



John and Vitaline Daigneau

Credit: Center for Adventist Research Image Database.

Daigneau, John Magloire (1832–1922) and Vitalene Marie (Dion) (1834–1908)

MICHAEL W. CAMPBELL

Michael W. Campbell, Ph.D., is North American Division Archives, Statistics, and Research director. Previously, he was professor of church history and systematic theology at Southwestern Adventist University. An ordained minister, he pastored in Colorado and Kansas. He is assistant editor of *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* (Review and Herald, 2013) and currently is co-editor of the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Seventh-day Adventism*. He also taught at the Adventist International Institute for Advanced Studies (2013-18) and recently wrote the *Pocket Dictionary for Understanding Adventism* (Pacific Press, 2020).

John and Vitalene Daigneau were among the early French Canadian Adventist believers who resided in Battle Creek, Michigan, for approximately 18 years. Following a disagreement with Ellen White and the Seventh-day Adventist Church, they left Adventism. However, they maintained close relationships with some Adventist friends, and several of their relatives continued their association with the denomination.

Early Life

John Magloire Daigneau was born April 12, 1832, in St-Pie, Les Maskoutains (near Montreal), Quebec, to Amable (1801-1864) and Marie (1807-1890) Daigneau.¹ At age 14, he moved with his parents to Vermont. His sister, Lucetta (1840-1907), recalled that when they were children, their local Catholic priest tried to stifle their interest in studying the Bible.² The family was deeply spiritual and had sought answers to their theological questions by exploring the Bible on their own.

In 1851, John married Vitalene Marie Dion (1834-1908), and they had five children: Samuel (1852-1931), Charles Louis (1856-1928), Adora Adeline (1862-1934), Alma Henriette (1864-1938), and Clifford Eugene (1873-1931). In 1854, John and Vitalene moved to Battle Creek, Michigan.³

Involvement in Adventism

The earliest evidence of the Daigneaus' affiliation with Sabbatarian Adventism appears in 1857 with a contribution for the *Review and Herald*.⁴ By 1860, he was actively involved in the emerging denomination and participating in a "Committee of Arrangements" for a conference in Battle Creek.⁵

John worked as a stone mason. As a result, he was very strong and tested Ellen White's physical phenomena during one of her visions. As [J. N. Loughborough](#) later described John and White's encounter, "in this vision, Mrs. White would clasp her hands together upon her chest with the fingers upon the back of the hand, and he could not by the utmost exertion raise one finger sufficiently to get his thumb and finger between her finger and hand. Almost the next moment her hands were unclasped, and her hand and arm were moving gracefully toward the object she seemed to be viewing."⁶ Daigneau's experience provided tangible affirmation of Ellen White's prophetic gift.

In 1861, Ellen White wrote a strong letter of admonition to the Daigneau family. She noted how John, although he had once been "rejoicing in the truth," had come to doubt present truth and was about "ready to yield and let go his hold of truth." Vitalene was jealous and murmured against other believers. Together, she expressed, how she believed they were in grave spiritual peril.⁷

The Daigneaus remained Adventists for a time. In 1863, John played an important role translating early correspondence in French between [Jean Vuilleumier](#), a Sabbathkeeping Adventist in Europe, with church leaders in Battle Creek. During the United States Civil War, he enlisted as a private in the Michigan 6th Regiment, Michigan Calvary, but the war ended before he was involved in any fighting.⁸ In 1869, Ellen White admonished the family again for the "mismanagement" of their children.⁹ Especially troubling, from her perspective, was the "self-abuse" or masturbation of their sons, Samuel and Charlie.¹⁰ Soon afterward, the family moved away, and their names disappear from Adventist publications.

By 1871, the family had returned to Quebec where they lived the following three decades. While living in Canada, John exported large quantities of hemlock bark. He became prosperous through shipping and owned his own steamers.¹¹

Final Years

In 1902, John and Vitalene moved to Benton Harbor for John to join his son in operating the Daigneau Laundry Company. After Vitalene's death, on November 11, 1909, he married a widow, Marie T. Therien (1851-1917).

