

***o“Against the Odds, They Did Preach”
The First Four Women to be Ordained
in the United Methodist Tradition***

For many years it was believed that Anna Howard Shaw from New England was the first woman to have been ordained in the United Methodist tradition, in the New York Methodist Protestant Conference held in Tarrytown, in 1880. Then in the early 2000s Christopher Shoemaker from Georgia uncovered the story of Helenor Alter Davisson, who had been ordained deacon in Indiana in the Methodist Protestant Wabash Conference in 1866.

Much to my surprise, in 2004/5, while doing research for the book which I wrote for the 50th anniversary of full clergy rights for women in the United Methodist tradition, *Courageous Past, Bold Future*, four additional women were uncovered who had been ordained elders in the Methodist Protestant Church between Davisson’s ordination as a deacon and Shaw’s ordination as an elder: Pauline Williams Martindale in Kansas in 1875, Maggie Ritchie Elliott in Missouri in 1876, Emma J. Plummer Baldwin in Missouri in 1878 and Mary Hobson Johnson in Kansas in 1879.

Information on these women was scarce and much of what I learned came from birth, marriage and census records. In the intervening years, however, I have learned that area newspapers often had a wealth of information that was not included anywhere else, and that turned out to be the case for Pauline Williams Martindale - though not so much for the other three women.

The result was an unusual two-part article since there was too much on Martindale for just one article while not enough on the other three for a single article. Part One was published in the latest April 2021 issue of *Methodist History* and Part Two should appear in the July 2021 issue; so if you receive *Methodist History*, you will be able to read the entire two-part article. Due to the amount of material, tonight I am going to concentrate on Pauline Martindale and just give a brief overview of the other three women.

In his history of Iowa Methodism, *Between the Rivers*, John A. Nye reported that “women had been accepted into the ministry of the Methodist Protestant Church. Mrs.

Pauline Martindale was received by the conference in 1872 and became the only woman minister in the state.”¹ Iowa MP Conference minutes revealed that Pauline was married to another pastor, John A. Martindale.

Paulin(a) Williams was born in Indiana in May 1845, the daughter of the Rev. Gabriel and Martha Williams.² Gabriel was a Methodist Protestant pastor who served churches in Indiana and was the President of the Wabash Conference in North Indiana between 1850 and 1852, before moving to northern Illinois.³

Pauline would have been 5-7 years old during the years her father was President of the Wabash Conference, and it is quite possible that during that time, as well as in the following years, she might have had contact with Helenor Alter Davisson, who began traveling and working with her father, the Rev. John Alter, as early as the 1840s, and, thus, might have been inspired by Helenor to go into the ministry.

Pauline married John A. Martindale, also of Indiana, in 1867, in Missouri.⁴ They had one child, Gloraine Luella.⁵ John A. Martindale was initially a member of the North Indiana ME Conference, having been received “on trial” in 1861. He remained on trial until 1864 when he was ordained as a deacon, and then he located in 1865.⁶

John first appeared in the 1869 Minutes of the Iowa MP Conference.⁷ Pauline then appeared in the 1870 Minutes as being accepted for the Itinerancy under the name Phoebe, and she led one of the religious services during that conference.⁸

¹ John A. Nye, *Between the Rivers: A History of Iowa United Methodism* (Iowa Annual Conference Commission on Archives and History, 1986), 93.

² 1850 US Federal Census, Franklin township, Montgomery County, Indiana, n.p; 1900 US Federal Census, Clay Centre Township, Clay county, Kansas, 11. Pauline seems to have born “Paulina” but in her older years is nearly always referred to as Pauline.

³ Obituary for Gabriel Williams, posted on Ancestry.com: <https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/tree/65975676/person/42163322050/media/34176f45-2926-4516-b1c3-fd6e52353a5a>.

⁴ Family Group Record for John A. Martindale, Family Search International Genealogical Index, <http://www.familysearch.org>; 1880 US Federal Census, Liberty Township, Grundy County, MO, 367B.

⁵ *California Death Index, 1940-1997*, online database, accessed on Ancestry.com.

