



William and Mabel Howse and family.

Photo courtesy of Adventist Heritage Centre, Australia.

Howse, William Ralph (1883–1957), and Mabel Amelia (de Jersey, 1885–1966)

SHIRLEY TARBURTON

Shirley Tarburton, M.Litt. (Distinction) (University of New England, Armidale, New South Wales, Australia) retired in 2008 after 40 years teaching church-school (mainly high school but including eight years at university). An Australian, she has taught in four mission fields, Australia, and New Zealand. She has authored five books and co-authored one on church history, biography and family history, as well as several magazine articles. She is married to Dr. Michael Tarburton with two adult children and four grandchildren.

William Ralph Howse was an Australian Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) printer who ran printing presses at SDA mission stations in French Polynesia and in the Cook Islands and then worked in Australia for almost 15 years at

Signs Press at Warburton, Victoria, and 17 years at Avondale Press at Cooranbong, New South Wales (NSW).

Early Years

William Howse was born in Greenwich, London, late in 1883.¹ He was the fourth son (and fifth child) of Thomas (1844–1894) and Louisa (Hunt, 1850–1929) Howse.² Will's father was a warehouseman in the wool industry.³ His five brothers and sisters were Edmund George, Henry Thomas, Horace Dyke, Fanny Elizabeth, and Marie Louise (later Wegener).⁴

In 1889, the Howse family immigrated to Australia, arriving in Sydney on the *Cuzco* on December 7.⁵ They settled in Hobart, Tasmania, where the senior Thomas died just under five years later, of cancer.⁶

Conversion

About this time, Louisa obtained copies of *The Great Controversy* and *Bible Readings* and was very impressed by what she read. She prayed earnestly that the Lord would guide her to know what she should do, and when a Seventh-day Adventist lady Bible worker called on her, she took that as an answer to her prayer.⁷ She shared what she learned with her children, now ranging in age from 6 to 19, and the whole family attended the SDA camp meeting in May 1895.⁸

Here, they had the opportunity to hear Mrs. Ellen G. White speak because she had come to Hobart to speak at the camp meeting⁹ and also to attend the wedding of her son Willie to a Hobart girl, Ethel May Lacey, on May 9.¹⁰

Bible studies followed, and they all agreed with what they learned.¹¹ Louisa and the adult children were baptized by December 1895,¹² and all the children joined the Hobart SDA church over the next few years. Each of the boys spent his life working for the church. Fanny died of tuberculosis three years later,¹³ but Marie married Ted Wegener and had a large family that contributed to the church in Tasmania, South Australia, and Victoria.¹⁴

Education and Training

After completing his schooling, Will joined his older brother Thomas as a manufacturing jeweler and clock repairer.¹⁵ Various members of the family were musicians, both singing and playing an instrument, and in April 1908, Will was part of a group from Hobart that attended a church convention in Launceston where he contributed both instrumental and vocal music to the program.¹⁶

The following year, he attended the Australasian Missionary College at Avondale, New South Wales, where he enrolled in the missionary course.¹⁷ While there, he also participated in missionary work off campus¹⁸ and wrote some articles that were printed in the church paper.¹⁹ On October 14, 1912, he graduated, ready to put into practice what he had mastered.²⁰

Marriage

Shortly before graduation, Will received an employment offer for 1913—a missionary appointment to the Society Islands in French Polynesia.²¹ For overseas appointments, it was preferred that employees be married, and Will had that contingency covered. On January 8, 1913, Will married Mabel Amelia de Jersey in her parents' home in Glenorchy, Hobart, Tasmania.²²

Mabel had been born October 2, 1885, in Hobart.²³ Her parents were Walter Henry (1860–1915)²⁴ and Amelia (Quodrill, 1863–1951)²⁵ de Jersey. She was the eldest surviving child of nine children: Walter, Emily Florence (Rabe), Herbert Henry, Rosina Mabel (Gillis), Ernest Roy, Leslie, Vera Lillian Vestrice (Bellette) and Lionel.²⁶

When she was just a toddler, her parents became Seventh-day Adventists through the ministry of W. L. H. Baker.

