

Some Highlights of the Life of **Merritt E. Cornell** (1827-1893) ([www.APLib.org](http://www.APLib.org))  
 See "Merritt E. Cornell: In the Spirit of Peter" *Lest We Forget*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 3-6

<i>Date</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Event</i>
1827/01/29	0	Born in Chili, New York (near Rochester)
1837	10	Moved to Michigan
1844	17	Was a believer in Advent at the Great Disappointment
1849/06/23	22	Married to Angeline Lyon (daughter of Henry Lyon); dedicated their lives to preaching the Advent message
1852	25	Attended Joseph Bates' Sabbath Conference at the Palmer home in Jackson, Michigan, accepted and began preaching the Third Angel's Message, immediately sharing the Sabbath with J. P. Kellogg, and Angeline's father. <sup>1</sup> Joined Hiram Case on a preaching tour in Michigan and Indiana

Kellogg, Lyon, and two other believers, Cyrenius Smith and Dan Palmer were later instrumental in bringing the *Review* publishing work to Battle Creek by financing the land and building for the first publishing house there.

1853	26	May: met James and Ellen White on their first trip to Michigan; joined J. N. Loughborough on an evangelistic tour through Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin
1854	27	May: helped Elders White and Loughborough with evangelism in Locke, Michigan, with only half the people fitting in the schoolroom used for the meetings; White said they should purchase a tent next year, but Cornell suggested doing so at once, and money was raised, he made the trip to purchase it, and with Loughborough conducted June 2-4 in Battle Creek, Michigan the first Sabbatarian Adventist tent meetings ever conducted; the next week they were in Grand Rapids with 1000 in attendance; Angeline helped follow-up Bible interest in the meetings

On May 18 and 19, we held meetings in a schoolhouse at Locke, Michigan. Such a crowd came that two schoolhouses that size could not have held them. In the emergency we took out a window and improvised a pulpit in the empty space so we could speak to all the people, inside and outside, seated in their carriages and on the grass. {1987 JNL, MML 37.2}

The sight of this large assembly led to conversation the next day as to the feasibility of holding tent meetings. As we traveled to Sylvan, Elder White suggested that by another year we might venture the use of a tent. "Why not have one at once?" Elder Cornell urged. The more we talked the more we were impressed to do so. {1987 JNL, MML 37.3}

On arriving at C. S. Glover's about noon on the 22nd, Elder White explained to him what we thought of doing. He asked what the tent would cost. When he was told that \$200 would deliver it to Jackson, he handed Elder White \$35 saying, "This is what I think of it." {1987 JNL, MML 37.4}

By late afternoon we reached Jackson and saw Brethren Smith, Palmer, and J. P. Kellogg. Each of these expressed his opinion in the same manner as had Brother Glover, with the exception of Brother Kellogg who promised to lend us all that was lacking to purchase it. Near sunset of that day, Elders White, Cornell and I retired to a grove and laid the matter before the Lord in earnest prayer. At noon of May 23, Elder Cornell started for Rochester to purchase of E. C. Williams the first meeting tent ever used by Seventh-day Adventists. {1987 JNL, MML 37.5}

At Rochester, Elder Cornell went directly to the sail loft of E. C. Williams. Pleased to learn that we were going to use tents in our labors, this earnest First-day Adventist said, "I have a ten-ounce circular tent 60 feet in diameter which was used only 10 days on a state fairground. It is as good as new. Since I got a good price for the use of it, I will sell it to you for the cost of the material, -\$160. In addition I will give you a nice bunting flag 15 ft. in length with the motto on it 'What is Truth?' " The bargain was speedily completed and in a few hours the tent was on its way to Jackson. {1987 JNL, MML 39.1}

In two weeks from the time we first spoke of the tent enterprise, our tent was erected in Battle Creek on the southeast corner of Tompkins and Van Buren Streets. It was my privilege to give the first sermon. Our voices

sounded well from that elevated location. They said they could hear me preach a mile away. Elder Cornell spoke alternately with me in that meeting. {1987 JNL, MML 39.2}

