



Amyes Memorial Hospital, 1936, containing eight wards each 20 feet by 16 feet; treatment rooms, 22 feet by 16 feet and an operating theatre, 22 feet by 16 feet. The dispensary was a separate building.
From *Australasian Record*, July 4, 1938.

Amyes Memorial Hospital, Solomon Islands

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.

The Amyes Memorial Hospital was opened in 1939 at Kukudu on the Island of Kolombangara, Western Solomon Islands. Today it functions at the Kukudu Adventist Clinic.

The establishment of the Amyes Memorial Hospital was said, at the time, to be “one of the biggest undertakings of the [Australasian] Union Conference in the South Seas.”¹ It would certainly be larger than the little hospitals at Batuna in the Marovo Lagoon and Kwailibesi on Malaita Island. A site was chosen at Kukudu, on the west coast of Kolombangara Island, a short ocean trip from the capital, Gizo.

At the General Conference session in San Francisco, May/June 1936, Dr. Edmund Finkle and family were nominated to pioneer the venture.² It would be another 12 months before the Finkles arrived in the Solomon Islands to take up duties.³ In the meantime the local people threw themselves energetically into gathering building materials from other islands and transporting them by canoe to the building site. These were used to construct a number of small huts to serve as living quarters while the main hospital was under construction. They also cleared the ground and planted food crops for Finkle and the patients. From the jungle they cut and hauled logs for the foundation piles of the hospital.⁴

Treatments Amid the Builders

From the time Finkle arrived, patients began to congregate for treatment. His temporary home was used as a dispensary and he performed surgeries in the front room. No record was kept of the number of treatments until

December 1937, when it was reported that one thousand were treated during the month. All this activity was taking place while the European-style doctor's home and hospital were under construction. Approximately 450 postholes were dug into the hard coral, and nonrotting timber was used for the foundation piles, all labor being provided freely by the local people. Load after load of milled timber was shipped from the Batuna sawmill. Roads were built on campus, and a sanitation system was installed. During the first six months of 1938, while construction was continuing, fourteen thousand patients were treated.⁵

Official Opening

Belatedly, the dedication and official opening did not take place until Friday afternoon, June 30, 1939. By then the long single-story hospital and a separate doctor's home was completed. There was ward capacity for sixty beds. Another building was set aside for obstetric patients. Some distance from the main building were 12 cottages for lepers. Nurses John and Ivy Gosling had arrived to assist Finkle, and under their supervision a small team of young local men and women were assembled as trainee nurses.⁶ Curiously, in connection with the hospital no mention was ever made in the church press of Sidney Amyes, the man memorialized in the hospital's title. He had passed away in 1935, having been an active layman and benefactor of the medical work in New Zealand.⁷

Difficult Times

After a three-year term Finkle did not wish to continue and left the Goslings in charge. They did what they could to maintain local faith in the institution. However, the coming of war to the region dealt a devastating blow to the enterprise. The Goslings were evacuated, leaving a few people to monitor the hospital. The situation deteriorated when Japanese troops arrived. Jimaru and Pana, mission workers dedicated to the oversight of the property, quickly erected two safe houses back in the mountains, and there they hid the Europeans' belongings and much of the hospital equipment. Sadly, the enemy came searching and found the buildings and destroyed the contents. David Ferris, in 1945, was one of the first expatriates allowed to return to the area. He organized the people to clean the campus and do repairs to the buildings. In a short time he had the hospital functioning again, caring for forty inpatients and many day cases.⁸

A Diminishing Unit

The Goslings returned after the war for another term of service.⁹ Dr. Cyril Evans was a fresh postwar recruit who was relieved by Dr. Calvin Palmer in mid-1949.¹⁰ However, Palmer was the last medical doctor to attend. Following the war the government upgraded their hospital in Gizo, and church officials saw little need to duplicate medical services. The 1950s witnessed a reduction of bed capacity to 32, staffed by expatriate and national nurses, the first expatriates being Sydney Sanitarium graduates David Harris and Gwen Long.¹¹ Newlyweds Colin and Melva Winch arrived in 1956 for two years,¹² after which the institution ceased to function in all but name only. A nurse, Rosie "Franki" Jimakana, remained to dress wounds, especially caring for lepers.¹³