²⁷ From October 1886 to February 1887, two literature evangelists, William Arnold and W. E. Wainman, became the first SDAs to evangelize Tasmania. They took 300 orders in Launceston and Hobart for *Thoughts on Daniel and the Revelation*.²⁸ Due to the strong interest shown, Pastors Mendel C. Israel and William L. H. Baker ran a series of meetings in Hobart from April to June 1888.²⁹ Mabel's father attended some of the meetings and then Pastor Baker held Bible studies in the family home. Both Walter de Jersey and his wife were baptized,³⁰ becoming charter members of the Hobart church that was set up at the end of June.³¹

This was the church that the Howse family joined seven years later. When Mabel was 20, she started selling the *Signs* magazine door to door,³² and in 1909 she went to the Australasian Missionary College at Avondale, over 1,500 kilometers (900 miles) away. Will Howse joined her there a year later.³³ Here she enrolled in the missionary course, graduating October 9, 1911.³⁴ The month before graduation, she was appointed to teach the Prospect SDA Church school in South Australia.³⁵ This was about 1,200 kilometers (745 miles) from the college and no closer to home than she had been for the previous three years. At the end of 1912, the Prospect church community was full of praise for the great job that Mabel had done teaching the multigrade school for that year and showed their appreciation by a gift of a cabin trunk and a handbag.³⁶

On December 19,³⁷ Mabel sailed from Adelaide to Hobart for her wedding to Will, which took place just under three weeks later.³⁸

Career

Two weeks after their wedding, Will and Mabel arrived in Sydney, where they boarded the R.M.S. *Tahiti* and sailed for Papeete on January 25, 1913.³⁹ They located on the second largest island of the group, Raiatea, which was about 200 kilometers (125 miles) from Tahiti. This is where the SDA work was first established and where the headquarters was originally located.⁴⁰

Will and Mabel ran meetings, engaged in visitation, and distributed literature.⁴¹ Later in the year, they had the opportunity to visit Huahine with Pastor F. E. Lyndon, director of the mission, spreading literature and giving

Bible studies and talks.⁴² They also assisted with some meetings at Pastor Lyndon's station on Tahiti, where Will's instrumental and vocal music was much appreciated.⁴³

On May 21, 1914, their first child, Eric William, was born (d. December 12, 2004). He spent his adult life also working for the church as an accountant, missionary, division treasurer, and General Conference Director of World Food Services.⁴⁴

Although he was a recent graduate, during the Quadrennial Session of the Australasian Union Conference held in September 1914, Will was appointed to the Eastern Polynesian Union Mission Committee.⁴⁵

Both Will and Mabel undertook to learn the local language and by the end of 1914 were conversant enough to use it for Bible studies as well as conversation.⁴⁶ Will was particularly encouraged to be able to baptize some new believers during 1914,⁴⁷ and there was a steady increase in Sabbath School membership.⁴⁸

After three years at Raiatea, the Howses were transferred to Vaiare, Moorea, in 1916.⁴⁹ Until this time, Will and Mabel had been supported financially by the SDA youth of Tasmania, but in 1917 their support was taken over by the union conference.⁵⁰ On November 8 of that year, their second son, Ronald Walter, was born in Tahiti (d. May 11, 2008). He became a printer and spent most of his working life in the Sanitarium Health Food factory press at Avondale.⁵¹

In 1918, a printing press was set up at the training college on Rarotonga in the Cook Islands. Because both Mabel⁵² and Will had worked in the Avondale Press while studying at the Australasian Missionary College, Will was chosen to be in charge of the printing.⁵³ Shortly after Ron's birth, Will and Mabel moved to Rarotonga, and the January issue of the Tahitian paper, the *Te Maramarama*, was off the press by the end of the month.⁵⁴

The following year, on July 31, their first daughter, Moira May, was born in the Cook Islands (d. November 22, 2006). In 1943 she married Edward William Wickes and lived the rest of her life in Cooranbong, near Avondale.⁵⁵ Their last child was Eileen Rosalie, who married Milton Earle Turner.⁵⁶ The year and place of her birth are not known. She died on August 28, 2010.⁵⁷

When Moira was only a few months old, Mabel became very ill with typhoid fever. She spent eight weeks over the end of 1919 and the beginning of 1920 ill with the disease, sinking very close to death and recovering only after earnest prayer on her behalf.⁵⁸ Will's health was weakened, too, so he requested furlough in the homeland, and as soon as Mabel was able to travel, the family sailed for Sydney.⁵⁹ They arrived on March 8 and then went on to Warburton, Victoria, where they could stay with Will's mother and Mabel could receive treatment at the SDA Sanitarium and Hospital.⁶⁰

To enable Mabel to visit her mother in Hobart (her father had died about the time they moved from Raiatea to Moorea), the conference sent them to Tasmania, where Will helped in the Appeal for Missions campaign.⁶¹ When that was completed, he visited isolated members and scattered churches around the island state. The bracing climate and association with well-loved places and people restored their health, and they moved to