Mr. Noble, the postmaster of Battle Creek, lived not far from the tent and became very interested. He told everyone he saw to go up to the tent and they would hear something worthwhile. So we had crowds in those three days of our first tent-meetings by Seventh-day Adventists. {1987 JNL, MML 39.3}

Returning from Wisconsin about the middle of June, the Whites met with us at Grand Rapids for a three-day general meeting of our people in that part of the state. It also gave the crowd of citizens at our meeting an opportunity to learn our beliefs. {1987 JNL, MML 39.4}

1855	28	Contributed to a report (from a committee with Joseph Bates and J. H. Waggoner) on spiritual gifts given to the 1855 conference in Battle Creek that proved to be a milestone in the acceptance of Ellen White's prophetic gift.
1858	31	Authored <i>Facts for the Times</i> 137-page book on doctrines
1862	35	Authored <i>Miraculous Powers: The Scripture Testimony on the Perpetuity of Spiritual Gifts, Illustrated By Narratives of Incidents and Sentiments Carefully Compiled from the Eminently Pious and Learned of Various Denominations.</i>
1871	44	Helped Loughborough pioneer the Third Angel's Message in California (San Francisco, Woodland, St. Helena, Oakland, San Jose, Santa Clara)
1872/01/28	45	Received letter from Ellen White about his improper conduct with women (which was causing a division in San Francisco); he accepted her counsel; 3T227-243 "Self-Caring Ministers" written to him (Letter 29, 1872)
1876	49	Lost his ministerial credentials; continued free-lance preaching

See Section "A Public Evangelist" in *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior, Adultery, and Divorce*, pp. 166.2-181.4 which contains parts of 4 Ellen White's letters to Cornell from 1871 to 1880.

1871: But, Brother R, I was shown that you now should be very circumspect in your deportment and in your words. You are watched by enemies. You have great weaknesses for a man who is as strong as you are to move the crowd. As you are now separated from your wife there will be suspicion and jealousy, and falsehoods will be framed [even] if you give no occasion. But if you are not cautious, you will bring a reproach upon the cause of God which could not soon be wiped away. You may feel, as I saw you had felt, that if you were not going to live with your wife, you wished to be free from her. You are restless, uneasy, and unsettled. Satan is tempting you to make a foolish man of yourself. Now is the time for you to show yourself a man, to exhibit the grace of God by your patience, your fortitude, and courage. . . . {TSB 167.1}

1876: God has erected the barriers of testimonies as a wall about you to guard you from falling under the specious wiles of the enemy, but you break all these down and press over everything to follow your inclination. Your sorrow for your sins is like that of those who anciently rent their garments to express their grief but did not afflict their souls. You have not a correct sense of what sin is. The aggravating character of unchastity of thought and actions you have not sensed. Your mind is carnal, and that almost continually. If you really were sorry for your sins, if you really had a true sense of your wrongs, you would exercise that repentance that needeth not to be repented of. {TSB 169.2}

I desire now to state facts. I have been shown that your life and your labors in the cause of God for some years have been a greater injury to the precious cause of present truth than a benefit... {TSB 169.3}

[After his separation from the ministry, Ellen White continued to write to him and his wife, concerned about their salvation. They lived in Maryland for some time in the 1880s, where they were visited by Ellen White.]

1886/09/06	59	In letter to Butler regarding J. H. Waggoner, EGW wrote, "Elder Cornell's credentials were taken away from him; he is a deeply repenting man, humbled in the dust." {21MR 379.5}
1889	62	Moved back to Michigan
1890	63	Reconciled to the church, credentialed again
1893/11/02	66	Died from internal bleeding

Footnotes

1. Corliss, J. O., "The Message and Its Friends---No. 8: Merritt E. Cornell, the Stormy Petrel," *Review*, October 11, 1923, pp. 11, 12