



Seated L-R: Cleora Green, Sophia Whatley, Millie Dexter, Arthur Young (Pitcairner sitting on the ground). Standing L-R: Joseph Green, William Floding, child Leroy Whatley, Jonathon Whatley, Alfred Young (Pitcairner), Herbert Dexter.

1896. *Pitcairn missionaries before the fifth voyage in 1896*. Database on-line. Center for Adventist Research Image Database.

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Floding, William Erik (1876–1961)

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* and the *Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series*, and many magazine articles. He is married to Noeleen and has two sons and three grandchildren.

William Erik Floding, an Adventist missionary to Samoa, was born on September 8, 1876, in Minnesota to Erik and Betsey Olafsdotter (Lind) Floding. His parents were of Swedish heritage, their surname sometimes appearing as “Flodin.”

Service in Samoa

Details of William’s training as a nurse are obscure. He was chosen to sail with a group of missionaries aboard the fifth voyage of the “Pitcairn.” Previously, he was living in Oregon.¹ The vessel departed San Francisco on May 19, 1896, calling at Pitcairn Island, Tahiti in French Polynesia,² Rurutu Island, Rarotonga Island, Aitutaki Island, and Palmerston Island until reaching Samoa on August 20. William disembarked at Apia, Samoa, to assist Dr. Frederick Braucht at his medical mission.³ For approximately three years, he nursed patients under primitive conditions until the Samoa Sanitarium was opened for both European and national clients. When Braucht transferred in mid-1899, William and a female nurse were left to conduct a clinic for a short time. William then took passage to Australia about 1900 with the prospect of furthering his education at the Avondale School for Christian Workers in Cooranbong in New South Wales.⁴

A Brief Interlude

William’s time in Australia was short. He made his way back to his homeland and eventually to Emmanuel Missionary College in Berrien Springs, Michigan.⁵ While there, he met Marie Wilson, a member of the domestic staff who had earlier attended Union College, Nebraska.⁶ On August 21, 1902, they were married in Berrien Springs with Percy Magan performing the ceremony.⁷

Return to the South Seas

In September 1902, William and Marie returned to Samoa as newlyweds. They sailed aboard the “Ventura”⁸ intending to not only provide some nursing as the need arose, but also to devote considerable time to literature distribution and the nurture of the small group of believers. For this reason, William was granted a ministerial license by the General Conference.⁹ Up until 1905, the medical mission in Samoa deteriorated under a succession of short-term doctors, so William increasingly gravitated to canvassing denominational literature. The title *Christ Our Saviour*, recently translated into the Samoan language, gained ready acceptance among the people. In fact, ministers of other faiths used it as source material for their sermons.¹⁰

William and Marie’s first daughter, Elisabeth, was born in Samoa in 1905 and was just an infant when they sailed back to America.¹¹

San Francisco

After approximately three years serving in the Samoa Mission (1902-1905), William and Marie settled in Oakland, San Francisco.¹² In 1913, a second daughter, Willeta, was born into their family. William did not continue with nursing, but instead worked as a salesman for a candy wholesaler.¹³ Marie passed away in Alameda on August 6, 1958, at the age of 78. At the same place, William passed away less than three years after that, on March 6, 1961, at the age of 84.

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2. John E. Graham, "News From the Pitcairn," *ARH*, September 1, 1896, 564.

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4. D[elos] D. Lake, "Samoa," *The Missionary Magazine*, April 1900, 180.
5. "Items of General Interest," *Union Conference Record*, October 15, 1902, 8.
6. Lillian Holaday, ["Notes"], *The Educational Messenger*, September 1915, 15.
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