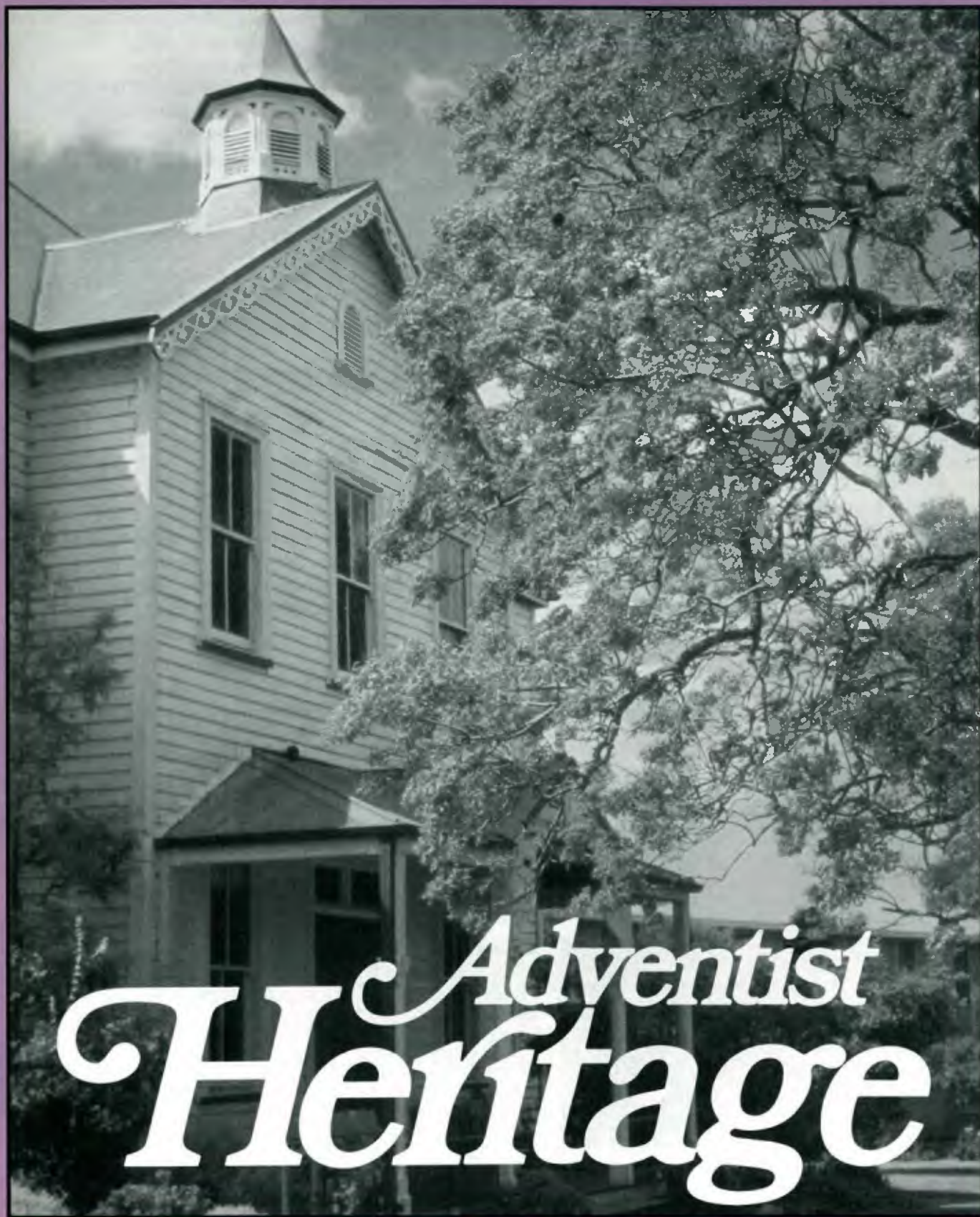


A Journal of Adventist History

Volume 16  
Number 1



# Adventist Heritage

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**Michelle Abel** is a second-year university student majoring in professional writing and history and looking to a B.A. degree. She moved from waitressing at the Valley View Restaurant in the Warburton Health Care Centre to a position as editorial assistant at the Signs Publishing Company in Victoria, Australia. She has two younger brothers and two younger sisters, accounting for five of the grandchildren of Kenneth Mead. Michelle is single, though she speaks enthusiastically about her boyfriend. Her hobbies include reading and writing, travel, and eating Italian and Malaysian food.

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**Malcolm J. Bull** graduated from Avondale College with a B.A. in Theology. Having served for a year as the island's pastor, his knowledge of Pitcairn comes first-hand. He has also ministered in New Zealand, and since January of 1993 he has been the minister of the Moree, New South Wales, church. His wife, Glenysie Evelyn, hails from New Zealand, and they have four children.



**Ella Lenona Coombs** lives with her husband, Glen, at Balcolyn, New South Wales, on the shores of Lake Macquarie. As a granddaughter of Maud Sisley Boyd, she has taken a keen interest in the early pioneer history of Avondale College. Her husband worked as a government land evaluator, and Ella made a lifetime career of primary school teaching. Retirement now permits time for her hobbies of gardening, music, sewing, and, as she puts it, "loving my granddaughters."



**Laurence Gilmore** served as a paramedic in the Australian Army Medical Corps during World War II. As a young man called to pioneer mission work in Papua New Guinea, he took his young wife June and five-month-old baby to this isolated island country. Subsequently, he returned to New Zealand to work in several large city missions and to pastor. Later he filled public relations posts in New South Wales, becoming the founding editor of a monthly newsletter, *Conference News*. He has four children and five grandchildren. In retirement he and June live in Balcolyn, NSW where they pursue their hobby of gardening.



**Milton Hook**, a pastor-evangelist in Sydney, Australia, lives in Wahroonga. He graduated twice from Avondale College, with a Primary Teacher's Certificate (1961) and a Theology degree (1964). From Andrews University he holds two degrees, an MA in Religious Education (1976) and an EdD in Religious Education (1978). He has served as an elementary school teacher as well as a Bible teacher at both the academy and college levels. He and his wife Beverley served as missionaries in Papua New Guinea. They have two sons, Andrew and Lauren. Milton enjoys stamp collecting and walking. His interest in historical research and genealogical studies has made possible his contributions to *Adventist Heritage*.

*Continued on next page*

# CONTRIBUTORS

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**Robert K. McIver**, along with his wife Susan and their two daughters Althea and Skye, resides at Avondale College, where he is a Senior Lecturer in the Theology Department. Robert has earned several degrees, including a BSc from Canterbury University, a BA from Avondale College, a BD(Honors) from London University, and an MA and a PhD from Andrews University. Before joining the faculty at Avondale, he taught high school Mathematics and worked as a Youth Pastor. His special interests include studying the Gospel of Matthew and archaeology.



**Karen Miller** is a graduate of Avondale College (B.Ed.). Having served nine years as a secondary school English teacher for the Seventh-day Adventist educational system in Australia, she now works as an Assistant Editor at Signs Publishing Company in Warburton, Victoria, Australia. She is involved in the production of three church journals, *Record*, *Good Health*, and *Signs*. She is devoted to her family of two sisters, one brother-in-law, a "very precious three-year-old niece, and her widowed mother. Her special interests include photography and travelling, but she ranks writing at the top of her list.



**Arthur Patrick**, of Castle Hill, New South Wales, has behind him a rich history of service—first in pastoring, and then in teaching in New Zealand and Australia. Since 1992 he has been Senior Chaplain at Sydney Adventist Hospital. His academic record includes early studies at Avondale College (1954-1957), followed by an MA in Theology and a MDiv (1972) at Andrews University. He took his next three degrees in Australia: DMin from Christian Theological Seminary in 1973; MLitt from University of New England in 1984; and Ph.D. from the University of Newcastle in 1992. His dissertation discussed "Christianity and Culture in Colonial Australia . . . , 1891-1900." His special-interests publications on Australian church history qualify him well to be guest editor of this issue of *Adventist Heritage*.



**Gilbert Valentine**, with his wife Gail and two teenage sons, presently lives at Newbold College, England, where he serves as Chaplain and senior lecturer in Religion. His wife lectures in business Studies at Henley College. After some years in pastoral and youth ministry in Australia (1969-1974), he served as President of Pakistan Adventist Seminary (1985-1990). He holds a BA from Avondale College (1968) as well as an MA and a PhD from Andrews University (1982). A prolific writer and researcher in SDA history, his most recent book published was *The Shape of Adventism*. Gardening, tennis, and music are his regular hobbies, but just now they are secondary, he says, to "soaking up the beauty of England's historic homes, churches, and gardens."

# Adventist Heritage

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# THE EDITOR'S STUMP

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## Interpreting the Adventist Past in Australasia

by  
Arthur Patrick  
Guest Editor



"The First Fleet" is the universally accepted name for eleven motley ships which brought the first European residents to Australia in 1788. Almost a century later the first contingent of Seventh-day Adventist missionaries paused briefly in Sydney before settling in Melbourne,

the capital of the colony (now state) of Victoria during 1885. Thus it is only recently that the Adventists celebrated their centenary (1985), just before the Australians hosted a plethora of bicentennial events in 1988. Since then the Adventists have remembered the centenary of Ellen Whites's arrival (1891) for a nine-year sojourn in the antipodes.

*Adventist Heritage* has been to the fore in helping the church in the vast territory of the South Pacific Division tell its story to the rest of the Adventist world. A special issue focused on the then Australasian Division in 1985, and feature articles have appeared in other issues. It is fitting, then, that this issue should include, in addition to narrative, a more comprehensive attempt at interpretation. Even so, any interpretation must be rooted in the documents of the past at the same time as it is alive to the ongoing perspectives of a church which continues to think of itself as a movement.

Stephen N. Haskell was a household name in

the United States before he led the pioneer band of Adventist missionaries to Australia and New Zealand. The very next year (1886) Haskell described the church's new missions in the Southern Hemisphere for a volume published in Basel, Switzerland, entitled *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Mission of the Seventh-day Adventists*.

During 1899 the *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales* reported on a visit by a Member of Parliament and others to the institution which is now Avondale College. The author, W.S. Campbell, was impressed by the new "industrial college" and by "some splendid specimens of young vegetarians" which he saw "running about."

Readers of *Adventist Heritage* will be intrigued by Gilbert Valentine's account of Adventist historiography with reference to the church in the South Pacific Division. A New Zealander now working in England, Valentine's credentials as an Adventist historian are best illustrated by his 1992 volume from Andrews University Press, *The Shaping of Adventism: The Case of W.W. Prescott*.

Hugh Mackay, one of the most acute observers of contemporary life in this country, has this year (1993) published a best-seller, *Reinventing Australia: The Mind and Mood of Australia in the 90s*. In view of Mackay's emphasis on the role of values in a society, it is appropriate for us to re-examine the ideals which caused our pioneers so early and so successfully to

develop a co-educational college in New South Wales. Robert McIver's article on Avondale College addresses that task.

Adventist ideas have spawned institutions which then create, for the public, the visible face of the movement. This process has been especially evident in the South Pacific Division. The Signs Publishing Company grew from the fledgling publishing enterprise which the Adventist pioneers began within months of their arrival. The Sanitarium Health Food Company was inspired by the philosophy of Ellen White and informed by the church's experience in North America. Today it is a leading manufacturer of breakfast foods throughout Australia and New Zealand. Milton Hook focuses on the largest single-location Adventist institution in the Division, now known as Sydney Adventist Hospital. His article entitled "Hospital on a Hilltop" recounts some of the struggles during the early years of what is now the largest private hospital in Australia's most populous state. Laurence Gilmore tells two human-interest stories about the Hospital: how it was almost taken over by Douglas MacArthur and the Americans during World War II, and how Marmite helped it rise from three stories to ten in its early 1970s rebuilding program.

Without Ellen White, early Seventh-day Adventists may not have coalesced as a movement, keeping their Adventist faith alive and discovering the links between health and religion. But the Australasian church owes a particular debt to Ellen White in view of her ministry here from 1891-1900. In my article entitled "Ellen White: Mother of the Church in the South Pacific," I attempt an overview of her early role, the recent challenges to that role, and her continuing significance. Australian and New Zealand Adventists will forever remember that Ellen White's masterpieces on Jesus Christ (*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, *The Desire of Ages*, and *Christ's Object Lessons*) were written in their countries.

Walter R.L. Scragg as former Division president

fostered, between 1985 and 1988, a centennial volume and three symposia on historical issues. Scragg's vision of history took on substance under the leadership of the Division's field secretary, Dr. Arthur J. Ferch. Tragically killed in a mission-field accident on 5 September 1991, just before the publication of the third historical volume which he edited, Ferch will be remembered as a brilliant Old Testament scholar who also helped the Australasian church understand its heritage.

The current president of the South Pacific Division, Bryan W. Ball, earned a doctorate in church history at the University of London and has authored such books as *The English Connection: The Puritan Roots of Seventh-day Adventist Belief* (1981). Ball's latest manuscript, recently accepted for publication by Oxford University Press is entitled *The Seventh-day Men: Sabbatarians and Sabbatarianism in England and Wales 1600-1800*. The church's past has an exciting future when it is on the agenda of those who lead us.

Late in the 1890s, my maternal grandparents and my widowed paternal grandmother were encouraged by Ellen White to move to Cooranbong, adjacent to Avondale College. All three of them, with their families, became her neighbours; she influenced their lives profoundly and her influence lives on amongst their numerous descendants. It is fitting that this issue of a journal published in the United States should express the gratitude of Australian and New Zealand Adventists to those people in the Northern Hemisphere whose ancestors transplanted Adventism into Australasian soil and nurtured its early development. We, in turn, have a responsibility to pass on "the everlasting gospel . . . to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

# THE EDITOR'S STUMP

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## Down Under Revisited

by  
Dorothy Minchin-Comm



Eight years ago *Adventist Heritage* devoted an entire issue to the Centenary of the South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists. Most of the articles and pictures were then distilled from a new book, *Seventh-day Adventists in the South Pacific, 1885-1985*. In this present issue, Guest Editor Arthur Patrick leads a contemporary group of authors in reviewing and interpreting the development of Adventist church in Australia. Dr. Patrick's close, familial ties with the early beginnings in Australia, combined with his scholarship on the topic, make him unusually capable in this task. He is able, paradoxically, to view this passage of church history with a warmly objective eye.

In the picture department this time, we present the "Painting Pastor," Kenneth Mead. And finally, you will observe, biography sometimes fills its cup and then overflows. Ella Coombs' original story of her grandmother, Maud Sisley-Boyd, took on a life of its own and became the saga of the Sisley Family, beginning in Tunbridge Wells, England, flowering in early Battle Creek, Michigan, and ending in Avondale's pioneer cemetery in Cooranbong, Australia.

A note about the cover: Avondale's justifiably celebrated jacaranda trees bloom all around the college campus, right to the door of historic College Hall. We regret that budgetary limitations forbade our offering you a full-color cover so that you could appreciate the delicate lavender shadings of the jacaranda blossoms in full bloom. The best we could do was to make a deep "jacaranda color" the theme shade for the issue.

Enjoy another intellectual and spiritual journey Down Under.

## The Painting Pastor of Australia

by

Michelle Abel and Karen Miller

A “Kenneth Mead Original” graces a wall in the foyer of the Victorian Conference office of the South Pacific Division. Another hangs in the lounge of a Seventh-day Adventist Youth Camp lodge near the Snowy Mountains, also in Victoria. Countless children now own a miniature painting, a reward for listening to Pastor Mead<sup>1</sup> preach. Fine art and evangelism seem an unusual mix, but art has always been an integral part of Ken Mead’s ministry.

The pastor does not owe his appreciation to his Adventist heritage—at least not initially. Born at Manly Beach, Sydney, in 1923, he naturally supposed that the most interesting things in life were being a “surfie” and shooting the waves. As an architect and artist, however, his father did teach him the love of beauty. Watching his father produce lovely paintings soon had the boy thinking of a career in art. Consequently, after finishing high school Ken enrolled in a Sydney art school, where he spent two



*Now retired in Victoria's lovely Yarra Valley, Pastor Ken Mead stands at his front door, ready to begin his next project.*

years. “At that state I had no interest in theology,” he remembers. “I was interested in becoming a graphic designer and earning big money.”

Brought to a decision point in an evangelistic program conducted by Pastor Nelson Burns, however, Ken enrolled in the ministerial course at Avondale College in 1941. His skills were obvious and he did some work in the art department, though he had decided that

he should henceforth do nothing but preach the gospel when he went to his first appointment in public evangelism in New South Wales. He recalled all too clearly that he had planned to use his art simply “to attain success, make money, and drive a Jaguar.”

Then one day on the beach, he watched his five-year-old drawing with his colored pencils. The old feeling returned, and Ken Mead began to paint again—just for relaxation on holidays. Shortly thereafter, his talent moved from the private to the public sphere. Working with young people at youth camps, he began to teach them how to paint. “And some of them now paint much better than I do. That’s very satisfying.”

Meanwhile, in 1956, Pastor Ernie Steed had inaugurated a fast-moving, almost TV-type presentation called “The Best Saturday Night in Town.” The spotlights and big sound attracted young and old. The program ran for four years, and Ken Mead found much scope for his creativity, producing differ-





*Ken Mead coordinated an evangelistic crusade held in Melbourne in 1971 by evangelist Earl Cleveland. Later the "black-white mission" also ministered in Sydney. These successes foreshadowed Mead's arrival in the U.S. to work with Cleveland in a similar campaign in Detroit, Michigan.*

ent, exciting effects and painting back-drops for the show. To his great satisfaction, his evangelistic fervor and his artistic talents flowed together in joint fulfillment.

When Ken Mead transferred to the South Australian Conference as Youth Director in 1961, he took the "Best Saturday Night" concept with him. Some of the shows featured top Australian artists, like the singer Harold Blair. Back in Sydney in 1965, he coordinated the introduction of George Vandeman's "It is Written" program in Australia. It began in the Manufacturers Hall at the Sydney Showgrounds, with a seating capacity of more than 5,000. Tapping into all kinds of resources, Mead not only recruited top businessmen but also used the relatively new "walkie-talkie" communication system among his ushers. They packed the hall for five nights.

After working with Evangelist Earl Cleveland in 1971 in campaigns in Sydney and Melbourne,

Ken Mead came to the United States to coordinate the first "black-white" mission in Detroit, Michigan. Then he joined Vandeman as associate director of the telecast, "It is Written." Eighteen months later, however, ill health forced him to return home to Australia.

Although he has been involved in a wide variety of

*Mead has been no stranger to the lights and cameras of television. He worked with George Vandeman in introducing the "It is Written" program in Sydney and later served as the program's Associate Director in the States. Unfortunately, ill health forced him to return to Australia after only eighteen months.*



successful media productions, he accounts his accomplishments as minimal. "I am a Jack-of-all-Trades and master of none." If there was success, it was attributable to the Lord's blessing and the many people "who were brighter than me." Perhaps he inherited this stance from his architect father who said, "I can draw the plan, but they're only scratches on a piece of paper. It's the expertise of the tradesmen that produces the building."

Fine art, performance and creative ministry have intertwined in Ken Mead's life. Whether painting, teaching kids to paint, or staging a program, he never just fills in time. "It all expresses my love and faith and my appreciation for the beautiful things of His creation." He deplores the idea of living in "our own little world" and divorcing ourselves from our community. Art and music help form the necessary



*Both of Ken Mead's paintings show his deep insight into the traditions of his native land. He has gracefully captured the sparse gray-greens and browns of the Australian bush, the toil of the man in the field, and the romance of a tall ship gliding into a bay.*



bridge.

Today, Ken Mead lives in retirement in the Yarra Valley of Victoria. Over the last twelve years he has had three art exhibitions (with between 30 and 50 paintings at each show). He directs all the money he makes from sales back into the youth ministry of the church. He still loves people with a passion. Despite his family's disapproval, he still picks up hitch-hikers. "I'm nearly 70 years old, and no one has knocked me over the head yet." In his less risky moments he conducts art classes for senior citizens. "It's so exciting to help them observe God's creation and then to show them that what we paint can be only the faintest reflection of what He has produced."

1. "Pastor" here refers to an ordained minister.



(Left) In 1993, Mead organized a sight-and-sound show for the 85th anniversary of the Warburton Adventist School. It presented the heritage of both the school and the valley, and involved all the local schools, community organizations, and emergency services. The event won the Australia Day Award for the Yarra Valley.



(Left) One of his own paintings hangs above his desk in 1978, when he was president of the Tasmania Conference. While there, his secretary insisted on his entering a painting into the Hobart Art Show. Because painting was only a hobby, Mead doubted his work would sell. To his surprise and embarrassment, his painting drew the highest price at the show (\$750), and the pastor received much media attention.



(Left) One of the first giant "flannelgraphs" or "grassographs" created by Mead in 1957 for a national youth congress in Sydney. While the technique is now popular at the Olympic Games, at the time it truly was a spectacular event with 2000 young people framing the sign and picture. To the music of the bands and a voice from the stage, each person pulled out a small pink cape, changing the color of the frame.

# BOOKMARKS

## Arthur J. Ferch *Journey of Hope*

by Milton Hook

This paperback, sub-titled *Seventh-day Adventist History in the South Pacific: 1919-1950*, is the companion volume to *Adventist History in the South Pacific: 1885-1918*. Both titles suggest that they are comprehensive histories, but in reality they are selected essays, a sampling of topics on the subject.

*Journey of Hope* is a compilation of papers presented at the 1988 S.D.A. History Symposium held in Sydney as part of the Australian Bicentennial Celebrations. Dr. Arthur Ferch co-coordinated the Symposium and just prior to his tragic death, he edited the manuscripts. The entire project is an example of the encouragement he nurtured among



Arthur John Ferch (1940-1991)

Seventh-day Adventist scholars.

The opening chapter by Dr. Donald Hansen discusses the Australian ecclesiastical scene, more particularly his area of specialty (the situation in New South Wales churches during the time between the two World Wars). The reader may note, in Hansen's overall view,

some tacit contrasts and comparisons with the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Dr. David Parker is the only non-Seventh-day Adventist contributor to the book. He discusses some aspects of the conservative strand in Australian Protestantism, drawing on his 1982 doctoral dissertation.

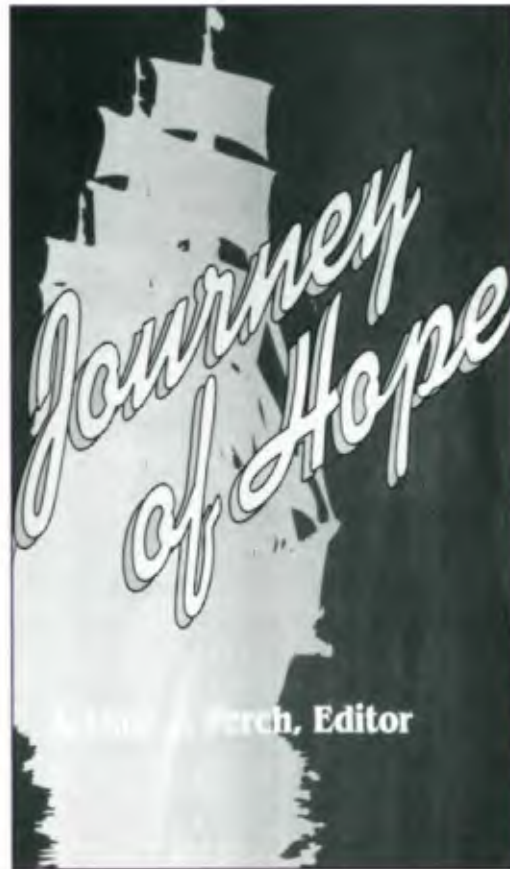
Subsequent chapters discuss Australasian Seventh-day Adventist attitudes to trade unionism, "worldly" educational degrees, non-combatancy and conscientious objection in wartime, and religious liberty in the Pacific Island mission field. Adventism's multi-pronged evangelism is also treated.

The imperative of the mission-boat for the spread of Adventism among the Pacific isles is the subject of another chapter. A large percentage of the boats in service are mentioned by name. This vast topic is deserving of an entire book, for the boats' roles were as significant as those of the personalities.

Jill Anderson is the only female contributor to the book. She has a special burden to highlight the unsung work done by national missionaries in the Pacific islands. She has restricted her research to those nationals who served in Papua. It is a commendable start in a neglected corner of Adventist history.