In 1971 a much smaller institution of 14 beds was opened at the cost of \$6,000 on the same site under the name Kukudu Adventist Hospital.¹⁴ It was staffed by leading nurses Rosie Jimikana, Bennie Vavozo,¹⁵ and Bessie Simba.¹⁶ It ceased to be listed in 1978. The Kukudu Clinic functions on the same site today.¹⁷

Conclusion

Considering the time and effort invested by the people of Kukudu, they could have been justifiably upset when the hospital was gradually downgraded, but instead they recognized that faster and better boats gave easy access to the government facilities at Gizo. A well-equipped and maintained clinic continues to operate on the site.

SOURCES

Anderson, J[ohn] D. "He Is Our Doctor." *Australasian Record*, April 12, 1937.

Anderson, J[ohn] D., and G[ui]nevere] M. Anderson. "Eighteen Years in the Solomon Islands." *Australasian Record*, June 27, 1938.

Ferris, Norman. "Faith Strengthened in the Solomons." *Australasian Record*, January 14, 1946.

Finkle, Edmund. "Establishing the Amyes Memorial Hospital." *Australasian Record*, June 27, 1938.

"Nurse Totenhofer writes from Batuna . . ." *Australasian Record*, July 19, 1937.

"On July 9, Dr. and Mrs. Calvin Palmer . . ." *Australasian Record*, July 25, 1949.

Piper, A[lbert] H. "The Secretary's Report." *Australasian Record*, September 14, 1936.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbooks. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1940–1978.

Smith, W[illiam] J. "Sidney Amyes." *Australasian Record*, April 15, 1935.

Stewart, A[ndrew] G. "Dedication of Amyes Memorial Hospital." *Australasian Record*, September 4, 1939.

Tindall, R[ex]. "The Solomons Open Up." *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, February 22, 1971.

NOTES

1. J[ohn] D. Anderson and G[uinevere] M. Anderson, "Eighteen Years in the Solomon Islands," *Australasian Record*, June 27, 1938, 3.?
2. A[lbert] H. Piper, "The Secretary's Report," *Australasian Record*, September 14, 1936, 6–10.?
3. "Nurse Totenhofer writes from Batuna . . .," *Australasian Record*, July 19, 1937, 8.?
4. J[ohn] D. Anderson, "He Is Our Doctor," *Australasian Record*, April 12, 1937, 4.?
5. Edmund Finkle, "Establishing the Amyes Memorial Hospital," *Australasian Record*, June 27, 1938, 2, 3.?
6. A[ndrew] G. Stewart, "Dedication of Amyes Memorial Hospital," *Australasian Record*, September 4, 1939, 3, 4; photographs, *Australasian Record*, July 4, 1938, 6.?
7. W[illiam] J. Smith, "Sidney Amyes," *Australasian Record*, April 15, 1935, 6.?
8. Norman Ferris, "Faith Strengthened in the Solomons," *Australasian Record*, January 14, 1946, 5.?
9. E.g., "Amyes Memorial Hospital," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), 272.?
10. "On July 9, Dr. and Mrs. Calvin Palmer . . .," *Australasian Record*, July 25, 1949, 8.?
11. "Amyes Memorial Hospital," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1952), 278.?
12. E.g., "Amyes Memorial Hospital," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1957), 257.?
13. E.g., "Amyes Memorial Hospital and Leprosarium," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1971), 397, 398.?
14. R[ex] Tindall, "The Solomons Open Up," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, February 22, 1971, 6, 7, 13.?
15. E.g., "Kukudu Adventist Hospital," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1972), 369.?
16. "Kukudu Adventist Hospital," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1978), 432.?
17. "Clinics and Dispensaries," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2017), 723.?

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