

## **The Wanderings of An SDA Christian Librarian**

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Once upon a time, a long...long... time ago, I was the English teacher and librarian at Blue Mountain Academy, an SDA boarding academy near Hamburg, Pennsylvania. My job description was to teach six classes of English each day (four preparations ) and be responsible for the library.

Blue Mountain Academy was built in 1954-55 at the base of the picturesque Blue Mountain in Northeastern PA. The East Pennsylvania Conference had purchased some 750 acres with seven farms located on them. The academy was erected on a large flat acreage in the midst of these farms. Joan and I were founding faculty members of the institution, coming there in 1954. In the early days the student body fluctuated between 370-420 students.

My wife and I spent nine happy years there, but in 1964 a significant happening occurred in our lives that changed the course of history (at least our history).

I had just completed my MSLS degree at Drexel University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Back then there were only three librarians in academies who had earned a graduate degree in Library Science—Margaret Duncan of Pine Forge Academy in Pennsylvania (an all black school), a librarian at Lynwood Academy in California and I.

I was in my ninth year at BMA when the Columbia Union Conference organized a Union-wide convention of academy teachers at a hotel in Atlantic City, New Jersey. I was asked to arrange for a display of new paperback books. This was a bit maverick because “these books did not have ‘hard’ covers and would not last very long.”

Paperback books were just coming into their own in 1964. Anyway, I took a shine to them primarily because of their cheap prices.

Just a week before the Conference, I received a phone call from Dr. Keld Reynolds, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Loma Linda University who wanted to fly back East and interview me. Dr. Reynolds wanted to arrive at the same time as the Conference was being held, over in New Jersey.

When Dr. Reynolds heard that, he offered to come to Atlantic City and interview me there. Well, California was the farthest from my mind! My family was mostly on the East coast in Youngstown, Ohio. Also, when word spread around the hotel that someone from Loma Linda University had come all the way east to see George about a job, his well-meaning friends confided to him that Southern California was a “hot bed” of Adventist liberalism!

Sometime later while George and Joan pondered all of this, Dr. Reynolds called and asked me if I would be willing to fly West and visit the University for a few days. I agreed, with reservations. It never entered my mind that I might be moving from academy teaching and librarianship to a university, and not as one of the librarians, but as the Director of the Library!

Before the flight West a letter arrived from a woman librarian who called herself Alice Gregg. Alice introduced herself and said she heard I was coming to LLU. She also announced that she had been assigned an office in a bathroom. Well, what a way to be introduced to the library. I was nonplussed, to say the least.

Time has a way of smoothing the bumps of life, and I soon learned that Alice marched to a different drummer. OK, I decided. I’ll march with her!

On the flight West to Los Angeles Dr. Reynolds met me at LAX, and we were soon on our way out. Outside I realized that it was almost dark, which led me to say, "Your twilight is really short!" "Yes," Dr. Reynolds said, "You have longer twilights back East." At the university I was introduced to the library staff and a few of the classroom faculty. It was about this time that I learned I was also responsible for the large medical library at the White Memorial Hospital in Los Angeles (more on this later).

Palm trees and avocados; orange, lemon and grapefruit trees; sunshine galore. What an interesting and exciting part of America. I walked through the orange groves streets on the south side of Loma Linda that are now houses on Daisy, Tulip, Hillcrest and Lawton. I was smitten with the wild and woolly West! Returning home to Pennsylvania, I received a telephone call from Elder E.A. Robertson, Educational Secretary of the Columbia Union Conference. He learned about my "call" and wanted to give me some advice.

"George, you are making a mistake if you accept the offer from Loma Linda. You have only worked in an academy setting. You haven't had any library experience at the college level. You should do that first; then think about the university."

Joan and I parleyed together, and finally I said to my wife, "The university knows my educational background. They know my work experience. They also know I'm in my late thirties, but in spite of all of that they are still extending the invitation to come. Maybe God is saying something to us!" Joan agreed and we accepted the call.

We moved in August of 1964. As we drove through Cajon Pass into Loma Linda, I had told Joan about the mountains around Loma Linda which I had seen so clearly in

early spring. Now they were gone! Our first experience with the smog problem in Southern California!

Dr. and Mrs. Dalton Baldwin had come to Loma Linda earlier and were living on Mead Lane. We had known them in Pennsylvania, so we asked them to find us a house to rent. Dalton found one across the street from them.

Lillian Miller from University Realty rented the house to us. A few months later we bought a new home on Tulip Avenue, which we have owned now for forty years. At the time Joan's father thought we were very foolish to buy a home for \$27,500 with a monthly mortgage payment of \$155 per month!

