

Tucker, Charles Arthur (1909–1996) and Eulalia Beryl Hawken (1912–1973)



Charles and Eulalia Tucker on their wedding day, February 13, 1937.

Photo courtesy of Nerice Allum (Tucker).

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Ross Goldstone, M.A. (Avondale College, Cooranbong, New South Wales, Australia) retired in 1998 as Senior Pastor, Avondale Memorial Church, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia. New Zealand born, Goldstone has served the Church as a pastor, Conference Youth Director, teacher, and Sessional Lecturer at Avondale College. He has authored nine books relating to Adventist history, including *The Angel Said Australia*. He is also co-author of four other books on Adventist history in Australasia. In retirement Ross Goldstone continues to research and write Adventist Church history.

Charles and Eulalia Tucker were missionaries at Aore in the New Hebrides and at Batuna in the Solomon Islands in the years leading up to World War II. Charles Tucker was employed as a teacher and mechanic and Eulalia Tucker was a nurse. Upon permanent return from mission service Charles Tucker was employed at the Sanitarium Health Food Factory at Cooranbong, New South Wales, as a mechanical engineer until his retirement in 1971.

Early Life

Charles Arthur Tucker was born on January 5, 1909, in Boulder, West Australia.¹ He was the eighth child of Charles Zachariah Tucker and Frances Emma Jane Tucker.² On August 31, 1912,³ at the age of sixty-four, Zachariah Tucker died and was buried in the Boulder Cemetery.⁴ He was buried as a Methodist but Frances

Tucker, a piano teacher, was heavily involved with the Salvation Army. She married Richard Davis on November 11, 1913. He was also involved in the Salvation Army. The family lived in poverty, so Charles Tucker left school at the age of sixteen and obtained a four-year apprenticeship as a motor mechanic with Rosenthal's Garage in Berri, South Australia.⁵ In 1927, an evangelistic series was conducted in Berri by Nelson C. Burns, J. J. Potter, and Volrad Reye. As a result, Tucker was one of six candidates baptized on November 19, 1927.⁶

Education and Service

In January 1929, Charles Tucker, along with his older brother, Evan, left their family in West Australia and rode a motorbike across the country to the Australasian Missionary College in Cooranbong, New South Wales. One can appreciate their poverty as they shared just one loaf of bread throughout the journey. As a student Charles Tucker had only one shirt, which he wore each day, washing it on Friday afternoon so that it would be clean for Sabbath.⁷ Evan Tucker trained for the ministry while Charles Tucker took Bible subjects and worked his way through six years of study by caring for the college boiler at night.⁸ He attended Avondale between 1929 and 1931, and between 1933 and 1935.⁹ Having a talent for music, he joined the choir and played tenor horn in the Avondale Band. It was while they were students in college that he met Eulalia Beryl Hawken who had been born at Tarana, New South Wales, on November 22, 1912.¹⁰ After leaving college, Eulalia Hawken continued her studies in nursing at the Sydney Sanitarium and Hospital.¹¹

Late in 1935, at a meeting of the Australian Union Conference Committee, Tucker was invited to go to the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) to take charge of the Aore Industries. It was anticipated he would travel to Aore with Hamlin Perry who was returning to the New Hebrides from furlough.¹² Their departure was delayed for some weeks due to a shipping strike in Sydney, but eventually the *Morinda* sailed out of Sydney harbor on January 8, 1936.¹³ Eleven days later, the ship berthed at Aore having experienced calm seas throughout the journey.¹⁴

Upon arrival, Tucker immediately set about his assignment with enthusiasm, proving a great help to Aore industries while, at the same time, assisting in the needs of the outside community.¹⁵ Meanwhile, Eulalia Hawken graduated from nursing in December 1936¹⁶ and Tucker returned to Australia just in time for their wedding on February 13.¹⁷ The ceremony took place at the Hawken's home in Cobbora, New South Wales.¹⁸ On April 15, 1937, the young couple were on board the *Morinda* bound for Aore. Tucker continued his work in Aore Industries and Eulalia Tucker took up nursing responsibilities in the small Aore hospital.¹⁹

