



Frances and Alexander Waugh and their three daughters

Photo courtesy of Milton Hook.

## Waugh, Frances Ngahuia Lucy (Nicholas) (1872–1956)

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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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Francis Waugh was a translator for the Australasian Union Conference. She was largely responsible for the regular magazines that served the needs of the Pacific Island nations: *Te Maramarama* (Tahitian), *Tuatua-mou*

(Cook Islands Māori or Rarotongan), *Talaʻfekau Moʻoni* (Tongan); and *Tala Moni* (Samoa).

## New Zealand Origins

Frances Ngahuia Lucy Nicholas was born in New Zealand on December 6, 1872.<sup>1</sup> Her father was English and her mother was Maori of the Ngati Maru clan in the Taranaki district. Her stepbrother, Henry, had married a Rarotongan young woman and settled on Rarotonga Island as a trader, becoming quite wealthy. When Frances Nichols was almost twelve years old Henry Nichols visited her school one day and tricked her into boarding his return ship just before it sailed back to Rarotonga, Cook Islands. Henry Nichols's move was culturally acceptable, especially in view of the fact Frances Nicholes was well cared for and there was every intention she would be returned to New Zealand.<sup>2</sup>

## Time on Rarotonga

The years away from home were fortuitous. Nichols learned the Rarotongan language and was employed by the resident British Governor as his interpreter at public functions. The first contact she had with Seventh-day Adventists occurred when the *Pitcairn* called at Rarotonga in 1891. She purchased a book simply to get rid of the colporteur.<sup>3</sup>

When Nichols was twenty years old she made a visit to her family in New Zealand and then returned voluntarily to Rarotonga to resume her work as interpreter. Nichols continued to associate with the Seventh-day Adventist missionaries who came on subsequent voyages of the *Pitcairn*. She was persuaded to attend the Avondale School for Christian Workers for training as a missionary nurse. In 1897, she sailed for Australia via New Zealand where she revealed her plans to her family. Her mother tried to discourage her, but Nichols persisted and continued on to Australia. Aboard ship, she met a Tahitian named Tita Salmon. She convinced him he should attend the same school. It was there that he was later baptized.<sup>4</sup>

## At Training School

Nichols arrived at the Avondale School for Christian Workers in August 1897. Ellen White gave her lodgings for two years and paid her tuition fees. Nichols's eldest sister was married to a cattle rancher, Harvey Waugh, who own a property named "Guy Fawkes" near Armidale, New South Wales. Nichols spent her first vacation at the ranch and met Harvey Waugh's brother, Alexander Gordon Waugh, usually known as Gordon, who was immediately enamored with Frances Nichols. Gordon joined her at the school and learned something of Adventism.<sup>5</sup> While a student, she translated a number of tracts into the Polynesian languages and these were printed at the Avondale Press.<sup>6</sup> At the close of the school year, 1899, Frances Nichols and Alexander Waugh returned to the ranch and on December 5 were married in the town of Walcha.<sup>7</sup>

## Farming

Gordon and Frances Waught settled into married life on a farm in the vicinity of Walcha. They had two daughters. Conditions were rugged. Drought, bushfires, and locust plagues were part of a farmer's life, but they witnessed a number of remarkable answers to prayer that converted Gordon to the Adventist Church. In 1904, they decided to sell the farm and move to the Adventist community at Wahroonga<sup>8</sup>

## Translation Work

Living close to the Sydney Sanitarium, Frances Waugh planned to train as a nurse. However, her talent as a translator was utilized by church leaders. She soon found herself fully occupied with translation work. She became responsible for the translation of the monthly periodicals *Te Maramarama* (Tahitian), *Tuatua-mou* (Cook Islander), *Tala'fekau Mo'oni* (Tongan) and as editor of the *Tala Moni* (Samoa), work along at first and later with Agnes Deane.<sup>9</sup> Waugh was appointed by the Australasian Union Conference council to serve on the [Pacific] Island Book Committee from 1911 to 1918.<sup>10</sup> She was also a delegate to the Union Conference council sessions from 1906 to 1914.<sup>11</sup> During these years, she produced the Rarotongan version of *Bible Readings*<sup>12</sup> in addition to the quarterly Sabbath School lessons and periodicals for Eastern Polynesia. The work demanded regular trips to the Avondale Press to deliver copy and extended visits to read galley proofs. She gave approximately thirteen years of service as a translator and editor until the printing of books and periodicals for Eastern Polynesia was transferred from Avondale to Rarotonga around 1918.

## After 1918

Gordon Waugh had been elected to the New South Wales Conference executive committee for some years (1912, 1915, and 1917) and continued for 1919 and 1920.<sup>13</sup> He was also a delegate at the 1918 Australasian Union Conference Session.<sup>14</sup> Frances Waugh became interested in alternative medicine, often caring for the sick with treatments in her own home.<sup>15</sup> They united in their efforts to help establish a permanent building for the nearby Hornsby church, later renamed the Waitara church. On June 28, 1932, Gordon Waugh died after surgery to correct a condition caused by a fall from a ladder.<sup>16</sup> Frances Waugh died peacefully on March 17, 1956.<sup>17</sup>

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## NOTES

1. "Frances (Nicholas) Waugh," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, April 16, 1956, 15.

2. Frances [N. L.] Waugh, "Mrs. E. G. White Educates Daughter of Maori Chieftainess," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, August 29, 1955, 2-4.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

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9. "Nominations," *Union Conference Record*, September 21, 1908, 41.
10. "Australasian Union Conference: Island Book Committee," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1911), 90.
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13. "New South Wales Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1912), 97.
14. "Delegation to the Union Conference," *Australasian Record*, October 21, 1918, 60.
15. Frances [N. L.] Waugh, "Mrs. E. G. White Educates Daughter of Maori Chieftainess," *Australasian Record and Advent World Survey*, August 29, 1955, 2-4.
16. A[lbert] W Anderson, "Alexander Gordon Waugh obituary," *Australasian Record*, July 11, 1932, 7.
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