens of other Adventist women who laid the foundation of the Adventist Church in Central America and what was then the West Indies Field have largely been forgotten by contemporary Adventists. These women are worth remembering since they were passionately dedicated to mission and made significant contributions to church work at various levels.

There is no doubt that contemporary Latin American Adventists affirm that women have a role in the proclamation of the gospel and the expansion of mission. However, women mostly serve at secondary levels. Some female Adventist pioneers in the Inter-American Division (IAD) held more significant administrative positions, but their contributions were often lost sight of and attributed to their husbands instead. There were, however, some women who were recognized by the General Conference for their contributions, as discussed below.

Adventists in the IAD today have a poor understanding of what Adventist women actually accomplished in Central America, the Caribbean, Guyana, Panama, Colombia, and Venezuela. Although their contributions to the development of Adventism are recognized to some degree, it is often unacknowledged that they occupied positions such as treasurer, executive secretary, or interim president of a Mission, Conference, or Union. This goes against today’s social paradigms that have been enforced for decades, which have only caused disconnection and discontinuity between the rich historical heritage of the first Adventists and the current vision of the role of women in leadership.

Unfortunately, there has been some loss of information in the denomination’s historical archives pertaining to these women, either due to the omission of their stories or because archival information has been lost or destroyed. Some church historians, however, have highlighted the contributions of women in the IAD. For example, George Enoch recognized the important contributions of women in his 1907 book.⁴ M. Ellsworth Olsen likewise highlighted the work of both men and women of the IAD in his 1926 work.⁵

³ Ibid.

⁴ George Enoch, *The Advent Message in the Sunny Caribbean* (Port of Spain, Trinidad: The Watchman Press, 1907). Enoch highlights the work of Adventist pioneers in the Caribbean and specifically recognizes Elizabeth Elwin (1887) and “the slave mother” from Barbados (1880), who provided the basis for Adventist development in the Caribbean. He also references teams of husbands and wives that served as the first Adventist missionaries in this region.

⁵ M. Ellsworth Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1926), 537–557.

Other historians have focused primarily on the image and position of men and have marginalized these women pioneers to subordinate or supportive roles, or simply do not mention them at all.⁶ While there have been several notable efforts by some Adventist scholars and historians in the United States to gather and systematize the abundant historical evidence of early Adventist women pastors between 1880 and 1920, this has not included the women of the IAD.⁷

The first study on the historical contribution of women to the development of Adventism in South America was written by Silvia C. Scholtus and published in 2012.⁸ Scholtus focused on the activities of Adventist women

⁶ See e.g., Wesley Amundsen, *The Advent Message in Inter-America* (Washington, DC, Takoma Park, MD: Review and Herald, 1947); Floyd Greenleaf, *The History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2 vols. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1992); Richard A. James, ed., *A Stone of Help: Presidential Reports of the Guyana Conference of SDA* [I couldn't find this online. Is SDA actually abbreviated in the title/biblio info?] (Georgetown, Guyana: Guyana Conference of SDA, 2015); Eric John Murray, *A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Trinidad and Tobago, 1891–1981* (Port of Spain, Trinidad: College Press, 1981); Luis E. Greenidge, *Beginnings and Developments of Seventh-Day Adventist Work in Venezuela* (Angwin, CA: Pacific Union College, 1935); Glen O. Phillips, *Over a Century of Adventism, 1884-1991* (Barbados, West Indies: East Caribbean Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, 1991); cf. Nataniel García Robayana, *Sin temor al futuro* (Caracas, Venezuela: n. p., 1989); Carlos Schupnik, *Aquí obró Dios* (Nirgua, Yaracuy, Venezuela: n. p., 2010).

⁷ See Bert Haloviak, "Route to the Ordination of Women in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church: Two Paths," March 18, 1985, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Resources/Unpublished%20Papers%20on%20Ordination/Route%20to%20the%20Ordination%20of%20Women.pdf>; George R. Knight, *Nuestra iglesia: Momentos históricos decisivos* (Doral, FL: Asociación Publicadora Interamericana, 2008); Kit Watts, "The Role of Women in the SDA Church," February 1972, <http://www.adventistarchives.org/the-role-of-women-in-the-sda-church.pdf>; Josephine Benton, *Called by God: Stories of Seventh-day Adventist Women Ministers* (Lincoln, NE: AdventSource, 2002); Michael Bernoi, "Mujeres del siglo diecinueve en el ministerio adventista contra el telón de fondo de su época," en *Mujer y ministerio: Perspectivas bíblicas e históricas*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2004), 143–160; Patricia A. Habada and Rebecca F. Brillhar, eds., *Bienvenida a la mesa: Preparando un lugar en la mesa para la mujer en el ministerio* (Langley Park, MD: TEAM, 1999). Between 1919 and 1922, Adventism developed a fundamentalism which ended up affecting women's leadership in the United States. See Michael W. Campbell, *1919: The Untold Story of Adventism's Struggle with Fundamentalism* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2019); Michael W. Campbell, *The Rise of Adventist Fundamentalism* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2022).

⁸ Silvia C. Scholtus, *Liderazgo femenino: En los inicios de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día en la División Sudamericana* (Libertador San Martín, Argentina: Universidad Adventista del Plata, 2014).

who fulfilled different functions in the Tract Society and Sabbath School departments, which were the highest positions occupied by women at the time in the organizational structure of the South American Division.⁹ Although a valuable contribution, this also did not include women of the IAD.

Hence, when reviewing published historical information, there is little to no material written on the contributions of Adventist women pioneers in the formation and organization of the IAD. This paper begins to fill that gap by providing historical evidence of the role of women in the IAD from various sources. These reveal that Adventist women pioneers held important administrative positions at various levels of the IAD between 1903 and 1940.

The Impact of the Adventist Mission on the Reorganization of 1901–1903

Adventism had a significant transformation in its organizational structure between 1901 and 1903.¹⁰ The goals of reorganization included the simplification of the administrative and bureaucratic framework of the General Conference, and decentralization of power in the General Conference through the creation of the Union Conference.¹¹ These new entities allowed the local fields (especially the regions outside the United States) to make autonomous and independent decisions apart from the General Conference, and to attend to the needs of their churches and missionaries, which were in constant development and expansion. The proposal had been applied in Australia, by Daniells and William C. White. There, the creation of this new administrative level was requested.¹² Reorganization also allowed the unification of different administrative entities that functioned as independent Conferences. After 1903, these became departments under the direction of an executive committee at different levels of the Adventist organization.¹³

⁹ Scholtus, *Liderazgo femenino*, 16–18.

¹⁰ See Barry David Oliver, *SDA Organizational Structure: Past, Present and Future* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1989).

¹¹ George R. Knight, *Nuestra organización: Momentos históricos decisivos* (Doral, FL: IADPA, 2007), 128; Ellen G. White to A. O. Tait, August 27, 1896, Letter 100, 1896, Ellen G. White Estate; A. G. Daniells to W. T. Knox, May 21, 1901; A. G. Daniells to Members of the General Conference Committee, August 2, 1901, Record Group 11, Letter Book 24, General Conference Archives, Silver Spring, Maryland. See also Richard W. Schwarz, “The Perils of Growth, 1886–1905,” in *Adventism in America: A History*, Gary Land, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1986), 127.

¹² See Thirty-Second Session Minutes in Daily Bulletin, vol. 1, no. 13 (1897), 212–215; C. C. Crisler, *Organization: Its Character, Purpose, Place, and Development in the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1938), 52–53; A. V. Olsen, *Through Crisis to Victory 1888–1901* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1966), 172.

¹³ Knight, *Nuestra iglesia*, 129–130.

Barry Oliver has highlighted two realities that helped drive the 1901 restructuring. The first was the ongoing financial crisis the General Conference faced, given the United States' economic depressions of 1893 through 1897.¹⁴ The second was the diminishing capacity for financial support in missionary expansion. This caused Adventism to modify and revise previous missionary plans, such as the Foreign Mission Board (FMB), to allow for a consolidation and increase of support capabilities in the different fields outside the United States, which were experiencing accelerated growth.

The reorganization between 1901 and 1903 also redefined the roles of certain officers, such as the secretary of the General Conference. David J. Trim demonstrated that Adventism's growing missional needs modified the secretary's authority to help the church respond to the realities and needs of the mission field.¹⁵ In 1903, the FMB was replaced by the General Conference Committee.¹⁶ The officers serving on the committee created plans for expanding mission, provided support, expedited financial aid, and sent missionaries to new fields. However, the executive secretary (*currently referred to as the Secretariat*) took control of mission work and gathered information from all church entities in order to improve efficiency.¹⁷ The position of secretary was not merely an administrative role but provided mechanisms to reach souls for Jesus.

The restructuring between 1901 to 1903 also resulted in the creation of the first conferences in Central America and the Caribbean.¹⁸ The first Adventist missionaries in these areas were able to work without bureaucratic restrictions, so that the organization of the church harmonized with the mission of the church.

Women Pioneers in Sabbath School and Youth Ministries (1880–1910)

According to stories passed down through oral history in Barbados, the first successful instance of Adventist evangelism took place in 1883. An

¹⁴ See Barry Oliver, "The Principles and Process of Denominational Reorganization, 1901–1903," in *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*, January 29, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=DC19&highlight=reorganization>, hereafter *ESDA*.

¹⁵ David Trim, "General Conference Secretariat and the Mission Enterprise of the Seventh-day Adventist Church," *Journal of Adventist Mission Studies* 15.2 (2019): 34–65.