Charles Tucker's major responsibility at Aore was to keep the engines operative in the small fleet of mission vessels which were the main means of travel and communication throughout the islands. There were no aircraft in use by missionaries and without reliable motors to drive the mission vessels through sometimes stormy seas, the progress of the work was handicapped. In carrying out this mechanical work, Tucker endeavored to give practical training to indigenous workers.²⁰

Due for furlough, the Tuckers returned to Australia in March 1940 and their post at Aore was filled by Edward Martin from Fiji.²¹ Early in October of 1940, the Tuckers took up new responsibilities at Batuna in the Solomon Islands.²² It was to prove a short stay due to the onset of the hostilities of World War II in the Solomon Islands. However, during this short stay their first daughter, Beryl Frances, was born at Tulagai in the Solomon Islands. After Japan's advances in the Solomons and the fall of Kieta, the Australian Union Conference instructed all European missionaries to evacuate. First to return to the safety of Australia were the wives and children of missionaries, including Eulalia Tucker.²³ The record does not mention their daughter Beryl, but she must have travelled with her mother as she was only about 9 months old.²⁴ Seven men, Barrett, Howse, Cormack, Gosling, Ferris, Perry, and Tucker, determined to return to Australia on the small mission vessel, the *Melanesia*. It was a bold attempt to save the flagship of the Solomon Island mission fleet from falling into the hands of the Japanese. Leaving Tulagi in the Solomons on February 10, 1942, just ahead of the invading forces of Japan, the epic journey was undertaken by these seven men, none of whom were experienced navigators. The success of the venture has become one of the monumental episodes of wartime mission exploits, recounted many times around campfires of Junior and Youth camps throughout the South Pacific.²⁵

Tucker did not remain at home for very long. He was soon on a ship bound once again for Aore in the New Hebrides. Eulalia Tucker joined him in mid-1943.²⁶ They remained at Aore until October, 1950.²⁷ During this time their second daughter, Corrine Fay, was born on the island of Espirito Santo, New Hebrides.²⁸

In 1950, Charles and Eulalia Tucker, together with their two daughters, Beryl and Fay, returned permanently to Australia. They worked in the Victorian Conference between October 1950 and October 1951.²⁹ At that time, they left church employment initially to visit Eulalia Tucker's parents in Dunedoo, New South Wales, where their third daughter, Nerice, was born.³⁰ In 1953, the Tuckers purchased their first home in Beauty Point Road, Morisset, and on May 9, 1954, Charles Tucker commenced work as an engineer in the maintenance department of the Sanitarium Health Food Factory at Cooranbong.³¹ There he served with distinction until his retirement in 1971.³²

On April 6, 1973, Eulalia Tucker died following a long battle with cancer.³³ One year later, on April 13, 1974, Charles Tucker married Kathleen Martin at the Brightwaters Seventh-day Adventist Church.³⁴ The service was conducted by the bridegroom's brother, Pastor Evan Tucker.³⁵ A widow, Kathleen Josephine O'Connor was born on March 18, 1911, in Melbourne, Victoria.³⁶ She married John Martin in 1937 and they spent many years as missionaries in Papua New Guinea.

In 1989, the Charles and Kathleen Tucker moved into a unit in the Avondale Retirement Village. Six years later, it became necessary to move into Kressville Lodge, an assisted living facility.³⁷ Kathleen Tucker died on April 24, 1996.³⁸ Charles Tucker died on September 9, 1996.³⁹ Faithful to his God and honored by his family and fellow church members, Charles Arthur Tucker was buried in the Avondale Adventist Cemetery on September 22, 1996.

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NOTES

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40. Personal knowledge of the author as the pastor of Kathleen and Charles Tucker for a number of years and who conducted Charles Tucker's funeral service.

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