

# Good Health (America)

## MILTON HOOK

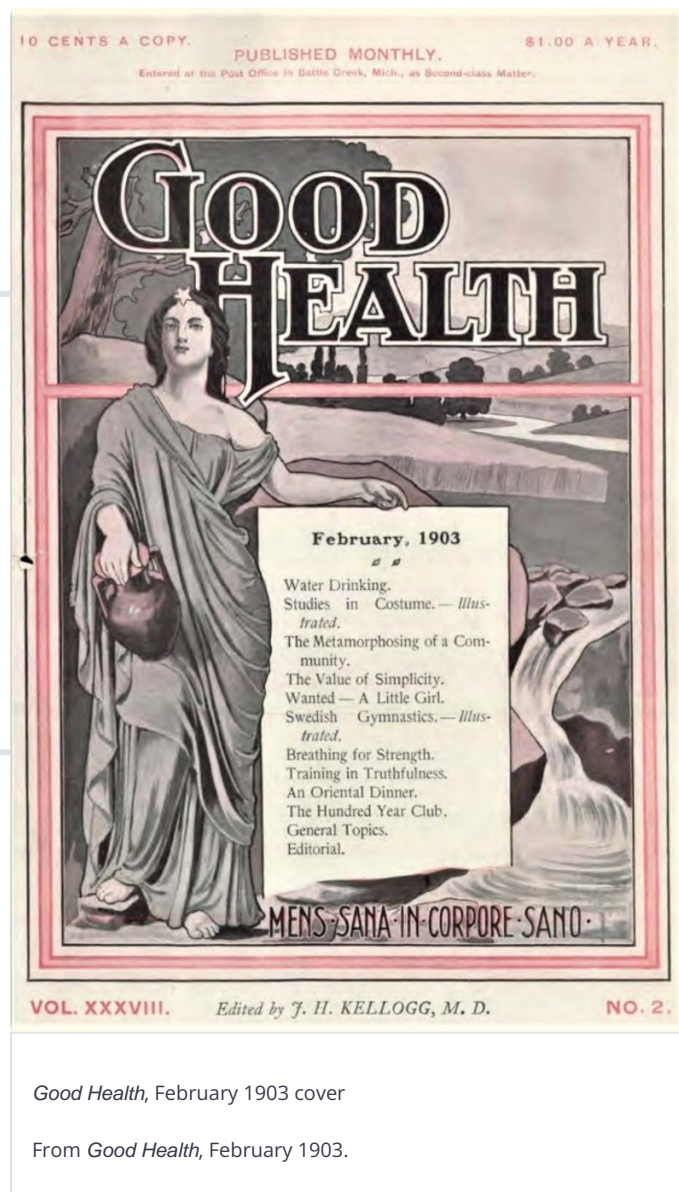
Milton Hook, Ed.D. (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, the United States). Hook retired in 1997 as a minister in the Greater Sydney Conference, Australia. An Australian by birth Hook has served the Church as a teacher at the elementary, academy and college levels, a missionary in Papua New Guinea, and as a local church pastor. In retirement he is a conjoint senior lecturer at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored *Flames Over Battle Creek*, *Avondale: Experiment on the Dora*, *Desmond Ford: Reformist Theologian, Gospel Revivalist* the *Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series*, and many magazine articles. He is married to Noeleen and has two sons and three grandchildren.

Good Health was the first health periodical published by Seventh-day Adventists. Initially entitled the *Health Reformer* (1866-1878), it was issued monthly at Battle Creek, Michigan, in association with the Western Health Reform Institute (WHRI), renamed Battle Creek Sanitarium in 1877.<sup>1</sup> The periodical served the dual purpose of advertising the health institution and instructing the church members and wider community about natural means for the prevention and treatment of disease.

