

Manuscript Release #1087 ✓

[Release requested by Morris C. Lowry, a teacher at Southwestern Adventist College, for possible use in a book on Robert M. Kilgore. Portions of the letter have appeared in Manuscript Release #106 and in volume 5 of the E. G. White Biography.--KHW.]

A VISIT TO GRAYSVILLE, TENNESSEE AND HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA

(Written June 30, 1904, from Nashville, Tennessee, to Marian Davis.)

Friday morning, June 17, accompanied by Willie, Sara, and Maggie, I left Nashville for Graysville, where I spent Sabbath and Sunday.

I found that the work at Graysville has made much progress. Graysville is a homelike place, a pretty little village in a valley surrounded by hills. A large part of the village is made up of the homes of Seventh-day Adventists. Timber is cheap in that part of the country, and building does not cost as much as it does in many other places.

On Sabbath morning I spoke to a large congregation in our church. The Lord was with me, and I had much freedom in speaking. Three ministers from outside churches were present. Elder Butler spoke in the afternoon.

On Sunday we were taken to see the different lines of work that are being carried on by our people in Graysville. We went over the school buildings, and then we visited the 25-acre farm on the hill, which has recently been acquired by the conference, and has been leased to the school. On this farm we saw large fields of corn being cultivated by the students, broad pasture land, and on the hill 30 acres of strawberries.

The school is doing well. An addition is needed to the main building, for the chapel is not large enough. But we advised those in charge to wait

until the sanitarium could be put in running order. Finishing and equipping this institution will require all the means that they can command at present.

From the school farm we drove to the sanitarium. I am much interested in this institution. It is built on the mountainside, in the midst of a grove of trees. There are pine, oak, chestnut, hickory, and many other varieties of beautiful trees. With proper care this grove can be made very beautiful. It is as healthful a location for a sanitarium as I have ever seen. It is a place that you would delight in. The view from the top story is very fine. I was taken to the spring, which is a little farther up the mountain. This spring gives an abundance of soft, pure water, and is a treasure of inestimable worth.

On our return, the brother who was driving stopped at the homes of many of our brethren in the village. I did not get out of the carriage, but we drove up to the gate, and the friends came out and shook hands with me. Whole families--father, mother, and children--came out to speak to me, and I shook hands with each one, not forgetting the children.

We found Brother and Sister Steward living in a home of their own. They have a comfortable little cottage and two acres of land, planted with berries, grapes, plums, and other kinds of fruit. Twice while I was in Graysville they sent me a box of raspberries, which they had picked from their own garden.

Brother Robert Kilgore has a home in Graysville. He is now holding tent meetings in a village in northern Georgia, about 25 miles south.

Sister Kilgore is with him. Their son Charles is business manager of the Graysville school. He went with us to show us the different places of interest.

Elder Smith Sharp lives near the school, and his daughter, Mrs. Lenker, who for several years has been matron of the school home, is now living in her own new house nearby. Brother and Sister Lenker entertained us during our visit.

Elder Sharp's mother lives with him. She is nearly 90 years old. She is a cheerful woman, in possession of all her mental faculties, but is blind and almost deaf. We had a very pleasant conversation with her, and before we left we had a season of prayer together.

Our visit to Graysville was a very pleasant one. We were sorry that we could not stay longer, so that we might have more time to talk with the brethren and sisters there.

Early on Monday morning we took the train for Huntsville. We reached the school at one o'clock the same day. That afternoon we were taken over a portion of the school farm. We find that there are nearly 400 acres of land, a large part of which is under cultivation. Several years ago Brother S. M. Jacobs was in charge of the farm, and under his care it made great improvement. He set out a peach and plum orchard, and other fruit trees. Brother and Sister Jacobs left Huntsville about three years ago, and since then the farm has not been so well cared for. We see in the land promise of a much larger return than it now gives, were its managers given the help they need.

