



## **Heber H. Votaw Collection (Personal Collection 111)**

General Conference Archives  
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists  
12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20901  
Prepared by Ashlee Chism, August 2022

## **Scope and Content**

This collection contains correspondence, notes, pamphlets and periodicals, two cloth wall hangings (a prophecy chart and a map), and three books, which belonged to or were related to Heber Herbert Votaw (1881-1962).

## **Arrangement and Quantity**

This collection is seven linear feet. It is arranged into two series. The first series, Documents, is split into three subseries, Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949; Special Cases, 1940-1952; and General Papers, 1892-1962. The second series, Artifacts and Books, is much smaller than the first series.

## **Custodial History and Immediate Source of Acquisition**

The initial material in this collection was donated to the General Conference Archives by Heber Votaw's nephew, George T. Harding, in July 2013. Additional accretions of material were transferred to the General Conference Archives by the Harding Heritage Foundation in 2017.

## **Conditions Governing Access**

This collection is open for research.

## **Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use**

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## **Preferred Citation**

*For the collection:*

Boxes 35 A-G, Heber H. Votaw Collection. General Conference Archives, Silver Spring, Maryland.

## **Biographical Information**

Heber Herbert Votaw was born 3 March 1881 in West Mansfield, Ohio, United States, to Lewis and Angeline (Curl) Votaw. He was their fifth and final child, as Lewis tragically died in 1883 at the age of forty-seven. Votaw grew up in Ohio, attending public school from 1886 to 1892. He took the

preparatory course at Battle Creek College from 1893 to 1897, and then attended Mount Vernon Academy from 1898-1899 and from 1900-1903. While attending Mount Vernon Academy, he met, and then, after graduation, married, on 5 August 1903, Phoebe Carolyn Harding (1879-1951), daughter of George Tyron Harding (1844-1928) and Phoebe (Dickerson) Harding (1843-1910). Carolyn went by her middle name.

The Votaw children were initially raised in the Methodist Episcopal tradition. In 1887, his mother Angeline (1842-1924) became a Seventh-day Adventist; Heber and his sister Myrta (1868-1927) were the only ones of her children to officially join the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Her son Edson (1863-1931) never became a member despite his belief in its message and raised his children in the Adventist faith; his son William later became a missionary to India. Heber H. Votaw was converted to Christianity in August 1898 and was baptized as a Seventh-day Adventist near Mendon, Ohio in October 1898 by E. J. Van Horn (1851-1929).

Votaw began church employment in May 1900, working as a canvasser in Fayette County, Ohio. Both he and Carolyn continued to assist in evangelistic efforts undertaken by the Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Marion, Ohio, and surrounding towns. Votaw was ordained as a minister by A. G. Daniells, W. A. Spicer, and J. S. Washburn on 13 October 1904, two days before he and Carolyn, along with Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Little, set sail from New York City, headed for mission service in India.

The Votaws were assigned by the India Mission to open work in Burma (today, Myanmar). In 1905, they visited the United States for the General Conference Session, where Heber attended meetings, sold literature, and, along with Carolyn, studied the Burmese language. They then returned directly to their work in Burma. By August 1905, Heber was calling for the Adventist Church to send a worker directly to the Karen people group.

After a breakdown of their health (which was especially serious for Heber), the Votaws were advised by physicians to return to the States. They sailed from Bombay (today, Mumbai), India on 1 July 1914. By early October 1914 they had arrived back in the States, where they spent time with family in Marion and West Mansfield, Ohio. Indeed, they arrived home in time to see Carolyn's older brother, Warren G. Harding, elected as one of Ohio's U. S. Senators in November 1914.

During 1915, the Votaws moved to Takoma Park, Maryland, as Heber had been hired by Washington Missionary College (today, Washington Adventist University) to teach, expecting to spend most of his time training young men for ministerial labor in its Department of Missions. In 1917, they moved to Columbus, Ohio, where Heber worked as a minister until his brother-in-law, Senator Harding, hired him in 1918 to work as a secretary in his Washington office. So, they moved back to Takoma Park. During this time, Carolyn worked as a social worker in the Women's Bureau of the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, District of Columbia.