⁶ Rev. L. W. Monson, comp., *Manual of the North Indiana Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church 1844-1889* (Wabash: Plain Dealer Co., 1890) 11,26; hereafter referred to as Monson, *Manual. Minutes of the 1862 North Indiana Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 90; *Minutes of the 1863 North Indiana Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 85; *Minutes of the 1864 North Indiana Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 87-88.

⁷ *Minutes of the 1869 Iowa Conference of the Methodist [Protestant] Church*, 16.

⁸ *Minutes of the 1870 Iowa Conference of the Methodist [Protestant] Church*, 5,6.

By 1871 area newspapers reported that Pauline was lecturing. The December 12th *Daily Iowa State Register* stated that, “Mrs. Martindale of Montezuma, has mounted the rostrum for the season with several lectures on the live issues of the day. The *Republican* recommends her highly as an accomplished and amiable Christian lady.”⁹ In 1872 John and Pauline were appointed to bring Fraternal Greetings to the North Missouri Conference where her father was serving, and Pauline preached while attending the conference:¹⁰

. . . Sister Martindale accepted a pressing invitation to preach on Friday at eleven o’clock, and a large congregation was in attendance. Her discourse was so simple, unaffected, sincere, touching and true that all who listened were profited. She is evidently an earnest Christian. This is the first qualification for preaching. She tells the story of the Cross in a way which wins, not only the attention, but the sympathy of the hearer. By her very first sentence, so tender and direct, she disarmed criticism. We have occasionally heard women *declare* [?] and sometimes *scold* from the *pulpit*, but Pauline Martindale is the first woman we ever heard *preach*.

And to such preaching we could listen again and again with profit and delight. Let anybody and everybody preach, who, in feature, in tone of voice, in every movement, thus bears the sanction of the Most High . . . Never, in our finest churches of the east, under the sound of any human voice, however masculine and doctorly, have we witnessed such a melting of souls, such a deep interblending of emotions – such a blessed result under the word – as when a woman preached - far out upon the prairie.¹¹

This was incredibly high praise for a woman preacher in 1872, especially one who had not yet been ordained. Pauline would have been only 27 years old at the time, and it would certainly seem, that “against the odds, she did preach.”

That same year John, however, began to encounter problems. When he was called for his character examination, “on motion, ...referred to a committee, consisting of Bros M R Hixon and J R Pearshall. . . On bringing the parties together, Bro Martindale made certain acknowledgements, upon which the complaint was withdrawn, and we

⁹ *Daily Iowa State Register*, December 12, 1871, 2.

¹⁰ *Minutes of the 1871 Iowa Conference of the Methodist [Protestant] Church*, 10-11; *Minutes of the 1872 Iowa Conference of the Methodist [Protestant] Church*, 9.

¹¹ *Kansas Reporter* (Wamego, Kansas) November 7, 1872, 4.

recommend that his character passed.” John and Pauline were, however, left without an appointment at their own request.¹²

It should be noted here that it was the practice then and continues to be the case to the present day that when charges were brought against a pastor – often within the executive session of the clergy – these charges are never fully described within the minutes due to the need for confidentiality. Though understandable, this becomes very frustrating for the historian who is attempting to determine what really happened, as you will see in other cases in this presentation, as well.

John and Pauline began serving that year in the Kansas Conference and officially transferred to that Conference in 1873. Several newspapers described Pauline’s lectures. For example, on November 7, 1872, the *Kansas Reporter* in Wamego, Kansas, carried a notice about a lecture which she was to give:

Rev. Mrs. P.W. Martindale will deliver a lecture at the Court House next Monday evening, Nov. 11th. The subject of the lecture will be, “How shall the spell be broken.” (*sic*)

For the benefit of our readers we append a few notices of the press of this lady lecturer:

“Mrs. Martindale’s lectures abound in gems, both of thought and language. They are delivered in a clear and beautiful style.”—Princeton (Mo) *Advance*.

“Mrs. Martindale’s lecture was pronounced by all who heard it, as able, eloquent, and convincing.”—Grundy Co., Mo, *Republican*.

“Mrs. Martindale as a lecturer is not surpassed by any of the women lecturers of the day.” Montezuma (Iowa) *Republican*.¹³

It was at the end of this article that the glowing description of her preaching had appeared.

