



Grave of Floyd and Ella Asbaugh.

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Ashbaugh, Floyd Garfield (1890–1987)

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Floyd Garfield Ashbaugh was a pioneer colporteur missionary, youth leader, temperance promoter, and church administrator.

Early Life

Born May 14, 1890, in Britton, South Dakota, U.S.A., Floyd Garfield Ashbaugh was the fourth child of Frederick Thomas Ashbaugh (1858-1943) and Martha Rosella Smith (1857-1951).¹ The Ashbaughs had eight children: Frederick Elliot (1880-1898), Ellis Butler (1882-1958), George Henry (1886-1955), Elbert Roland (1888-1979), Floyd Garfield Ashbaugh (1890-1987), Luella May Ashbaugh Thomson (1891-1972), Harold Bryan (1896-1983), and Helen Rosella Ashbaugh Morton (1899-1975).²

Ashbaugh spent his earlier years in three different places: Britton, South Dakota, Hecla, South Dakota, and Newark, South Dakota. In 1909, while Floyd was working at a vegetarian cafeteria in Los Angeles, California, Elders Luther Warren and C. E. Ford converted him, and Elder Ford baptized him during the same year.³

Education and Marriage

Floyd Ashbaugh went to public schools from 1898 until 1905. He then attended Fernando Academy in California during 1910 and 1911.⁴ That same year he answered a call to serve as a pioneer missionary to the Philippines. He married Ella Pearl Nelson in 1918.⁵ Ella Pearl was born February 2, 1888, in Necedah, Juneau, Wisconsin, to parents Hans Nelson and Marie Christine Nielson. She had a brother named Albert. Floyd and Ella had a daughter named Lolita Evangeline.⁶

Ministry

Ashbaugh served as a youth leader in San Fernando during 1910⁷ and began canvassing while studying at Fernando Academy.⁸ While he was actively involved in selling books in California, he received a call to work as a missionary literature evangelist in the Philippines.⁹ He sailed from San Francisco to the Philippines on Wednesday, November 22, 1911, along with Elder E. M. Adams and family.¹⁰

Ashbaugh pioneered the Adventist Church in the Panayan Mission, his territory being the Panay and Guimaras islands.¹¹ He had already begun working there before E. M. Adams arrived in the region.¹² During his first week, he took orders amounting to 247.40 pesos, the second week 238 pesos, and the third week 324.50!¹³ Much of his work he did on foot, though sometimes by horse, sailboat, and rowboat. Once he had the opportunity to travel in a private carriage, "a calesa drawn by an ox."¹⁴

In 1913, Floyd received a bicycle from the United States that helped him a lot in his canvassing and delivery work, especially during the dry season.¹⁵ His literature evangelism efforts laid a foundation for the Adventist mission, resulting in numerous conversions and baptisms in the Philippines, especially in Iloilo and the Panayan

Mission.¹⁶

In 1915, Ashbaugh conducted a literature evangelism training institute at Argao, Cebu, attended by five young men.¹⁷ However, that same year, he returned to the US to continue his studies.¹⁸

Floyd attended Pacific Union College. The faculty and students of the college recognized the importance of a model society that followed General Conference Missionary Volunteer department plans, so it formed one and voted unanimously for Floyd to be its assistant leader.¹⁹ He and other leaders were actively engaged in missionary activities, including a series of evangelistic meetings that resulted in a number of baptisms.²⁰ The society also conducted seminars and training sessions, and sent out literature evangelists during the summer.²¹ It also served to develop prayer life among the students and fostered a love for missions.²²

In 1918 the Philippine Union Conference invited Ashbaugh to return to the Philippines, but because of his wife's unfavorable medical report, the General Conference voted to release him from the appointment. He then served in the Southeastern California Conference as Missionary Volunteer departmental secretary from 1920 to 1926.²³

In 1926, the Kentucky Conference elected him as president²⁴ and he held the post until 1930.²⁵ Before the end of that year he became field secretary for the Pacific Union Conference and served until 1931.²⁶

In 1932, leadership chose Floyd G. Ashbaugh as the Missionary Volunteer secretary for the Pacific Union Conference and he remained there until 1940. Alongside this responsibility, in 1934, he was "appointed secretary of the American Temperance Society for the Pacific Union Conference."²⁷ In 1940, he served as the leader of the Pacific Union Conference for the Medical Cadet Core, in charge of the training Adventist young men for medical service in the military.²⁸

Beginning in 1942, Ashbaugh, who was already a member of the War Service Commission, was commissioned to be a regional secretary of the Pacific Union Conference.²⁹ Holding the cadet rank of colonel, he became secretary of the War Service Commission and Medical Cadet Corps in 1943, then in 1946 as a regional secretary of Army Camps and Industrial Relations located in the United States.³⁰

In 1947, he served as regional secretary of the American Temperance Society, Religious Liberty society, and the Council on Industrial Relations of the Pacific Union Conference.³¹ In 1953, Elder Ashbaugh was invited to be the field secretary of the Pacific Union Conference and represent its sanitariums. He served as the Institutional Field representative of the Pacific Union from 1955 until his retirement in 1957. Ashbaugh received special recognition from the Pacific Union Conference in 1958 for his valuable contribution to the church.³²

Later Life

Floyd and Ella Ashbaugh retired in the Pacific Union Conference, settling in Aptos, California. The couple celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary New Year's Day, 1968, and were honored at a reception and buffet

given by their daughter, Mrs. Marvin Moore of Fresno.³³

During the opening of the "Literature Ministry Seminary" in the North Philippine Union, R. H. Henning reported that Floyd Ashbaugh and Robert Caldwell had first entered the region and that a 1983 survey reported that "85 percent of the church membership became interested in Adventism through reading Adventist literature."³⁴

Floyd Ashbaugh not only broke records as a literature evangelist, but he also had splendid results in his work as a Missionary Volunteer secretary.

Ella Pearl Ashbaugh died May 16, 1972, at St. Helena, Napa, California.³⁵ Floyd Ashbaugh died on January 16, 1987, (aged 96) in Fresno County, California, and was buried in Saint Helena Cemetery, Saint Helena, Napa County, California.³⁶

Contribution

Floyd Ashbaugh left his mark in ministry as a literature evangelist, a temperance advocate, and a Missionary Volunteer and church leader. He helped pave the way for Seventh-day Adventism to penetrate the Philippines. Floyd has been credited as a contributing factor in the increase of interest in Adventism through Adventist literature in the Philippines.³⁷

During his missionary canvassing efforts in the Philippines, Floyd had great success in selling books and broke sales records. Even though he labored in the Panayan Mission for only a few years, his work was remarkable; and the Philippine Union Conference considered it a great loss when he was not able to return.³⁸ Ashbaugh was also recognized for his faithful service as secretary of the American Temperance and Religious Liberty societies, indicating the trust the denomination had in him.

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