Two geographical areas—Western Samoa and Asia—receive special discussion. Pastor David Hay's chapter on Adventism in Samoa is written with the benefit of years of personal mission service in the area together with the research incorporated into his own 1988 book, *The Isles No Longer Wait*. Dr. Noel Clapham discusses

Australasia's contribution to the Adventist mission thrust into Asia. Only passing reference is made to the pre-1912 era when Australasians pioneered in Southeast Asia. But the constraints of the Symposium forced him to concentrate on the post-World War I era. Despite the fact that Southeast Asia was not then under the control of the Australasian Division, many Australians served with distinction in the broader Asian mission field.



The book cover of *Journey of Hope*

One Australian of historical stature, Pastor C. H. Watson, is also given special study. Alan Smith has done considerable research into this former General Conference president. He has teamed up with Dr. Alexander Currie to write this essay—which differs in a number of details with D. A. and G. L. Ochs' book, *The Past and the Presidents*. Some dependence on telephone interviews with two of Watson's adult children was unavoidable. Better documentation may be achieved only if some of Watson's correspondence, now held privately, is released to historical researchers in the future.

The reader may wonder about the title and cover design. The green and gold colors, together with a stylized First Fleet ship, were deliberately chosen to match the Australian Bicentenary theme. The meaning of the title must be inferred from the sub-title.

# A Tribute to Arthur Ferch

Arthur Ferch was born in Germany on 7 September 1940, and died in a car accident while on an itinerary in Samoa on 5 September 1991. A graduate of Avondale College (B.A., Theology, 1965), the University of London (B.D., Honors, 1973), and Andrews University (Th.D., 1979), Dr. Ferch was Chairman of the Department of Theology at Avondale College from 1980-1984, and Field Secretary of the South Pacific Division from 1984 until his death.

A broad range of interests is clearly expressed in the more than sixty scholarly papers, articles, and books which Dr. Ferch wrote during the last two decades of his fruitful life. His doctoral dissertation, *The Son of Man in Daniel Seven*, was published by Andrews University Press in 1983. But his zest for apocalyptic literature was linked to a wider enthusiasm for the entire Old Testament and the Christian gospel. Review and Herald published *In the Beginning* (1985) and *Daniel on Solid Ground* (1987), while Signs pub-

lished three volumes which Dr. Ferch edited, one of them, called *Toward Righteousness by Faith: 1888 in Retrospect* (1990). He was as competent writing for Adventist periodicals as for highly-specialized journals concerned with archaeology and Biblical Studies.

The South Pacific Division tenderly remem-

bers Arthur John Ferch as a pastor-teacher whose dedication and energy were legendary within his lifetime. Carole Ferch-Johnson, a counselor and chaplain at Sydney Adventist Hospital, was appointed Women's Ministries Coordina-



*Andrew, Arthur and Carole Ferch relaxing at home.*

tor for the South Pacific Division in 1992. Recently Carole and Arthur's sons, Richard and Andrew, graduated from Medicine (University of New South Wales) and Economics (Sydney University), respectively.

While Dr. Ferch rests in the certainty of the first resurrection, his deeds and his writings continue to nurture the church to which he devoted his life so faithfully.

—Arthur Patrick

## Hospital on a Hilltop

*by Milton Hook*

**T**he Sydney Adventist Hospital is one of the most significant Seventh-day Adventist institutions in the Southern Hemisphere. Its chequered history reaches back into the 1890s when Australasians made their first attempts to institutionalise their convictions about health care.

The hospital's predecessor, the Summer Hill Sanitarium in suburban Sydney, became totally inadequate in a very short time and some alternative was quickly sought. The expanding enterprise had forced the superintendent, Dr. Edgar Caro, to rent nearby buildings in the same street, and while this provided extra space it physically fragmented the institution. These hired quarters all had internal stairways which only added to the nurses' strenuous work load as they struggled up and down with buckets of hot and cold water, meals, linen, and everything associ-

ated with the care of patients. The shoe-string budget was so frayed it could not support many labour-saving facilities.

Despite the odds, some of the denomination's leaders felt they should press ahead and build their own structure. Others, however, sounded alarm bells because of mounting debts and warned that a large sanitarium could become a white elephant. These forecasters of doom were ignored.

### Finding the Right Place

Sites were being explored as early as 1898.

Charles Schowe, Senior, a church member in the Hills district west of Sydney, offered his orchard for sale but the church leaders considered it an unsuitable site for a sanitarium. Early the following year properties near the Hawkesbury River and at Hornsby Junction (later called Hornsby) were also investigated. It was



*The Sydney Sanitarium as it looked in the early 1920s*

conceded that a large sanitarium in the bush would need feeder branches in Sydney and Newcastle if either of these remote sites was chosen.

A site selection committee of three was eventually elected in April 1899. They were Pastor Arthur Daniells, Dr. Edgar Caro, and George Morse. For six months prior to their nomination many letters were despatched to John Wessells in South Africa urging him to come to Australia and manage the venture from its infancy. Wessells was a wealthy businessman who had experience in the management of a similar sanitarium in his home country. It was hoped he would inject some of his own money into the Australian sanitarium as he had done in the South African sanitarium, but that did not eventuate. In actual fact, when Wessells left the sanitarium in South Africa it was staring bankruptcy in the face.

Wessells and his family arrived in Sydney in July 1899. He was soon presented with Caro's grandiose plans for a four-storied sanitarium of one hundred rooms costing \$16,000 or more.

During the 1899 session of the Australasian Union Conference at Cooranbong it was formally voted to erect a sanitarium in the vicinity of Sydney. Immediately after this agreement was reached on Friday morning, July 21, the one hundred members who were gathered at the report of the Australasian Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association pledged over \$1,800 cash and \$200 in interest-free loans. This was a spontaneous demonstration of their zeal for the project. A patient of the Summer Hill Sanitarium, Anglican minister John Geiss, was so impressed with the venture he initially

donated \$1,000 and became a member of the Adventist church.

### The John Wessell's Choice

Despite the existence of the site selection committee Wessells did most of the laborious searching. Sites close to the seaside at Manly and Bondi were explored. He preferred the north shore of Sydney, however, and looked at many properties there, including ones at Ryde, Eastwood, Asquith, Pymble and Wahroonga. After checking factors

such as water supply, access to gas mains, roadways, and sunny aspects, his interest gravitated more and more to twenty-nine hectares at Wahroonga on one of the higher ridges in the Sydney region. A portion of this bushland was already cleared and planted in orchard and its proximity to two railway lines as well as good creek



*Mrs. Radley's buggy carried Ellen White to inspect the proposed sanitarium site in Wahroonga. While the elders viewed the bushy hilltop, the three Radley children stayed by the carriage. Left to Right: Alf, Jack, and Clive.*

water were all compelling reasons to buy. On three sides the land sloped away into fern-filled gullies. A sanitarium on the hilltop would command a sunny vantage point.

The owner, widow Elizabeth Evans, would sell at the bargain price of \$4,200. On October 31, 1899, after consultation with some church leaders, Wessells quickly agreed to buy, paying a cash deposit of \$400 and finalizing the legalities in mid-November. The remainder was to be paid in installments over twelve months. In November he also arranged to purchase from Joshua Johnson an adjoining three hectare orchard and shanty for \$1,280 on similar terms. The present-day Wahroonga church approximates the site of this



early orchard. Some years later additional purchases of neighbouring bushland more than doubled the total area of the property.

The search and purchase proved to be the high point of Wessells' contribution. Soon after, he was elected as Corresponding Secretary and Business Agent for the Australasian Union Conference. This meant travelling throughout Australasia and a division of his interests. Personal matters unsettled him, too, he and his wife having lost a daughter at birth in late November. With his uncles killed fighting for the Boers in South Africa and with the war turning against the Boers he felt he should hurry home to protect his financial interests. He left Australia in March, 1900.

### The First Sanitarium

In the wake of signing the contract for the Wahroonga property, and before the cash flow became critical, Ellen White recommended that sanitariums be built in Melbourne and Geelong also. Wessells, on the other hand, had advised it would be wiser from a business viewpoint to first establish one main sanitarium firmly before branching out to other centers.

Two caretakers were employed to live on the Wahroonga property and work the orchards. Little else was accomplished during the first half of 1900 except that church leaders voted to go ahead and build immediately in order to open by Decem-



*Mr. Edward Murfet of Tasmania gave a generous donation for the construction of the first Sanitarium*

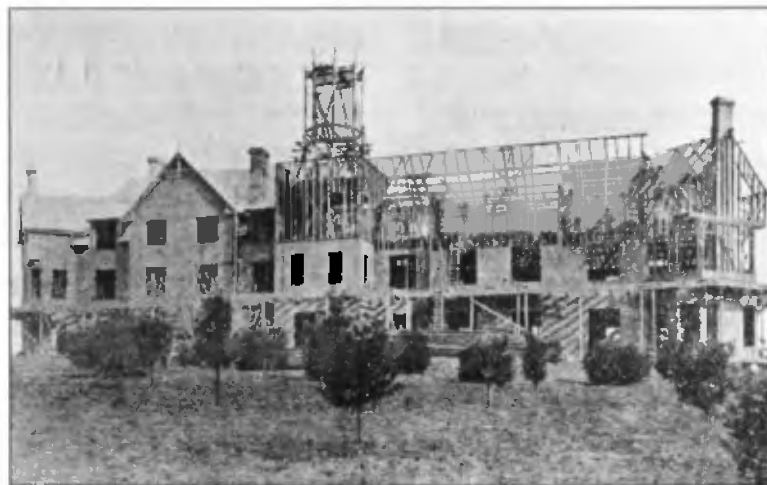
ber 1900. Their vision of a sixty-bed sanitarium, costing approximately \$20,000, struggled for fruition despite some significant donations. Ellen White and an Adventist farmer in Tasmania, Edward Murfet, gave \$200 each. Murfet followed later with more donations and loans.

For two years, 1900 and 1901, the enterprise floundered in a maelstrom of political intrigue and questionable bookkeeping. Dr. Caro and the Summer Hill Sanitarium manager, Fred Sharp, battled to keep their own institution solvent at the expense of Dr. Daniel Kress and the

planned new sanitarium. The coming of John Burden from America in January, 1901, and the exit of Dr. Caro in the same year saved the sanitarium from the brink of bankruptcy. For these reasons, instead of beginning the new building project with some cash reserves the initiators were virtually paupers—indeed, deeply in debt.

Dr. Merritt Kellogg, a medic and carpenter, returned with his young Australian wife, Eleanor, to Sydney in June, 1900 after a term of mission service in Tonga. Although he was in his mid-sixties, he was hale and hearty and took up his

duties as architect and building supervisor with gusto. He submitted two different plans, one less pretentious than Caro's tall dream. Ellen White advised against a brick building. Instead, plans for a three-storied timber structure were accepted by church leaders.



*Under construction in 1902, this is the earliest photograph of the sanitarium building.*

Brick foundations were laid without fanfare in the summer of 1900/1901. When Burden arrived, stringent measures were introduced to cut costs. The original plan was reduced to a two-storey building with a functional attic and an iron roof instead of a tiled one. By February 1901 the first storey was up and weather-boarded. At first the only experienced carpenters helping Kellogg were Fred Lamplough and Will Taylor, but Percy Mills and John Nichols came later. Many amateurs assisted, including Bert Guillard, Harold Hughes, Arthur Baker, Charlie Harlow, and other Avondale School students. Often they worked twelve hours a day on the project.

Building on Sundays stirred some local animosity, and the labourers were reported. The police visited the site on two occasions and took down the names of "violators." Police intended issuing summonses, but they were not sure how they could get convictions. Kellogg reasoned with them, explaining that the sanitarium was to be for charitable work in the community. His carpenters, he added, had agreed to work fifty-seven hours per week, and accepted wages for only forty-eight hours. Therefore, Sunday work was their donation to a charity, and they were really not earning their living by working on Sundays. Whether the argument would have survived in court will never be known for it satisfied the police and they left the workers alone. Kellogg took extra care, however, to subdue noise on Sundays from that time onwards.

When the Foreign Mission Board paid Kellogg eighteen months wages in one lump sum he used \$200 of it to buy more building materials. Dr. John



*Charles Harrison was head of what had become a large staff by 1926.*

Kellogg also sent \$2,400 to accompany the charter of "The Sydney Sanitarium and Benevolent Association." This charter recognized the Sydney Sanitarium as a sister institution in a worldwide Adventist network under the umbrella of the International Medical Missionary and Benevolent Association.

The Sanitarium's purpose, the charter read, was to be "undenominational, unsectarian, philanthropic, humanitarian, charitable, and benevolent, and in no way, directly or indirectly, for private profit or dividend paying to any one." The Australasian Union Conference immediately dropped the words "undenominational" and "unsectarian," demonstrating that the institution was definitely to be identified as an Adventist one. This action reflected the attitude of church headquarters in America where the wording was also a bone of contention with Dr. Kellogg.

### **A Series of Financial Crises**

Building progress petered out in the latter half of 1901 as the scandal of the Summer Hill Sanitarium's \$2,400 debt became more evident. Merritt Kellogg reported to Ellen White, "The Summer Hill institution and the Health Food Company have used up more than 2,300 [\$4,600] of the Building money." Conference President, Pastor George Irwin, admitted their dilemma when he addressed the membership saying, "We are at a point in this enterprise where we cannot go back without great loss and disgrace, hence our only course is to push on at once to victory."

Urgent calls for carpenters were sent out. Many responded from Cooranbong, travelling by train to Hornsby on Friday afternoons and

# The Great Deliverance of 1942

"The whole staff rallied as one person to pray three times a day that the proposed military plans to control and occupy the 'San' in June, 1942, would not eventuate," Pastor A. W. Knight (now a Medical Ward patient), told me. It was 1968, and I, as the first Public Relations and Fund Raising Officer of the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital, was visiting this much-loved former chaplain. He unfolded a fascinating story.

The Japanese military forces had been moving ever southwards in a relentless push with none to stop them. America was recovering from the debacle of Pearl Harbor in December, 1941. In Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, New Caledonia, and Southwest Pacific, the Americans were commandeering any buildings they wanted.

They had decided to take over the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital with its extensive estate in the northern suburbs of Sydney, the capital of New South Wales.<sup>1</sup> The Australian Federal Government had given full approval to the impending acquisition. When the great Allied commander, General Douglas MacArthur, wanted anything, Prime Minister John Curtin readily acceded to his demands.

Protests, strikes, sit-downs, and walk-outs were all useless. This was WAR TIME! The Americans took over land and buildings wherever these were needed. Their representatives had even marked out on the Hospital estate the sites for quonset-type buildings and other structures. As the reality of it all came to the administrators, Pastor Knight, then chaplain, and the business manager, George Adair, encouraged the staff to petition God TDS (Three Times Daily) to stop the plans and somehow reverse man's desires and intentions. For three weeks the staff prayed that the Seventh-day Adventist Church would not lose ownership and control of the only hospital founded in Australia by divine guidance.

That was a big thing to ask for in June, 1942. The Japanese war machine had consumed the Philippines, Malaysia, Burma, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands. They had bombed Darwin in the Northern Territory of Australia and sunk ships in Sydney Harbor. Australia's crack fighting divisions (the 6th, 7th, and 9th) were in the Middle East, while the 8th was incarcerated in the infamous Changi Prison in Singapore. Only an under-strength and ill-equipped

infantry battalion was trying to stop the enemy at Kokoda, Papua New Guinea. The Australian military was even prepared to retreat from North Queensland and set up a "Brisbane Line."

One morning the telephone rang in Business Manager George Adair's office and a voice said: "The American's have changed their plans." Imagine the excitement around the San! "Praise the Lord," was heard on every side.

As a reminder of the experience and to mark the occasion, Pastor Knight had a special card printed which carried selected statements from Ellen White's writings. The card was headlined "He Faileth Never." It read, in part:

When in faith we take hold of His strength, He will change wonderfully change, the most hopeless, discouraging outlook . . . Having asked according to His word, we should believe His promise, and press our petitions with a determination that will not be denied.

(Tested and Proved, June, 1942)

Pastor Knight was a man of deep faith in his God and greatly loved by his staff, student nurses, and in particular by those he called "my boys," the male students. The little card, carrying his signature, was given to me for the San and should always be a treasured part of the Hospital's history.

Naturally the local church membership, meeting in the old wooden building located where the present Medical Center operates, knew what was happening. On the following Sabbath morning, after the thrilling news had been announced, a retiring collection was taken up as an expression of gratitude for God's goodness and deliverance. It was decided to use the money (about £50) for something permanent in the San. Subsequently, a glass book case was built in the Patient's Lounge with the sacred money.

"That little gift is to stand as a witness to answered prayer way back there in 1942. He who never fails was tested and proved," old Chaplain Knight concluded.

—*Laurence Gilmore*

1. The present large Wahroonga Church and the Activities Center/School of Nursing buildings were not standing in 1942.

working a twelve-hour Sunday before returning home late Sunday evening. Church leaders voted to buy materials only as funds came in, rather than take a \$5,000 loan to complete the building. Church members were admonished to pay a second tithe for one year. Their Sabbath School offerings for the second quarter of 1902 were also used to keep the building program going.

These funds furnished enough to complete the first two storeys and verandahs, in addition to the outer shell of the roof, attic, and tower, and a separate rear building for hydrotherapy treatment rooms.

Building costs to the end of 1902 totalled almost \$17,000. The second tithe brought in about \$3,000. The Sabbath School offering provided \$400. Dr. John Kellogg donated the royalties of his medical books sold in Australasia. This amounted to over \$600. He and other benefactors in America gave over \$4,000. The balance was met by Australasians.

A quiet dedication service was held in the Sanitarium parlour on New Year's Day, 1903. Unlike the opening of some earlier Adventist health institutions in Australia, no government dignitaries were present. Even the architect and building superintendent, Merritt Kellogg, was absent, having returned to America a few weeks earlier with the promise of work in his homeland—a promise that proved to be empty.

### Administrative Measures

The Sanitarium administrative staff was en-



*Just before the opening of the San in 1902, the staff posed for a group picture. Drs. D.H. and Lauretta Kress are seated in the second row, second and third from the left. Pastor and Mrs. G.A. Irwin are seated next to them.*

tirely American. Drs. Daniel and Lauretta Kress took charge as physicians. Burden continued as manager and his wife, Eleanor, served as secretary and treasurer. The Conference President's wife, Nettie Irwin, transferred from the Avondale Health Retreat and acted as matron until the Irwins returned to

America in 1905.

Kress was a man of austere habits, warning against the medical dangers of bicycle riding and advocating strict vegetarianism, two meals a day, and no liquids with meals. He ate only unleavened bread because yeast bread, he said, "contained .05 of alcohol and other products resulting from the cultivation of the germs which produce the gas and lighten the bread." This, of course, was completely foreign to typical Aussie thinking, and Kress often despaired of educating the locals to his own regimen. "The church is largely made up of people who are 'worthless' and 'unconverted'," he moaned to his close friend, Irwin. Adventist ministers, he alleged, were intent on making Sabbath-keepers rather than health-reformers.

It was during the Kress era (when Pastor Ole Olsen replaced Irwin) that the idea of nurses wearing black uniforms was also entertained. Thankfully, a more cheerful dress prevailed.

Kress never dispensed drugs. He was prone to cite instances when patients at the Battle Creek Sanitarium had their pain taken away by prayer. He was not as rigid, however, as two trainee nurses who objected to studying physiology on the grounds that reliance on the prayer of faith would serve the



*Since Lewis Butler was the Sanitarium's first patient, it is fitting that his wedding portrait should also be featured.*



*The first couple to be married at the Sanitarium were Ethelbert ("Bert") Thorpe and Lydia ("Lily") Williams, both members of the 1903 graduating nursing class.*

patient best. Their zeal is to be admired, but such oddities were perhaps symptomatic of naivete. It remains a fact, however, that the British Medical Association looked askance at what was offered and did not remove the Sanitarium from its black list until 1912.

The Doctors Kress had transferred with their trainee nurses from the Avondale Health Retreat to the Sydney Sanitarium in the last half of 1902. These nurses lived in the unfinished attic under spartan conditions. Hessian [burlap] was hung for doors, tacked to the stark framework as partitions, and spread on the floor as matting. There was no heating for winter, and in summer the building became a sauna as the sun beat unmercifully on the unlined iron roof. Toilet facilities were downstairs. This situation improved very slowly as the attic and tower were finished piecemeal from 1906 onwards. Patients, on the other hand, were provided with tasteful rooms and kind treatment. Front rooms

were at a premium, costing up to \$2 per week. A room at the rear could cost as little as eighty cents per week. For heating, wood-burning open fireplaces were located in the rooms. A consultation together with a prescription carried a fee of fifty cents, but a full examination including urine and blood tests would cost \$2.10. All bathroom treatments were fifty cents each. A 10% discount was offered to professional men, indicating this as the class of people which the Sanitarium was most anxious to attract.

### **The First Patients**

The Sanitarium's first patient was an emergency case accepted before the official opening. Fifty-seven-year-old Lewis Butler, the village store-keeper near Wahroonga Railway Station, became ill with rheumatic fever. Kellogg and his carpenters were in the habit of buying many of their supplies from Butler's store, so naturally the stricken man

was well-known to the little Adventist community. He responded to the treatments and recovered. His thirty-two-year-old wife, Lillian, who did not enjoy good health, received regular hydrotherapy treatments once the Sanitarium officially opened. One of the nurses she befriended, Anna Nordstrom, would share the Sabbath School lesson study with her. Lillian eventually asked for a minister to visit their home, and the subsequent Bible studies resulted in their baptism. When Butler then threw out all the tobacco, ham, and soft drinks in his store, the locals declared he had gone mad. Before selling the business and reopening at Cooranbong, the Butler family regularly worshipped on Sabbaths with the Sanitarium group. Weather permitting, these services were held outdoors until adequate facilities were built. The changes of heart in the Butler family proved to be the harbinger of many more conversions to Adventism. Kress reported in 1906 that "about thirty have thus far commenced to keep Sabbath as a result of our Sanitarium work."

Three weeks after the official opening Dr. Lauretta Kress delivered the first baby at the Sanitarium. Maternity cases were the exception rather than the rule in the early days, but on this occasion it was the child of an employee, Thomas William Palmer, and his wife, Clara. They named their infant Reuben.

Patronage was very slow in materializing. The number of patients at any one time during 1903 was no more than twenty. For years only a fraction of the Sanitarium's potential was used. Approximately seventy patients was the maximum number that could be accommodated. Annual

balance sheets repeatedly showed a loss until 1912, despite the distribution of attractive advertising cards at the health food cafes and monthly health promotion meetings in Adventist churches.

### The First Nursing Class

Perhaps the highlight of 1903 was the graduation of the first nursing class at the Sanitarium. These seven trainees had begun their course at the Avondale Health Retreat with Dr. Kress. On Thursday evening, September 17, the weather was stormy, so many did not venture out. The audience, therefore, consisted mainly of Sanitarium workers. Eva Hodge, who had passed all her examinations despite being ill with tuberculosis, had died three weeks before graduation and this cast a note of sadness over the gathering. Lily Williams led the small group down the aisle, followed by Sara Young, Bertha Ford, Edgar Davey, and Fred Redward. A gap was left in honour of Eva, and Bert Thorpe brought up the rear. It was something of a practice walk for Lily and Bert because six weeks later they trod the same aisle to be married before embarking to work at the Christchurch Sanitarium in New Zealand.

Maud (Cammell) Smith, and Louis and Lizzie Currow, all earlier products of the Summer Hill Sanitarium training, served in overseas missions. The first graduation class of the Sydney Sanitarium also provided missionaries to the Pacific and South-East Asia. Sara Young, a Pitcairner, who had served on Rurutu Island and in Tonga before



*In 1920 the Sydney San staff farewelled some of their colleagues off to the Pacific Islands mission field.*

training in Australia, worked in Samoa until she was felled by pneumonia in 1906. The Thorpes later served in Tonga, Java and Fiji. Edgar Davey worked as a missionary nurse in Singapore. These individuals, especially, typified an essential purpose of the Sanitarium. That is, they were trained to use the medical work as a means of introducing unbelievers to the Christian lifestyle. These names were among the vanguard of an army of graduates who served as missionary nurses in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific.

Low patronage and nagging debt hindered major improvements in facilities. Only by gradual degrees were some high priorities met. Fire escapes, hoses and extinguishers were added. The courtyard between the rear of the building and the treatment rooms was paved and used as an outdoor gymnasium. Two years later, in 1905, a proper gymnasium was built and doubled as a temporary church until 1912 when the first Wahroonga church was erected. Electric light was not installed until 1908.