## The *Health Reformer*

The first issue was dated August 1866, with Dr. Horatio S. Lay (1828-1900), WHRI director, serving as the initial editor. It began as an unillustrated production of sixteen pages, its masthead reading "Our Physician, Nature; Obey and Live." Dr. Lay proclaimed in his first editorial the "aim to instruct the people how to avoid sickness, or if sick, how to regain their health" for it is "a moral duty" to live healthfully.<sup>2</sup>

The elements of healthful living advocated in the columns of the periodical were many and basically simple. Rest and adequate sleep, sunshine and fresh air were stressed in the earliest issues.<sup>3</sup> The advice was to drink only water and to abstain from alcohol, tea, coffee and tobacco.<sup>4</sup> The ideal diet excluded meat of any kind.<sup>5</sup> Some



Good Health, February 1903 cover

From Good Health, February 1903.

recipes provided contained no eggs or milk, suggesting a preference for a vegan regimen.<sup>6</sup> Butter was not recommended.<sup>7</sup> Salt was regarded as detrimental, as were sugar and candies.<sup>8</sup> As a rule two meals a day were preferred, with no intake between meals in order to rest the digestive system.<sup>9</sup> Bread baked from coarse flour, rather than white flour, was recommended.<sup>10</sup> Other important elements included dental care, the use of music to relieve stress and of natural remedies rather than reliance on drug medication.<sup>11</sup> Women were advised not to wear tight corsets that hindered deep breathing<sup>12</sup> and to adopt the Reform Dress, details of which were provided in several issues as early as 1868.<sup>13</sup>

Some articles were curious or bound to raise a smile. One writer argued against the wearing of stove-pipe hats that were knocked off when the wearer went through a doorway. The beaver style hat was considered to be more practical.<sup>14</sup> Another urged readers to take a bath rather than hide their body odor with Eau de Cologne.<sup>15</sup> Men were recommended to wear beards because they were a protection against extremes of weather and filtered dust and disease germs from the air.<sup>16</sup> Women, apparently, were left with greater vulnerability to bacteria and blizzards.

The occasional article would not stand up under the scrutiny of subsequent advances in knowledge. For example, early issues recommended phrenology literature as “a most interesting and instructive companion.”<sup>17</sup> One anonymous author demonstrated sexist stereotypes in arguing against woman’s rights advocates as a “feeble minority” of “strong-minded women” who were motivated by “the assumption of equality” as opposed to “men’s sounder judgement.”<sup>18</sup>

## The Kellogg Era

A characteristic of the earliest issues edited by Dr. Lay was the employment of testimonials and explanations from preachers using a biblical or idealistic perspective.<sup>19</sup> After he became editor in 1874, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg (1852-1943) moved toward a somewhat more scientific basis for the articles. He sometimes used an anthropological approach, investigating customs outside his Western culture. For example, he lauded the loose-fitting Chinese clothing style and linked it with their longevity, however tenuous the link might be.<sup>20</sup> This random example illustrated Kellogg’s quest for practical evidence rather than ideology alone.

However, on occasion an article stooped to down from anthropology to popular notions. For example, Kellogg used an article written by a medical doctor describing the Australian aborigine as “the brute creation” whose “intellectual development was but little above that of the larger apes” and whose “children under twelve are hideously ape-like.” He claimed marriage among the natives was accomplished by a male clubbing a young woman and dragging her to his shanty. He further claimed that their custom of burial above ground on wooden platforms was “uncouth,” not realizing that the practice was out of respect for the deceased.<sup>21</sup> In retrospect such articles must be labelled disappointing, even offensive, for failing to rise above the cultural and racial prejudices prevalent but not universal in nineteenth-century America.

By the 1870s the periodical grew to thirty-two pages and increased to its maximum size of ninety pages in 1900 with an annual subscription rate of one dollar.<sup>22</sup> Its overall presentation became more attractive, advancing from the pages simply of block text during the early years to illustrated articles and decorative covers in several colors. Circulation statistics were encouraging, 54,264 copies being reported for the year 1883.<sup>23</sup> This total included 4,000 subscribers from outside the faith.<sup>24</sup>

## Post-Adventist Publication

The periodical ceased to belong to the Seventh-day Adventist church when Dr. Kellogg separated from the denomination. Its final listing in the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* was in 1906. At that time it was an eighty-page periodical and the annual subscription remained at one dollar.<sup>25</sup>

From 1907 a different appealing cover was printed each month.<sup>26</sup> Over time the size of the periodical diminished. In 1937 each monthly issue was thirty-two pages for twenty-five cents.<sup>27</sup> It shrank to sixteen pages for ten cents by 1942,<sup>28</sup> the year before Dr. Kellogg's death.

