ANNIE SMITH

Birth: March 16, 1828  West Wilton, New Hampshire
Death: July 26, 1855

Family: Father - Samuel Smith
Mother - Rebekah Spalding Smith
Brothers - Samuel, John, Uriah

Accomplishments: Elementary teacher, poet, hymnist, artist, proofreader, copy editor in Rochester and Saratoga Springs
Annie Smith was a very talented young woman who endeared herself to the Adventist pioneers, including James and Ellen White. She was born in Wilton, New Hampshire in March of 1828. Anne became a Baptist but left that church in 1844. She studied the Bible prophecies diligently and joined the Second Adventists of Christ. During this time she taught school and in the spring attended the Charlestown Female Seminary to study French oil painting. Anne published poetry in secular magazines and was becoming much involved with the Seminary's social life.

At this time Anne's mother met Joseph Bates and shared her concern about Anne's change. He suggested that her mother write a letter to Anne encouraging her to visit the meetings he, Bates, would be holding in Boston.
The night before the meetings Bates dreamed about the late arrival of a young lady who sat in the only vacant seat near the door of the meeting room. Anne dreamed that she would be late for an evangelistic meeting. She was late for the meeting! However, she became interested in the Sabbath message once more and stated her change of heart in a published poem-letter entitled "Fear Not, Little Flock."

James White read the publication and was impressed with her writing skills. James and Ellen White invited her to Saratoga Springs, N.Y. to serve as assistant copy editor. She was somewhat hesitant about taking the position due to her partial loss of sight, but she eventually accepted. She was annointed and was healed in Saratoga. The Whites were so impressed with Anne's ability that she worked as copy editor of The Review and The Youth's Instructor. Annie continued to write and publish hymns and poetry, forty-five pieces in all, including the hymn "I Saw One Weary," written Aug. 19, 1852.

---


ATLANTIC UNION CONFERENCE
The parable of the talents, told by Jesus, is a familiar one. "The kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey." (Matthew 25: 14, 15.)

Without question, many of our early Adventist pioneers were extremely talented. Most had little formal education, which was not unusual at that time; but as they were committed to God, their abilities proved to be a great blessing to the church. There were a brother and sister among them that I would call "five talented." They were Annie and Uriah Smith. Referring to Annie and Uriah Smith, one historian has written: "No better examples are there of New Hampshire granite, not only in the beautiful character that results from its polishing, but in the indomitable grit that comes from its grinding." (A.W. Spaulding, "Footprints of the Pioneers", page 123)

Annie Smith was four years older than her brother, Uriah. She was born March 16, 1828. With her brother and parents, she joined the Millerite Advent movement and went through the disappointment of 1844. She was 16 at the time, just six months older than Ellen Harmon, who would later become a prophetic messenger and marry James White.

Following the disappointment, Annie turned her attention to school. Coeducation was not common in those times, so she attended a women's seminary at Charlestown, Massachusetts, in her early 20's. Annie was a poet, as were both her mother and brother, Uriah.

Annie and her brother had a common interest in art and poetry. She was a painter. Both wrote hymns, though she was more prolific in hymn writing.

In 1852, when she was 24, Joseph Bates told her mother, Rebecca Smith, that he planned to hold evangelistic meetings near where Annie was staying. Her mother told her of the meetings, and Annie decided to go to a meeting just to please her mother.

The night before, she dreamed that as Bates began his sermon, she arrived late and took the only empty seat. In her dream, she also heard the words he would speak and saw a prophetic chart he was using. That same night, Bates had a similar dream, in which he saw Annie coming in late and taking the last seat.

The next evening, Annie left home in plenty of time to be at the meeting, but got lost on the way and arrived late. The second hymn was being sung when she entered the door, and she took the only vacant seat and listened as Bates stood up and repeated Daniel 8:14: "Unto two thousand and three hundred
days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." He was the man she had seen in her dream. Those were the very words she had heard him say. The chart was the one she had seen, as well.

Even more unusual was the fact that he had changed his topic, even as he had stood to speak. Each remembered their dreams and felt that God had spoken through the dreams to them for a special purpose. After the meeting, Bates and Annie met; and they related their dreams to each other.