¹⁶ A. L. Chism, D.J.B. Trim, and M. F. Younker, *We Aim at Nothing Less Than the Whole World: The Seventh-day Adventist Church's Missionary Enterprise and the General Conference Secretariat, 1863–2019*, General Conference Archives Monographs 1 (General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2021).

¹⁷ Trim, "Secretariat and the Mission," 43.

¹⁸ See Naomi Modest and Glenn O. Phillips, "Early Adventist Missionaries in the Caribbean," in *ESDA*, December 21, 2020, [https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=7C7&highlight=Foreign |Mission|Board](https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=7C7&highlight=Foreign%20Mission%20Board).

unnamed woman came across a copy of *Signs of the Times* and began keeping the Sabbath. She was not, however, the first documented Sabbath-keeper in Barbados. George Enoch served as a missionary in the Caribbean [should insert dates here of when he was there] and recounted the story of a black slave woman in Barbados who used to gather her children and read to them from the Bible, especially the Ten Commandments.¹⁹ According to Enoch, this unidentified woman taught her children that the Sabbath was the true rest day, saying: “My children, God made the seventh day holy, and it is the Sabbath. Men have changed it, but some day the true Sabbath will be restored. I may not live to see it, but you will.”²⁰ When these children became adults, they heard the Adventist message, remembered their mother’s words, and became solid Adventists.

Similarly, the first Adventist church was established in Georgetown, British Guiana in 1887. Yet, a year earlier, Elizabeth Elwin Gauterau, the daughter of the governor of Roatan, Honduras spread the Adventist message in Honduras, the Bay Islands, and Belize.²¹ She was also the one who requested and encouraged the sending of the first Adventist missionaries. Additionally, in 1889, Mrs. A. Roskrige organized the first Sabbath School on the island of Antigua.²² The first Adventist missionaries established their base here and it later became the headquarters of the East Caribbean Conference.

The growth of Adventist membership and local churches in the Caribbean led to the formation of administrative structures, such as missions and conferences. It is important to note that conferences were the next highest administrative level in the Adventist structural system after the General Conference, as Eric Richter has pointed out.²³ Conferences were composed of groups of local churches and were in charge of growing Adventism in the regions where they operated. As Adventism expanded in the Caribbean, unions were added as a new level of organization above conferences (1901–1903). Women were less present in positions of influence in the newly formed unions. However, it is important to note that women were involved in the consolidation and organization of these organizational levels as they were created: from church to conference, and from conference to union.

¹⁹ Enoch, *Advent Message*, 5. Enoch was a missionary in the Caribbean and tells this story about a woman he met, without giving her name. Subsequent historical narratives repeat it.

²⁰ Enoch, *Advent Message*, 6.

²¹ Adan Hector E. Ramos and Del Delker Howell, “Gauterau, Elizabeth,” *ESDA*, January 29, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=9B04&highlight=Elizabeth|gauterau>.

²² Enoch, *Advent Message*, 8; Phillips, *Over a Century of Adventism*, 8.

²³ Eric Richter, “Women Conference Presidents: A Forgotten History,” *Adventist Record*, December 17, 2020, <https://record.adventistchurch.com/2020/12/17/women-conference-presidents-a-forgotten-history/>.

In 1897, the West Indies Mission was established, with headquarters in Jamaica (supported by the General Conference), and Elder Albert J. Haysmer was elected as the first president.²⁴ He arrived on the island in 1893 with his wife, Dora (née van Deusen), who became the first “secretary” (a position now known as “director”) of the Sabbath School in 1902.²⁵ She is listed in church records under her husband’s name (i.e., “Mrs. A. J. Haysmer”); a common practice by Adventists at the time.²⁶ Dora was born in Michigan in 1863 to Adventist pioneer Elam van Deusen.²⁷ In 1888, she married Haysmer and they worked in Michigan before receiving a call to go to Jamaica in 1893.²⁸ They both helped establish the Jamaica Conference and Haysmer was acting superintendent there until early 1903. However, by 1904 he became President of the East Caribbean Conference, where they worked together in ministry. In that period, Dora served as secretary of the Sabbath School of the East Caribbean Conference, based in Barbados. By 1905, they returned to the United States, where they worked in the establishment of Adventism among African Americans.²⁹ They also served in Alberta, Canada, and eventually retired in Massachusetts, where Dora died in 1951.³⁰

Margaret Ann Thornton was born in Missouri in 1852 and married elder Judson Beckner in 1873. They worked in different parts of the United States until 1901, when the Beckners received a call to direct the work of the church in Jamaica. They remained there until 1908 and “Mrs. M. A. Beckner” served as a Sabbath School secretary and teacher for the conference between 1903 and 1907.³¹ She then served as a Sabbath School secretary in the South Carib-

²⁴ A. J. Haysmer, “Biennial Report of the West Indian Mission Field,” *The General Conference Bulletin* 4 (April 16, 1897), 275; Foreign Mission Board Committee Minutes of December 5, 1897 Meeting, *Foreign Mission Board Minutes*, vol. 3 (March 18, 1897–January 6, 1899), 40, 49.

²⁵ Educational Department, “Sabbath School Department of General Conference,” *The Advocate of Christian Education*, June 1, 1902, 192; hereafter, *Advocate*.

²⁶ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Year Book: 1904* (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1904), 74, 116.

²⁷ Glenn O. Phillips, “Van Deusen, Elam (1833–1917),” in *ESDA*, January 29, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=5C75&highlight=van|deusen,|elam>.

²⁸ Milton Hook, “Haysmer, Albert James (1861–1950),” in *ESDA*, September 11, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=D9GE&highlight=haysmer>.

²⁹ See the editorial work of the Haysmers as an example of work among African Americans and fundraising for educational institutions in Tennessee and Oakwood College. *The Gospel Herald*, July 1910, 41–48.

³⁰ C. A. Haysmer, “Mrs. A. J. Haysmer,” *Northern Union Outlook*, July 17, 1951, 7.

³¹ H. E. Rogers, *1907 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1907), 99.

bean Conference from 1909 to 1910.³² The Beckners returned to the United States in 1913. After her husband's death in 1916, Margaret devoted herself to her sons, who also became missionaries. When Margaret died in 1941, I. M. Burke stated in her obituary that she and her husband: "rode from house to house" on their bicycles to visit the sick and needy.³³

Carrie E. Kelley is listed as the first secretary of the Sabbath School Department for the Mexican Mission and served in this position between 1902 and 1904.³⁴ "Mrs. M. R. Enoch" held the same position in the Barbuda Mission, from 1902 to 1910.³⁵ It is worth noting that the only two mission positions at that time were the one she occupied and that of elder—the position which her husband held. Amanda Elizabeth Wellman similarly headed the Sabbath School Department in the East Caribbean Conference (1906) and the Jamaica Conference (1909–1911).³⁶ From 1912 to 1914 she also served as secretary of the Young Missionary Volunteer Department.³⁷ Stella Wellman was another pioneer who headed the Sabbath School Department in the South Caribbean Conference in 1907.³⁸

Amanda Elizabeth Sloan was born in Michigan in 1856. She married Delmer E. Wellman in 1876 and they had four children together. In 1882, the Wellmans moved to Hillsdale, Michigan, where Amanda "developed practical experience in the training of children, Bible study work, and Sabbath School supervision."³⁹ In 1893, Delmer was ordained as a minister and in 1899 they left the General Conference to work as missionaries in Jamaica. For twenty-three years, the Wellmans worked to consolidate and expand Adventism in the Caribbean islands. She died in 1928. One of her sons, Sterri Austin Wellman, became the Associate Director of the Sabbath School Department of General Conference from 1926 to 1946.⁴⁰

³² General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *1910 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1910), 131.

³³ See I. M. Burke, "Beckner," *Atlantic Union Gleaner*, July 9, 1941, 6.

³⁴ "Sabbath School Department of General Conference," *Advocate*, November 1902, 359; General Conference, *Seventh-day Adventist Year Book: 1904*, 75, 117.

³⁵ "Sabbath School Department," *Advocate* (1902), 359; General Conference, *1910 Year Book*, 139.

³⁶ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *1906 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1906), 88; H. E. Rogers, *1911 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1911), 129.

³⁷ H. E. Rogers, *1914 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1914), 149.

³⁸ General Conference, *1907 Year Book*, 99.

³⁹ See G. A. Roberts, "Wellman," *Pacific Union Recorder*, August 9, 1928, 6.

⁴⁰ Milton Hook, "Wellman, Sterrie Austin (1879–1966)," in *ESDA*, October

The West Indian Union Conference was established in Jamaica in 1906.⁴¹ Adventist women were able to consolidate the Sabbath School Departments within the newly formed Missions and Conferences. In addition, those same women were responsible for taking the YPMV that had been established by Milton Kern and coordinating its implementation at all subsequent administrative levels, working as the administrators, themselves.⁴²

Flora Plummer, who spearheaded Luther Warren's project,⁴³ was the General Conference Sabbath School secretary from 1901 to 1931.⁴⁴ Her years of experience in Adventist leadership, as executive secretary of the Iowa Conference in 1897, and later as interim president in 1900, gave her a broad vision that informed her advocacy for programs that responded to the constant challenges posed by Adventist growth.⁴⁵

Mary E. Benton was born in Michigan in 1872 and married Warren G. Kneeland in 1892. The following year the Kneelands accepted a call to serve in Guyana, where they worked among the Arawak indigenous people and established the first Adventist church in Essequibo in 1896. In 1901, the Kneelands received a call from the General Conference to serve in Trinidad, Tobago and Grenada.⁴⁶ In 1907, "Mrs. W. G. Kneeland" became the secretary of the YPMV in the Guyana Conference.⁴⁷ In 1908, Mary was elected secretary of the Sabbath School in the Jamaica Conference. The Kneelands then moved to the Western Caribbean Conference where Mary headed the same department from 1915 to 1919.⁴⁸ In 1916, she also headed the Home Missionary

16, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=7ADO&highlight=wellman>.

