

# Sparrow, Frederick, Jr. (1869–1931)

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GODFREY K. SANG

Godfrey K. Sang is a historical researcher and writer with an interest in Adventist history. He holds a B.A. in History from the University of Eastern Africa Baraton and a number of qualifications from other universities. He is a published author. He is the co-author of the book *On the Wings of a Sparrow: How the Seventh-day Adventist Church Came to Western Kenya*.

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Frederick Sparrow Jr. was a pioneer Adventist missionary who was in the first party that opened up the Solusi Mission near Bulawayo in Zimbabwe.

Frederick Sparrow was born April 9, 1869, in South Africa to British migrants Emma and Frederick Sparrow who settled at Barthust near Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape. He was their fifth child in what would eventually be a family of 12 children. He was named after his father who was a Methodist minister.<sup>1</sup> His father died in 1887 when Fred was just 18.

Fred Sparrow was 20 when the Rokeby Park Seventh-day Adventist Church was established in 1889 and he became one of the charter members of that church. In 1894, just after the initial encounter with Cecil Rhodes through whom the Adventists received a land grant near Bulawayo, Fred Sparrow joined the first team of Adventists who went to secure the land.<sup>2</sup> The team included Pieter Wessels, N. H. Druillard, A. Goepf, E. J. Harvey, I. B. Burton, and J. Landesman. They left Vryburg in South Africa and traveled by ox-wagon, arriving on July 5, 1894, at Solusi. After securing the place they built some huts and bought 200 head of cattle. They returned to Cape Town, leaving Fred Sparrow in charge of the new Matabele Mission Station which would be the first mission station in all of Africa. It would later be renamed Solusi Mission. Fred Sparrow later returned to South Africa to await the new American missionaries. He married Evelyn (Lulu) Willmore (1874-1963) the daughter of Elizabeth and William H. Willmore who were some of the earliest members of the Rokeby Park Adventist Church.

Together with his wife, Fred received the missionaries, Elder George Byron Tripp and his wife and son, W. H. Anderson and his wife, and Dr. Carmichael, at Mafeking and led them on the 600 mile (1,000 kilometer) trek to Solusi. They arrived at Solusi in July 1895 and occupied the dwellings that had been built the previous year. Fred Sparrow remained there with his family for a while before returning to South Africa. He became the first in the Sparrow family to join active mission work. Later his brothers would work at Solusi, including his eldest brother Christopher Sparrow and older brothers Charles Sparrow (father of Hubert M. Sparrow) and David Sparrow. This mission station, 35 miles from Bulawayo, is now home to Solusi University.

Fred and Evelyn were the parents of Ashton W. Sparrow, Violet E. Connole, Arthur E. Sparrow, Lorna A. Hendry, Thelma G. Duffy, and four other children. Fred died on August 26, 1931.<sup>3</sup>

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## SOURCES

"Fredrick Sparrow," *Geni*. Accessed September 9, 2019. <https://www.geni.com/people/Frederick-Sparrow>.

Spalding, Arthur W. *Origin and History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, vol. 4. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1962.

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## NOTES

1. From a write-up by E. M. Sparrow on the family history compiled circa 1988 and graciously availed to the author by Yvette Sparrow of Helderberg, private library.
2. Arthur W. Spalding, *Origin and History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1962), 14.
3. "Fredrick Sparrow," *Geni*, accessed September 9, 2019, <https://www.geni.com/people/Frederick-Sparrow>.

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