Annie returned to the school that she was attending, impressed by what she had experienced. The next day, she left for home and soon accepted the Sabbath and Advent messages. After he had printed two of her poems in the Review, James White invited her to join the publishing work, just beginning in Rochester, New York. In December 1852, she came to Rochester at the age of 24. Six months later, her brother, Uriah, would also come to Rochester at age 21.

It is of special interest to note that both Annie and Uriah turned down rather flattering offers to teach. They had been asked to teach for $1,000 each, which was a considerable salary at that time. Instead, they both turned their attention to the work of the Adventist church; and for the first several years, worked only for room and board at Rochester.

Annie became assistant to the editor very soon. She served as proofreader and did other technical work in connection with the publishing work there. For the next two years, her poems appeared regularly in the Review, and several of them were set to hymns and were sung by early Adventists.

In November 1854, Annie had to leave Rochester because of illness. She had contracted tuberculosis, which in those days was referred to as consumption. She had been working on a book of poems for several months. Annie felt that when her book of poems was done, she would either get well or die. Uriah sketched and engraved a peony for the cover of this book of poems. This was her favorite flower. Ten days after Uriah took the final manuscript to the office for printing, Annie died. She was only 27 years old.

The book of poems is somewhat unusual in that one section contains poems that had been written by her, dedicated to several early friends who also died in their twenties. The book of poems, titled Home Here, and Home in Heaven, includes poems for the following friends:

On the Death of Nathaniel White (J. White's brother) Aged 22 years. Died May 6th, 1853.
On the Death of Anna White (James White's sister) In the 26th year of her age. Died November 30th, 1854.
On the Death of Robert F. Harmon (E. White's brother) Aged 27 years. Died February 5th, 1853.

Nathaniel and Anna White, as well as Lyman Masten, had worked in publishing with her and with James and Ellen White at Rochester. Robert Harmon, Ellen White's brother, had died in Gorham, Maine, at the Harmon home.
In 1852, as the publishing work was first established in Rochester, those who set up that first press operated by Adventists were very young. Think of some of them:

James White, 31
Ellen White, 24
Anna White, 26
Nathaniel White, 22
The foreman of the press, 23
Fletcher Byington, 20
Annie Smith, 24
Uriah Smith, 21
George Amadon, 17
Warren Batcheller, 13

A. W. Spaulding, in writing about Annie Smith, has given us this personal evaluation: "A sweeter, more self-effacing, yet talented woman has never been known among us, nor, we may say, elsewhere, than Annie R. Smith." (Origin and History, Volume 1, page 213.)

Hymns that can be found in the present Adventist church hymnal, written by Annie Smith, are the following:

"How Far From Home?" Number 439
"I Saw One Weary" Number 441
"Long Upon the Mountains" Number 447

Annie is buried in a small community cemetery in West Wilton, New Hampshire. Her grave is marked with a granite stone that simply says, "ANNIE." Her obituary in the Review, placed there by her brother, Uriah, is as follows:

Died--In Wilton, New Hampshire, July 26th, 1855, of consumption, my sister, Annie R. Smith, aged 27 years. The following lines which she composed the day but one before her death, show with what feelings and hopes she fell asleep in Jesus, to wait the glad morning of the resurrection.

"O, shed not a tear o'er the spot where I sleep,
For the living and not for the dead ye may weep;
Why mourn for the weary who sweetly repose,
Free in the grave from life's burden of woes?

"I long now to rest in the lone, quiet tomb,
For the footsteps of Jesus have lightened its gloom;
I die in the hope of soon meeting again
The friends that I love, with Him ever to reign."

This story is taken from the Harvest 90 Education Project "Biographical Sketches - Elementary".
ANNIE SMITH
1828 - 1855

Sixteen was surely young, life had just begun,
When in 1844, sad that Jesus had not come,
Annie Smith turned to art and teaching.
When she heard J. B. preaching,
She gave up fame to write and work in Jesus' name.
In her last eleven years, Annie became one of our pioneers.

