



The Lock family on their way to the Solomon Islands, c. 1947. Back row: Lester, Edna. Front row: Darryl, Glynn, Linette.

Photo courtesy of Glynn Lock.

## Lock, Lester Norman (1916–2011)

### GLYNN LESTER LOCK

Glynn Lester Lock was born in Mackay, North Queensland. He is third generation missionary to Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, and is now retired after working in primary, secondary, tertiary and aviation education. He was married to Bette-Joy (Rosendahl), now deceased and mother of his two adult children, Joyanne and Kent, for forty-eight years, six of those in the Solomon Islands and PNG. Lock enjoys visiting family, including three grandchildren, and friends, woodwork, caravanning, gardening, volunteering and participating in music. He now lives with his wife, Lorraine, in Swansea, NSW.

Lester Lock was an educator and administrator in Papua New Guinea and Australia. He translated the Sabbath School Quarterly into Motu and Tok Pisin for 26 years.

## Early Years<sup>1</sup>

Lester Norman Lock was born at Subiaco, Western Australia on April 24 1916.<sup>2</sup> He was the second child and first son of William and Marguerite (Molly) Lock of South Australia who were working in the West Australian Conference where William was the Publishing Director.<sup>3</sup> Before Lester's birth Molly had been reading the story of James Chalmers, a missionary to Papua. So taken was Molly with the story that she promised God that if the child was a boy she would dedicate him to the Lord as a missionary.<sup>4</sup>

In 1924<sup>5</sup> the William Lock family was invited to go to Papua as missionaries spreading the gospel along the Kokoda Trail.<sup>6</sup> The mission station would be at Efogi.<sup>7</sup> Before climbing halfway up the Owen Stanley Range, the Locks spent several weeks at Bisiatabu learning something of the Papuan culture and language and preparing for the trek up the Kokoda trail.<sup>8</sup> One day while spending time with the students attending the Bisiatabu School and listening to them converse in the local Koiari language, Lester mused to himself, "You've got to think in English, why don't you talk in English."<sup>9</sup> His fascination with language became a core of service throughout his life.

The trek up the range to Efogi took six days<sup>10</sup> of relentless climbing and descending steep, slippery tracks and crossing numerous rivers. Arriving at Efogi they rested the next day, Sabbath, and then work started. William worked in the villages along the trail building up the church and developing interest in numerous communities!<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile Lester was learning the Koiari language as he played with the children on the station.<sup>12</sup>

At the end of 1926 William travelled to Sydney to attend the annual Australasian Union Conference meeting and was ordained to ministry.<sup>13</sup> After two and a half years<sup>14</sup> at Efogi the family moved back to Bisiatabu after the transfer of Pastor and Mrs. Peacock to the Solomon Islands.<sup>15</sup> While at Bisiatabu, Lester spent considerable time with one of the student families, the Meanous. As they conversed, he learned and became fluent in the Motu language,<sup>16</sup> the second Papuan language he acquired.

## Education and Marriage

Year 1934 saw the break-up of the family when Lester travelled to Avondale College to study, preparing for service.<sup>17</sup> During vacations in study years, he worked as a literature evangelist travelling east and west from Port Moresby with his father William in the mission ship Diari. He earned two scholarships helping to pay his college fees.<sup>18</sup> While at Avondale he worked in the printing press in the Sanitarium Health Food Factory,<sup>19</sup> learning a valuable skill. After graduation from the ministerial course in 1938, he was appointed as a literature evangelist in the New South Wales (NSW) Conference.<sup>20</sup> He assisted Pastor Bullas around Parkes, NSW.

Near the end of 1939, he was invited to transfer to Papua; he married his college sweetheart, Edna Murray, on January 4, 1940. Immediately they were sent for medical training at the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital. Edna was also sent to the Crown Street Women's Hospital to do some training in midwifery. Three children were to be

born to Lester and Edna: Darryl Murray Lock, born in Port Moresby, Papua; Linette Ruth Lock, born in Mackay, Queensland, and Glynn Lester Lock, also born in Mackay Queensland.

On arrival in Papua, the couple worked at Bisiatabu; part of Lester's work was the translation of the Sabbath School Quarterly into Motu. Once translated, the lessons were sent to Mirigeda, where the press was located. There they were printed and then distributed to the churches.