Geeveston, where Will helped Pastor and Mrs. Battye run evangelistic meetings.⁶²

When their furlough was over, Will was appointed to Warburton to work in the press at the Signs Publishing Company.⁶³ During his time there, he had the pleasure of joining two of his brothers, Edmund and Horace, in musical performances in both the choir and the band.⁶⁴

In 1936 he was transferred to work in the Sanitarium Health Food Company press at Avondale, where he remained until his retirement in 1953.⁶⁵ During this time he served for many years as an elder of the College church at Avondale.⁶⁶

Later Years and Death

After just four years of retirement, Will passed away at Cooranbong on February 22, 1957.⁶⁷ He was beloved by the college community for his loving interest in all and was esteemed as a genuine Christian.⁶⁸ Mabel lived another nine years, remaining active in the Cooranbong church and community until she died suddenly on September 20, 1966.⁶⁹

SOURCES

"A new work. . . ." *Launceston Examiner*, October 14, 1886.

"A quiet wedding. . . ." *Australasian Record*, January 27, 1913.

"Actions Taken by the Union Conference Council Held at Wahroonga, New South Wales, September 5–15, 1911: Distribution of Labour." *Australasian Record*, October 2, 1911.

Arnold, William. "A Word from Australia." *Present Truth*, November 17, 1887.

Barritt, Clive, and Claude D. Judd. "Moira May Wickes obituary." *Record*, March 17, 2007.

Birth Records. FreeBMD. <https://www.freebmd.org.uk>.

"Brother W. R. Howse reports. . . ." *Australasian Record*, June 12, 1916.

"Brother William R. Howse. . . ." *Australasian Record*, February 3, 1913.

Burns, N. C. "William R. Howse obituary." *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, March 18, 1957.

Butler, S. C. "Marie Louise Wegener obituary." *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, February 10, 1969.

"Closing Exercises." *Australasian Record*, November 4, 1912.

"Closing Exercises at the Australasian Missionary College." *Australasian Record*, November 20, 1911.

"Distribution of Labour." *Australasian Record*, May 31, 1920.

"Distribution of Labour." *Australasian Record*, September 16, 1912.

"England and Wales Census, 1881." FamilySearch (for Thomas Howse, Lambeth, London, Surrey, England). <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q27Q-GWZK>. from "1881 England, Scotland and Wales census," database and images, *findmypast* (<http://www.findmypast.com> : n.d.); citing 38, Piece/Folio 623/76, The National Archives, Kew, Surrey; FHL microfilm 101,774, 313.

Hare, Mrs. R. "Prospect Church-School, South Australia." *Australasian Record*, January 13, 1913.

"Hobart, July 4." *Launceston Examiner*, July 5, 1888.

Hobart, Tasmania. Birth Registration. National Archives of Tasmania.

Hobart, Tasmania. Death Registration. National Archives of Tasmania.

Hollingsworth, H. W. "Amelia de Jersey obituary." *Australasian Record*, November 19, 1951.

Howse, W. R. "A Week in Huahine, Society Islands." *Australasian Record*, December 8, 1913.

———. "A Word from Raiatea." *Australasian Record*, April 12, 1915.

———. "Modern Spiritualism—Satanic or Divine?" *Australasian Record*, September 25, 1911.

———. "On Furlough in the Homeland." *Australasian Record*, January 10, 1921.

———. "Raiatea." *Australasian Record*, August 30, 1915.

———. "The Week of Prayer in Raiatea." *Australasian Record*, July 14, 1913.

"Immigration and Shipping." NSW Government: State Archives and Records.

<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/immigration-shipping>.

Judd, Claude D., and Rex Cobbin. "Ronald Walter Howse obituary." *Record*, June 7, 2008.

Judd, Claude, Arthur Patrick, and Rein Muhlberg. "Eric William Howse obituary." *Record*, January 29, 2005.

Kappler, Miriam R. "Sabbath-School and Missionary Convention in Tasmania." *Union Conference Record*, June 15, 1908.

"Lectures on Prophecy." *The Mercury*, April 21, 1888.

Lyndon, F. E. "Eastern Polynesian Mission." *Australasian Record*, March 25, 1918.

Marriage Records. FreeBMD. <https://www.freebmd.org.uk>.

Meyers, H. J. "Large." *Australasian Record*, September 23, 1929.

"More from our island. . . ." *Australasian Record*, March 16, 1914.

"New Works." *The Mercury*, February 8, 1887.

"Pastor F. E. Lyndon writes. . . ." *Australasian Record*, February 23, 1920.

Piper, H. E. "In Memoriam: Howse." *Australasian Record*, February 12, 1951.

Pretzman, C. H. "Our Island Papers." *Australasian Record*, November 19, 1917.

