



John and Jessie Paap with daughter Hilda

Photo courtesy of South Pacific Division Heritage Centre.

Paap, John Henry (1871–1919)

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* and the *Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series*, and many magazine articles. He is married to Noeleen and has two sons and three grandchildren.

New Zealand national John Paap was a gifted educator who taught in two countries: at Healdsburg College and Pacific Union College in the United States and at the Avondale School for Christian Workers in Australia.

John Henry Paap was born January 13, 1871, in Kaikoura, New Zealand¹ to Johann Joachin Christian and Caroline (Gabbetis) Paap. He was one of eleven children. They were Mary Georgina (b.1869), Dorothea Fredrika (b.1870), Frederick William (b.1870), John Henry (b.1871), Charles Herbert (b.1873), Caroline Elizabeth (b.1875), Leonard Gabbetis (b.1876), Marion Beatrice (b.1878), Annie May (b.1880), Dorothea Louisa (b.1881) and Amy Herbatina (b.1883).² Father Johann was a sheep farmer and John became an expert shearer not only in New Zealand but also on working tours in Australia. The Paap family accepted the Seventh-day Adventist faith in 1892 as a result of the visit of Edward Gates from the mission schooner *Pitcairn*. John boarded the vessel for its return to California via Pitcairn Island, arriving at San Francisco in 1894.³

In America

At Healdsburg College John graduated with a science degree. During his studies he met fellow student and music teacher Jessie Edith Creamer. They were married at St. Helena on August 29, 1895, by Hiram St. John.⁴ Following his graduation John taught science at Healdsburg College, autumn 1897 through autumn 1899 and then accepted an appointment to the fledgling Avondale School for Christian Workers, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia.

Both John and Jessie brought significant expertise to the curriculum at the Avondale School during their eleven years of service, 1900 through 1910. John taught mathematics and basic sciences, adding botany and astronomy to previous options.⁵ John and Jessie combined to offer private vocal and instrumental music lessons. They were the first to form a choir, renditions adding to the solemnity of church and graduation services.⁶ Jessie also offered private lessons in freehand drawing and oil painting of still life and landscapes.⁷ Management of the school farm in addition to English language teaching was added to John's work load as a science teacher. Studies in classic English literature were not offered but the rudiments of the English language were a priority. To meet the need John composed *The Avondale Speller*, a collection of graded words that advanced to difficult ones such as cuirassier, seneschal and sesquipedalian. One section listed Latin words like prima facie. Another group were words often confused such as carat, caret and carrot.⁸

In 1910 John and Jessie were recalled to California in order to teach at the newly established Pacific Union College. He taught science and supervised the teams of boarding young men who worked part-time on the farm to assist with their school fees.⁹ Once again, Jessie taught drawing and painting.¹⁰ In 1914 John was appointed to be principal at Lodi Academy to the east of San Francisco. Jessie taught piano and art and their elder daughter, Hilda, taught violin.¹¹ John also became enthusiastically involved with civic entities such as the Y.M.C.A., the Red Cross and the promotion of government War Bonds to support the Allied cause in World War I.¹²

Tragedy

When the 1919 influenza pandemic swept the world Lodi Academy was not spared. John himself, despite his robust health, contracted the disease in early January. It rapidly affected his heart and he succumbed on Sabbath morning, January 18. The entire community, secular, church and school, together with Jessie and daughters Hilda and Marion, were shocked and saddened by his sudden departure.¹³ He was a gifted man who gave over two decades of valuable service to education. He is buried in the St. Helena Cemetery.¹⁴ Jessie did not remarry. She returned to Pacific Union College to continue her teaching of music and art.¹⁵ She died in 1961 and was buried alongside John where her parents were also buried in the same family plot.¹⁶

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NOTES

1. "A Well Known Teacher Has Fallen," *Pacific Union Recorder*, February 6, ,1919, [1]-2.

2. "John Henry Paap," FamilySearch.org. Intellectual Reserve, 2020, accessed May 20, 2020, <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/pedigree/landscape/LZKT-6SQ>.
3. "A Well Known Teacher Has Fallen," *Pacific Union Recorder*, February 6, 1919, [1]-2.
4. "John Henry Paap," FamilySearch.org. Intellectual Reserve, 2020, accessed May 20, 2020, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q24W-GVNM>.
5. *Annual Announcement of the Avondale School for Christian Workers* (Cooranbong, New South Wales: Avondale Press, 1901), 15, 19.
6. A[sa] T. Robinson, "Avondale School Closing Exercises," *Union Conference Record*, November 1, 1900, 10.
7. *Annual Announcement of the Avondale School for Christian Workers* (Cooranbong, New South Wales: Avondale Press, 1903), 17.
8. Milton Hook, *Avondale: Experiment on the Dora* (Cooranbong, New South Wales: Avondale Academic Press, 1998), 66.
9. "A Well Known Teacher Has Fallen," *Pacific Union Recorder*, February 6, 1919, [1]-2.
10. E.g., "Pacific Union College," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1911), 154.
11. E.g., "Lodi Academy," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1915), 169.
12. "A Well Known Teacher Has Fallen," *Pacific Union Recorder*, February 6, 1919, [1]-2.
13. Ibid.
14. "John Henry Paap," Find A Grave.com. 2020, accessed May 22, 2020, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/48243305/john-henry-paap>.
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16. "Jessie Edith (Creamer) Paap," Find A Grave.com. 2020, accessed May 22, 2020, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/48243304/jessie-edith-paap>.

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