With the coming of World War II, Edna and their first child, Darryl, were evacuated to Australia. Lester followed later with other missionaries in the mission ship Diari. Lester and Edna spent the war years in North Queensland where Pastor William Lock was the Superintendent.

In July 1944, Lester was sent back to Papua to open a temporary training school at Korela, to restart the printing of the Motu Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly, and to translate and produce the Lesson Quarterly. While in the Korela district of the Marshall Lagoon, he learned another local language, his third Papuan language. Lester spent about 12 months at Korela without his family who had remained in North Queensland. A decision by the Australasian Union Conference in late 1945 saw the family transfer from the Marshall Lagoon in Papua to the Solomon Islands.

In the remaining months while at Marshall Lagoon before sailing to the Solomon Islands, Lester worked with Pastor Ngava, a Solomon Islander. Lester became a student once again as Pastor Ngava taught him the Marovo language, the language widely used in the Solomon Islands by the Adventist Church. Thus he acquired a fourth language other than English. The text they used was the Marovo New Testament, translated into Marovo by pioneers, local workers, and people from the Marovo Lagoon.

When the family arrived at their post at Kopiu in 1946, the indigenous people were surprised to hear Lester preach and communicate in the Marovo language. While at Kopiu Lester used the mission ship *G F Jones* to work around his field. He was ordained to the ministry in 1946.<sup>21</sup> After just a short time the family moved from Kopiu to Honiara, where Lester was Education Director, and then to Betikama where he was the principal of the growing school.

In 1950, the family were transferred to Kambubu, New Britain Island, New Guinea, where Lester was principal of the fledgling school. That year, a decision was made to develop Kambubu into a training school for mission workers and it was named Adventist Union College. In 1953 the name was changed to Jones Missionary College. Two years of post-primary school education were added to prepare students as mission workers. Lester's responsibilities included developing curriculum, running the school, and recruiting students from Papua, New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Expatriate and local staff were added to the school community, and new buildings provided teaching spaces and student accommodation.

A bold venture was initiated when girls were accepted into the school despite significant opposition from the men back in the villages. Stories abound of efforts to discourage and frighten the girls with many paranormal

events occurring in their first year at Kambubu, but, with much prayer, the girls remained at school, and a significant victory was won. Also, while at Kambubu, Lester continued translating the Sabbath School Quarterly into Motu.

After this, came a series of appointments to administrative work in Local Missions and at Union Headquarters. First was an appointment in 1958 to Bougainville as Mission president and teacher. The mission ship Devare was used to transfer the family from Kambubu to Inus. The journey across open sea took two days and one night. While President of Bougainville Mission, Lester continued to translate the Sabbath School quarterly into Motu. Thungea Biliburuku, a student from Kopiu and Kambubu days, assisted with the translation work. Later Thungea became better known as Pastor Wilfred Bili.

By this time the three Lock children had finished their elementary education and were enrolled at Avondale High School to continue their secondary education. This was a difficult time for both children and parents, particularly Edna who very much missed her family. The children would travel home only for the Christmas break and then south again for a new school year.

So the pattern was set, with each appointment, whether in Papua New Guinea or in Australia, Lester would translate the quarterly lessons into Motu and later Tok Pisin (Melanesian Pidgin) which was his fifth language not including English. Towards the end of 1960, the family was transferred to the Coral Sea Union office in Lae, Papua New Guinea to care for four departments including Sabbath School and Publishing. After 3 years at the Union office, Lester was appointed as president of the Eastern Highlands Mission in 1963. It was during this time that Edna suffered two heart attacks requiring hospitalisation in Goroka. At the end of the year the missionary couple returned to Australia and were appointed to ministry in the Victorian Conference.

While in Victoria, with access to good medical care, Edna's health improved significantly. Darryl was nearby at the Signs Publishing Company in Warburton, and for some of the time one of the twins, Linette, was in Melbourne gaining a midwifery qualification.<sup>22</sup> The other twin, Glynn, spent time with his parents while recovering from a shoulder injury.<sup>23</sup> It was gratifying for the family to be in close proximity after such a long time separated by mission service. Throughout this period, Lester continued to translate the Sabbath School Lessons into Motu.