When Harding was nominated as the Republican presidential candidate in 1920, the Votaws became a part of his campaign; their work largely appears to have been comprised of interviews and clerical work. After his election as President of the United States on 2 November 1920, Harding appointed

Heber to be the superintendent of federal prisons, which included being chairman of boards of parole. Carolyn began to work with the United States Public Health Service, as head of the social service division; she was an advisor to the Federal Board of Vocation Education, a board within the Veterans Affairs Bureau. These positions did not keep them from active church involvement. Less than a month after the election, Heber introduced President-Elect Harding to an Adventist delegation, who presented him with an address from the Autumn Council. Heber continued to contribute articles to the *Review*, and both Heber and Carolyn were delegates at large at the 40<sup>th</sup> General Conference Session in 1922.

President Harding unexpectedly died 2 August 1923; after his death, news of various scandals was uncovered. Harding's Attorney General, Harry M. Daugherty, and his director of the Veterans Affairs Bureau, Charles R. Forbes, were both tried for corruption in office; as part of that process, both Heber and Carolyn Votaw were investigated, and both provided testimony at various times. Both were cleared of any wrongdoing in these matters. Still, these events were stressful and likely brought about a relapse of Heber's health; he underwent an operation in early January 1925, and then announced his resignation from his post on 21 January 1925. The resignation was effective on 4 March 1925. A few months later Heber was invited to work as the Washington Sanitarium as its Service Director. He also served as part of the Executive Committee of the Potomac Conference.

In 1926, Heber Votaw became associate secretary (today, associate director) of the General Conference's Religious Liberty Department. As part of this position, he was associate editor of *Liberty* magazine. He worked with C. S. Longacre (1871-1958), swapping positions with him when he became the department secretary (today, director) in 1941 and editor of *Liberty* in 1942. Votaw served on several boards and committees, including the War Service Commission. He remained departmental secretary until 1950, when A. W. Johnson became secretary and Votaw once again became one of the department's associate secretaries. He retired in the summer of 1954, and remained in Takoma Park, in the house he'd had built in the mid-1920s, until his death on 7 October 1962. The Votaw House became and remains now the residence of the president of Washington Adventist University.

### **Description Control Element**

Description based on DACS. A register of the initial donation was created by R. A. Kloosterhuis in Summer 2013, and information from that register was used, along with original research, in the creation of this original finding aid, which was drafted by Ashlee Chism in August 2022. Sources for the biographical information include Votaw's biographical information blank from 1905; Votaw's obituaries (published in the *Review* [139:55, p25] and the *Columbia Union Visitor* [67:46, p15]); Carolyn (Harding) Votaw's obituary (published in the *Review* [128:48, p20]); various articles from the *Review and Herald*, *Eastern Tidings*, and *Columbia Union Visitor*, and the article about [Votaw](#) in the *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*. Additional research about the Votaw and Harding families was done on Ancestry.com.

## Related Archival Materials

*General Conference Archives, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*

RG 052 – General correspondence and reference files, Religious Liberty Department

RG 021 – Incoming Secretariat Correspondence

RG 021 – Biographical information blank

RG 033 – Sustentation file

Pamphlets Collection

*National Archives and Records Administration, United States Federal Government*

RG 129 – Records of the Bureau of Prisons, 1870-2009

RG 90 – Public Health Service

RG 351 – Records of the Government of the District of Columbia [containing the records of the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Force, 1861-1968]

RG 65 – Federal Bureau of Investigation [originally the Bureau of Investigation]

## Collection Series

### *Series 1: Documents*

This series is arranged into three subseries: Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949; Special Cases, 1940-1952; and General Papers, 1892-1962. The first two subseries were the materials originally donated in 2013; these subseries are largely comprised of correspondence between Votaw, people seeking assistance with religious liberty matters on behalf of themselves or their organizations, and officials from the United States government. This includes correspondence with people such as U. S. Senator Millard E. Tydings (1890-1961), FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover (1895-1975), Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox (1874-1944), and Representatives Sol Bloom (1870-1949) and Fred L. Crawford (1888-1957). The folders are arranged chronologically and then alphabetically.

The third subseries (General Papers, 1892-1962) is comprised of correspondence, notes, pamphlets, and clippings which Votaw made during his career. The correspondence from 1921-1924 relates largely to Votaw's work as the Superintendent of Prisons as well as the Senate inquiry into actions he took in that role, which was part of the Senate's larger inquiry into Attorney General Harry M. Daugherty (1860-1941) during 1924. Other materials are related to Votaw's religious liberty work; he seems to have been deeply involved with the drafting of the message sent and delivered by a deputation of delegates from the 36<sup>th</sup> General Conference Session to President Theodore Roosevelt on May 22, 1905. Of note are Voice of Prophecy correspondence lessons completed by a Mrs. Eric A. Thiele who lived in Takoma Park, Maryland, United States in 1946-1947. The folders are arranged chronologically and alphabetically.

