Young, Sarah Grace (1856–1921)

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.
Sarah Grace Young was among the first Sabbathkeepers and Seventh-day Adventist converts on Pitcairn Island.

**Pitcairn Years**

Sarah Grace Young was born February 9, 1856, on Pitcairn Island. She was a descendant of the 1789 HMS *Bounty* mutineer Edward (Ned) Young and one of twelve children of Moses and Albina (McCoy) Young. On May 24, 1877, she married cousin George Edward Selwyn Young. They had three children, Charles Austin, Laura Moreland, and Roland Percival.¹

In 1881 it was reported in *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* that “an interest has been awakened on Pitcairn Island.”² This had come about because Elders James White and John Loughborough had sent two separate consignments of literature to the island. The first box, dispatched in 1876, met with only suspicion among the Anglican islanders. The second box, however, ignited a spark of interest with Mary Ann McCoy who began to correspond with American Adventists. She shared her discoveries with Sarah Grace Young and husband Edward Young (his preferred name). Early in 1886 the trio followed their convictions about the Saturday Sabbath and separated from their fellow Anglicans in order to worship together. Their move created some friction on the island.³

When it became known in America that the small group had decided to observe Saturday, arrangements were made for John Tay to visit Pitcairn Island. Tay landed there on October 18, 1886 and conducted meetings to explain the tenets of faith of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. His ministry prompted most of the population to join with the original trio in the observance of Saturday.⁴

Tay was not an ordained minister and did not baptize any of his converts, but he returned on the first voyage of the Pitcairn with Elders Edward Gates and Albert Read, arriving on November 25, 1890.⁵ Sarah Grace Young and her husband were baptized by Read on December 6, 1890 together with many others, and became charter members of the Pitcairn Island SDA Church.⁶

Tragedy came to Pitcairn Island in 1893 when a typhus epidemic was introduced by ship-wrecked sailors rescued and sheltered by the islanders until further help arrived.⁷ Sarah’s husband, Edward, died of the disease on October 11, 1893.⁸

**After Pitcairn**

Sarah left Pitcairn in 1899 and lived for thirteen years in the Society and Cook Islands, moving on to Australia in 1912. She spent her last years in the home of her daughter and son-in-law, John and Laura (Young) Edmunds, at Warburton, Victoria. She was laid to rest on November 21, 1921, in the Box Hill Cemetery, suburban Melbourne. Elder Albert Piper conducted her funeral service, testifying of her abiding faithfulness to the Advent message.

**Sources**

“Church Record of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Pitcairn Island, 1890 - 1916.” South Pacific Division Heritage Centre, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, NSW; Box 110.

Gates, E[ward] H. “News From the “Pitcairn.”” *The Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, May 15, 1891.


**Notes**


3. “Church Record of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Pitcairn Island, 1890-1916,” South Pacific Division Heritage Centre, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, NSW, Box 110.?


6. “Church Record of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Pitcairn Island, 1890-1916,” South Pacific Division Heritage Centre, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, NSW, Box 110.


8. “Church Record of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Pitcairn Island, 1890-1916,” South Pacific Division Heritage Centre, Avondale College of Higher Education, Cooranbong, NSW, Box 110.