

Halliday, Harold James (1898–1975)

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.

Harold James Halliday was Sanitarium Health Food administrator, war-time administrator of National Emergency and Welfare Services, secretary/treasurer of various local conferences, and president of North Queensland and Sydney Conferences.

Early Life

Harold James Halliday was born in Adelaide on April 22, 1898, to William and Helen Halliday.¹ His father died at their home in Ward Court, North Adelaide, in April 1920.² He heard his father ask the family doctor about the afterlife but the doctor could offer no satisfactory answer. Harold visited various churches in his vicinity in search of solace but he found none. At the time he was working in Adelaide's large department store, John Martin and Company, and regularly purchased meals at the Sanitarium Health Food (SHF) Cafe because he had been advised to adopt a vegetarian diet for health reasons. While at lunch there one day in 1920 he saw an advertisement about a series of religious meetings in the Hindmarsh Town Hall. He attended and was captivated by the Bible prophecies explained by evangelists Reuben Hare and Erwin Roenfelt. Within a few months he resigned from his employment in order to observe the Saturday Sabbath and was baptized. He found an alternative job with a cosmetics business that did not require work on Saturdays but by 1922 he had convinced himself the nature of the business did not fit with his new-found ideals. Once again he resigned.³



Harold Halliday

Photo courtesy of Joan Irvine.

Church Career

Rather than attend college for further education Harold chose to capitalize on his business experience by canvassing denominational books from door to door. He remained in Adelaide and from April through December 1922 he sold over two hundred copies of *Bible Readings for the Home Circle*.⁵

In 1923 Harold began work as a travelling salesman in South Australia for the SHF. In the same year, on October 23, he and Maud Naomi Williamson, another relatively new convert and colporteur, were married in the Adelaide church by Elder Scott Stewart.⁶ In October 1925 Harold transferred to the Hobart branch in Tasmania.⁷ A further transfer was made in early 1930 when he accepted heavier responsibilities as sales manager and assistant secretary for the SHF throughout New Zealand.⁸ Sales were booming and Harold was asked to concentrate on the management of the retail shop in Christchurch.⁹ While in that role he was also a member of the executive committee of the South New Zealand Conference.¹⁰ Harold's final term with the SHF, 1933 through 1939, was at their headquarters office in Wahroonga, New South Wales, as assistant general secretary with specific responsibility for the retail shops and vegetarian cafés throughout Australasia.¹¹

Prior to leaving the Wahroonga offices, in 1940, Harold assisted in the statistics department¹² and supervised the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist branch of the wartime National Emergency Service, a homeland defence entity that trained citizens in rescue work, first aid, home nursing, and as air raid wardens.¹³

Towards the end of 1940 Harold commenced almost four years as secretary/treasurer of the Victorian Conference¹⁴ followed by an equal span as secretary/treasurer of the North New South Wales (NNSW) Conference until 1947. During both periods the conferences suffered the loss of their presidents through death and Harold had to step in as acting president.¹⁵ At the close of his time with the NNSW Conference Harold was ordained in December 1947 at Cooranbong during the annual camp meeting and business session.¹⁶

From 1948 through 1953 Harold served as president of the North Queensland Mission.¹⁷ He initiated the choice and purchase of property to serve as a permanent place for camp meetings and conference sessions. Later, the grounds were named Halliday Park as a memorial and the conference offices were erected on site.¹⁸ In 1954 Harold accepted the role of president of the Greater Sydney Conference, an office he held until his retirement in 1961 after forty years of service.¹⁹

Retirement Years

Harold and Maud settled in the Adventist community at Cooranbong, New South Wales. He took a leading role in the local Dora Creek church and was instrumental in laying plans for a new church at Brightwaters.²⁰ They had been blessed with five children: Donald, Joan, Ian, Harold Jr, and Robert. Sadly, Robert died prematurely in 1964, leaving a wife and two children.²¹ In January 1974 it was convenient for the family to gather together at Cooranbong to celebrate a belated fiftieth wedding anniversary.²²

Ill-health afflicted Harold during the last eighteen months of his life, a time marked by two surgeries that culminated in him quietly slipping away in his sleep on July 8, 1975. He was laid to rest in the Avondale Memorial Cemetery.²³ Maud passed away on August 24, 1988, and was laid to rest alongside Harold.²⁴

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