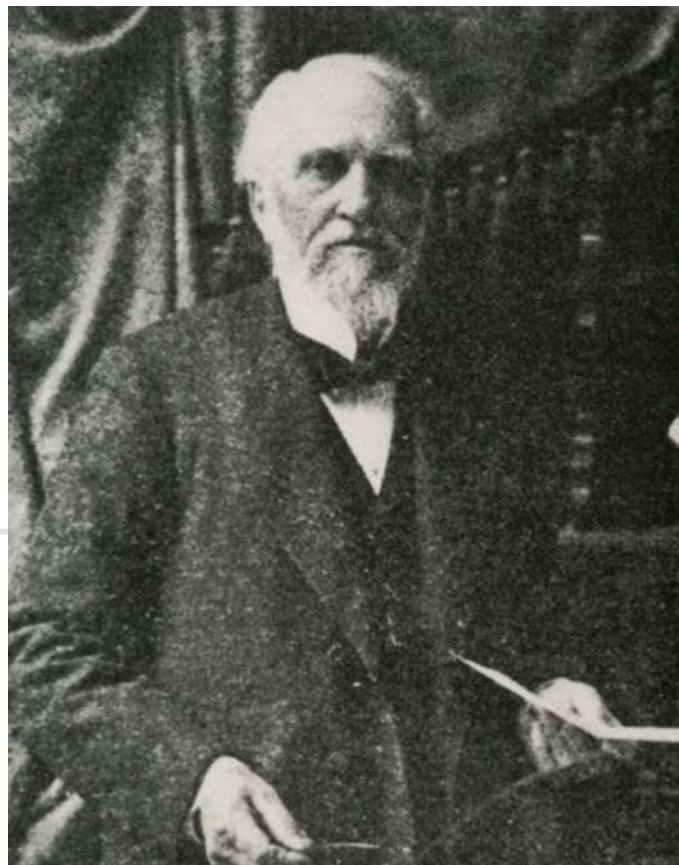


Crosier (Crozier), Owen Russell Loomis (1820–1912)

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).



O. R. L. Crosier.

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Owen Russell Loomis Crosier (Crozier) was a minister, a Millerite editor and revivalist, an educator, and a businessman.

Early Life and Millerite Movement

Crosier was born February 2, 1820, in Canandaigua, New York, to Archibald H. (1791-1822) and Nancy Loomis (1797-1827) Crozier. His father was an Irish immigrant who worked as a cooper, first around Albany, New York, and then in Conway, Massachusetts, where he met and married Nancy Loomis. After they married in 1818, they moved to Geneva, New York, where his father continued to make barrels. His mother died from a disease, and his father later drowned tragically. By the age of three, he had apprenticed to a “prosperous farmer” named Stephen Thatcher (1777-1867), who lived in the area.¹ At age fourteen, he ran away, attended Wesleyan Seminary in Lima and Genesee Academy in Rochester, and, ten years later, completed a two-year course at the University of Rochester.² He began ministry as a Methodist minister during the 1830s and early 1840s.³

He reported that a “Br. Adams” gave a course of lectures in the spring of 1843.⁴ In the fall of 1843, he was baptized by immersion (he had been sprinkled six years before) by E. R. Pinney, a Baptist and Millerite revivalist from Seneca Falls, New York.⁵ On April 16, 1844, he wrote of his firm belief and ardent hope that the Lord would quickly return. He noted that “all the ministers of our town oppose this lovely doctrine more or less.”⁶ In late 1843, he went to Dr. Franklin B. Hahn (1809-1866), then president of the Village corporation, for permission to hold meetings in the Town Hall. After other ministers declined, Dr. Hahn gave him permission and then had him deliver a similar series in the schoolhouse near his home, which led to his conversion and that of his family.⁷ A significant turning point came during a camp meeting held on Dr. Hahn’s property from August 20-28, 1844. After the camp meeting, Crosier reported that “there is now in Canandaigua a band who meet three times a week to pray and talk of the ‘blessed hope’ which we believe will soon be changed into a glorious fruition.”⁸ One particular highlight for Crosier was the preaching of [Lucy Hersey](#) (1824-1888). He added that he hoped “none of our sisters upon whom the spirit is poured, will withhold their talents and influence in this important crisis. They are among the most useful laborers in the field.”⁹ Among his Millerite activities was editing *The Day-Dawn*, a Millerite periodical based in Canandaigua. “My time was wholly occupied in the work,” he later remembered. “I published THE DAY DAWN, to discuss freely new developments of truth, and as an organ for those who adhered strictly to the Bible without Human Creeds or church partyism; and visited and lectured in various places.”¹⁰ They formed a preaching circuit in which Crosier would alternate between Canandaigua, Port Gibson, and Rochester, leading to a strong Millerite fellowship in that area.¹¹

