

# Beddoe, Benjamin Ernest (1884–1931)

## 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.

Benjamin Beddoe, minister and conference administrator, held several positions in the Pacific Union Conference, was president of the South African Union, and served in the General Conference Secretariat for more than six years.

## Heritage

The surname Beddoe is of Welsh origin meaning “a house of prayer.”<sup>1</sup> Benjamin’s grandparents, William Henry (1821-1908) and Mary Parcell Beddoe (1827-1897), married in Wales in 1845. They sailed to the United States in 1851 and joined the Mormon migration to the Utah territory where Benjamin’s father, also named William Henry, was born in Salt Lake City in 1853.<sup>2</sup> The younger William, commonly known as Henry, and his wife Mary Ella Moore Beddoe, moved from Utah to Missouri where Henry worked as a miller. They settled in Rolla, central Missouri, and became Seventh-day Adventists, baptized by G. I. Butler. There were nine children in their family: Daisy Ella (b. 1879), William Watkins (b. 1882), Benjamin Ernest (b. May 25, 1884), Thomas Henry (b. 1886), Everett Elihu (b. 1889), Adolph Robert (b. 1891), Morris Valentine (b. 1894), Leroy Russell (b. 1897) and Pansy Mary (b. 1904).<sup>3</sup>

Benjamin was educated in public schools and advanced to the Missouri State University where he studied during the academic year 1899-1900. In 1900 he was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist faith and entered Battle Creek College (renamed Emmanuel Missionary College and moved to Berrien Springs, Michigan in 1901)



Benjamin E. Beddoe, 1920.

Credit: United States Passport Applications, 1795-1925, *FamilySearch*.

to train for the ministry.<sup>4</sup>

## Pacific Union Conference Years

Three years of college training was followed by an appointment to the Missouri Conference to serve as a tent master for evangelistic teams.<sup>5</sup> While working in Hannibal, Missouri, he married Anna Mae Lowe on August 24, 1904.<sup>6</sup>

In 1905 Beddoe was called to the California Conference and in 1906 was assigned to Nevada, at that time part of the conference's territory. He served there for more than two years, first based in Gardnerville, then Genoa City, and finally Reno.<sup>7</sup> He was ordained at Oakland, California, by Stephen N. Haskell, William C. White, and H. W. Cottrell in February 1909. Beddoe served as the conference's Young People's and Missionary Volunteer (YPMV) secretary (director), 1910-1911, and then as pastor of the Oakland church, 1912 and 1913.<sup>8</sup>

Most of the remaining years of Beddoe's career were served in administration. Though mostly still in the Pacific Union, his responsibilities shifted rapidly over the next seven years. Beddoe was president of the Central California Conference for a year (1914) and president of the Southern California Conference for two years (1915-1916). The Pacific Union Conference then placed him in charge of its YPMV and Home Missionary departments.<sup>9</sup>

Tragedy came with the premature death of Anna on April 17, 1917, at their Glendale home. She was laid to rest in the Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Glendale.<sup>10</sup>

The following year, Benjamin married Lou Ellen Watts in Glendale on March 23, 1918. J. Adams Stevens performed the service.<sup>11</sup>

At the 1918 General Conference session held in San Francisco, March 29-April 15, Beddoe was appointed to the position of field secretary in the General Conference Sabbath School Department. He served in this role for less than a year before returning to pastoral ministry in San Francisco in 1919. Then, in 1920, he was called back into administration and served for a year as president of the Southeastern California Conference.<sup>12</sup>

## Service Abroad and at Denominational Headquarters

Late in 1920 Beddoe was appointed to the presidency of the South African Union Conference, at that time composed of 28 organized churches and a total baptized membership of 953 believers.<sup>13</sup> Benjamin and Lou Ellen, together with his two children, Harry and Mae, from his first marriage, departed New York aboard the "Olympic" on January 26, 1921, bound for Cape Town.<sup>14</sup>

Beddoe served two years in South Africa but his time overseas was cut short by ill health, apparently the early stages of systemic kidney disease. In the latter part of 1923 he returned to his former role in the Sabbath School Department at General Conference headquarters but soon afterwards was called to the Secretariat, serving as

assistant secretary under A. G. Daniells.<sup>15</sup> At the 1926 General Conference, Beddoe was elected associate secretary, working in partnership with Cecil Meyers who was elected secretary.<sup>16</sup>

His health deteriorated but Beddoe soldiered on, completing his four-year term. He left Washington, D.C. in 1930, hoping to improve his condition by spending the winter of 1930-1931 in the better climate of southern California.<sup>17</sup> He passed away in Glendale, California, on February 4, 1931, and was laid to rest in Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale. He was only 46 years of age.<sup>18</sup>

Lou Ellen Beddoe remained in California and enjoyed a long life, passing away at Redlands on December 17, 1975, aged 87. She rests in Montecito Memorial Park in Colton, California.<sup>19</sup>

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## NOTES

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