

# Hoopes, Lewis Azariah (1859–1925)

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## SABRINA RILEY

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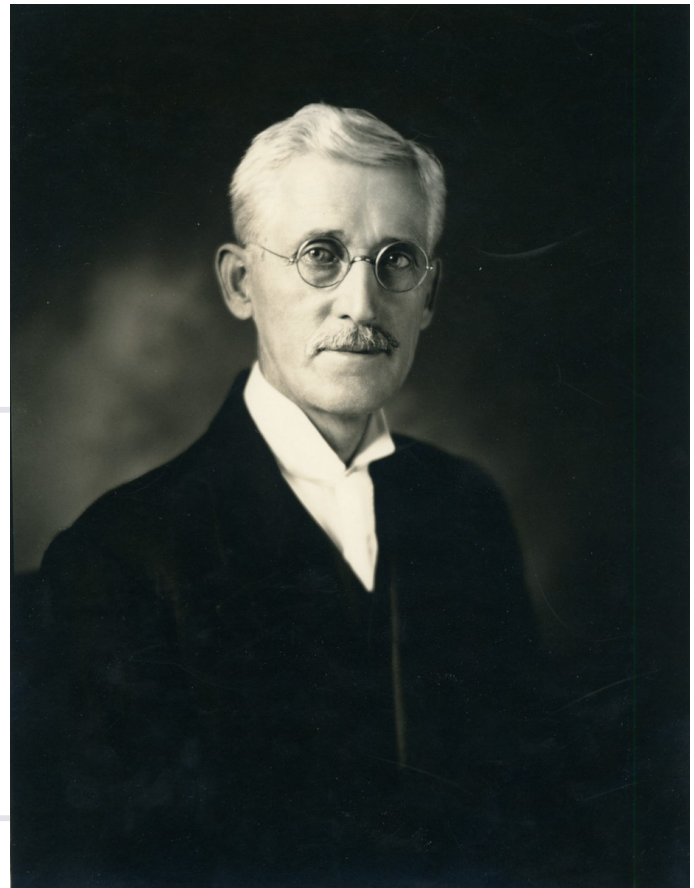
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Lewis Azariah Hoopes an Adventist minister, educator, and administrator, was born on April 20, 1859, in Westland Ohio.<sup>1</sup>

## Early Life (1859–1870s)

The son of Isaac Hoopes and Mercy R. King (1823–1899; 1824–after 1900), Lewis and his twin sister, Mercy May (1859–1894),<sup>2</sup> were the youngest of nine children and the second set of twins in the family. The older seven children included Thomas E. (1848–unknown), Rebecca K. (1850–1918), Sarah Ann (1852–1917), Agnes K. (1854–unknown), Parthena C. (1855–1939), Isaac Leander (1857–1929), and Amos Alcanzer (1857–1933)<sup>3</sup>

Isaac Hoopes, a gunsmith by profession, was a corporal in the Union Army during the Civil War. Mercy R. King was born into a Quaker family. She was disowned by her congregation when she married Isaac Hoopes.<sup>4</sup> Following the Civil War, the Hoopeses divorced.<sup>5</sup> For a time Mercy and several of the younger children were placed with families for whom they worked.<sup>6</sup> In the 1870s Mercy worked as a cook for the Santee Sioux Indian Agency in Nebraska.<sup>7</sup> Many of her adult children followed her to Nebraska. During her later years Mercy resided with two of her daughters' families—first, Rebecca, and then, Sarah. Isaac remained in Morgan County, Ohio, for the rest of his life and eventually remarried.



Lewis Azariah Hoopes, in undated photo courtesy of the General Conference Archives. Shared by Ashlee Chism.

## Education and Marriage (1870s–1883)

According to his obituary and Union College history, as a young adult Hoopes studied at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. He briefly taught at the university as well as several other schools—one of which was the District 27 country school in Woodville Township, Platte County, Nebraska, where he taught a five-month term in 1878–1879.<sup>8</sup> Hoopes demonstrated leadership skills early in his life when he became a founding member of a local agricultural society in Monroe Township (also in Platte County, Nebraska) on August 2, 1879, and served as its first president.<sup>9</sup>

During the 1870s and 1880s the Adventist Church in Nebraska accomplished considerable growth. It is unknown exactly how Hoopes first encountered the Adventist message, but he would have had many opportunities. He was baptized in 1882.<sup>10</sup> On September 4, 1883, in Platte County, Nebraska, Hoopes married another recent convert to Adventism, Emma Ann Snyder (1863–1949).<sup>11</sup>