Brother Jacobs put forth most earnest, disinterested efforts, but he was not given the help that his strength demanded. Sister Jacobs also worked very hard, and when her health began to give way, they decided to leave Huntsville and go to some place where the strain would not be so heavy. Had they then been furnished with efficient helpers and with the means necessary to make the needed improvements, the advancement made would have given Brother Jacobs encouragement. But the means that ought to have gone to Huntsville did not go, and we see the result in the present showing.

Recently the suggestion has been made that the school at Huntsville is too large, and perhaps it would be better to sell the property there, and establish the school elsewhere. But in the night season instruction was given me that this farm must not be sold. The Lord's money was invested in the Huntsville school farm to provide a place for the education of colored students. The General Conference gave this land to the Southern work, and the Lord has shown me what this school may become, and what those may become who go there for instruction, if His plans are followed.

There is need at the Huntsville school of a change in the faculty. There is need of money, and of sound, intelligent generalship, that things may be well kept up, and that the school may give evidence that Seventh-day Adventists mean to make a success of whatever they undertake.

Wise plans are to be laid for the cultivation of the land. The students are to be given a practical education in agriculture. This education will be of inestimable value to them in their future work. Thorough work is to be done in cultivating the land, and from this the students are to learn

how necessary it is to do thorough work in cultivating the garden of the heart.

The facilities necessary for the success of the school must be provided. At present the facilities are very meager. There is not a bathroom on the premises. A small building should be put up, in which the students can be taught how to care for one another in times of sickness. There has been a nurse at the school to look after the students when they were sick, but no facilities have been provided. This has made the work very discouraging.

The students are to be given a training in those lines of work that will help them to be successful laborers for Christ. They are to be taught to be separate from the customs and practices of the world. They are to be taught how to present the truth for this time, and how to work with their hands and with their head to win their daily bread, that they may go forth to teach their own people. The bread-winning part of the work is of the utmost importance. They are to be taught also to appreciate the school as a place in which they are given opportunity to obtain a training for service.

The teachers should constantly seek wisdom from on high, that they may be kept from making mistakes. They should give careful consideration to their work, that each student may be prepared for the line of service to which he is best adapted. All are to be prepared to serve faithfully in some capacity.

No laxness is to be allowed. The man who takes charge of the Huntsville school should know how to govern himself and how to govern others.

The Bible teacher should be a man who can teach the students how to present the truths of the Word of God in public, and how to do house-to-house work. The business affairs of the farm are to be wisely and carefully managed.

Each student is to take himself in hand, and with God's help overcome the faults that mar his character. And he is to show an earnest, unselfish spirit in the welfare of the school. If he sees a loose board in a walk or a loose paling on the fence, let him at once get a hammer and nails, and make the needed repairs. The wagons and harnesses should be properly cared for and frequently examined and repaired. When harnesses and wagons are sent out in a dilapidated condition, human life is endangered.

These little things are of much more importance than many suppose in the education of students. Businessmen will notice the appearance of the wagons and harnesses, and will form their opinions accordingly. And more than this, if students are allowed to go through school with slack, shiftless habits, their education will not be worth half as much as it would be if they were taught to be thorough in all they do. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." Little things needing attention, yet left for days and weeks till they become an unsightly neglect, teach the students lessons that will cling to them for a lifetime, greatly hindering them in their work. Such an example is demoralizing, and students whose education is after this order are not needed in the world.

Should not our God be served most faithfully? We are called upon as teachers to rise up with firm purpose of heart, and discipline ourselves with sternness and vigor to habits of order and thoroughness. All that our

hands find to do is to be well done. We have been bought with a price, even the blood of the Son of God, and all that we do is to honor and glorify our Redeemer. We are to work in partnership with Christ, as verily as Christ works in partnership with the Father.

Christ is pleading for us in the presence of God, and we are to lay aside every weight, "and the sin which doth so easily beset," in order that we may follow our Lord. All that we do, whether it be done with the hands or with the head, is to be done with exactitude. Then Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren.

