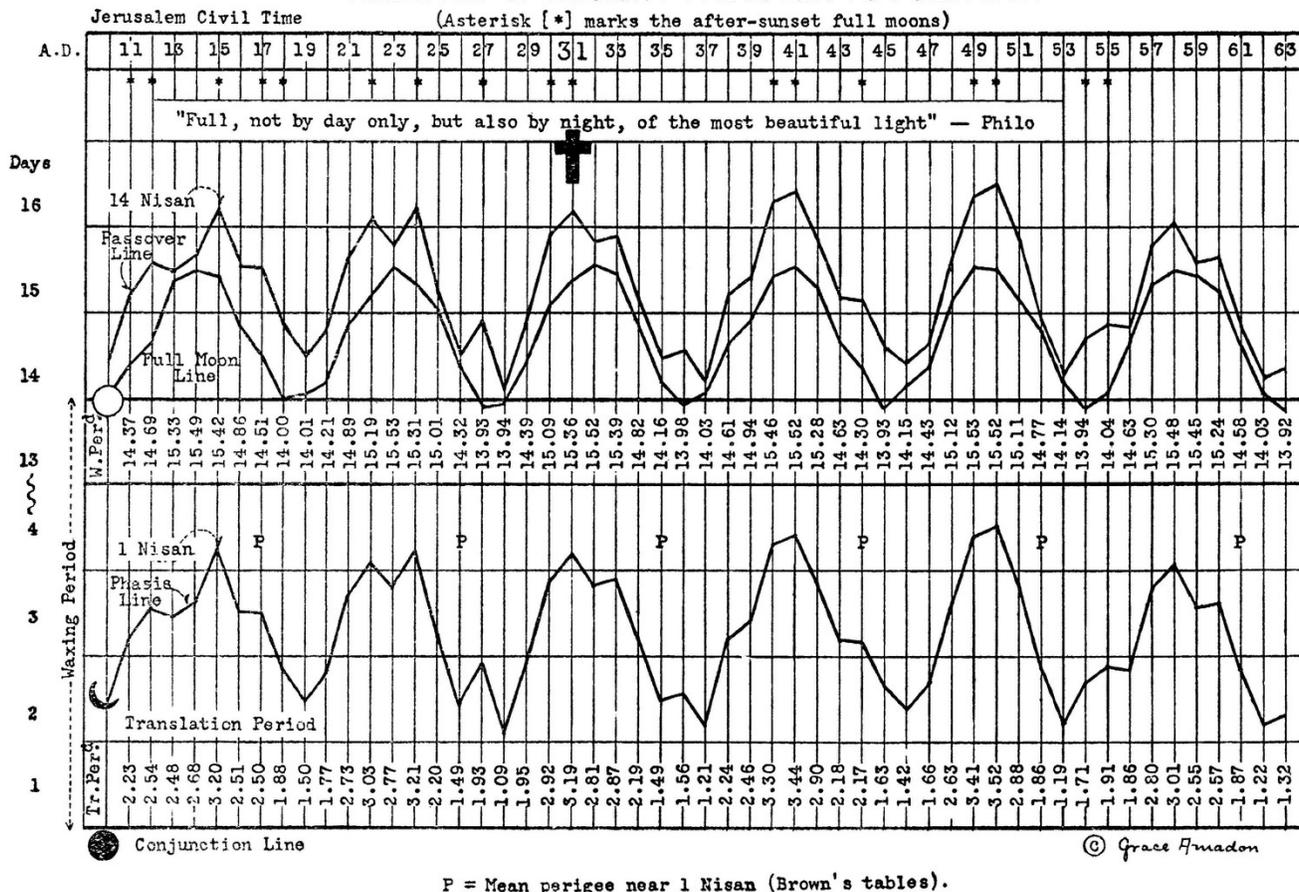


## RELATION OF ANCIENT PASSOVER TO FULL MOON



Grace Amadon's work on ancient Jewish calendation.

From Grace Amadon, "Ancient Jewish Calendation," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 61, No. 4 (December 1942): 227-280.

# Amadon, Grace Edith (1872–1945)

## BRIAN E. STRAYER

Brian E. Strayer, Ph.D. (University of Iowa). Strayer taught history at Jackson (MI) Junior Academy, the University of Iowa, Southern Adventist University, and Andrews University for 41 years. He has written 10 books, 120 scholarly and professional articles, 40 reviews and critiques in French and Adventist history and directed three Adventist heritage tours of New England. He writes a weekly column ("The Past Is Always Present") in the *Journal Era* and shares Adventist history at camp meetings, schools, and churches.

Grace Edith Amadon was a musician, teacher, illustrator, and writer. She served in North America and South Africa.

## Early Years

Grace Edith Amadon was born February 24, 1872, in Battle Creek, Michigan, to George W. Amadon (1832-1913), a foreman at the Review and Herald press, and Martha D. (Byington) Amadon (1834-1937), a founder of the first Dorcas Society. From childhood Grace regularly attended Sabbath school, church, prayer, testimony, and youth meetings at the Battle Creek Dime Tabernacle (built in 1878). She also enjoyed picnics at Goguac Lake and frequent visits to her grandparents, John (1798-1887) and Catharine Byington (1803-1885), and to her aunt and uncle, Ambrose and Caroline White, all of whom lived in Ceresco about fifteen miles southeast of Battle Creek. A quiet, sweet-tempered girl, she loved helping her grandmother with household chores and picking berries.

