

Mitchell, Charles Edwin (1899–1994) and Evelyn Maud (Stone) (1901–1991)

LESTER DEVINE

Originally trained as a secondary history teacher, a career long Adventist educator, Lester Devine, Ed.D., has taught at elementary, secondary and higher education levels and spent more than three decades in elected educational leadership positions in two divisions of the world Church, NAD (1969-1982) and SPD (1982-2005). He completed his forty years of denominational service with a term as director of the Ellen G. White/Adventist Research Centre at Avondale University College in Australia where his life-long hobby of learning and presenting on Adventist heritage issues became his vocation.



Photo courtesy of Barry Oliver.

Grave of Pastor Charles Mitchell, Avondale Adventist Cemetery,
Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.

Charles and Evelyn Mitchell spent twenty-eight years of service in leadership in mission service primarily in the territory of Papua and New Guinea.

Charles Mitchell was born in Kempsey, NSW, Australia, on April 18, 1899.¹ He joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1914 after attending an evangelistic series of meetings conducted by C. F. Paap and K. F. Stewart. In 1916 and 1917 he enrolled at the Australasian Missionary College at Avondale, where he studied subjects in the ministerial training course. However, because of ill health, he did not graduate.² He then worked at the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital from 1918 and remained there until the end of 1926, completing a short nursing training program during that time.³ He also completed a short course in hydrotherapy, and a short course in tropical medicine at Sydney University. He also studied bookkeeping in night classes while living in Sydney.⁴

In 1923 Charles married Evelyn Maud Stone.⁵ Evelyn had been born on August 21, 1901, in Burnie, Tasmania.⁶ She had studied nursing at the Sydney Sanitarium graduating in 1921.⁷ They had two children: Joan Estelle (Waterhouse), born on July 24, 1930, and Margaret Gwen (Wavel) born on February 11, 1933, both at the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital.⁸

Charles and Evelyn Mitchell accepted an invitation to transfer to Papua at the end of 1926⁹ They left Sydney on February 12, 1927, bound for Papua.¹⁰ They commenced their service in Efogi on the Kokoda Track in the Owen Stanley ranges, replacing W. N. Lock, who had pioneered the area just three years previously.¹¹ After 13 years in Papua, in a number of locations, Charles was ordained to the gospel ministry at Mirigeda, Papua, on May 15, 1940.¹² With the exception of one year in Rabaul, on the island of New Britain, their mission service was all in Papua.¹³

In 1955, after 28 years of mission service, Charles Mitchell applied for sustentation because of ill health.¹⁴ The Mitchells subsequently retired from active denominational service and returned to their Australian homeland.¹⁵

Evelyn Mitchell died at the Sydney Adventist Hospital on August 24, 1991.¹⁶ Charles Mitchell also died at the Sydney Adventist Hospital, on June 10, 1994.¹⁷ He was survived by their two daughters and his brother, Aubrey Mitchell.¹⁸ The career of Charles and Evelyn Mitchell saw 28 years of unbroken mission service.

SOURCES

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"Bound for their new field of labour . . ." *Australasian Record*, February 28, 1927.

Charles Edwin Mitchell Biographical Records. South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives. Folder: "Mitchell, Charles Edwin." Document: "Biographical Information Blank."

Charles Edwin Mitchell Sustentation Records. South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives. Folder: "Mitchell, Charles Edwin." Document: "Sustentation Fund Application."

Charles Edwin Mitchell Sustentation Records. South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives. Folder: "Mitchell, Charles Edwin." Document: "W. E. Zeunert to L. Butler, December 17, 1954."

"Distribution of Labour." *Australasian Record*, October 18, 1926.

Maywald, George W. "Evelyn Maud Mitchell obituary." *Australasian Record*, October 19, 1991.

Silver, John, and Eric Greenwell. "Charles Edwin Mitchell obituary." *South Pacific Record*, July 23, 1994.

"Sister C. E. Mitchell wrote from Efogi . . ." *Australasian Record*, September 19, 1927.

NOTES

1. Charles Edwin Mitchell Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives (Folder: "Mitchell, Charles Edwin"; Document: "Biographical Information Blank").

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. George W. Maywald, "Evelyn Maud Mitchell obituary," *Australasian Record*, October 19, 1991, 14.
6. Charles Edwin Mitchell Biographical Records.
7. Rhae Allbon, "Sanitarium Graduating Exercises," *Australasian Record*, November 28, 1921, 5.
8. Charles Edwin Mitchell Biographical Records.
9. "Distribution of Labour," *Australasian Record*, October 18, 1926, 34.
10. "Bound for their new field of labour . . .," *Australasian Record*, February 28, 1927, 8.
11. "Sister C. E. Mitchell wrote from Efogi . . .," *Australasian Record*, September 19, 1927, 8.
12. Charles Edwin Mitchell Biographical Records.
13. Ibid.
14. Charles Edwin Mitchell Sustentation Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives (Folder: "Mitchell, Charles Edwin"; Document: "Sustentation Fund Application").
15. Charles Edwin Mitchell Sustentation Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives (Folder: "Mitchell, Charles Edwin"; Document: "W. E. Zeunert to L. Butler, December 17, 1954").
16. Maywald.
17. John Silver and Eric Greenwell, "Charles Edwin Mitchell obituary," *South Pacific Record*, July 23, 1994, 14.
18. Ibid.

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