The Hoopeses had four children. Samuel Lewis Hoopes (1884–1955) accompanied his parents to Australia, where he met and married Rebecca Violet Minchin (1888–1948). Samuel worked as a colporteur in Australia and New Zealand before returning to the United States and opening a bakery in Fortuna, California.<sup>12</sup> Ethel Winifred (1886–1971) also met and married her husband, Cecil Kenneth Meyers (1887–1964), a Seventh-day Adventist minister, in Australia.<sup>13</sup>

Vera Evelyn (1901–1997) became a music teacher at Lodi Academy and married Merlin Burl Watts (1899–1988) in 1925.<sup>14</sup> Mildred L. (1903–2002) became a nurse serving in Asia and South Africa with husband, Ralph Shore Watts, who later became a General Conference vice-president.<sup>15</sup>

## Career (1883–1925)

Hoopes's career in Adventist ministry and education was long and varied. After joining the Adventist Church, Hoopes quickly became very active in evangelistic efforts, and in a growing field with few ministers his advancement was rapid. He was granted a colporteur's license in 1883.<sup>16</sup> By 1884 Hoopes was partnering with other ministers to conduct tent meetings throughout Nebraska, where their efforts frequently resulted in the organization of new companies of believers. After Hoopes's ordination in 1885,<sup>17</sup> he made Bloomington, Nebraska, his home, where he regularly visited established churches and companies in the south-central part of the state, bringing encouragement to isolated Adventist church members. He also was a member of the Nebraska Conference executive committee. In 1886 he was nominated vice president of the Nebraska Tract Society,<sup>18</sup> and from 1889 to 1891 he served as president of the Nebraska Conference.<sup>19</sup> While president of the Nebraska Conference, he also served as secretary of the committee that chose the site for Union College near Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1890.<sup>20</sup>

During Union College's earliest years Hoopes was a Bible instructor, a position he resigned to become secretary of the General Conference in 1897.<sup>21</sup> While GC secretary, Hoopes resided in Battle Creek, Michigan, and was actively involved in many GC committees, either as a part of his secretarial duties or in addition to them. From 1900 to 1902 Hoopes, along with L. T. Nicola, became the first editors of *Christian Record*, a magazine for the visually impaired.<sup>22</sup>

In the fall of 1901 Hoopes returned to Union College as president, where his administration was a refining influence on rural farm students. Everett Dick recalled his brother Arthur's stories upon returning home. "The stories he [Arthur Dick] told about education, about the spiritual and cultural life at Union College in 1904 during the administration of L. A. Hoopes, brought the first glimpse of culture and better living into the experience of our farm family, just as Union College has done for other plain folk of the Middle West over the years."<sup>23</sup> Most notably, Hoopes improved the college's record keeping by creating the position of academic registrar.<sup>24</sup> Hoopes's presidency of Union College ended in 1904; however, he remained at the college as a faculty member for one more year.<sup>25</sup>

In 1905 the General Conference decided to send Hoopes to Australia, where he taught at Avondale College (named Australasian Missionary College between 1911 and 1964), pastored the college church, and served on many committees of the Australasian Union. Of his arrival in Australia, Hoopes wrote, "The brethren here do not believe in letting men rust out." Within weeks of his arrival he was made a member of the school board, the Avondale Press Committee, and the Health Food Department—he was secretary of the latter two. While attending the New South Wales camp meeting, he was also appointed to the conference committee and made chair of the Religious Liberty and the Educational departments, effectively making him school superintendent for the Australasian Union.<sup>26</sup> This heavy workload set the tone for Hoopes's entire tenure in Australia.

Upon his return from Australia in August 1913, Hoopes taught at Southern Training School, in Graysville, Tennessee (a forerunner of Southern Adventist University), and, from 1916 to 1919, Oak Park Academy in Nevada, Iowa, where he was also principal. In 1920 he became a chaplain at Hinsdale Sanitarium, a position he held until his death caused by "cancer of the stomach" on May 4, 1925.<sup>27</sup>

## Contribution

Hoopes's ministry spanned 44 years. He was instrumental in organizing several churches in Nebraska, including Hastings and the first Adventist church in Omaha.<sup>28</sup> He was valued for his administrative abilities during his two terms as GC secretary. In fact, if one were to list every committee on which he ever served, it would be a long list. But despite Hoopes's early success as an evangelist, minister, and administrator, his heart was in education.

As early as 1887 Hoopes was among the leaders working to establish the Lincoln City Mission, a Bible school operated by the Nebraska Tract Society and intended to educate colporteurs and Bible workers.<sup>29</sup> Many of his committee appointments were connected to academic interests, such as the GC Education Committee, formed

in 1901.<sup>30</sup> Ultimately, nearly thirty years of Hoopes's career was spent in education.

