JOHN LOUGHBOROUGH

JOHN NORTON LOUGHBOROUGH
Birth: January 26, 1832
Death: 1924
Accomplishments: Preacher, literature evangelist, author of Hand Book of Health
John Loughborough is considered to be the first lay preacher and non-Sabbatarian Adventist. He became a Seventh-day Adventist in 1852. He supported himself as a preacher by working at odd jobs and some carpentry work. He was ordained as a minister in 1854.

From 1854 he worked extensively in New York, Pennsylvania and the mid-west. He was also a literature evangelist.

As a result of his stay in Dansville, New York, Loughborough supported health reform. He wrote a book entitled Hand Book of Health; or a Brief Treatise on Physiology and Hygiene.

JOHN NORTON LOUGHBOROUGH
First Church Historian

January 26, 1832 - April 7, 1924

John Norton Loughborough became a Sabbath-keeping Adventist through the labors of J. N. Andrews. He began preaching immediately and was ordained in 1854. He became our first missionary (to California, that is!) in the year 1868. In 1878 he was sent to Europe. He was at one time president of the Illinois Conference. For six years he was superintendent of General Conference districts made up of conferences. He was the denomination's first historian, writing the book, The Rise and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists, which was followed by The Great Second Advent Movement. He was also the author of smaller books. Loughborough was the first man to receive ordination in what was later to be known as the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This occurred when he was only 22 years old.

Like most of the early Advent leaders, John Loughborough took a real interest in the literature work. One day he and James White were discussing ways and means of advancing the work of the gospel. It was suggested that if books were offered to the people in public in connection with preaching services, the people would be willing to buy and pay a small price for them, thus the way would be prepared for more literature to be produced. The alert young preacher said, "I will try it." So at one of the meetings tracts were displayed on the speaker's stand and offered for sale. At the close of the sermon many persons came forward and bought them. At that time a complete set of all Adventist literature published, including tracts and one paper-covered book, could be purchased for 35 cents. Today it would cost thousands of dollars to buy one copy of all Seventh-day Adventist literature published in many languages.

Loughborough was truly a great pioneer, lending his many talents to the development of the work wherever there was a need.

"In 1908, at the age of seventy-six, he began a tour around the world, visiting the principal centers of the Seventh-day Adventist work. He travelled thirty thousand miles by water and six thousand by land. This closed his active service except for an occasional trip to a camp meeting or General Conference session, or to take up his pen to write reminiscences of bygone days. He made his home with his daughter, Mrs. J. J. Ireland, at Lodi, California. When she and her husband were called to Washington, D.C., Elder Loughborough's health was failing, and he spent his last years in the St. Helena Sanitarium, where he passed away peacefully on April 7, 1924, at the ripe old age of ninety-two. His funeral was held in the St. Helena church, which was one of the first churches he had raised up in California more than fifty years before."

See: Pioneer Stories Retold, pp. 115-142; Footprints of the Pioneers, pp. 147-156.
A Story About John N. Loughborough

Not long after John Loughborough became a Seventh-day Adventist, he was impressed that he should go and preach the message but he hesitated until he could earn enough money to support his wife. He tried to make the business succeed in which he was engaged, but it failed. His funds were very low. Then he went to a meeting in Rochester. During this meeting Sister White had a vision. In relating this vision she said, "Brother Loughborough is holding back from his duty to preach the message, trying to get means for his support. The Lord told me to say, 'Decide to preach the message and the Lord will open the way for your family's support.'" --Divine Predictions Fulfilled, pp. 25-27.

After the meeting, John Loughborough went home and prayed. He said to the Lord, "I will go and trust in You to open the way for my support." When he made that promise he only had three cents in his pocket and he didn't know where any more money was coming from. But he was happy in his heart.

Monday morning his wife said to him, "John, we are out of matches and I need some thread." Elder Loughborough took the pennies out of his pocket and said, "Mary, this is all the money I have. You get one cent's worth of matches and a skein of thread and bring me one cent. I don't want to be entirely without money."

His wife was very blue. "What are we going to do?" she said. John Loughborough said, "I am going out to preach and let the Lord open the way for us as He promised to do in the vision last Sabbath."

Mary Loughborough went to her room to have a good cry. She wept for an hour. Then she went out to make her purchases. She hadn't been gone but a few minutes when a strange man called at their door and ordered sixty dollars worth of sashlocks. Brother Loughborough had tried to sell sashlocks but he had failed. Now, since he had told the Lord that he would obey and become a preacher, the Lord began to work for him.

The man said, "I will call for the sashlocks at noon and pay you for them then." Well, Brother Loughborough only had to walk about two blocks to the factory where he placed the order for the locks. The sale went through as planned and his profits were over thirty dollars. And thirty dollars was a lot of money back in the 1850's.

When Mary Loughborough returned with the purchases, she found her husband singing. "You seem to be very happy," she said.

"Yes," he replied. And he told her what had happened. And she went to her room and had another hour's cry, but this time for a different reason.

Elder Loughborough was obedient to the heavenly vision. He became a successful preacher. God used him in a mighty way to build up the interest of His cause.
JOHN LOUGHBOROUGH

John Loughborough's life story began almost two years before the stars fell. He was born in 1832 in Victor, New York. His father, as well as his grandfather, preached in the Methodist church. When John was three years old a school was started. This school would be like our pre-schools today. The school was in the Methodist Church and Miss Bibbins was their teacher. On the last day of school each child had a small speaking part to present. After John spoke his part the people clapped but John didn't know why they were clapping. He thought it was just part of the meeting.

John heard the ministers talk about the fact that Jesus was coming on October 22. This made him very happy. Every night, before he went to sleep, he would think about what had happened during the day to see if he had done or said anything that would make Jesus sad. He felt that he could not wait until the next morning to confess his sins.

John, along with other young people, waited for Jesus to come on October 22, but Jesus did not come. John was very disappointed. The neighbor boys that he had talked to about the coming of Jesus now made fun of him. "Haven't gone up yet, have you, John?" Of course, you can imagine how John must have felt.

John continued to study and his love for God grew each day. Later John became a Seventh-day Adventist. Not long after he became an
Adventist he was impressed that he should go and preach. But he was afraid to go because he didn’t know how he could support his wife. He had a business that he worked very hard at but it was failing. One night John went to a meeting where Ellen White was preaching. During her sermon she had a vision. When she told what she had seen in vision there was a message for John. Ellen White told him that he was not preaching because he did not know how he would support his wife. Ellen assured him that God wanted him to preach and the Lord would see to it that there would be enough money to support them.

After the meeting, John Loughborough went home and prayed. He said to the Lord, "I will go and trust in You to open the way for my support." When he made that promise he only had three cents in his pocket, and he didn’t know where any more money was coming from. But he was happy in his heart.

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"Yes," he replied. And he told her what had happened. And she went to her room and had another hour's cry, but this time for a different reason.

Elder Loughborough served the Lord for the rest of his life. He became a successful preacher, and God used him to help build up the Adventist work.

- References:
  Footprints of the Pioneers
  Pioneer Stories Retold