At the 1875 annual conference, meeting in Americus, Kansas, on Thursday morning, September 30, the Committee on Itinerancy and Orders “report the name of Sister P. W. Martindale as a proper person to be elected to Elder’s Orders. . . On motion report rec’d and Sister P. W. Martindale was elected to Orders.” Then, on Sunday morning, October

¹² *Minutes of the 1872 Iowa Conference of the Methodist [Protestant] Church*, 8-9, 11.

¹³ *Kansas Reporter* (Wamego, Kansas) November 7, 1872, 1, 4.

3, 1875, at the age of 30, while meeting in the local Methodist Episcopal Church, Sister P. W. Martindale, was ordained as an Elder in the Kansas Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, *making her the first woman in the United Methodist tradition known to have been ordained as an Elder in full connection!*¹⁴

In 1877 the Martindales were listed as missionaries in the appointment list for the Kansas Conference, though nothing is stated about where they would be serving. By 1878, however, they were in Lincoln, Nebraska, where Pauline appears to be serving as the pastor of the Methodist Protestant Church, while she was also heavily involved in temperance activities, including the editing of a temperance newspaper, *The Spirit of the Hour*.

Unfortunately, Pauline suffered from sunstroke over the summer of 1878, and this seems to have affected her ability to continue as the editor of the paper and the pastor of the church. At the 1878 Kansas Conference held in October Pauline was left in the hands of the President, while John was left without an appointment.¹⁵ On the 2nd of November, the *Nebraska State Journal* in Lincoln reported:

Mr. Moser, late of Albia, Monroe County, Iowa, has purchased the material and good will of *The Spirit of the Hour* from Mrs. Martindale, and will continue its publication in this city. . . Mrs. Martindale has been faithful in season and out of season, and retires from the journalistic field with the good wishes of all who know her.¹⁶

During the first few months of 1879 Pauline and John ran a rather elite boarding home for “Members of the Legislature and others visiting the city.”¹⁷ There is no mention in the local papers of Pauline preaching or lecturing.

On October 3rd, however, it was reported that, “J. A. Martindale was adjudged insane by the County Commissioners yesterday and taken to the Insane Hospital.”¹⁸ This, then,

¹⁴ *Minutes of the 1878 Kansas Conference of the Methodist [Protestant] Church*, 65; *Iola Register* (Iola, Kansas) October 26, 1878, 2.

¹⁵ *Minutes of the 1878 Kansas Conference of the Methodist [Protestant] Church*, 65; *Iola Register* (Iola, Kansas) October 26, 1878, 2.

¹⁶ *The Nebraska State Journal*, November 2, 1878, 4.

¹⁷ *Nebraska State Journal*, January 7, 1879, 4; January 12, 14, 15, 1879, 4; March 8, 1879, 4.

¹⁸ *Nebraska State Journal*, October 3, 1879, 4.

accounts for him being listed in the 1880 U.S. Federal Census as an inmate of the Nebraska State Hospital in Lincoln.

Pauline apparently returned to Kansas after her husband was admitted to the State Hospital, though she was not present at the 1879 annual conference.¹⁹

Although the minutes of the Conference say nothing regarding Pauline's assignment for the coming year, several newspaper reports indicate that she was preaching and lecturing in the months following and was sometimes described as an evangelist of the MPC.

The Kansas Chief in Troy, Kansas reported in November that:

Mrs. Martindale, of Lincoln, Nebraska, gave a powerful temperance lecture, last Friday evening. She is well worthy of her station; although taking a stand against intemperance, she does not advocate women's rights.

Although this report seems to indicate that Pauline was not in favor of women's rights, you will see from a later news report that apparently some factions of the temperance movement had made the decision *not* to advocate for women's rights, much to Pauline's disappointment, and she, apparently, did not advocate for such rights when she was lecturing on temperance issues.^{20, 21, 22}

In the 1880 US Federal Census for Walnut Township, Atchison County, KS, Pauline was listed as Head of the Household, "keeping house." Her daughter Luella was listed, along with a nephew, William Axtell, and Henry B. Sipple, described as a "boarder" and "farm laborer." Interestingly, Henry Sipple had preached at the MP Church in Lincoln in 1879 and was elected to Elder's Orders at the 1880 Kansas Conference, so it is unclear why he was living in Pauline's household and listed as a farm laborer. At the end of the list was John A. Martindale, clergyman, with no relation to the head of the household specified,

¹⁹ *Minutes of the 1879 Annual Conference of the Methodist [Protestant] Church*, 76,78, 87.