### **Beginnings at Loma Linda University**

The library at the White Memorial Hospital was in the basement of Paulson Hall. It was probably the largest hospital library in Los Angeles. The holdings of the library were almost exclusively clinical in nature, because the medical school in those days was divided. Students went to the Loma Linda campus for the basic medical sciences and then transferred to the Los Angeles campus for clinical medicine at the White and the Los Angeles County Hospital.

The decision had been made before I arrived to consolidate the two campuses (under pressure from the accrediting body of the American Medical Association). Our church, after a struggle between consolidating at Loma Linda or Los Angeles, decided in favor of Loma Linda.

The library at Loma Linda was primarily basic science, and the one at the White was clinical. My job was to transfer to Loma Linda any books and journals that the Loma Linda library did *not* have. Joyce Marson and Mollie Sitner were the librarians

there at the White. Joyce was in charge. After her husband died at Walla Walla College, Mollie came to live in the Los Angeles area and worked part time with Joyce.

Now you can understand how the ladies felt. I was commissioned to deplete their library and have the items shipped to Loma Linda. I came down to the White once a week to “encourage” the ladies and help them understand that I had no malice toward them. My task was to merge the two libraries on the Loma Linda campus. Sometimes I rode down to Los Angeles with Jerry Pettis, who was working for LLU and later became U.S. congressman from our district in Loma Linda.

Jerry’s untimely death in his private plane near Banning, CA shook up the people of our area. The memorial service was held in the University Church. Two or three helicopters filled with members of U.S. Congress landed on the campus between the church and the Dental School. It was a sad, but impressive service.

As I have said before, I came to Loma Linda in 1964. Just prior to that Dr. G.T. Anderson, President of La Sierra College, was appointed President of a “new” institution—formerly called The College of Medical Evangelists and now called Loma Linda University. He was a fine gentleman and scholar as well as an effective administrator. More about Dr. Anderson later.

Prior to my coming West, there was an addition put on the Vernier Radcliffe Memorial Library. It was a module of six floors of book stacks. The supports for the shelves were also supports for the floors. In other words the configuration of the stacks could never be altered.

Dr. Anderson told me of his plans for the newly re-named institution to reflect the liberal arts as well as the medical sciences. He wanted the library to reflect the new

direction in its collection development program. Now we had space in the library and a charge to fulfill. We were “ripe” for something to happen!

### **The Slotkin Brothers’ Story**

Milton and Stanley Slotkin were Jewish business men who owned a chain of retail stores in southern California called “Abby Rents.” You could rent anything from large pieces of heavy equipment, hospital beds to wedding banquet punch bowls, cups, tablecloths, etc. When you needed something, Abby Rents could rent it to you.

The brothers were good business men with an eye to the profit margin. They also needed tax deductions to keep the IRS from taking too much money. I am not completely clear on how this came about, but the brothers took an interest in the rehabilitation of young Los Angeles gang members whose bodies were covered with tattoos.

Somehow the Slotkins had befriended a plastic surgeon at the White Memorial Hospital . The brothers asked the surgeon if he and his staff could perform plastic surgery on these gang members who were now ashamed of their bodies. The Slotkins promised to pay all of the medical bills—honest benefactors to humanity but always with that profit margin in mind.

One day the brothers heard about a used book store in Burbank, CA that came up for sale. They bought the entire store and its contents of approximately 125,000 books. The object, of course, was to donate the books to a college or university library and then have a tax write-off for several years in the future.

Through some fluke (I think God had a hand in it.) they called LLU, and the call was directed to me. Milton Slotkin was on the phone. He wanted to know if I would like

a gift of a used book store. Now, I lost my equilibrium for a moment. I had been at LLU only a few years and was still “green around the gills.” I told him I needed some time to think about it.

“That’s all right,” he said. “I’ll call again tomorrow. And if you are interested in the contents of the book store, you must move them in three days.” And he hung up. Never in the annals of my brief human history had I ever been placed in such an unusual predicament! Naturally, I went to Alice Gregg, who was Chairman of our Department of Technical Services.

Alice said to me, “You know this collection of books is apt to be rich in literature, art and the social sciences. It will also be full of ‘junk.’ Let’s take it!” I wanted to clear this with my boss, Dr. Robert Cleveland, Vice President for Academic Affairs. He was agreeable and we had six floors of empty stacks available.

Now, how was I going to get these books out here! I talked to the head of Maintenance. He agreed to organize the men and trucks. The next day Slotkin called me, and I told him we were interested. He was delighted! The brigade of men and trucks left for Magnolia Blvd., Burbank, CA. They packed all of the books in boxes and transported them to the LLU library.