John passed away on May 24, 1922, in Nashville, Tennessee, on his way to spend the summer in St. Petersburg, Florida. His funeral was held in the First Baptist Church.¹² He is buried with his first wife at the Crystal Springs Cemetery in Benton Harbor, Michigan.¹³

The Daigneau home in Battle Creek (today located at 480 Van Buren Street) is restored as part of the Historic Adventist Village (HAV).¹⁴ His home was originally located near the lot on Champion Street, where Deacon John White's home (James White's father) was built and just beyond was James and Ellen White's Wood Street home (all three homes are now part of HAV). On the other side was the home of another early Sabbatarian Adventist minister, J. N. Loughborough, whose home (although no longer extant) was also their neighbor. The location of their home to these early Adventist pioneers demonstrates how interconnected these early pioneers were in one another's lives.¹⁵

SOURCES

Campbell, Michael W. "Daigneau, John M. and Vitaline M. (Dion)." In *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, rev. ed., edited by Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2013.

Daigneau, Lucetta. "The Bible." *The Youth Instructor*, February 1860.

"J. M. Daigneau Dies Suddenly in Nashville." *The Herald-Palladium*, May 26, 1922.

"J. M. Daigneau Will Be Buried Sunday Afternoon." *The Herald-Palladium*, May 27, 1922.

"John Daigneau Dies at Age of 92 Years." *Battle Creek Enquirer*, May 27, 1922.

"Life of Late J. M. Daigneau Praised." *The Herald-Palladium*, May 29, 1922.

Loughborough, J. N. *Rise and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists with Tokens of God's Hand in the Movement and a Brief Sketch of the Advent Cause from 1831 to 1844*. Battle Creek, MI: General Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists, 1892.

"Mrs. John M. Daigneau Died Early Today." *The Herald-Palladium*, September 16, 1908.

White, Ellen G. *Special Testimony for the Battle Creek Church*. Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1869.

NOTES

1. "Amable C. Daigneau," Find a Grave, accessed July 5, 2026, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/5088261/amable-c-daigneau> and "Dontilde Dion Daigneau," Find a Grave, accessed July 5, 2026, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/5088267/dontilde-daigneau>. For detailed genealogical information, see: "Daigneau Family Tree," *Ancestry*, https://www.ancestry.com/invite-ui/accept?token=RE32peuuwQhEaO2gl8-1yOkIGU6fbRgXM_57yZTzWaY=
2. Lucetta Daigneau, "The Bible," *The Youth Instructor*, February 1860, 10-11.
3. "Once Lived in Battle Creek," *The Battle Creek Enquirer*, March 23, 1931, 7.
4. "Receipts," *ARH*, November 26, 1857, 24.
5. "Battle Creek Conference," *ARH*, September 18, 1860, 144.
6. J. N. Loughborough, *Rise and Progress of the Seventh-day Adventists with Tokens of God's Hand in the Movement and a Brief Sketch of the Advent Cause from 1831 to 1844* (Battle Creek, MI: General Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists, 1892), 247.
7. Ellen G. White to Brother and Sister [John M.] Daigneau, October 18, 1861, Letter 10, 1861. <https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p13961.3112024&index=0>.
8. "J. M. Daigneau Will Be Buried Sunday Afternoon," *The Herald-Palladium*, May 27, 1922, 1.
9. Ellen G. White, *Special Testimony for the Battle Creek Church* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1869), 23.
10. *Ibid.*, 21.
11. "John Daigneau Dies at Age of 92 Years," *Battle Creek Enquirer*, May 27, 1922, 1.
12. "Life of Late J. M. Daigneau Praised," *The Herald-Palladium*, May 29, 1922, 3.
13. "Vitaline Marie Dion Daigneau," Find a Grave, accessed July 5, 2026, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/5088302/vitaline-marie-daigneau>; "John Magloire Daigneau," Find a Grave, accessed July 5, 2026, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/5088295/john_magloire-daigneau.
14. "Historic Sites," Adventist Heritage Ministries, accessed July 5, 2026, <https://adventistheritage.org>.

15. Loughborough, *Rise and Progress*, 247.

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000