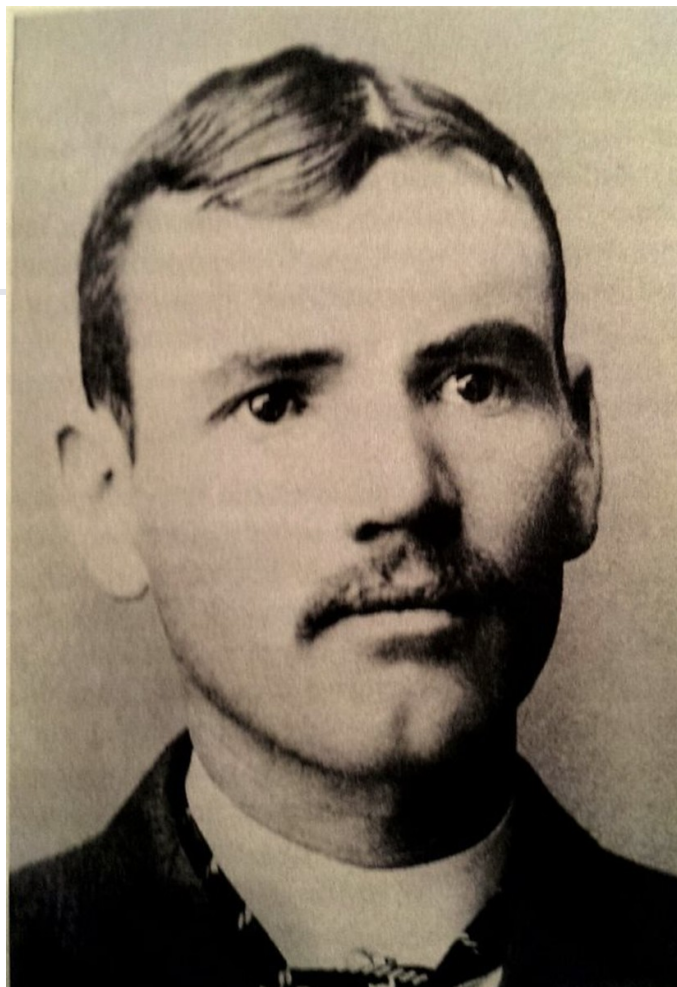


Thurston, William Henry (1855–1924)

THE BRAZILIAN WHITE CENTER – UNASP

The Brazilian White Center – UNASP is a team of teachers and students at the Brazilian Ellen G. White Research Center – UNASP at the Brazilian Adventist University, Campus Engenheiro, Coelho, SP. The team was supervised by Drs. Adolfo Semo Suárez, Renato Stencil, and Carlos Flávio Teixeira. Bruno Sales Gomes Ferreira provided technical support. The following names are of team members: Adriane Ferrari Silva, Alan Gracioto Alexandre, Allen Jair Urcia Santa Cruz, Camila Chede Amaral Lucena, Camilla Rodrigues Seixas, Daniel Fernandes Teodoro, Danilo Alfredo Rios Junior, Danilo Fauster de Souza, Débora Arana Mayer, Elvis Eli Martins Filho, Felipe Cardoso do Nascimento, Fernanda Nascimento Oliveira, Gabriel Pilon Galvani, Giovana de Castro Vaz, Guilherme Cardoso Ricardo Martins, Gustavo Costa Vieira Novaes, Ingrid Sthéfane Santos Andrade, Isabela Pimenta Gravina, Ivo Ribeiro de Carvalho, Jhoseyr Davison Voos dos Santos, João Lucas Moraes Pereira, Kalline Meira Rocha Santos, Larissa Menegazzo Nunes, Letícia Miola Figueiredo, Luan Alves Cota Mól, Lucas Almeida dos Santos, Lucas Arteaga Aquino, Lucas Dias de Melo, Matheus Brabo Peres, Mayla Magaieski Graepp, Milena Guimarães Silva, Natália Padilha Corrêa, Rafaela Lima Gouvêa, Rogel Maio Nogueira Tavares Filho, Ryan Matheus do Ouro Medeiros, Samara Souza Santos, Sergio Henrique Micael Santos, Suelen Alves de Almeida, Talita Paim Veloso de Castro, Thais Cristina Benedetti, Thaís Caroline de Almeida Lima, Vanessa Stehling Belgd, Victor Alves Pereira, Vinícios Fernandes Alencar, Vinícios Pereira Nascimento, Vitória Regina Boita da Silva, William Edward Timm, Julio Cesar Ribeiro, Ellen Deó Bortolotte, Maria Júlia dos Santos Galvani, Giovana Souto Pereira, Victor Hugo Vaz Storch, and Dinely Luana Pereira.



William Henry Thurston

Photo courtesy of Brazilian White Center - UNASP.

William Henry Thurston, administrator, missionary, and literature evangelist,¹ was born November 14, 1855, in Kingston, Wisconsin, United States, and became one of the first missionaries to arrive in Brazil at the end of the nineteenth century.² Thurston accepted the Adventist faith in 1880 at age 25, and soon afterward became elder of the Hancock Church, Wisconsin, where he served until 1890.³ Thurston officially entered church employment in 1890, when he accepted a call to be president of the Wisconsin Sabbath School Association and secretary of the Wisconsin Conference literature evangelist program.⁴

In 1887 he married his first wife, Christena McCallen (1863-1890), who three years later died from heart problems.⁵ Then in 1892 he married his second wife, Florence E. Strong (1869-1961), with whom he had four

children: Herbert, Millard Eugene, Clarence Fillmore, and Claud.⁶ In 1894 he accepted a request from the General Conference Mission Board to serve as a self-supporting missionary in Brazil, together with Frank Westphal, who would organize Adventist work in Argentina. On a Sunday evening, July 15, 1894, the Thurstons and Westphals left Battle Creek on a train bound to New York.⁷ There they embarked on the *S. S. Paris* steamship for Southampton, Britain, from where they sailed to South America on the *S. S. Magdalena*. On August 12 the Thurstons disembarked in Rio de Janeiro.⁸