Lester and Edna were invited to return to Papua in 1967.<sup>24</sup> There he was the president of the Central Papuan Mission for 5 years until the family transferred back to Lae in 1972 to serve in the Sabbath School Department and care for translation. During this time Lester commenced producing the Sabbath School quarterly in Melanesian Pidgin which, by this time, had become the lingua franca of Papua New Guinea. In 1973 Edna was diagnosed with a melanoma on one leg. The melanoma was excised at Lae hospital but Edna's health gradually deteriorated until at the end of 1975 the couple were granted permanent return to Australia and appointed to ministry at Thornleigh, and later Waitara churches in the Greater Sydney Conference.

## Later Years

In 1978, while ministering at Thornleigh Lester was commissioned by the Division to search out a parcel of land near Port Moresby on which to establish a Seventh-day Adventist tertiary institution to serve the island nations of the South Pacific. A parcel of land was identified, leased and Pacific Adventist College, later Pacific Adventist University, was developed and opened. Lester was invited to the opening.

The ravages of malaria, heart attacks and melanoma impacted on Edna until one night, after just 11 months of retirement, she slipped into a coma. Just a few days later in the early hours of December 18, 1981 Edna died and was buried in the Avondale Cemetery.

Lester lived in their Thornleigh home for a short time after Edna's death. He married Moina Tanner, and they moved together to Dunnoon near Lismore, so that she could be located nearer to one of her children. Tragically, Moina separated from Lester and they were subsequently divorced. Lester moved to Port Macquarie where his son Glynn and his daughter-in-law Bette-Joy lived. On February 12, 1992, he married June Muriel Glaspell at John's River, New South Wales. Lester and June set up home at the Avondale Retirement Village, Cooranbong, New South Wales. But wherever he went, he continued translating with the Motu Sabbath School quarterly his chief focus. Lester also translated drama for the Covenant Players, Revelation Seminar material, and was involved with the Bible Society in translating and producing the Tok Pisin Baibel (Melanesian Pidgin Bible). He worked with Dr. Glynn Litster to produce a Motu Hymn Book translating selected hymns from various Adventist hymnbooks and song book publications. He also translated the book of *Daniel* into Melanesian Pigin. During these years he made a number of visits to Papua New Guinea, catching up with friends and helping train and consolidate translators for the Church.

## Death and Legacy

Almost thirty years after Edna died Lester died on December 17 2011<sup>25</sup> and was buried in the Avondale Cemetery beside Edna. June died on July 4, 2014. When packing up his office a small mantelpiece clock, with the following inscription, was found on his study desk.

Pr Lester Lock

On behalf of the South Pacific Division Sabbath School Department

we would like to thank you for your 26 years of voluntary

service (1981-2007) for translating the Bible Study Guide

Manuscripts into Hiri Motu, true Motu and Tok Pisin

This plaque on the little clock from his desk tells something, but not nearly enough, of a man committed to extending the kingdom of God, sharing the Gospel and making the world a better place.

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## NOTES

1. Much of the information in this biography is based on the personal knowledge of the author as a son of Lester and Enid Lock
2. Lester Norman Lock Personal Service Record, South Pacific Division of the General Conference Archives, folder: "Lock, Lester Norman," document: "Personal Service Record."
3. Ibid.
4. Lester N. Lock, *Locks That Opened Doors* (Warburton, Victoria: Lester Lock, ca. 2001), 12.
5. Ibid., 5.
6. Ibid., 14.
7. Ibid., 14, 17.
8. Ibid., 17.
9. Ibid., 20.
10. Ibid., 26, 27.
11. W. N. Lock, "Memoir," unpublished document, personal collection of Glynn Lock, 58-62.
12. Lock, *Locks That Opened Doors*, 47.
13. Lester Norman Lock Personal Service Record, and, Lock, *Locks That Opened Doors*, 31.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 47.
17. Ibid., 53.



18. Ibid., 54, 55.

19. Ibid, 53.

20. Lester Norman Lock Personal Service Record; Lock, *Locks That Opened Doors*, 55. The material that follows is extracted from Lester Lock's recollections as recorded in his book *Locks That Opened Doors*, unless otherwise acknowledged.

21. Lester Norman Lock, Personal Service Record.

22. Linette Lock, interview by author

23. Glynn Lock, personal knowledge from being a son of Lester and Edna Lock.

24. Lester Norman Lock Personal Service Record.

25. Alan Saunders and Titus Rore, "Pastor Lester Norman Lock obituary," *Adventist Record*, vol. 117, no. 11, June 2, 2012, 22

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