By Lynne E. Buhler

Annie Smith: Girl dressed in long sleeved, white blouse; long, dark skirt; and holding open book in front of her.

Annie Smith wrote the following songs in *Advent Singing*: "How Far from Home," #20; "I Saw One Weary," #21; and "Long upon the Mountains." #24.
Coded Message

Directions: Use the numbers on the keys to complete the coded message.
ANNIE SMITH
A Look at Her Life and Poetry
Let none this humble work assail,
Its failings to expose to view,
Which sprung within Misfortune's vale
And 'neath the dews of Sorrow grew.

Thus does Annie Rebekah Smith, the early Adventist hymnsm, beg indulgent tolerance of the little book of poems she completed on her deathbed in 1855. Her wishes will be honored here in favor of a modest effort to tell the simple story of her short, sad life.

Most of what is known about her comes from a little sketch of her life included in another book of poems published by her mother, Rebekah Smith, in 1871. From this we learn that Annie was born in West Wilton, New Hampshire, on March 16, 1828, the only daughter of Samuel and Rebekah Smith. She was four years older than her better-known brother, Uriah, and just four months younger than the best-known of Adventist women, Ellen G. White.

At ten, Annie was converted and joined the Baptist Church. With her mother, she left that communion in 1844 to throw her youthful energies into preparation for the Second Advent of Christ.

When the clouds of October 22 carried only another drab New England morning instead of a host of angels, Annie turned her attention to study and teaching. For the next six years she alternated between teaching in seven different district schools and pursuing her own intellectual enrichment.

She spent six terms at the Charlestown Female Seminary in Charlestown, Massachusetts, next door to Boston. The Seminary, chartered in 1833, offered courses in English, philosophy, Romance

The Life and Love of

Annie Smith

Ron Graybill

A research assistant at the Ellen G. White Estate and a graduate student in American religious history at John Hopkins University, Ron Graybill has been studying early Adventist hymnody.
languages, Latin, Hebrew, music and art. There were also free lectures in anatomy, physiology, and chemistry.

The school year was divided into three terms — a twelve-week fall session and winter and spring terms of sixteen and seventeen weeks. Most likely Annie taught in the grammar schools near her home during the winter and then, while the youngsters went to work on the farms, she would go to Charlestown in mid-April to attend the spring term at the Seminary.

Although her mother only mentions that she studied French and Oil Painting, it seems probable that she might have delved into other subjects as well during the course of her six terms at the school. She was not, however, a regular student, and was not listed with the other students in any of the school's catalogues during the years she attended.

The Seminary was ostensibly non-denominational, but it was far from irreligious. There were regular weekly Bible lessons, and each young lady was expected to come equipped with her own Bible, whatever commentary she may have had, plus other books "Containing moral and religious instruction, suitable for Sabbath reading." The students were required to attend church twice each Sunday at some stated place. Just where Annie may have chosen to attend is unknown, but if, after her Millerite adventure, she reverted to her former denominational affiliation, she would have found things in Charlestown nicely arranged; her school was located on the corner of Union and Lawrence Streets with the First Baptist Church at the other end of the block.

During what was probably her first term at the Seminary in 1845, the Reverend Edward Beecher, pastor of Boston's Salem Church, addressed the students and faculty in a lecture titled "Faith Essential to a Complete Education." This philosophy was pervasive not only at the Charlestown Female Seminary, but throughout the American public school system of the time.

During Annie's last term at the Seminary in 1850, she was definitely enrolled in an art course. One day, while sketching a picture of Boston from Prospect Hill in Somerville, she strained her eyes and for eight months could hardly use them. This brought her to another disappointment in life. She was unable to accept a coveted position in a school at Hancock, New Hampshire.

To alleviate her unhappiness, she became an agent and, according to her mother, a frequent contributor to The Ladies' Wreath, an elegant literary magazine published in New York. Four poems from her pen appeared in this publication within two years. She is also said to have contributed a few pieces to The Odd Fellow, but so far her contributions to the paper have not been located.