²⁰ *Brown County World* (Hiawatha, Kansas), November 6, 1879, 3; *Kansas Chief* (Troy, Kansas), November 20, 1879, 3; December 18, 1879, 3; *Kansas Weekly Herald* (Hiawatha, Kansas), November 28, 1879, 3.

²¹ *Kansas Valley Times* (Rossville, Kansas) January 23, 1880, 2; January 30, 1878, 3.

²² *Kansas Valley Times*, February 27, 1880, 2.

described as “insane,” though he was, apparently, an inmate of the Hospital for the Insane in Lincoln, Nebraska at the time.

At the 1880 Kansas Conference both John’s and Pauline’s characters passed, but they were once again left without an appointment at their own request.²³

The annual conference in 1881 seems to have been the beginning of problems for Pauline. The conference roll for 1881 indicated that John was present, and his character passed. Pauline, however, was not present, and she was, along with Henry Sipple, referred to the Committee on Difficulties.²⁴ The report from the Committee read: “After careful consideration, we recommend that the character stand arrested, in view of charges to be presented in the regular way by this committee, of, Sister Pauline W. Martindale and Brother H.B. Sipple.” The appointment list stated that charges were preferred against both Martindale and Sipple, though, of course, they were not specified. John Martindale was appointed as an evangelist.²⁵

In 1882 John Martindale was transferred to the unstationed list at his own request, and the secretary was ordered give him a letter of his standing in the conference.²⁶ This was the last reference to John in the minutes.

That same year, however, Pauline Martindale and Henry Sipple were once again referred to the Committee on Difficulties which recommended that they be brought to trial according to the requirements of the *Discipline*. The President’s Report for that year described the difficulties which he had had, however, in gathering all the parties needed for the trial, particularly the representatives of the conference who were to bring the charges. Two different dates were set, and the defendants sent written defenses, but it appears that a trial was never actually held.²⁷

²³ *Minutes of the 1880 Kansas Conference of the Methodist [Protestant] Church*, 103, 111, 119, 120.

²⁴ *Minutes of the 1881 Kansas Conference of the Methodist [Protestant] Church*, 130, 131, 134, 137, 140.

²⁵ *Minutes of the 1881 Kansas Conference, Methodist Protestant Church*, 161, 162, 142.

²⁶ *Minutes of the 1882 Kansas Conference, Methodist Protestant Church*, 180, 182, 188.

²⁷ *Minutes of the 1882 Kansas Conference, Methodist Protestant Church*, 183, 195, 283.

Sometime between 1880 and 1883 Pauline and John had divorced as Paulin(a) Martindale and Henry B. Sipple were married on April 1, 1883, in Missouri by a pastor from the MEC,S.²⁸ Nevertheless, Pauline was still referenced in the October 1883 Conference minutes as Pauline Martindale. The minutes stated that Pauline Martindale and Henry Sipple had “withdrawn under charges.” There was also a standing vote taken on the floor of the conference, apparently to approve that action. The vote was “Ayes 21, Nays 18.”²⁹ Thus, it seems fairly clear that whatever the charges were, there was no clear consensus as to the guilt of the two parties. This was, however, the end of service in the ordained ministry for both of the Martindales and Henry Sipple.

