

Cady, Benjamin Jacob (1863–1927) and Iva Rosebud (Fowler) (1867–1931)



Benjamin J. and Iva Fowler Cady

Photo courtesy of Center for Adventist Research.

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 J. Cady was a minister who, with his wife, Iva Fowler Cady, devoted two decades to educational, editorial, and evangelistic work as missionaries in the South Pacific.

Early Life, Marriage, and Ministry

Benjamin Cady's father, Philander Houghton Cady (1832-1897) moved as a young man from Vermont to Wisconsin where he married Nancy Hall (1834-1914) in 1854 and with her raised a family of seven children on a farm at Poy Sippi, about thirty miles west of Oshkosh.¹ Three of their sons took over the farm while P. H. Cady gravitated to preaching for the Seventh-day Adventist faith. By 1885 he was working as an ordained minister for the rural community at Poy Sippi.² Benjamin, who was born at Poy Sippi on March 20, 1863, trained as a carpenter³ and then, having acquired those skills, decided he would follow his father in ministry.

Leaving his home at twenty-three years of age, Benjamin went west to the rural community of Vilas in South Dakota to canvass denominational books and remained there as a trainee minister until 1888.⁴ He returned to Wisconsin to marry Iva Rosebud Fowler at her home village of Elroy on December 10, 1888.⁵ The following year Benjamin was ordained to the gospel ministry.⁶ The couple remained in the Wisconsin Conference, first serving to the north in Bloomville.⁷

Service in the South Pacific (1893-1913)

In 1892 the Cadys were assigned to sail on the second voyage of the "Pitcairn" to the South Seas. The vessel departed San Francisco on January 17, 1893, arriving at Pitcairn Island a month later. After spending some time with the Pitcairners where Edward and Ida Gates were located the Cadys proceeded to French Polynesia, reaching there April 6.⁸

Two families of believers were living on Raiatea Island so it was thought advisable for the Cadys to settle there and respond to pleas from the local people for someone to teach their children. The villagers quickly erected a structure of native materials, divided to function as living quarters and a classroom. Both Benjamin and Iva served as teachers.⁹ After two years this venture had to be closed because of French government opposition.¹⁰

Cady persisted in his quest to train young people to assist in mission work. Having no children of their own at the time Benjamin and Iva were happy to take some into their home for training.¹¹ Benjamin also leased a plantation of coconut palms and fruit trees on Raiatea Island and developed it as an industrial school, giving the appearance to government authorities that the young people were there as full-time laborers rather than manual students.¹² His farm experience and training as a carpenter proved to be invaluable as he built a home on the property, started a sugar mill and a copra drying facility, and acquired a small cattle herd and some horses.¹³

Cady became the director and treasurer of the Eastern Polynesian Mission which included Pitcairn Island, the Society Islands and the Cook Islands. Statistics for the Tahitian field in 1908 disclose a total of 74 baptized members in four churches. Nine Sabbath Schools were functioning with 121 members.¹⁴

Unlike many early missionaries whose term was brief because of health failure or discouragement, the Cadys' service extended to sixteen years. To their credit they both learned the local language and were able to easily identify with the island culture.¹⁵ They initiated a periodical titled *Te Maramarama* for the Tahitian people and another titled *Tuatua Mou* for the Cook Islanders. Iva acted as editor for the Tahitian paper.¹⁶

When Benjamin was appointed to be the director of the Fiji Mission, the Cadys departed Tahiti on February 25, 1910,¹⁷ arriving at Suva, Fiji, on March 20. There they purchased furniture and supplies which were loaded onto the mission vessel.¹⁸ With a ship's crew and another missionary they set out for Buresala Training School on Ovalau Island. Within hours of landing a severe hurricane swept across Fiji, destroying buildings and damaging

boats including the one that had brought them to their destination. Most of their belongings were lost.¹⁹ The Cadys' stay in Fiji lasted less than twelve months before they sought some respite in Australia.²⁰

Benjamin Cady acted as business manager and chaplain at the Sydney Sanitarium for much of 1911.²¹ He made a brief trip back to Fiji but returned to Australia on February 23, 1912.²² He ministered in the Queensland Conference for the remainder of the year and then he and Iva sailed to America.²³

Ministry in the Northwest United States (1913-1923)

From the heat of the tropics Benjamin and Iva found relief in the cool Rocky Mountains, caring for the church community at Bozeman, Montana Conference, during 1913 and 1914.²⁴ They then transferred to similar work in the mountains of Washington state at Toppenish, Sunnyside and Riverside, 1915 through 1917.²⁵ For the following six years they served in the Western Oregon Conference.²⁶

Legacy

Benjamin's health deteriorated so he and Iva retired to live near the Glendale Sanitarium in southern California and seek restoration. But he slowly declined and passed away peacefully at his home on December 6, 1927.²⁷ Benjamin Jacob Cady rests in Forest Lawn Memorial Park (Glendale) Cemetery.²⁸ Little more than three years later Iva Fowler Cady passed away on February 22, 1931, and was laid to rest alongside Benjamin.²⁹ They had given over thirty years of dedicated service, many of them pioneering under primitive conditions.

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NOTES

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