After the Great Disappointment: the Sanctuary and the Sabbath Messages

On October 23, 1844, [Hiram Edson](#) (1806-1882) in Port Gibson invited Crosier to go with him to encourage some fellow believers.¹² During their walk, Edson later recalled receiving an insight that “the cleansing of the sanctuary is a work which Christ accomplishes in heaven just before returning to this world to take the kingdom.”¹³ Christ moved from the Holy Place to the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary to receive the kingdom from His Father (Daniel 7:9-14; 8:14).¹⁴ They discovered that their previous interpretation that Christ would return to cleanse this earth through fire was mistaken. This led Edson, Crosier, and Franklin B. Hahn to an in-depth Bible study about the cleansing of the sanctuary. According to a later (1904) reflection:

I [Crosier] was present in that all-night prayer meeting and Scripture study held after the disappointment. When the light came concerning the temple in heaven, showing that this had been the object of the prophecies which we thought referred to the return of Jesus and the cleansing of the earth by fire, what a joy this light was to us! Very early in the morning I was on horseback going from place to place to tell the good news and to cheer those whom I could reach.¹⁵

Hahn and Edson decided that their discoveries were “just what the scattered remnant needed” to explain their disappointment and “set the brethren on the right track.” They agreed to share the publication expense if Crosier would “write out the subject of the sanctuary.”¹⁶ Some of the group’s preliminary views first appeared in the *Day-Dawn*, edited by Crosier and published by Hahn in March 1845. The first issue emphasized the eschatological marriage (Matthew 25:1-13) as the heavenly antitype of the Day of Atonement described in Leviticus 16. He understood the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25) as a “chronology of four important events. Viz: (1) The tarrying time. (2) the midnight cry. (3) the marriage, and (4) shutting of the door.”¹⁷ Crosier’s understanding of a two-phase atonement in the heavenly sanctuary was further developed in several letters published in *The Hope of Israel*, *The Day-Star*, and *Voice of Truth*. His most mature exposition was his “The Law of Moses,” written on fifty foolscap pages at Dr. Hahn’s home, and published in the *Day-Star* “Extra” of February 7, 1846, with an endorsement from Edson and Hahn.

The *Day-Star* “Extra” influenced [Joseph Bates](#) (1792-1872), James White (1821-1881), Ellen G. Harmon (later White) (1827-1915), and several others toward a deeper understanding of Christ’s two-phase priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, and set the stage for the development of the distinctive and integrated Sabbatarian Adventist understanding of the sanctuary. Ellen White wrote in 1847: “The Lord shew me in vision, more than one year ago, that Brother Crosier had the true light, on the cleansing of the Sanctuary, &c; and that it was his will, that Brother C. should write out the view which he gave us in the *Day-Star*, Extra, February 7, 1846. I feel fully authorized by the Lord, to recommend that Extra, to every saint.”¹⁸ It should be noted that, in addition to Crosier, [Emily Clemons](#) (1818-1900), among others, also believed and wrote about Christ’s special ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, so this was a topic of great interest among those wrestling with their disappointment and clinging to their faith in Christ’s soon return.¹⁹

In 1846, under the influence of Bates, Crosier partially accepted the seventh-day Sabbath, observing both days of worship for about a year while continuing to minister. “We worked so a year, without controversy on the Sabbath question.”²⁰ Eventually, he became “satisfied that Seventh-Dayism is not promotive of the Christian spirit; quit keeping it and gave many reasons. Those who adhered to it denounced me and withdrew fellowship.”

²¹ After Enoch Jacobs (1809-1894), publisher of the *Day-Star*, converted to Shakerism, the Bridegroom Adventists—who maintained belief in the prophetic framework, the Sabbath, and the sanctuary, and identified with the Bridegroom parable of Matthew 25—were left without a publisher. Although the first number of the *Day-Dawn* had appeared in March 1845, this publishing hiatus was a catalyst for Crosier to restart the publication, with over a dozen issues appearing between July 1846 and April 1847.²² By September 20, 1847, he wrote a letter to William Miller asking whether he still believed in the “Shut Door” and, therefore, the prophetic validity of Christ’s soon return.²³

Changing His Beliefs

By early 1847, Crosier had joined [Joseph Marsh](#) (1802-1863) in editing the *Advent Harbinger* in Rochester, New York, but afterward rejected the seventh-day Sabbath and his earlier understanding of the sanctuary. He advocated the “age-to-come” theory. James White, Ellen White, and Joseph Bates indicated that they had initially planned to publish their views in *The Day-Dawn*, but since the periodical had ceased publication, they now published them as a stand-alone tract.²⁴

On July 10, 1853, Owen Crosier married Mariah Polly Alger (1834-1912) and, a year later, they relocated to Michigan, where he worked as an evangelist for the Advent Christian Church. The couple had twelve children.²⁵ He cleared land and developed a farm in Paris township. He afterward moved to Grand Rapids where he helped start a hardware store. During the Civil War he became associate editor of the *Grand Rapids Eagle*. In later life, he changed the spelling of his name to “Crozier.” When one of the first public schools was organized in Grand Rapids, both Owen and Mariah served as teachers. Crozier played a “prominent” role in organizing the Republican Party in Kent County, Michigan. After the war, he moved to Jamestown and became the drain commissioner for Ottawa County. He died on September 12, 1912.²⁶ He and Mariah are buried together in Oakhill Cemetery in Grand Rapids, Michigan.²⁷ In his later years, he fought vigorously to oppose his earlier views about the Sabbath and the Sanctuary doctrines. Even Adventist critic D. M. Canright (1840-1919) observed the irony that Crosier, who had helped formulate the sanctuary doctrine, later rejected it himself.²⁸ J. O. Corliss later (1919) recalled how Crosier became one of the “most bitter opponents” of the Sabbath, contending that the Ten Commandments had been done away with by Christ.²⁹

