



## “Far More Than Bed and Bath”

For a number of years, the editor of the *Journal of Adventist Education* has discussed with various officers of the Adventist Student Personnel Association (ASPA) the possibility of highlighting the unique needs of residence deans and students in our boarding academies, colleges, and universities. Residence-hall living has had a major impact on the development of a significant number of Seventh-day Adventists. The shared experience of “going away to school,” learning to live with a roommate, seeking autonomy and independence while guided by a parent-like person called a dean, learning the responsibilities and privileges of residence-hall life while preparing for life in the wider society—all are important experiences that significantly shape our young people, and are deserving of attention by educators and administrators.

Donald W. Murray spent nearly 42 years as a residence-hall dean. Most recently, he was the dean of men at Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Maryland. Long recognized by his peers as an educator and mentor, Murray will share his insights and passions through this regular column.—Eds.



Battle Creek College dormitory students, 1899-1900, on the steps of the ladies' dorm. At the far left is Professor Homer Salisbury; at the right is Chef Frank Wilson.

**L**et's begin at the beginning. The church's first attempt at higher education began with Battle Creek College, established in 1874 in Battle Creek, Michigan. Moral education for our educational pioneers was a priority right from the beginning. Consider this quotation from the first college catalogue:

“The founders of Battle Creek College have deemed it necessary for the better protection of our sons and daughters, to establish this school in which moral and religious influences are made of first importance. This is here done by shielding them [the students] from the base influences that undermine the characters in many of our institutions of learning without urging upon any personal special religious views.”<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the high resolve made by those pioneers to do “moral education,” Battle Creek College did not have residence halls. Six years after the college opened its doors, its catalogue continued to state that, “Dormitories are considered unsafe for the healthful growth of students and are, for that reason not provided. But many houses of the citizens are open at a moderate cost to such as desire board and lodging.”<sup>2</sup>

Where did this seemingly cavalier attitude about student housing originate? It should be noted that the history of residence halls in American higher edu-

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cation is filled with stories of antisocial behavior among students, including vandalism and violence against teachers and administrators.<sup>3</sup> By 1850, new construction on U.S. college campuses for male students did not include dormitories. It was during this time that President Henry Tappan, of the University of Michigan, converted the school's dormitory to classrooms.<sup>4</sup>

In 1861, Vassar College was established for the education of women. At this time, the trend was to provide dormitories for women's schools but not for those catering to males.<sup>5</sup>

The educational mindset by the mid-19th century, then, revealed a noticeable turning away from stringent rules and moralistic efforts to control student behavior. A German philosophy of education advocating that schools should assume no responsibility for a student beyond the classroom had begun to gain support.<sup>6</sup>

Into this milieu came the Battle Creek College pioneers. They wanted to

*Continued on page 35*

*The Prepare Curriculum: Teaching Prosocial Competencies* (Goldstein, 1999): This program is designed for students who are aggressive, withdrawn, or otherwise deficient in social competencies. It includes activities and materials for middle and high school students in 10 areas, and deals with topics such as problem-solving, anger control, stress management, and cooperation. Published by Research Press, Department 95, P.O. Box 9177, Champaign, Illinois 61826.

*Working Together* (Cartledge & Kleefeld, 1994): incorporates stories and activities based on folk literature to teach social skills to students in grades 3-6, and older students with special needs. Published by American Guidance Service, 4201 Woodland Road, Circle Pines, Minnesota 55014.

*Skillstreaming the Adolescent: New Strategies and Perspectives for Teaching Prosocial Skills* by Arnold P. Goldstein and Ellen McGinnis (1997) and *Skillstreaming the Elementary School Child: New Strategies and Perspectives for Teaching Prosocial Skills* by the same authors (1997) provide activities designed to develop competence in dealing with peers, family, and authority figures. Skillstreaming programs for elementary and preschool children are also available. Research Press, Department 95, P.O. Box 9177, Champaign, Illinois 61826.

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# DEAN'S COLUMN

*Continued from page 24*

operate a coeducational institution that emphasized moral development for both genders. In both areas, they were going against the mainstream of American education. It soon became apparent that they could not accomplish their goals without instituting programs that emphasized whole-person development beyond the classroom.

By its second year (1875), Battle Creek College had begun to assume more responsibility for student housing options.<sup>7</sup> After 10 years of operation (1884), all women were housed in South Hall unless they lived with parents.<sup>8</sup> Finally, in 1887, some 13 years after the college opened; both men and women were housed on campus. The women moved into West Hall; the men into the recently vacated South Hall.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps to make a statement about the importance of this step, the first preceptors (deans) were W. W. Prescott and his wife, Daisy. Prescott was also college president.<sup>10</sup>

That's how residence-life began in the educational ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Future columns will discuss other aspects of residence life and the role of residence-hall deans. ✍

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