

More (or Moore), Hannah (1808–1868)

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Hannah More (or Moore) was a missionary, a teacher, and an early Seventh-day Adventist convert (1866) whose tragic death helped prompt the church to develop a more intentional approach to welfare and hospitality.¹



Hannah More

Credit: *Adventist Review*, January 28, 2024.

Early Life

More was born November 22, 1808, to Samuel (1771-1861) and Amy Whiton (1773-1853) More.² Her parents were ardent Congregationalists who ran a farm in Union, Connecticut. An intelligent young woman, More attended Nichols Academy and Monson Academy, where she developed a reputation as a serious Bible student. The principal of Monson Academy affirmed that she had committed the entire New Testament to memory. She later taught school in the region.

Mission Service

At age 31, More petitioned the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (ABCFM) to send her as a missionary to Native Americans in present-day Oklahoma. She arrived at Dwight Mission (near Vian, Oklahoma) in early 1841.³ As a teacher and preceptor, she spent the next six years as a missionary among the Cherokee

and Choctaw tribes, who had been forcibly removed by the United States government from their ancestral homes and farms in the southeast part of the United States in what is known as the Trail of Tears. More learned their languages, but was dismayed to discover that the tribes, like their white plantation owning counterparts, enslaved black people and had brought their enslaved people with them to Oklahoma.

Afterwards, More spent two years teaching in Connecticut and New York (1848-1850) before sailing in 1850 under the sponsorship of the abolitionist American Missionary Association (AMA). From 1851 to 1857, More worked in present-day Sierra Leone with repatriated *Amistad* survivors. These people had led a successful revolt against enslavers onboard the Spanish ship *Amistad*, who had in violation of British and American trade agreements transported captured Africans across the Atlantic Ocean. In the ensuing court case in the United States, the enslaved Mendi people won their freedom, and some of them returned to Sierra Leone. More learned the local language in order to serve as a teacher, preceptor, and preacher there.⁴

More returned to the United States in 1857, where she resumed teaching, attended lectures at Oberlin College, and eventually was employed as the principal of the female seminary in Maxville, Kentucky. When it became obvious that the United States was moving toward Civil War over the question of whether to end slavery or not, in late 1860, More, an ardent abolitionist, decided that it was no longer safe to remain in Kentucky and began a slow journey back north to her family in Connecticut.⁵

While in Connecticut, settling her father's estate and trying to make arrangements to return to Africa as a missionary, More attended a meeting where [Stephen N. Haskell](#) (1833-1922) preached on Revelation 7:1-3, describing the "four angels" holding back the winds of strife. In light of the ongoing war, this message resonated deeply with her, especially its emphasis on sealing God's people.⁶

Haskell later recalled their acquaintance, noting More's strong interest in prophetic interpretation and history. After studying Adventist teachings, More accepted the seventh-day Sabbath.⁷ Correspondence with [Mary Haskell](#) (c. 1812-1894) continued after More returned to Africa to work as an independent missionary at a series of mission stations on Africa's west coast. From Cape Palmas, Liberia, in January 1864, she wrote: "Your people may now consider that you have whole hearted Seventh-day Adventists here, waiting with you for that blessed appearing."⁸ She distributed Adventist literature across western Africa.

More's observance of a seventh-day Sabbath brought her into conflict with fellow missionaries. Due to this opposition to her missionary endeavors and her declining health, she decided to return to the United States. By 1865, Uriah Smith (1832-1903) reported that she "has been thrown out of her employment as a missionary on account of keeping the Sabbath."⁹ Years later, [D. T. Bourdeau](#) (1835-1905) encountered a group of Sabbath-keepers at the mouth of the Senegal River who traced their beliefs to More's influence.¹⁰

In 1866, More returned to Boston and was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in South Lancaster, Massachusetts. She was the first person recorded as baptized in the Village Seventh-day Adventist Church. She

lived with the Haskells on an adjacent property. The following spring, she traveled to Battle Creek, Michigan, expecting to find employment and housing among Adventists who knew her story but was unable to secure either.

Death and Legacy

More eventually accepted an invitation to live with non-Adventists, a former mission colleague's family, in northwestern Michigan.¹¹ Although James (1821-1881) and Ellen White (1827-1915) made plans to assist her return to Battle Creek, she fell ill and died on March 2, 1868. She is buried in East Leland Cemetery in Leland, Michigan.¹²

Ellen White later lamented that the denomination had missed a significant opportunity in their treatment of More. Ellen White wrote a rebuke to the church for not treating a returning missionary as they should. According to White, the Adventist community had been indifferent to her needs and neglected her.¹³ White described her as having “died a martyr to the selfishness of a people who profess to be seeking for glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life.”¹⁴ Reflecting on later missionary efforts, she wrote in 1874: “Oh, how much we need our Hannah More to aid us at this time in reaching other nations.”¹⁵

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. This article is revised and adapted with permission from the forthcoming devotional on Adventist mission history by Michael W. Campbell.
2. For genealogical information, see: *The Barbour Collection of Connecticut Town Vital Records*, vol. 47 (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co, 2002), 102, and Michigan, US, Death Records, 1867-1952, in *Ancestry.com*, https://www.ancestry.com/invite-ui/accept?token=ln4PbQUQXD7B-OgmO_MCpOqScRNWp1JmqxvFTDSk4Mo=.
3. Charles Hammond, *The History of Union, Conn., Founded on Material Gathered by Rev. Charles Hammond* (New Haven, CT: Press of Price, Lee and Adkins, co., 1893), 175.
4. For a comprehensive overview, see William M. Knott, "Foot Soldier of the Empire: Hannah More and the Politics of Service," (Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 2006).
5. Knott, "Foot Soldier of the Empire," 359-360.
6. Ibid., 363-364; Stephen N. Haskell, "How the Message Went to Africa," *ARH*, March 3, 1921, 4-5.
7. Haskell, "How the Message Went to Africa," 4-5.
8. Hannah More, "The Sabbath in Africa," *ARH*, March 29, 1864, 142.
9. See editorial note under "Extracts from Letters," *ARH*, February 7, 1865, 87.
10. Stephen N. Haskell, "How the Message Went to Africa," *ARH*, March 3, 1921, 4-5.
11. See Bill Knott, "Adventism's First Female Missionary," *Adventist Review*, January 28, 2024, <https://adventistreview.org/magazine-article/adventisms-first-female-missionary/>.
12. Her original grave marker was removed to the Ellen G. White Estate, Inc, for safe keeping and a new marker marks the location of her remains. For the site of her grave, see <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/43448808/hannah-more>.
13. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1945), 1:668-670; 2:140-144; see also Bill Knott, "More (or Moore), Hannah (1808-1868)," in *The Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., eds. Jerry Moon and Denis Fortin (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2013), 471-472.

14. White, *Testimonies*, 2:332.

15. White, *Testimonies*, 3:407.

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