

Carr, Harold Edgar (1882–1976), and Clara Alberta (Paterson) (1882–1964)

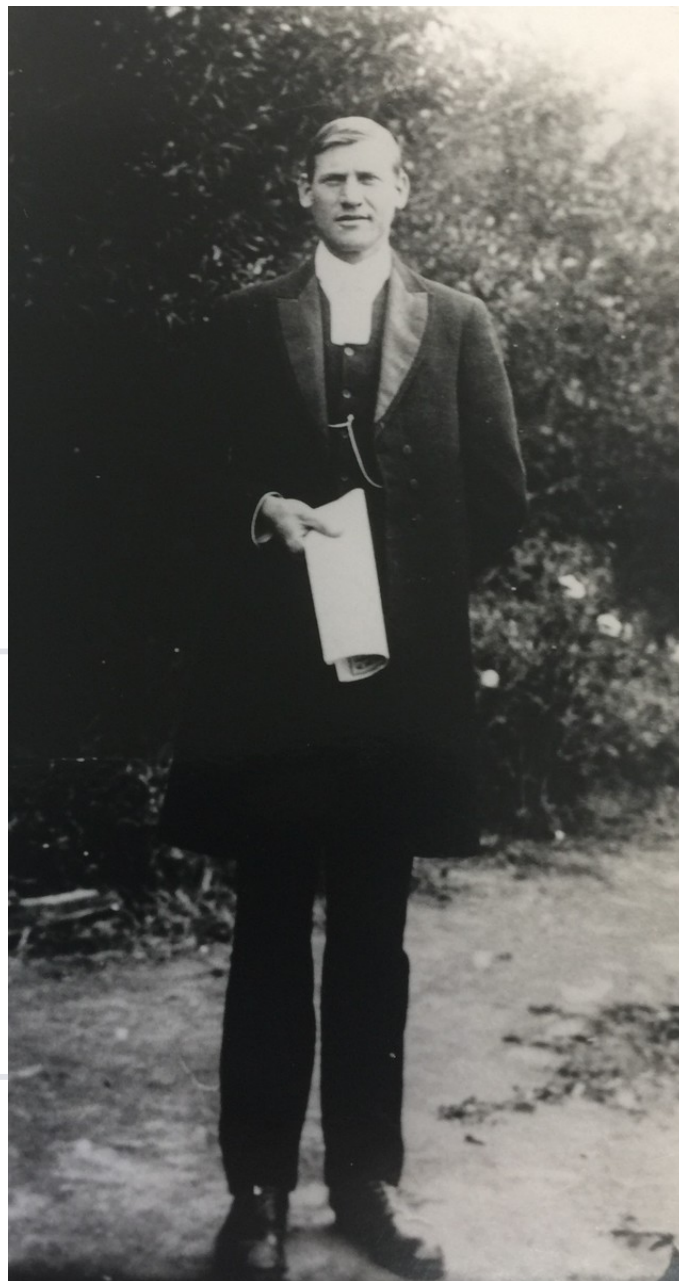
LESTER DEVINE

Originally trained as a secondary history teacher, a career long Adventist educator, Lester Devine, Ed.D., has taught at elementary, secondary and higher education levels and spent more than three decades in elected educational leadership positions in two divisions of the world Church, NAD (1969-1982) and SPD (1982-2005). He completed his forty years of denominational service with a term as director of the Ellen G. White/Adventist Research Centre at Avondale University College in Australia where his life-long hobby of learning and presenting on Adventist heritage issues became his vocation.

Harold and Clara Carr, along with Calvin and Myrtle Parker, were the first Australian Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) missionaries to the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu).

Harold Edgar Carr was born on November 5, 1882, in Parkside, Adelaide, South Australia.¹ His mother became an SDA and was baptized in 1890.² Harold

Carr states that he also “accepted the message” in 1890.³ He was just eight years old at that time. In 1899, Carr attended the Australasian Missionary College for one year as an “industrial student” working his way through his education.⁴ While enrolled at Avondale, Harold was baptized in Dora Creek at “dry log.”⁵ In 1908 Carr enrolled in the nursing program at the Sydney Sanitarium and graduated in 1911.⁶ Clara Alberta Patterson was a classmate. She had been born in Wagga Wagga in New South Wales, Australia, on August 4, 1882.⁷ Clara and Harold were married on January 2, 1912, shortly after their graduation.⁸ They were under appointment to the New Hebrides.⁹



Harold E. Carr, c. 1920.

Photo courtesy of South Pacific Division Heritage Centre.

The Carrs left Sydney on February 1, 1912, bound initially for Norfolk Island.¹⁰ They remained on Norfolk for some three months working with the small group of church members.¹¹ Leaving their wives on Norfolk Island, Carr and Calvin Parker traveled to the New Hebrides looking for a suitable site to establish a mission station.¹² They remained for more than a year in Port Vila, the capital.¹³ While in Vila, they began providing much needed medical care to the surrounding villages.¹⁴ At the same time, they were searching for a place to establish a permanent presence. After inspecting a number of sites, Pastor Calvin Parker and Harold Carr made a special trip in February 1913 to the small island of Atchin, and after further inspection by Pastor Butz, specially sent by the Australasian Union, a property of 15 acres was procured.¹⁵

In June 1913 the Carrs traveled to the small island of Atchin and established themselves about half a kilometer (one-quarter mile) off the northeast coast of the island of Malekula.¹⁶ The Parkers joined them just a few weeks later, on July 25.¹⁷ Conditions were rudimentary.¹⁸ Carr noted that “cannibalism has been discontinued for about ten or twelve years, we are told, but immorality and vice of every description ‘stalk abroad at noonday.’”¹⁹

Medical work was commenced as soon as possible.²⁰ However, their stay in the New Hebrides was cut short. By November 1913 they were on their way home to Australia. Their first child, Harold Patterson Carr, who had been born while they were at Vila, had died on October 16, and Clara Carr was gravely ill.²¹ They had buried their small son of eight and a half months on Atchin. It was the first Christian burial on the island.²² Four more children would be born into the family: Clara Dorothy Carr, born May 27, 1914, in Rippon Lea, Melbourne, Victoria; Alethea Verna Carr, born July 24, 1917, at Millicent, South Australia; Raymond Edgar Carr, born August 15, 1918, at Cooranbong, New South Wales; and Ruth Vida Carr, born March 20, 1920, at Inverell, New South Wales.²³

Back in Australia, Harold Carr opened “treatment rooms” in Collins Street, Melbourne.²⁴ He remained there during 1914 and 1915 and then received an invitation to enter field ministry. The family transferred to Millicent, South Australia,²⁵ and were there for less than two years before moving at the end of 1917 to Cooranbong, New South Wales, to be in charge of the Avondale health retreat.²⁶

In 1919, Carr was appointed to ministry in the North New South Wales Conference.²⁷ Called into field ministry, Harold Carr raised up a new church at Wallsend in the nearby city of Newcastle before moving north to Inverell,²⁸ and later to Armidale,²⁹ and then, finally, in 1925, to Wingham.³⁰ Shortly after coming to Wingham, their eldest daughter, Dorothy, just 10 years old, died in the Taree hospital.³¹

After some time working for the Church in Queensland, Carr’s precarious health necessitated a change from denominational employment. He went farming near Nambour before relocating once again to the Avondale area for the sake of the education of their children, Raymond and Ruth.³²

Clara Carr died on April 6, 1964.³³ Harold Carr died on September 26, 1976.³⁴

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NOTES

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