As incentives to persuade patients to prolong their stay, some of the aging orchard at the front of the building was replaced by a croquet court in 1913 and, soon after, a tennis court. These outdoor activities were introduced to replace gardening which able patients had been encouraged to do but which had proved to be generally unpopular. At the same time



*Mrs. Elsie M. Shannan, matron from 1911-1923 and 1925-29.*

the main building received its first real coat of paint. Originally, Kellogg had only enough funds for an oil primer, so, for a decade, the institution bore a very cold and stark appearance. But in 1913 the hungry timbers were painted grey with white trimmings, and the iron roof was covered in red. The following year a washing machine and other labour-saving devices were installed in the laundry, new linoleum was laid in the hallways, the stairs were recarpeted and a Chinese gardener was employed because, from the outset,

there hadn't been much success with growing vegetables. The gardener returned to his homeland in 1921.

### The Kress Era

Dr. Laretta Kress suffered declining health before she and her husband finally returned to America early in 1907. As she could not carry a heavy work-load, consideration was given to employing a third doctor. Dr. Caro heard of these plans and made himself available, but his offer was rejected. Instead, Dr. Howard James sold

his practice at Bendigo in Victoria and joined the staff as an assistant physician in the latter part of 1905. He remained for approximately eighteen months before transferring to the Adelaide Hydropathic Institute. Just prior to the depar-



*Mr. George S. Fisher, business manager, 1912-1919 and 1934-41.*



*Lucy Harrison, a nursing graduate in 1912, later married George Teasdale, who became principal of Avondale College in 1916.*

# One Day and Night in History

Weak with beriberi, the Australian POW sat in Singapore's hell-hole of Changi Prison facing inevitable death. Like all the others, he barely survived on a token of white rice. With fading vision and severely swollen legs, he faced a grim future.

A Red Cross parcel from Australia finally reached this place of misery. No cigarettes or chocolates, however. Instead, it contained Marmite, a yeast extract rich in Vitamin B<sub>1</sub> so necessary to fight beriberi. The medicos rationed this valuable food, reserving it for those most seriously ill. This POW received two teaspoons a day—a large dose. Over the next few weeks his eyesight, cardiac functions, and overall strength returned. He lived.

The story now moves elsewhere. In the early 1970s the sketch plans for the new Sydney Adventist Hospital were presented to the Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council for approval, but they were not passed. Many weeks went by with no word from the Council. Hospital administrators and indeed Division leaders all wondered what was wrong. The architectural firm specialized in designing hospitals and all submissions were complete.

Finally the Council advised that the proposed ten-level building was well above the tree-line. For almost a century it had been policy that all buildings, residential and otherwise, must not exceed a height of three levels. Modern hospitals, however, are built in the vertical plane for efficiency and cost-saving.

Repeated approaches and hearings before the Council failed, and the Council told the Church to design a different structure. "Lobby! Lobby!" was the message to Dr. Bert Clifford, Medical Director. Adventists were not accustomed to the lobbying process with all of its ramifications. Still, the Hospital entertained groups and individuals—all talking about the new building and its potential.

One day the Medical Director and I (as the hospital's public relations officer) were entertaining a Councillor who had been the most vocal opponent of the development. Then . . . was it Providence or coincidence? That day I was wearing my badge given to all Australian military personnel who served overseas. The Councillor was wearing a similar one. "Where did you serve?" he asked.

"In the Army Medical Services in Papua New Guinea," I replied.

"I was in Singapore and Malaysia," he told us. As ex-soldiers with these badges, we were suddenly on common ground and had a new starting point for discussion. He told us of his near-death experience with beriberi and how Marmite had virtually saved his life. Dr. Clifford and I saw our moment of opportunity. "Do you know who makes Marmite?" we asked. "It's our sister institution, the Sanitarium Health Food Company. We're both subsidiaries of the Adventist Church."

Upon hearing this, the Councillor seemed to be deeply and visibly moved—we could see that. With a few more words and a quick look at the Hospital's plans, he excused himself. At the next Council meeting, that man was the foremost speaker, defending our proposal for development. "I've been to the San,<sup>1</sup> and all my questions have been answered. This new hospital is essential to the community, and I say it needs full approval of the Council—and NOW!

The surprise of the other Council members can only be imagined. That evening, June 1, 1970, a small group of observers<sup>2</sup> sat in the Visitor's Gallery listening to the debate. More than one silent prayer went up that night. At exactly 11:15 p.m. the motion to grant approval was carried by a clear majority. Outside the Chambers an exuberant Dr. Clifford shook hands with Bob Skinner, declaring, "We made it!"

This event marked an historic day for the Seventh-day Adventist Church of the South Pacific Division, confirming our faith in God who still directs men's affairs and who works good out of seemingly impossible situations. As "God's Hospital," Sydney Adventist Hospital was now set on its destined course.

—*Laurence Gilmore*

1. The institution was founded as the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital in 1903. Area buses still carry signs reading simply "San Hospital," even though it was renamed Sydney Adventist Hospital in 1973.

2. Dr. Bert Clifford, Dr. James Price, Architect Bob Skinner, Purchasing Officer John Sherriff, and Public Relations Officer Laurence Gilmore.



ture of the Doctors Kress another husband-wife team arrived to replace them. They were Doctors Franklin and "Lala" (Sisley) Richards who had briefly practised at the Leicester Sanitarium, England. Eulalia Richards was a niece of Nellie Starr whose husband, George, was chaplain at the Sydney Sanitarium.

The Kress era is notable for an important feature which represented one of the goals of the institution, that is, soul-winning. On November 8, 1906, an adjunct of the Sanitarium was opened in "Como" cottage on the corner of Bondi Road and Park Parade, Bondi. Nurses who had completed two years of training were appointed to spend four months living at Bondi and gaining experience in medical missionary work. (By this time the training course had been extended to three years.) Accepting a drop in wages, they canvassed health literature and gave home treatments, Bible studies, cooking demonstrations and discussions on dress reform wherever opportunity arose. In effect the Gospel Medical Home, superintended by the Starrs, was a testing ground for



*Will Patrick in WWI uniform, a few years after his emergency surgery.*

suitability to home and foreign mission service. For easier access the location of this venture was soon transferred to North Sydney. Then a short time later Starr himself moved away, and the project was abandoned. This relatively short-lived enterprise was an attempt, however, to equip the nurses for practical health evangelism.

Usually, only a small percentage of graduates remained to work at the Sanitarium. The majority scattered to take up work with either health food cafes, church boarding schools, or public evangelism teams. Some went to foreign mission fields,

and others engaged in self-supporting medical work. Much of their working life was therefore not simply a routine of nursing but rather an evangelistic witness. A requirement before they even started their training was that they sign a statement disclaiming any mercenary motives. Their intentions were meant to be entirely humanitarian. Other requirements were that they be a mature twenty to thirty years of age and strong enough to work a fifty-four hour week, plus Sabbath duties, with one week



*Administrators in 1920. Back row, L-R: Pastor W.R. Carswell (Chaplain); Mrs. C. Rosendahl (Manager). Front row: Mrs. Elsie Shannan (Matron); Dr. Thomas Sherwin (Medical Director); Dr. Marguerita Freeman.*



*In the 1930s some new staff doctors were added. Back row: Dr. Boyd, Dr. Gilbert McLaren, Dr. Charles W. Harrison. Front row: Dr. Thomas Sherwin, Dr. Marguerita Freeman.*

as a holiday each year—all on a minimum wage. First year trainees in 1906, for example, received \$1.50 each week and the entire amount was divided among tithes, meals, room rent, and tuition fees. They were expected to have a cash reserve for other necessities such as their ankle-length uniforms and aprons. Second and third year trainees accrued a small credit which could be used for board in times of sickness.

Like Caro, Kress placed little importance on secular recognition of the nurses' training. In fact, in 1906, Olsen, then President of the Australasian Union Conference, even moved to abolish graduation services because he believed they stimulated vanity. These attitudes merely reflected the goal of training nurses solely for mission service. From the same perspective many nurses cut short their training and took positions at overseas posts just as soon as these were offered to them.

At that time the institution held scant medical recognition and Kress neither expected nor courted any improvement. He prophesied before he left that "the time is not far distant when, if faithful, we shall receive no state recognition." He did not anticipate that the Sanitarium would receive registration as a private hospital in 1910 under the Private Hospitals Act. Later, after Doctors George Sherwin and Marguerita Freeman took over from the Doctors Richards in



*After the fire of 1919, the Sanitarium tower had to be rebuilt*

1912, Sherwin persuaded the British Medical Association to recognize the Sanitarium. And in 1927, concurrent with the extension of the training course to four years, nurses were granted State registration if they passed the government exams.

In the Kress era there were two nurses in the second class at the Avondale Health Retreat, who, after their graduation in 1904, remained to work at the Sanitarium. One was Anna Nordstrom who eventually had charge of the culinary department and then, in 1907, embarked for a lifetime of mission service in South-East Asia. The second was Esther (Kelly)

Anderson. Her deceased husband, Alex, had sailed to New Zealand as part of the crew on the *Pitcairn*. After her graduation Esther served as a senior nurse and finally was appointed matron of the Sanitarium in September 1906. At the beginning of 1908, when Alfred Semmens transferred from Adelaide to be the new manager, Esther began sharing her duties with Emma Semmens; Esther served as domestic matron and Emma as medical matron. Esther's sister, Louisa Jacobson, suffered a premature death during Christmas 1911, leaving two little boys, Howard and Arthur. Their father abandoned them, not even attending his wife's funeral, so Esther voluntarily gave up her nursing career at the Sanitarium in order to care for the boys.



*What to do on a Saturday night in the 1920s? Try some exercises in the San Gymnasium with your friends.*

## The Early Challenges of Nursing Duties

Another name of enduring character was Elsie Shannan. As an American, she received her training at Battle Creek Sanitarium. It was there she met and married George Shannan of Hobart. Both worked at the Summer Hill Sanitarium but George died prematurely of tuberculosis in 1902. Elsie, with her little daughter, Dorothy, went home to America, but in December 1904 she was asked to return and work at the Sydney Sanitarium. Home duties allowed her to do only relief and special nursing for a few years. When Dorothy was older Elsie joined the staff on a full-time basis. Tragedy struck at Christmas-time in 1910 when Dorothy died, aged only eleven years. Rather than return to her homeland Elsie stayed on and when Emma Semmens went to America in 1911 Shannan was appointed matron. In this capacity she served until 1929, returning only once to America for a holiday. In 1929 it was found her American certificate was no longer acceptable to the State Nurses Registration Board. Since she could not continue as matron, she stepped down. She continued, however, to teach trainees hydrotherapy until 1938 when she fully re-



*The Shannon Wing, to the right of the original San, was opened in 1920.*

he said, were Adventists. These included Charlie Holland, an Avondale School student who had fractured his skull, mangled his arms and had two fingers amputated when he became entangled in moving machinery at the health food factory. Holland made a good recovery. So also did Will Patrick, a Cooranbong church member who was rushed to



*The Sanitarium's laundry staff circa 1918*

tired at sixty-six years of age. Her shock of snow-white hair and kind Christian manner were familiar to all at Wahroonga.

By 1911, patronage was on a climb. Dr. Richards reported up to forty patients at the institution. This was the estimated number required to balance the budget. A quarter of the patients,

he said, were Adventists. These included Charlie Holland, an Avondale School student who had fractured his skull, mangled his arms and had two fingers amputated when he became entangled in moving machinery at the health food factory. Holland made a good recovery. So also did Will Patrick, a Cooranbong church member who was rushed to the Sanitarium with a ruptured appendix and peritonitis.

Nursing was not for the faint-hearted. Having committed oneself to the course, there was little respite from the constant duties. A typical day's routine began at six in the morning. It was then that the night watchman and a skeleton staff of nurses retired and the main group reported for duty. A worship and breakfast break occurred, followed by further chores and treatments until one o'clock. Dinner was then served. A relatively relaxed period followed with convalescents taking

physical exercise, either in the gymnasium or outdoors, and the nurses continuing their round of duties. Classes for the nurses were held 3:30 - 5:30 pm on Sundays to Thursdays.

After the evening meal a short exercise period was held in the gymnasium and treatments were given to insomniacs and to patients who had been admitted that same afternoon. At 9 pm the night watchman and night nurses returned. Half an hour later all patients and nurses not on duty were expected to retire. Lights were extinguished at 10 pm. On Saturday evenings everyone attended a special class in gymnastics. On Sunday evenings a gospel service for the patients was held in the parlour.

### Dealing With Fire Hazards

The risk of fire in such a large wooden building led the management and staff to practise their fire-drills very seriously. These exercises were not wasted. Early on the morning of January 10, 1919, the Sanitarium was brought to the brink of disaster when a fire mysteriously broke out in the operating theatre on the second floor, directly under the tower. The alarm was sounded and all hands reached their prearranged posts within minutes.

The patients were hurried outside and their belongings,

wrapped in sheets, were tossed from the windows. At great personal risk, the hosemen clambered onto the roof and played water at the base of the tower, which had lit up like a huge candle. Pressure could carry the water no higher. By the time fire brigades arrived from Hornsby and Chatswood, the drama was over. The tower, operating theatre, and some nurses rooms in the attic, where the fire had crept along the roof timbers, were destroyed.

The tower was quickly rebuilt, using a new design. Because the original one tended to sway in strong winds, the new tower was shortened by six feet and made broader. The large room under the tower was transformed into a visitor's lounge which

opened onto a top floor balcony. A decorative lead-light incorporating the initials "S.S." for Sydney Sanitarium was installed on the face of this room.

Immediately after the fire the building's insurance cover was more than doubled, to over \$44,000. Furthermore, the precaution was taken of building any further extensions in brick rather than timber.

### Years of Growth

The first of such extensions was completed in 1920. Located on the northwest side, and lacking the aesthetic



*(Above) Sydney San in the 1940s. Trees obscure the Shannon Wing (right). In 1933 the South Wing (left) opened to house new treatment rooms, plus surgical and maternity wards.*

*(Below) The San's dairy herd of Friesian cattle was maintained until the 1970s. The prize calves and milk cows once grazed in the shadow of the Shannon Wing.*

grandeur of the original building, it was a three-storied structure with verandahs. It had a flat promenade roof with adamax applied, a bituminous overlay for weather-proofing. On May 3 the promenade was decorated with ferns and flags for the dedication of this new wing. Approximately four hundred people, including local dignitaries and newspaper reporters, sat or stood on the roof as a brief service was held overlooking the surrounding bushland.

This extension provided room for an extra thirty patients, a new operating theatre, and better quarters for some of the female staff. Even so, it was not built without some criticism. Some church members branded it as extravagant, a denial of God's will, and contrary to standard Adventist practice. These accusations were answered in a candid statement published in the *Australasian Record*. Church leaders explained that patronage had increased, the need for more trainee missionaries had become urgent, and the earning capacity of the institution was hampered. It was a case, they said, of expand or cease to operate as a missionary training institution.

Resistance to change was also reflected on other occasions. One example was some ongoing prejudice against the purchase of an X-ray unit in the 1920s. Sherwin argued that better equipment was imperative in order to stem another slump in patronage. Ultra-conservative leaders balked at the high cost and argued that such equipment rapidly became out-dated and before long they would have to buy a better model.

By 1924 Sherwin had theoretically won the debate about the X-ray. The Sanitarium Board voted to buy a unit. Donations came in until by the end of the year a total of nearly \$1,000 was reached. However, the project degenerated into a legal wrangle with those installing the machine. The company was pressing for the installation of a number of accessories and because the Sanitarium was reluctant to agree, work came to a standstill. The Sanitarium Board then hired a solicitor to



*The San in the late 1960s, just before the rebuilding project began.*

handle their rejection of the entire deal. Nevertheless, by the end of 1926 money was appropriated for the additional equipment and the installation company was satisfied.

Other improvements included the installation of a lift [elevator] in 1924 so that patients did not have to struggle up and down the stairways. It was located in the centre of the original building. The culinary department was upgraded with a washing-up machine. Toilet facilities were fitted for the top floor in 1926. The following year Harry Tempest and Ernest Baldwin modified the electrical wiring throughout the building to enable a link-up to the city power supply. When this task was accomplished, the dam which had supplied water for the coal-fired steam boilers began to be converted into a swimming pool. The \$4,000 cost, however, proved too much, and the project was abandoned. The dam had to be filled in.

The orchard, vegetable garden, dairy, and poultry all functioned at a loss in the 1920s. The Sanitarium Board tried a number of strategies to improve the situation. By 1930 a section of the orchard was uprooted to make way for a golf links, but then the project was stopped. The remainder of the orchard continued to be leased to Robert Watson, and Thomas Carr rented the dairy and vegetable garden. Giving these auxiliaries over to free enterprise seemed to be the best solution. The poultry run, worked and later leased by A.S.B.

Craig throughout the 1920s, became such an eyesore and noisy annoyance to the patients that it was closed down in 1931.

Some changes were also made to nurses' working conditions. In 1925 the required working hours were reduced to forty-four per week. This fluctuated in the following years, at times being set at fifty, or forty-eight when State registration was gained. Fifty-two hours were still required when classes were not being held. Two weeks holiday on full pay was granted. Payment for overtime, which was discouraged in the early days, was set at eight cents per hour, but it was paid as a lump sum at the end of the year. Regular rates were also modified in 1925. Second-year trainees, for example, were paid ten cents per hour. Eighty-five percent of their wage had to pay for tithe, full board, tuition fees, text books and uniforms. This left them with about seventy cents each week in their pockets.

The highlight of development in the 1930s was the construction of a three-storied brick and concrete annex to the south-eastern wing. This time, on July 18, 1933, over five hundred staff, church members, and government dignitaries gathered for its official opening. The Australian Broadcasting Commission's Military Band came to play in grand style.

The lower floor of the new section was devoted to ladies' and mens' hydrotherapy treatment rooms. Features of these facilities were the all-copper plumbing and special non-slip floor tiling. Upstairs was set aside for medical and obstetrical wards, twenty-five in all. Some rooms in the original building had been transformed into office

space, but with these new additions the total bed capacity for the institution now topped 116. The new wing was centrally heated, hot and cold water was available in each room, and a private telephone was at each bedside. The sun-room was fitted with special glass which admitted ultra-violet rays, doors were equipped with noise-reducing rubber-roller latches, and the corridors were laid with cork tiles—a first for hospitals in Australia.

It does appear, however, that building costs outstripped available finances in the tough depression years because the third floor remained uncompleted for more than a decade. Known throughout that time as "the skeleton," it was finally opened as

a surgical ward on Friday afternoon, November 10, 1944, with a quiet in-house ceremony.

Since the 1950s major changes have taken place both to the physical plant and the services offered to the public. Principal among the many developments with bricks and mortar has been the demolition

of Kellogg's original wooden building and its replacement with a multi-storied utilitarian hospital opened on June 10, 1973, and was renamed the Sydney Adventist Hospital.

In the 1970s there also occurred a significant reduction in the need for missionary nurses as Pacific Island territories became self-sufficient. Nowadays, nursing graduates usually remain in the homelands.

### In Step with the 1990s

Like any other institution of its kind, the Sydney Adventist Hospital features a central



By 1973 the new multi-story Sydney Adventist Hospital dwarfed the old San, which was subsequently demolished

monolith offering the full spectrum of medical services. It has a wide range of specialties. Preventive medicine or health education is still a feature.

Hydrotherapy is but a shadow of its former prominence, its place being overtaken by maternity and surgical cases. Gradually, since its opening in 1903, the hospital has laboured to increase its professional and technological excellence. It has diversified into radiotherapy and oncology for cancer treatment, open heart surgery, ultrasound and computerized tomography ("cat-scan") for soft tissue analysis, as well as nuclear medicine. It is today one of the most highly regarded private hospitals in Australia.

Major sources for this article are the Australasian Record, the Minutes of the Medical Missionary Committee (Sydney Branch), the Minutes of the Summer Hill Sanitarium Board, the Minutes of the Sydney Sanitarium Board, private letter collections stored at Avondale College, and the author's personal collection of pioneer data.



The Sanitarium Maternity Cottage ("Bethel"), built in 1915. Today it houses the Public Relations and Graphic Design Depts.



The hydrotherapy rooms demonstrated the stated purpose of the San: to utilize all the "methods and appliances . . . in rational medicine" to "aid the sick to the most complete and permanent health in the shortest time."



Compared to its modern, high-tech operating rooms, the San's original facilities were quite spartan

## Ellen White: Mother of the Church in the South Pacific

by Arthur Patrick

**H**istorians face an ongoing challenge with reference to Ellen White. She was adopted and loved as the mother of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the vast area of the world known as the South Pacific Division,<sup>1</sup> in spite of cogent reasons why this was unlikely to have occurred. The time has come to analyse this relationship between Ellen White and the church more thoroughly.

Although competent historians are careful about making judgments close to an event, or soon after a person's death, it is now more than a hundred years since the widowed Ellen White (1827-1915) entered the territory of the South Pacific Division on November 27, 1891. On that day the *S.S. Alameda* paused at Apia, where friendly Samoans brought canoe-loads of tropical fruits, shells, coral and handcrafts alongside. On December 3 and 4 the ship berthed at Auckland, New Zealand, facilitating the first visit between the best-known of the church's founders and antipodean Adventists. When the *Alameda* sailed into "the most beautiful harbour in the world" [Sydney, New South Wales] on December 8, Ellen White quickly recognised

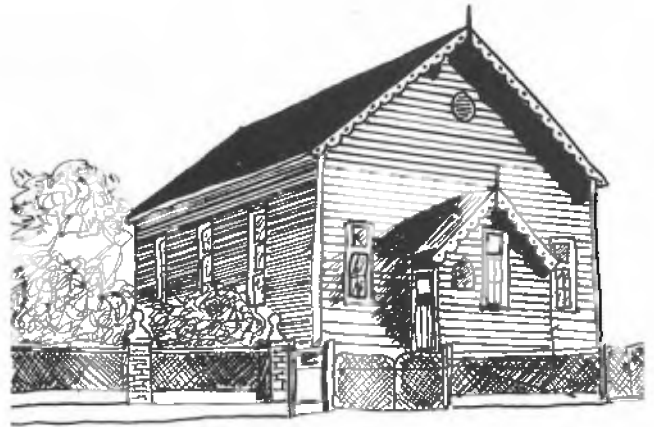
two North American missionaries on the wharf, Arthur and Mary Daniells, friends from the Whites' time in Texas. Contrary to her earlier plans, it was almost nine years later when Ellen White boarded the *S.S. Moana* for the voyage back to her homeland, where she remained until her death on July 16, 1915.<sup>2</sup>

A number of observations about Ellen White can be made without fear of contradiction. Articles in reference works and the content of numerous theses written for universities in widely-separated countries demonstrate beyond all question that she is a person who merits serious study.<sup>3</sup> One eighth (105 months) of her 70-year public ministry was spent in Australia and New Zealand, a segment of overseas service long enough to call for careful assessment. Sufficient time has elapsed since her South Pacific sojourn and her death for coherent historical analysis to occur. More than that, the primary sources are abundant. When in 1972 the General Conference moved to establish a headquarters archive and then a string of Ellen G. White/Seventh-day Adventist Research Centres around the world, it facilitated better access



*Ellen G. White, circa 1890s, as she looked during her years in Australia*





*Top left: The first SDA church in Parramatta, a wooden structure built in only 5 1/2 weeks. The dedication, on December 10, 1892, followed an evangelistic campaign led by Robert Hare and David Steed. Top right: The second church in Parramatta took three months to build and was dedicated on March 7, 1937. Bottom: The third church took 18 months to complete and was dedicated on 14 May, 1988.*

to a significant body of primary documents. The Research Centre for the South Pacific Division opened in a five-room section of the Avondale College Library on 22 February 1976. Since then a great deal of serious investigation has been undertaken.

