

# RACHEL PRESTON

**RACHEL HARRIS OAKES PRESTON**

Birth: March 2, 1809 Vernon, Vermont

Death: 1868

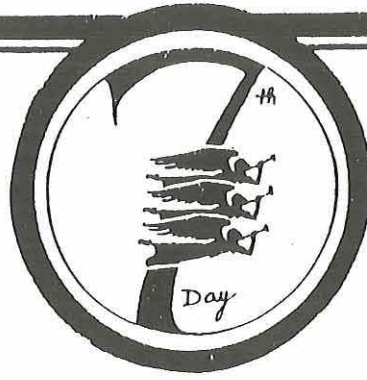
Family: Father - Sylvanus Harris

Spouses - Amory Oakes

Nathan T. Preston

Daughter - Rachel Delight Oakes Farnsworth

Accomplishments: Initiator of the Seventh-day Sabbath as a doctrine



## Rachel Oakes

(1809-1868)

7<sup>th</sup> day

Rachel was a member of the Seventh Day Baptist church when she became familiar with the teachings of the Adventists. She introduced the Sabbath to the Adventists and joined the group in Washington, New Hampshire.

Rachel moved to Washington, New Hampshire to be close to her daughter, Delight. Rachel Delight was teaching school at the time.

Mother Rachel was concerned about keeping all the ten commandments and witnessed for the seventh-day sabbath wherever she went. She witnessed to Frederick Wheeler, a Methodist preacher. He was converted. Wheeler was conducting a communion service and was urging the congregation to keep all the commandments. Rachel Oakes was a visitor in the room and later recounted to him that she wanted to stand up and tell him to recover the communion table until he and the congregation accepted the fourth commandment. It took some time before others attending the service accepted the teaching in 1844. Mrs. Oakes joined the small group of Adventists.

Rachel Oakes married Nathan T. Preston and moved away. She did not embrace all the teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist church until the last year of her life.

It has been said that Rachel Oakes was one of those responsible for the founding of the first Seventh-day Adventist church.



# RACHEL OAKES PRESTON

## Zealous Sabbathkeeper

March 2, 1809 - 1868

A clue to the important role played by Mrs. Preston in early Adventist history may be gained by looking at the inscription on the headstone of her grave: "Rachel Preston was used of God in bringing the truth of the Sabbath to the Adventist Church at Washington, New Hampshire; which became the first Seventh-day Adventist Church in America."

Rachel Preston was a Seventh Day Baptist when she came to Washington. Her daughter Rachel Delight Oakes, became the wife of Cyrus Farnsworth who, with his brother William, were the first Sabbathkeepers among the Washington Adventists.

In 1837 Rachel Harris Oakes and her daughter joined the Seventh Day Baptist church in Vernon, Vermont. Evidently her husband, Emory, died there although there isn't any account of it. In 1843 Rachel Oakes and her daughter, Delight, moved to Washington, New Hampshire. Delight taught school, and her mother lived with her and became the instrument in God's hands in bringing the Sabbath light to that company of Adventists. The Adventists, in turn, brought to her the blessed hope of the second advent. In Washington she met Nathan T. Preston whom she married. They lived there and at Milford for many years and finally returned to Vernon, Vermont, where she died and was buried.

See: *Footprints of the Pioneers*, pp. 29-39; *Captains of the Host*, pp. 107-109

## *A Story About Rachel Oakes Preston*

Let us go back to the little church in Washington, New Hampshire, the first church of Sabbath-keeping Adventists. Arthur Spalding will tell you about an experience that led a number of honest souls to begin the observance of the Sabbath.

"Communion service was being held in the Washington, New Hampshire, Christian church, one Sunday in the winter of 1844. The presiding elder was Frederick Wheeler, a Methodist and Adventist minister of Hillsboro, whose circuit included this church. Among the communicants he noticed a middle-aged lady sitting in the Daniel Farnsworth pew, who kept her bright eyes upon him during the service, and seemed almost to start to her feet when he declared, 'All who confess communion with Christ in such a service as this should be ready to obey God and keep His commandments in all things.' He wondered about that lady.

"Visiting in the family later, the minister met Mrs. Rachel Oakes, mother of young Rachel Delight Oakes, the school teacher. Direct in speech as in gaze, she said to him, 'You remember, Elder Wheeler, that you said everyone who confesses Christ should obey all the commandments of God?'

"'Yes.'

"'I came near getting up in the meeting right then, and saying something.'

"'I thought so. What did you have in mind to say?'

"'I wanted to tell you that you had better set the communion table back and put the cloth over it, until you begin to keep the commandments of God,' said Rachel Oakes.