"Report of the Australasian Union Conference." *Australasian Record*, October 12, 1914.

Robbins, W. E. "Australasian Missionary College." *Australasian Record*, August 28, 1911.

Robson, Eileen M. "Warburton Medical Aid Society." *Australasian Record*, October 28, 1935.

Ryerson Index to Death Notices and Obituaries in Australian Newspapers. Accessed February 7, 2019.
<http://ryersonindex.org/search.php>.

"Seventh Day Adventists." *Launceston Examiner*, May 3, 1895.

Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia. 2nd rev. ed. Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1996.

"Signs of the Times: Our 20,000 List." *Union Conference Record*, November 1, 1905.

"Southern News—Hobart." *The Tasmanian*, May 4, 1895.

"T. Howse death notice." *The Mercury*, September 5, 1894.

"Tasmanian Conference." *Australasian Record*, January 22, 1917.

"Thirteen of our students. . . ." *Australasian Record*, September 25, 1911.

Turner, E. A. "Turner-Howse." *Australasian Record*, November 29, 1948.

Turner, W. G. "Mabel A. Howse obituary." *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, October 17, 1966.

"Warburton Brass Band." *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, January 13, 1975.

"Warburton Medical Aid Society." *Australasian Record*, October 28, 1935.

"We were pleased to meet. . . ." *Australasian Record*, March 22, 1920.

White, A. H. "Walter Henry de Jersey obituary." *Australasian Record*, January 31, 1916.

"White-Lacey." *The Mercury*, May 18, 1895.

William Ralph Howse Biographical Records. South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives. Folder:
"Howse, William Ralph." Document: "Worker's Biographical Record."

"Word comes through. . . ." *Australasian Record*, March 9, 1920.

NOTES

1. Greenwich, England, birth records, vol. 1d, p. 1061 (4Q 1883), William Ralph Howse, FreeBMD, <http://www.freebmd.org.uk/cgi/information.pl?cite=04%2BOVzbisx3f0JuQ57jixA&scan=1>.
2. English Marriage: Howse, Thomas 2Q 1874 St Saviour 1d 62; "T. Howse death notice," *The Mercury*, September 5, 1894, 1; H. J. Meyers, "Large," *Australasian Record*, September 23, 1929, 7.
3. "England and Wales Census, 1881," *FamilySearch* (for Thomas Howse, Lambeth, London, Surrey, England), <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q27Q-GWZK> : 18 August 2016; from "1881 England, Scotland and Wales census," database and images, *findmypast* (<http://www.findmypast.com> : n.d.); citing 38, Piece/Folio 623/76, The National Archives, Kew, Surrey; FHL microfilm 101,774, 313.
4. English Births, individual obituaries, cemetery records.
5. "Immigration and Shipping," NSW Government: State Archives and Records, <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/immigration-shipping>.
6. Hobart, Tasmania, death registration RGD35/1/14 no. 1314 (1894), NAME_INDEXES:1140281, Thomas Howse, National Archives of Tasmania.
7. H. E. Piper, "In Memoriam: Howse," *Australasian Record*, February 12, 1951, 6.
8. "Southern News—Hobart," *The Tasmanian*, May 4, 1895, 38.
9. "Seventh Day Adventists," *Launceston Examiner*, May 3, 1895, 5.
10. "White-Lacey," *The Mercury*, May 18, 1895, 2.
11. Piper, "In Memoriam."
12. Ibid.
13. Hobart, Tasmania, Death Registration, RGD35/1/68 no 718 (1898), NAME_INDEXES:1142916, Fanny Elizabeth Howse, National Archives of Tasmania.
14. S. C. Butler, "Marie Louise Wegener obituary," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, February 10, 1969, 15.
15. William Ralph Howse Biographical Records, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives. Folder: "Howse, William Ralph." Document: "Worker's Biographical Record."
16. Miriam R. Kappler, "Sabbath-School and Missionary Convention in Tasmania," *Union Conference Record*, June 15, 1908, 6.