William had brought with him two boxes of books and magazines published by the Review and Herald and Pacific Press publishing houses. As the publications were in English and German with a few in Spanish, he achieved little success in his sales, since the majority of the population had no knowledge of those languages.⁹ Perceiving the need for material in Portuguese even though he had limited resources, in July of 1900 he edited the first Adventist periodical in that language--*O Arauto da Verdade*, a translation of the *Herald of Truth*. Almeida Marques Typography and Lithography printed the magazine in Rio de Janeiro.¹⁰ Guilherme Stein, Jr., was responsible for the translation and revision of the periodical, working in Thurston's home. There they started the Brazilian Tract Society, the embryo for the Brazil Publishing House.¹¹

Also, in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Thurston contributed to the beginnings of the Méier church, located on Piauhy Road no. 67, between the Cupertino road and the Cascadura train station. Pastors Thurston and Huldreich Graf organized the church, the second in Brazil, on October 27, 1895.¹² During those early days Thurston experienced many difficulties because, in addition to not speaking Portuguese, as a self-supporting missionary he depended on his book sales to survive.¹³ In 1901, after seven years working in Brazil, he returned to the United States, serving as president of the Lake Union Conference in Battle Creek, Michigan.¹⁴ In 1903 he became president of the Canadian Union, where he stayed until 1909. Afterwards he moved to Kansas, where he led that conference for one year.¹⁵ In 1910 he became president of the Wisconsin Conference.¹⁶ Five years later he accepted a call to work in the Columbia Conference, where he pastored until 1923.¹⁷ Thurston passed away in his sleep August 25, 1924, at the Walla Walla Sanatorium in College Place.¹⁸

Willian Henry Thurston was the first official missionary to work in Brazil, followed by Huldreich Graf and Frederick Spies. Responsible for publishing the first Adventist periodical in the Portuguese language and for the founding of the first tract society in the country, he, together with Graf, organized the second SDA church in Brazil.

SOURCES

Breed, A. J. "Thurston." *ARH*, February 11, 1890.

Enciclopédia da Memória Adventista no Brasil,

http://www.memoriaadventista.com.br/wikiasd/index.php?title=Willian_Henry_Thurston.

Guedes, Leonidas Verneque. *Olhando para nós, nos movemos para frente*. Maringa, PR: Massoni Gráfica e Editora, 2019.

Lessa, Rubens. "Casa Publicadora Brasileira 85 anos de história." *Revista Adventista*, December 1985. Accessed August 7, 2019, <http://acervo.revistaadventista.com.br/capas.cpb>.

Rabello, João. "Os batismos de 1895 e a organização da primeira igreja." *Revista Adventista*, Accessed on August 12, 2019, <http://acervo.revistaadventista.com.br/capas.cpb>.

Rouse, J. S. "Willian Henry Thurston." *ARH*, October 9, 1924.

Scheffel, Rubem M. "História de nossos livros." *Revista Adventista*, December 1985. Accessed August 7, 2019, <http://acervo.revistaadventista.com.br/capas.cpb>.

Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia. Second rev. ed. M-Z. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996.

Seventh-day Adventist Online Yearbook Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, various years. <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/>.

Wearner, Robert G. "Mission to the world-1894." *ARH*, October 20, 1983.

Westphal, F. W. " O Começo de Nossa Obra na America do Sul. Extractos de uma Carta Escripta pelo Pastor F. W. Westphal." *Revista Mensal*, September 1924. Accessed August 7, 2019, <http://acervo.revistaadventista.com.br/capas.cpb>.

NOTES

1. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, second rev. ed. (1996), 775.
2. Ruben M. Scheffel, "História de nossos livros," *Revista Adventista*, December 1985, 10.
3. J. S. Rouse, "Willian Henry Thurston," *ARH*, October 9, 1924, 21; A. J. Breed, "Thurston," *ARH*, February 11, 1890, 95.
4. Rouse, 21; "State Cavnassing Agents," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1891), 18; "Sabbath-School Association Presidents," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1891), 19; "Wisconsin," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1894), 38.
5. Breed, 95.
6. Rouse, 21; Breed, 95.

7. Robert G. Wearner, "Mission to the world-1894," *ARH*, October 20, 1983, 6, 7; João Rabello, "Os batismos de 1895 e a organização da primeira igreja," *Revista Adventista*, January 1995, 10.
8. Wearner, 6, 7.
9. Rubens Lessa, Casa Publicadora Brasileira 85 anos de história," *Revista Adventista*, December 1985, 6; Enciclopédia da Memória Adventista no Brasil, http://www.memoriaadventista.com.br/wikiasd/index.php?title=Willian_Henry_Thurston.
10. Scheffel, 10.
11. Lessa, 6.
12. Leonidas Verneque Guedes, *Olhando para trás, nos movemos para frente* (Maringá, PR: Massoni Gráfica e Editora, 2019), 38.
13. F. W. Westphal, "O Começo de Nossa Obra na America do Sul. Extractos de uma Carta Escripta pelo Pastor F. W. Westphal," *Revista Mensal*, September 1924, 4.
14. "Lake Union Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1904), 29; *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*. Second rev. ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996), vol. II, 775.
15. "Canadian Union Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1904), 22; "Kansas Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1910), 32; "Wisconsin Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1911), 45.
16. "Wisconsin Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1911), 45.
17. "Upper Columbia Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1924), 54.
18. Rouse, 21.

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