

# Tuaine Solomona

## (c.1885–1938)

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### 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.

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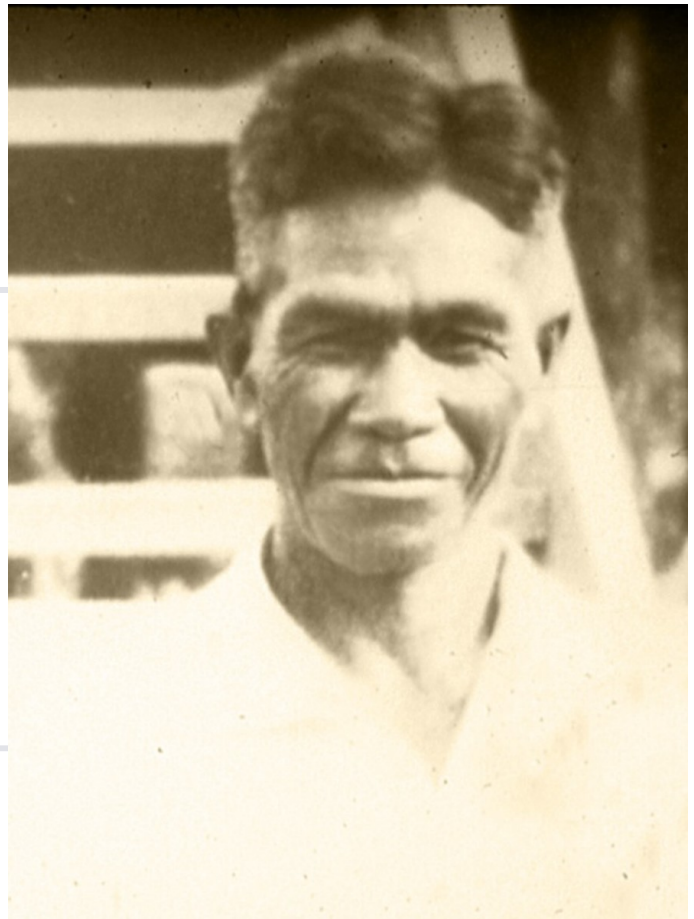
Tuaine Solomona was a native Cook Islander and missionary who helped Septimus Carr and other Seventh-day Adventist missionaries to Papua.

### Early Years

Tuaine Solomona was born on Rarotonga Island, Cook Islands, about 1885.<sup>1</sup> He was the son of Timi Terai and Ngata of Titikaveka.<sup>2</sup> As a teenager he attended Evelyn Gooding's small mission school at Titikaveka, which she conducted between 1902-1905.<sup>3</sup> He demonstrated potential as a leader and travelled to the Avondale School for Christian Workers in New South Wales, Australia to broaden his training.<sup>4</sup> He was sent to Avondale because of his aptitude for leadership and his practical skills in establishing new gardens, later maintaining the mission ketch *Diari* (after earning a Certificate in Internal Combustion Engines), and handling horses, all of which were to prove invaluable in helping to establish new mission stations.<sup>5</sup>

### Mission Service

Rather than return to his home where he was urgently needed, he was appointed to assist Septimus Carr during the pioneering stage in Papua.<sup>6</sup> Rarotongan missionaries of another denomination in Papua were on the mailing list for the Adventist periodical, *Tuatua-Mou*,<sup>7</sup> and Carr had made contact to further influence them.<sup>8</sup> Solomona would have had some rapport with them.



Tuaine Solomona, c. 1915.

From Robert Dixon collection.

In November 1909 Solomona sailed on the *Van Spilbergen* from Sydney, bound for Port Moresby.<sup>9</sup> He arrived November 16 to cope with an unfamiliar Motuan language and culture.<sup>10</sup> Carr's mission station was located at Bisiatabu on a plateau to the east of Port Moresby. The climate was hot and humid, making manual work very taxing. Benisimani Tavodi, Carr's Fijian assistant, and Solomona operated a pit-saw to provide lumber for building the mission homes. They also worked to establish garden plots of bananas, taro, tapioca, citrus, and rubber trees.<sup>11</sup> Later they added corn, pumpkins, and yams.<sup>12</sup> Solomona was granted a missionary licence in 1911.<sup>13</sup>

## Interlude

Solomona wanted to find a wife among the local population, but according to Carr's standards, he committed some indiscretions when courting. Carr dismissed him toward the end of 1911. Solomona found employment with a plantation owner where he was given a managerial role. The owner was an Indian gentleman who had married a Papuan woman. Some years later Solomona married their daughter, Mary. They had four children, Terry (Joe), Ivan, Eunice, and Martha.<sup>14</sup>

## Return to Mission Service

Solomona almost drowned on one occasion, an experience that caused him to seriously consider the direction of his life. He and Mary determined to return to the mission field with their young family. He was appointed to assist Cecil Howell at Mirigeda near Bisiatabu about 1932. Later they were transferred to Maopa village near Aroma to work alongside Alma Wiles.<sup>15</sup>

In 1938 Solomona began to experience health problems when a doctor discovered a malignancy in his mouth. The lack of modern analgesics meant he suffered considerably until he succumbed on April 8, 1938. Missionary Ken Gray conducted his burial service in the little cemetery at Mirigeda. Elder William Lock, superintendent of the Papua Mission, spoke highly of the assistance Solomona had given to the mission cause.<sup>16</sup> Mary remarried a missionary named John Mea, also known as Karaho.<sup>17</sup>

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## NOTES

1. W[illiam] N. Lock, "Tuaine Solomon [sic]," *Australasian Record*, July 4, 1938, 7; Cook Islands Court Minute Book No. 4, May 5, 1908, 199, held in the personal collection of Suzi Wharton, granddaughter of Solomona.
2. Suzi Wharton, granddaughter of Solomona, telephone interview with the editor, June 14, 2020.
3. Evelyn Golding, "Seventy Years of Providential Care," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, March 19, 1956, 2.
4. "Passenger List, Union Steamship Company of New Zealand, *Rotokino*, December 5, 1903, held in the personal collection of granddaughter Suzi Wharton..
5. Ibid.
6. "Actions Taken by the Union Conference Council," *Union Conference Record*, October 4, 1909, 4.
7. "From a New Guinea Missionary," *Union Conference Record*, August 17, 1908, 5.
8. S[eptimus] W. Carr, "Annual Report of the New Guinea Mission," *Union Conference Record*, September 27, 1909, 3-4.
9. "On the afternoon of November 1 . . .," *Union Conference Record*, November 15, 1909, 8.

10. "Brother Carr of New Guinea wrote . . .," *Union Conference Record*, December 13, 1909, 8.
11. E[dith] M. and S[eptimus] W. Carr, "Advancement in New Guinea," *Union Conference Record*, January 17, 1910, 3; G[ordon] and M[aud] Smith, "Arrival in New Guinea," *Union Conference Record*, January 17, 1910, 3.
12. S[eptimus] W. Carr, "Biennial Report of New Guinea Mission," *Union Conference Record*, October 24, 1910, 26.
13. "Credentials and Licences," *Australasian Record*, October 2, 1911, 6.
14. Boehm, 39.
15. Ibid.
16. W[illiam] N. Lock, "Tuaine Solomon," *Australasian Record*, July 4, 1938, 7.
17. Boehm, 39.

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