

Hellestrand, Oscar Vincent (1886–1973) and Ella Louise (Sharp) (1893–1986)

MILTON HOOK

Milton Hook, Ed.D. (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, the United States). Hook retired in 1997 as a minister in the Greater Sydney Conference, Australia. An Australian by birth Hook has served the Church as a teacher at the elementary, academy and college levels, a missionary in Papua New Guinea, and as a local church pastor. In retirement he is a conjoint senior lecturer at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored *Flames Over Battle Creek*, *Avondale: Experiment on the Dora*, *Desmond Ford: Reformist Theologian, Gospel Revivalist* the *Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series*, and many magazine articles. He is married to Noeleen and has two sons and three grandchildren.



Oscar and Ella Hellestrand on their wedding day, December 7, 1914.

Photo courtesy of Milton Hook. From the collection of Robyn (Hellestrand) Baldwin, Sydney, NSW.

Oscar Vincent Hellestrand was a pastor and health educator from Australia. Oscar Hellestrand and his wife, Ella were missionaries to the Solomon Islands.

Early Life

Oscar Hellestrand was born in Hay in New South Wales on May 19, 1886.¹ His mother was an Irish Roman Catholic, and his father a Swedish Lutheran trying to make a living on a sheep station east of Booligal. Oscar attended the Booligal Catholic Church and found a job in the village grocery store. However, sheep and uncertain rains held no attraction for him, so he left home and went to Sydney when he was about eighteen years of age.² In his own words, he became a “salesman and traveller” and accepted the Advent message in 1908.³

Oscar enrolled at the Avondale School for Christian Workers in 1909, studying units in the Bible Worker's Course as preparation to train as a nurse.⁴ On November 1, 1909, he began his training at the Sydney Sanitarium⁵ and graduated on October 31, 1912.⁶

Church Employment

Oscar was assigned to assist with tent crusades in New Zealand, first in Auckland (1913)⁷ and later in Christchurch (1914).⁸ In the course of his work he met Ella Sharp, a young lady employed as a typist in the New Zealand Conference headquarters in Wellington. A romance blossomed. Towards the end of 1914 they returned to Australia and were married on December 7 in the home of Ella's parents in Bathurst, New South Wales (NSW).⁹ One month later they boarded the *Kulanbangara* and sailed to a mission appointment in the Solomon Islands.¹⁰

Arriving at their destination, Oscar and Ella were met by Griffiths Jones. He ferried them in his boat, *Advent Herald*, to Viru Harbour on New Georgia Island.¹¹ Jones had assembled a pre-fabricated cottage there and was operating a small school. The Hellestrands inherited this base while Jones moved south to establish stations in the Marovo Lagoon region, but he kept in touch. During the first nine months of their service some brief reports filtered back to Australia, telling about their mission school and garden¹² and a day trip in a canoe to pioneer among the inhabitants of Nono Island.¹³ From the start there were ominous reports of malarial fevers.¹⁴ Both Oscar and Ella suffered, in addition to Jones himself, and others soon after. At that time there was a misguided reluctance to take quinine as a precaution. Once the fevers took hold there was nothing in the tropical climate that could stop its debilitating effect. Half way into their three-year term assignment Oscar and Ella had to return to Australia for relief.

Brief Interlude

Ella, especially, needed to be in better health, for she was expecting their first child when they arrived in Australia. They stayed with her parents until little Jean was born in January 1917.¹⁵ A few months later they accepted an appointment to South Australia to assist in tent crusades at Forrestville and Angaston.¹⁶ Then they transferred to Western Australia late in 1917¹⁷ to help with tent evangelism and ministerial visitation, first in Midland Junction.¹⁸ The following year, 1919, Oscar assisted with similar work in the Fremantle area.¹⁹ Their second child, Alan, was born in that year.²⁰

Another Mission Field

At the Australasian Union Conference Council, September/October 1919, the Hellestrands were appointed to the Samoan mission field.²¹ They believed their health was adequate for another tropical climate so they sailed from Western Australia to Sydney in preparation.²² An industrial strike by ship engineers delayed their departure

until February 28, 1920.²³ Unfortunately, their term was cut short again, this time only lasting approximately twelve months before the fevers returned.