The job was done in three days. It was an incredible journey! I was grateful. I told the men to put the boxes on the floors of the new stack module at the library.

Someone on the staff came up with the idea of a faculty party in the stacks with the boxes of books. Several classroom faculty took part opening the boxes and putting the books on the shelves. I know that a number of faculty were aghast at the titles of

some of the books. I heard their comments, but we were quick to remind them that this was a used book store.

After the library staff recovered from this wild adventure, the Administration held a reception for the Slotkin brothers. Milton, who seemed a little older than Stanley, made a little speech at which time he presented to me two pages from an Incunabula, beautifully rubricated and illuminated in the margins and the initial letters of each paragraph.

I asked him where he found these. He was cagey, at first, but admitted that they were lifted out of the Incunabula books. When I objected to what he had done, his response was, “ You are interested in preservation, but I am in the business of wholesale distribution.” What else could I say? C’est la vie!

Sometime later I was talking to Dr. Landeen, who often came to the La Sierra library to do research. He told me that at the end of World War II when the American forces entered Berlin, he was responsible for visiting the great libraries of the cities to see how badly they were destroyed by the ravages of war.

Dr. Landeen said he found Incunabula that had pages missing, whether by bombs or pilferage. These beautiful pages ended up in antiquarian book stores in America. Where the Slotkins found/bought them is unknown to me.

One other word on the new stack addition. The faculty here were anxious to separate academic computing from the business office computing, but the academics did not know where to go. About this time two former faculty members from Pacific Union College were hired on campus: Dr. Paul Stauffer, as Dean of the graduate School, and Dr. Ivan Neilsen to be responsible for heading up an academic computing facility.



The problem was that Ivan had no space assigned to him. Being aggressive and of an entrepreneurial character, he learned about all of the library's new space. He approached me and asked to have the top floor of the stack module. I agreed to "loan" it to him until space became available. I also told him I wanted to use his facility including a programmer's time.

I saw in this move an opportunity to computerize our serials holdings and thereby printing out copies of it in book form. We did that for a number of years. Ella Belle Groves, Chairman of our Department of Periodicals, and her staff spent hours at a keypunch machine punching out IBM cards and then taking boxes of the punched cards up to Ivan's facility.

One of the programmers assigned to our job had to program a large "Mother Board" which he installed in the side of the mini computer. Then he packed all of the cards in the top of the machine, pressed the button and voila, the "Periodicals Holdings" books were printed out, bound and available on all levels of the journal stacks and a few other areas on campus

The first several editions were printed in all caps. Difficult to Read! Young librarians today do not realize the great lead forward when the computer could cope with upper and lower case letters. The early computing efforts might seem primitive, but that is called "Progress." The mainframe and mini computer of those by-gone days have been replaced by the PC and Mac, both of which are infinitely more powerful than the early giants (bless Intel's chip!). Progress again!

One delightful characteristic of Dr. Neilsen was his sense of humor. "George, you know your library is going to be replaced by the computer and a paperless society."

He told me that many times as he passed through our lobby on his way up to his ivory tower. I usually retorted with the comment, “That may be true, Ivan, but you will still need librarians to plug your computers in the wall sockets.”

### **Merger with La Sierra**

A few years after I arrived, the accrediting committee of WASC came for a formal visit. They wanted to see if there were any changes from The College of Medical Evangelists to Loma Linda University. Well, there wasn't much change except that the new president was not an MD. He was a Ph.D. in the liberal arts mode. Also, the library was expanding quickly into the humanities and the social sciences.

The major criticism was that we had very few undergraduate students, no “College of Arts and Sciences.” The WASC committee said that if we were to continue to use the word “University” in our title, we needed an undergraduate component. Their suggestion was one of two scenarios: create a College of Arts and Sciences at Loma Linda or merge with a liberal arts college near-by.

Dr. Anderson, our President, picked up on the first suggestion. It had been a dream of his to build a small arts and sciences college here at Loma Linda. But church politics militated against it, because the LLU Board was composed of all the Union Conference Presidents—all of whom were looking out for their own local colleges—PUC, WMC, EMC, etc.

The presidents were afraid that the pre-med students at the new college on the LLU campus would have cart blanche acceptance into the School of Medicine, and their students would be left out. Whether this would come true or not, one could not say. Suffice it to say, the Board rejected Dr. Anderson's dream. Subsequently, the Board

negotiated with our Adventist college in Riverside—La Sierra College, some twenty miles away.