Grace's parents took her to concerts and encouraged her musical talent by enrolling her in vocal, piano and organ lessons. As a teenager, Grace became so proficient in music that she assisted Battle Creek College music teacher Edward Barnes (c 1884-1900) and, like her sister Kate, often played the organ for services at the Dime Tabernacle.

In the 1890s, Grace gained a reputation as the ablest Greek and Latin student ever to graduate from Battle Creek College. She also took science and medical courses at Dr. John Harvey Kellogg's American Medical Missionary College.

In 1893 at the age of 21, Grace went to Cape Town, South Africa, where at Claremont Union College (now Helderberg College) she taught for six years (1893-1899) Greek, Latin, mathematics, and music, gaining a reputation as an excellent teacher with high scholastic standards. Meanwhile, Grace also fell in love with an Adventist Boer (Afrikaner), a choice that her parents did not approve. In what relatives have described as "the five thousand mile frown," Martha Amadon summoned her daughter home. Grace Amadon never married.

## Public Health Work

From 1899 to 1902, Grace taught elementary pupils in the Battle Creek Seventh-day Adventist church school before moving to Chicago, Illinois. There between 1903 and 1912 she worked as a bacteriologist at a public health facility, taught pathology at the Chicago Veterinary College (1907-1911), and drew anatomical illustrations for medical textbooks.

Although she enrolled in the premedical course, she abandoned her studies in 1912 and moved to St. Joseph, Michigan, to care for her ailing father George Amadon (who died in 1913) and her mother Martha Amadon (who died in 1937 at age 102). During her twenty-five years in St. Joseph, Grace operated a medical laboratory that earned her commendations from state officials.

## Prophetic Chronology Scholar

During the 1920s and 1930s, Grace focused her attention on establishing the reliability of Old and New Testament prophetic dates (for the 1260, 1290, 1335, and 2300 day/year prophecies as well as the precise dates for the Passover, Crucifixion, and the antitypical Day of Atonement events) by studying ancient calendars and astronomy. In 1937 she moved to Washington, D.C. and two years later, she was invited to join a General Conference special research group, the Committee on Historical Bases and Involvements and Validity of the October 22, 1844 Position). She was the lone female of the eight-member committee. Although she had only a college degree, Grace quickly distinguished herself as an exhaustive researcher in libraries and archives, an outstanding mathematician and astronomer, and a writer of clear, precise prose.

LeRoy Froom (1890-1974), the chair of the Committee on Historical Bases, who praised her “amazing linguistic, scientific and mathematical attainments,” lauded that she “applied herself with such devotion and brilliance” that she quickly won the admiration, not only of church officials and scholars, but also of astronomers at the United States Naval Observatory where she served as a consultant. Froom further asserted that she had “made a distinct contribution to the scientific confirmation of prophetic time prophecy.”<sup>4</sup> One Adventist pastor, however, who occasionally disagreed with Grace’s calculations, accused her of casting an “Amadonian Spell” over the General Conference research committee between 1938 and 1945.<sup>2</sup>

## Later Life

Between 1940 and 1945, Grace Amadon wrote at least twelve scholarly manuscripts and articles (see Sources below) focusing on Jewish Calendation and precise calculations for the dates of the Passover, Christ’s trial and crucifixion, and the antitypical Day of Atonement. Four of these manuscripts were published in Adventist periodicals and two in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*; the others were presented to the members of the Committee on the Historical Bases, Involvements, and Validity of the October 22, 1844 Position.

Grace Amadon, “the weary warrior” (as Froom called her), died of influenza on May 22, 1945, at age 73, in the Washington Adventist Sanitarium in Takoma Park, Maryland, two weeks after V-E Day brought an end to World War II in Europe. Her body was taken to Battle Creek, Michigan, and buried in the Amadon family plot in Oak Hill Cemetery.

## Contribution

Grace Amadon’s contributions extend to sacred keyboard music in Battle Creek, to the teaching of math, music and ancient languages in South Africa, and to medical science with her precise drawings for medical textbooks. But her greatest contribution to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and to the larger scholarly community came during the last seven years of her life when her exhaustively researched and carefully argued presentations on

ancient calendars and dating methods at the General Conference and in academic journals strengthened confidence in the accuracy of the prophetic dates for the 1260, 1290, 1335, and 2300 day/year prophecies as well as the dating for such events as Passover and Christ's crucifixion. According to L.E. Froom, Leon Smith, and astronomers at the U.S. Naval Conservatory, no one else in the denomination had previously accomplished these tasks with such brilliance and clarity.

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## NOTES

1. LeRoy E. Froom, "Grace E. Amadon obituary," *ARH*, June 21, 1945, 20.

2. J. H. Wierts to L. E. Froom, June 29, 1945, Box 5, Folder 9, Grace Amadon Collections, Center for Adventist Research, James White Library, Andrews University.

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