Although the “difficulties” which Pauline experienced within the conference were never specified, it is probable that they had something to do with the fact that Pauline divorced John Martindale (an action which was unusual enough in itself in those days) and her relationship with Henry Sipple which subsequently led to marriage. Nevertheless, she did not let this prevent her from continuing to be involved in the community in other ways. Though she was no longer a member of the Methodist Protestant Church, newspaper articles over the next few years indicated that she remained active in the temperance movement and continued to be involved with church activities, even preaching on occasion.³⁰

In 1896 Pauline wrote a letter urging supporters to attend the Prohibition Party’s State Convention to elect strong delegates for the upcoming election. She concluded the letter with these words, “So we must now depend on men and women, who each one are dedicated to this cause. It was hard for me as a woman who had so long hoped that our party would lead in suffrage for women. Not lay it by for a time.”³¹ So, this report seems to indicate that though Pauline was strongly in favor of women’s voting rights that she had bowed to the decision of her party to “lay...by for a time” public support for woman’s suffrage.

²⁸ *Missouri Marriage Records, 1805-2002*, 392, online database, accessed on Ancestry.com.

²⁹ *Minutes of the 1883 Kansas Conference, Methodist Protestant Church*, 219, 228.

³⁰ *Wyandotte Gazette* (Kansas City, Kansas) September 18, 1855, 2; September 25, 1885, 3; May 7, 1886, 3; May 1, 1885, 3; October 2, 1885, 3; *Leavenworth Standard* (Leavenworth, Kansas) November 17, 1886, 3.

³¹ *The Fulcrum* (Burlingame, Kansas) June 19, 1896, 1.

One of the most interesting news articles, however, was a notice that appeared in both a Kansas City newspaper as well as one in Brooklyn, New York in 1901 that indicated that Pauline was still very much involved in the temperance movement and in a somewhat unique manner:

“A Joint in Kansas City Closed and a Bartender Arrested”

KANSAS CITY, Mo., June 1.—Expecting resistance of a physical nature, constables with a warrant against Charles Wyrick, charging him with running a joint, were led in their raid today by two women. Deputy Constable Mrs. Mary Augustine and Deputy Mrs. Pauline Sipple led Constable Myer and Deputy Bullet into the “joint.” The barkeeper was arrested, and the fixtures carted away. The attaches made no fight when they saw the women. It is not improbable that women will be attached to every joint-raiding party.³²

In 1907-08 there were a number of newspaper articles regarding Pauline’s granddaughter, Tot Williams, and her temperance work in the Salvation Army. A May 27th article in the *Ottawa Guardian* (Ottawa, Kansas), under an article entitled, “Do Good Work,” states that, “The Salvation Army in Ottawa, under the direction of Captain Tot Williams and Lieutenant Westmore, are accomplishing great work along temperance lines. Many young men with blighted hopes for the future, brought upon them by the drink habit, are being brought under the loving influences of the gospel by these devoted young women. At the end of June the *Guardian* reported that, “Mrs. Pauline Sipple, of Kansas City, Kas, who has been visiting her granddaughter, Capt. Tot Williams, will return home today. Mrs. Williams enjoyed her visit to Ottawa, and has been of great help to the Salvation Army Lassies.”³³

In the 1920 Federal Census (recorded on January 28) Pauline was listed as a resident of the Osawatomie State Hospital in Miami, KS. Henry had died in 1913, and Pauline died on March 12, 1920.³⁴ No death record for John has been found.

“Against the odds,” Pauline Williams Martindale Sipple, the first woman known to have been ordained elder and receive full clergy rights in the United Methodist tradition was

³² *The Brooklyn Citizen*, June 2, 1901, 11; *The Kansas City Gazette*, June 1, 1901, 1.

³³ *The Ottawa Guardian* (Ottawa, Kansas), 24 May 1907, 3, 28 June, 1907, 4; *Lawrence Weekly World* (Lawrence, Kansas) October 25, 1906, 2.

³⁴ 1900 US Federal Census, Clay Center Township, Clay county, KA, 11; 1900 US Federal Census, Pueblo City, Pueblo County CO, 73; 1910 US Federal Census, Kansas City, Ward 3, Wyandotte County, 9a; 1920 Federal Census, Osawatomie State Hospital, Miami County, 12A; <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/104372017>; *The Leavenworth Times*, March 16, 1920, 7.

a strong, articulate woman, who was not only a successful preacher but also a respected leader in the temperance movement in her day. “Against the odds,” she also sought happiness in her personal life by divorcing a husband who had difficulties, and then marrying a second time. Even though this, then, apparently led to her withdrawal from the ordained ministry, she continued to follow her call as a leader in the temperance movement and continued her work in the church, as well. Had it not been for whatever difficulties Pauline experienced with her two husbands, it is likely that her story would have been known long before this, and she would have been recognized along with other strong female Methodist leaders such as Frances Willard and Anna Howard Shaw.