⁴¹ It consisted of Jamaica, British Guiana, Central America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Venezuela, and all islands in the Caribbean Sea. See I. H. Evans, "The West Indian Union Conference," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, February 7, 1907, 12.

⁴² See Ruth Westcott, "Seventh-day Adventist Young People's Society of Missionary Volunteers," *Pacific Union Recorder*, August 5, 1926, 1.

⁴³ See Brian E. Strayer, "Warren, Luther Willis (1864–1940)," in *ESDA*, January 29, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=7AD1&highlight=Plummer>.

⁴⁴ See Richard W. Schwarz y Floyd Greenleaf, *Portadores de luz: Historia de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Asociación Casa Editora Sudamericana, 2012), 324.

⁴⁵ L. Flora Plummer, "Iowa Conference Proceedings," *Review and Herald*, June 29, 1897, 411, hereafter, *RH*.

⁴⁶ C. A. Russell, "The Journey's End," *Southern Tidings*, February 3, 1943, 6.

⁴⁷ General Conference, 1907 *Yearbook*, 98.

⁴⁸ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: The Official Directories; 1919* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1919), 190.

department.⁴⁹ Furthermore, she also worked in Panama, Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, the Bahamas, and Honduras before her death in 1955.⁵⁰

Nannie E. Bender was born in Nebraska in 1877 and married Urbanus Bender in 1902. She became the first woman to lead the Sabbath School department at the union level in the West Indian Union Conference in 1908 and held this position until 1910 when she and her husband returned to the United States. They then served in Africa, where Urbanus held various positions. Nannie died in 1965.⁵¹

Grace Thornton was born in Ohio in 1881 and married Harold H. Cobban in 1905. They worked together for seven years between the Panama Canal Zone and the island of Trinidad. “Mrs. H. H. Cobban” served as the secretary of YPMV in the same union from 1908 to 1909. Harold served as the treasurer of the union before becoming assistant treasurer of the General Conference. Grace died in 1970.⁵²

The establishment of the Sabbath School Department was of vital importance in the first missions and conferences, as well as printed publications. Doctrinal consolidation and the strengthening of Adventist identity were part of Sabbath Bible study.⁵³ Women in leadership positions were able to provide these mission fields with the practical and theoretical mechanisms of Adventist teaching. Also, the innovative attention of the YPMV department, strengthened future generations in the Adventist message.

*The Identities of Key Women Pioneers within the Organization
of the Inter-American Division*

Since the IAD was established in 1922, the historical review of Adventist women pioneers in Latin America and the Caribbean is divided into two periods: 1902 to 1921, and 1922 to the 1940s.⁵⁴ The first period was critical to the expansion of the Adventist message and opened the way for the establishment of missions and the first local conferences.

⁴⁹ H. E. Rogers, *1916 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1916), 164.

⁵⁰ “Kneeland,” *RH*, February 24, 1955, 26.

⁵¹ Department of Public Health of State of Tennessee, “Nana E. Bender, Certificate of Death – 65-018911,” *Tennessee State Library and Archives*.

⁵² “Cobban,” *Columbia Union Visitor*, April 16, 1970, 12; hereafter, *Columbia*.

⁵³ See Jonathan Oey Kuntaraf, “Sabbath School Personal Ministries Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists,” in *ESDA*, November 29, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=DB32&highlight=Sabbath|School>.

⁵⁴ In the early 1950s, women were displaced by ordained pastors. For an explanation of the decline on women’s leadership in Adventism, see Patrick Allen, “The Depression and the Role of Women in the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” *Adventist Heritage* 11.2 (1986): 48–54; Laura L. Vance, *Seventh-day Adventism in Crisis: Gender and Sectarian Change in an Emerging Religion* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1999).

Between 1902 and the 1940s, women played a leading role in the establishment of the Adventist organization. They held the positions of treasurer, secretary, and interim president in missions and conferences. While many of the men in these same positions were not questioned concerning their work, the women were often be asked what they did all day as secretaries and treasurers. They answered that they performed the same function as the men who were in these positions. While the role of the treasurer was clear, the early policies of the General Conference did not clearly delineate the responsibilities of the president or secretary. David Trim states: "The constitution briefly defined the Treasurer's function, but about the other two officers it stated simply: 'The duties of the President and Secretary shall be such respectively as usually pertains to those offices' (Art. III)."⁵⁵

Because women first served as secretary and treasurer in 1906, the activities they performed in their positions would have followed those prescribed in the 1905 Constitution of the General Conference. According to this document, the treasurer was to, "receive all funds and disburse them by order of the president, and to render such financial statements at regular intervals as may be desired by the Conference or the Executive Committee."⁵⁶ Meanwhile, the secretary was to record the minutes of meetings, compile statistical data and reports from institutions or entities controlled by the board of the Conference, "and perform such other duties as pertain to his office."⁵⁷ In the absence of a president, the secretary took control and represented the conference, acting as interim president.

Although the responsibilities of the secretary and treasurer are not described in detail in the various historical archives, they included: managing and safeguarding funds, payment of salaries, and the financing of missionary projects. They also included clerical work such as recording minutes in meetings, correspondence with higher entities, and preparing written reports of the progress of the work of the church in their fields. Some of these reports were published in official church newspapers. These women also developed strategies for missionary activities, gave Bible studies, and participated in the advancement of the work of the church. The next section focuses on the lives and identities of these women.

1906 to 1921: The Establishment of the First Union Conferences

The West Indian Union Conference was established in 1906, grouping together the missions and conferences, both in Central America and throughout the Caribbean, except Mexico. Over the years, the missions grew in membership and financial maturity, which led to their organization

⁵⁵ Trim, "Secretariat and the Mission," 2.

⁵⁶ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *1905 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1905), 136.

⁵⁷ General Conference, *1905 Yearbook*, 132.

as conferences. During this period, there was a long and tedious process of organization and restructuring of the regions that make up this union, as the boundaries of their territories were constantly modified. During this period of extensive change, women played a significant role in church leadership.

1. Lura Edna Collins Moore (1878–1938)

In 1902, “D. P. Zeigler, from Missouri” requested authorization from the FMB, to go with his family as self-supporting missionaries to Cuba. However, the committee did not feel it would be safe for him to make the trip.⁵⁸ William A. Spencer visited Cuba for a few days, sometime between December of 1902 and January of 1903. On his return, he recommended officially starting the work of the church in Cuba.⁵⁹

In 1903, while the General Conference was deciding on missionary projects in Cuba, Lura Collins and Isaiah Moore (1879–1942) each completed the nursing course at the Battle Creek Sanitarium.⁶⁰ Isaiah worked with Edson White on the steamboat, *Morning Star*, in late 1898. He assisted in the preparation of wholesome food, worked as the ship’s mechanic, and helped teach African American people to read in the evenings.⁶¹ Lura and Isaiah were married in Iowa on December 31, 1903.⁶² The Moores worked as nurses at the Chicago branch of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, and Lura was also employed by the Tract Society in Kansas and worked as a stenographer for the *Life Boat* periodical.⁶³

In 1904, the General Conference sent the Moores to organize the first Adventist mission in Cuba.⁶⁴ They arrived in the municipality of Marianao, Havana, Cuba, on May 9 and settled there until 1909.⁶⁵ Lura wrote a report concerning their arrival in Cuba, the beauty of its beaches, and the old Morro fortress and its new location. She also made contacts selling Spanish-language magazines and English-language subscriptions to *The Life Boat*.⁶⁶ The Moores

⁵⁸ Minutes of Mission Board Meeting, January 18 (8:00 p.m.), 1902, minutes, in *Records of the Foreign Mission Board* 4, 43.

⁵⁹ See “Historia de la Unión Cubana,” *Unión Cubana de los Adventistas del Séptimo Día*, <https://unioncubana.interamerica.org/historia>.

⁶⁰ “News and Notes,” *Life Boat* 6, no. 6 (June, 1903): 170.

⁶¹ See “Morning Star Group of Southern Missionary Workers,” *The Gospel Herald* 1, no. 8, (March, 1899): 68.

⁶² “Workers’ Bulletin,” *The Workers Bulletin* 15, no. 2 (January 12, 1904): 108.

⁶³ “News and Notes,” *The Central Advance* 2, no. 4 (January 27, 1904): 12.

⁶⁴ See *Yearbook, 1904*, 15.

⁶⁵ “Isaiah E. Moore – 8155,” *U.S., Consular Registration Certificates, 1907-1918*, *Ancestry*, https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2995/images/40457_1521003240_0566-00360?pId=29025.

⁶⁶ See “News and Notes,” *Life Boat*, August, 1904, 238; “News and Notes,” *Life Boat*, July, 1904, 222.

organized the first Adventist Church in Havana in 1905 and the General Conference sent two other missionary couples to Cuba the same year.⁶⁷

By 1906, Mission officers were appointed, and Lura was elected executive secretary and treasurer, while Elwin W. Snyder became president.⁶⁸ The Moores hosted a small class teaching English in their home, along with providing medical care. In September 1907, the Moores traveled to the United States where Lura gave birth to a daughter named Lillian Ruth, and returned to Cuba.⁶⁹ Although Lura resigned from [title of job] in 1908, the Moores remained in Cuba until July 1909 when they returned to Iowa. In December, their daughter died at the age of two. The Moores devoted themselves to medical missionary work. They had two children, and Lura died of cancer in 1938.

