

# Hackman, Earl Frederick (1898–1951)



## 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.

Earl F. Hackman spent his early career in Home Missionary departmental leadership from local conference to General Conference levels and then moved to the presidencies of the Southeastern California Conference, the Northern California Conference, the Southern Union Conference and the Inter-American Division.

## Early Years

Earl Frederick Hackman was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on May 5, 1898. His parents were Hiram (“Harry”) Krupp Hackman and Louise Margaret Kleiman Hackman. The couple had lost their first child in infancy. Earl, therefore, grew up as the eldest of two sons, his brother, Elmer, being two years younger than himself. According to the 1910 United States Census, Harry Hackman was employed as a bookkeeper in a gas company office. During the 1910s he served for a few years as secretary-treasurer of the West Pennsylvania Conference!<sup>1</sup>

As a teenager Earl attended a tent effort conducted by Ned Ashton and J. E. Veach and was baptized later by Frank H. Robbins. To prepare himself for church work Earl attended Mount Vernon Academy in Ohio and advanced to one year beyond academy level before entering the employ of the church?<sup>2</sup>

E.F. Hackman, IAD President 1947-1950

From *Changing Lives in Inter-America, 1922-1997, 75 Years of Miracles* (Miami, FL: IAD Publishing Association, 1997).

## Home Missionary Leader

Upon hiring him in 1918, the Ohio Conference placed 20-year-old Earl Hackman directly into training for an administrative role, assigning him the position of assistant secretary in the Home Missionary Department.<sup>3</sup> The following year he was placed in charge of that work. His rapid advance continued just a year later with his election in 1920 as Home Missionary secretary of the Southeastern Union Conference, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia.<sup>4</sup> One of his main responsibilities was the organization and promotion of the annual Harvest Ingathering campaign in which Adventists sought support from the wider community for the church's medical, educational, welfare, and evangelistic projects throughout the world.<sup>5</sup>

On April 26, 1922, Earl married Esther Virginia Simmons in Knoxville, Tennessee. Two years later, at the Cumberland Conference camp meeting, also in Knoxville, August 28 through September 7, 1924, Hackman was ordained by William H. Heckman and Frederick C. Gilbert.<sup>6</sup> The couple would have two daughters: Virginia Margaret Mitts and Carolyn Ann Reece.<sup>7</sup>

A few months after his ordination, Hackman, only 26 years of age, was chosen as the associate secretary of the Home Missionary Department at the General Conference.<sup>8</sup> During the ensuing decade he conducted Home Missionary conventions in various regions of the world. For example, in 1928 he held a series of four meetings at different locations in Cuba.<sup>9</sup> In 1929 he spent four months in France and Italy conducting conventions in both countries to promote the annual Harvest Ingathering, medical missionary work, the literature ministry and the formation of missionary correspondence groups in local churches.<sup>10</sup>

At the 1936 General Conference session a review was made of the Harvest Ingathering results, 1908 through 1935. Under the watch of Hackman and his colleagues, the total amount raised through Ingathering during the worst years of the Great Depression, 1930-1935 (\$6,392,958) remained nearly on par with the previous six-year period during the prosperous 1920s (\$6,517,690).<sup>11</sup>

## Executive Leadership

Following his decade at the General Conference, Hackman served as president of two conferences, respectively, in the Pacific Union: Southeastern California (1934-1940) and Northern California (1940-1943). In 1943, he was elected president of the Southern Union Conference. Hackman was credited with inaugurating an era of "expansion of buildings and facilities," overseeing unprecedented growth in membership through evangelism, and giving vigorous support to the development of Southern Missionary College (SMC, now Southern Adventist University) as an accredited senior college.<sup>12</sup> Formerly a junior college, SMC awarded its first baccalaureate degrees in 1946 and, when Hackman left the Southern Union in 1947, the college was on a trajectory to accreditation by the Southern Association in 1950.<sup>13</sup>

In 1947, Hackman was called to the presidency of the vast Inter-American Division (IAD). At the 1950 General Conference session in San Francisco he observed that the IAD had maintained the second highest membership in the world field, a total of 71,784 as of December 31, 1949. At that time his division, comprising 27 different countries, was organized into six union missions, 35 local conferences and a total of 926 churches!<sup>14</sup>

The GC session in July 1950 turned out to be the site of Hackman's last public appearance. His health had been deteriorating for several months and soon after the session he was admitted to the Glendale Sanitarium in southern California, suffering incurable colon cancer which had metastasized to other organs!<sup>15</sup>

Earl F. Hackman passed away on January 20, 1951, at age 52, and was laid to rest in the Montecito Memorial Park, Loma Linda, California. W. H. Branson, General Conference president, preached for the funeral service held in the Loma Linda Hill church, with former GC president J. L. McElhany and Voice of Prophecy speaker H.M.S. Richards, Sr., among the other ministers who participated!<sup>16</sup>

A new science building at Southern Missionary College, critical to its accreditation as a senior college, was dedicated February 21, 1951, and named Earl Hackman Hall!<sup>17</sup> Esther Hackman found employment as placement secretary for the Alumni Association of the School of Medicine at Loma Linda University. In 1962 she married Louis Hansen. She passed away on March 30, 1982!<sup>18</sup>

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## NOTES

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