This more ready access to the church's memory-bank has sharpened the problem for the historians. Although researchers now have many more facts to assemble, the essential data is increasingly beyond dispute. The far more demanding task is to construct interpretations which accord with all of the facts and which satisfy the variety of groupings which have developed in the church.<sup>4</sup> Only as consensus is achieved can the church move on coherently with its mission. Five of the

arguments which are least in dispute are as follows:

#### **Five Roadblocks to Success**

1. Ellen White lived as an American in a British Colony [Australia] during most of the years 1891-1900, except for the year 1893 when she ministered in another British Colony [New Zealand]. Prizing their Scottish, Irish, Welsh, and English heritage, the most ardent Protestants in both countries tended to distrust the nation which had developed from the rebel colonies on the far side of the Atlantic. The Wesleyans, for instance, were in many respects theologically nearest to the Adventists. They were confident that as a nation, however, Great Britain epitomised God's ideals and that the Adventists were a regrettable and

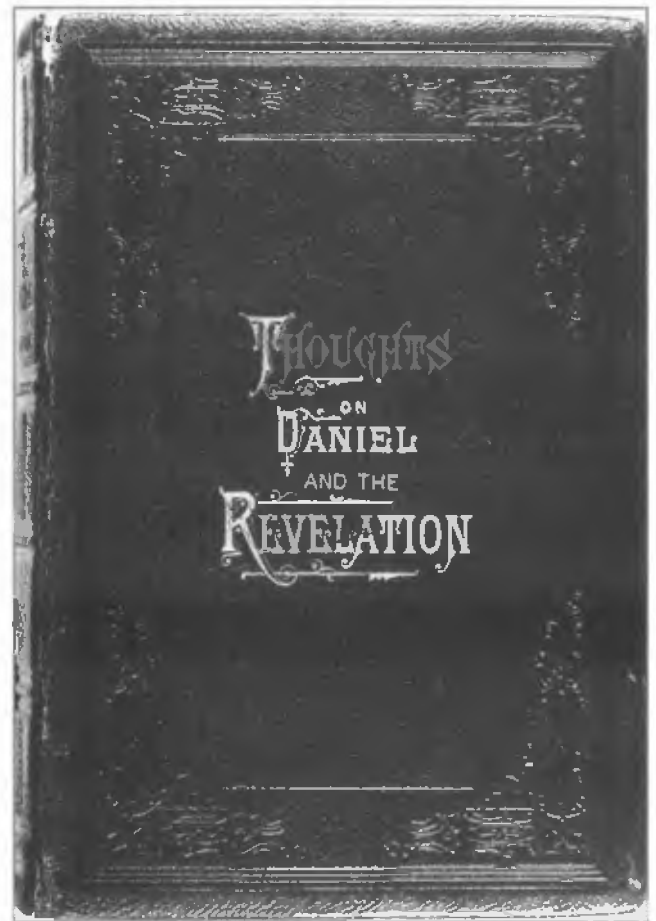
annoying incursion from the United States.<sup>5</sup> It is clear that North American Christianity had some impact upon the religious life of Australasians during the nineteenth century. But, to be readily accepted in the religious climate of the 1890s, Ellen White should have come to the South Pacific with a British accent.

2. Even more importantly, Ellen White was a woman. Most females in nineteenth-century Australia knew their place and kept in it. The home was their sphere, not places where important decisions were made and implemented. Another Christian woman from overseas, Jessie Ackermann, made a noticeable impression in Australia during the years Ellen White was here, but her efforts were soon forgotten. If Ellen White was to influence significantly either the local Adventists or their society, she should have been born male.<sup>6</sup>

3. In 1891 Ellen White was well past 60, the age understood as normal for female retirement in Australia. Indeed, she marked her sixty-fourth anniversary on the day North Americans celebrated Thanksgiving, as the *Alameda* neared Samoa on its way from Honolulu. She returned to the United States in time for her seventy-third birthday. In her sixties and seventies, surely Ellen White should have been starting to relax rather than pressing ahead with some of the most ambitious projects of her entire career. Instead, she functioned in ways which led the church to adopt her as its *active mother*, not as a *retired grandmother*.

4. At times Ellen White suffered severe physical infirmity. During much of 1892 her right arm was so painful that she could move it only below the elbow, and write no more than a few lines a day. Sometimes she had to be carried to the pulpit, where she preached sitting down, an experience which she regarded as "quite a humiliation." An American female retiree in uncertain health would scarcely be chosen by any informed committee wanting to make a lasting impact in the lands "Down Under."

5. But Ellen White was beset by an even more serious problem: she came as a convinced pre-millennialist to a society in Australia which was



The cover for Uriah Smith's *Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation*, written in response to questions on prophecy. Colporteurs found it to be a popular seller.

actively opposed to such a religious stance. The Roman Catholics believed that Australia would soon become a new and greater Ireland. It was, they thought, a sort of "promised land" in which Irish saints and scholars would lead the church to recover the role which it had enjoyed in medieval Christendom. The Anglicans were led by an ardent archbishop committed to "Christianising" Australian society. Although a minority of them during the 1890s were seriously involved with eschatology, they held to a pre-millennialism which conflicted with the Adventist view. The Wesleyans were sure that their brand of Christianity was destined to succeed in the glorious federated nation which their eyes of faith foresaw. The secularists ridiculed the hopes of all three of these denominations, as they did the expectations fostered



Now restored, Norfolk Villa on Prospect Street, Harris Park, Sydney, was home to Mrs. White and her household from 1894-1895. In a letter to Dr. Kellogg dated October 25, 1894, she described it as "a pleasant and convenient house . . . [with] rooms [that] are light and airy." John Watson, (inset) an Adventist and member of the Parramatta and Granville Historical Societies, discovered Ellen White's Sydney home several years ago.

amongst the other segments of Christianity. The unbelievers also saved some of their harshest indictments for supernaturalists like those who proclaimed a cataclysmic Second Coming of Christ.<sup>7</sup>

The list of historical reasons why Ellen White's sojourn in the South Pacific should have been a non-event could readily be extended. But she transcended the disadvantages which beset her, and bonded quickly with the 500 believers in Australia and New Zealand. More importantly, as the small Adventist membership was multiplied by five during her stay, she devel-



"Sunnyside," Cooranbong, N.S.W., Australia. Always restless for country life, Ellen White purchased a property close to the site chosen for Avondale. She lived here from December 25, 1895 until August, 1900, when she returned to the U.S.

oped a strong relationship with these new believers. Thus she came to influence the infant church as a mother does a young child. Along with the many positive results of these circumstances was a problematical one: the Australasian church became highly dependant upon her. She gave us such certainty during the decades of our spiritual adolescence that we tended to overlook the implications of some of her plainest counsels. We learned by heart many choice statements, amongst them this gem from *Education*: "Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do."<sup>8</sup> Too often, however, we expected Ellen White to tell us what to think, and even to read the Scriptures for us. By contrast, she intended us to become responsible adults, in a spiritual sense.

### An Inevitable Crisis

Inevitably, therefore, a crisis would occur at some time. There were local difficulties in the early-1930s when a respected leader, W.W. Fletcher left the church. During the mid-1950s a conference president (R.A. Greive) and a number of his ministers departed over issues similar to those raised by Fletcher. Beginning in reaction to Greive, Robert Brinsmead throughout the 1960s led a faction which criticised the church severely. Then

Brinsmead changed his theological stance, criticizing the church from an opposite vantage point during the 1970s. By the early 1980s, Brinsmead's changing ideas took him outside of Adventism and then beyond the parameters of evangelical Christianity.

These stirrings caused serious stresses in the church, but until about 1970 the problems



The three Patrick sons, left to right: Charles, William, and Sydney. As lads they knew first-hand the kindness of their neighbor, Ellen White.

could always be parried or contained by an appeal to the authority of Ellen White. Thereafter the situation altered rapidly. Her long-established role was challenged incipiently early in the 1970s; it was attacked overtly before the decade closed.

### The New Conflagration

This time the assault came on multiple fronts. The standard issue for most Adventists had been simply "What does Ellen White say?" During the 1970s it became principally "What is Ellen White's authority?" Instead of questions about whether cheese should be on Adventist tables and whether Adventists should vote, there was discussion about the historical substance of *The Great Controversy*. Then came the disturbing book by Ron Numbers (*Ellen G. White: Prophetess of Health*) which raised questions about her writings on health reform. Next came disquieting rumours that Walter Rea, a pastor in California, was charging Ellen White with the extensive use of unacknowledged literary sources. Even more perplexing, Robert Brinsmead was on the intellectual pendulum-swing which denied all he had earlier affirmed about Ellen

White. His doubts were even on the lips of many who were not his followers.

So, late in the 1970s, the church was forced to draw increasingly on the arsenal of trusted weapons it had long prized for settling skirmishes. But, so strong was the current of change in the Adventist community, its well-used methods were less effective than they had been formerly.

Given these circumstances, only a spark was needed to ignite a conflagration. California and Australia are both subject to the effects of wildfire; a theological spark in the former was to ignite an inferno in the latter. At a critical moment a serious biblical question was posed by Desmond Ford in California on October 27, 1979. Almost immediately the Australasian church gave what seemed to be an official response when a considered *Ellen White answer* appeared in the Division paper on December 10.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps, had she been present to ask, Ellen White's response may have been to repeat her last words at a General Conference, "I commend to you the Word of God." In any case, the South Pacific church saw its relationship with its mother imperiled as she was drawn to the centre of its controversy.

Understandably, neither the rank-and-file nor the church's leaders welcomed the difficult challenge to redraw the officially-accepted portrait of Ellen White. Yet this process was made necessary by the long accumulation of folk-lore, the perplexing questions posed by people critical of the church, and the sudden availability of primary sources.



Arthur G. and Mary Daniells



W.C. White and his Australian wife in 1896. Seated: Ethel May and Willie White, holding the twins. Standing: Mabel, age 10, and Ella, age 14.

Indeed, many Adventists were psychologically unready to acknowledge the godly but fallible prophet who had been well known to earlier leaders like A.G. Daniells and W.W. Prescott. They much preferred the Ellen White of J.S. Washburn, or that of A.T. Jones before his apostasy. Their illusions, however, were confronted by massive disquieting evidence which did not fit within the long-cherished rubrics.<sup>10</sup> This was the age of international ham radio operators and jet aircraft and photocopiers; never before could rumour and reality spread so quickly through the church.

The smoke from that conflagration has been dissipating for a decade. It is already clear that three options were preferred. Some of the truest believers steeled themselves against the new evidence about Ellen White and retreated into a ghetto of denial, sometimes reverting to sectarian positions which projected Adventism as a cult. A significant group rejected Ellen White; some of these also repudiated the Seventh-day Adventist Church or even Christianity itself. But, for others, a long process involving the constructive transformation of ideas seemed imperative. So the question posed at the outset of this article has now developed two dimensions. Why was Ellen White so enthusiastically accepted during and after her nine years in Australasia? Why has she demonstrated such resilience during the recent crisis?

### A Dual Bias

Before I list my set of answers, let me confess to a dual bias. Early in their Adventist experience my maternal grandparents, John and Charlotte Pocock, came to know Ellen White. They evangelized their neighbours enthusiastically and successfully with her books. Their English independence was overwhelmed by her kindness. She gave them clothes for their children when, during a time of financial depression, John lost his employment because he kept the seventh-day Sabbath. John lived in "Sunnyside" for months as one of Ellen White's family of helpers. Later she invited him to move with his family to Cooranbong to work at the fledgling institution which would become Avondale College. There she lent him a tent to live in while he built a home, and a cow so his young family could be nourished with milk. He heard her sing favourite hymns while she raked leaves in the grounds of "Sunnyside", and he was deeply moved as she prayed in the family circle and preached in the Avondale church. Until his death in 1946 he believed intensely that Ellen White's life was a powerful witness to the integrity of the message which she professed.<sup>11</sup>

My widowed paternal grandmother shared a similar experience. After being nurtured in the faith by A.G. Daniells, Amelia Patrick met Ellen White at the 1898 Brisbane campmeeting. Encouraged by Ellen White to move to Cooranbong with her three boys, Amelia came to know the lifestyle and attitudes of the church's mother at first hand. At Cooranbong, Amelia's three small sons once found a destitute man sheltering under the Dora Creek bridge. The boys ran home and brought the man their entire Sabbath treat—a whole egg from each lad. When Ellen White heard the story, she sent a basket of eggs to the widow's cottage. Amelia experienced a pervasive sense of peace as she read *The Great Controversy* and listened to Ellen White's talks at Avondale. So, from both sides of my family I grew up with a strong emotional—perhaps even sentimental—attachment to Ellen White.

My other bias derives from long years trying to understand Australian history, with the help of The University of New England in Armidale and then The University of Newcastle, an institution within easy driving distance of Avondale College. Most Australian historians are known to be skeptics rather than believers. Those who are Christians, like all historians, are trained to thoroughly question their assumptions. My current conclusions about Ellen White have been honed by a long dialogue between family sentiment and historical method. So why did this diminutive lady become so endeared to South Pacific Adventists?



*The Pocock sisters, May (standing, b. 1900) and Bertha (b. 1902). May was a graduate of Sydney Sanitarium and married to Pastor E.L. Minchin. Bertha married William Patrick and operated a horse-drawn taxi service between Cooranbong and the train stations at Dora Creek and Morisset. Both the Pocock and Patrick families grew close to the White family in Cooranbong.*

### Reasons for Success

1. Ellen White epitomised *the truth*, that is, *the message*. We are a people caught by the significance of “the blessed hope” and “the third angel’s message.” We knew before she arrived that Ellen White was a first-generation Adventist, a participant in the sacred pain of our birth as a movement, an eyewitness of what God did in those formative years, a co-founder of the church, and a person equipped to speak to us prophetically as no one else could do. Thus she was accepted by the Australian church as a symbol of Adventism *par excellence*.<sup>12</sup>

2. Ellen White identified with the ordinary people who had heeded the extraordinary Adventist message. She was a *practical* prophetess who was interested in growing vegetables, fruit and flowers; who was willing to surrender the heads of

her chickens so broth could be made to sustain a family too prejudiced to eat “Adventist” food; who trained cows to stand while being milked rather than adopting the “barbarous practice” of the Australians—confining the cow’s head in a bail and tying its leg with a rope. Ellen White was the sort of down-to-earth woman who appealed to the people of an emerging nation still dominated by frontier attitudes.<sup>13</sup>

3. Ellen White fostered a set of compelling ideas amongst her contemporaries. These were value-centred, involving such issues as “true” education, health reform, health care and witnessing with literature. They were concepts big enough to stir the imagination of pioneer Adventists, to cause them to dig deeply into their pockets and to

perspire freely as they built structures which would grow and multiply and become impressive institutions like Avondale College, the Sanitarium Health Food Company, Sydney Adventist Hospital, and the Signs Publishing Company. This recognition of Ellen White as a powerful source of motivation, however, must not be allowed to diminish the significance of other stalwarts: Stephen Haskell, Arthur Daniells, and “Willie” White amongst them. But some of the principal ideas which she emphasised, when combined with the sacrifice and toil of others, developed the visible face of the church in Australasia. Timber and bricks and concrete came to portray something of what it meant

to be a Seventh-day Adventist.<sup>14</sup> Thus institutions became enduring reminders of Ellen White and her ministry.

4. Ellen White was a warm-hearted evangelical Christian.<sup>15</sup> The names of four of the books published during her Australian years suggest her central focus during the 1890s: *Steps to Christ*, 1892; *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 1896; *The Desire of Ages*, 1898; *Christ's Object Lessons*, 1900. Perhaps Adventists' lives have been shaped by *The Desire of Ages* more than by any other influence outside the Scriptures. Together these volumes brought us face-to-face with Christ our Saviour, and gave us a pervasive sense of gratitude to their author.

5. A fifth reason gathers up these others and gives them potency. In her life, in her frequent talks and sermons, as in her copious writings, Ellen White was accepted by the pioneer Adventists of Australia and New Zealand as a spiritually-gifted person. The church listened to her because her testimony carried convincing credentials. The core of the matter can be put very simply; Jesus, God incarnate, died for us, rose and ascended. From that time He has showered spiritual gifts upon His people to equip them to continue His ministry (Ephesians 4: 8, 11-14). Moreover, those gifts are poured out upon old and young, male and female (Joel 2:28). The fact that Ellen White was a spiritually-gifted person who focused on "the truth as it is in Jesus" was far more significant to the young church than any of the disadvantages (nationality, gender, age, and infirmity) which beset her.<sup>16</sup>

These five reasons remain as compelling in the 1990s as they were during the 1890s, but in the interim we had created a problem for ourselves. Over time we had constructed an Ellen White who met our needs as we perceived them,<sup>17</sup> a person different from the flesh-and-blood individual who lived amongst us from 1891-1900.



*The William N. Patrick family circa 1934-35.  
Seated left to right: Will Patrick, Alice, Bertha Pocock-Patrick, and Baby Arthur. Standing left to right: Ivy, Joseph, and Mrs. Wanzlich.*

### **Implications for Today**

In short hindsight, the questions raised about Ellen White since the 1970s seem to be crucial for her continuing influence in the church throughout the South Pacific Division. Because we were not ready for them, however, they wreaked severe damage amongst us. Yet these discussions brought into the open a large quantity of data previously unknown even to serious students of Ellen White's life and writings.

By early 1982, when the first International Prophetic Guidance Workshop convened at the church's world headquarters, it was as though a huge box of new information cards had been dumped on the church's corporate desk. These cards required careful sorting and interpretation, a process which continues to be on the church's agenda for the immediate future.<sup>18</sup> Many in the church experienced a form of bereavement due to the loss of their long-held and cherished concept of an all-knowing and ever-authoritative Ellen White, and the consequent removal of a pervasive yet valued source of ultimate control over both their personal lives and the church. All the classic symptoms of grief were painfully evident in the church, includ-

ing the frustrations of denial, anger, and depression.<sup>19</sup>

Our lethargy in creating a coherent alternative to the traditional picture of Ellen White has prolonged the problems associated with this bereavement. There was an urgent need for sensitive pastoral support to be given to ministers, teachers and members. But some of those leading the church were themselves in a process of bereavement. Also, it was difficult to quickly grasp the implications of the evidence and to give constructive leadership in the discovery and adoption of viable new patterns of thought. Thus the two extreme responses flourished. First, *Reversion*, implied that the new research and discussions raised questions which should not be asked, and thus all such investigations should be prevented or discontinued. Second, *Rejection*, the other extreme response, claimed that the new evidence exposed Ellen White and her ministry as a great deception, a cause for disregarding her writings or leaving the church entirely.

The response with enduring viability, *Transformation*, often seemed too difficult or too terrifying to attempt,<sup>20</sup> since it called for a comprehensive reassessment of Adventism in general and Ellen White in particular. Essentially it is the church's constant task, for every generation must reformulate its religious tradition for itself if it is to adequately "own" its faith.

One of the greatest challenges which the church faces in the 1990s is in the attitude of the present generation of young Adventists, especially those who have grown up estranged from the church's mother. Step-by-step the church is formulating a comprehensive new picture of Ellen White and her ministry.<sup>21</sup> Recently this author suggested, to an interdepartmental consultation at the South Pacific Division headquarters, some of the issues which invite greater emphasis.<sup>22</sup> They are quoted here in the language of their delivery.

\**The link between cosmology and eschatology*, first things and last things. The doctrine of creation has powerful environmental implications. Prophetess though she was, with a compelling sense of mission, Ellen White

exemplified a mature delight in the entire world of nature, even to pansies, peaches and potatoes. A recovery of her comprehensive interest in this theme would speak powerfully to our age.

\**The link between health and religion*, spiritual and physical well-being. We are currently allowing our culture to edge ahead of us in some aspects of this duality; to recover the authentic voice of Ellen White could make us the head and not the tail.

\**The interpretation of history*. Christianity is a teleological religion; it is directed toward a specific goal. All history is moving toward that end, and Ellen White can help us to discover and articulate the way in which the past reveals the purpose of God for the present and the future.

\**The primacy of Scripture* in the formation of doctrine. We have yet to fully implement Ellen White's counsel by making the Bible our sole rule of faith and practice.

\**The dynamic nature of Adventism*. We have not yet maximised the significance of our heritage. The *life and writings* of Ellen White are inextricably linked with the *history and thought* of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. We are still in the early stages of making this relationship understood in the church.<sup>23</sup>

\**The winsomeness of God*. In my first wide-margin Bible there are copious notes made with a mapping pen in Indian ink, detailing the way in which Ellen White's writings on the life of Christ assist our understanding of the four Gospels. Were there two demoniacs or one at Gadara? What was the sequence of the events in the life of Jesus? Did this miracle occur on the way *into* or the way *out* of Jericho? I asked countless questions on that level, some of which are quite irrelevant in the light of now well-known facts.<sup>24</sup> I now believe that the essential theme of *The Desire of Ages* is clearly stated on page 22: Jesus came to reveal to us the God whom to know is to love. Some of the questions which I asked of this masterpiece were no doubt important, but too many of them were outside of its purpose or what could be expected of it.

\**The ultimacy of Jesus Christ*. Probably most of us have not yet been able to fully implement Ellen White's far-reaching injunction that "of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world."<sup>25</sup>

While such a list could be expanded readily, these suggestions give a hint at the avenues inviting fuller exploration. How will historians of the future write about Ellen White's role in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the South Pacific Division during the last two decades of the twentieth



eth century? Will they chart a conflict which merged into a dialogue, involving lay people, church leaders and specialists in redrawing a composite and comprehensive picture of Ellen White? Will they see that we understood clearly that to lose an understanding of our heritage is to lose a clear sense of our identity?

It is exciting to ponder the possibilities for Ellen White's enhanced role in the South Pacific church as we approach one hundred years since she left Australasia. The dynamic woman who stood much taller than her physical stature amongst our pioneers influenced the developing church profoundly. The Australasian Adventist faith, like that of the non-Adventist churches in these countries, had been transplanted from the Northern Hemisphere and must to be acclimatised to a new and demanding set of circumstances. For the Adventists, the long period of that acclimatization probably reached its most difficult phase late in the 1970s and early in the 1980s.

Or, to change from the metaphor of agriculture to that of the family, the 1970s and early 1980s may come to be understood as a final adolescence of the church in the South Pacific. That period was as turbulent as a family crisis sometimes is, when a new generation is reaching adulthood. The church is now in a new phase of its experience, developing a more mature relationship with its mother. Never was it more important to remember some of her most-quoted yet often-neglected words:<sup>26</sup> "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history."<sup>27</sup>

## End Notes

1. This territory is bounded by Antarctica in the south, Western Australia in the west, Papua New Guinea and Kiribati in the north, and Pitcairn Island in the east. The term "Australasia" is used in this article synonymously with "South Pacific Division." Amidst a total population of 26 million, the region has more than a quarter-million Seventh-day Adventists, 56,000 of whom are in the home bases of Australia and New Zealand.

2. The publication of Arthur L. White's *Ellen G.*

*White: The Australian Years* (Washington D. C. and Hagerstown: Pacific Press, 1983) "helped us [South Pacific Adventists] take a giant step forward in grasping the meaning of our past." See my review in *Adventist Heritage*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Fall 1985), pp. 62-64.

3. See the bibliography compiled by Gilbert Abella and Vera May Schwarz, *Dissertations, Theses and Major Research Papers Related to the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Loma Linda: Loma Linda University Libraries, 1988), pp. 207-218.

4. Thus the endnotes cite a number of my articles which explicate ideas treated briefly here, and append references. For more comprehensive readings see the bibliography by Abella and Schwarz, the collection of articles made by Roger Coon of the Ellen G. White Estate and updated periodically, and Robert W. Olson, *Periodical Articles Concerning Inspiration, Ellen G. White, and Adventist History* (Washington, D.C.: Ellen G. White Estate, 1986).

5. See *The Weekly Advocate*, August 8th and 15th, 1891, pp. 586-7, 594-5; cf. *The Methodist*, December 29, 1894, p. 7; May 16, 1896, p. 7.

6. I have explored this theme in "Ellen Gould White and the Australian Woman, 1891-1900" (M. Litt. thesis, The University of New England, 1984).

7. For documentation see chapters 2-7 of my dissertation, "Christianity and Culture in Colonial Australia: Selected Catholic, Anglican, Wesleyan and Adventist Perspectives, 1891-1900" (Ph.D., The University of Newcastle, 1991).

8. *Education* (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1903), p. 17.

9. See A.N. Duffy, "The Heavenly Sanctuary . . . Not One Pillar to be Moved," *Record*, December 10, 1979, pp. 6-7. The article presented ten Ellen White quotes drawn together by the Ministerial Association Secretary of the Division.

10. For a documented review of the substantive issues, see Donald R. McAdams, "Shifting Views of Inspiration: Ellen G. White Studies in the 1970s," *Spectrum*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (March 1980), pp. 27-41.

11. See the "Pioneer" section in *Adventist Heritage*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Spring 1992), pp. 15-25.

12. To understand the context of Ellen White's ministry in Australasia see my article, "Seventh-day Adventists in the South Pacific: A Review of Sources," *The Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (June 1987), pp. 307-326. R. W. Taylor well emphasizes the role of the American missionaries who passed on their attitudes toward Ellen White to their new converts. Letter, Taylor to Patrick, November 26, 1992, p. 1.

13. See my articles entitled "The Problem of Our Tallest Poppy," *Record*, November 2, 1991, pp. 6-7; "Ellen White in Australia," *Adventist Review*, December 12, 1991,

pp. 16-18. It must be stressed that Ellen White sought advice about agricultural methods from local people who demonstrated knowledge and experience. She also employed Iram James to supervise the work in her garden, orchard, and farmlet.

