I. Life Sketch of Beth Armstrong Coffin [Part 1]
II. New School Building for Guam-Micronesia

Kathy Marshall <colorcat3@comcast.net> Feb. 13:

Victor and Lillie McCune Armstrong were on their way as missionaries to China in September 1921. The family visits had come to an end. Their furniture had been sold as they had been instructed as western style furniture was readily available in China. They traveled to San Francisco to board their ship and arrived a few days before the ship sailed. Victor took the family to visit the Pacific Press, which was located nearby. When he introduced himself to the receptionist, she handed him a letter. It was addressed to him from the General Conference. They had no prior plans of visiting Pacific Press. How did a letter reach them there?

The letter stated the General Conference Committee had changed their minds and was sending them to Japan instead of China and they would need to take their furniture with them! With what little time remained before departure they were able to find a used furniture store and with the money they had left, they bought a western-style table, chairs and beds before their ship sailed.

When they arrived in Japan and were introduced to the mission president, he said, "So Elder Armstrong, where are you folks on your way to?" Victor said, "We are coming to Japan". The president asked, "What will you be doing?" Victor stated the letter he received did not specify and he expected to find out when he arrived in Japan. This was news to the president, and he begrudgingly decided, since they were already there with their luggage unloaded on the dock, they should get off the ship.

While waiting for word from the GC as to what he would be doing, they began their language study. During this time the family was temporarily housed with another family in a Japanese-style house near the mission headquarters. On December 9, 1922 Lillie instructed Victor to call for the doctor. And so it was that Helen Beth arrived in Ogikubo, Tokyo, Japan to join 8-year-old sister Marie and 4-year-old brother, Victor Adelbert in the house with tatami floors and rice paper walls.

When Beth was 9 months old, the terrible earthquake of 1923 struck Japan. It was a Sabbath morning and the family was by now living in a mission house next door to the church. Each Sabbath morning, Lillie's routine was to put Beth into the baby buggy and position it in front of the fireplace. Since Japan's summers are hot and humid, the draft from the fireplace kept Beth cool and she could sleep while Lillie would play the organ for the church service next door. On this particular September Sabbath morning, Beth was not in the mood to sleep. Each time Lillie rocked her and laid her in her buggy, Beth's eyes would pop open and she would laugh and "jabber". Finally running out of time, Lillie picked Beth up and carried her to church where she handed her off to big sister Marie to hold while she played the organ.

When the sermon ended and Lillie began the introduction to the closing hymn, there was a loud rumble. Initially they thought it was an ox cart lumbering by on the cobblestone street outside the compound. When the rumbling continued, the lights began to sway and the organ began to wobble across the floor, the congregation shouted out, "Jishin", "Jishin" (the Japanese word for earthquake) and ran out of the church. The shaking of the earthquake was so violent and extended that the publishing house, where many of the mission offices were located was totally destroyed. Everyone looked on in amazement as the bricks were shaken out onto the ground like projectiles until the only thing left standing were the water pipes up to the second story. Had this been a work-day the outcome would have been tragic.

About 30 minutes later, Victor decided to dash into their house for some food. As he was leaving, Lillie called after him to bring the baby buggy as Beth was getting heavy. When he returned a few minutes later with the food, Lillie asked why he did not bring the baby buggy. With an ashen face he told her the chimney had fallen on the baby buggy and
flattened it. Beth always considered the angels must have been "tickling" her that particular Sabbath morning to keep her awake.

The heavy after-shocks continued for three weeks. Since no one could return to their homes, the missionary families lived in a large communal tent divided by sheets to give each family a little privacy.

After a year of language study, the General Conference notified the Mission thatVictor was to be the next Japan Mission President. Victor protested that he was the newest man on the staff and would only agree to the appointment if the Japanese brethren voted unanimously in favor of his appointment. During his year of language study they had grown to love and respect him and the Japanese vote was unanimous.

When Beth was five, the family returned for their eagerly anticipated furlough to visit family in Montana and Iowa. As the ship docked and she got her first glimpse of America, she looked down at the stevedores working on the dock and said with surprise, "Look at all those dirty white men!" The only white men she had ever known were professional men.

Life in America on her grandmother and step-grandfather’s farm was a new and exciting experience for Beth. One day on the farm she came running into the house and announced that the pigs were barking at her.

When their furlough was over they returned to Japan where Beth began school and became an avid reader. The family called her their bookworm. Beth learned Japanese along with English and later could also read one type of Japanese characters.

One day after teaching music in Tokyo, Lillie came home with an extra bulge in her satchel. It was a little wiggly puppy they named, "Tippy" because of the white tip on its tail. Tippy was the first of Tippy dogs in three generations of family.