## Titles

*Health Reformer* (1866-1878); *Good Health* (1879-1953)

Editors

Horatio S. Lay, 1866-1868; editorial committee of twelve, 1868-1871; James White, 1871-1874; J. H. Kellogg, 1874-1942.

---

### SOURCES

*Good Health* (America). Full text of issues from 1866-1907, excepting 1890 and 1901, along with six issues from 1937 and one from 1942 accessible at Adventist Digital Library, <https://adventistdigitallibrary.org/adl-332015/good-health-america>. The same content, listed as the *Health Reformer*, accessible at General Conference Office of Archives, Statistics and Research Online Archive, <https://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/Forms/AllFolders.aspx>

*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. Battle Creek, Michigan: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1884-1886.

*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1904-1906.

---

### NOTES

1. The official name taken by the institution in 1877 was Medical and Surgical Sanitarium, but it became generally known as Battle Creek Sanitarium; *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. edition (1996), s.v. "Battle Creek Sanitarium."
2. H. S. Lay, "To the Reader," *Health Reformer*, August 1866, 8.
3. J. N. Loughborough, "Rest," *Health Reformer*, August 1866, 4; J. Matteson, "Light," *Health Reformer*, September 1866, 20-21; "Ventilate Your Children's Rooms," *Health Reformer*, October 1866, 46.
4. "About Water," *Health Reformer*, September 1866, 30-31; "Liquor Drinking," *Health Reformer*, September 1871, 80; Isaac Sanborn, "My Experience," *Health Reformer*, January 1867, 84.
5. J. N. Andrews, "Flesh as Food for Man," *Health Reformer*, August 1866, 9-11.
6. "Valuable Recipes," *Health Reformer*, February 1867, 103.
7. Isaac Sanborn, "My Experience," *Health Reformer*, January 1867, 84.
8. "The Salt Muddle Again," *Health Reformer*, December 1872, 362; "Candies," *Health Reformer*, February 1867, 104.
9. J. H. Waggoner, "Two Meals a Day," *Health Reformer*, August 1866, 13-14; [Horatio S. Lay], "Eating Between Meals," *Health Reformer*, September 1866, 24.
10. John Byington, "An Item," *Health Reformer*, December 1866, 78.
11. D. C. Hawxhurst, "Care of the Teeth," *Health Reformer*, September 1871, 87; Valentine Hammann, "The Effect of Music," *Health Reformer*, June 1870, 235-237; E. G. White, "Drug Medication," *Health Reformer*, September 1866, 19-20.
12. L. C. Tolhurst, "A Talk With Women," *Health Reformer*, September 1866, 27.
13. E.g., Dr. Russell, "The Reform Dress," *Health Reformer*, January 1868, 105-107.
14. N. E. Farmer, "Hats," *Health Reformer*, October 1866, 43.
15. "Perfumes," *Health Reformer*, September 1871, 75-76.
16. "Why We Should Wear Beards," *Health Reformer*, January 1867, 93.
17. "The Phrenological Journal responds..." *Health Reformer*, September 1866, 32.
18. "Women's Rights and Maternity," *Health Reformer*, December 1872, 381.

19. E.g., "Eld. J.N. Andrews..." *Health Reformer*, December 1866, 80.
20. "Chinese Dress," *Good Health*, January 1888, 11-12.
21. Felix L. Oswald, "International Health Studies: Australia," *Good Health*, January 1891, 1-4.
22. E.g., Frontispiece, *Good Health*, January 1900.
23. "The Publishing Work," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Battle Creek, Michigan: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1884), 76.
24. "Proceedings of the American Health and Temperance Association," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Battle Creek, Michigan: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1884), 66-68.
25. "The Good Health," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Company, 1906), 108.
26. E.g., Frontispiece, *Good Health*, January 1907.
27. E.g., Frontispiece, *Good Health*, January 1937.
28. Frontispiece, *Good Health*, June 1942.

---

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