14. The current research by Dr. Glynn Litster is demonstrating the role which others (like William C. White) had as they implemented ideas which Ellen White long fostered (like the importance of health foods). The founding of institutions was a group effort, but without the motivation provided by Ellen White the outcome would have been quite different.

15. See my article, "An Adventist and an Evangelical in Australia: The Case of Ellen White in the 1890s," *Lucas: An Evangelical History Review*, No. 12 (December 1991), pp. 42-53. Some would prefer to describe Ellen White as "a Christ-centered Christian" rather than as "an evangelical Christian." Both terms are appropriate; the term "evangelical" is useful in view of the current research into Australian evangelicalism. The scholars engaged in this study prefer an inclusive definition of the term. They are near to the publication of two volumes, a dictionary of evangelical biography and a history of evangelicalism.

16. In his review of this article, John Gate says: "The way we interpret Ellen White's writings will determine largely what kind of picture we end up with; and the way we interpret Ellen White's writings is largely determined by the way we appreciate the way she received her information." Thus Gate emphasizes the importance of both the doctrine of inspiration and biblical authority. Letter, Gate to Patrick, 14 December 1992.

17. The church through twenty centuries has constantly done this with Jesus of Nazareth. See Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985).

18. Roy Adams' recent discussion of Ellen White's writings as "canonical" raised painful memories amongst South Pacific Adventists. See "A Prophet for Our Time," *Adventist Review*, 4 June 1992, pp. 8-11.

19. Some participants in the historical events question the appropriateness of bereavement as a symbol of the church's experience. It may be that a range of models will be necessary to adequately portray the events which took place.

20. Fritz Guy has cogently outlined the procedures which facilitate the process of transformation. See his unpublished paper, "The Future of Adventist Theology: A Personal View" (Berrien Springs: Andrews University, 1980). Cf. Beverly Flanigan's use of the term "transformed outlook" in "Forgiving the Unforgivable," *Psychology Today*, September/October 1992, p. 92.

21. In planning a video to highlight the centenary of Ellen White's arrival in the South Pacific, it was

decided to aim the production at this group rather than the older generation in the church. The result is the Adventist Media Centre production entitled "One Hundred Year Recall," released in 1991.

22. The address entitled "Ellen White in the 1990s" is summarized in typescript, dated 15 June 1992.

23. Cf. my article, "Does Our Past Embarrass Us?" in *Ministry*, April 1991, pp. 7-10.

24. See Robert W. Olson, "How *The Desire of Ages* Was Written," 23 May 1979, a Shelf Document available from the Ellen G. White/SDA Research Centres. Note page 32 which shows that Ellen White did not claim to know the order of the events in the life of Christ.

25. *Evangelism As Set Forth in the Writings of Ellen G. White* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1946), p. 188. As we show other Christians the extent of Ellen White's agreement with cardinal Christian doctrines, they are usually more open to heed her distinctive convictions.

26. *Life Sketches* (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1915), p. 196.

27. I wish to acknowledge the constructive comments made by a number of people after they had read drafts of this article, in particular Pastor John Gate, Dr. Milton Hook, Dr. Allan Lindsay, Dr. Trevor Lloyd, Dr. Robert McIver, Pastor Keith Parmenter, Dr. Lynden Rogers, Pastor John Shaw, and Pastor Ron Taylor. However, any interpretations stated or implied herein are my sole responsibility. It seems impossible to deal adequately with Ellen White's role as mother of the Australasian church without including the recent period. To interpret events which have occurred within the past two decades is to run the serious risk that one's conclusions will be revised with the passage of time; to fail to do so is to consign the church's mother to an undesirable limbo. I have, therefore, chosen the risk of being proved wrong, with the hope that creative discussion will be stimulated, enhancing Ellen White's future role in the South Pacific Division. It should be added that this article has only addressed the situation in the homelands of Australia and New Zealand; another article needs to explore her role in the Pacific Islands.

## South Pacific Historians Interpret Their Church

by Gilbert Valentine

The 1985 centennial of the birth of the Adventist Church in the South Pacific Division was celebrated with zest throughout the region. Local churches, schools, conferences and institutions joined in the year-long commemoration with an imaginative array of events that included re-enactments, dinners, seminars, public meetings, press conferences, the production of documentary films, and the publishing of books. All year long reports of the happenings, historical snippets, and historical photographs, seemingly *ad infinitum*, dominated the pages of the church's weekly paper, then called the *Australasian Record*.<sup>1</sup> Some church members were no doubt glad for the arrival of December and the discovery that there were other important things to write about besides history.

The respite was short, for Australia's grandiose bi-centennial celebrations occurred a mere three years later. The nation's European colonization began in 1788, the Adventists' historic Minneapolis General Conference convened in 1888. So history occupied centre stage yet again. The South Pacific church now celebrated with the wider society and extended the focus to include both its local heritage and the Minneapolis event.

Beyond the nostalgia, however, the lasting value of this trio of celebrations was the opportunity they provided Adventists for serious intro-

spection and critical self-evaluation. The task of appraisal found ready to hand a coterie of trained Adventist scholars. During the 1970s and early 1980s increasing numbers of the church's teachers and



Walter Scragg

ministers had gained post-graduate qualifications. Furthermore, church leaders felt secure enough to invite a number of non-Adventist scholars to share in the process of reflection. It is to the credit of the Division's administration, under the leadership of Walter R.L. Scragg, that the church not only actively encouraged these historians to research and write but invested significant amounts of money in the process.<sup>2</sup> The encouragement produced a flood of research and a series of books involving the labours of no less than 35 different writers.

In truth, local interest in writing denominational history began five years prior to the centennial with the publication of the first full-length book on the subject. Ross Goldstone's *The Angel Said Australia*,<sup>3</sup> chronicled the church's beginnings in the South Pacific. The volume adopted an anecdotal approach and with its faith-affirming narrative, found a ready market amongst church

members. In 1983, the Division leadership decided that something more comprehensive, yet still on the popular level, would make a useful volume for introducing the church to the non-Adventist public on the occasion of the church's centennial. Historian Noel P. Clapham, long-time chair of the Avondale College humanities department, was commissioned as director of an editorial team. Sixteen writers contributed articles. Published in 1985 as a "coffee table" book, *Seventh-day Adventists in the South Pacific 1885-1985* is authoritative, yet written in a readable and enjoyable style. It is profusely illustrated with over 450 black-and-white and full-colour photographs, many of which are full-page. A distinctive feature of the work is the inclusion of numerous potted biographies of "legendary" church leaders replete with faded photographs which give the volume the comfortable feel of a family album. The book is an excellent public relations volume.

Four other books consist of papers first presented at scholarly conferences marking the various centennials. The first of these, *In and Out of the World: Seventh-day Adventists in New Zealand*,<sup>4</sup> edited by Peter Ballis, focuses primarily on the social dimension of Adventism in New Zealand. The first two of the eight articles are by non-Adventist academics who chart the socio-religious environment in late nineteenth century New Zealand where Adventism found its place amongst a population largely comprised of first or second generation English immigrant settlers. According to Peter Lineham, this population was already familiar with itinerant evangelists, the "sawdust trail," "revivalism" and prophetic preaching. All were established features of religious life in the 1880s, although Adventism's particular apocalyptic emphasis set it in fierce dispute with other revivalists. Lineham argues that the prophetic movements like Adventism were some of the most interesting and distinctive forces in nineteenth century New Zealand.

Ballis's own essay looks at Adventism's in-

volvement in New Zealand politics. Prohibition, military conscription and the issue of religion in the public schools were three social issues the church vigorously addressed. He points out that rather than giving it an "other world" orientation, Adventism's apocalyptic perspective led it into reacting to developments in society and thus enabled it to contribute to the shaping of public policy. The impact of Adventism as a minority group on the larger New Zealand society, particularly the indigenous Maori population, is further illustrated in Gilbert Valentine's study on the work of Sir Maui Pomare, the first Maori to train as a medical doctor. A one-time Adventist, Pomare trained under J.H. Kellogg at the Battle Creek Sanitarium in the 1890s.

In a fresh approach to understanding the church, econometrics professor Fraser Jackson applies the methods of the science of demographics to the study of the growth and distribution of the denomination in New Zealand. Jackson documents the fact that New Zealand Adventists belong to the lowest socio-economic levels of society and that the three decades of the movement's social reformism (1886-1918) were also its period of greatest growth. These same decades of social activism also provide the background to understand the rapid growth in the system of church schools operated by the church in New Zealand, a story traced in Glynn Litster's paper. The volume



Arthur and Carole Ferch

concludes with a study by Denis Steley which attempts to account for Adventism's remarkable success in the Pacific in transforming local "pagan" cultures and indigenizing the faith.

The other three centennial monographs are edited by Arthur Ferch, who at that time was field secretary of the Division. Two deal with Adventist history in the South Pacific. The third book focuses on theology.

*Symposium on Adventist History in the South Pacific: 1885-1918*<sup>5</sup> contains the seventeen papers presented at a centennial conference held at Monash University in October 1985. Following a thematic pattern roughly similar to Ballis's work, the volume is organised in four sections: the religious, socio-political and cultural environment; the growth and development of the church, with a particular focus on the role of A.G. Daniells; the nature and growth of the outreach of the church; and Adventist mission in the Pacific islands.

Like Ballis's work, this volume also begins with a paper by a non-Adventist scholar. Walter Phillips provides a perceptive analysis of the religious climate in Australia during the 1880s. The plant of Adventism found soil well cultivated by revivalists and visiting evangelists. Another particularly helpful introductory study is an insightful paper by Arthur Patrick clarifying the manner in which Adventist theology shaped the church's involvement with the social issues of the day. A number of studies look at these particular social issues and the various occasional alliances with other liberal and secular forces in society that the Adventist church entered into in pursuance of its social agenda.

Two of the studies fill important gaps in the still incomplete picture we have of A.G. Daniells. One, by Gilbert Valentine, examines Daniells' involvement in the shaping of Australian church structure and his at times very tense relationship with W.C. White. The other, by Milton Hook, examines Daniells' complex relationship to Ellen G. White. Both papers endeavour to deal respon-

sibly with recently released archival materials and issues that at the time were still quite sensitive.

Five of the papers investigate the growth and expansion of the church, but tend to concentrate on details at the expense of analysis, as one reviewer observed.<sup>6</sup> They nevertheless fill in important pieces of the picture of the development of the Australian church. The last section of the book, apart from Denis Steley's helpful insights concerning the reasons for the church's lack of progress in some island territories, is the weakest. The article, for example, on Adventist theological education in the Pacific is largely a listing of schools and training institutions.

Ferch's second historical volume, *Journey of Hope*, published in 1991, (see Milton Hook's book review in this issue) is a collection of papers presented at the 1988 Bi-centennial Conference on Adventist History held at Macquarie University in Sydney, New South Wales. The thirteen papers pick up the story where the earlier book left off, looking at the history of the church during the period 1918-1950. Again, with the exception of a study by Denis Steley on religious liberty and Adventist mission in the South Sea Islands, the last section of the book dealing with mission is also its weakest area. One paper for example, is little more than a boat-lover's catalogue of nautical information drawn with few exceptions from the pages of the *Australasian Record*. Another is a Who's Who of Australian missionaries in Asia, while another is an anecdotal narrative of the church's use of expatriate Pacific islanders as missionaries in Papua. It would have been helpful in the latter piece, for example, to have learned of the church's rationale and its policy in this area, to know the practice of other mission bodies and what was different about the Adventist approach. Even with its inadequacies, however, this paper highlights the importance of oral sources, and it is hoped that much more oral history will be recorded before the significant remaining eyewitnesses die out. Limited availability of, or access to, sources



A.G. Daniells

was evidently a problem for several writers.

The more significant contributions in *Journey of Hope*, as in the earlier volume, are those that deal with the interaction between the church and society. Two papers set the scene, with Don Hansen taking a critical look at the place of the Christian church in Australian society during the period between the wars, and non-Adventist contributor David Parker documenting the importance of conservatism in the Christian church in Australia. Parker's account should be of interest to American readers puzzled by the strong fundamentalist strand in Australian Adventism.

Three papers look at Adventism and social issues. Peter Ballis deals with the church's opposition to labour unions and the legislation of compulsory unionism during the 1930s. Gary Krause examines the ambiguity of Australian Adventism's attitude to war and Trevor Lloyd provides an intriguing account of the trials of Avondale College as it grappled with the issues of government recognition. If the period between the Wars presented the church with difficulties in its relationship to the state, it was nevertheless a period of rapid growth. Ross Goldstone's study of evangelism during the period documents an increase of

membership from 6,000 to 15,000 in Australia and New Zealand alone.

*Journey of Hope* is marked by an even greater lack of evenness in the quality of writing and research than was evident in some places in the first volume. Several papers, such as the biographical study of C.H. Watson and David Hay's account of the church in Samoa, could have benefited from more substantial editing. Of the three monographs the one by Ballis is the most coherent. All three, however, reflect a growing maturity of thought and self-understanding in the church that is gratifying. For anyone seeking to understand the Adventist church in Australia, they are essential resources.

Two other scholarly works on Adventist history in the South Pacific should be noted. Arthur Patrick's excellent bibliographic essay "Seventh-day Adventist History in the South Pacific: A Review of Sources" was written primarily for non-Adventist scholars who may be interested in researching Adventism. Published in the June 1987 issue of *The Journal of Religious History*,<sup>7</sup> Patrick's article skilfully maps the contours of Australian Adventism and is an illuminating introduction to the literature.

*The Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series* is a creative attempt by Milton Hook to provide a resource history of the South Pacific Division for use in college and high school religion classes. This thirty-two booklet series, published in mid-1992 with the support of the South Pacific Division Education Department, is intended to make it possible for students to study authoritative local history. With restricted mission field school budgets in mind, the booklet format allows teachers to choose those booklets relevant to their particular topic of study. The booklets deal in an attractive readable style with the Pacific Island groups as well as the Division mainlands (Australia and New Zealand) and their institutions.

*Towards Righteousness by Faith: 1888 in Retrospect* does not address Australian denominational history. Rather, it represents an attempt to con-

tribute to the debate over soteriology within Adventism by offering perspectives by Australian scholars on the issues growing out of the 1888 Minneapolis Conference. Also edited by Arthur Ferch, the volume comprises five papers presented at a centennial celebration of the event at Macquarie University in Sydney. The most interesting contribution of the book is probably Norman Young's review of Adventist exegesis of "the law" in Galatians 3:19-25. He notes that while contemporary Adventist scholars agree completely with neither the Smith-Butler camp nor that of Waggoner-Jones, surprisingly, on balance they tend to favour several of the positions advocated by Smith and Butler.

Arthur Patrick offers a useful sociological perspective on the role of Smith and Butler in the conflict as forces for "continuity" were unable to understand the need for "reorientation" required in the expression of Adventist faith in view of changing circumstances. Two of the papers deal with the theology of the leading "reformers" at Minneapolis. Milton Hook deals with Waggoner's views and Kerry Hortop deals with the teachings of Jones. Both papers represent a perspective that sees Justification by Faith not as "separate" from Sanctification but as necessarily distinct from it. In this view, Justification is logically prior in the "ordo salutis" but not chronologically or experientially separate as George Knight seems to understand.<sup>8</sup> The perspective offered by Hook and Hortop is undoubtedly conditioned by a reaction to the legalistic understanding of soteriology that permeated the public presentation of Adventist doctrines for decades until at least the late 1960s.

This collection of recent publications clearly indicates that Adventism in Australia, as it enters its second century, has not lost its vitality. The maturing of outlook and the ability to look at itself critically, evaluating its self-understanding, give promise that the church, with its distinctive message, will continue to be relevant.

## Notes

1. The 48 issues published during 1985 featured over 108 historical articles and published over 160 historical photographs.

2. The South Pacific Division supported the publication of three of the books and financed the conferences at which the papers were first presented.

3. *The Angel Said Australia* (190 pp.) was published by the Signs Publishing Company, 1980. It followed an earlier work by Goldstone, *Veneered Infidelity* (Napier: The Daily Telegraph Company, 1979, 139 pp.) recounting the story of the Adventist church in the Hawkes Bay district of New Zealand.

4. Peter Ballis was pastor of the Adventist churches in the Hawkes Bay area of New Zealand at the time. The papers published as *In and Out of the World* (Palmerston North [New Zealand]: Dunmore Press, 1985, 178 pp.) were presented as a series of centennial lectures organized by the Hawkes Bay Chapter of the Adventist Association of Business and Professional Men in Napier during October 1984.

5. The Adventist Association of Business and Professional Men also assisted with the costs of publishing this volume.

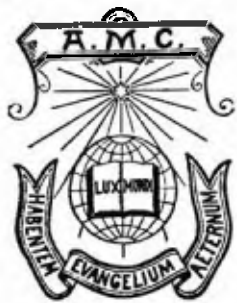
6. See Sarah H. Sohmer's book review in *The Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (June 1991), p. 359.

7. Published under the full title, "Seventh-day Adventist History in the South Pacific: A Review of Sources" in *The Journal Religious History*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (June 1987), pp. 307-326, Patrick's article is intended as a guide to non-Adventist historians. Its comprehensiveness, however, also makes it of great value to Adventist scholars.

8. Knight's critique of Hook and Hortop defends a Wesleyan synthesis that is more the "Wesleyanism" of Wesley's descendants than that of Wesley himself. It could be argued that the underlying optimism about human nature inherent in the American way of thinking has colored American approaches to the understanding of soteriology predisposing it to a more semi-pelagian Wesleyan harmony. *Ministry*, February 1992, p. 26.

## Physical, Mental, and Moral Education at Avondale College

by Robert K. McIver



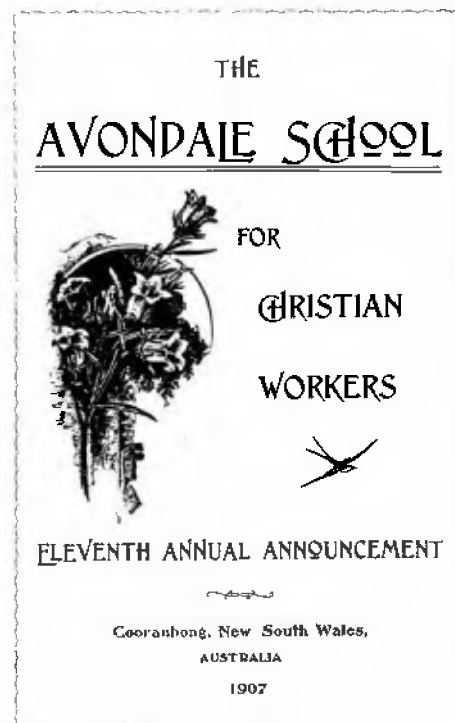
Australian Missionary College logo from 1922

Because humans have physical, spiritual, mental and social aspects, it is self evident that the primary object of education should be “to develop and train every part of the being—physical, mental and moral.”<sup>1</sup> At least this reasoning was self-evident to Ellen G. White and the group of

American educators working with her to establish a school in Australia which could serve as “a pattern for other schools which shall be established among our people.”<sup>2</sup>

Late nineteenth-century Australia provided a new opportunity to apply lessons learned from close observation of early Adventist education in the United States. In Australia, there was no established curriculum to be changed, and no faculty in place to resist those changes. The Avondale School for Christian Workers could begin in the same way it should continue.

The early pioneers of Avondale had clearly defined concepts of both what the goals of true education should be, and how they should be achieved. They expressed these at some length in their letters and their writings, and with particular clarity in the “Calenders” and “Announcements” of the fledgling school.<sup>3</sup> This article examines



Title page of the 11th annual announcement of The Avondale School for Christian Workers (1907)

some of these goals and methods, allowing, as far as possible, the original participants to speak with their own words. These goals touched every aspect of Avondale students’ existence: their social life, and their physical, intellectual, and spiritual development.

### Sociological Goals

The early pioneers at Avondale were unashamedly comfortable in the countryside, and





Left: A panoramic view of Avondale Missionary College in 1921. Right: An aerial view of Avondale College as it looks today.



actively promoted both its way of life and its values:

Too often it is considered important by parents to send their children from the country to some large town where they may learn its "polished city ways," but at this school we desire to take young men and women from the towns and teach them "country ways": in fact, make ladies and gentlemen of them of the good, hard-working, thrifty type . . .

For these reasons the Avondale School of Christian Workers has been located in the country, where the beauties of nature are more elevating than the works of man; where the tilling of the soil is better for muscle, brain, and heart, than amusements, sports and holidays; where God's pure air is sweeter than on the city streets; and where true

manhood and womanhood and the love of Christ may develop in our children's hearts under the best possible conditions.<sup>4</sup> There was also a strong egalitarian impulse:

We have no servants, but believing that "labour is ennobling," teachers and pupils work together, and find that "God-appointed labour is a blessing to man, to occupy his mind, to strengthen his body, and to develop his faculties."<sup>5</sup>

Every effort was made to create a family atmosphere. The student dormitories were called homes or residences, and every evening residents met with the preceptor or preceptress who "lead their families in worship."<sup>6</sup> The whole College, teachers and students alike, ate together at tables seating eight.<sup>7</sup> The students were expected to develop their characters through the fruitful lessons of

**Below:** Dora Creek has always given Avondale its special character. The "Old Dry Log" has witnessed many baptisms.

**Right:** The first church built at Avondale (1897).





*The "Old Chapel," which dates from 1898, is still in use today*

physical labour, spiritual enrichment, and serious study, not through frivolous amusements:

The school in Avondale is to be a pattern for other schools which shall be established among our people. *Games and amusements are the curse of the Colonies*, and they must not be allowed in our school here . . . . One thing is to be

*Below:* In 1935 Haskell Hall, the Men's residence, was extended using materials from the demolished Avondale Health Retreat. *Right:* Preston Hall was built next to Bethel and housed women students until the new Ella Boyd Hall opened.



