

Klooster, Henry J.

(1896–1963)

DENNIS PETTIBONE

Dennis Pettibone, Ph.D. (University of California, Riverside), is professor emeritus of history at Southern Adventist University. He and his first wife, Carol Jean Nelson Pettibone (now deceased) have two grown daughters. He is now married to the former Rebecca Aufderhar. His published writings include *A Century of Challenge: the Story of Southern College* and the second half of *His Story in Our Time*.

Henry J. Klooster, science professor and college administrator, was born February 3, 1896, in Chicago, Illinois.¹ As a student at Emmanuel Missionary College (EMC), he led two successful fundraising campaigns that paid off a significant portion of the college debt. After graduating from EMC, he received a second bachelor's degree from the University of Chicago and would later obtain master's and doctoral degrees.² He began his teaching career in 1922 as a science teacher at Canadian Junior College.³ In 1923 he became president of Canadian Junior College, but continued teaching science classes as well.⁴

In 1927, at the age of 31, Klooster accepted the position he would hold longer than any other: president of Southern Junior College. He continued combining administrative responsibilities with science teaching. He was the only biology and chemistry teacher at Southern for many years, teaching three to five classes a semester. In addition, he held evangelistic meetings and frequently preached Sabbath morning sermons.⁵ He encouraged his faculty members to plan lessons and chapel services that would help their students to grow spiritually.⁶

Reportedly, "his administrative success at Southern sprang from a combination of organizational skill and dynamic speaking complemented by an appearance."⁷ He secured junior college accreditation for Southern and began agitating for senior college status as early as 1920, although this issue would lie dormant for a decade.⁸

From Southern Junior College, Klooster moved to the presidency of his alma mater, Emmanuel Missionary College, in Berrien Springs, Michigan. He headed that college from 1937 to 1943. Now that he was president of a



Henry J. Klooster.

From *Adventist Heritage*, Vol. 8, No. 1, Spring 1983, page 50.

senior college, he appears to have left teaching responsibilities behind⁹ until late in his EMC administration, when he taught a class in chemistry.¹⁰

His next assignment was the presidency of Pacific Union College (PUC) in Angwin, California, where he was president from 1943 to 1945. He had no teaching responsibilities at PUC.¹¹ Despite his brief tenure at PUC, he is described as having "played a dynamic leadership role in advancing" that college.¹²

Describing Klooster as dynamic, PUC historian Walter Utt says, "Few administrators in the denomination had such ability." Calling him "a man of imperious personality, with definite ideas for strengthening and vitalizing the work at P.U.C., he left an imprint on the campus. which long survived his two short years on campus," preparing "master plans for postwar expansion, both physical and educational."¹³ This included planning for accreditation by the state of California.¹⁴

He suddenly resigned in October 1945 because of "personal problems." The faculty was told that he needed "rest and recuperation."¹⁵

At this point, Klooster disappeared completely from denominational employment records,¹⁶ even though he lived on until November 20, 1963.¹⁷

SOURCES

Obituary. *ARH*, February 6, 1964.

Pettibone, Dennis. *Century of Challenge: The Story of Southern College, 1892-1992*. Collegedale, TN: The Board of Trustees, Southern College of Seventh-day Adventist, 1992.

Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook, various years. <https://www.adventistyearbook.org/>.

Utt, Walter. *A Mountain, Pickax, A College*, third edition Angwin Pacific Union College, 1996.

"Your Heritage: Henry J. Klooster." Accessed March 26, 2021. <https://puc.edu//heritage/klooster2.html>.

NOTES

1. Obituary, *ARH*, February 6, 1964, 25.

2. Dennis Pettibone, *Century of Challenge: The Story of Southern College, 1892-1992* (Collegedale, TN: The Board of Trustees, Southern College of Seventh-day Adventist, 1992), 123.

3. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1923), 184.

4. Ibid. (1924), 192.
5. Pettibone, 123.
6. Ibid., 135-36.
7. Ibid., 123.
8. Ibid., 136-137.
9. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1938), 247; (1939), 254; (1940), 260-261; (1941), 265-266; (1942), 209-210.
10. Ibid. (1943), 220.
11. Ibid. (1944), 241-242; (1945), 1943-244.
12. "Your Heritage: Henry J. Klooster," accessed March 26, 2021, <https://puc.edu/heritage/klooster2.html>.
13. Walter Utt, *A Mountain, Pickax, A College*, third edition (Angwin, CA: Pacific Union College, 1996), 113.
14. Ibid., 114.
15. Ibid.
16. The 1946 *Yearbook* gave his address in Boulder, Colorado (*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* [1946], 372). However, he is not listed as an employee of the Central Union Conference and the Colorado Conference (Ibid., 31-32).
17. Obituary.

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