

# Williams, Paul Lewellyn (1893–1970) and Dollie (Tyrer) (1893–1987)

---

## 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.

---

Paul Williams and his wife, Dollie, served overseas as nurses and in administration roles in China and Singapore.

## Early Years

Paul Lewellyn Williams was born on November 1, 1893, in Brooklyn, New York, to Charles and Katherine (Keating) Williams, both immigrants to America. Charles was of Welsh descent and Katherine of Irish heritage. Their children were William Charles (b. 1881), Kathleen Mary (b. 1882), Mary Eleanor (b. 1884), John Bainbrigg (b. 1885), Arthur David (b. 1886), Ruth (b. 1892), Paul Lewellyn (b. 1893), Gerald Robert (b. 1894), and Samuel (b. 1897). At the time of Paul's birth, his father was working as a clerk in a New York freight office, but later took up farming in Bledsoe, Tennessee. As a teenager, Paul assisted his father on the family farm.<sup>1</sup> His mother had converted to Adventism two years prior to his birth.<sup>2</sup>

In May 1914, Paul was baptized by Elder Mahlon Serns in Hinsdale, Illinois. Paul entered the nursing class at Hinsdale Sanitarium and Hospital, graduating in the class of 1917. In March 1918, he began work at White Memorial Hospital, Los Angeles, serving as charge-nurse in the men's treatment rooms until 1920.<sup>3</sup> During that time, he married Nurse Dollie Tyrer on May 7, 1919, at the White Memorial Church. Elder Nels Waldorf performed the ceremony.<sup>4</sup> They had one adopted son, Daniel Leong.<sup>5</sup>

## Mission Service in the Orient

In 1920, Paul and Dollie received an appointment to mission service in China. They sailed from San Francisco in April 1920, disembarking at Hong Kong.<sup>6</sup> They located at Nanning, Kwangsi (Guangxi) Province. Paul served as secretary/treasurer of the Kwangsi Mission and superintendent of the Nanning SDA Dispensary. Dollie was leading nurse at the dispensary. At the same time, Paul continued studies from the International Correspondence School and qualified as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA). He and Dollie maintained their

roles until 1925,<sup>7</sup> Paul eventually being relieved of the superintendence of the dispensary but still assisting Dollie with some nursing.<sup>8</sup>

War conditions intensified around Nanning in 1925, forcing Paul and Dollie to seek the safety of Hong Kong. At the same time, Dollie was having some medical problems. All things considered, they decided to take an early furlough back to America. They departed in August 1925.<sup>9</sup> Dollie received needed medical attention, and they returned to China in 1926.<sup>10</sup> Paul took up a new role as secretary/treasurer of the South China Union Mission with offices in Hong Kong. Dollie acted as hostess to the many visiting church officials. They served in this dual role until 1933.<sup>11</sup>

Paul and Dollie departed Hong Kong in June 1933 for a second furlough in the homeland.<sup>12</sup> They returned in December aboard the S.S. President McKinley from San Francisco.<sup>13</sup> They accepted entirely new roles for 1934, Paul serving as director of the Cantonese Mission, and Dollie teaching English in the Canton Middle School.<sup>14</sup> Their mission efforts were focused on the Cantonese-speaking people of the Guangdong Province. There were 738 baptized members in twelve organized churches, and seven smaller companies under their care.<sup>15</sup>

In 1935, Paul was appointed as secretary-treasurer and auditor of the South China Union Mission, with headquarters in Hong Kong. Dollie worked as cashier and bookkeeper in the same offices. This convenient arrangement lasted until 1941.<sup>16</sup>

A major move occurred when Paul was appointed to be the treasurer of the Far Eastern Division (FED), based in Singapore. Once again, Dollie filled the role of cashier and bookkeeper in the same offices. They transferred to Singapore in September 1941.<sup>17</sup> At that stage, they did not know the disruptions to peace that they would soon experience.