The soul suffers a great loss when duties are not faithfully performed, when habits of negligence and carelessness are allowed to rule the life. Faithfulness and unselfishness are to control all that we do. When the soul is left uncleansed, when selfish aims are allowed to control, the enemy comes in, leading the mind to carry out unholy devices and to work for selfish advantage, regardless of results.

But he who makes Christ first and last and best in everything, will not work for selfish purposes. Unselfishness will be revealed in every act. The peace of Christ cannot abide in the heart of a man in whose life self is the mainspring of action. Such a one may hold the theories of the truth, but unless he brings himself into harmony with the requirements of God's Word, giving up all his ambitions and desires for the will and way of Christ, he strives without purpose; for God cannot bless him. He halts between two opinions, constantly vacillating between Christ and the world. It is like one striving for the mastery, yet cumbering himself by clinging to heavy weights.

To Brother Rogers, who is to take charge of the Huntsville, school, I would say, Look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith. You will have provocations, but do not lose your patience and your self-control. Do not allow yourself to be easily provoked. I am sure that you are in the right place, and I ask you to work with an eye single to the glory of God.

We left Huntsville on Wednesday afternoon, and reached Nashville at seven on the evening of the same day. Since our return we have been looking for places suitable for sanitarium work. Yesterday evening Edson and Emma and I rode out to see a place about five miles from Nashville. It is an old-time plantation. There are 385 acres in the property. The house is a large, brick one, and stands in one of the most beautiful groves of trees I have ever seen. It would be an excellent place for a camp meeting. But we are quite decided that it is not suitable for sanitarium purposes. A great many changes would have to be made in the house to adapt it to our work. Besides this, part of the land is bottom land, very low, and at certain seasons of the year is covered with water. The river runs on two sides of the property. We do not think that it would be wisdom to pay thirty thousand dollars for this place.

We are much more favorably impressed with another place at which we have been looking. This is known as the Boscobel College, and in the past has been used as a girls' school. There are two large, brick buildings, and ten acres of land. We are told that the place can be leased for a moderate rental. There are about fifty rooms, partially furnished, and the place is supplied with city water, and is provided with a good heating apparatus and with other facilities necessary for sanitarium work.

About nine miles from Nashville, toward Edgefield Junction, Brethren Sutherland and Magan found a farm of 400 acres for sale, which they thought might be used for school purposes.

As we looked this place over, we became deeply interested in it. The size of the farm, its location, the distance that it is from Nashville, and the moderate sum for which it could be purchased, seemed to point it out as the very place needed for our school work here. The house is old, but it can be used until more suitable buildings can be erected.

Other properties were examined, but we found nothing so well suited to the work. The farm is so large that it not only affords a place for the school for the training of white teachers, but a place also for a colored sanitarium and a training school for colored students. The school for white people and the sanitarium and school for colored people can stand entirely separate, and yet the teachers can counsel together; and the forces of both will thus be strengthened.

The price of the place, including standing crops, farm implements, and over 70 head of cattle, was \$12,723. I felt so thoroughly convinced that it was a favorable location for the work that I advised our brethren to make the purchase.

The place has been purchased, and as soon as possible Brethren Sutherland and Magan, with a few experienced helpers, will begin school work. We feel confident that the Lord has been guiding in this matter.

The plan upon which our brethren propose to work is to select some of the best and most substantial young men and women from Berrien Springs and

other places in the North, who believe that God has called them to the work in the South, and give them a brief training as teachers. Thorough instruction will be given in Bible study, physiology, the history of our message; and special instruction will be given regarding the cultivation of the land. It is hoped that many of these students will eventually connect with schools in various places in the South. In connection with these schools there will be land that will be cultivated by teachers and students, and the proceeds from this work will be used for the support of the schools.--Letter 215, 1904. ✓

White Estate
Washington, D. C.
September 27, 1984
Entire Letter