Box	Subseries	Folder Title
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	General Military Matters, 1920-1942
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Undated notes and drafts

35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Kokal, 1927
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Corson, 1928-1929
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Welling, 1928
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Boulard, 1929
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Case in Ooltewah, Tennessee, 1929
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Cooksey, 1929
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Hughes, 1929
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Lambert, 1929
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Webster-Bartholomew Hospital, 1929
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Slater, 1930
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Dobbins, 1931
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Government Printing Office, 1931
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Washington Sanitarium and Hospital property, 1931
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Bernstein, 1932
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Burke, 1932-1934
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Dillworth, 1932
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Hansen, 1932
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Italian law, 1932
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Navy Department, 1932
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Tiller, 1932
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Bodner, 1933
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Castillejo, 1933
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Hodgson, 1933
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Ingels, 1933
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Magnusses, 1933
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Mika, 1933-1934
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Richards, 1933-1934
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Tavouktsian, 1933
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Elsenheimer, 1934
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Shaver, 1934-1935
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Wells, 1934
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Cannings, 1935
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Christensen, L., 1935
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Jefferys, 1935
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Mayberry, 1935-1936
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Ruehling, 1935
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Cowdery, 1936
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Exemption from Social Security, 1936
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Janzen, 1936
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Parking outside Takoma Park headquarters, 1936
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Pittsburgh Evangelistic Series, 1936

35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Cottrell, F. E., 1937
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Davies, 1937
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Fritz, 1937-1938
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Mohr, 1937
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Nelson, 1937
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Claims regarding China property, 1938
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Clymer, 1938
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Smith, D. J., 1938
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Stewart, 1938
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Tydings, 1938-1940
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	USDA, 1938
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Holden, 1939
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Smith, C. D., 1939
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Smith, G. J., 1939
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Vulliet, 1939
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Civilian Conservation Corps, 1940-1941
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Gregorius, 1940
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Grovet, 1940
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Harris, 1940
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Imai, 1940
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Labor Unions, 1940
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Ruhling, 1940
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Tarr, 1940
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Wolcott, 1940
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Fayard, 1941
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Krieghoff, 1941
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Navy, 1941
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Thurston, 1941
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Dorsey, 1942
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Gory, 1942
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation, 1942
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Pester, 1942
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Alcox, 1943
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Peick, 1945-1947
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Folsom, 1946
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Francis, 1946
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Roberts, 1946
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Roche, 1946
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Shoemaker, 1947
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Various Cases, 1947-1948
35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	West Pennsylvania Conference, 1948

35 A	Favorable Decisions, 1920-1949	Mabry, 1949
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Case Memoranda, 1940-1949
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Special Cases, Arthur - Witte
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Special Cases, Atkins - Maxwell
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Special Cases, Monk - Willis
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Gruner, 1946-1947
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Lacy, 1946
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	O'Dell, 1946-1947
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Steele, 1946
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Burgess, 1947
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Kaplan, 1947
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Robertson, 1947
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Stevens, 1947
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Vinkel, 1947
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Fischer, 1948-1949
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Phillips, 1948
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Newman, 1949-1950
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Watson, 1949
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Augusta, Georgia, 1950
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Bosari, 1950
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Dunsmuir, California, 1950
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Kettle Falls, Washington, 1950
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Lowenstein, 1950
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Ordinance in Borger, Texas, 1950
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	St. Paul, Minnesota, 1950
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Traverse City, Michigan, 1950
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Tracy, 1950
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Ford and Washington, 1952
35 B	Special Cases, 1940-1952	Glison, 1952
35 C	General Papers, 1892-1962	Religious Liberty pamphlets and periodicals, 1892-1908
35 C	General Papers, 1892-1962	Clippings, notes, and pamphlets, 1905
35 C	General Papers, 1892-1962	Correspondence and notes, 1904-1906
35 C	General Papers, 1892-1962	GC Session issues, Review, 1905
35 C	General Papers, 1892-1962	Sermon Exchange, 1906
35 C	General Papers, 1892-1962	Correspondence and notes, 1906-1907
35 C	General Papers, 1892-1962	Evangelistic Series advert, 1915
35 C	General Papers, 1892-1962	Correspondence and notes, 1921-1922
35 D	General Papers, 1892-1962	Correspondence and notes, 1923-1924
35 D	General Papers, 1892-1962	Envelopes, US Penitentiary Investigation, 1922
35 D	General Papers, 1892-1962	Transcript of Dyche testimony, 1924
35 D	General Papers, 1892-1962	US Penitentiary Audit, Atlanta, Georgia, 1921-1924



