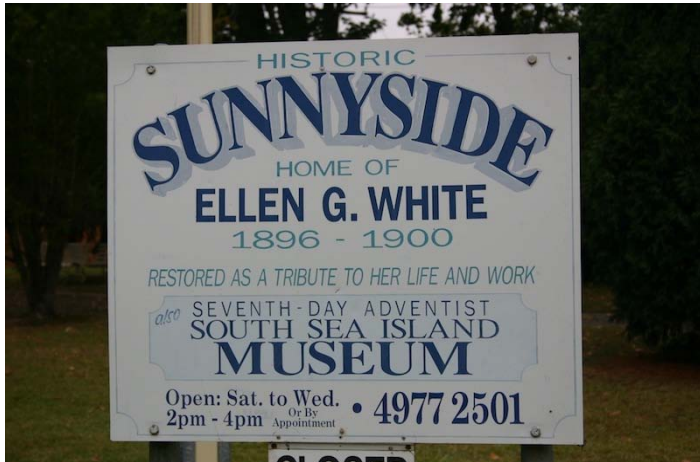


A Brief Journey Through “Sunnyside” Historic Home



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"Sunnyside" is a well preserved home built in 1895. It became Ellen White's during her stay in Australia (1891-1900). It contains some of the original furnishings used by Ellen White and it reflects her day and ministry in Australia. It is especially linked with her contribution to the establishment of Avondale College.



In her personal reminiscences of Ellen White, Sarah Peck, a teacher and missionary from Africa, shared an interesting description of "Sunnyside" (RH, March 19, 1964). "I wish you might have known Sister White in her home life. Her home in Australia was fittingly named "Sunnyside".

"It was about a 15 minute walk from the college on a long and quiet driveway off the main road. On the grounds were some fruit trees, a home garden, a few flowers an arbor covered with passion-fruit vines loaded with delicious fruit, a natural spring, and a big stone Dutch oven where the family baking was done.

"The house was very plain and simply furnished - three or four bedrooms upstairs and two down, one of which was Sister White's private room where she did all her writing. The rather small living room did double duty as reception room and guest bedroom. It had a fire-place and was cheery" (Ibid).



The history of "Sunnyside" is interesting as it unfolds Ellen White's commitment to visionary plans and thinking. The beginning of the New Year 1896 brought moments of anticipation. When the house was at the final stages of completion, W.C. White shared the following description. "Mother's house, when completed, will have eleven rooms. The main building is 32x32 with a veranda in the front and a hall running through the centre. There are four rooms 12x12, and upstairs there are four more nearly as large. Back of the main building there is a lean-to, 14x22 intended for the kitchen. "This much of the house is plastered and therefore will be quite cool and comfortable. Mother decides to use the back room for a dinning room, and so is having an addition 16x22 feet attached to the dining room, which will be divided into a kitchen, bathroom, and storeroom."

"We expect the carpenters to complete their work this week, then we shall get settled." Arthur White, *The Australian Years*, 260. (The above photo shows the first room in the house.)



On display, one finds pictures of Ellen White and her son William Clarence White. In another corner, the photo gallery unfolds the story of the Avondale Health Retreat opened on December 27, 1899 and dismantled in 1935. The Retreat played a very significant part in practical ministry. Ellen White wrote, "We want that hospital so much" (Lt 73, 1899.



The city hospitals were too far and the nearest doctor was about 25 miles away. W.C. White wrote, "The purpose in view is to provide a place in which to properly treat the sick of the neighborhood; a convalescent home for the Sydney Sanitarium patients; and a health retreat for worn and weary aged workers in the cause" (Arthur White, *The Australian Years*, 438). In the same room, one finds the desk given by Ellen White to John Pocock. Perhaps, here she expressed her frustrations in a letter to Mrs. Josephine Gotzian. "I am much burdened regarding the dearth of means which delay the opening of our Avondale Retreat....We are losing precious time, which ought to be filled with effective work in behalf of those for whom this building is erected" (Letter 19, 1899)