2. Ethel Threadgold Nowlen (1873–1908)

Ethel was born in Maidstone, Kent, England, in 1873 and arrived in Buenos Aires around 1893. In his chronicles, Frederick Westphal documents how the Craigs came to know Ethel, quoting a statement from the Craigs, saying: “there was with us a young English girl, Ethel Threadgold. She had learned the truth taught to her by the Craig husband and wife on their departure from England.”⁷⁰ In 1893, Richard and Alice Craig were sent by the WBF to officially open the work of the church in South America.⁷¹ Upon arriving in Buenos Aires, they opened a small school in their home (the first Adventist school in South America). Alice taught classes with Miss Ethel. In 1894, Frederick and Mary Westphal arrived in Buenos Aires with their children. In 1895, the Craigs returned to the United States due to Alice’s health, but Ethel continued to teach in the small Adventist school.

Clair A. Nowlen, Elwin W. Snyder, and Augustus Stauffer [went as colporteurs] to Uruguay in 1891.⁷² Ethel and Clair married in 1895. They left Argentina for England and the United States for a time in 1896. On April 5, 1907, the General Conference received a request from the West Indian Union that they “pay the transportation of C. A. Nowlan [*sic*], to: Central America,

⁶⁷ See A. R. Ogden, “Cuba Mission Organized into a Conference,” *The Inter-American Division Messenger*, April 1, 1935, 11; hereafter, *IADM*.

⁶⁸ See General Conference, *1906 Yearbook*, 87.

⁶⁹ “Workers’ Bulletin,” *The Workers Bulletin*, September 10, 1907, 44.

⁷⁰ Federico Westphal, *Pioneros en Sudamérica*, trad. Silvia Scholtus de Roscher (Libertador San Martín, Entre Ríos, Argentina: Centro de Investigación White, 1997), 31, 32, 34.

⁷¹ Foreign Mission Board Meeting, June 6, 1893, minutes, in *Records of the Foreign Mission Board*, 2:35.

⁷² See Eugenio Di Dionisio, “Nowlen, Clair A. (1865–1961),” in *ESDA*, January 29, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=4GM3&highlight=clair|nowlen>.

to engage in the Spanish book work.⁷³ The measure was approved on May 19, and the Nowlens arrived in Belize on May 21.⁷⁴ While the headquarters of the Central American Mission was in Belize, Guatemala became the next mission field for the Cardeys and Nowlen, with the goal of selling and distributing Adventist literature in Spanish. Their success, along with the skills of Colporteur Nowlen, aided them in establishing Adventism there.⁷⁵

Adventism grew rapidly in Central America. From March 5 to 15, 1908, administrative meetings were held in Ruatan, Bay Islands. During these meetings, the mission was reorganized into the Central American Conference.⁷⁶ Ethel was elected as executive secretary and treasurer of the new conference and Cardey was elected president.⁷⁷ Missionary work continued to focus on Guatemala. In April, the Nowlens experienced a major loss with the death of their eight-year-old daughter.⁷⁸ Ethel buried her alone, since Clair was working with Cardey in Guatemala and did not know what had happened.⁷⁹ They continued their mission work nevertheless and moved to Guatemala in July. Ethel periodically wrote articles for the *Review and Herald* about the obstacles they faced as well as the progress they made there. Reflecting on their experiences, she once stated: “The one comforting thought in it all is that the battle is not ours; but the Lord’s, and that though there are great walls to be encountered, his Word can cause them to fall, as did the walls of Jericho.”⁸⁰

Ethel’s health began to deteriorate due to an intestinal problem. The General Conference took an emergency vote on December 10 1908, to move her from Guatemala to Graysville Sanitarium, Tennessee.⁸¹ Despite the efforts of the medical staff, she died on December 29. E. L. Cardey, president of the Central American Conference expressed the impact of the news for Adventists in the region.⁸² Arthur Daniells, president, named her in his May 3,

⁷³ “Spanish Central America,” *One Hundred and Sixty-Third Meeting of the General Conference Committee*, April 5, 1907, 270.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁷⁵ See “Mission Notes,” *RH*, July 18, 1907, 16; “Business Notice,” *RH*, January 2, 1908, 24.

⁷⁶ See “Business Notices,” *RH*, 85, no. 10 March 05, 1908, 24; W. A. Spicer, “First Camp-Meeting in Central America,” *RH*, 85, no. 16 April 1908, 13–14.

⁷⁷ See “Year-Book Revisions,” *RH*, May 28, 1908, 22.

⁷⁸ Mrs. C. A. Nowlen, “Nowlen,” *RH*, May 21, 1908, 23.

⁷⁹ See “One of the Little Ones,” *RH*, April 30, 1908, 24.

⁸⁰ Ethel T. Nowlen, “Guatemala,” *RH*, July 9, 1908, 19.

⁸¹ *Three Hundred and Twenty-Seventh Session, 7th meeting of General Conference Committee*, December 10, 1908, 575.

⁸² E. L. Cardey, “Guatemala, Central America,” *RH*, February 11, 1909, 15; “Items of Interest; Southern Illinois,” *Lake Union Herald*, January 20, 1909, 8.

1909, address to the General Conference session delegates. And William A. Spencer, secretary, praised her work, recalling Ethel's character: "Regardless of the gifts that made her a valued secretary in the conference work, our sister had that bright, cheery temperament that is a blessing in itself to any field."⁸³

3. Mabel Eminnie Dyheman Walleker (1866–1940)

Mabel Eminnie Dyheman was born in Homer, Michigan on June 23, 1863. "As a child she was deeply religious, going to the Baptist church, and at the age of 16 she became a very active Christian worker."⁸⁴ When her family moved to Chicago in 1890, she converted to Adventism. She also worked for the Chicago Tract Society and studied nursing at the Battle Creek Sanitarium. In 1897, Mabel married Hans Christian Walleker, who graduated from the ministerial course at Union College in 1893.⁸⁵ The Wallekers served in the Northern Pacific Union and the Western Washington Conference until 1906 when the GC voted to invite Hans and his family to the East Caribbean Conference.⁸⁶ In 1910, Mabel was elected as secretary-treasurer in that same conference. She served in this position until 1913, when Hans received a call to return to the New York Conference.⁸⁷ Mabel died in 1940.⁸⁸

4. Mary Anna Fitch (1884–1972)

Mary Anna Grobe was born in Wisconsin on September 11, 1884. In 1903, she married Daniel DeWitt Fitch, who had been a part of the fifth Adventist missionary expedition to Pitcairn Island in 1896.⁸⁹ Daniel graduated from the nursing course at the Battle Creek Sanitarium. The Fitches went on to work extensively among the churches in California. Mary, like her husband, wrote several articles for the *Review and Herald* and the *Pacific Union Recorder*. In 1911, the Southern California Conference, extended a missionary credential

⁸³ William A. Spencer, "A Fallen Worker," *RH*, January 14, 1909, 6.

⁸⁴ See M. E. Chapman, "The Journey's End; Walleker - Mabel Eminni," *Southern Tidings*, July 24, 1940, 6.

⁸⁵ See H. C. Hartwell, "The Journey's End; Walleker," *Southern Tidings*, July 2, 1947, 7.

⁸⁶ One Hundred Twenty-Eighth Meeting, October 10, 1906 (2:00 p.m.), *General Conference Committee*, 210.

⁸⁷ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *1913 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: The Official Directories* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1913), 140; Hartwell, "The Journey's End; Walleker," 7.

⁸⁸ M. E. Chapman, "The Journey's End; Walleker," *Southern Tidings*, July 24, 1940, 6.

⁸⁹ See Ernest Lloyd, "Full of Years and Good Works; D. D. Fitch," *RH*, June 13, 1957, 7.

to Mary and a ministerial license to Daniel Ficht.⁹⁰

In 1915, the General Conference voted that the Fitches be sent as missionaries to Puerto Rico. It was also requested that Mary “engage in office work.”⁹¹ The Puerto Rico Mission was established in 1909, however, before the Fitches arrived, William Steele was the Mission’s superintendent. Mary continued to publish a variety of articles in the *Review and Herald* on topics ranging from healthy cooking, biblical reflections, and advice for parents.⁹²

In 1916, she was appointed secretary-treasurer of the Puerto Rico Mission and held that office until 1919.⁹³ At that time, the General Conference called the Fitches to Venezuela, where they worked until 1924.⁹⁴ In various publications and reports on the progress of the cause in Puerto Rico, Mary’s activities as the secretary-treasurer are noted.⁹⁵ Nobably, she developed a friendship with Indalecia Gomez, the sister of Juan Vicente Gomez, the President of Venezuela at the time. As a result of their relationship, the government granted permission to the Adventists to perform their baptisms at the Chorro del Avila in the capital city of Caracas.⁹⁶

In 1925, Mary was listed as the secretary-treasurer of the Guyana Mission.⁹⁷ And in 1926, she was the Sabbath School secretary of the South Caribbean Conference.⁹⁸ The Fitches returned to California in 1929, where they continued to work for the church. Mary died in 1972.⁹⁹

⁹⁰ “Credentials and Licenses,” *Pacific Union Recorder*, August 24, 1911, 7.

⁹¹ *One Hundred Ninth Meeting of the General Conference Committee*, January 28, 1915, 255.

