

Centennial Moments

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Eleanor Baxter Burden—She also served

Eleanor Baxter Burden, like so many Seventh-day Adventist women of her time, probably is best known to us for her working association with her husband—John Allen Burden—as well as for being a faithful church worker. Beyond the blurring that time brings, one can discern Ella, as she was called, as a woman of purpose, a partner in pioneering.

Born in Philadelphia on November 13, 1865, she came to California with her parents in 1877, and here she and her mother joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Starting in 1883, she attended Healdsburg College, and completed a degree there. She and John Burden met at college. They were married April 12, 1888, and she joined him in his work at St. Helena Sanitarium (now St. Helena Hospital and Health Center at Deer Park, California). There they were united in service—he as the manager and she the bookkeeper—for nearly 10 years.

In 1899, John and Ella were invited to begin sanitarium work in Australia. There they assisted in founding the Sydney Sanitarium (now Sydney Adventist Hospital), again working as manager and bookkeeper respectively. They returned to California in 1904

to continue their efforts in founding other Seventh-day Adventist sanitariums, first at Glendale and then at Loma Linda in 1905.

At the Loma Linda Sanitarium, Ella was equal to her new position as matron.

During



the first few months after the purchase of the Loma Linda property, her task was to convert the furnishings and equipment of a health resort to those that would be suitable for a medical institution.

In the words of Keld J. Reynolds, “like her husband, [she] seemed to be omnipresent and omniscient. And

she could pinch-hit. When her husband bought a printing press, she learned to set type and run the press.”

Thus she became the printer of the first issues of the 16-page *Medical Evangelist*—the little periodical that became familiar throughout the United States and elsewhere as the representative of the College of Medical Evangelists for more than 50 years.

Once more, in 1916, Ella and John Burden teamed up in the managing of a new medical institution—Paradise Valley Sanitarium near San Diego (now Paradise Valley Hospital). Again, he was the manager and she was the matron, a position in which she continued until her illness and death in 1933.

The Burdens lived simply and frugally. They poured their gifts and creative energies into Church endeavors throughout their entire lifetimes and saw their reward as being heavenly rather than earthly.

One of Ella’s favorite poems, found in her Bible, has a verse that sums up her philosophy of life:

“Fading away like the stars of the morning, Losing their light in the glorious sun; So let me steal away, gently and lovingly, Only remembered by what I have done.”