Thinking the salt-air of Charlestown would be good for her eyes, Annie remained there with friends. She must not have been too blind, because during her stay she ventured north to Portland, Maine, and on to Nova Scotia.

Meanwhile, her mother was becoming more and more concerned about Annie's avid pursuit of secular success in literature and art. When Joseph Bates, the sea captain who became an Adventist preacher, visited the Smith home in West Wilton, Mrs. Smith shared her burden with him. Since he was to be in Boston in a few days, he urged the mother to write Annie inviting her to his meetings. Contrary to J. N. Loughborough's account, the services were to be held at Elizabeth Temple's home in Boston, not at the Folsom residence in Somerville.

The night before the first meeting, Bates had a
cause, I feel unworthy and unable to approach a subject of such moment, but as I've written for the world, and wish to make a full sacrifice, I am induced to send.”

Both the letter and the poem appeared in the Review, and the latter indicated Annie’s interest in hymns. The last stanza read:

Hallelujah’s we’ll raise,
Our Redeemer to praise
With the pure and the blest,
In the Eden of Love be forever at Rest.

The phrase, “Eden of Love,” used in the last line of the poem is the title of an infectiously beautiful folk-hymn that was carried over from the Millerite movement into Adventist hymnody.

James White, editor of the Review and Herald, impressed with Annie’s poem and doubtless familiar with her talents through her mother, immediately wrote asking her to come to Saratoga Springs, New York, to assist him as a copy editor. She hesitated, pleading her eye trouble as a reason she could not accept. He told her to come anyway, and upon her arrival, she was quickly healed after

anointing and prayer. Ellen White took note of Annie’s coming in a letter to a friend: “Annie Smith is with us. She is just the help we need, and takes right hold with James and helps him much. We can leave her now to get off the papers and can go out more among the flock.”

Although most of Annie’s time was spent in the drudgery of copy editing, she was occasionally given full responsibility for the Review while the Whites were away on preaching tours. She continued to write hymns and poetry as well, contributing a total of forty-five pieces to the Review and the Youth’s Instructor before her death three and a half years later. Ten of her hymns survive in the current Seventh-day Adventist Church Hymnal.

Annie had lived with the Whites in Saratoga Springs for only a few months when they moved to Rochester. Shortly before the move, she turned twenty-four. Times were hard for the little group of workers in Rochester. Ellen White tells how they had to use turnips for potatoes. Annie’s work was not always easy, either. James White, driving hard in these difficult early days, could be a demanding task master. Most of Annie’s poetry was deeply and seriously religious, but she did venture one light-hearted rhyme that may reflect something of James White’s eagerness that the Review be a perfect paper. The poem was titled “The Proof-Reader’s Lament”:

What news is this falls on my ear?
What next will to my sight appear?
My brain doth whirl, my heart doth quake —
Oh, that egregious mistake!

“Too bad! too bad!” I hear them cry,
“You might have seen with half an eye!
Strange! passing strange! how could you make
So plain, so blunderous a mistake!”

Guilty, condemned, I trembling stand,
With pressing cares on every hand,
Without one single plea to make,
For leaving such a bad mistake.

If right, no need of praise is won,
No more than duty then is done;
If wrong, then censure I partake,
Deserving such a gross mistake.

How long shall I o’er Ulls bewail?
"The best," tis said, "will sometimes fail;"
Must it then peace forever break —
Summed up, tis only a mistake.

In spite of whatever difficulties may have arisen, the Whites must have appreciated Annie and her work. James sent her a gift of $75 during her last illness, and Annie’s mother, writing of the bond of affection between her daughter and the Whites, said, “Annie loved them.”

There was someone else whom Annie loved: the handsome young preacher, John Nevins Andrews. John lived in Rochester during the time Annie was
The same night, Annie had virtually the same dream. The next evening, she started for the meeting in ample time, but lost her way. She entered just at the moment the dream had specified. Bates had been planning to talk on another subject, but remembering his dream he switched to a sermon on the Adventist view of the Hebrew sanctuary.

At the close of the meeting, he stepped up to Annie and said: "I believe this is Sister Smith's daughter, of West Wilton. I never saw you before, but your countenance looks familiar. I dreamed of seeing you last night." Annie related her own dream, and naturally was deeply impressed with the turn of events.