⁹² See Mary Fitch, “Thrift and Thriftlessness,” *RH*, January 27, 1916, 11; Fitch, “More Sure than Eyesight,” *RH*, January 18, 1917, 14; Fitch, “The Early Education of Children,” *RH*, March 15, 1917, 16; Fitch, “Cheaper Flour,” *RH*, October 25, 1917, 16; Fitch, “Infinitesimal Economies,” *RH*, November 28, 1918, 16.

⁹³ See Rogers, *1916 Year Book*, 166; General Conference, *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: The Official Directories; 1919*, 189.

⁹⁴ D. D. Fitch’s health had deteriorated. See *One Hundred Sixtieth Meeting of General Conference Committee*, July 30, 1923, 409.

⁹⁵ See William A. Spicer, “Seen and Heard in Puerto Rico,” *RH*, January 31, 1918, 17; William Steele, “Puerto Rico,” *RH*, November 28, 1918, 18.

⁹⁶ See García, *Sin temor al futuro*, 9; “Los primeros bautismos de la Iglesia Adventista de la Concordia,” *Asociación Venezolana Central*, <https://asovecen.interamerica.org/los-primeros-bautismos-de-la-iglesia-de-la-concordia>.

⁹⁷ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *1925 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: The Official Directories* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1925), 197.

⁹⁸ H. E. Rogers, *1926 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: The Official Directories* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1926), 217.

⁹⁹ “In Brief,” *Adventist Review*, March 2, 1972, 32.

5. Jennie Burdick-Seal (1887–1952)

Jennie Burdick was born in Farina, Illinois on November 10, 1887 and converted to Adventism in her youth. She found her first job in the Arkansas Conference as a stenographer. In 1914, she worked at the *Review and Herald* and the General Conference. The following year, J. S. Barrows resigned as executive secretary and treasurer of the West Virginia Conference, and the executive committee elected Jennie to replace him.¹⁰⁰ She frequently wrote reports that were published in the *Columbia Union Visitor* and made the usual audits of the conference's churches.¹⁰¹

In 1917, Jennie married colporteur John Sidney Seal. A year later, while both were working in West Virginia, the General Conference invited John to work as a colporteur in Guatemala, and a ministerial license was extended to him.¹⁰² On November 21, 1918, the Seals arrived in Guatemala City.¹⁰³ The Guatemala Mission had been organized in 1913, and was directed by a pastor until 1917 when E. W. Thurber was sent by the General Conference to serve as president of the mission. Jennie was appointed executive secretary of the Guatemala Mission in 1919.¹⁰⁴ The C. E. Knight noted: "Elder Thurber, the superintendent, thus relieved from the work of the office, which is attended by Sister Jennie B. Seal, is at liberty to attend to the work of the church in other places."¹⁰⁵ However, in the late 1920s, Jennie became ill with tuberculosis and the General Conference voted that the Seals return to the United States until her health improved.¹⁰⁶ She devoted herself to church work until her death in 1953.¹⁰⁷

1922–1940: Expansion of the Organization in Inter-America

The West India Union Conference was comprised of five conferences and four missions in 1907. When the IAD was organized in 1922, it was comprised of ten missions, three conferences and two unions, plus four educational

¹⁰⁰ See R. T. Dowsett, "Notice," *Columbia*, November 25, 1915, 8.

¹⁰¹ For example, a note in the *Columbia Union Visitor* states: "Miss Burdick, recently visited the Charlestown Church and audited the books of the treasurer." "News Notes," *Columbia*, August 15, 1918, 2.

¹⁰² Thirty - Eighth Meeting, August 4, 1918, *General Conference Committee*, 106.

¹⁰³ J. L. Shaw, "To the Fields in 1918," January 16, 1919, 11.

¹⁰⁴ General Conference, *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: The Official Directories; 1919*, 188.

¹⁰⁵ C. E. Knight, "Guatemala," *RH*, September 4, 1919, 22.

¹⁰⁶ *Two Hundred Eighty-sixth Meeting of General Conference Committee*, October 14, 1920, 835.

¹⁰⁷ E. D. Nelson, "Obituaries; Seal B. Jennie," *The Record*, 52/3, January 21, 1953, 8.

centers, and a publishing house in Panama.¹⁰⁸ The Adventist organization in the IAD continued to grow, and by 1940 it was made up of five unions, six conferences, and twenty-two missions. It also had seven educational centers, a publishing house, and two Health Centers. During this period of expansion, Adventist women kept the organization functioning at the critical levels of missions, conferences and, in one case, at the union level. Through their leadership, they managed the financial resources and recorded the challenges of their churches.

1. Myrtle A. von Pohle (1902–1998)

Myrtle Brown was born in New Jersey in 1903. She attended Washington Missionary College where she met Ernst Edgar Pohle, the son of missionaries to South America.¹⁰⁹ Pohle graduated with majors in theology and pre-medicine and married Myrtle in May 1924.¹¹⁰ In September, the General Conference voted to send the young couple to work in Guatemala. They were both twenty-two years old when they arrived in Guatemala City that fall. Their first child was born in 1925 and Ernst began fulfilling his duties as the executive secretary and treasurer.

In 1926, the Pohles moved to Guadalajara, Mexico. Ernst served as president of the Occidental Mission and Myrtle as the secretary-treasurer.¹¹¹ She was the first woman to hold this position in Mexico. In 1927, the Mexican territory was reorganized into the Mexican Union Mission, and Jalisco became part of the Lake Mission. There, Myrtle continued to serve in the same capacity until 1930.¹¹² The following year the Pohles were transferred to the Sierra Madre Mission, and she served as secretary-treasurer once again until they left Mexico.¹¹³

In 1931, the Pohles returned to the United States so that Ernst could complete his medical studies at the College of Medical Evangelists in Loma Linda, California.¹¹⁴ He graduated from medical school in 1936, and in 1942

¹⁰⁸ See General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: The Official Directories; 1923* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1923), 172–178.

¹⁰⁹ See *The Sligonian Annual*, 1924 (Washington, DC: Washington Missionary College, 1924), 11, 14.

¹¹⁰ *Two Hundred Eighty-First Meeting of the General Conference Committee*, June 23, 1924, 673.

¹¹¹ Rogers, *1926 Year Book*, 214.

¹¹² H. E. Rogers, *1930 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1930), 202.

¹¹³ H. E. Rogers, *1931 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1931), 208.

¹¹⁴ Manuel Vásquez, *The Untold Story: 100 Years of Hispanic Adventism*,

he and his wife founded Tempe Community Hospital in Arizona, which is now Tempe St. Luke's Hospital.¹¹⁵ Myrtle died in 1998.

2. Ethel Maud Edmed (1900–1988)

Ethel was born in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1900 to Annie and Herbert John Edmed. Originally from England, Herbert served as a missionary and administrator in England, South Africa, and the Caribbean.¹¹⁶ Ethel graduated from Claremont Union College in South Africa, (now Helderberg College of Higher Education) as a teacher-trainer in 1911.¹¹⁷ She moved to England in 1919 to be near her parents and worked as a preceptor and cook at Stanborough Missionary College.¹¹⁸

The East Caribbean Conference, elected Herbert as president in 1922.¹¹⁹ The following year, Ethel became the secretary of their Tract Society.¹²⁰ In 1924, Annie died, but Herbert and Ethel continued in their missionary work.¹²¹ Ethel was appointed secretary-treasurer of the Leeward Islands Mission in Antigua in 1925.¹²² She also attended the IAD's annual council as a mission officer and council member in July 1925.¹²³ In 1926, the East Caribbean Union Conference was established and Ethel became the first woman in Adventist Latin-American history to hold the positions of secretary, treasurer, and auditor at the union level.¹²⁴

1899–1999 (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2000), 129–130.

¹¹⁵ "Obituary: Ernest Edgar von Pohle," *Inter-American News*, July 11, 1978, 2.

¹¹⁶ See "Pastor H. J. Edmed," *The Jamaica Visitor*, June 1934, 1–3; M. D. Howard, "Pastor H. J. Edmed," *IADM*, June 1934, 13–14; Howard, "Elder H. J. Edmed," *RH*, June 14, 1934, 21.

¹¹⁷ Antonio Pantalone, "An Appraisal of the Development of Seventh-Day Adventist Mission in South Africa: A Missiological Evaluation" (Master's thesis, University of Durban Westville, South Africa, 1996), 104.

¹¹⁸ H. E. Rogers, *1920 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1920), 203.

¹¹⁹ H. E. Rogers, *1922 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1922), 154.

¹²⁰ H. E. Rogers, *1923 Yearbook of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1923), 174.

¹²¹ See G. Timmer Haining, "At Rest / Edmed [Annie]," *The Missionary Work* 29, no. 6 (March 21, 1924): 6–7.

¹²² Rogers, *1926 Year Book*, 216; Pedro L. V. Welch, "East Caribbean Conference," in *ESDA*, updated August 18, 2022, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=9C3Z&highlight=ethel|edmed>.

¹²³ See, "In Attendance at the Division Council," *IADM* 2, no. 8 (August 1925): 1.

