

Lamson, Drusilla (Orton) (1831–1919)

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Drusilla Orton Lamson and her family were early Sabbatarian Adventists and active supporters of the Adventist cause.

Early Life, Conversion, and Marriage

Drusilla Orton was born in Dansville, New York, on April 21, 1831, to [Jonathan \(1811-1866\)](#) and [Caroline \(1812-1873\) Orton](#).¹ As a child, she moved to

Rochester, New York, with her parents.² She and her family became Millerites and expected Jesus to come in 1844.

Later, when James and Ellen White relocated to Rochester, Drusilla accepted the seventh-day Sabbath and assisted them.³ In 1856 Drusilla married Joseph Bradley Lamson (1829-1870), who had become an Adventist by 1848 and by 1854 had embraced the seventh-day Sabbath. Together they established their home on the west side of Rochester in the town of Gates. They remained active Sabbatarian Adventists in Rochester and supported J. N. Loughborough and James White when they held meetings there in late 1857 through early 1858.⁴



Drucilla Lamson, undated. Courtesy of the Review and Herald Publishing Association Photographic Collection, General Conference Archives. Shared by Ashlee Chism.

From 1862 to 1864 Joseph served as the first treasurer of the New York Conference.⁵

Supporting the Adventist Cause

Ellen and James White had a close relationship with the Lamsons. Ellen White wrote affectionally of Drusilla⁶ and James and Ellen White stayed in her home for part of December 1865.⁷ During this visit, on December 25, 1865, Ellen White had a vision. While surrounded by the Lamsons, Drucilla's parents (the Ortons), the Loughboroughs, and other early believers who were praying for James White's health, Ellen White received a vision that Seventh-day Adventists should establish their own center for health treatments. The Lamsons subsidized efforts by the church to do so by purchasing \$50 of shares in the Western Health Reform Institute.⁸

The Lamsons were active supporters of the fledgling denomination. For example, they donated money to fund the production of the 1863 prophecy chart.⁹ Her father died under unclear circumstances in 1866.¹⁰ Her husband Joseph passed away from tuberculosis and typhoid at age 41, on January 22, 1870.¹¹ About a year before his death, Joseph published a confession for the reproofs he received from Ellen White.¹²

As a widow, Drusilla continued her husband's business selling graham flour.¹³ In 1876 Drusilla moved to Battle Creek where she served as matron of the [Battle Creek Sanitarium](#). In 1878 she was praised for her talents and faith in affliction as well as reprimanded by Ellen White for her conformity to the world especially in dress.¹⁴ By 1883 she returned to Clifton Springs, New York, to assist as a matron there until she retired in 1896. In 1893, she signed a published testimonial that during Ellen White's 1854 vision, Drusilla had seen a doctor check White for signs of breathing using a looking-glass and there had been "no sign of breath."¹⁵

Later Years

In her later years, Drusilla lived with her daughter and her family. She passed away on January 5, 1919. According to D. M. Canright, by 1889, she had "lost faith in the [Adventist] doctrine," which suggests why perhaps her obituary does not appear in any denominational publications. But her testimony about Ellen White's vision in 1893 leads to some doubts about Canright's assertions or at least indicate that any loss of faith did not necessarily last long. The timing of her death, in the middle of World War I and the influenza pandemic, which disrupted much including the publication of obituaries in periodicals, may have caused her obituary not to appear in an Adventist periodical.¹⁶ She is buried in the family plot at Mt. Hope Cemetery in Rochester, New York.¹⁷

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. For genealogical details, see "Lamson Family Tree," ancestry.com, https://www.ancestry.com/invite-ui/accept?token=_luEApboNMgdFFbEATH-sqO7u53u5fNWYtSbCuMuqWE=.
2. Obit., *Lifting Springs Press*, January 19, 1919. Copy from Loma Linda University Heritage Room.
3. Drusilla Orton, "From Sister Orton," *ARH*, November 25, 1852, 111-112.
4. J. B. Lamson, "From Bro. Lamson," *ARH*, January 13, 1859, 63.
5. J. N. Andrews, "Doings of the N.Y. Conference," *ARH*, November 4, 1862, 182; "New York Conference Report," *ARH*, December 1, 1863, 2.
6. Ellen G. White to Harriet Stevens, January 30, 1857, Letter 12, 1857.
7. Ellen G. White, "Our Late Experience," *ARH*, February 27, 1866, 97-99.
8. "On Shares in the W.H.R. Institute," *ARH*, October 16, 1866, 160.
9. "For New Charts," *ARH*, September 8, 1863, 120.

10. See account by J. N. Loughborough written to J. M. Aldrich: "Assassination of Bro. Orton, of Rochester, N.Y.," *ARH*, March 20, 1866, 127.
11. Obit., *ARH*, February 15, 1870, 71.
12. J. B. Lamson, "From Bro. Lamson," *ARH*, January 19, 1869, 31.
13. J. N. Andrews, "To Those Wanting Graham Flour," *ARH*, July 26, 1870, 48. See also the advertisement in *The Health Reformer*, January 1871, 144.
14. Ellen G. White, *Testimony for the Physicians and Helpers of the Sanitarium* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., c. 1878), 7, 58, 77.
15. See J. N. Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement: Its Rise and Progress* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1909), 208; Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: A Biography*, 1:303.
16. D. M. Canright, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced, After an Experience of Twenty-eight Years by a Prominent Minister and Writer of that Faith* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1889), 64.
17. "Drusilla Orton Lamson," *Findagrave.com*, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/59110555/drusilla-lamson>.

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