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## NOTES

1. O. Montgomery, "L. A. Hoopes obituary," *ARH*, June 18, 1925, 22.
2. In L. A. Hoopes's obituaries, Mercy's middle name is listed as Maria, which when pronounced with a long "i" rhymes nicely with Azariah and follows the practice of giving twins similar-sounding names. However, in later documents, including Mercy's gravestone, her middle name of record is May.
3. 1860 United States census, Morgan County, Ohio, roll M653\_1016, FHL microfilm 805016, page 452, digital image, "Isaac Hoopes," Ancestry.com, accessed February 4, 2019, <http://ancestry.com>.
4. Ancestry.com, United States, *Quaker Meeting Records, 1681-1935* [database online] (Provo, Utah, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014), accessed February 4, 2019, <http://ancestry.com>; Ancestry.com, *United States, Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy, Volumes I–VI, 1607-1943* [database online] (Provo, Utah, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2013), accessed February 4, 2019, <http://ancestry.com>.
5. 1880 United States census, Platte County, Nebraska, enumeration district 095, roll 754, FHL microfilm 805016, page 196A, digital image, "Mercy Hoopes," Ancestry.com, accessed February 4, 2019, <http://ancestry.com>.
6. 1870 United States census, Morgan County, Ohio, roll M593\_1246, FHL 552745, pages 118A and 203B, digital images, "Mercy Hoopes" and "Parthena Hoopes," Ancestry.com, accessed February 4, 2019, <http://ancestry.com>.
7. Ancestry.com, United States, *Register of Civil, Military, and Naval Service, 1863–1959* [database online] (Provo, Utah, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014), accessed February 4, 2019, <http://ancestry.com>.
8. Mary Ellen Ducey, archivist at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, was unable to locate proof of Hoopes's affiliation with this institution. See "Death of Elder L. A. Hoopes," *ARH*, May 28, 1925, 24; Montgomery, "Obituaries: Elder L. A. Hoopes;"

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9. "Monroe," *Columbus Journal*, August 13, 1879, 3.
  10. Montgomery, "Obituaries: Elder L. A. Hoopes."
  11. "Emma Ann Snyder Hoopes obituary," *ARH*, March 30, 1950, 20.
  12. "A Returned Missionary," *Central Union Outlook*, August 19, 1913, 6; "Samuel Lewis Hoopes obituary," Find a Grave, accessed February 5, 2019, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/157678642>.
  13. "A Returned Missionary"; "Emma Ann Snyder Hoopes obituary"; Ancestry.com, Australia, Marriage Index, 1788–1950 [database online] (Provo, Utah, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010).
  14. Ibid.
  15. "Mildred Hoopes Watts obituary," *ARH*, February 27, 2003, 29; "Former GC Vice President Dies," *ARH*, June 2, 1994, 6, 7.
  16. A. J. Cudney and W. D. Chapman, "The Nebraska Conference," *ARH*, October 23, 1883.
  17. A. J. Cudney and N. H. Druillard, "Progress of the Cause: Nebraska Conference Proceedings," *ARH*, November 24, 1885, 12.
  18. A. J. Cudney and S. E. Whiteis, "Nebraska Tract Society Proceedings," *ARH*, November 2, 1886, 6.
  19. J. P. Gardiner and Mary Callahan, "Nebraska Conference Proceedings," *ARH*, October 22, 1889, 11.
  20. Everett N. Dick, *Union: College of the Golden Cords* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Union College, 1967), 14; "General Conference Proceedings," *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, November 6, 1889, 2.
  21. General Conference Committee minutes, Spring Session 1897, 223, General Conference Archives, accessed February 20, 2019, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1897.pdf>.
  22. "CRSB President sand Editors," Christian Record Services, 2019, accessed February 20, 2019, <https://christianrecord.org/info/presidents-history.html>.
  23. Dick, viii.
  24. Everett Dick, George Gibson, and Union College staff, *Union College: Light Upon the Hill* (Lincoln, Nebraska: Union College, Alumni Association, 2004), 165.

25. "Union College," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1905), 89, 90.
  26. L. A. Hoopes, "A Letter to Friends at College View," *Educational Messenger*, December 1, 1905, 1-3.
  27. "Lewis Azariah Hoopes obituary," *Australasian Record*, June 29, 1925, 8.
  28. L. A. Hoopes, "Progress of the Cause: Nebraska," *ARH*, February 11, 1890, 11; L. A. Hoopes, "Progress of the Cause: Nebraska," *ARH*, December 23, 1890, 11.
  29. "Our Tract Societies: Lincoln, Neb., Mission." *ARH*, June 14, 1887, 7; Michael McGuckin, "The Lincoln City Mission: A. J. Cudney and Seventh-day Adventist Beginnings in Lincoln, Nebraska," *Adventist History* 2, no. 1 (July 1975): 24-32.
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