¹²⁴ Ian Greene and Clive P. Dottin, "Caribbean Union Conference," in *ESDA*, December 11, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=4C3T&highlight=>

Ethel returned to England in September 1927 in order to help care for her ailing aunt, whom her father had married two years prior. She remained there until 1929, when she received a call to work as treasurer of the West Indian Training College.¹²⁵ In 1935, she was then called to chair the business department and teach at Helderberg College.¹²⁶ Ethel never married, but made her students and fellow missionaries her extended family and died in 1988.¹²⁷ In some publications of the *Inter-America Division Messenger*, you can read the financial reports and the progress of the Adventist church during her ministry.¹²⁸

3. Vivian V. Nickle (1894–1990)

Vivian was born in Illinois on December 17, 1894. In 1920, she married George C. Nickle and both worked in California together in ministry. In 1926, the Nickles received a call to work in the Central Colombia Mission. George became president of the mission and Vivian became the first woman executive secretary and treasurer of the mission.¹²⁹ She served in this position from 1927 until 1930¹³⁰ and then served in the same capacity in the Colombian Atlantic Mission.¹³¹

In 1932, the Nickles moved to Mexico and Vivian was appointed secretary-treasurer of the Gulf Mission until 1933.¹³² The following year, George was asked to be president of the Central Mexican Mission, “provided he could obtain a permanent residence permit.”¹³³ He was president of the Panama Conference from 1936 to 1941, while Vivian was Sabbath School

ethel]edmed; Inter-American Division, *Committee Minutes*, May 18, 1926, 117.

¹²⁵ See “Names of Young People Answering March Questions,” *The Jamaica Visitor* 4, no. 7 (April, 1930): 10.

¹²⁶ *Seven Hundredth Meeting of the General Conference Committee*, August 19, 1935, 1705.

¹²⁷ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook: 1990* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1990), 550.

¹²⁸ See Ethel M. Edmed, “Growing at a Rapid Rate,” *IADM* 3, no. 2 (February, 1926): 6.

¹²⁹ *Four Hundred Seventy-First Meeting of General Conference Committee*, January 28, 1926, 1111.

¹³⁰ *Yearbook, 1927*, 246.

¹³¹ H. E. Rogers, *1927 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination*, Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1927), 246; Rogers, *1930 Year Book*, 198.

¹³² H. E. Rogers, *1933 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1933), 184.

¹³³ *Six Hundred Sixth Meeting of General Conference Committee*, November 12, 1934 (7:30 P.M.), 1452.

secretary.¹³⁴ Then, in 1942, they served in the West Cuban Conference until 1946.¹³⁵ George was elected president of the Colombian-Venezuelan Union Mission from 1947 to 1956. The Nickles returned to the United States in 1959. Vivian died in Texas on February 6, 1990.¹³⁶

4. Louise Gladys Cleaves (1892–1976)

Louise Seeds was born on February 23, 1892, in Maine. In 1916, she married Lloyd Vernon Cleaves, who worked as a pastor in the Maine Conference beginning in 1919. In 1920, the General Conference sent the Cleaves to work as self-supporting Bible workers in Colombia.¹³⁷ They arrived with Ernest Max Trummer, and joined the first Adventist missionary to Colombia, Frank C. Kelley.¹³⁸ They, with their families, established Adventism in Colombia. In 1921, they organized the first Adventist Church in Bogota and established the Colombian Mission.¹³⁹ Colombia is a large country and these early pioneers chose to begin their work in the largest cities. The Cleaves traveled through most of Colombia and strengthened the faith of church members in Bogotá, Medellín, Barranquilla, and Bucaramanga—a city where Adventists were strongly persecuted.¹⁴⁰

The Cleaves next served in the Venezuelan Mission, beginning in 1926.¹⁴¹ Lloyd was now an elder and traveled with Louise through western Venezuela.¹⁴² In 1930, Louise became the first woman executive secretary and treasurer at the Venezuela Mission.¹⁴³ She held that position until 1933 when she began

¹³⁴ H. E. Rogers, *1936 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination*, Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1936), 149.

¹³⁵ Claude Conard, *1946 Yearbook of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946), 22.

¹³⁶ “Obituary: Vivian V. Nickle,” *Inter-American Division News Flashes*, March 1990, 4; “Deaths: Nickle, Vivian,” *Adventist Review*, September 13, 1990, 24.

¹³⁷ *Two Hundred Eighty-Fourth Meeting of General Conference Committee*, October 11, 1920, 832.

¹³⁸ See Enoc Iglesias, “Trummer, Ernest Max (1875–1960),” in *ESDA*, August 22, 2021, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=9HGW&highlight=trummer>; Enoc Iglesias, Kelley, Frank Cortis (1860–1918),” in *ESDA*, August 23, 2021, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=1HJ2&highlight=frank|cortis>.

¹³⁹ Rogers, *1922 Year Book*, 237; Frank C. Kelley, “75-50-25 Years Ago,” *RH*, October 31, 1946, 2.

¹⁴⁰ See C. E. Knight, “A Visit to Colombia,” *IADM*, February, 1925, 5; Tirso Escandon, “Cover—Bucaramanga Church, Colombia,” *Ministry*, April, 1953, 3.

¹⁴¹ Rogers, *1926 Year Book*, 217.

¹⁴² See Charles R. Beeler, “To the Glory of God,” *IADM*, January, 1949, 7.

¹⁴³ Rogers, *1930 Year Book*, 198.

to have health problems. The Cleaves left Venezuela in 1934.¹⁴⁴

In 1935, Lloyd became president of the Honduras Mission. It is possible that Louise may have been the secretary-treasurer, as the *Yearbook* lists “L. V. Cleaves” in that position.¹⁴⁵ In 1936, the General Conference requested Lloyd’s permanent return to the United States.¹⁴⁶ In 1938, they also approved the permanent return of Louise and her daughter.¹⁴⁷ In 1939, Lloyd died alone at Gorgas Hospital in Panama and was buried in Corozal Cemetery. She is listed in the 1940 census of Massachusetts, where she resided and worked at the New England Sanitarium. She died in 1976.¹⁴⁸

Women in Leadership Within Local Missions

The lines of administrative work performed by women were expanded under special circumstances. When elected as secretaries, it was open to them to be the sole administrators in their local fields. The absence of a president, according to working policy, made the next officer a representative of the conference, technically making them the acting or interim president until another president was elected. Three women in Central America circumstantially performed this function, which automatically put them as the only officials in those Missions.

1. Hanna John Lutz (1908–1999)

Hanna was born on June 12, 1908, in Hamburg, Germany.¹⁴⁹ Her parents, Eugen Gustav John and Eugenia von der Twer, descended from respected families in Germany that served as state officials in the kingdom of Prussia. Hanna’s life and that of her family began to change when they converted to Adventism. Her father left his position as technical director in a glass factory. While some of Hanna’s uncles held high positions in the German government, her father began working as an accounting apprentice at the Adventist publishing house in Hamburg, eventually becoming director of the publishing houses in Hamburg, Basel, Switzerland, and Vienna, Austria.

¹⁴⁴ *Four Hundred Ninety-First Meeting of General Conference Committee*, November 2, 1933, 1139.

¹⁴⁵ H. E. Rogers, *1935 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1935), 138.

¹⁴⁶ *Eleventh Meeting of the General Conference Committee*, July 13, 1936, 32.

¹⁴⁷ *Three Hundred Fourth Meeting of General Conference Committee*, December 27, 1938, 1009.

¹⁴⁸ See “Louise G. Cleaves,” Ancestry.com. *1940 U.S. Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012.

¹⁴⁹ All biographical information was prepared by Rudi Maier, PhD, son-in-law of Hanna Lutz, and sent to the author by email. Rudi Maier to Daniel A. Mora, “Life Sketch Hanna John Lutz.”

Hanna studied secretarial studies at the Adventist Seminary in Marienhöhe and accounting at the German commercial school of Handelsschule from 1925 to 1927. After finishing her studies, she worked at the Adventist publishing house in Hamburg until 1929, when she traveled to work as an *au pair* in the home of a German family in Guatemala. She was hired to work in the mission office, handling church finances and assisting in various departments. While working there, she met Alfred Emil Lutz, a colporteur, and the two were married on July 29, 1931. They worked together in Central America and had seven children.

Orley Ford, president of the mission saw and valued Hanna's ability to serve as an officer in the Adventist organization. As a result, in 1932, twenty-four-year-old Hanna was elected executive secretary and treasurer of the Guatemala Mission, where she worked until 1934 while her husband worked as a colporteur.¹⁵⁰ The Lutzes moved to Nicaragua in 1934, where Hanna served as secretary-treasurer of the Nicaragua Mission.¹⁵¹ In 1937, Ellis P. Howard, president of the mission, left with his family on "furlough," and never returned. C. E. Westphal was the superintendent of the Honduras Mission when he was asked to oversee the work of the church in Nicaragua as an ordained minister,¹⁵² while Hanna remained as the only major officer in charge of the administration until 1938,¹⁵³ when Elder A. H. Roth was moved from the Panama Conference to be the president in the Nicaragua Mission.¹⁵⁴

From 1936 to 1946, the Lutzes were in Honduras, where they helped establish the first Adventist school.¹⁵⁵ World War II erupted during this time and Honduras declared war on Germany in December 1941. Many Germans had their property confiscated and were expelled from Honduras. Some of these were sent to internment camps in the United States. The Lutzes, however, were under the protection of their friend, Tiburcio Carías Andino, the president of Honduras.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁰ H. E. Rogers, *1932 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1932), 179; See e.g. "Where Are Our Workers?" *IADM*, April, 1927, 8; Orley Ford, "Good News from Guatemala," *IADM*, October, 1931): 8; C. E. Westphal, "The Honduras Mission," *IADM*, November, 1936, 7–8.

¹⁵¹ Rogers, *1935 Year Book*, 139.

¹⁵² C. P. Crager, "Central American Union Committee Meeting," *IADM*, March, 1936, 6.

¹⁵³ H. E. Rogers, *1937 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1937), 143.