In the merging of the campuses, the two libraries came into question: Who should be the Director of both libraries. A history professor at La Sierra began promoting himself as the Director of University Libraries. In the end, Dr. Cleveland asked me to be the head of both campus libraries.

We tried our best to make the two libraries look as if they belonged to one institution. I spent two days a week at La Sierra and three days at Loma Linda. I conducted joint library faculty meetings—first on one campus and then on the other.

We initiated a bus service back and forth between the two libraries. I told Dr. Cleveland I wanted to do this and asked if he had any money. He said he didn't. 'Would you support me if I use library funds to initiate the service?' He agreed and the bus service began to carry students, faculty, library materials and more.

Probably the greatest contribution I made to the merger was to lift the La Sierra librarians salaries to match those at Loma Linda. It took some magic manipulations of the La Sierra budget but it worked out.

The "marriage" between the two institutions was not a happy one. Faculty on both campuses were unhappy with the arrangement. When the great "Divorce" came sometime later, after I had left, it was a blessing for both parties, in my opinion.

FOOTNOTE: Today a "medical" university is no longer a problem to accreditation associations. In support of this statement I will remind you that Hannaman Medical College of Philadelphia became Hannaman University; Jefferson Medical School

(Philadelphia) became Thomas Jefferson University—without significant changes to their programs or student bodies. Times do change!

**Heritage Room:**

The Loma Linda library had a small room on the second floor designated “Historical Records.” Some of the staff called it, “Hysterical Records.” It housed Ellen G. White original letters and documents related to the founding of CME. Why were these papers not in the EGW Estate at the General Conference?

If my information is correct, the medical faculty and administration of CME put forth strong arguments that these Ellen White letters dealing with the founding of the CME should stay with the college.

In any event they were here! A librarian by the name of Irene Schmidt was in charge of the room and overprotective of the materials. Even her boss (me) had to be careful of how he approached the letters.

About this time the White Estate Office of the General Conference announced that they were going to microfilm their EGW letters and documents and make them available to scholars on the West coast, namely LLU. Elder Arthur White came to see me and said he would provide a half-time salary for a curator of these materials, if I would provide the other half.

I agreed and this was the beginning of the Department of Archives and Special Collections (the Heritage Room). This was a difficult time for Arthur White. He was the grandson of Ellen White and had been very possessive of her letters, but the Board at the GC had voted to distribute them to Loma Linda. (later to other places in the world)

Now, I needed a special person to head up the Department—someone with a religion degree and a Masters in Library Science. I called my friend Hedy Jemison, the curator of the EGW materials at Andrews University in the Seminary building. Hedy took some time to think about my request.

One day she called me and said that a young man by the name of Jim Nix was graduating from the Seminary with a M.Div. Degree. I might ask him. I don't remember the exact circumstances of our first meeting (I have a senior moment at this point), but I hired Jim as the Chair of the Department of Archives and Special Collections. Soon after he arrived I asked him to attend the University of Southern California. I felt it was important for him to have a Masters in Library Science.

Later when I talked to Arthur White, he told me Jim was divorced, and he felt reluctant to give the EGW materials into the care of a divorced man. Jim had told me the circumstances surrounding his wife's leaving him. Arthur White and I talked a number of times, and I tried to lead him along to my persuasion on the issue. I'm sure he must have talked to Hedy at Andrews University.

Oh! I didn't finish telling you about Irene. One day she came to my office.

"Mr. Summers, you remember that my mother is living with me?"

"Yes, Miss Schmidt, I remember."

"Well, she is quite ill and requires nursing home care, but it is expensive. I can't afford it."

"Oh, Miss Schmidt," I said. "I'm sorry. What are you planning to do?"

"I have decided to retire early and spend full-time caring for my mother at home."

I admired her for her motherly dedication. Irene was as good as her word. And so, out of the Office of Historical Records was born the Heritage Room.

FOOTNOTE: A note about the John Harvey Kellogg chairs in the Heritage Room. LLU gave me a six-week Sabbatical to go to Battle Creek, Michigan for research. Joan and I stayed in the old Fieldstone Building, across from Kellogg's "Greek Temple." We stayed in a guest room. From there we went out each day to find SDA memorabilia. The chairs came from patient rooms in the Battle Creek San.

At the Adventist Academy we found boxes of new silverware with the monogram BCS (Battle Creek San). There should be a box in the current Heritage Room. We also found several patient blankets. We brought one back. I also found a large collection of 8 x 10 black and white photos of the famous people who frequented the BCS. I borrowed a copy-board and a camera and copied each picture to bring back—Eleanor Roosevelt, Eddy Canter playing golf on the San's golf course, J.C. Penney, Emilia Airhart, etc.