17. William Ralph Howse Biographical Records, "Worker's Biographical Record."
18. W. E. Robbins, "Australasian Missionary College," *Australasian Record*, August 28, 1911, 8.
19. W. Howse, "Modern Spiritualism—Satanic or Divine?," *Australasian Record*, September 25, 1911, 4–5.
20. "Closing Exercises," *Australasian Record*, November 4, 1912, 8.
21. "Distribution of Labour," *Australasian Record*, September 16, 1912, 3.
22. "A quiet wedding . . .," *Australasian Record*, January 27, 1913, 8.
23. Hobart, Tasmania, birth registration RGD33/1/14, no. 305 (1885), Mabel Amelia de Jersey, National Archives of Tasmania.
24. A. H. White, "Walter Henry de Jersey obituary," *Australasian Record*, January 31, 1916, 7.
25. H. W. Hollingsworth, "Amelia de Jersey obituary," *Australasian Record*, November 19, 1951, 7.
26. Tasmanian Births, individual obituaries, cemetery records.
27. White, "Walter Henry de Jersey obituary."
28. "A new work . . .," *Launceston Examiner*, October 14, 1886, 2; "New Works," *The Mercury*, February 8, 1887, 2; William Arnold, "A Word from Australia," *Present Truth*, November 17, 1887, 349.
29. "Lectures on Prophecy," *The Mercury*, April 21, 1888, 2.
30. White, "Walter Henry de Jersey obituary."
31. "Hobart, July 4," *Launceston Examiner*, July 5, 1888, 2.
32. "Signs of the Times: Our 20,000 List," *Union Conference Record*, November 1, 1905, 8.
33. William Ralph Howse Biographical Records, "Worker's Biographical Record."
34. "Closing Exercises at the Australasian Missionary College," *Australasian Record*, November 20, 1911, 4.
35. "Actions Taken by the Union Conference Council Held at Wahroonga, New South Wales, September 5–15, 1911: Distribution of Labour," *Australasian Record*, October 2, 1911, 5.
36. Mrs. R. Hare, "Prospect Church-School, South Australia." *Australasian Record*, January 13, 1913, 7.

37. Ibid.
38. "A quiet wedding . . .," *Australasian Record*, January 27, 1913, 8.
39. "Brother William R. Howse . . .," *Australasian Record*, February 3, 1913, 8.
40. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 2nd rev. ed. (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald, 1996), s.v. "French Polynesia."
41. W. R. Howse, "The Week of Prayer in Raiatea," *Australasian Record*, July 14, 1913, 4.
42. W. R. Howse, "A Week in Huahine, Society Islands," *Australasian Record*, December 8, 1913, 4-5.
43. "More from our island . . .," *Australasian Record*, March 16, 1914, 8.
44. Claude Judd, Arthur Patrick, and Rein Muhlberg, "Eric William Howse obituary," *Record*, January 29, 2005, 14.
45. "Report of the Australasian Union Conference," *Australasian Record*, October 12, 1914, 13-18.
46. W. R. Howse, "A Word from Raiatea," *Australasian Record*, April 12, 1915, 3.
47. Ibid.
48. W. R. Howse, "Raiatea," *Australasian Record*, August 30, 1915, 4.
49. "Brother W. R. Howse reports . . .," *Australasian Record*, June 12, 1916, 7.
50. "Tasmanian Conference," *Australasian Record*, January 22, 1917, 4-5.
51. Claude D. Judd and Rex Cobbin, "Ronald Walter Howse obituary," *Record*, June 7, 2008, 14.
52. "Thirteen of our students . . .," *Australasian Record*, September 25, 1911, 6.
53. C. H. Pretyman, "Our Island Papers," *Australasian Record*, November 19, 1917, 8.
54. F. E. Lyndon, "Eastern Polynesian Mission," *Australasian Record*, March 25, 1918, 3.
55. Clive Barritt and Claude D. Judd, "Moira May Wickes obituary," *Record*, March 17, 2007, 14.
56. E. A. Turner, "Turner-Howse," *Australasian Record*, November 29, 1948, 77.

57. "Search for Notices," Turner, Eileen Rosalie, Ryerson Index to Death Notices and Obituaries in Australian Newspapers, accessed February 7, 2019, <http://ryersonindex.org/search.php>.
58. "Pastor F. E. Lyndon writes . . . ," *Australasian Record*, February 23, 1920, 8.
59. "Word comes through . . . ," *Australasian Record*, March 9, 1920, 8.
60. "We were pleased to meet . . . ," *Australasian Record*, March 22, 1920, 8.
61. "Distribution of Labour," *Australasian Record*, May 31, 1920, 5.
62. W. R. Howse, "On Furlough in the Homeland," *Australasian Record*, January 10, 1921, 3.
63. William Ralph Howse Biographical Records, "Worker's Biographical Record."
64. "Warburton Brass Band," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, January 13, 1975, 3; Eileen M. Robson, "Warburton Medical Aid Society," *Australasian Record*, October 28, 1935, 6-7.
65. N. C. Burns, "William R. Howse obituary," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, March 18, 1957, 15.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid.
69. W. G. Turner, "Mabel A. Howse obituary," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, October 17, 1966, 7.

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