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“Being There” Brings Teaching Alive

I just returned from a workbee at the William Miller property in upstate New York, an experience that has stimulated thought about the value of memory and heritage.

Cooking for some 25 people three times a day for a week didn't allow too much time for in-depth reflection, but I was able to gather my thoughts during a walk to Ascension Rock, passing through the maple grove where Miller retreated often for reflection and prayer, and during worships conducted at the small chapel Miller built nearby, which features these bold words: "For at the time appointed, the end shall be." What must it have been like, I wondered, to stand on Ascension Rock, so sure Jesus would come today? As the darkening shadows fell across the nearby mountains, in my heart I shared the Millerites' grief at not seeing Jesus, and the pain of having to go back to unbelieving family and friends, who taunted the little flock, "We told you so."

At the grove and inside the house, I marvelled at Miller's dedication to Bible study and thought about his influence in the community, as he served as a justice of the peace and preached all over the surrounding states, finally building the little chapel after his message was no longer welcome in nearby churches and the church he usually attended burned to the ground. A visit to nearby Whitehall, New York, provided some fascinating insights into U.S. history. Locks that facilitate water traffic to and from Lake Champlain, an old parachute factory, a re-enactment of Scottish settlers' participation in the War of 1812, and the hull of the original U.S.S. *Ticonderoga* all sent me back to

historical sources. These events became more real because I had been there.

For teachers too, travel and study offer marvelous personal and professional rewards. Besides the value of being reminded what it's

Picture
Removed

Participants in the workbee at the William Miller Property, June 1993.

like to be a student again, teachers can gain new insights and skills and renew their enthusiasm for teaching. Travel to historical sites, particularly those related to denominational history and our pioneers, can be especially valuable to classroom teachers and administrators, as they bring back interesting stories and experiences to relate to their students. Besides the personal satisfaction of saying, "I saw where the Millerites waited for Jesus to come," having been there gives a sense of immediacy to classroom discussions about the Great Disappointment and the historical foundations of Adventism. If you don't live near well-known sites, try to join a study tour, or look for local spots relating to history and famous personalities. Connecting with your past and revisiting the evidences of God's providential leading will strengthen your faith and make your teaching come alive. ✍

BY BEVERLY J. ROBINSON-RUMBLE