Both the second and the third women to have been ordained also experienced difficulties in the church. Margaret, better known as “Maggie,” Ritchie Elliott was born in 1845, in Hudson, OH and married Charles B. Elliott in 1868.³⁵ They first appeared in the minutes of the 1876 Missouri Conference of the MPC, when C.B. was accepted as a member, and Sister M.R. Elliott was elected to the itinerancy. On October 19, 1877, Maggie was then elected as an elder in full connection and ordained. Over the next few years Maggie was active in the conference, serving first on the Statistics Committee and later, on the Temperance, Obituaries, and the Stationing Committees. In 1882, Charles was present at annual conference, but Maggie did not attend; both were left without appointment at their own request. The following year they were both absent, though their characters passed. Charles’ appointment was left in the hands of the President, and Maggie still received no appointment at her own request.³⁶

In 1884, however, the examination of character stated that Charles was “laid over” and Maggie was “Questioned” and referred to a special committee. The special committee then reported back:

Whereas Mrs. Maggie R. Elliott, an ordained elder of this conference of the Methodist Protestant Church, has publicly, inegrilosly [sic], informally and spitefully proclaimed her voluntary withdrawal from the Conference,
Therefore, Be it resolved: That her name be stricken from the roll of the conference.

³⁵ *Ohio, Compiled Marriage Index 1843-1900*, online database, accessed on Ancestry.com.

³⁶ E-mail from John Finley to the author, August 8, 2005 and *Minutes of the 1877 Missouri Conference, MPC*, 347.

Later in the minutes a note appeared that C.B. Elliott and M.R. Elliott's names had both been stricken from the conference rolls.³⁷

Maggie Elliott may have left the MP Church, but she did not leave the ministry. In 1891, she joined the Congregational Church in Wisconsin. Maggie, too, however, divorced her first husband and re-married on January 14, 1894 - a man from Wisconsin named Edwin Pake. She died in 1928, in Osprey, FL. Although her obituary mentions her first husband, Charles B. Elliott, nothing is mentioned re: her ordination in the MP Church prior to being ordained in the Congregational Church in Wisconsin.³⁸

The third woman to be ordained elder was Emma J. Plummer Baldwin, born in 1846 in Illinois. She was married in Nebraska in 1873 to John Baldwin, who began his ministerial career in California in the Methodist Episcopal Church:

John Baldwin "was received on trial in 1859, discontinued in 1860, received again on trial in 1863, and ordained deacon and elected full member in 1867. He withdrew in 1871. C.V. Anthony in *Fifty Years of Methodism* wrote, 'John Baldwin was a rare specimen of the genus homo, rough, angular, good natured, but not very studious, perhaps poorly understood, he could not make a success in a field like California.'"³⁹

John and Emma Baldwin first appeared in the 1875 minutes of the Missouri MP Conference. Emma was accepted as a probationary member, and they were appointed to Douglas. In 1876 John was ordained elder and Emma was then ordained elder in 1878, and they were appointed together to Warsaw. In 1879, Emma was appointed to Greenfield and John to nearby Springfield.⁴⁰

Their difficulties began in 1880. A Committee on Investigation reported "That in their judgment, the charge and specifications contained in the paper marked 'Warsaw circuit

³⁷ *Minutes of the 1884 Missouri Conference of the Methodist Protestant Conference*, 503, 509.

³⁸ E-mail from the Reverend Douglas Showalter, UCC Pastor, Falmouth, MA, who researched early Congregational female pastors and was the individual whose research on Maggie Elliott led him to the Missouri Conference Archives; *Wisconsin Marriage Index 1820-1907*, 88, accessed on Ancestry.com; *The Oskosh Northwestern*, January 13, 1828, 16.