Service in Australia

Seemingly resigned to living away from the tropics, the Hellestrands settled in Sydney. For the next fifty years they attended Arncliffe SDA church where Oscar served as an elder.²⁴ He built his own home in the area and worked as a colporteur during 1921 and 1922, selling the health book *Practical Guide*²⁵ and, later, *Bible Readings*.²⁶ Their third child, Olive, was born in 1922.²⁷

Oscar then joined the Sanitarium Health Food Company, first as a sales and deliveryman and then as a health educator. Oscar turned his attention to dietetics. He is mentioned as one holding a medical missionary license from the Australasian Union Conference²⁸ and giving lectures for the SHF Company in 1927. These included warnings against the consumption of white bread and sugar. His reports about the lectures commented that the Parents' and Citizens Association, the Housewives Association and the Salvation Army were receptive to his message. No registered school of dietetic study was ever mentioned and no academic letters were ever appended to Oscar's name but he was identified at the lectures as secretary of the Food Reform Association.²⁹ Later he became secretary of the New Health Society of NSW and a Fellow of the Chemical Society of London.³⁰ His article about the dangers of coffee and tea drinking was published twice in the denominational press in 1938 and 1946.³¹ Gradually, Oscar found himself occupied more and more as a masseur in rooms connected with the SHF cafés in George Street and Hunter Street, Sydney.³² He also developed a private practice, specialising in clients with disabilities such as muscular dystrophy.³³ He withdrew from his work in 1953. He enjoyed two decades in retirement until he died on October 20, 1973.³⁴ For the remainder of her years Ella lived for periods with both her daughters and enjoyed time with the grand-children. She passed away on November 17, 1986.³⁵

On Reflection

The Hellestrands epitomised the close affiliation between SDA evangelism and the advocacy of health principles. Their earliest assignment at Viru in the Solomon Islands is memorialised with a meeting place at Viru Harbour named after them at a ceremony conducted by South Pacific Division president, Dr. Barry Oliver, in 2014.³⁶

SOURCES

"After the lifting of the engineer's..." *Australasian Record*, March 22, 1920.

"A short communication..." *Australasian Record*, February 15, 1915.

"Brethren Hellestrand and Blair..." *Australasian Record*, December 22, 1919.

"Brethren Robinson, Hellestrand..." *Australasian Record*, January 28, 1918.

"Brother and sister O.V. Hellestrand..." *Australasian Record*, December 3, 1917.

"By the "Kulanbangara," which sailed..." *Australasian Record*, January 18, 1915.

Coombe, L[es] C. "Ella Louise Hellestrand obituary." *South Pacific Record and Advent World Survey*, December 20, 1986.

Cormack, A[lexander] W. "Notes from Western Australia." *Australasian Record*, April 22, 1918.

Cormack, A[lexander] W. "News Notes from Western Australia." *Australasian Record*, August 26, 1918.

"Decisions of the Union Conference Council, Held September 24 to October 8, 1919, at Wahroonga, New South Wales," *Australasian Record*, October 27, 1919.

"Distribution of Labour." *Australasian Record*, October 27, 1919.

Forbes, A[llan] H. "Life Sketch of O.V. Hellestrand." *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, December 10, 1973.

Harker, H[arold] C. "Forrestville Tent Mission, South Australia," *Australasian Record*, July 30, 1917.

Harker, H[arold] C. "Western Australia." *Australasian Record*, May 26, 1919.

Harker, H[arold] C. "Concord Tent Mission." *Australasian Record*, April 20, 1931.

Hellestrand, O[scar] V. "The City of the Plains." *Australasian Record*, July 6, 1914.

Hellestrand, O[scar] V. "An Interesting Trip in the Solomons." *Australasian Record*, September 27, 1915.

Hellestrand, O[scar] V. [Letter]. *Australasian Record*, June 26, 1916.

Hellestrand, O[scar] V. "Health Lectures, Sydney." *Australasian Record*, September 19, 1927.

Hellestrand, O[scar] V. "Coffee and Tea Drugs Almost Identical." *Australasian Record*, August 15, 1938.

"In a letter written on April 26..." *Australasian Record*, June 7, 1915.

"Letters just received..." *Australasian Record*, March 29, 1915.

"Monthly Summary of Australasian Canvassing Work." *Australasian Record*, October 3, 1921.

"Monthly Summary of Australasian Canvassing Work." *Australasian Record*, November 20, 1922.

"On December 7, at the home of..." *Australasian Record*, December 21, 1914.

"On the last Sabbath..." *Australasian Record*, February 7, 1921.

"Oscar Vincent Hellestrand." N.d. Life sketch. Personal collection of Robyn (Hellestrand) Baldwin.

Oscar Vincent Hellestrand Work Service Records. South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, Wahroonga, NSW. Work Service Records. Folder: Oscar Vincent Hellestrand. Document: "Oscar Vincent

Hellestrand."

Pascoe, W[illiam] H. "Auckland, New Zealand." *Australasian Record*, June 16, 1913.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1914-1953.