"Elder Wheeler sat back astonished. He felt, a little weakly, that he was grateful this direct-action person had had the Christian grace to wait for a private interview. He, not keeping the commandments of God? Wherein was he disobeying? Oh, yes! He had heard of this Seventh Day Baptist sister who had recently come here to live, and of her decided views on the obligation of Christians to keep Saturday for Sunday. It was the literal fourth commandment she was now preaching to him.

"And it was an effective sermon. Frederick Wheeler went away thinking. He kept on thinking and studying, and not many weeks later he kept his first Sabbath and preached a sermon about it on that same day."--*Captains of the Host*, pp. 107-108.

And that's the way the Washington, New Hampshire, Adventists first heard about the true Sabbath of the Lord.

## "THE SEVENTH DAY IS THE SABBATH"

In a little village named Washington, in the mountains of the state of New Hampshire, lived some Adventists. They loved the Lord and were always talking to the neighbors and friends about how wonderful it was to know that Jesus would be coming to take His children to heaven.

In a little school in the village taught a young woman called Delight Oakes. Her mother, Rachel, came to live with her. The people in Washington noticed something different about the two ladies.

Every Saturday when all the other people in the countryside were busy cleaning house, washing clothes, getting their shopping done, and doing extra cooking and baking, Delight Oakes and her mother did none of these things. Instead they just stayed quietly at home and read their Bibles and sang hymns. Sometimes they went for walks in the country.

They told the people that they kept the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath. But they did go to church with the other people of the village on Sunday, and the Adventists were friendly with them. The Adventists told the two ladies about the coming of Jesus. Mrs. Oakes and Delight had never heard about this before, and they studied about it in the Bible with their Adventist friends and were happy to find that it was true.



One day in church they heard the minister say that before they had the communion service they should be sure that they loved Jesus and were keeping His commandments. What he said upset Mrs. Oakes, because the people in the church were not keeping the fourth commandment - the one that tells us to keep the seventh day holy.

A few days later the minister went to visit Mrs. Oakes, and she told him about how upset she had been. "I nearly stood up in church to tell you that you and the people in the church were not keeping the commandments as they should have been doing," she told the minister.

"What do you mean?" he asked in surprise.

"You don't keep the fourth commandment!" Mrs. Oakes explained. Then she showed him from the Bible that we should keep the seventh day, Saturday, not Sunday, the first day of the week.

The minister had never thought about it, but he could see it was right, and he kept on studying his Bible.

The people in the village talked about the Sabbath. Some said Saturday was the right day to go to church; others did not. Then one Sunday a young man named William Farnsworth stood up in church and said, "I don't know what the rest of you are going to do. But I can see that it is right to keep Saturday for the

Sabbath, and from now on I am going to do it."

His younger brother then said, "I too want to keep the true Sabbath."

So one by one the Adventist of Washington, New Hampshire, began to keep the true Sabbath, and pretty soon the little church they had built became a Seventh-day Adventist church. The people changed their meetings from Sunday to the Sabbath.

Far away from this village lived a good Adventist man named Joseph Bates. Once he had been a sea captain in charge of a big ship. He heard about those Adventists up there in the village of Washington who were keeping Saturday for the Sabbath. "I must go up there and see what this is all about," he said to himself. So he traveled up there and arrived in the village late at night.

Going straight to the minister's home, he told him why he had come. The two men sat down and had a Bible study. They were having such a good time reading what the Bible says about the Sabbath that they did not notice how late it was getting.

"Oh, look," they said. "It is getting light, and the sun will soon be up. We have been studying all night."

Joseph Bates was quite sure now that he should keep the Sabbath, as the people in Washington were doing. He went back to his

home. As he was crossing a bridge near his house he saw one of his friends. "Good day, Captain Bates," his friend called out to him, "What's the news?"

"The news?" Joseph Bates replied. "The news is that the seventh day is the Sabbath."

"What?" said his friend in surprise. "I must go home and study my Bible and see if that is so." He did, and he began to keep the Sabbath also.

Joseph Bates talked to everybody about the true Sabbath, and although some people said he was crazy and some got angry with him, many prayed about it and began to worship on the Sabbath.

Of course Captain Bates wanted his great friends the Whites to hear about what he had learned, but at first Ellen said it was not important nowadays. But then one day she had a vision. In it she saw the tabernacle in heaven. An angel told her to look inside it, right into the ark in the Most Holy Place. Jesus opened this ark, which was like a beautiful box, and there Ellen saw the stones on which God had written the Ten Commandments. Around the fourth commandment - the one that tells about the Sabbath - a beautiful bright light was shining.

When Ellen saw this she knew that God wants us to keep this commandment as well as the other ones, so she and James began to



observe the Sabbath and to teach others to keep it also.

- References:

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to Read to Children by: Miriam Hardinge