One day Tippy was missing. They called and called and searched the neighborhood to no avail. That night Beth knelt by her bed and prayed that Jesus would bring their Tippy back to them. Several weeks later a very thin and bedraggled Tippy did come home. He had a piece of rope around his neck, his paws were sore and bleeding, and his toenails very worn. It was obvious Tippy had chewed the rope in two to escape and dug his way out of an enclosure. Beth many told her children and grandchildren in one of their favorite bedtime stories, "A bad man had caught Tippy and tied him up, but Jesus brought him back to us and he was so happy to be back home".

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II. New School Building for Guam-Micronesia

Walter John <gwalterjohn@hotmail.com> Feb. 12:

Could you please be kind enough to post the following announcement/invitation on the SUD and FED newsletters for the benefit of those interested.

"This is both an announcement and an invitation to all who may be interested:

"The Chuu SDA school in Micronesia has been blessed with a new three-classroom building. The building project was jointly funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Rural Development (RD), and the Guam-Micronesia Mission of SDAs (GMM). The new classrooms are large and spacious and well situated on the school compound. An opening ceremony for the new school is being planned for Monday, February 18. It is our prayer that the new building will be a great blessing to the work of Adventist education on these remote Pacific islands."

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III. Burma Vignettes-- Early Missionaries # 18

Mervin Myat Kyaw <mervinmk@yahoo.com.au> and his wife Nan are Karen Adventists who worked many years in Burma and Thailand and now live and work in Australia. He has written a manuscript covering Adventism in Burma from its very beginning to the present and of his work in Thailand.

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Harry and Jessie Skinner of Australia arrived Myanmar in the late teens. Early in the twenties Harry and Jessie opened a station in brand new territory, at Hsi Seng, north east Myanmar. He had become proficient in the use of Burmese. He undertook a dictionary in Taungthu, a minority race, and he undertook preparation of a Taungthu grammar. He translated the gospel of Matthew into Taungthu, and his translation was accepted for publication by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Harry Skinner came to be recognized as the leading authority in Myanmar on the Taungthu language.

The Skinners could not endure the rigors of the climate and the unhealthful conditions at Hsi Seng. So this new station was abandoned.
However, a new beginning was made. The Taunthus were given the gospel of Matthew and seeds of truth were planted.

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IV. Adventist School for China

Rob Vieira <narrowwayman@hushmail.com> Feb. 11:

I was given your name and contact information as a reference from Ulena Robinson in Taiwan. I am serving as a missionary in China under the guise of an English teacher with New Dimension, an independent Adventist organization, and am currently on furlough here in the States.

I am writing to you on behalf of a friend of mine in China, Paul Niuben.

Paul has been running the Fragrant Lodge Seventh-day Adventist School in the south of Hebei province for the last 8 years. It is kindergarten through high school level. The school is on a small piece of land and the buildings are in poor condition and in need of repair. For several years now Paul has been negotiating with the local government to purchase a much larger parcel of land in that town, 11.5 acres, so that he can move the school, construct new and better quality buildings, and establish the school as one of the primary Adventist schools in mainland China. He also hopes to hire many more teachers and increase the student enrollment.

His reasons for expanding the school are as follows:

1. It is very difficult for Adventist students attending public schools in China to keep the Sabbath.
2. Public school teachers in China look down on and discriminate against Adventist students.
3. The whole Chinese system has a bad impression of Christians and our beliefs in general. Paul hopes the success of the school can help to improve Chinese people's overall attitude towards Christianity and Christians.
4. The different Adventist churches in China are not unified—every city SDA members are divided. Paul believes having a common school can help foster unity among the churches.
5. The school will have as one of its goals to produce academically high-level students for such positions as doctors, lawyers and administrators so that there may be an Adventist presence and influence in this higher class of the general workforce.
6. For the approximately 400,000 Adventist church members in mainland China, there are no official SDA schools, only small-scale homeschools or those which are in joint operation with the government.

Mr. Niuben plans to follow the traditional Adventist educational philosophy for his school, as put forth in the writings of Ellen White. This means:

**There will be a wide variety of subjects and courses to choose from, including Bible, language and writing, science, history, law, computers and manual arts.

**Students old enough to work will be encouraged to find part-time jobs during holiday periods in order to gain some job experience.

**Students will be required to raise their own sponsors and money, and report to them monthly.

**A healthy balance of classroom time and practical experience.

Within the last 15 years or so, attempts to establish a large Adventist school in China have failed, and a great amount of funds have been lost. However, Paul believes his plan will succeed because...

1. The school will be directed by himself, a Chinese national, not a foreigner.
2. The school will be operating below the county level, which means it will be very difficult for the central government to interfere, restrict or attempt to shut down the school.
3. Paul has more than 14 years of experience in negotiating with the government and dealing with government officials. He knows how the game works.

