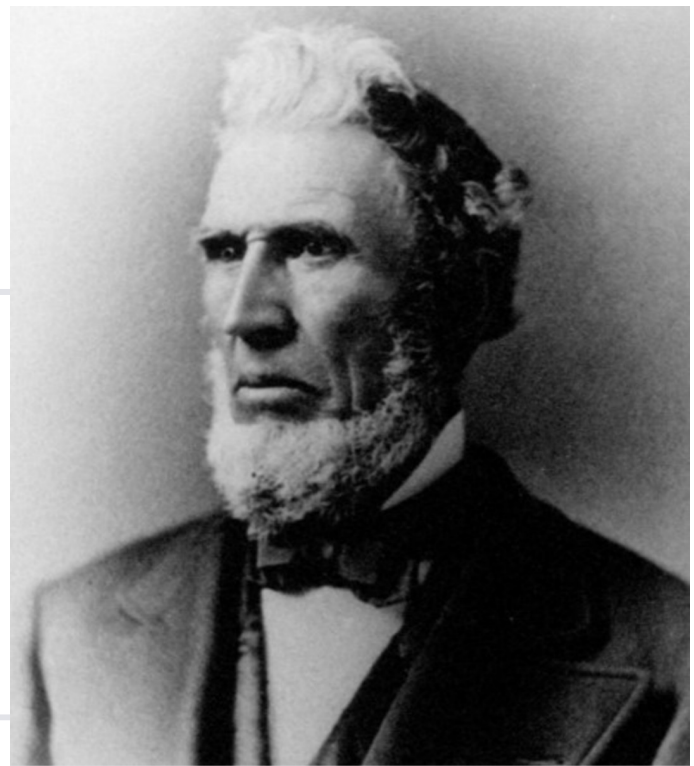


Hastings, Leonard Wood (1803–1883)

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).



Leoard Hastings

Photo courtesy of Ellen G. White Estate, Inc.

Leonard Wood Hastings was a farmer and Millerite believer who became a stalwart Sabbatarian and, later, Seventh-day Adventist. He was a close friend and supporter of Joseph Bates and James and Ellen White. His wife Elvira was a close friend of Ellen White.

Leonard was the second youngest of eleven children. He was born in Ashburnham, Massachusetts, on August 14, 1803, to Charles (1760-1860) and Anna Woods Hastings (1761-1825). His father fought during the American Revolution in the Burgoyne campaign and battle of Rhode Island. Charles subsequently served as a Captain under Lafayette.¹ At age 17, he moved to New Ipswich, New Hampshire. While not much is known about his early life, on March 31, 1832, Leonard married Elvira Burrows (1807-1850), who was also born in Ashburnham.

Leonard “was among the first to embrace the doctrine of the Lord’s coming.” In 1843, they withdrew from the local Congregational church because of their Second Advent beliefs. In 1844, as a testimony of his faith, he left his potatoes in the ground rather than harvest them.² The location of his farm has been a frequent stopping point on Adventist heritage tours.³ That year, a potato blight, damaged much of New England’s potato crop.⁴ According to J. N. Loughborough, his potatoes which had been left in the ground did not get the disease and, as a result, were much more valuable the following spring as seed potatoes.⁵

Leonard and Elvira were among the earliest to join the Sabbatarian cause.⁶ In early 1850, when their newborn baby, Frederick became sick with severe colic, James and Ellen White prayed and anointed their baby, who was miraculously healed.⁷ Ellen White received a vision in which she was shown angels hovering over Elvira to

strengthen her. White afterward wrote:

Our interview with that dear family was precious. Our hearts were knit together, especially was the heart of sister Hastings knit with mine, as were David's and Jonathan's. Our union was not marred while she lived.⁸

On Feb. 28, 1850, Elvira, still recovering from childbirth, died of "colic."⁹ Ellen White saw her close friend, Elvira, among the 144,000 redeemed.¹⁰ The 1850 census revealed that Leonard was now a single father trying to raise six children: Hannah (b. 1833), George (b. 1837), Sarah (b. 1839), Emma (b. 1842), Charles (b. 1845), and John Frederick (b. 1849).¹¹ This crisis contributed to a general turning of the remaining Hastings children toward God. On Sabbath, June 22, 1850, James White baptized Harriet, George, Sarah, and Emma.¹² Despite his struggles as a single father, he was so committed to Adventism that he decided to sell his farm to support James White's fledgling publishing work.

