



Collinsvale Church, Tasmania. Jesse Pallant was Conference President in Tasmania between 1904 and 1907.

Photo courtesy of Barry Oliver.

Pallant, Jesse (1862–1948)

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.

Jesse Pallant was born in Emu Bay, Tasmania, Australia, on September 3, 1862, to Joseph Pallant (1814–1909), a sea captain, and Mary Ann Tonkyn.¹ The family moved to New Zealand by 1875 where a sister, Mary Pearce

Pallant, and a brother, Frank Wanbrow Pallant, were born.² While the circumstances leading to Jesse becoming a Seventh-day Adventist are not known, his mother and sister Mary when 12 years of age were baptized by A. G. Daniels, who was then working in New Zealand.³ Mary was to later become one of the first nurses to graduate from the Summer Hill Sanitarium in Sydney, Australia, precursor to the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital.⁴

Pallant began his denominational service early in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in New Zealand and by November 1888 was the General Canvassing Agent in Auckland, New Zealand.⁵ Then in 1891 he married Jane Gibson Bell in the state of Victoria, Australia.⁶ They were to have three daughters: Eunice Edna (1895),⁷ Olive (1898),⁸ and Linda Zoe (1903).⁹

In December 1891 Pallant became the Tract Society director for the state of New South Wales (NSW), supervising and training canvassers (colporteurs).¹⁰ Later that year he was, in addition, involved in ship ministry in Sydney, NSW.¹¹ At the Australian Conference session held in January 1893, he was granted a ship ministry licence.¹² He reported that "he and Brother Robertson had visited three hundred ships, and files of the Echo had been placed on board of steamers and sailing ships going to many parts of the world."¹³ He continued working with sailors in Sydney harbor until the end of 1894 when he was granted a missionary licence at the Australian Conference session held in October 1894.¹⁴

In 1895 Pallant was given a ministerial appointment in NSW. He held meetings in North Sydney.¹⁵ By August 1896 he was conducting meetings in Brisbane, Queensland (Qld).¹⁶ He remained in Queensland until the end of 1898 where he was ordained in the gospel ministry at the Brisbane camp meeting in October 1898.¹⁷ Then in 1899 he was transferred to the Western Australia Mission.¹⁸ Though untrained at any of the denominational schools, he was showing an aptitude for evangelism and leadership.¹⁹ By 1902 Western Australia had been organized into a conference with Jesse Pallant elected as the first president.²⁰ In 1903 he was reelected, during the first camp meeting in the conference, as the conference president in Western Australia.²¹ After five years in Western Australia, the Pallant family transferred to Tasmania in 1904 where he became the president for Tasmania.²² He was reelected in that role in 1906.²³ In October 1907 Jesse Pallant attended the NSW Conference camp.²⁴ While there he was elected as president of the conference.²⁵ By October 1908 the Pallant family were on their way to Wellington in New Zealand where Pallant had been appointed as conference president for the country.²⁶ He was reelected in 1910.²⁷ And he was reelected in 1911.²⁸ That same year he was elected a vice-president of the Australian Union Conference with special responsibility for city evangelism. He and three others were named as "being fitted by experience for aggressive work in our large cities."²⁹

Even though he was a vice-president of the Australasian Union Conference, Pallant remained in New Zealand as president until the conference session held from January 31 to February 4, 1912.³⁰ His wife and three daughters traveled to Australia shortly thereafter in anticipation of their move to Sydney.³¹ Pallant, however, remained in New Zealand where he took charge of an evangelistic series in Auckland.³² He was still there during most of 1912.³³

After moving to Australia, Pallant was involved for a short time in an evangelistic series in Tasmania.³⁴ However, on March 10, 1913, he was suspended by the Australasian Union Conference pending an investigation of reported inappropriate actions with a female Bible worker.³⁵ He subsequently resigned, and his credentials were canceled.³⁶ A "Confession" appeared in the *Australasian Record* in which Pallant attempted to dispel any rumors that his leaving denominational employment was because of the actions of the Union Committee but because of his "own wickedness." He stated that he had "brought disgrace upon the sacred cause of present truth, which I sincerely regret . . . though my love for this message has never waned, neither have I doubted one single phase of the truth."³⁷

No further mention of Jesse Pallant appears in the *Australasian Record* after 1913. Jane Pallant died on May 23, 1931, and in her obituary her husband Jesse is not mentioned.³⁸ Pallant's sister, Mary Pallant Mountain, died in October 1947, and her brother is not mentioned in her obituary.³⁹ Jesse Pallant died in Glen Iris, Victoria, in 1948.⁴⁰ His death was not recorded in the literature of the church.

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