Paul and Dollie had barely time to unpack their goods when, in January 1942, the Japanese forces quickly moved down the Malayan Peninsula and into Singapore in early February. SDA missionaries escaped south to Batavia, Dutch East Indies (Jakarta, Indonesia, prior to the Fall of Singapore, February 8-15, 1942.<sup>18</sup> The Japanese, however, were intent on empire-building and pressed further south to Batavia, then took the city on March 5, 1942. Paul and Dollie, together with other missionaries, had fled to Sydney, Australia, on February 23, seeking passage across the Pacific to America.<sup>19</sup> In April, it was reported that some families had found a ship destined for New Orleans, Louisiana, via the Panama Canal. Paul and Dollie and a few of their associates boarded a ship sailing to San Francisco. The voyage was not without its dangers from submarine attack, but they arrived safely before the end of April 1942.<sup>20</sup>

## War-time Interim

Paul's arrival back in America initiated a search by church officials for a suitable role where he could continue to make a contribution to the advancement of the denomination. A number of possibilities were suggested,

including one as business manager of the Battle Creek Sanitarium.<sup>21</sup> Eventually, in July 1942, he accepted the position of manager of the Colorado Sanitarium. It proved to be a brief posting, July through November 1942. At that time, he was elected to be the secretary-treasurer of the Missouri Conference with offices in Kansas City, a position he held until June 1945. During this period, Paul was ordained in Jefferson City to the gospel ministry in August 1944 by Elders Nathaniel Wilson, Charles Longacre, and Frederick Mote.<sup>22</sup>

## Return to Singapore

Paul received notification in March 1945 that he was expected to resume his role as treasurer of the FED.<sup>23</sup> It was several months before arrangements could be made for passage to Singapore. Indeed, he and Dollie pressed ahead with the plans despite unfavorable health reports. Their endurance in the tropical heat was of some concern.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, they arrived back in Singapore in July 1945 to find two-thirds of their crockery still intact, some furniture needing repairs, and their small library of books in reasonable condition.<sup>25</sup>

In 1950, Paul and Dollie took a furlough at an opportune time to attend the General Conference Session in San Francisco. Instead of sailing across the Pacific Ocean, they toured west to London and went aboard the S.S. De Grasse, a passenger ship re-floated and rebuilt after the war years. On arrival in New York, they drove across their homeland to California to attend the meetings.<sup>26</sup>

After their 1950 furlough, Paul and Dollie returned to Singapore so Paul could continue serving as treasurer of the FED. Unfortunately, their final term in the Orient was cut short because Dollie contracted a persistent tropical fungoid disease on her hands and feet. They needed to leave the humidity of the Tropics.<sup>27</sup> They sailed back to San Francisco on the S.S. Tancred, arriving on October 15, 1954.<sup>28</sup>

## Back in the Homeland

In 1955, Paul was appointed to assist in San Francisco at the Western Transportation Office, a branch of the General Conference Transportation Bureau.<sup>29</sup> As treasurer of the FED, Paul was familiar with this type of work, arranging the dispatch and receipt of consignments of mission supplies and personnel. He had been on the mission field end of this work, but now was active on the homeland end. As he became accustomed to the work, he was asked to add to his role by serving also as assistant manager and, finally, general manager of ESDA Sales and Service in San Francisco.<sup>30</sup> This entity of the General Conference offered to missionaries and home churches cut-price merchandise such as cameras, film projectors, film strips, Sabbath School supplies, bulk foods, and clothing. Paul retired from active service in 1959. He and Dollie moved to the mountains to the east of San Francisco at Sonora. They participated in the local Adventist church activities.<sup>31</sup>

Paul Williams passed away on September 17, 1970, at the age of 76.<sup>32</sup> Dollie Williams lived to be 93, passing away on April 28, 1987. They now rest together in Mountain Shadow Cemetery, Sonora.<sup>33</sup>

---

## SOURCES

Cormack, A. W. "Our Missionaries." *ARH*, February 19, April 30, 1942.

