

Centennial Moments

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Early Beginnings at Loma Linda

The story of the birth of Loma Linda is replete with a series of bankruptcies followed by providential beginnings. In an earlier article in this series we mentioned some of these early attempts at trying to make Loma Linda into a lucrative health resort. But with each failed attempt the local area residents began to call the place "Lonesome Linda."

During the first five years of the twentieth-century Seventh-day Adventist co-founder Ellen G. White prophetically described a series of properties in Southern California. During those early years she guided church leaders to properties located both in San Diego (Paradise Valley Hospital) and Glendale (Glendale Adventist Medical Center) that quickly thrived as patients came for treatment. Yet, she continued to appeal for yet another property that she said would providentially become available.

As she made her appeals the local Adventist church leadership wondered how they could afford another institution. They were already saddled with more debt than they felt they should be carrying. At the same time, the denomination was in the midst of a crisis as the church struggled with the fate of the then world-famous Battle Creek Sanitarium. This crisis also had

its effect upon Adventist medical education as church leaders sought a new way for training world-be medical missionary physicians. Within this vacuum Ellen G. White had the foresight to see both the need for another health institu-



tion in Southern California and the need for a new Adventist medical school.

Mrs. White was convinced that this property that the church needed to procure existed. Church members in Southern California began to look for such a property between Riverside, San Bernardino, and Redlands. One such person, John Allen Burden, took Mrs. White's counsel seriously.

A local Adventist pastor

first located the property and brought it to the attention of John Burden. With no time to lose Burden contacted Mrs. White. He told her that this property he had found had been invested with \$155,000 (worth an estimated 3.1 million dollars in today's currency), the price had been reduced to \$110,000. Despite this significant savings, church leaders were not interested in any more debt.

Ellen White came to see Burden on her way across the country to attend the next General Conference session. At the train station he promised to keep her informed about developments concerning the property. The price was reduced to \$85,000, and then again to \$45,000. The investors in the property were desperate to get whatever money they could out of the property.

It was at this point that Mrs. White was in Washington, D.C., at General Conference session that she asked her son, W. C. White, to telegram Mr. Burden asking him to secure the property. "This is the very property we ought to have," she wrote. "Do not delay; for it is just what is needed.... We will do our utmost to help you raise the money."

With this counsel Mr. Burden set to work to see what he could do to purchase the Loma Linda property if it was at all possible.