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NOTES

1. The names of Stephen and Solomon Thatcher from Hopewell, Ontario, New York, both appear in the 1830 U.S. Federal Census but without a list of occupants so presumably Crozier is one of those living with one of these two Thatcher families by 1830.
2. "Death Ends a Life Full of Endeavor," *Evening Press* [Grand Rapids, Michigan], September 16, 1912, 8.
3. Ibid.
4. See note under "Leonard's Corner, Ontario Co.," *The Midnight Cry!* December 21, 1843, 168.
5. O. R. L. Crosier, "Early History of Ontario County Revealed in Story of Late Owen R. L. Crozier," *The Daily Messenger* [Canandaigua, New York], November 22, 1923, 22.
6. "Larneds Corner, N.Y.," *The Midnight Cry!* April 25, 1844, 328.
7. O. R. L. Crosier, "Early History of Ontario County Revealed in Story of Late Owen R. L. Crozier," *The Daily Messenger* [Canandaigua, New York], November 22, 1923, 22.

8. O. R. L. Crosier, "Letter from Bro. Crosier," *The Advent Herald, and Signs of the Times Reporter*, October 2, 1844, 67.
9. Ibid.
10. O. R. L. Crosier, "Early History of Ontario County Revealed in Story of Late Owen R. L. Crozier," *The Daily Messenger* [Canandaigua, New York], November 22, 1923, 22.
11. Ibid.
12. Hiram Edson remarked how he was "closely associated" with Crosier and Hahn. See F. D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry: A Defense of William Miller and the Millerites* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1944), 459; this account is confirmed by an interview in 1904 by J. W. Hofstra with O. R. L. Crosier. See W. A. Spicer, "A Meeting With O. R. L. Crosier," *ARH*, March 29, 1945, 5.
13. M. Ellsworth Olsen, *A History of the Origin and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1926), 181.
14. E.g. Chigemezi N. Wogu, "The Development of Adventist Missiology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Seventh-day Adventism*, eds. M. W. Campbell, et. al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 371-385.
15. W. A. Spicer, "A Meeting With O. R. L. Crosier," *ARH*, March 29, 1945, 5.
16. From the Hiram Edson Manuscript as quoted in George R. Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 63-64.
17. George Storrs, "Go Ye out to Meet Him: The Tenth Day of the Seventh Month," *Bible Examiner*, September 24, 1844, 2. For context, see Merlin D. Burt, "The Historical Background, Interconnected Development, and Integration of the Doctrines of the Sanctuary and the Sabbath, and Ellen G. White's Role in Sabbatarian Adventism from 1844 to 1849," (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2002), 104-105.
18. [James White, ed.] *A Word to the "Little Flock"* (Brunswick, ME: N.p., 1847), 12.
19. Merlin D. Burt, "The Historical Background, Interconnected Development, and Integration of the Doctrines of the Sanctuary and the Sabbath, and Ellen G. White's Role in Sabbatarian Adventism from 1844 to 1849," (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2002), 183.
20. O. R. L. Crosier, "Early History of Ontario County Revealed in Story of Late Owen R. L. Crozier," *The Daily Messenger* [Canandaigua, New York], November 22, 1923, 23.
21. Ibid.
22. Merlin D. Burt, "The Historical Background, Interconnected Development, and Integration of the Doctrines of the Sanctuary and the Sabbath, and Ellen G. White's Role in Sabbatarian Adventism from 1844 to 1849," (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2002), 240, 305.

23. O. R. L. Crosier to William Miller, September 20, 1847, William Jenks Papers, Aurora University.
24. [James White, ed.] *A Word to the "Little Flock"* (Brunswick, ME: N.p., 1847), 1.
25. For genealogical details, see https://www.ancestry.com/invite-ui/accept?token=4cWC2pSOe7vjQZq4ZWCERi-yO6xyl_q15p5NLikliHY=
26. All contemporary sources point to 1912 as the date of death. Some later Adventist historians such as LeRoy Edwin Froom and Alberto R. Timm list his death mistakenly as a year later. E.g. L. E. Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1971), 79; Alberto R. Timm, "O. R. L. Crosier: A Biographical Introduction," Term paper, Andrews University 1991.
27. https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/85275720/owen-russell_loomis-crozier
28. D. M. Canright, *Seventh-Day Adventism Renounced: After an Experience of Twenty-Eight Years by a Prominent Minister and Writer of that Faith* (Kalamazoo, MI: Kalamazoo Publishing Co., 1888), 119.
29. J. O. Corliss, "Early Experiences—No. 3, The Second Prophecy," *ARH* Jan. 30, 1919, 9-10.

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