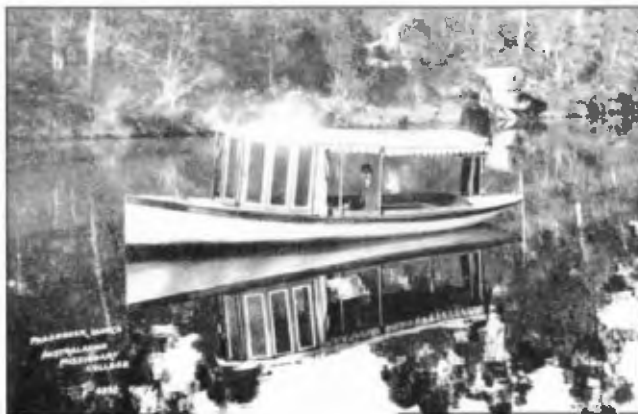
*Bethel Hall, the first Ladies' residence, was built in 1896-97*

plainly and decidedly carried out. Amusements are not to be a part of the education given to students in our school in this place.<sup>8</sup>

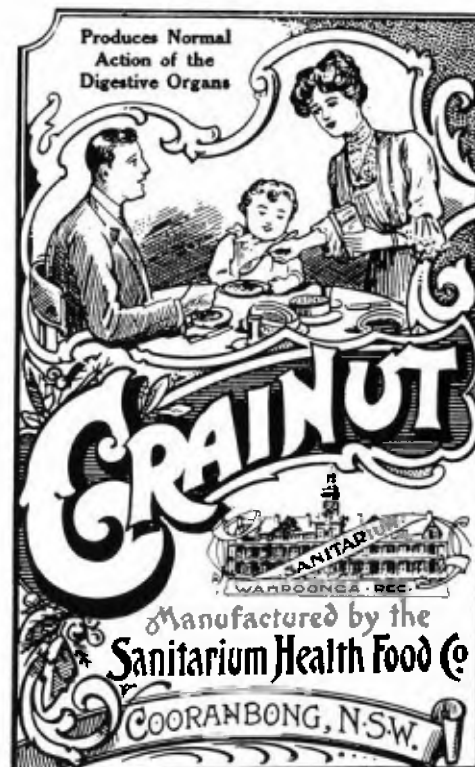
In this and other areas, the College drew on standards of conduct established already amongst Seventh-day Adventists in the United States. Right from earliest times these have found a troubled reception amongst the Australian youth at Avondale, who have repeatedly shown inclinations to be sports-minded. High standards of dress, conduct, and reading matter were also part of this tradition, and were required of students:

The Preceptress will insist upon a change of dress whenever that worn is judged by her to be a hindrance to the





*AboveTop: From the start, school industries were a prime consideration at Avondale. At the turn of the century the "sawmill-turned-health-food-factory" was served by boats on Dora Creek. In 1896 Metcalf Hare built the launch Avondale. In lieu of an engine, it was powered by two rowers. Middle: By 1921, the food factory had expanded considerably. Bottom: By 1913 a sleek passenger launch was plying Dora Creek's jellyfish-infested waters.*



**Above:** Two early scenes inside the Health Food Factory. They forecast the current success of the "Sanitarium Health Foods," which has the corner on Australia's cereal market.  
**Left:** An early advertisement

# Old Avondale Days

*Zec. 4:10*

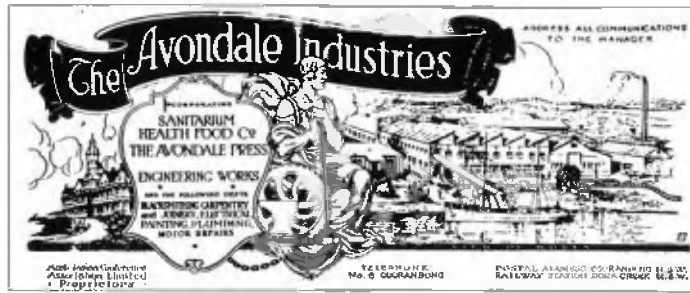
*Now a word about where we held Sabbath School & Church Service. They were held in an old two storey building that had been used as an hotel, then when the Saw Mill had cut some boards we sat on them and logs later there were Class rooms built over the Kitchen that were used, untill the Church was ready which was greatly needed because of increasing numbers of Students & Local Residents. At that time the Student body with their Teachers marched down in two groups, to the Church for Sabbath School & Church Service. Sister White often conducted the Service and if she saw any one inclined to be sleepy right in the midst of her sermon she would call out let us Sing, We are Homeward Bound then someone on the Platform would announce the number that was done so that no one would miss the Counsel she was giving, and I think it would be good; if we followed the same plann [sic] now, at that time the Windows did not open at the bottom. I like to look back to those times when Avondale was such a Sacred place as we met with and talked to the Lord's Messenger.*

*There was no howling dogs, or any noisy wireless with its jazzy worldly Songs to disturb the peace and Holy calm that pervaded. . or any tobacco [sic] to pison [sic] the beautiful sweet air. but oh what a change now you can decide for yourselves*

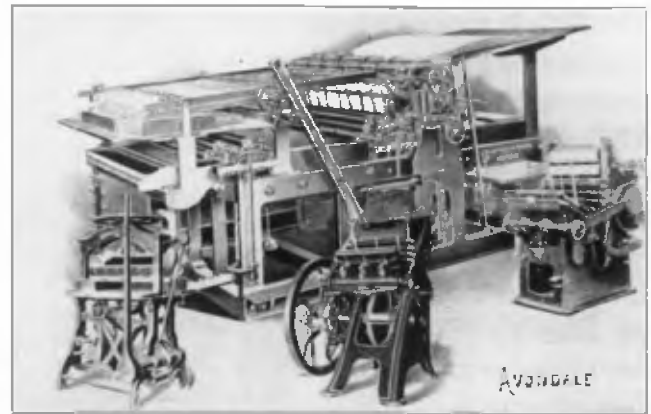
*Oh if you could have been hear [sic] and saw how earnestly she worked to get this College established where our Young people could get an abround [sic] Education . . .*

The above is an undated fragment of a manuscript written by John Pocock not long before his death in 1946, evidently prepared for one of his talks given in the Avondale Village Church, or perhaps to the students at AMC.

After their conversion in 1892, John and Charlotte Pocock lived in Arcadia, near Sydney. It was a time of economic depression; even as a skilled tradesman John lost his employment when he accepted the Sabbath. He worked intermittently at Cooranbong until 1899 when, at the invitation of Ellen White, he moved his family close to the Avondale College for Christian Workers. Ellen White loaned the Pococks a tent for the family to live in while John built "The Haven," the house in which they spent the rest of their lives.



**Above:** An advertisement for Avondale Industries. **Clockwise from Right:** Avondale's press proved to be a "growing enterprise" in 1907. The press not only served the College's needs but printed tracts for the mission fields on these three "modern presses"; The carpenter's shop in 1908; The carpentry class provided class instruction as well as much of the school's furniture; The school barn, shown here in 1903, offered students the opportunity to work off their tuition, thus achieving the College ideal of living "debt-free"; The blacksmith's shop, in 1908, had three forges, three anvils, two vises, a drill, and many other "tools-of-the-trade."



best health. All students are expected to dress plainly. The wearing of jewelry, and unnecessary ornamentation, are not in good taste here, nor in harmony with the wishes of the Managers....Students are not permitted to read or have in their rooms, novels, story magazines, or other reading of an injurious character.<sup>9</sup>

### Physiological Goals

While the estate was under development, students had often worked six hours a day, with studies taking only two hours of their time,<sup>10</sup> but by 1901 this had dropped to between 2.5 and 4 hours per day.

Useful manual labour was considered by Ellen G. White and her followers to be an essential component of any balanced school program. The early *Announcements* carefully document the establishment of the orchards and vineyard, the gardens, the dairy, the printing shop, the sawmill, the brick factory, the health food factory, etc. Training was provided in these and other areas although on somewhat gender-specific grounds:

Ladies who complete any department of the school work must be prepared to pass examinations in the following subjects: Preparation, cost composition, and dietetic value of hygienic foods; table service and care of the dining-room; the making and care of fires; care of the kitchen, and appointments; dish-washing, measuring, principles of boiling, steaming, stewing, baking; cooking of grains; preparation and preservation

of fruits and vegetables; bread-making in all its branches.

Examinations will also be required in the science of house-keeping, which will embrace the following subjects:—Sweeping, dusting, chamber-work, etc. Every young lady will be expected to be a competent laundress; she will be required to be able to do good work in the washing and ironing of all kinds of clothing and house linen.



*The Avondale College faculty in 1919*

Lady students will be examined in general sewing, cutting, fitting, making, and mending of all kinds of ladies' and children's garments. Special attention will be given to hand work, patching and darning. Students will be taught to cut their own patterns.

Parents can readily see that it will be an advantage to their children to be educated in this way, and the homes have been established for this very purpose.<sup>11</sup>

### Intellectual and Spiritual Goals

The intellectual sphere was expected to revolve around Scripture:

The Holy Scriptures ... should hold the first place in every educational system, for the foundation of all right education is the knowledge of God. Higher education is that which placed the Bible as the very foundation of all education....

There is no special position, no phase of human experience, for which the study of the Bible is not an essential preparation.<sup>12</sup>

For many years, for example, world history was studied as adjunct to biblical history. The history of Mesopotamia, Egypt, medieval Europe, and the papacy were studied because of the light that they threw upon the interpretation of biblical prophecies, particularly those of Daniel and Revelation—the Bible books studied first by all College students at least till 1903.<sup>13</sup> Biology and astronomy illustrated the wonders of creation, God's second book.<sup>14</sup> Other concerns in the curriculum centred on such areas as spelling, arithmetic, bookkeeping,<sup>15</sup> as well

	L. M.
Relig. Duty	5.00
Morning Worship (In Chapel)	5.30
Morning Study Period (In Chapel)	7.45-8.45
Breakfast	7.00
Work Period (For Industrial Students)	8.00-9.30
Recreation and Study Periods	8.00-10.00
Industrial Classes	9.00-10.00
Cultural Exercises	10.00
General Talks (Mon. & Fri.)	
Special (Fest. & Thurs.)	10.15-10.45
Work Period	10.45-11.00
Midweek Meeting (Wednesday)	10.00-11.00
Recreation and Study Periods	11.00-11.40
Lunch	P. M.
Work Period	1.30
Evening Study (For those who wish it)	1.30-5.00
Evening Worship (In House)	6.30
Evening Prayer	6.30-7.30
Evening Study Periods	7.30-8.45
Recreation and Study Periods	8.45
Lights Out	9.00

*Avondale students followed a stringent daily program, with each moment planned. Before this 1908 programme, "lights out" occurred at 8:45.*

tual and physical aspects of every student. Each of these areas received significant amounts of time each week. A daily program was published in the *Announcements* between 1903 and 1916, and the information given there and elsewhere in the *Announcements* reveals the following result. Each five-day week was organized in a way which allocated the following number of hours: 9.75 to religious exercises (including morning and evening worships, and chapels), 22 for classes (including 1 hour to spelling; 1 hour to music; 5 hours to industrial training; and 15 hours for academic study); 11.25 for study, 12.5 for work.<sup>16</sup> Saturdays (observed strictly as Sabbaths) were devoted



*The 1920 Australasian Missionary Brass Band*



*Some of the band members are shown here in formal attire, as part of the 1921 graduating class*

as the strong stress noted already on the development of the practical skills necessary for physical labour.

### Application

There was a definite connection between these goals and the actual program of study instituted at Avondale. The avowed goals of the institution were to develop the spiritual, intellec-

to religious exercises and evangelism, and most Sundays were spent in a physical labour program.

### What of Avondale Today?

The early pioneers who established the Avondale School for Christian Workers valued hard work, sobriety, thrift, corporate worship, and self improvement. They promoted a lifestyle and attitude well attuned to the needs of the membership

of the late nineteenth-century Seventh-day Adventist church in the Antipodes, which had a significant part of its membership living in rural Australia. They fitted their graduates with the skills necessary to move into their society. The young men were equipped with practical and intellectual skills which matched the demands which would be made of them as they built churches, hospitals and schools. They learned self reliance, and the ability to turn their hand to a wide variety of tasks. The young ladies were equally well prepared to meet the demands made upon them as homemakers and supporters of their husbands as they moved to establish their new faith in new areas.

The modern world in which Avondale's graduates find themselves is much different from the Australia known by Ellen White and her co-workers. The population of Australia is now largely urban, and is no longer mono-cultural (Anglo-Saxon). Specialist qualifications are now prized above generalist skills. The educational level of the general population has increased, as have the



*Miss Catherine Walker (1879-1963) served Avondale as a home economics teacher for many years.*

demands placed on Avondale to meet ever higher academic standards.

As society has changed so has Avondale. Today, young ladies are no longer taught dishwashing, cooking and housekeeping. By and large they share the same classes and occupations as do their male classmates. In order to provide the specialization needed, the College has become a true tertiary teaching institution, and the academic curricula of the College has become more demanding of the students at the expense of other aspects of the program.

With change comes the searching question of authenticity. Has the College changed so much now as to lose connection with its authentic roots, with its essential mission? As it looks to the future, Avondale must continually struggle to find how its basic perspective that education is the training of every part of the being—physical, mental and moral—should express itself in the curriculum and the environment of study which is set up. Time must be allocated, and creative energy must be directed toward providing at Avondale a spiritual environment which places the Bible at the centre of the curriculum, and which stresses the wholeness of the individual—social, physical, mental and spiritual. This is not an easy task in today's complex world. But then, the letters and writings of the early pioneers of Avondale show that they did not find the task easy, either.

## Endnotes

1. *Fifth Annual Announcement of the Avondale School for Christian Workers*, 1901. p. 9.
2. Ellen G. White, MSS 92 (1898-1901). Perhaps the most comprehensive account of the establishment of the Avondale school is the unpublished dissertation by Milton



*The domestic science building, known as "The Laurels," where Miss Walker shared her knowledge*





In 1908 the principal's office offered two classrooms chairs for visitors but little else other than the possibility of conversation

R. Hook, "The Avondale School and Adventist Educational Goals, 1894-1900" (Andrews University, 1978) [Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, #7912439, 1978]). Hook also provided two shorter accounts of the establishment of Avondale: "The Avondale School: A Holy Experiment," *Adventist Heritage*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Spring 1982), pp. 34-45; "Avondale College," in *Seventh-day Adventists in the South Pacific: 1885-1985*, edited by Noel Clapham (Warburton, VIC: Signs, [1985]), pp. 143-65. See also Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White*, Vol. 4, *The Australian Years* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1983), passim, esp. pp. 22-27, 42-47; A.G. Daniells, *The Abiding Gift of Prophecy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1936), pp. 308-21. Noel Clapham (now retired from Avondale as senior lecturer emeritus) began work as a history teacher at Avondale in 1948 and has a manuscript in preparation dealing with the history of Avondale, which he kindly made available to the writer. The unpublished MEd thesis by W.G. Gilson entitled "The History of Adventist Education in Australia and New Zealand" (University of Melbourne, 1963) has a chapter dealing with the history of Avondale (pp. 167-211). Gilson also collected key primary documents dealing with the establishment of the school, which are bound in two volumes (available at the Ellen G. White/SDA Research Centre, Avondale College). An extensive collection of original primary documents is available at the Heritage Room of the South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, which holds, among other things, nearly complete minutes for both the College and the church administration throughout the early period.

3. These documents were called *Calendars*, *Announcements*, *Prospectuses*, or *Handbooks* at different times in the history of Avondale. Despite the different names, their functions were the same, to describe the school/college, and list the different courses offered. The earliest existing example is the 1899 *Calendar* (DF 170 in the Ellen G. White/

SDA Research Centre, Avondale). The South Pacific Division Heritage Room at Avondale has copies of the *Announcements* for 1901-3, and a nearly complete set of *Announcements*, *Calendars*, and *Prospectuses* from 1908 onwards.

4. *Calendar* . . . 1899, pp. 37,39.

5. *Announcement* . . . 1901, p. 5.

6. *The Avondale School for Christian Workers: Fourteenth Annual Announcement*, 1910, p. 9.

7. This is described in college *Announcements* at least until 1921 (the 1922 and 1923 *Announcements* are not available, and the matter is absent in the 1924 *Announcement*).

8. *Announcement* . . . 1910, p. 42, emphasis supplied. This comment is found in the section entitled, "Principles of True Education: Extracts from the Writing of Mrs. Ellen G. White." Cf. Manuscript Release No. 553. Ellen White left Australia in 1901, but great attention was paid to her written opinions.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

10. *Calendar* . . . 1899, p. 17.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

13. The *Announcements* for 1904-1906 are not available.

14. "In our school classes the predominating influence of the Bible was felt in almost every subject taught, Bible prophecy, Bible doctrines, Bible history, Bible chronology, Bible geography, Bible literature, Bible arithmetic, Bible missions, Bible hygiene, Bible music, and Bible poetry, and so on." A.H. Plper (speaking of his early experience as a student at Avondale, during the period when Ellen White was there). In "Old Avondale," *Avondale Far and Near*, May 1947, p. 20. Ellen G. White/SDA Research Centre, Cooranbong, DF 170-c.

15. On bookkeeping see Hook, "The Avondale School," pp. 41-42. Spelling drills were regularly scheduled.

16. Cf. Gilson, "The History of Seventh-day Adventist Education in Australia and New Zealand," p. 171.

## Triumphs, Tragedies, and Transportation: A Quarter Century on Pitcairn Island, 1899-1924

by Malcolm J. Bull

The saga of the early Seventh-day Adventist presence on Pitcairn Island has frequently been told. The story of the parcel of tracts sent to the island by James White and John Loughborough in 1876 has often been related. We also know about the successful visit of pioneer missionary John I. Tay ten years later when the entire adult population accepted the Advent message.<sup>1</sup>

Then there is the story of the mission ship, *Pitcairn*<sup>2</sup> built as a response to Tay's report to the General Conference. It was launched and made its maiden voyage to Pitcairn Island in 1890. Eighty-two people were baptized and the church organized before the ship continued on its voyage. They visited numerous other islands in French Polynesia, the Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga,

and Fiji, as well as Norfolk Island and New Zealand. Over the next ten years the *Pitcairn* made five further voyages across the South Pacific between San Francisco and Auckland. On each of the six voyages they called in at Pitcairn Island on both the outward and return journeys.

John Tay's success on Pitcairn had been seen by the church as an indication from God that the time had come for missionary outreach into the islands of the Pacific. Also, because trans-Pacific transportation was a real problem, getting to Pitcairn Island easily became a priority. Few ships departed from the United States for the Pacific islands and none made a regular run, hence evangelism was practically impossible in the region. Not being on any trade route, Pitcairn Island was especially difficult to reach. Therefore the decision was



*The mission ship Pitcairn which called in at Pitcairn Island on each of its six voyages between 1890 and 1896.*

made to procure a ship to commence work in the Pacific.<sup>3</sup>

The initial decision was to purchase a ship, the *Phoebe Chapman* in Honolulu in 1888. That schooner, however, was lost at sea with all hands, including the minister sent to baptize the Pitcairn islanders, A.J. Cudney. Only then did the Adventist church decide to build their own ship which would, in its six voyages, fulfill the need for visiting Pitcairn as well as the other islands.

By the end of the 19th century conditions in the Pacific had changed. Consequently, the Mission Board made a report to the 1899 General Conference Session meeting at South Lancaster, Massachusetts:

It is the opinion of the board that to continue to run the *Pitcairn* from San Francisco is a most expensive way of reaching the islands with missionaries and supplies. Means of transportation on the Pacific Ocean are so increased and extended that almost all parts of the island field can now be reached much cheaper than by a sailing vessel.<sup>4</sup>

Whereas this transport situation held true for most of the South Pacific, the same could not be

said for Pitcairn Island. When the *Pitcairn* left for the last time in 1899, the island was left in as isolated position as before. Shipping contacts between Pitcairn and the outside world were rare and spasmodic. The few ships that did call, however, provided an opportunity for ship-missionary work. After a long voyage across the Pacific, the seafarers were quite sober and responsive by the time they reached Pitcairn. They happily accepted the reading matter which the Pitcairners distributed and thus learned about the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Living as they did in a virtually cashless society, the islanders also relied upon these infrequent visits to raise some funds for missionary work and to sell their tithe produce. A tenth of all that grew in their gardens and on their fruit trees was stored in the tithe-house and taken out to passing ships in an effort to convert it into cash. As the ships called so infrequently, much of the food spoiled before it could be sold.

### A Ship of Their Own

These problems started the Pitcairners thinking about the possibilities of raising enough money to purchase a small vessel of their own so that they could carry the produce to market in French Polynesia and thereby raise enough money for their tithes and provide an opportunity for evange-



John I. Tay, pioneer missionary to Pitcairn Island in 1886. He re-turned on the first voyage of the *Pitcairn* in 1890.



Pastor Andrew J. Cudney, who was lost at sea on the ill-fated voyage of the *Phoebe Chapman* in 1888.



Captain Griffiths F. Jones. This Welsh mariner pioneered many Adventist missions in the Far East and South Pacific.

lism in the nearby islands.

An emergency situation in November, 1900, unexpectedly brought them closer to realizing their ambition. A four-masted British ship, the *Pyrenees*, arrived off Pitcairn with a fire smoldering in the cargo of wheat and barley in its hold. It had already been burning for fifteen days and was threatening to burn through the deck. The captain hoped to run his ship ashore to save the crew, but this was impossible due to the heavy seas, contrary winds and Pitcairn's rocky coast.

A Pitcairner named J. Russell McCoy offered to pilot the ship to Mangareva<sup>5</sup> almost 300 miles to the west. The voyage safely made, the crew beached the ship. The people on Mangareva, however, were suffering from acute food shortages themselves and were barely able to feed the crew members. Russell McCoy spent some time with people who had been favorably influenced by the visits of the *Pitcairn* during the previous decade.

Unaware that the ship had been sold, many wanted to know when it would return. Hence McCoy discussed



*The Landing at Bounty Bay. Only the bravest and most skilled mariners attempted to land their ships on Pitcairn's rocky shores.*

the matter of transporting cargo between Pitcairn and Mangareva with a local merchant. Such a vessel, he learned, would cost \$3,000 to \$4,000 in "Chili coin" (Chilean pesos). Although the merchant offered to contribute toward the cost himself, nothing came of the idea, and McCoy had to think of another way to return home to Pitcairn. Meanwhile, in Tahiti, there was talk of purchasing a new schooner to serve the islands around Tahiti and Pitcairn Island. Pastor E.H. Gates, who was in charge of the Eastern Polynesian Mission, had a promise from the General Conference of \$500 for the project. He also considered the possibility of leasing a ship.

### **The Pitcairn II**

Early in 1902 the British Consul in Tahiti arranged for the purchase of a 15-ton cutter at the cost of £218, lent by the British government. The ship was named *Pitcairn the Second* but the similarities with its famous namesake ended there. Not only was it quite unworthy of the name, but there was no one qualified to take



*This photo, taken on July 19, 1906, shows the view of Adamstown from Christian's Cave. H.M.S. Cambrian, seen in the upper left corner, is anchored in Bounty Bay. The large white-roofed building at the center right is the new two-story church, at this stage still under construction.*

the cutter through to Pitcairn Island. A chance encounter<sup>6</sup> one evening in Papeete led to Captain Griffiths F. Jones, who had been serving the past year as a missionary in the Society Islands.<sup>7</sup>

Captain Jones was able to train the young Pitcairners in the skills of navigation as they accompanied him on the *Pitcairn II* during the next year. Born sailors, they doubtless owed their fearless disposition to their seafaring ancestors who had sailed on the *Bounty*.

One of their first voyages took them in search of Henderson Island (named after Captain Henderson who rediscovered<sup>8</sup> the island in 1819). They found the waterless island about 120 miles northeast of Pitcairn. Its good stands of miro trees would be used in the future to supply wood for the celebrated Pitcairn carvings.

Meanwhile rumors reached Mrs. Jones in Tahiti that the *Pitcairn II* and her husband had been lost at sea during a storm in the Tuamotu Group. Traveling in a French schooner in search of him, she arrived in Mangareva (in the Gambier Group) to discover that all were quite safe and had departed for Pitcairn only three days earlier. Mrs. Jones opted to stay on Mangareva to await his return, taking up residence in an old, rat-infested, deserted house.

Captain Jones arrived at Pitcairn the same day and was impressed to return immediately to Mangareva. After quickly reloading the boat, he set out for Mangareva, sailing before a fair, fresh wind. He was much surprised to find his wife awaiting him. George Warren, a Pitcairner, took over as captain when Captain and Mrs. Jones returned to Tahiti. *Pitcairn II* continued to transport the dried bananas, coconuts, poultry, and other



Moses Young and his wife, Alice. Thursday October Christian II is holding the walking stick. The photo dates from 1906.

products to Mangareva and Tahiti to be sold for tithe.

In October, 1903, Pastor B.J. Cady, who had been working for some time in Tahiti as mission president, made an eventful voyage to Pitcairn to visit the church members. He reached the Gambier Islands on a little steamer, but the only vessel available to make the 300-mile journey to Pitcairn was a small seven-ton cutter, thirty feet long and eight feet wide.

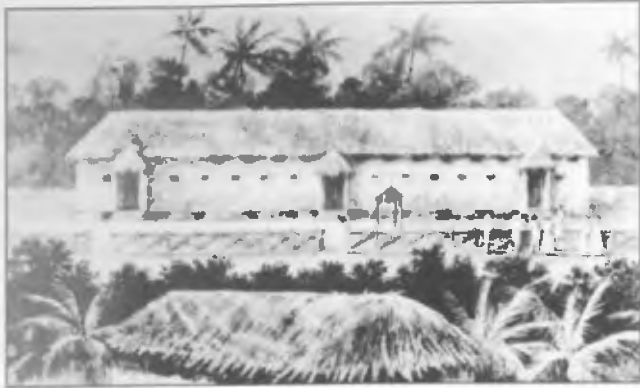
After praying earnestly about the ship and receiving the Lord's assurance that "I will be with you all the way,"<sup>9</sup> Cady successfully reached Pitcairn in the leaking boat—which had to be pumped out every two hours. The crew left him on Pitcairn and returned to Mangareva to have the boat recaulked, promising to return in about two weeks. Pastor Cady held meetings in the church for the two planned weeks and then continued on for a further seven weeks—still with no sighting of the cutter.<sup>10</sup>

Eventually Pastor Cady was able to return to Mangareva on a French missionary schooner belonging to another denomination. They had lost their way and had called in at Pitcairn for emergency supplies. Although they refused to take him any further, he was able to complete his journey on a French man-of-war bound for Tahiti.

The Pitcairn crew of the *Pitcairn II* had one dangerous failing while at sea. They had a bad habit of falling asleep on watch, or even at the helm. On one occasion the French chartered their boat to take a French scientist to another island. On their return voyage to pick him up, three weeks later, they all fell



The mission schooner Tiare



*Pitcairn's Parliament House and church, as sketched by Lieut. W.H.J. Pym, R.N., in 1898.*



*The courthouse on Pitcairn Island, which also served as the public hall, in the early twentieth century.*

asleep and were almost wrecked on an island they had never seen before. They lost their dinghy and almost their lives, swimming back to the *Pitcairn II* in shark-infested waters.