This school which Mr. Niuben wants to construct and establish is a large-scale endeavor, and the funds needed correspond accordingly. He estimates costs for construction of the various buildings needed, including classrooms, dormitories, a library, a music hall and teachers quarters will require a sum of about 800,000 US dollars to be raised. An additional $60,000 will cover the costs of the teachers' salaries for one full year.

In this regard, he has asked me to help him while I am here in the States to raise these funds—I am a board member of the Fragrant Lodge Adventist School and a personal friend of Paul. What we are asking of you is if you can help us by contacting and gathering together a few or more church members in your area who you think would be interested in
advancing the cause of Adventist education in China and also qualify as potential high-profile donors, keeping in mind the large amount of funds we are needing to raise. Once you have a few names together, we can arrange a specific time when I can come and give an in-depth presentation about the project to this group of potential donors. I will only be here in the States until the end of June, so we would probably have to schedule such a meeting to be no later than May.

So in essence, this is our need. This is a huge and challenging endeavor, but one which we feel is of utmost importance for the future of Adventist education in China. Will you help us? I would like to try to contact you soon by phone that I may talk further with you about Mr. Niuben's project. Would you please email me your phone contact information or call me at 580-778-3383?

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V. Mark Finley & Evangelism Team in Indonesia [Part 1 of 3]

"Longtime evangelist Mark A. Finley; General Conference (GC) Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department director Jonathan Kuntaraf; GC Health Department director Kathleen Kuntaraf, wife of Jonathan; vocalist Charles Haugabrooks; and other team members held a series of meetings in Manado, Indonesia, August 31-September 7. This resulted in remarkable conversions, including that of a tribal chief on a remote Indonesian island. Hope Channel taped the nightly meetings and aired them throughout Indonesia on its newly established 24-hour network there. Here are three reports Finley wrote of the event while in Manado.

"Report 1 -- September 2
"Warmest greetings from Manado, Indonesia! We began our evangelistic meetings with a packed audience of thousands in the Manado Convention Center. Manado is the capital of the Province of North Sulawesi, one of Indonesia's hundreds of islands. More than 75,000 Seventh-day Adventists worship in some 450 churches in the province,

"Adventism began here in 1921 when Samuel Rantung, who lived in this area, visited Jakarta. During his lengthy stay in Jakarta he came into contact with the Adventist message, received Bible studies, and was baptized into the Adventist church. When he returned to his village community in North Sulawesi, the entire village wanted to about the 'iron beasts,'
referring to the trains in Jakarta. There were no trains in this region of Indonesia, and the people here had never seen one before. So Rantung invited the townspeople to a special meeting to hear about his adventures, during which he told of another type of beast—the prophetic beasts of Daniel 7 & 8.

"The villagers listened with great interest as they learned about the prophecies and the coming of Jesus. Rantung continued regular discussions with them about Bible prophecy, and by the end of the year 21 people had been baptized and the Adventist faith launched in the Manado area.

"Our church is now flourishing here, and the membership is growing. In Manado there is now a union office, a conference office, and a 90-bed Adventist medical center. There is also a thriving secular university. On Sabbath I preached at the university church to 4,000 students about the Christ who can meet each of our needs. Early that morning it was refreshing to see hundreds of students walking to Sabbath school carrying Bibles in their hands.

"Before the series began, I conducted two days of training sessions for about 120 pastors. At the session I heard the story of the father of one of the pastors who more than 30 years ago met a tribal chief, who together with his people lives on the remote Indonesian island of Tanimbar. Although we have 230,000 Seventh-day Adventists in Indonesia, thousands of islands have no Adventist presence at all. Tanimbar is one of them.

"The chief and the pastor's father developed a friendship and studied the Bible together for several years. Although the chief came to believe the Adventist message, his leadership position hindered him from fully embracing it and being baptized. He was reluctant to interrupt the status quo of his tribe. His son, however, accepted the Adventist message in 1995 and is now a university professor in Manado.

"The chief is now 77 years old and has been engaged in Bible studies for the past four years with the son of the pastor who studied the Bible with him so many years ago. He and his family traveled for a week by boat to come to Manado to attend our evangelistic meetings, and they have requested baptism. Please pray for the chief, his family, and his people.

"Jonathan and Kathleen Kuntaraf, Charles Haugabrook, and I sense the power of God working in our meetings every night. Jonathan serves as translator, Charles is presenting the music, and Kathleen the health talks.

"The Indonesian people treat us with amazing hospitality. The churches spend hours every day preparing our noon meal. What a joy to be a part of the worldwide Adventist family!" [Part 1 of 3] -- from the February, 2013 edition of
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