Joseph Bates, in his letter to the Review and Herald reporting this visit to Boston, merely says: "We spent the Sabbath and first-day July 26 and 27, in meeting with about twenty believers, at No. 67 Warren Place, Boston, where the meetings are to be held every Sabbath. . . . Here two, that had formerly believed the advent doctrine, embraced the last message."

A month after she attended Bates's meetings, Annie sent a poem, "Fear Not, Little Flock," to the Review, along with a letter: "It is with much reluctance that I send you these verses, on a subject which a few weeks since was so foreign to my thoughts. Being as it were a child in this glorious realm, my eyes were injured. This etching, taken from the Ladies' Wreath, shows Boston and Bunker Hill from Chelsea."
If other's joys [Angeline's] seem more than thine,
Pause, ere thou at this repine;
Life hath full enough of woe,
For the sunniest path below.

And in a poem titled "Resignation," she wrote:
Thou art the refuge of my soul,
My hope when earthly comforts flee,
My strength while life's rough billows roll,
My joy through all eternity.

But Annie's most personal feelings on this subject would hardly be found in her religious poetry, printed as it was in the Review for J. N. Andrews and everyone else to read. Her mother's book, published in 1871, includes a good selection of Annie's secular verse. One of these was a poem which Annie addressed to her mother:

My lot has been to learn
Of friendship false, that bright will burn
When fortune spreads her wing of light,
But fades away when cometh night.

"Dear Annie," her mother wrote in her "Response":

What though thy lot has been to bear
Much adverse fate, mid toil and care
Raised expectations crushed and dead
And hope's triumphant visions fled?

Does not thy heart begin to feel
The claims of Him who wounds to heal?

Were it not that Mrs. Smith's "Response" specifies that Annie's crushed expectations came "mid toil and care," the mention of "friendship false" in Annie's own poem might have referred to some disappointment she suffered during her school...
days in Charlestown. Of the four poems she wrote for *The Ladies' Wreath* during the time just before she became an Adventist, two speak of blighted love. If nothing else, these secular poems indicate something which her sober hymns do not: that she was capable of feeling the whole range of emotions connected with youthful love. In "Trust Not—Love Not," she wrote:

Love's sweet strain, like music flowing,
Drink not deep its melting tone:
Eyes that now so gently glowing,
Beaming fondly in thine own —
Lips will smile, but too deceive thee,
Tender glances, heed them not:
For their coldness soon may grieve thee,
Soon thou mayest be forgot.

Witness also these lines from a ballad-like poem, "The Unchanged":

The morn of youth was on her cheek when love her bosom thrilled,
With golden dreams of future bliss her gentle soul was filled —

His dark eyes woke the flame within of soul lit,
lustrous hue,
To be unquenched — the holy light of pure devotion true.

---

And oft she gazed with rapture on that bright angelic face.
So radiant and beautiful with eloquence and grace:

His voice, like tones of music sweet, bound with a magic spell,
As gems of wisdom from his lips in heavenly accents fell.

I saw her in the moonlit vale, a lovely maiden's form,
Her spirit in illusions wrapped, her cheek
with vigor warm;
Untouched by sorrow's withering hand, so pale, for hers were dreams
Of other years — that for the night had cast their halo beams.

The possibility that Annie may have been in love with J. N. Andrews adds a new dimension to the controversy over her hymn, "I Saw One Weary, Sad, and Torn." Each verse of the hymn is thought to be an ode to one of the Adventist pioneers contemporary to her. The first two stanzas are assigned respectively to Joseph Bates and James White. Bates is identified by the "many a line of grief and care" which on his brow were "furrowed there." He was much older than any of the other pioneers. James White is almost certainly the one who "boldly

**Uncertainty has shrouded this musical ode to the advent pioneers. Who was Annie writing about in the third stanza?**
braved the world's cold frown" and was "worn by toil, oppressed by foes." But who was the Adventist who

... left behind
The cherished friends of early years,
And honor, pleasure, wealth resigned,
To tread the path bedewed with tears.
Through trials deep and conflicts sore,
Yet still a smile of joy he wore:
I asked what buoyed his spirits up.
"Oh this!" said he — "the blessed hope."