In similar circumstances, *Pitcairn II* came to an untimely end. The ship was approaching home on the evening of June 12, 1904, riding out a storm, when the helmsman and the entire crew fell asleep. Caught in the heavy seas, the cutter turned over and sank suddenly. The surprised, now-awake crew were left swimming, without a sign of their ship. One unfortunate member of the crew, Samuel Coffin, went down with the ship. Since their small, flat-bottomed boat was still providentially afloat, complete with oars and a bailer, the survivors were able to row back safely to Pitcairn.

Once again, the Pitcairners were without a

means of access to the outside world. Upon learning that the cutter had foundered, the government generously informed the Pitcairners that they were not required to repay the loan advanced for the purchase of the ship.

### **The John Adams**

Pastor B. J. Cady returned to Pitcairn for a visit in 1907, accompanied by Mark Carey, a new school teacher for the church school on Pitcairn. They travelled on the *Torch*, a small gunboat, which remained at anchor for four days while Cady held meetings and visited the people. Three of those he visited were Thursday October Christian II,<sup>11</sup> the oldest man on the island (aged 88), and Moses Young and his wife Alice who were both only a little younger. All three were able to



*The Pitcairn mission house shown around the turn of the century.*



*Pitcairn Island's church until 1907. Built in 1864, it was originally an Anglican chapel.*



The church school building at Niger

remember John Adams, the last surviving mutineer from the *Bounty*. All continued rejoicing in the Lord.

While on the island, Pastor Cady was also able to dedicate their new two-story church. It replaced the old, dilapidated, thatch-roof building where John Tay had preached over twenty years earlier. Built by the islanders themselves from timber taken from local trees and hand-sawn with pit-saws, it had taken several years to build. Thirty-foot wide by seventy feet long, the upper floor was used for the church and the ground floor for Sabbath School.

Pastor Cady also informed the Pitcairners that a new sixteen-ton cutter had been purchased by the British Consul in Tahiti. The British government had contributed £150 to add to the £124 donated by friends in England and America. The new boat, named the *John Adams*, would run between Papeete, Tahiti, and Pitcairn Island several times a year, renewing the link between the two islands which the mutineers of the *Bounty* had once so assiduously sought to destroy.

The *John Adams* made its first voyage to Pitcairn and back in mid-1907. Russell McCoy returned with it and spent some time working as a ship-missionary in Papeete. Unfortunately, the small vessel was condemned as unseaworthy and was later sold at an auction for £60. The urgent need, however, remained for keeping communica-

tion lines open between Tahiti and Pitcairn and for opening up new work in other islands of the Eastern Polynesian Mission.

### The *Tiare*

In April, 1908, the dreams of the Mission were fulfilled with the purchase of a 25-ton schooner, the *Tiare*,<sup>12</sup> for about \$1,600.<sup>13</sup> The vessel served the Mission and Pitcairn well for over two years, making a number of voyages between Pitcairn and Tahiti. The first trip brought back several delegates from Pitcairn Island, including Mark Carey, to the Mission Session held at Raiatea in June, 1908. It was also used to transport several of the Tahitian delegates to Raiatea. Expenses were well covered by income from freight and passage money.

Later that same year, the *Tiare* returned the delegates to Pitcairn, via the islands of Tubuai and Mangareva. Russell McCoy joined the ship as the ship-missionary. The schooner brought supplies of food and clothing to Pitcairn and took back, by way of payment, island produce for the Tahitian market. Tithed produce was also carried for sale. As the Pitcairn trips ran at a deficit, it was sometimes necessary to operate the *Tiare* as a trading vessel among the islands of French Polynesia for a considerable part of the year.

As a number of Pitcairn islanders were traveling to Tahiti on the *Tiare* and quite a few stayed in Papeete between voyages, it was found necessary to form an English-speaking church in Papeete about the



The interior of the Niger church school

year 1910. The Eastern Polynesian Mission was always on the look-out for missionary workers among the Pitcairn members. Seasoned sailors, they could readily learn the native languages of Polynesia and were easily able to adapt themselves to the sometimes rough living conditions of the Pacific islands.

On July 7, 1910, the *Tiare* left Tahiti once more with stores for Pitcairn, having been thoroughly overhauled, painted and furnished with a new set of sails. Little did anyone know that her days as a mission vessel were numbered. This time the loss would not be due to the forces of nature. In the plans and recommendations made at the 1910 session of the Australasian Union Conference the following action was taken:

WHEREAS the prevailing conditions and restrictive laws in the Society Islands make it impracticable to run a mission boat in harmony with the principles of the denomination and with advantage to the interests thereof,  
 R E C O M -  
 M E N D E D, that we sell the mission schooner, *Tiare*.<sup>14</sup>

Shortly afterwards the *Tiare* was sold, and Pitcairn Island was once more cut off from regular contact with the outside world.

### Spiritual Growth



The two-story church building on Pitcairn, completed in 1907, remained a house of worship for thirty-seven years. The church was on the top floor while Sabbath School was held on the ground floor.

Perhaps the biggest changes on Pitcairn Island itself during this period came about as the result of a terrible hurricane which swept the island in September, 1911. Although there were no injuries, trees were uprooted, gardens were devastated, houses were destroyed and great damage was done to church property.

The church school building and the tithe-house at Shady Nook were flattened. The roof of the new church building was torn off and found near the Landing, almost half a mile away.

The church roof was soon replaced and the school continued to operate in the ground floor room while the new school building was being constructed at Niger,<sup>15</sup> below the Square where the church was located. The tithe-house was relocated to a site on the main road (then called Coconut Grove) about 100 yards from the Square.

Through all of these changes the church prospered spiritually. Russell McCoy reported in a letter on August 26, 1913:



A view inside the second-story church room

All the religious meetings held on the Sabbath and other days are having a good attendance. Often all the members of the Sabbath School attend. In social meetings from fifty to sixty-six testify and in the prayer meetings prayers are offered until called to rise.



The church officers go to different families twice a week in the evenings to have family worship, and twice a week they have Bible readings in the school house. The people here are trying to help one another as never before. You must not think that all have consecrated themselves anew to God; there are a few who need the grace of God in their hearts, but we trust and pray that they too will soon turn from their ways of sin and folly unto God."<sup>16</sup>



*The Papeete church in Tahiti, built by Pitcairners in 1910.*

New missionaries arrived late in August, 1913. They were Pastor and Mrs. M. R. Adams, both graduate nurses of the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital. They reached Pitcairn via Tahiti and Makatea, where they joined the *Hamstead* for a very rough voyage into head winds and heavy seas. Although the sea had dropped a little when they arrived off the island, it was still too rough to come ashore at the Landing in Bounty Bay. Instead, they had to land at the Western Landing at Tedside and make the arduous two-mile walk along rough track, across the thousand-foot high ridge, to Adamstown.

The Adams were to find that the reports of a revival among the Pitcairners were true: "The Spirit of the Lord has been working upon their hearts and arousing in them a sense of their need and of a preparation to meet the Lord," Pastor Adams reported. "All, both old and young, are seeking a deeper and richer experience in the things of God. . . ."<sup>17</sup>

Assisted by Fisher Young, Pastor Adams had sixty children to teach in the church school. He also prepared a number of candidates for baptism. The thirteen who were baptized on November 3, 1913, were the first new members on the island for

some ten years. He also led out in the Lord's Supper for the first time in over twelve months and joined in with the islanders in their annual campmeeting.

Campmeetings had become a regular feature of island life since their inception in 1899. Some may think it strange that such a small island, with only one church, would need a campmeeting but every

year they would meet high on the plateau of Flatland, with two large tents erected for the adults' and children's meetings and a large group of family tents. Cooking was done outside. Meetings were held each day at 5:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., and these proved a great blessing for all who attended.

The year 1914 brought two events of world-wide significance that would, in time, bring great changes to the way of life on Pitcairn Island. The first of these was the outbreak of war in Europe. Because news travelled slowly to Pitcairn, however, it was October before they first heard that as a British colony they were officially at war with Germany and Austria. The resulting infrequency and delays in shipping meant a severe lack of supplies to the island for several years.

About the same time, the new Panama Canal was opened. Whereas the mutineers had sought refuge on Pitcairn in 1790 due to its extreme isolation, the opening of the Canal now meant that the island was almost mid-way on the great circle route between Australia and New Zealand, and Panama. Although at first the Canal was used only for naval traffic, it later was used more and more by both cargo and passenger shipping, making Pitcairn Island an important stopover point in the mid-Pacific.

Life for the Adams family became progressively busier with the addition of a baby son, Paul,

with teaching the school and night classes, first-aid and Bible classes, and with yet another campmeeting and seventeen more baptismal candidates. Under their careful nurturing, the church members were growing spiritually, and their experience in the Lord was the best it had been for years.



*Pastor and Mrs. M.R. Adams*

### **The Messenger**

Shipping connections between Pitcairn Island and the outside world had not improved since the sale of the *Tiare* and had virtually disappeared since the outbreak of World War I. Tithe produce continued to accumulate in the tithehouse with no way of turning it into cash. In December, 1915, the Pitcairnians met together to discuss the problem. A report of the meeting stated that:

Brother Adams said that every time we asked the Lord to open the way, he felt impressed that we should do some work of faith—that we must cooperate with the Lord to get this store [of tithe goods] away. He felt more and more impressed that we should build a small boat for this purpose.<sup>18</sup>

In deciding to build a boat, the church members planned to donate it to the Australasian Union Conference for missionary work in the islands. Construction of the boat was, however, a real step in faith. Apart from timber from the local trees and plenty of willing man-power, they had little else by way of other materials.

Despite a sharp earthquake, a long spell of dry weather which prevented their planting their gardens, and food shortages early in 1916, the boat-

building continued. Pastor Adams wrote: "The work of the schooner is moving along nicely. We hope to finish planking her outside by the end of this week. The work is slow on account of limited facilities and materials. We have had to make nearly all our own nails."<sup>19</sup> The timber was all felled high on the island and had to be carried down the hill and sawn by hand. Pastor Adams was

able to secure other materials, including rope, paint, oil, nails, bolts, pitch and iron, as well as coal for the forge, from the few passing ships.<sup>20</sup>

The finished vessel was forty-four feet long by fifteen feet wide and was rigged as a schooner. After a year of strenuous construction, the twenty-five-ton boat, which they named the *Messenger*, was launched. Mrs. Adams reported:

We had an anxious time the day the boat was launched. It was feared by some that it could not be done; nevertheless this feat was accomplished, although her false keel was somewhat damaged; but this can be repaired.<sup>21</sup>

With George Warren at the helm, the *Messenger* set out for Mangareva that same afternoon. They arrived four days later after an easy voyage. After a week on the island, they continued on to Tahiti. Only a few days out from Mangareva they ran into heavy weather and contrary winds. They were obliged to tack the *Messenger* for the next twenty-one days. They were still 200 miles from Tahiti when they ran into a hurricane which blew them almost 300 of their hard-won miles south again. When the storm blew out, they were within 300 miles of the island of Raivaevae.

With only two buckets of fresh water left and

their food supplies (by then chiefly pumpkins) running low, the crew met together to discuss and pray about their next course of action. Should they (a) return to Pitcairn, (b) call at the Austral Group for water and provisions, or (c) make straight for Tahiti? The decision made by drawing lots was to sail for Tahiti, which was reached in only a week's pleasant, post-hurricane sailing. The journey of about 1,000 miles had taken them about forty-five days.

When Pastor F. E. Lyndon, the Mission President, was offered the schooner as a mission vessel donated by the Pitcairn Islanders, he was astonished to learn that the boat had cost only fifteen shillings (less than \$2) to build. It had been constructed mainly on prayer, hard work, donations from passing ships and personal sacrifice. Pastor Lyndon had to inform them, however, that the Mission wouldn't need it themselves. Rather, they felt that it would be better used for a regular connection between Pitcairn and Mangareva. Pastor and Mrs. Adams were to be relocated on Mangareva, from whence he could supervise the work on Pitcairn. Walter Fisher Young was appointed as the school teacher and Fred Christian, the head elder, was to care for the church.

It was not until June 4, four-and-a-half months after its departure, that the *Messenger* arrived back at Pitcairn. The ship had been sighted by the islanders a week earlier but had been becalmed only sixteen miles from the island. Although Mrs. Adams started packing for their departure for Mangareva, they had to wait another four months for a ship to take them to New Zealand.<sup>22</sup>

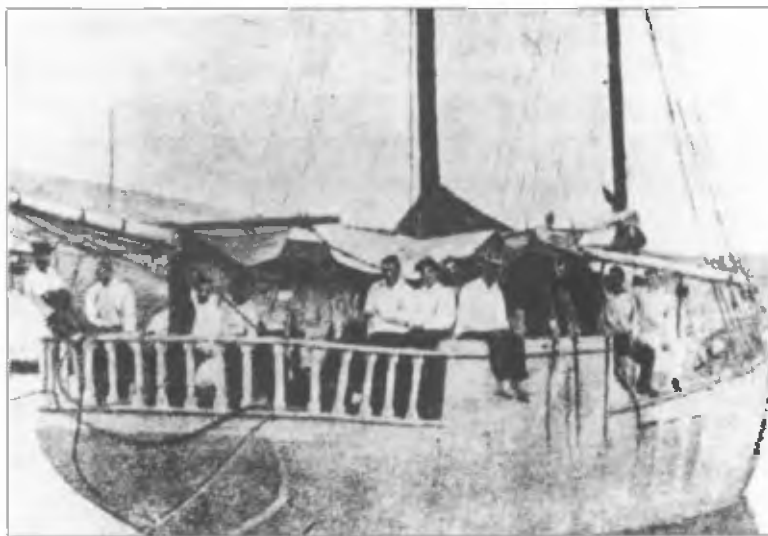
The *Messenger* made several voyages to Mangareva and other nearby islands after that first eventful voyage in 1917. In one such voyage (May, 1919), the vessel ran into a gale and was badly damaged. She was able to limp back to Pitcairn where she underwent lengthy repairs. It was not until early the following year that she was ready to relaunch and make another voyage to Mangareva.

Fisher Young chose to accompany the group in order to distribute the large pile of tracts in French and Tahitian which Pastor Adams had left behind nearly two-and-a-half years earlier. He met with some success in distributing the papers and was able to give several Bible studies by showing them the texts in a Tahitian Bible he had with him (after looking up the passages in his own English Bible first). All of the Bibles, including his own, were sold before his departure.<sup>23</sup>

After a week on Mangareva the voyagers set off on their return journey. The *Messenger*, however, was destined never to reach home.<sup>24</sup> While still within sight of Mangareva, they remained becalmed for four days. When the wind did start to

blow, it was against them. The slow progress into the strong head-wind and heaving seas weakened the boat, and it began to leak badly. When they finally sighted Pitcairn, fifteen or sixteen days later, they had run out of food. Two horses which were on board had died from starvation, and their carcasses had been thrown overboard.

A small boat was lowered and was rowed to the distant island to alert the Pitcairners to the ship's plight. Those on the *Messenger*, meanwhile, kept



The mission ship *Messenger*



A group of Pitcairn men in the early 1890s. Standing left to right: Alfred Young, Alphonso Christian, Vieder Young, Gerard Christian, Stanley Young. Seated left to right: Moses Young, Simon Young, Thursday October Christian II, and Russell McCoy.

the pumps working day and night to prevent themselves from drowning.

When the islanders attempted to bring relief to the stricken vessel, they could not find it. Providentially, a steamer passing Pitcairn three days later<sup>25</sup> was persuaded to turn about and rescue the crew. They eventually had the *Messenger* under tow, but when it showed signs of filling with water, they trans-shipped the cargo and crew and cut the sinking ship adrift.

It appears that the vessel was lost due to seawater rusting the iron nails which held it together. It had been further weakened by the damage caused by the storm a year earlier. On that final voyage, the severe strain on the ship brought about by the constant headwinds was simply too great.



Missionaries with the SDA missionary schooner Pitcairn. Left to right: Mrs E.H. Gates, Mrs. J.I. Tay, Elder E.H. Gates, J.I. Tay, Mrs. A.J. Read, Mr. A.J. Read.

Although they praised the Lord for their deliverance, there was, however, little mourning for their ship. Fred Christian, one who assisted in the rescue of the crew, later explained: "Before we reached Bounty Bay, the *Messenger* had sunk, and good riddance. She was a terrible job, with a heavy nose, and she went just as fast sideways as for'ward."<sup>26</sup>

### Tragedy

With the *Messenger* gone, life on Pitcairn was much quieter than in previous years. The isolation, however, was not quite as complete as in the past. From being an out-of-the-way outpost of civilization, the island had now become an important stop-over for both cargo steamers and passenger liners in the mid-Pacific. For countless passengers the sight of the lofty ramparts of the isolated rock was a welcome break from the monotony of weeks of limitless ocean. These visits also provided the Pitcairn church members with a floating mission-field. They distributed tracts and papers and sang hymns for the passengers.

One such occasion (June 14, 1921), resulted in a double tragedy for the island and for the church. Two ships were approaching the island from opposite directions. On board the *Ionic* was the Governor of Pitcairn (the British High Commissioner

in Fiji) who was making a brief stop en route to England. The sea conditions in Bounty Bay were atrocious, with terrible breakers rolling in from the Pacific. Two longboats were able to make a safe passage through the raging surf, but the third was struck by a huge wave and hurled

at the rocks on the other side of the harbor.<sup>27</sup>

More huge waves threw the boat all over the harbor, and it was thought best to haul it back into the boatshed. When another wave lifted the boat onto the landingslide, the men rushed across to haul it up higher. Just at that instant, Fisher Young slipped on the skids and fell into the water next to the boat. The next wave picked up the boat again and slammed it back onto its keel again, crushing Fisher under the keel and breaking his back. Alphonso Christian, rushing to assist him, was picked up by the surging waves and thrown against the boat and then onto some rocks in the harbor. He received two fearful gashes on his head and never regained consciousness, dying shortly afterwards.

The others carried the mangled body of their church leader and school teacher back to the village. Although in indescribable agony, Young's mind was clear. He asked for forgiveness from any he might have wronged and entreated them to see to the salvation of his children. He also made arrangements for the coming Sabbath services and for his Bible class. Then, his suffering being so great, he begged his family and friends to pray that God would let him die. He passed to his rest an hour or two later. His dying words: "Safe in the arms of Jesus."<sup>28</sup>

Like a ship without a rudder, the leaderless church struggled through a very difficult period over the next few years. Without strong spiritual leadership and without a resident pastor, many of the weaker members and the youth lost their motivation and slipped out of the church. Temptation and sin took their toll, and as a result a number of the church members were disfellowshipped. Others, although still attending church, lost their love for the Lord. Nonetheless, a large number of church members remained faithful to God and loyal to the church. This period was perhaps the nadir in the experience of the Pitcairn church.

Regrettably, the leaders of the Eastern



*Pastor Robert Hare*

Polynesian Mission did not fully appreciate the problems Pitcairn was facing. The regular mail from Pitcairn and the large tithes and offerings received and reports of the annual campmeetings seemed to indicate prosperity and a sense that all was well. This led Pastor F. E. Lyndon to write: "We do not advise placing a European worker on the island, but think that a visit should be made to the church by one of our workers every two years

if possible."<sup>29</sup>

There had not been a pastor on Pitcairn since the Adams's left at the end of 1917, even for a short visit. Then, in 1923, the Eastern Polynesian Mission received a letter from Pitcairn. It was an appeal from the church for a representative from the Australasian Union Conference to be sent to them as soon as possible. At last, the administrators began to realize the spiritual plight of the Pitcairners and decided that their request should be granted at the earliest opportunity.<sup>30</sup>

#### **"An Inspiration to the Island"—at Last**

In March, 1924, Pastor and Mrs. Robert Hare answered the call and made the long voyage from Wellington, New Zealand, on the *Remuera*. The Hares seem to have made a big impression on the islanders as they ministered to their spiritual needs. M. E. McCoy wrote:

I have no words to express our joy in having Brother and Sister Hare here with us. When sitting under Brother Hare's teaching, it makes one feel as if one does not know the alphabet of the Bible yet. Everyone loves him. They are an inspiration to the island.<sup>31</sup>

The islanders were especially grateful to be able to participate in the Lord's Supper for the first time in over six years. Also the pastor led out in

the Week of Prayer—three meetings held daily. The adults met at 5:30 a.m. and again in the afternoon, while the young people met during the first hour of school each day.

The Week of Prayer paved the way for the reorganization of the church. Seventy-five members formed the nucleus of the church and many others, who had either stumbled in their relationships with Christ or had never been baptized (due to the years with no ordained minister on the island) commenced studies with Pastor Hare, planning to be baptized at the end of the campmeeting.

The campmeeting commenced on Friday evening, October 3, at Flatland, the plateau above Adamstown. Their tightly structured daily programme started with a devotional meeting at 5.30 a.m., followed by family prayer and breakfast. It continued with a children's meeting at 10:00 a.m., a Bible study at 11:00 a.m., a young peoples' service at 1:00 p.m., and another Bible study an hour later. The evening meal was followed by a final meeting for the day, at 5:30 p.m. Due to lighting difficulties, they retired to bed at 8:00 p.m. This programme was interrupted with the unexpected arrival of a ship on the second day. Both

practical and prophetic subjects were studied at the meetings, and the deep moving of the Holy Spirit was evident.

On Wednesday, October 15, 1924, Pastor Hare baptized 63 candidates at Down Isaacs, including a number of husbands and wives as well as five rebaptisms. Making their decision



Hauling a longboat from a boatshed at the Landing, Bounty Bay.

for baptism while watching the others being baptized, two more were baptized the next day. The following Sabbath, the 65 new members were welcomed into church fellowship.

Pastor and Mrs. Hare returned to their homeland five days later, leaving behind a vigorous and happily renewed church behind. Their visit of seven busy months is still remembered as one of the greatest triumphs of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Pitcairn.

In the years that followed, the church in Pitcairn passed through difficult periods as well as later spiritual high points. Never again, however, would they experience such depths or triumphant heights as they did during the first quarter of the 20th-century.

## End Notes

1. Harry P. Ballis, "Religion on Pitcairn Island: The First Hundred Years, 1790-1890," *Adventist Heritage*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Fall, 1984), 40-56.
2. See Fred M. Harder, "Pitcairn: Ship and Symbol," *Adventist Heritage* Vol. 6, No. 1 (Summer, 1979), 3-15.
3. Norman Ferris, "The Story of Pitcairn Island," *Review and Herald* (October 3, 1957), 17.
4. *General Conference Bulletin*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (February 17, 1899), 24.
5. Mangareva is the largest and only inhabited island in the Gambier group in French Polynesia. Its main town in Rikitea. It lies about 300 miles west of Pitcairn Island and is the nearest inhabited land.
6. Ferris, 8.
7. The Society Islands are a group in French Polynesia and include the main island of Tahiti.
8. Henderson Island was first discovered by the Spanish explorer Pedro Fernandez de Quiros in late January, 1606. He called it San Juan Bautista (St. John the Baptist). In 1819 it was rediscovered by the H.M.S. *Hercules* and named after its captain. A short time later it was sighted by the American ship *Elizabeth*, and was named after that ship, the captain being unaware that it had already been named Henderson Island. When first visited by the Pitcairners in 1851, it was still known as Elizabeth Island. Along with Oeno and Ducie Islands, it belongs to the Pitcairn Islands group.
9. *General Conference Bulletin*, Vol. 6, No. 19 (June 4, 1909), 322.
10. The cutter never reached either Mangareva or Tahiti after leaving Cady on Pitcairn. Apparently it went

down at sea with all hands on the return voyage.

11. Thursday October Christian II (1819-1911), grandson of Fletcher Christian, was the first Pitcairn Islander to accept the Sabbath during the visit of John I. Tay in 1886. He was usually known by his nickname, "Duddie."

12. *Tiare* means "flower" in the Tahitian language.

13. The actual cost of the *Tiare* was 8,000 francs or £313. The chronometer and other essential items were a further £31, and another £12 went for change-of-ownership expenses. An initial payment of £190 was made, followed by later payments of £166 (partially met by £54 from the sale of the *John Adams*. The Australasian Union Conference, as the official owners, donated £100.

14. *Union Conference Record* (November 7, 1910), 61.

15. In 1948 a new school (administered by the British government) was built at Pulau, and the old school building at Niger was demolished. The Niger site is the present location of the mission house completed in 1962.

16. *Australasian Record* (November 24, 1913), 8.

17. *Australasian Record* (January 19, 1914), 2.