"Dollie Williams." *Find A Grave Memorial* ID 113997835. Accessed October 26, 2023.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/113997835/dollie-williams>.

"Paul Llewellyn Williams." *FamilySearch*. Accessed September 26, 2023.

<https://www.familysearch.org/tree/pedigree/landscape/L6W5-G64>.

"Paul Llewellyn Williams." *Find A Grave Memorial* ID 113997795. Accessed October 26, 2023.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/113997795/paul-l-williams>.

Roth, D. A. "Paul Williams." *Pacific Union Recorder*, November 1970.

*Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*. Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association. Various years.

<https://www.adventistyearbook.org/>.

Williams, P. L. "Greetings to the Workers and Church Members of the Far Eastern Division," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, November 1941.

Williams, Paul Llewellyn. Appointee Files, RG 21, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Silver Spring, MD (GCA).

Williams, Paul Llewellyn. Secretariat Files, RG 21, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, Silver Spring, MD (GCA).

---

## NOTES

1. "Paul Llewellyn Williams," *FamilySearch*, accessed September 26, 2023, <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/pedigree/landscape/L6W5-G64>.

2. Paul Llewellyn Williams Biographical Information, October 18, 1945. Secretariat Files, RG 21, Record 114953, GCA.

3. Ibid.

4. "Paul Llewellyn Williams," *FamilySearch*.

5. Roth, "Paul Llewellyn Williams," obituary, *Pacific Union Recorder*, 1970.

6. P. L. Williams, "Greetings to the Workers and Church Members of the Far Eastern Division," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, November 1941, 2.

7. "Paul Llewellyn Williams," Secretariat Files.

8. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1925), 268.
9. Paul Llewellyn Williams Information on Returning Missionaries Form, August 12, 1925. Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 49556, GCA.
10. Letter, B. E. Beddoe to P. L. Williams, May 2, 1926, Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 49556, GCA.
11. "Paul Llewellyn Williams," Secretariat Files.
12. Paul Llewellyn Williams Information on Returning Missionaries Form, May 30, 1933, Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 49556, GCA.
13. Letter, P. L. Williams to M. E. Kern, November 1, 1933, Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 49556, GCA.
14. "Paul Llewellyn Williams," Biographical Information Blank.
15. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* for 1935, 111-112.
16. "Paul Llewellyn Williams," Biographical Information.
17. Ibid.
18. A. W. Cormack, "Our Missionaries," *ARH*, February 19, 1942, 1.
19. Paul Llewellyn Williams, Information on Returning Missionaries Form, April 17, 1942, Appointee Files. RG 21, Record 49556, GCA.
20. A. W. Cormack, "Our Missionaries," *ARH*, April 30, 1942, 32.
21. Letter, H. T. Elliott to P. L. Williams, May 8, 1942, Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 49556, GCA.
22. "Paul Llewellyn Williams," Biographical Information Blank.
23. Letter, A. W. Cormack to P. L. Williams, March 23, 1945, Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 49556, GCA.
24. Letter, Robert Hare to W. P. Bradley, October 2, 1945, Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 49556, GCA.
25. Letter, P. L. Williams to W. P. Bradley, July 30, 1945, Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 49556, GCA.
26. Letter, P. L. Williams to W. P. Bradley, February 27, 1950, Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 49556, GCA.
27. Letter, P. L. Williams to W. P. Bradley, July 30, 1954, Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 49556, GCA.
28. Letter, W. H. Raley to H. T. Elliott, October 15, 1954, Appointee Files, RG 21, Record 49556, GCA.

29. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1956), 18.

30. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1958), 17-18.

31. D. A. Roth, "Paul Llewellyn Williams obituary, *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, November 1970, 4.

32. "Paul Llewellyn Williams," *Find A Grave Memorial* ID 113997795, July 19, 2013, accessed October 26, 2023,  
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/113997795/paul-l-williams>.

33. "Dollie Williams," *Find A Grave Memorial* ID 113997835, July 19, 2023, accessed October 26, 2023,  
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/113997835/dollie-williams>.

---

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000