Three possible candidates have been suggested for this stanza: Uriah Smith, Andrews, and Annie Smith herself disguised in masculine pronouns. Uriah is eliminated on chronological grounds. He had not yet accepted the "third angel's message" at the time Annie wrote the hymn. The hymn was published August 19, 1852, about a year after Annie's conversion, five months after her arrival in Rochester, and just enough time for a friendship with John to blossom.

But Annie herself cannot be ruled out as a candidate. She certainly felt that she had renounced "honor, pleasure, and wealth" to become an Adventist.

In the same poem in which she makes the allusion to "friendship false," she says:
My lot has been to pore
Learning's classic page-o'er,
Seeking for hidden pearls to wear.
Fame's golden wreath, the victors bear.

She had been on the brink of fame, or at least she thought so, and for her to turn her back on it was a special trial. Naturally, if she was writing about herself in the hymn, she could not reveal it, but all the details of the third stanza fit Annie perfectly. The problem is that they also fit John. The question of whether the stanza refers to John or Annie may never be resolved, and perhaps it is fitting that they are linked in this mystery.

It is no wonder that many of Annie's hymns were so somber. Not only was she an Adventist in a day when Adventists were scorned and despised, not only did she give up her hope of worldly fame, not only was she thwarted in love, but death itself was stalking her. She had been with the Review for barely a year when she was called home for the death of her father, Samuel Smith. When she returned to the office in Rochester late in December, 1852, she found that James White's brother Nathaniel and his sister Anna had arrived, both suffering from tuberculosis.

Anna White soon took over the editorship of the newly launched Youth's Instructor to which Annie contributed an occasional poem. But Nathaniel lived only till May of 1853. Annie commemorated his death with a poem. About a year later, Luman V. Masten, another of the young workers in the office, died of tuberculosis. Again Annie wrote a poem, a portion of which read:

Then mourn not the loss of our dear, absent brother
Bright angels shall watch o'er the dust where he's laid
To rest by the side of his fondly-loved mother,
Who for his salvation so fervently prayed.

In November of that same year, 1854, Annie returned to her home in West Wilton, suffering from the first stages of tuberculosis herself. She had just arrived when word came that Anna White had died of the disease. The poem she wrote for Anna became a hymn which would be sung at her own funeral:
She hath passed Death's chilling billow.
And gone to rest:
Jesus smoothed her dying pillow—
Her slumbers blest.

Annie arrived home November 7. A month later she was coughing blood. Her mother says that since she had "confidence in water treatment, she went where she could receive such." Perhaps she traveled to nearby New Ipswich where, according to the Water-Cure Journal of June, 1853, a Mr. Amos Hatch operated a hydropathic institution.

But the treatment did not help, and Annie returned home in February, just in time for a visit from Joseph Bates. "At the commencement of the Sabbath, the 16th," her mother wrote, "the spirit and power of God descended upon her, and she praised God with a loud voice... Bro. B. then said

This collection of Annie's poetry was finished ten days before her death. Knowing that the peony was her favorite flower, Uriah engraved one for the title page.

HOME HERE,

AND

HOME IN HEAVEN;

WITH OTHER POEMS.

BY ANNIE R. SMITH.

ROCHESTER, N. Y.
PUBLISHED AT THE ADVENT REVIEW OFFICE.
1855.
to Annie, 'You needed this blessing, and now if the Lord sees that it is best for you to be laid away in the grave, he will go with you.'"

But Annie prayed for just one more privilege before she died. She wanted to be able to finish her long poem, "Home Here and Home in Heaven," and publish the little book of poetry she had been planning. Her brother Uriah came home in May, and helped her to copy and arrange her poetry for publication. As soon as the flowers blossomed that spring, he sketched and engraved a peony, her favorite, to go on the title page of her book.

Annie told her mother that she believed there would be a change in her condition once the book was done. Either she would be healed, or she would die. She lived less than ten days after she finished her work.