S[hannan], E[lsie M]. "Sydney Sanitarium: The New Class in Nursing." *Union Conference Record*, January 24, 1910.

Sherwin, T[homas] A. "Graduating Exercises at the Sydney Sanitarium." *Australasian Record*, November 18, 1912.

"The friends of Brother O.V. Hellestrand..." *Australasian Record*, February 24, 1930.

Tudor, Ralph. "Oscar Vincent Hellestrand obituary." *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, December 10, 1973.

"Word has reached us of late..." *Australasian Record*, July 26, 1915.

NOTES

1. Oscar Vincent Hellestrand Work Service Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, Wairoa, NSW. Work Service Records. Folder: Oscar Vincent Hellestrand. Document: "Oscar Vincent Hellestrand."
2. "Oscar Vincent Hellestrand," n.d., life sketch, personal collection of Robyn (Hellestrand) Baldwin.
3. Oscar Vincent Hellestrand Work Service Records.
4. A[llan] H. Forbes, "Life Sketch of O.V. Hellestrand," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, December 10, 1973, 13.
5. E[lsie M.] S[hannon], "Sydney Sanitarium: The New Class in Nursing," *Union Conference Record*, January 24, 1910, 6.
6. T[homas] A. Sherwin, "Graduating Exercises at the Sydney Sanitarium," *Australasian Record*, November 18, 1912, 8.
7. W[illiam] H. Pascoe, "Auckland, New Zealand," *Australasian Record*, June 16, 1913, 4-5.
8. O[scar] V. Hellestrand, "The City of the Plains," *Australasian Record*, July 6, 1914, 5.
9. "On December 7, at the home of...", *Australasian Record*, December 21, 1914, 8.
10. "By the "Kulanbangara," which sailed...", *Australasian Record*, January 18, 1915, 8.
11. "A short communication...", *Australasian Record*, February 15, 1915, 8.
12. "In a letter written on April 26...", *Australasian Record*, June 7, 1915, 8.

13. O[scar] V. Hellestrand, "An Interesting Trip in the Solomons," *Australasian Record*, September 29, 1915, 4.
14. "Letters just received...," *Australasian Record*, March 29, 1915, 8.
15. "Oscar Vincent Hellestrand," n.d., life sketch.
16. H[arold] C. Harker, "Forrestville Tent Mission, South Australia," *Australasian Record*, July 30, 1917, 5.
17. "Brother and sister O.V. Hellestrand..." *Australasian Record*, December 3, 1917, 8.
18. "Brethren Robinson, Hellestrand..." *Australasian Record*, January 28, 1918, 8.
19. H[arold] C. Harker, "Western Australia," *Australasian Record*, May 26, 1919, 5.
20. "Oscar Vincent Hellestrand," n.d., life sketch.
21. "Decisions of the Union Conference Council, Held September 24 to October 8, 1919, at Wahroonga, New South Wales," *Australasian Record*, October 27, 1919, 6.
22. "Brethren Hellestrand and Blair...," *Australasian Record*, December 22, 1919, 8.
23. "After the lifting of the engineer's...," *Australasian Record*, March 22, 1920, 8.
24. A[llan] H. Forbes, "Life Sketch of O.V. Hellestrand," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, December 10, 1973, 13.
25. "Monthly Summary of Australasian Canvassing Work," *Australasian Record*, October 3, 1921, 6.
26. "Monthly Summary of Australasian Canvassing Work," *Australasian Record*, November 20, 1922, 4.
27. "Oscar Vincent Hellestrand," n.d., life sketch.
28. "Credentials and Licences," *Australasian Record*, September 24, 1928, 5.
29. O[scar] V. Hellestrand, "Health Lectures, Sydney," *Australasian Record*, September 19, 1927, 5-6.
30. "The friends of Brother O.V. Hellestrand..." *Australasian Record*, February 24, 1930, 8.
31. E.g., O[scar] V. Hellestrand, "Coffee and Tea Drugs Almost Identical," *Australasian Record*, August 15, 1938, 6-7.
32. A[llan] H. Forbes, "Life Sketch of O.V. Hellestrand," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, December 10, 1973, 13.

33. "Oscar Vincent Hellestrand," n.d., life sketch, personal collection of Robyn (Hellestrand) Baldwin.
34. Ralph Tudor, "Oscar Vincent Hellestrand obituary," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, December 10, 1953, 14.
35. L[es] C. Coombe, "Ella Louise Hellestrand obituary," *South Pacific Record and Advent World Survey*, December 20, 1986, 22.
36. Alexander S. Currie, email to Milton Hook, August 6, 2016.

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000