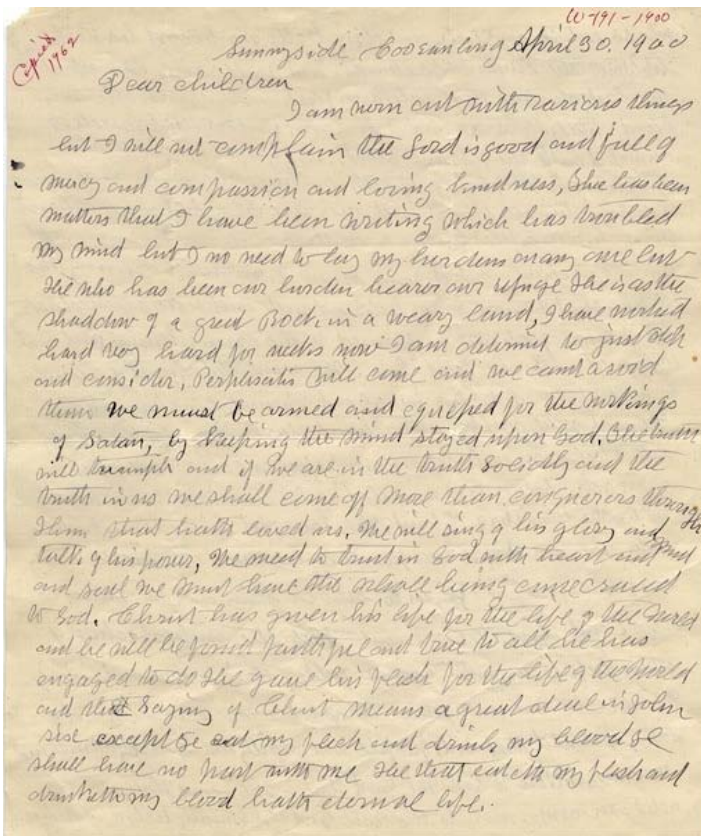


The cabinet displays a number of artifacts such as personal testimonies, *Present Truth* 1849, *Youth's Instructor* 1852, a copy of a letter written by Ellen White to Dr. David Paulson, founder of the Hinsdale Sanitarium, Chicago Illinois.

The impact of Ellen White's practical ministry had a tremendous impact on the residents of the Cooranbong village. Thomas Russell, a member of the Cooranbong community and an entrepreneur wrote the following. "Mrs. E.G. White's presence in our little village will be sadly missed. The widow and the orphan found in her a helper. She sheltered, clothed and fed those in need and where gloom was cast her presence brought sunshine."



The bedroom is plainly furnished, yet, in this place, Ellen White spent precious moments in prayer, spiritual mediation and writing. The thoughts, expressed in the letters to her children show her strong reliance on God. "We must exercise faith. I am praying to the Lord to give me strength and health and clearness of mind.....I do not ask for a smooth path, but I supplicate my heavenly Father for an increase of faith (Letter 119, July 31, 1896)



In a letter written to her children on April 30, 1900, Ellen White wrote the following. " I am worn out with various things but I will not complain. The Lord is good and full of mercy, compassion and loving kindness. There have been matters that I have been writing which troubled my mind, but I have no need to lay my burden on anyone but Him who has been my Burden-bearer, our Refuge. He is as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.....We need to trust in God with heart and mind and soul." Lt 191, 1900, April 30, 1900.

In the Research Centre, we keep a number of the original letters written by Ellen G. White.



In the bedroom stands a washing basin originally owned by Ellen White. It was donated to "Sunnyside" by Mrs. M Lister. So what was life like down under. In her letter to Emma and Edson White, Ellen White wrote. "I have a cistern fourteen feet deep and six feet across. This makes it large in circumference. It is bricked up in cement. We have had drought for one year since we came here. I have a large brick oven built out of doors.....we have an extensive creek; the water never fails. The washhouse is built close by the creek, and the water is pumped up into a barrel and we have washtubs set in this house. We have a furnace bricked in, and a large boiler. We kindle fire under the boiler and there we heat the water, and can fruit, take baths and wash our clothes" (Lt 151a, 1897, August 29).



This dressing gown belonged to Ellen White. It was donated to "Sunnyside" by Mrs. Annie Conley. Ellen White's life was committed to ministry for others. Iram D.C. James speaks of an inspiring experience. During a difficult time, the family survived on just a few small potatoes and a little milk. One day a coachman left them a supply of flour. When the family inquired where the goods came from he said, "The Lord sent it". Next week Mrs. White visited the family and brought with her a supply of food. Take note of the next sentence. "You can never know how parched the ground was on which the blessings fell. They said to us more than a thousand sermons." Kindnesses, personal interest, words of encouragement, comfort and joy, caring ministry make up the list of fond memories left by Ellen G. White, both in the Cooranbong community and among the churches in Australia.



The back family room contains a number of items associated with the Radley family. The Radleys were introduced to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Sydney by Ellen White and they became her friends. Their children called her "Gran" and they often visited her home.

Ellen White wrote to the Editor of Review and Herald. "Also send the *Review and Herald*, *Youth's Instructor* and *Sabbath School Worker* to John Radley of Pennant Hills, N.S.W., Australia. Please make no delay in this matter. This man is well off and intelligent and a great reader, but he has nearly gone over to the world. I have placed in his house *Patriarchs and Prophets*, and he also has *Great Controversy*, *Christian Education* and *Steps to Christ*. I have felt it my duty to do this, hoping to save him from ruin. He has a large orchard of oranges, lemons, apricots, peaches, etc., but does not care to supply his family with books on the present truth. Such families, I am determined, shall have my books, and the papers. We hope Radley will come back. He has a wife who loves the truth, and a family of interesting children. We want this family, {the Lord's heritage,} to be saved. (Lt. 74, 1895, Ellen White to Elder A.O. Tait)



In the same room hangs a picture of some of the workers who worked with Ellen White in Australia. (From left to right, Pastor & Mrs. Gates, Pastor & Mrs. A.J Read and Pastor & Mrs. G.B. Starr)



"Yesterday morning [I] was up at 1 o'clock. It is midwinter with us. We have not had but two frosts. The heat wave, which was quite severe in many places, was scarcely felt here.....I put in generally three or four hours of writing before any one is stirring and we have breakfast at 7 o'clock" (Lt. 186, 1898, July 4). The picture shows Ellen White's dining room at "Sunnyside".