³⁹ 1900 US Federal Census, Ohio Township, Franklin County, Kansas; *Nebraska, Marriage Records 1855-1908*, 87, online databases accessed on Ancestry.com; E-mail from Stephen Yale, archivist, California-Nevada Conference, to the author, 08/23/2006.

⁴⁰ E-mail from John Finley to the author, 08/23/2005.

vs. Jno Baldwin' are of such a nature as to require an investigation before a committee as provided for in Discp. P.37 – Art.3. They recommend the reference of the paper marked 'Jno Baldwin vs. Bush & Berry' to the pastor of Mt. Olivet Ch for action. See Discp – p. 25 – Trial of members Art. 2. ”⁴¹

The 1881 minutes then stated under examination of character: “Jno Baldwin, expelled from conf. & church....” “E.J. Baldwin, character passed, dismissed by letter.”⁴² Thus, it seems that Emma suffered the consequences of her husband’s difficulties in the ministry – though, again, those difficulties were never spelled out. It is interesting to note, however, that the 1880 US Federal Census lists John Baldwin as living in Ottawa, Kansas as a “boarder” and Emma is living in Marion, Missouri, as head of household, along with the two children that she had with John and John’s children from a former marriage.⁴³

In the 1900 US Federal Census John and Emma were listed in Ohio Township, Franklin County, Kansas, along with their six children, having been married for 37 years. In the 1910 census, however, Emma was living with her son, Edgar, and described as divorced, while John was living in Oregon with his son, Silas, described as having been married only 38 years, which might indicate that they were divorced shortly after 1900.⁴⁴

Whether John and Emma actually divorced, sometime after 1900, John moved out of the household and lived elsewhere until his death in 1913 in Great Falls, Montana. Nevertheless, he and Emma, along with three of their sons, are buried together in Antioch Cemetery, Homewood, KS. Emma died in 1936, the last of the four women to die.⁴⁵

⁴¹ *Minutes of the 1880 Missouri Conference, Methodist Protestant Church*, 415.

⁴² *Minutes of the 1881 Missouri Conference, Methodist Protestant Church*, 431.

⁴³ 1880 US Federal Census, Ottawa, Franklin County, KS, 124; Marion Township, Dade County, KS, 122.

⁴⁴ 1900 US Federal Census, Ohio Township, Franklin County, KS, 200; 1910 US Federal Census, Ohio Township, Franklin County, KS, 6B; 1910 US Federal Census, Portland, Multnomah County, OR, 8A.

1920 US Federal Census, Ohio Township, Franklin County, KS, 5A; 1930 US Federal Census, Ohio Township, Franklin County, KS, 2A.

⁴⁵ *Find-a-grave* website: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/45100160>; *Great Falls Tribune* (Great Falls, Montana) 2 November 1913, 9. Divorce records in Kansas are not public records and therefore cannot be accessed. Note: the fact that they are buried together does not necessarily signify that they never divorced. My great-grandmother divorced her husband in 1907 and married a second time; she is, however, buried in the same lot as her first husband.

The fourth woman, Mary C. Johnson, also married a pastor, Addison Johnson, but these two seemed to have served in the Kansas Conference without incident. Mary Hobson was born in 1845, in Iowa and married Addison Johnson from Ohio in February 1866.⁴⁶

Mary and Addison first appeared in the Kansas minutes in 1879 when they were recommended for admission into the itinerancy and referred to the Committee on Itinerancy and Orders and were both approved for elder's orders.⁴⁷

In 1881 Mary was appointed to serve on the Committee on Sabbath Schools and on the Committee on the Examination in the First Year. She, was, however, left in the hands of the President at appointment time. Mary preached in one of the services at the 1882 Annual Conference. The President reported that in the fall he appointed Addison as pastor of the Whitewater Creek Circuit and connected it with the Cowley Circuit, appointing Mary as the Associate Pastor. In January, however, he relieved them of the Cowley Circuit. In 1883 and 84 the Johnsons were left without work at their own request, and the reason became obvious in 1885, when Mary died on August 21st.⁴⁸ Friday evening of the annual conference, October 9, was set aside for a memorial service for Mary, and Sisters [Rosetta] Smith and [Amanda] Evey were to participate.