Her mother chronicled the last days of her twenty-seven-year-old daughter in great detail. On the eighteenth of July, she wrote a poem titled "Our Duty":

Never from the future borrow
Burdens that no good repay,
Strength required for to-morrow,
May be lost on us today.

At three o'clock the next afternoon she said: "Mother, some change has taken place. I don't think I shall live through the day." "I saw that there was a change," her mother wrote, "and Stayed by her. Night drew on. No one happened in. She said, "It seems to me I could not breathe to have many in the room." "Her mother told her she was not afraid to be alone' with her if she died. Through the night the mother and her semi-invalid brother John watched. It seemed that each moment must be her last.

About two in the morning she rallied some, and looked very happy. "Annie is being blessed," Mrs. Smith said to John. Soon Annie exclaimed, "Glory to God," a number of times, louder than she had spoken for a long while. "Heaven is opened," she said. "I shall come forth at the first resurrection."

Uriah had returned to Rochester by now, hoping he could get the type for Annie's book and let her see the proof sheets before she died. Mrs. Smith wanted to write him and urge him to come home at once, but Annie said: "It will make no difference. I think I am dying; don't leave me, mother, while I live."

The fact that Mrs. Smith would write a vivid day by day account of Annie's decline reflects the Victorian tendency to romanticize illness and death. Nineteenth-century Americans, Adventists included, were far less inclined to disguise or avoid death than we are today. Annie and her mother talked freely about her death long before it occurred. Her mother did not look back on those last days as some hideous shame to be expunged from memory, but as something worth preserving in every detail.

At age twenty-seven Annie died of tuberculosis at her mother's home.

![Image of a house, captioned: At age twenty-seven Annie died of tuberculosis at her mother's home.](image)
This engraving of a cat reveals another of Annie Smith's talents.
On Tuesday morning, July 24, Annie composed her last poem:

Oh! shed not a tear o'er the spot where I sleep;  
For the living and not for the dead ye may weep;  
Why mourn for the weary who sweetly repose;  
Free in the grave from life’s burden and woes?

No recasting can improve the poignant forcefulness of her mother’s account of her last hours:

Tuesday night was a solemn and interesting night. I stayed with her alone through the night. Neither of us slept. She was very happy, and talked much with me. She said in her former familiar way, “My mother, I’ve been afraid I should see you all out. I’ve called after you by night and by day.” She felt bad to have me kept up as I was on her account. But she said, “I am here now, your dying girl. I think this is the last night, and you must be sure to rest when I am gone. O, my blessed mother, I shall bless you in Heaven for taking such care of me. No sorrow or suffering there. We shall all be free there. Yes, we shall all be free when we arrive at home, and we shall live forever. Yes, and I can smile upon you now through all my sufferings.” It was her last suffering night. Wednesday, the 25th, a death coldness was upon her. In the afternoon she became more free from pain and distress. While speaking in the evening of taking care of her, she said, “I shall not want any one to sit up: you can lie on the lounge.” At 1 o’clock I called Samuel [another brother]. She talked with him, called for what she wanted as usual, and told him he might lie down. About three o’clock she called him to wet her head with water, and said she felt sleepy. She was indeed going into her last sleep. Samuel wet her head, and soon after spoke to me and said, “I don’t know but Annie is dying.” I spoke to her.

She took no notice, breathed a few times, and died apparently as easy as any one going into a natural sleep. Her sufferings were over. She was gone. It was 4 o’clock in the morning, July 26, 1855.

Annie’s marker is to the left of the Smith headstone in the family plot.

SOURCES

BOOKS

Loughborough, J. N. Home and Progress of Seventh-day Adventists. Battle Creek: General Conference Association of the Seventh-day Adventists, 1892.


White, James, ed. Hymns for God’s Peculiar People. Oswego, New York, 1849.

LETTERS


PAMPHLETS


PERIODICALS


Revive and Rebuild, 27 August 5, 1851 — August 21, 1855.

Youth’s Instructor, 1-3 August, 1852 — October, 1855.