¹⁵⁴ C. P. Crager, "Changes and Recruits," *IADM*, March 15, 1938, 5.

¹⁵⁵ See Carlos Alberto Paguada and Fredy Rene Funez, "Central Honduras Conference," in *ESDA*, January 29, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=CG2D>.

¹⁵⁶ Rudi Maier to Daniel A. Mora, "Life Sketch Hanna John Lutz."

The Lutzes moved once again in 1947; this time to Costa Rica. Alfred served as a Bible teacher at the Central American Adventist Vocational College, along with working as a beekeeping instructor, as the college emphasized a holistic work model for students. However, the Lutzes perceived some unfair administrative handling, and in 1949 they returned to Honduras, where they devoted themselves to their beekeeping farm. Both worked among the Olancho Native Americans. Hanna taught at the Adventist college; and Alfred also worked as a pastor from 1960 until his retirement in 1978. Hanna died in Tegucigalpa in 1999.

2. Emma Rodríguez

In 1938, Emma Rodríguez was elected as executive secretary and treasurer in the Nicaragua Mission and remained in this position until 1940.¹⁵⁷ She was an active missionary; for example, she is mentioned supporting an evangelistic meeting in Managua, as an officer of that mission.¹⁵⁸ Emma served as interim president from 1941 until 1942.¹⁵⁹

Other information concerning her life is scarce. The archives were destroyed when communist groups looted and burned the Nicaragua Conference in 1982.¹⁶⁰ Marvin Gómez Otero compiled oral histories of Adventism in Nicaragua by interviewing elderly Nicaraguan Adventists. In 1935, Emma helped to disseminate Bible studies by correspondence, attracting many interested people who became Adventists. One of the women Gomez interviewed told him Emma “was the secretary of Mission.”¹⁶¹ It is possible that Emma’s full name was Rosa Emma Julia Rodríguez.¹⁶² If this is so, she also established the first Adventist school in Nicaragua.¹⁶³

3. Marie Fanselau (1899–1991)

In 1928, E. Kotz published a report on missionaries sent to foreign fields. He began by stating: “Mission means sharing with others the best that we

¹⁵⁷ H. E. Rogers, *1940 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1940), 151.

¹⁵⁸ F. I. Mohr, “Managua Evangelistic Effort,” *IADM*, July 1, 1940, 4.

¹⁵⁹ Claude Conard, *1942 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1942), 115.

¹⁶⁰ Marvin Gómez Otero, *La historia de un pueblo: Los Adventistas del Séptimo Día en Nicaragua* (Nicaragua, Unión Adventista de Nicaragua, 2013), 108.

¹⁶¹ Gómez, *La historia de un pueblo*, 42.

¹⁶² Ministerio de Educación Pública, “Instituto Centroamericano Adventista,” *Dirección Regional Educación Alajuela*, <https://www.drea.co.cr/Circuito-03/instituto-centroamericano-adventista>.

¹⁶³ Gómez, *La historia de un pueblo*, 42.

have: Christ.”¹⁶⁴ An extensive list of Adventist missionaries was then detailed, including “Miss Maria [*sic*] Joswig, from Germany, to Honduras, Central America.”¹⁶⁵ Marie arrived in Honduras in April 1928 and met the young German colporteur, Gustav Adolf Fanselau, who had arrived a year prior.¹⁶⁶ On May 2, 1928, Marie and Adolf Fanselau were married in Balboa, Panama. Their first child was born in 1929 in Tela, Honduras, and in 1932 their twins were born in Managua, Nicaragua.¹⁶⁷ Adolf was a successful colporteur and in 1928 the Honduras Mission extended him a missionary license.¹⁶⁸ He was appointed to head two departments: home and field mission.¹⁶⁹

Marie served as executive secretary and treasurer of the Nicaragua Mission from 1931 until 1934.¹⁷⁰ Her work demonstrated her ability to lead and strengthen the work of the Adventist church. In 1935, she held the same two positions in the Guatemala Mission until 1939.¹⁷¹ Both Marie and Adolf contributed to the development of *El Centinela* magazine. Adolf died suddenly in 1938, leaving a great void for Marie, her children, and the Adventist work in Central America.¹⁷²

Marie’s work continued to develop in the administration of the Adventist Church. In 1940, she is listed in the *Yearbook* as the executive secretary and treasurer of the Guatemala Mission. She remained in this position until 1946. While World War II was raging in Europe, the Adventist work in Guatemala

¹⁶⁴ E. Kotz, “How Shall They Hear Without a Preacher?” *RH*, January 24, 1928, 3.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ See C. B. Meyers, “To the Mission Fields in 1927,” *RH*, January 19, 1928, 5.

¹⁶⁷ “Marie Fanselau,” Ancestry.com. *Federal Naturalization Records, California, USA, 1843–1999* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014; “Sister Maria Joswig (Mrs. A. Fanselau), to Honduras,” in “New Recruits,” *IADM*, March, 1929, 7.

¹⁶⁸ See Adolf Fanselau, “The Printed Page in Nicaragua,” *IADM*, October, 1932, 7; W. E. Baxter, “The Sons of Strangers,” *IADM*, March 1930, 3; F. W. Steeves, “Colporteur News from Guatemala,” *IADM*, January, 1937, 9.

¹⁶⁹ H. E. Rogers, *1928 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1928), 244.

¹⁷⁰ H. E. Rogers, *1934 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1934), 136. She is listed in the *Yearbook* as “Mrs. A. Fanselau.”

¹⁷¹ H. E. Rogers, *1939 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1939), 149.

¹⁷² See “Council Proceedings of the Inter-American Division Committee,” *IADM*, February 1, 1938, 3; C. P. Crager, “Changes and Recruits,” and D. A. Cone, “The Publishing Work in Inter-America,” *IADM* 15, no. 6: 5, 8.

progressed, as is indicated in the report of “Mrs. Marie Fanselau.”¹⁷³ During 1944, Marie became interim president of the mission after Werner A. Wild was called to another post.¹⁷⁴

In 1945, C. E. Westphal wrote that Marie, “our Mission secretary-treasurer and secretary [director] for Publications and Home, devotes much of her time to attending to the needs of our twelve colporteurs.”¹⁷⁵ Later that fall, the General Conference voted to bring Marie and her children to the United States and “extend the financial guarantees required by the United States Government in connection with her application for permanent residence.”¹⁷⁶ Marie settled in Glendale, California, in 1946. She held missionary credentials until her death in 1991.¹⁷⁷

Historical Context of Pioneer Women in Administrative Positions

Although pioneer Adventist women played a leading and key role in the formation of the first Adventist organizations in the IAD from 1906 to 1947, they did not need to be ordained to be elected as executive secretaries or treasurers and to carry out their functions as officers. On the other hand, the fact that they were officers did not authorize them to perform the functions of an ordained pastor. It did, however, give them the authority to represent their local fields as duly appointed or elected officers.

Some might be tempted to equate the function of these women executive secretaries with the work of a clerk, which would not be unrelated to the function of a secretary.¹⁷⁸ However, this comparison is not appropriate, as it would limit or minimize the function that these women had as officers of the Adventist organization. That is, secretaries and treasurers in the missions and conferences were not generally women. The office of secretary was held mostly by men in the period from 1906 to 1947, and no one concludes that they were simple clerks (See appendix A). These pioneer women were elected or appointed in the same manner as men and made important contributions

¹⁷³ Wesley Amundsen, “Advance in Guatemala,” *RH*, October 21, 1943, 12.

¹⁷⁴ *Three Hundred Fourth Meeting of General Conference Committee*, July 22, 1943, 1020.

¹⁷⁵ C. E. Westphal, “Notes of Progress from Field Reports,” *IADM*, January, 1945, 8.

¹⁷⁶ *Six Hundred First Meeting of General Conference Committee*, October 11, 1945, 2071.

¹⁷⁷ General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook: 1991* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1991), 227.

¹⁷⁸ For example, in the *1933 Yearbook*, when the secretary-treasurer of Costa Rica Mission became vacant, the following description can be read: “Office work carried by Central American Union Mission.” Rogers, *1933 Year Book*, 135; Rogers, *1935 Year Book*, 137. This same description was made when the office of president was vacant in 1934. Rogers, *1934 Year Book*, 135.

in their fields and likely never imagined that their mission territories would eventually include millions of members.

