Roy Edgar Hay was a pioneer missionary in the Philippines.

**Early Life, Education, and Marriage**

Roy Edgar Hay was the second of Rolly Edgar Hay’s and Malinda Emily Brown’s (1863-1938; 1866-1947) five children. Hay was born on July 24, 1887, in Republic County, Kansas. His siblings included Glenn Lee (1883-1952), Nellie (1895-1992), Eleanor Cotter (1897-1919), and a child that did not survive. Hay’s father joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1882, and in 1901 the family established a new home in Greeley, Colorado.

In 1906, at age 19, Roy enrolled at Union College, although he never graduated. Spending his summers in colporteur work and evangelistic efforts, Hay went to Colorado and assisted in several tent meetings in the Colorado Conference in 1910. That same year, he married Edith Lillian Dransfield (1891-1982) of Topeka, Kansas, and their marriage was blessed with four children—Royal Edgar (1911-1987), Donald William (1913-2008), Conrad Bennett (1916-2001), and Mary Eleanor (1919-2012). Conrad and Mary were born in the Philippines.

**Career and Ministry**

During the General Conference Session in 1913, L. V. Finster, the man who pioneered the work in Manila, the Philippines, requested additional missionaries. Hay and his wife responded to the call to start the Adventist work in Northern Luzon, the Philippines. On August 25, 1913, two months before their departure to the Philippines, Hay was ordained. On October 1, 1913, the couple and their two sons—Royal, age 2 and Donald, age 6 months—together with Finster and three other missionary families, boarded the ship *Mongolio* in San Francisco bound for Manila. In November 1913, the missionaries arrived at their mission field in the Philippines; Vigan, Ilocos Sur, was chosen to be the center of the pioneering work among the Ilocanos in Northern Luzon in spite of being in the heart of Roman Catholicism in the north.

During their first two years in Northern Luzon, the Hays engaged in training and laying a foundation for evangelism. Hay focused on learning the Ilocano dialect, and getting tracts translated and printed. The Hays opened their house free of charge to high school students studying in Vigan, so long as they attended evening family worships. Colporteur institutes were another method implemented by the Hays. The students lodging in their house became Hay’s apprentices in his colporteur institutes. After months of training, he dispatched these students to the surrounding towns and provinces. On March 19, 1915, he commenced his first open-air evangelistic meeting held at San Julian, a barrio of Vigan, which lasted until October. It was attended by about thirty or forty adults who brought their own seats. Yet, it was purely seed-sowing for no baptism was reported. By November 1915, Hay’s request for a Filipino associate in the work was fulfilled by the arrival of the newly-married Filipino couple, Leon and Maria Roda (Leon was ordained in December 1916). But sometime in January 1917, Hay met a severe motorcycle accident. One of his feet was badly injured to the point of amputation, but was saved through operation. He spent several months in
The work in Northern Luzon continued to progress through the leadership of Hay. The first baptism was held in 1916, and additional missionaries enabled the expansion of the mission field into the southern towns of Ilocos Sur, as well as the provinces of Ilocos Norte, Mountain Provinces, Abra, La Union and Pangasinan. The initial success of the work led to the organization of the Northern Luzon Mission in 1917, with Hay the director and the Hay home the headquarters.

On March 23, 1921, after eight years of pioneering work in Northern Luzon, the Hays went to the United States for a furlough thinking to return soon. The work was temporarily entrusted to another American missionary couple, William and Effa Ammundsen, who had arrived about eight months earlier. But the Hays' return to the Philippines was postponed when, in a medical check-up, Edith was found to be in poor health. While waiting for medical clearance, Hay visited various places, promoting mission work by sharing stories and slide shows from the Philippines. Also, while in the United States, he was elected the official delegate of the Philippines to the General Conference Session in 1922.

Later Life
The Hays' dream of returning to the Philippines to continue the work they had started in Northern Luzon was prohibited when Edith Hay was diagnosed with cervical cancer. Following this setback, Hay served in the Nebraska Conference as Sabbath School director and in other conferences—Colorado, Kansas, Oregon, and California—in various capacities. At the same time, he started writing children stories which were published in church papers. These stories were known as “Ma Stories” because the heroine is a mother. Unexpectedly, on June 15, 1935, at the Glendale Sanitarium, Hay died of congestive heart failure a few days short of his 48th birthday. Edith died on December 7, 1982, at age 91 and was buried beside her husband.

Legacy
The beginning of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Northern Luzon is attributed to Hay. Through his pioneering work begun in November 1913, the church was established in the Roman Catholic-dominated lowlands and the non-Christian tribes of the mountainous uplands of Northern Luzon. When Hay left for a furlough in 1921, the Northern Luzon Mission, which he was instrumental in founding and leading for eight years, had six organized churches and two companies. Furthermore, there was a significant Adventist presence in the mountainous regions of Northern Luzon. In reaching the remote places, far from the luxuries of paved roads and highways, Hay traveled by foot, or rode on horseback, water buffalo, or oxcart. It was his belief in the imminent coming of Jesus that fueled him to reach the people, both pagans and other Christians, and to help them be ready for Jesus. His pioneering work is summarized in two strategic legacies: learn the local language in order to effectively communicate the message and train the local people to reach their own people.

NOTES


Calkins.

Hay, October 12, 2013.


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