Tragedy struck the Hastings family again when his oldest daughter, Hannah, also succumbed to disease in 1854.¹³ The summer of 1855 marked a turning point in early Adventism as a revival swept across Sabbatarian Adventism that year as church leaders more publicly affirmed the prophetic ministry of Ellen White and began to make her writings more widely visible in publications such as the *Review and Herald*. Leonard affirmed this general sense of backsliding. He urged the fledgling church to repent and reform and eschew Laodicean tepidness.¹⁴

Leonard regularly organized area meetings, at times, gathering in his home.¹⁵ By 1860, his three youngest children were still living with him, and his estate was valued at \$260.¹⁶ Two years later this small group of Advent believers under his leadership, that had gathered since the Millerite movement, formally organized into a church. On Nov. 12, 1862, Leonard wed Martha Colburn (1818-1888).¹⁷ Tragedy struck the Hastings family again when 23-year-old Emma died Jan. 31, 1865, from typhoid fever and erysipelas.¹⁸ A modestly prosperous farmer, by the time of the 1870 census, the value of his real estate had increased to \$3,000.¹⁹ In his later years, he helped organize the New England Conference (1870) and became vice president of the New England Tract and Missionary Society (1875).²⁰

Leonard died on April 11, 1883.²¹ He was buried next to both of his wives in the Central Cemetery also located in New Ipswich, New Hampshire.²²

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NOTES

1. Mary Jane Seymour, *Lineage Book National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: [The Society], 1900), vol. 11, 217.
2. J. N. Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement: Its Rise and Progress* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1909), 166-167.
3. Merlin D. Burt, *Adventist Pioneer Places: New York and New England* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2011), 89-91.
4. For a description of the potato blight in New England, see "The Disease in Potatoes," *New England Farmer and Horticultural Register*, October 2, 1844, 107; "Potatoes," *The Evening Post*, September 30, 1844, 2; "The Disease in Potatoes," *New England Farmer and Horticultural Register*, November 20, 1844, 166.
5. Arthur Whitefield Spalding, *Footprints of the Pioneers* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1947), 68-72.
6. Obituary, *ARH*, June 5, 1883, 367. See also: J. N. Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement: Its Rise and Progress* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1909), 166-167; idem., *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 the Seventh-day Adventists, 1892), 85-86.

7. Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts: My Christian Experience, Views and Labors in Connection with the Rise and Progress of the Third Angel's Message* (Battle Creek, MI: James White, 1860), 111; idem., *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White: Being a Narrative of her Experience to 1881 as Written by Herself; with a Sketch of Her Subsequent Labors and of Her Last Sickness Compiled from Original Sources* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1915), 122, 123.
8. Ibid.
9. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/63067438/elvira-hastings> [accessed 9/22/22]
10. [Michael W. Campbell] "Leonard Wood Hastings," in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, eds. Jerry Moon and Denis Fortin (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2013), 405.
11. For a detailed genealogy, see: <http://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/tools/tree/185202860/invitees/accept?inviteId=e6577262-6abe-4ef0-aa87-bc022bbf02a8> [accessed 9/22/22]
12. James White, "Our Tour East," *Advent Review*, Aug. 1850, 14-15.
13. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/63067483/harriet-a.-hastings> [accessed 9/22/22]
14. See letter excerpted in *ARH*, December 4, 1856, 36; *ARH*, September 3, 1867, 208.
15. Cf. *ARH*, December 17, 1861, 24.
16. 1860 United States Federal Census, Year: 1860; Census Place: New Ipswich, Hillsborough, New Hampshire; Roll: M653_672; Page: 657; Family History Library Film: 803672 [accessed from Ancestry.com 9/22/22].
17. Martha was born Sept. 21, 1818, in Temple, New Hampshire, to Nathan Colburn (1779-1868) and Elizabeth Powers Colburn (1782-1853).
18. Obit., *ARH*, March 21, 1865, 127.
19. 1870 United States Federal Census, Year: 1870; Census Place: New Ipswich, Hillsborough, New Hampshire; Roll: M593_844; Page: 230B [accessed from Ancestry.com 9/22/22]
20. S. N. Haskell, "The New England Conference," *ARH*, September 16, 1875, 86; L. W. Hastings, "Report of the General Quarterly Meeting of the N. E. Tract and Missionary Society," *ARH*, April 1, 1875, 110.
21. Obit., *ARH*, June 5, 1883, 367.
22. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/63067421/leonard-wood-hastings> [accessed 9/22/22]. Martha's grave is not marked but she is mentioned as buried next to her husband in her obituary, *ARH*, July 3, 1888, 431.

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