18. Extract from a letter written by Sister H. Young published in the *Australasian Record* (May 16, 1916), 2.

19. *Australasian Record* (June 5, 1916) 8. Every usable scrap of iron was melted down to make the nails. Even the Adams' stove poker was made into nails.

20. *Australasian Record* (December 4, 1916), 3.

21. *Australasian Record* (March 12, 1917), 8. The launching of the *Messenger* took place on January 15, 1917.

22. After the Adams's return to Australia (via New Zealand), their plans were changed and they never returned to either Mangareva or Pitcairn.

23. In spite of this and other efforts over the years, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has never been able to start a church on Mangareva, and there are no members there today.

24. An elderly Pitcairner told me in 1984 that Fisher Young had told him that one of the reasons the *Messenger* never returned to Pitcairn was that some of the crew had used money from the sale of tithe goods for their own uses. Young had been told in a dream that the ship would never return, although there would be no loss of life of cargo.

25. Fred Christian, Letter, April 14, 1920.

26. Francis Patrick Clune, *Journey to Pitcairn*, 210.

27. One young man, Sydney Christian, was severely injured and required careful nursing for several weeks before he recovered.

28. Alphonso Christian left six children, and Fisher Young left a wife and four young children.

29. *Australasian Record* (October 30, 1922), 86.

30. *Australasian Record* (November 12, 1923), 4.

31. *Australasian Record* (June 23, 1924), 8.

## CORRECTIONS

We apologize for the following errors inadvertently published in our last issue, 15-3:

On page 5, the man identified as James Edson White is actually his father, James Springer White. In the genealogy, "Enice Gould" should read "Eunice Gould," the dates for William C. White should read "1854-1937," and the small photo above the name "Burleigh Salisbury" is his brother, Homer. A good likeness of Burleigh can be found on page 7.

## The Sisleys: Lives of Sacrifice and Service

by

Ella L. Coombs and Dorothy Minchin-Comm

In mid-nineteenth century England, John and Susannah Sisley quietly went about rearing their family of seven children in Tunbridge Wells, Kent, wholly unaware of the colorful careers awaiting them in widely scattered parts of the world. They were a devout "dissenting" family, not fearful of innovative ideas. The family were much impressed with the missionary stories Dr. Cook brought to their church from the South Seas. Along with other children all over England they saved their pennies in a "ship bank" until a vessel could be purchased for Captain Cook's missionary work among the heathen.<sup>1</sup> The vision never faded and those children would heed the "Go ye" call of Matt 28:19 for the rest of their lives.

When only 16, the eldest son, John, began to crave adventure. He wanted to see the New World. His parents resisted his importunity until finally they had to



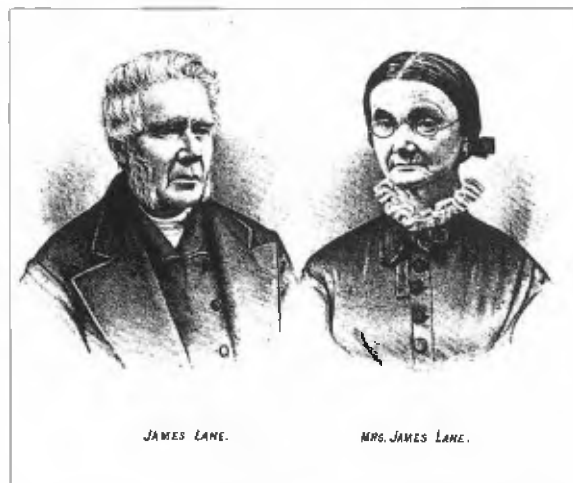
*John Sisley, Sr. (1805-1859) gave several pioneers to the early Adventist movement in Michigan, though he himself lived and died in England.*

agree, stipulating that he must go to the farm home of Susannah's cousin, Sarah Lane and her husband, in Convis, Michigan. With no idea of the chain of events he was beginning, John, Jr. set off across the Atlantic in 1857.

He arrived in Convis to find that his relatives had become very interested in the preaching of Joseph Bates. Soon he was sending Adventist literature back home to England. Two years later Father Sisley died, and the second son, Richard, came to

America to join his brother. Fascinated with the tracts that John had sent, John, Sr. had planned to sell the family business, take his wife and the five remaining children and move to Michigan. He wanted them all to learn the strange new Adventist doctrine that had so captivated John, Jr. Maud was just 11 years old when she arrived in America.

It took four years for Susannah to make the final decision to move, sell the



*James and Sarah Lane. For many years, he ran a public-house for teamsters, while she became famous for her pumpkin pies.*

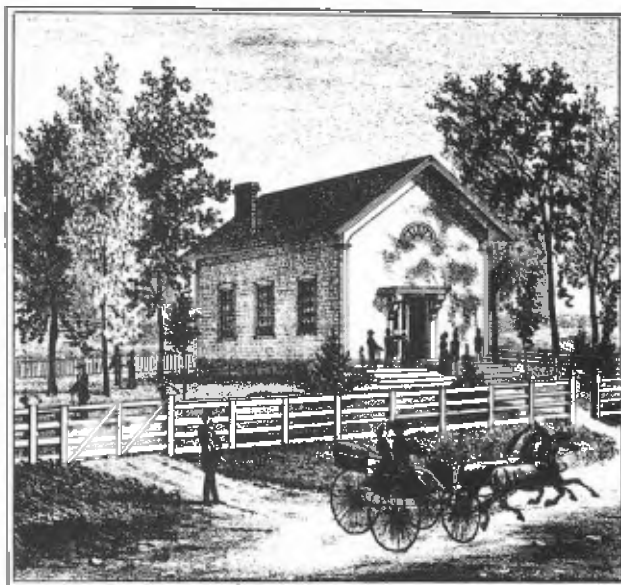


family business, and book a passage to the New World. All of this meant parting forever from friends and family in England. By the summer of 1863 the newly immigrated and newly reunited Sisley family attended a campmeeting where they heard Ellen White preach. She had seen this family in vision, and when they came into the meeting, she turned to her assistant and said:

This mother is a widow. She has brought these children all the way from England, where they learned about the seventh-day Sabbath, to be with us here in Battle Creek. Before Father Sisley died, he asked the mother to bring them to America, where they could receive an education amongst Sabbath-keepers. I hope that you will give them a warm welcome and make them feel at home. The Lord has shown me that every one of these children will become a worker in His cause.<sup>2</sup>

John was first to believe, but by September the entire family had become Sabbath-keepers, joining a small group of less than 5,000

*At right: The Sisley brothers, John (near right) and Richard (far right). The young men invited their widowed mother and siblings to join them in Convis Michigan. She did so in 1863.*



*The Convis church, built in 1869. Founding members included James and Sarah Lane and John and Mary Sisley.*

members. Having always been strict Sunday-keepers, the transition was not difficult. Ellen White soon encouraged Susannah Sisley to move her family from the Convis farm to Battle Creek where there would be proper work and school opportunities.

Maud Sisley always remembered the first Seventh-day Adventist campmeeting held at Wright, Michigan in 1868. Along with a timber wagon-load of Battle Creek young people they camped in the woods, pitching "tents" made of

sheets (which could later be turned to domestic use). All of their supplies had to be carried from home. At the campground, unplanned boards provided backless seats under the trees, and the congregation sang *a cappella*.

At sixteen, Maud went to work at the Review & Herald Publishing house for \$6.00 a week. The opening of Battle Creek College (where they listened to Uriah Smith's Bible lectures) and the creation of a Literary Society now broadened the young people's intellectual opportunities. Either James or Ellen White came to the editor's room on Sunday mornings for talks. The inauguration of the tithe system remained a vivid memory in Maud's mind. It was a practical measure, not easily evaded. A collector came around every Sunday morning to receive the tithes.

When Stephen Haskell came from South Lancaster to organize a Tract and Missionary Society, Maud's enthusiasm for missionary outreach increased. So, after 10 years' service in the Review office (working for ten cents an hour), she asked for six months "vacation." At the time there were very few holiday and no stated vacations. An annual

church picnic (with a “hygienic dinner spread upon the grass” and swimming) was about the most anyone thought of doing in this line.

Maud spent her “vacation” in Newark, Ohio,<sup>3</sup> with Miss Elsie Gates, a student from Battle Creek College who was fired up to distribute literature. (Colporteur as such, had not yet been defined.) They had no instruction on how to do this but depended on “the Lord to show us how to do it.” Good friends, the girls were only a year apart in age and shared a birthdate, November 25. The girls rented a small attic room (with cooking privileges) for fifty cents a month.

Their spartan diet consisted of navy beans, dried apples and cornmeal, or “middlings,” usually sold for cattle feed. Occasionally a farmer would offer them fresh vegetables. Food cost them each about 25 cents a week, but it gave them stamina enough for walking endless miles. They had no money out of their meagre savings to be squandered on car fares. They lent out books and scattered tracts and pamphlets everywhere they went. When J. H. Waggoner arrived in Springfield, the girls gave him enthusiastic support in his tent meetings. They helped with music, distributed invitations, and talked with the ladies who came to the tent.

In 1877, about the time Elsie Gates had to return home because of illness in her family, Maud received her first mission call. Making the decision to go was neither easy nor automatic, even though she was a devout Adventist. She wrote:



*Maud Sisley Boyd*

While kneeling in prayer about seven o'clock one evening, I heard a voice distinctly asking me this question. “Are you willing to do anything that the Lord wants you to?” At this time I had been a member of the church for ten years and had often thought I was willing to do anything . . . [But] I now found that I had not made the wholehearted surrender that I thought I had.

Then, seeing herself “arraigned before the Judgment seat of God,” she wept and prayed until midnight, at which time she made a full commitment. The

very next morning she received the letter asking her to go to Switzerland.

The first Seventh-day Adventist foreign missionary, J. N. Andrews, had gone to Switzerland just three years earlier. In November, 1877, Maud Sisley, along with Elder and Mrs. William Ings, sailed from Boston. J. N. Andrews met them in London. Soon she found herself part of the mission family in Basel. One room, about 12 x 12, was the office. Here they set the type for French tracts. Young Charles Andrews took the forms into the city and back again in a handcart. Folding and addressing was done at the dining room table. When Andrews returned to Battle Creek with his daughter because of her ill health, the mission family numbered eight. No two of them were related or were of the same nationality.

In 1879, J.N. Loughborough sent for Maud to help in his pioneer



*Susannah Gower Sisley. As a widow she moved her family from England to America, joining her two elder sons in Michigan*



*Ella Boyd, Maud's daughter, accompanied her mother to the "new school" at Avondale, Australia. She graduated from the teacher-training course in 1902. Later she taught in Brisbane and Tasmania. These two pictures show her during her time of mission service in Tonga.*

tent meetings in Southampton, England. Six months later she returned to the United States to marry Charles L. Boyd. As president of the Nebraska Conference, Charles, accompanied by Maud, travelled from church to church in his covered wagon. Between 1883 and 1887 they served in the presidency of the North Pacific Union. Here two little daughters joined the family, Ella and Ethel.

Then in 1887, along with Elder and Mrs. D.A. Robinson, the Boyds went to Cape Town, South Africa, in response to a call from a company of Sabbath-keepers there. Strict economy was still the order of the day. Maud possessed a bed springs, a folding organ, and some chairs. Otherwise her furniture consisted of kerosene boxes tastefully covered with cloth. While in Cape Town, they lost their youngest child, Ethel. In 1898, Charles' health finally gave way, and they returned to America. Both of their mothers then lived with the Boyds. Charles' mother, Rachel Hurlburt-Boyd, died shortly before he passed away in 1899.

Widowhood notwithstanding, Maud was not to be left alone for long. Long ago she had promised to go wherever God sent her. So, the next year, in re-

sponse to Ellen White's specific request, she joined G.A. Irwin's party bound for Australia. Her mother, Susannah, and her daughter Ella, now aged 17, accompanied her. Shortly after their arrival, an accident occurred which would have poignant meaning to Maud for the rest of her life.

On their common birthday, November 25, 1899, her friend Elsie Gates arrived in Sydney with her brother's family. On that Sabbath, the newcomers, having just come up to Cooranbong from Sydney, had dinner at Willie White's home. On Sunday evening Maud Boyd's daughter Ella, along with another friend, Miss Sarah Peck, took Elsie Gates with them from the White home, "Sunnyside," to the school. Ellen White wrote of the event in a letter to her son on December 3, 1899: "The buggy was drawn by a horse thought to be safe and manageable, though awkward."



*Ellen White's home, "Sunnyside," served as a popular meeting place for Cooranbong Adventists*

The road beyond "Amen Gate" led into a mile of bush, bordering Sandy Creek. As they approached the bridge which Elder Haskell and the school boys had built across the creek, the horse shied at a fallen tree in the path, tried to turn around for home, but backed into the creek



While Maud Sisley Boyd lies at rest next to her mother, Susannah Sisley, in the Avondale Cemetery, she is also memorialized on the grave stone of her husband, Charles Boyd, buried in Asheville, North Carolina.

instead. Sarah Peck was thrown out onto the bank and the carriage rolled over her. Ella Boyd and Elsie Gates, however, were thrown into the water, some 15 feet deep. Ella scrambled out and ran to the school to call the men.

In about three minutes they had the body of Miss Gates out of the water. They carried her to the school, and did everything possible to restore her, but without success. She was dead. It is believed by all that she did not die from drowning; for she had made no struggle to save herself. We think that the shock killed her. She was buried on Monday afternoon.<sup>4</sup>



Ella Coombs standing near Sandy Creek, where Elsie Gates was drowned

A notice appeared in the January 30, 1900 edition of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, informing readers of Elsie's unfortunate death.

Ellen White was thankful that “the angel of God must have worked their deliverance” by saving Miss Peck and Ella Boyd. As for Elsie Gates, she had long struggled with a “lung difficulty.” Only the day before she had spoken of the fact that apart from her brother and his wife (also in poor health), the rest of her family were dead. She dreaded suffering from a lingering disease. So Ellen White concluded, “We have laid her away for a little while, till she shall be called forth to a glorious immortality.” Elsie Gates was just 47 years old. Maud Boyd and her dear friend from the Newark, Ohio, days had only been given one short Sabbath day to share together.

As a teacher, preceptress (dean), and matron at the Avondale School, Maud went on to share in the puzzling decisions as well as the marvellous experiences connected with the founding of that school. Her brother Richard came out at Ellen White's request to teach English at the school. He helped Maud with the care of their mother, Susannah, until she died in 1910 at the age of 90. Afterwards, Richard, having interested several other couples in doing further pioneer work, went to Java—where he died in 1920.

After nine years, Maud accepted another call to do Bible work in New South Wales and Victoria. Australia also held an attraction for her niece

Nellie Sisley (later Rockwell), who came down from Battle Creek to serve as the first church school teacher at Wahroonga. Later she taught in Tonga and at Longburn College, New Zealand. Thus, Ellen White's predictions about the Sisley children were



## References

Personal letters.  
Maud Sisley Boyd, "Early Experiences." *Australasian Record*, Vol. 41, No. 23, (Monday, June 7, 1937), 1-3.

## Notes

1. Maud Sisley, Letter.
2. Cited in Ella Robinson, "Seven Little Sisleys," in *Stories of my Grandmother*, p. 132.
3. Only years later did Maud Sisley-Boyd discover that an Adventist church had actually been founded in Newark, Ohio, as a result of their work.
4. Ellen White, Letter from Sunnyside, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia, December 3, 1899. To "Dear Children, Edson and Emma." (File W2 -03-99).
5. The sketches of James and Sarah Lane and the church at Convis are taken from the *History of Calhoun County, Michigan (1830)*.



*Avondale's newest Women's Residence, Ella Boyd Hall pays tribute to its namesake's dedication to church service (above).*

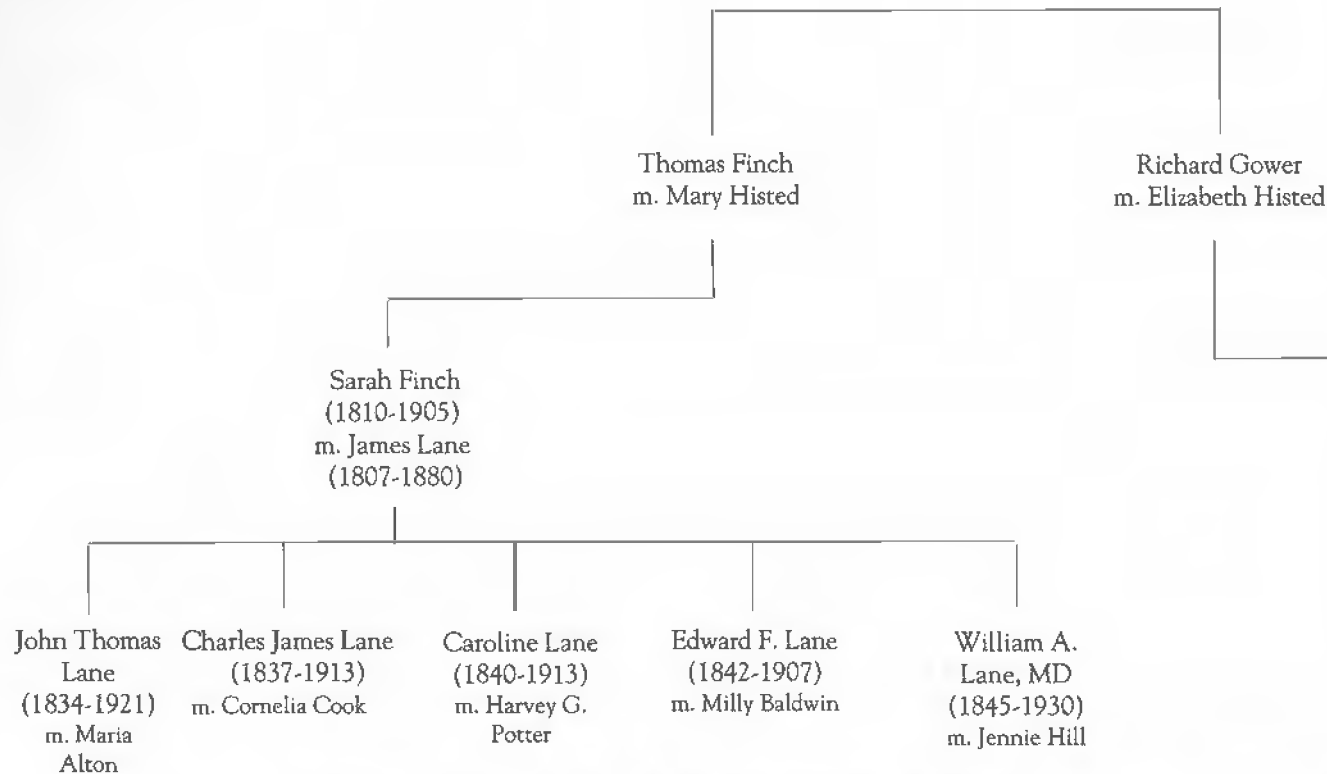
correct.

In 1911, Maud returned to the United States to be with her ailing sister, Nellie (Mrs. G.B. Starr) and took up Bible work in Massachusetts. Her daughter, Ella, meanwhile had married Leonard G. Paap, an Australian, and remained behind. The last 17 years of Maud's public service were spent as a Bible worker in the sanitariums at Loma Linda and Glendale, California.

Finally, she returned to Australia to live with her daughter, Ella Paap, and her family in Parramatta, Sydney. In her almost 70 years of service to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Maud Sisley-Boyd witnessed the beginning of Adventism in America, Europe, England, Africa, and Australia. When she died in 1937, she was buried in "God's Acre," Avondale's old pioneer cemetery, beside her mother and near her dear friend of her youth, Elsie Gates. Those stalwart pioneer women would have liked it that way . . . .



*Two Sisley sisters: Mrs. Nellie Starr (left) and Mrs. Maud Boyd*

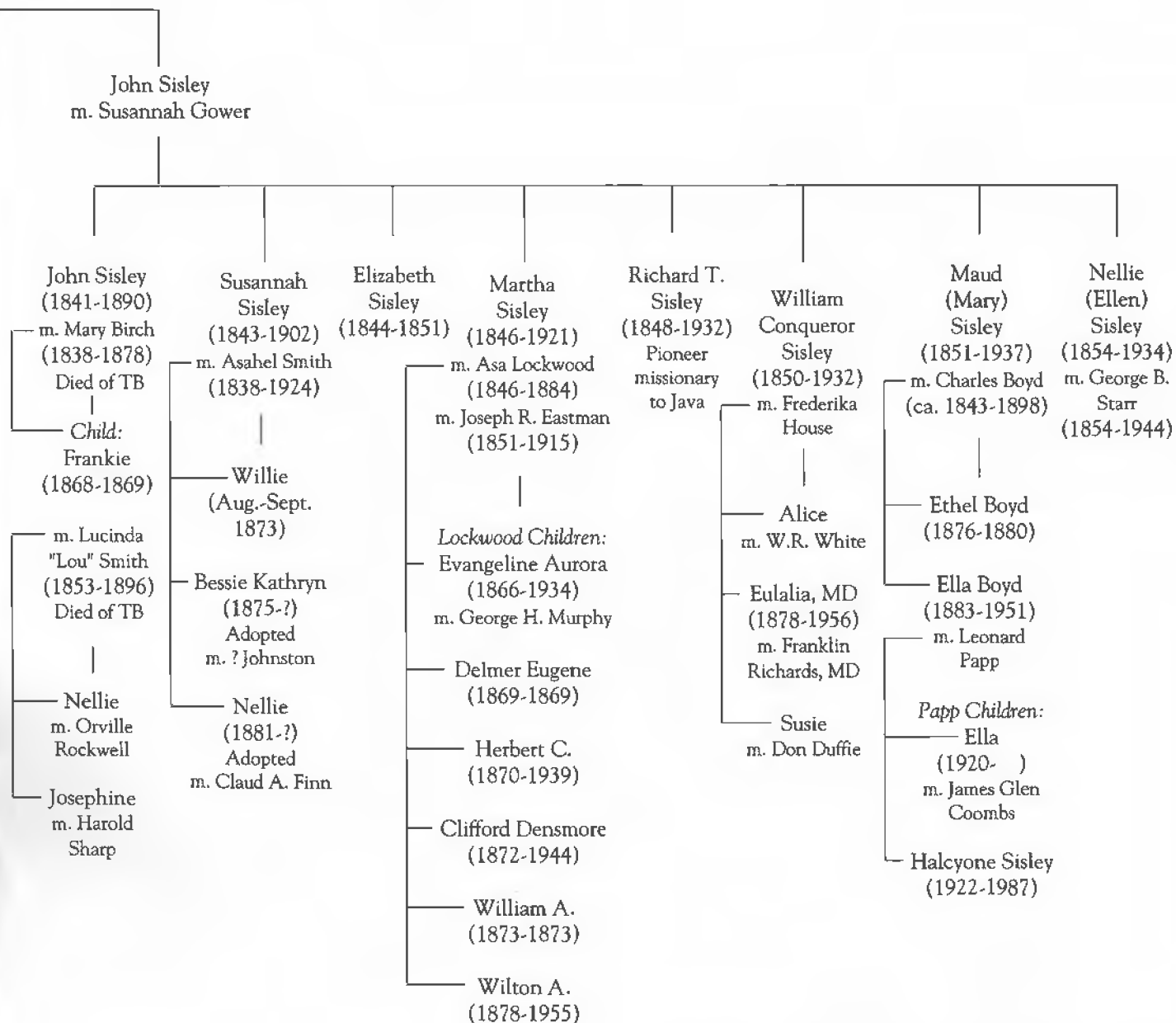


Men on the porch, left to right: Charles Boyd, Wilton Lockwood, Herbert Lockwood; at C.L. Boyd's right are Ella (in light colored dress), and Susie Sisley; in front of Wilton is Eulalia Sisley; in front of Herbert is his wife, Jessie (Grandma Sisley holds their baby, Lyndon, in the front row); standing by their bicycles: Dr. Lillis Wood Starr, her husband, John A. Starr, and Evangeline Murphy; in front of Eva is her mother, Martha Lockwood; just above and to the left of Martha is Susannah Smith; the girl in the center, in front of Eulalia, is Alice Sisley; in front of her sit the two little girls, Josephine and Nellie Sisley with their mother, Lucinda; sitting by the post is Frederika Sisley; the men to the right are William C. Sisley and Clifford Lockwood; the boy is Holly Murphy with his sister Grace.



Sisley Family Portrait, taken at William C. and Frederika Sisley's home, ca. 1890s.

# The Sisley Family Tree



Genealogy compiled by  
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