The following obituary appeared in the 1885 Minutes:

Whereas it has pleased the Great Head of the church to remove from our ranks since the last Conference, our beloved sister Rev. Mary C. Johnson, and whereas, we bow in humble submission to the devine [sic] will, Knowing that in all things he will do right:

Therefore, Resolved, that we as a Conference feel that we have lost an efficient member, a woman preeminently good and a faithful Itinerant and Resolved, that we insert the following in memory of her life.

Mary C. Johnson was born in 1844 [1845], February 11 and died August 21st 1885 and was therefore in the 41st [40th] year of her age. She departed this life at the

⁴⁶ Find-a-grave website: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/66303724>, accessed on Ancestry.com.

⁴⁷ *Minutes of the 1879 Kansas Conference, Methodist [Protestant] Church*, 76, 78, 87, 90; *Minutes of the 1880 Kansas Conference, Methodist Protestant Church*, 119.

⁴⁸ *Minutes of the 1881 Kansas Conference, Methodist Protestant Church*, 148, 149, 169.

⁴⁸ *Minutes of the 1882 Kansas Conference, Methodist Protestant Church*, 189, 205; *Minutes of the 1883 Kansas Conference, Methodist Protestant Church*, 231; *Minutes of the 1884 Kansas Conference, Methodist Protestant Church*, 252; *Minutes of the 1885 Kansas Conference, Methodist Protestant Church*, 279.

Residence of Bro. W. Pearson who lives 4 miles North of Douglass, Butler County, Kansas.

Her funeral was preached in Pleasant Hill church by L. C. Guyette, assisted by W. W. Woodward, after which she was buried in Price's Graveyard ¼ mile west and ½ mile south said Church where she rests from her labor. Sister Johnson died in great peace, all through her sickness, her faith was unshaken. Trusting Him who said, I will hold thee by thy right and Hence she was always patient and [cannot read word]. Two weeks before she died she said it seems a long time to wait for I have fought a good fight and I know I have kept the faith and [there] is a crown for me and I shall soon have it: Brethren, it will not be long before we shall follow her if faithfull [sic] to the sunny clime of Undying Day.

L.C. Guyette
W.W. Woodward⁴⁹

The stories of the first four women ordained as elders in full connection in the Methodist Protestant Church reveal that they all married men who were also ministers, one of the acceptable ways for women to serve in those days. Three of the women experienced difficulties in these relationships, however, which eventually led either to dismissal or withdrawal from the church. In at least two cases and maybe even a third, these difficulties led to divorce, indicating that women who followed their call into the ordained ministry in the late eighteenth century often had obstacles to overcome on many fronts. The one woman who was ordained, and who seemed to have had no trouble at all, died at age 40. "Against the odds," these strong, often outspoken women, followed their call to preach.

In conclusion, one might ask why it has taken so long for the stories of these four women to come to light? By 1884 when Anna Howard Shaw's ordination was questioned at the MP General Conference and deemed "unauthorized by church law," none of these women were still members of their conferences. Sisters Amanda Evey and Rosetta S. Smith in Kansas had yet to have been ordained. Therefore, there was no reason for any of their names to have been raised.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ *Minutes of the 1885 Kansas Conference, Methodist Protestant Church*, 269, 279-280.

⁵⁰ Edward J. Drinkhouse, M.D., D.D. *History of Reform in the Methodist Protestant Church, Vol II* (Board of Publication of the Methodist Protestant Church, 1900), 617. In addition, Missouri Conference Archivist, John Finley, could find no evidence that the minutes of the Missouri MP Conference had ever been formally p

Further, though Pauline Williams Martindale Sipple, the first woman to have received full clergy rights in the United Methodist tradition, was clearly an independent woman who followed her calling within her own sphere and was active beyond the ordained ministry as was Anna Howard Shaw, her story has clearly been eclipsed by Shaw who came from urban New England rather than the rural Midwest, and who rose to national fame due to her involvement in the woman's suffrage movement while never having had her ordination officially revoked. Nevertheless, Pauline Martindale Sipple should receive recognition as a pioneer Methodist woman, who also paved the way for the others who followed her, "Against the Odds."