35 D	General Papers, 1892-1962	Religious liberty materials, 1926-1944
35 D	General Papers, 1892-1962	Congressional bills, 1929
35 D	General Papers, 1892-1962	Supreme Court of the United States opinions, 1940s - 1
35 D	General Papers, 1892-1962	Supreme Court of the United States opinions, 1940s - 2
35 E	General Papers, 1892-1962	Vegetarianism, 1941-1961
35 E	General Papers, 1892-1962	Clippings and drafts on health, 1943-1947
35 E	General Papers, 1892-1962	Religious Liberty notebook, 1946
35 E	General Papers, 1892-1962	Voice of Prophecy materials, 1946
35 E	General Papers, 1892-1962	Voice of Prophecy Completed Lessons, 1946-1947 - 1
35 E	General Papers, 1892-1962	Voice of Prophecy Completed Lessons, 1946-1947 - 2
35 E	General Papers, 1892-1962	Congressional Record, 1961-1962
35 E	General Papers, 1892-1962	Adventist Men manuscript, 1962

### ***Series 2: Artifacts and Books***

This series is comprised of two cloth charts (a prophecy chart and a map) and three books belonging at one time to Heber Votaw, including his Bible. Additionally, the Bible had an assortment of loose notes tucked between its pages; these items have been removed from the Bible and placed in a folder of their own.

<b>Box</b>	<b>Description</b>
35 F	Prophecy chart, c. 1910
35 F	Cloth map (very large)
35 G	Manual given to Heber Votaw by A. J. Parker
35 G	Book, <i>The life and epistles of St. Paul</i> , W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, 1911, with inscription to “Deac” from Heber Votaw. [‘Deacon’ was the nickname of George T. Harding, Jr.]
35 G	Bible belonging to Heber Votaw
35 G	Folder of loose materials formerly interleaved between the Bible’s pages, undated

***Materials transferred out of the collection***

The following books were transferred out of the collection to the general collection of the Rebok Memorial Library or discarded altogether. None of the books contained marginalia by any of the Votaws or Hardings, though the copy of *Daniel and Revelation* (1918) belonged to Mary V. Harding in 1937, and the copy of *The Great Controversy* (1946) has “George T. Harding IV” stamped on the cover. Since the subjects of the volumes may be of interest to those looking to use this collection, the titles, authors, publication date, and overall disposition are made available in this aid.

***Books***

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Year Published</b>	<b>Overall Disposition</b>
Low voice collection no. 5	Rodeheaver, Homer A. (Homer Alvan), 1880-1955.	1952	See library catalog
Christ's last legion	Spalding, Arthur Whitefield, 1877-1953.	1949	See library catalog
The great controversy	White, Ellen G. (Harmon), 1827-1915.	1946	See library catalog
Our day in the light of prophecy	Spicer, W. A. (William Ambrose), 1865-1952.	1918	In conservation
Back to the Bible, or the new Protestantism	Price, George McCready, 1870-1963.	1920	See library catalog
God speaks to modern man	Lickey, Arthur E., 1895-1974.	1952	See library catalog
Daniel and the Revelation	Smith, Uriah, 1832-1903.	1918	See library catalog
Index to the writings of Ellen G. White	Ellen G. White Estate	1942	See library catalog
Testimonies for the church, volume five	White, Ellen G. (Harmon), 1827-1915.	1938	See library catalog
Early writings of Ellen G. White	White, Ellen G. (Harmon), 1827-1915.	1942	See library catalog
Fundamentals of Christian education	White, Ellen G. (Harmon), 1827-1915.	1923	In conservation
Bible readings for the home		1951	See library catalog
The story of redemption	White, Ellen G. (Harmon), 1827-1915.	1947	See library catalog
Instruction for effective Christian service	White, Ellen G. (Harmon), 1827-1915.	1925	Discarded due to poor condition
Instruction for effective Christian service	White, Ellen G. (Harmon), 1827-1915.	1925	Discarded due to poor condition
The story of redemption	White, Ellen G. (Harmon), 1827-1915.	1947	Duplicate copy. Discarded.
Your Bible and you	Maxwell, Arthur S	1959	Duplicate copy. Discarded.
Manual for ministers	General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists	1925	Discarded due to poor condition
Source book for Bible Students	General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists	1927	Discarded due to poor condition