The small writing desk was originally owned by Ellen White and it was donated to "Sunnyside" by Mr. and Mrs. E.E. Thorpe. In spite of her busy program, Ellen White was always mindful of the practical aspects of the Christian ministry.

On February 10, 1897, she wrote, "We have a supply of poor families that must be kindly cared for and helped to help themselves. We have these poor as legacy from God to us. Inasmuch as ye do this to one of the least of these, my brethren, ye do it to Me. Then we will work on, doing our level best to alleviate the care of the poor, helping them when we can and strengthening them all we can in correct methods" (Lt 187, 1897).



On the glass cabinet, visitors to "Sunnyside" may read expression of gratitude, appreciations and thanks for the Christian kindness and caring ministry which Ellen White shared in the land down under.



Ellen White was a prolific writer. Her days began early. In the morning hours, she found quietness and inspiration. "The morning hours from 3:00 A.M until 7:00 A.M are best hours to write, for then I am not broken in upon and obliged to give my time to advise with my brethren and counsel with them (Ms 175, 1897). On the bookshelf, the visitors find copies of books written by Ellen White, both the English versions and translations. Her literary work saw the completion of the classic volume, "The Desire of Ages". The inspiration and thoughts expressed in this book touched the hearts of many people. Ellen White wrote, "Heavenly scenes were presented to me in the life of Christ, pleasant to contemplate, and again painful scenes which were not pleasant for Him to bear which pained my heart (Ms 93, 1900)



On the adjacent side are copies of her early Testimonies for the Church and other publications. Ellen White's ministry points people to Jesus, her best friend. No wonder, she expressed a passionate plea. "God would be pleased to see *The Desire of Ages* in every home. In this book is contained the light He has given upon His Word. To our canvassers I would say, "Go forth with your hearts softened and subdued by reading of the life of Christ. Drink deeply of the water of salvation, that it may be in your heart as a living spring, flowing forth to refresh souls ready to perish." (Lt 75, 1900.



In the last room stands the pulpit from which Ellen White often preached in the Avondale church.

Mid August Ellen White stated "We took matters up quite fully, and decided that a meetinghouse must be built. We decided to start the work at once..." Letter 90, 1897.

The church was dedicated October 17, 1897. The *Bible Echo*, in reporting the dedication, described the building as situated near Maitland Road and three quarters of a mile from the school buildings, built of wood, well constructed, neatly painted, and presenting a very nice appearance...The building could accommodate 450 persons and was dedicated free from debt. *The Australian Years*, 321.

Time came to say good-bye. What legacy would Ellen White's ministry leave on the minds of people in Australia? Perhaps, the words of appreciation expressed in an album given to her on the day of her departure, tell the story.

"I am very glad for the privilege of expressing to you my warm appreciation of the kindly interest you have taken in me, and for the words of counsel and encouragement which you have given me." - C.B. Hughes

"I still cherish with melancholy pleasure, the recollection of events that cluster round the autumn of 1863, when my dear children, and myself came amongst you, as strangers in a strange land." - Susannah Sisley

"As a member of your family, it is with sadness, that I think of our association being broken up. I can but express my appreciation and gratitude for the kindly interest you have manifested in me and my welfare." - Dores E. Robinson

"We wish to thank you for your great kindness to us and also for your kind words of counsel and cheer." - John and Charlotte Pocock

"Very tender are the memories that cluster around our association from my early childhood. It is with gratitude I recall the many tokens of true maternal and fraternal interest in us children by yourself and dear Elder White when we were deprived of the care of our natural father. The instances are too numerous to mention." – M.S. Boyd

"I was converted through reading the chapter on 'Repentance' in 'Steps to Christ'... I found peace in my Savior." – P.B. Rudge

"We wish...to show in some slight measure our appreciation of your labors amongst us, with whom you have so unselfishly labored during the past year. Many times have you driven 28 miles across the mountains so that we might have the benefit of your presence and labors, at the loss of your rest and personal comfort." – Maitland friends

"...and knowing that we and others will miss you and your kindly interest in the welfare of the people." – Albert and Bessie Lamplough

"I thank Him for giving me the privilege of living in your household for nearly a year. I have learned many valuable things for which I am deeply grateful." – Karen Marie Laurisen

"I shall never forget your personal interest in me and my family. You have been to us a faithful mother in Israel." – Arthur and Carrie Hickox

"Regret thy parting from our loving band,
To join again friends in thy native land;
Affectionate esteem will aye be paid
To one, who deep foundation wisely laid.
Farewell! dear Sister, messenger of God
For long yet scatter seeds of truth abroad." – J.S. Caro & M. Caro

