

Rogers, Harvey Edson (1867–1943)

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Peter J. Chiomenti, M.A. (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan). After 24 years with the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, Chiomenti retired in 2015 as assistant director, with an emphasis in records management and archives. For the 10 years prior to that he was a proofreader and copy editor with the Review and Herald Publishing Association. Prior to that he did freelance proofreading.

Harvey Edson Rogers was the first statistical secretary of the General Conference and an author of manuals on typewriting and shorthand.

Josephus Huett Rogers of Kentucky, and Sarah Ann (Miller) Rogers of Indiana, Sabbath keepers since 1860, welcomed Harvey Edson into the world on April 2, 1867. By then the family lived in Missouri, where young Harvey would spend his first 12 years, before moving with his parents to Kansas. In 1886 he entered Battle Creek College in Michigan, where he specialized in shorthand.¹ While attending a camp meeting in Osborne City, Kansas, Harvey made his decision for Christ and was baptized in the summer of 1886 by Elder J. W. Bagby.²

The first denominational work that Harvey undertook was canvassing in Phillips County, Kansas where he sold *Marvel of Nations* by Uriah Smith during the summer of 1887. His full-time work for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists started in December of 1888. He described his work as a stenographer, “laboring successively with various Secretaries and Presidents,” and “doing reporting work . . . at most of the General Conference sessions.”³

Carrie Diana Cross came into Harvey’s life and on June 28, 1891, they were married by Elder O. A. Tait. They had two daughters, Minola Frances, born 1896, and Viola Marie, born 1902.⁴

According to the 1888 *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, an administrative reorganization of the General Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists resulted in creation of the new position of corresponding secretary of the General Conference, to “be conferred upon some person who can devote his entire time to General Conference work.” In this position we see the beginnings of the statistical work of the General Conference. Some of the duties were to:

- 1) send the necessary blanks to those whose accounts are to be audited by the General Conference;
- 2) ascertain the amount of tithes collected by each State Conference quarterly, and secure a title of the same for the General Conference treasury;
- 3) present to the General Conference, at each annual meeting, a summary of the workings and growth of the cause in connection with the different missions;
- 4) countersign all orders upon the treasurer;
- 5) keep all the books and accounts, and to be the custodian of all deeds and legal papers belonging to the General Conference Association of the Seventh-day Adventists, and to see that they are legally recorded⁵

Here we see the seeds of what would become the position of statistical secretary, later the Office of Archives and Statistics, and finally what is today the General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research.

In the years 1892 to 1894 Rogers became more and more involved with the statistical work.⁶ The 1904 *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*



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Taken just before leaving Norton, Kansas to take up work at the General Conference office in Battle Creek, Michigan. The shorthand note states: H. Edson Rogers, Oronoque, Kansas, Shorthand Reporter and Teacher, Typographer with the Norton Champion. Photo courtesy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Archives.

lists H. E. Rogers as the statistical secretary,⁷ a position he held until 1941 when he retired.

The 1904 *Yearbook* provides a thorough statistical overview of the denomination. It includes a chart showing overall denominational growth, in five-year increments from 1882 to 1902, in the categories of churches, missions, ministers, licentiates, members, and tithes. It revealed that the membership total had increased from 17,169 in 1882 to 73,533 in 1902. Other charts give an annual breakdown of tithes since 1887, the Sabbath School statistics, and territory population, membership, and churches of the union conferences as of December 1, 1903.⁸

Even as Rogers became more involved with statistics he did not forget his stenographic skills. In an era before recording devices, a good stenographer was a valuable asset. In 1903 Rogers published the *Typewriting and Office Manual*, described as “a series of practical, progressive lessons in the use of the Remington typewriter, by the touch method, with instructions upon various features of office and type writing, shorthand, and related work.”⁹

In 1905 he published *The Rogers Compendium of the Graham System of Shorthand, A Practical, Synthetic Method* a work of 350 pages that is still available online.¹⁰

Before passing to his rest in 1943, Harvey Edson Rogers made a major contribution to Seventh-day Adventist Church as statistical secretary of the General Conference, as editor of the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, and by keeping accurate records that aided in the decision making process during the maturing and growth of the church as an organization.

SOURCES

Harvey Edson Rogers Biographical Information Blanks, 1934 and 1935. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Archives, Silver Spring, MD.

“Harvey Edson Rogers obituary,” *ARH*, March 25, 1943.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Battle Creek, Michigan: Review & Herald Publishing House, 1888.

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NOTES

1. GCA, Biographical Information Blank, Harvey Edson Rogers, 1934, questions 5, 7, 13; Harvey Edson Rogers obituary, *ARH*, March 25, 1943, 19.?
2. GCA, Biographical Information Blank, Harvey Edson Rogers, 1905, question 11.?
3. *Ibid*, questions 17, 18.?
4. *Ibid*, questions 23, 27.?
5. “The Reorganization of the General Conference Association,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Battle Creek, Michigan: Review & Herald Publishing House, 1888), 52, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB1888.pdf>.?
6. Biographical Information Blank, 1934, question 15.?
7. “Directory of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination, General Conference,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1904), 11, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB1904.pdf>.?
8. “A Statistical Review,” *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* 1904, 7-10.?
9. *Catalogue of Titles of Books and Other Articles*, Vol. 34, No. 39 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), 1016, accessed April 20, 2020, <https://books.google.com/books?id=IP83AQAAMAJ&pg=PA1016&lpg=PA1016&dq=typewriting+and+office+manual+rogers&source=bl&ots=cT2bnEzMs&sig=...>
10. Harvey Edson Rogers, *The Rogers Compendium of the Graham System of Shorthand, A Practical, Synthetic Method*, digitized by Google, original from the University of Michigan, accessed March 18, 2020, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015008897244&view=1up&seq=5>. See also Indigo, accessed March 18, 2020, <https://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/the-rogers-compendium-of-the/9780526358489-item.html>.?