One night Joan and I were the only ones in the Fieldstone building, and we decided to go up to the attic. That is where we found the chairs. We tagged about 25 of them with "LLU," and I received permission from the hospital administration to ship them back home.

### **Library Construction: La Sierra**

The La Sierra campus of Loma Linda University had been gearing up for some time to build a new library. Mr. Glenn Hilts had been the Director of the college library for many years. Now I came into the picture as director of both campus libraries. This was a touchy situation, and I tried to use "kid gloves." As I have said before the marriage of the two campuses was not entered into with full faculty embrace.

Glenn and his staff had written a “Library Program,” which delineated the interior of the library and the work flow which accompanied it. I came along and tried to put “icing” on the cake.

The library was to be two floors above ground and one underground. I pleaded for a third floor above ground—not a finished one, but only a shell that we could fill in as money became available. The college Board felt they could not afford the shell. I lost that battle. In retrospect, my pleading for the extra floor was the right thing to do. Now twenty years later the library needs an addition, and the current county building code will not allow the extra floor. (So I am told.)

One battle that I did win was my insistence that we hire a Library Designer. I wanted a color-coordinated building from top to bottom. Also I didn’t want to be caught in library faculty meetings deciding colors and furniture designs. The administration backed me this time, and we hired Linda Appelt from down on the coast. I was impressed with Linda—not only her prior experiences designing libraries, but also her personal appearance each time that she came. She was color-coordinated!

Linda asked for complete control of all the colors in the building—the outside brick, the carpet, the furniture even down to our desk pads and wastepaper baskets. I gave it to her. Now that doesn’t mean she went off on her own without consulting the library staff. We had many meetings. Linda presented her ideas; and, for the most part, we accepted them. Those few who were unhappy couldn’t blame me. “It was Linda’s fault!”

The new library was perched on a hill overlooking the rest of the campus. The library was build around an atrium—all glassed-in with open sky at the top. The students

could go out and study there among the plants and flowers, weather permitting. We hosted a couple of weddings out in the atrium. The bride and groom walked down the grand staircase from the second floor. It was impressive. We also hosted a Spanish dance troupe that came and performed out there. In a library? Yes, in a library. Such fun!

I was very proud of the new library. Most of the credit should go to Glenn Hilts and his staff who spent hours on writing the Library Program. The architect (name slips my mind) took the Program and designed the interior of the building. Linda and her creativity made it beautiful. As I said before, I added the “icing” to the cake.

### **Library Construction: Loma Linda**

I am not sure if any other Adventist librarian has had the privilege of planning two university libraries or not. I did, and I am grateful for it.

In 1978 the Vernier Radcliffe Memorial Library at Loma Linda was full and overflowing. We were casting about to plan a major addition to the library. So, we did what was done at La Sierra: We wrote a “Library Program” describing what we needed in terms of departments, personnel and work flow. There was no money for the addition, but we had great faith that something would materialize, and it did.

Don Prior, our Loma Linda Vice President for Advancement, had talked to me about finding money. He had made contact with the Del E. Webb Foundation. The Del Webb Construction Company had been building hotels up and down the California coast as well as Las Vegas.



Don caught them at the right time. They were “fat” with profits and didn’t want to give it all to the IRS, so they set up a private foundation to hold their profits and were anxious to find a recipient of their largess.

The Foundation wanted Don to make a presentation to their Board. Don asked me and Dr. Bieber, our President, to come with him to Los Angeles. The meeting was held in the conference room of the Del E. Webb Foundation. In preparation for the meeting I took a copy of the Library Program that I had bound in tan leather.

That did the trick plus Don’s charm. He was notified sometime later of a gift of approximately \$4,000,000. The administration added other gift monies to complete the project. The Del Webb people are like the Slotkin brothers. They know how to make money.

FOOTNOTE: Del Webb Construction Co. saved their profits from IRS by setting up a private foundation with the understanding that their construction company would build our library addition. Then Loma Linda paid the construction company out of money given to us by the Del Webb Foundation. All very legal. Pretty tricky, wouldn’t you say?

At Loma Linda we hired Marshall Brown as our interior design person. We had gone down to Chula Vista to see Marshall’s work at a public library and liked what we saw. He was a different personality from Linda Appelt at La Sierra. He was more of a salesman who promoted his ideas. I don’t mean to infer that we didn’t like his ideas. He had good ones. There were two areas that, in retrospect, I would have done differently.

Marshal wanted the chairs at the tables to be tubular stainless steel. His reasoning was that one could see “through” the chairs, and that would give an airy atmosphere to