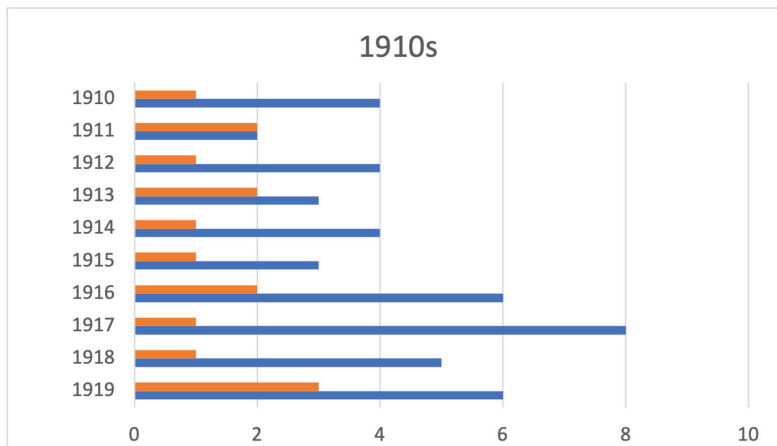
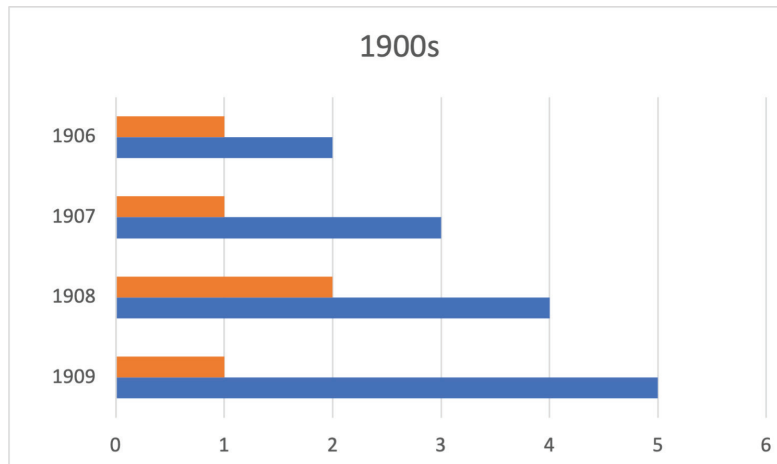
Conclusion

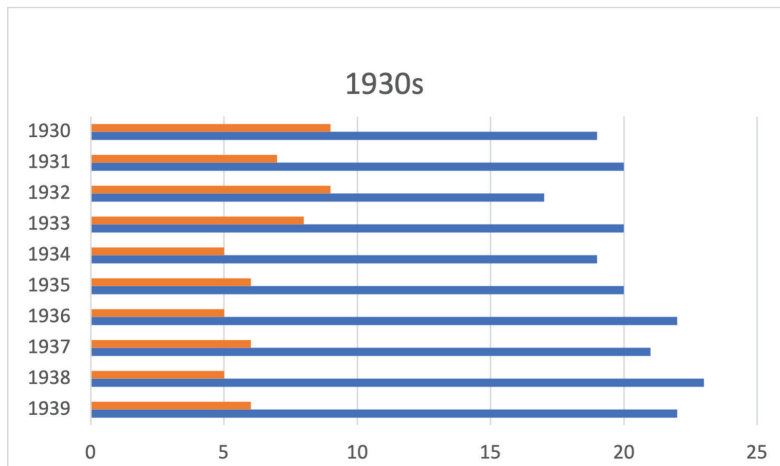
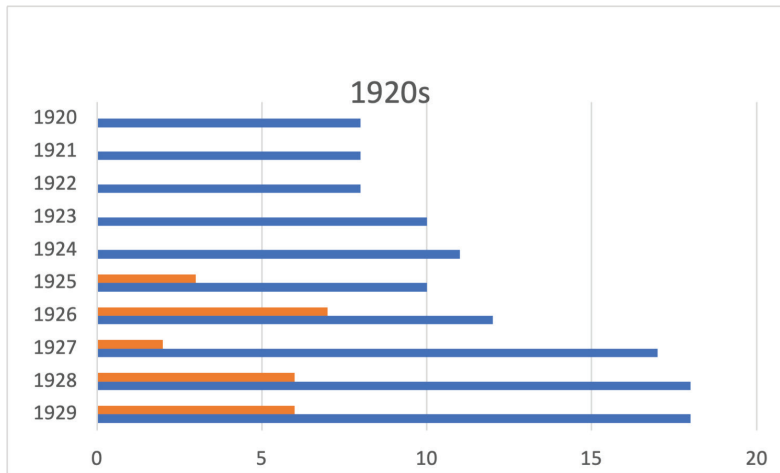
Historical evidence indicates that a diverse group of people contributed to the establishment and growth of the Adventist Church in what would become the IAD. In the early formative years, Adventist women played an important part in the organization of the first missions and conferences in this division. They maintained the stability and governance of the churches, along with the men, in addition to safeguarding the financial funds and reporting the challenges and progress in their local fields. In three special cases, women also became interim presidents as the temporary sole officers of their missions. Ethel Edmed similarly served as the first woman in Latin-American Adventist history to become executive secretary at the union level.

The rich history of their leadership in the IAD, which challenged the paradigms and social stereotypes of the twentieth century must be considered again today. Adventists have unfortunately largely forgotten the legacy and contributions of these women. This has contributed to the marginalization of women in ministry in the IAD. There is still much work to be done to recover the lost history of these pioneer women who helped lay the groundwork for the Adventist administrative structure in the IAD. Recovering their stories may help ensure women are offered more mission and administrative opportunities in the future.

Appendix A

The figures below show the number of women and men who served as secretary-treasurer in the Inter-American Division, according to the Yearbook, from 1906 to the 1930s.





Appendix B

Pioneer Adventist Women in Administrative Positions in the IAD

Secretaries: Jennie **Burdick-Seal**, Guatemala Mission (1919); Adella **Innis**, Guatemala Mission (1911); Ruth I. **Roth**, Haiti Mission (1919); **Secretary Treasurers:** Mrs. M. A. **Altman**, Bahamas Mission (1925); Mrs. W. H. **Atherly**, French West Indian Mission (1932–1933); Mrs. D. C. **Babcock**, Curacao Mission (1928–1929); Mrs. G. G. **Brown**, Yucatan Mission (1926–1927); Louise Gladys **Cleaves**, Venezuela Mission (1930–1933), Honduras Mission (1935–1936); Mrs. H. D. **Colburn**, Bahamas Mission (1945–1947) and Bahamas Mission (1947–1948); Mrs. K. S. **Crofoo**, Cayman Islands Mission (1947–1948); Mrs. C. L. **Dinius**, Central Mexican Mission (1928), Yucatan Mission (1929–1933), Lake Mission (1937–1939); Mrs. A. O. **Dunn**, French West Indian Mission (1934–1941); Ethel Maud **Edmed**, Leeward Islands Mission (1925–1926); Marie **Fanselau**, Nicaragua Mission (1931–1934), Guatemala Mission (1935–1943, 1945); Mary A. **Fitch**, Puerto Rico Mission (1916–1919), British Guiana Mission (1925–1926); L. H. **Gardiner**, Curacao Mission (1941–1942); Anna E. **Goodrich**, West Caribbean Conference (1908); Lulu **Gregory**, Gulf Mission (1926); Hilda **Gristo**, Honduras Mission (1938–1939); Mrs. W. E. **Hancock**, Central America Conference (1911); Mabel L. **Head**, Atlantic Colombia Mission (1939), Upper Magdalena Mission (1940), Pacific Colombia Mission (1941); Tressa **Hutchinson**, Bahamas Mission (1935–1936); Mrs. A. T. **King**, Guiana Conference (1930); Mrs. I. G. **Knight**, Cayman Islands Mission (1930–1934); Mrs. A. V. **Larson**, Honduras Mission (1932); Mrs. A. C. **Lien**, Atlantic Colombia Mission (1929); Hanna E. **Lutz**, Guatemala Mission (1932–1934), Nicaragua Mission (1935–1936); Mrs. C. E. **Moon**, Sonora Mission (1926); Lura Edna Collins **Moore**, Cuba Mission (1906–1907); Vivian V. **Nickle**, Central Colombia Mission (1928–1929), Pacific Colombia Mission (1930), Gulf Mission (1932–1933); Ethel Threadgold **Nowlen**, Central America Conference (1908); Alma **Osgood-Jones**, Central America Conference (1913–1914); Edna W. **Parchment**, Cayman Islands Mission (1945); Mrs. A. G. **Parfitt**, Gulf Mission (1927–1931); Mrs. Gordon **Prenier**, Salt Cays Mission (1947–1949); Mrs. G. **Rebell**, Central Mexican Mission (1927), Yucatan Mission (1928); Eugenia **Robinson**, Salvador Mission (1936–1939), Honduras Mission (1940–1941); Emma **Rodríguez**, Nicaragua Mission (1938–1940); Millie E. **Steele**, Santo Domingo Mission (1925–1926); Mrs. C. B. **Sutton**, British Honduras and Islands Mission (1930–1934); **Myrtle von Phole**, Occidental Mission (1926), Lake Mission (1927–1930), Sierra Madre Mission (1931); Mrs. W. R. **von Phole**, Sierra Madre Mission (1929–1930), Lake Mission (1930–1931); Mabel **Walleker**, East Caribbean Conference (1910–1913); Mayme **Wood**, British Honduras

and Bay Islands Mission (1935–1937); Mrs. Mayme W. **Wright**, Honduras Mission (1945–1946); *Acting Interim Presidents:* Ethel Maud **Edmed**, East Caribbean Union (1927); Marie **Fanselau**, Guatemala Mission (1944); Hanna E. **Lutz**, Nicaragua Mission (1937); Emma **Rodríguez**, Nicaragua Mission (1941).

Appendix C

Pictures of Some Women Presented in this Article



Photo 1. This photograph shows the 1922 Leaders and Workers Meeting for the organization of the Inter-American Division, in Trinidad.



Photo 2. Lura Edna Collins and her husband Isaiah Moore - Executive Secretary and Treasurer, Cuba Mission 1906 Reference: Ancestry.com | Colored by MyHeritage.



Photo 3. Ethel Edmed, first woman elected as Executive Secretary and Treasurer of Union in SDA History | Reference: Photo already 1937, Courtesy of Yvette Sparrow, Helderberg College.



Photo. 4. Hanna Lutz, first woman to head the Mission Nicaragua in 1937 | Reference: Courtesy of Maier-Lutz family.



Photo 5. Mary Fitch, Executive Secretary and Treasurer of Porto Rico Mission, 1915-1919 | Reference: Ancestry.com