

Sarah Lindsey

SARAH LINDSEY, LADY MINISTER

Sarah Hallock was born in Pennsylvania in 1830 and grew up on an secluded farm in the beautiful hills of Northern Pennsylvania. Sarah spent her childhood in the quiet valley unaware that far to the north in Quebec, Canada, lived a boy named John Lindsey who would someday unite his future destiny with hers.

John Lindsey's early years are not known to us except that he had been a Millerite and had gone through the Great Disappointment of October 22, 1844. A few years later, Joseph Bates baptized him into the Sabbath-keeping Adventist Church.

Sarah after a "deep conviction of the truth" at the age of 27, was baptized after attending the tent meetings during the summer of 1857. Sarah later wrote about her baptism: "I feel grateful to my kind, loving Savior, that I have a faith and hope that reaches forward to a heaven that is, to a God that is, and to a Savior that is, and who is about to appear the second time."

In the 1860's John and Sarah and John were married. And by 1869 they had begun a dynamic preaching ministry together. But what they saw going on in their church saddened them deeply. A number of church members and leaders had turned away from many of the commandments and were dishonoring God in the way they were living.

Sarah couldn't just sit back and watch as homes broke up and people's lives were ruined. She decided to help her husband share the love of Jesus and how He could change their lives. She began speaking in the afternoon at weekend meetings. Her topic was the love and

kindness of God.

It didn't take long for the New York-Pennsylvania Conference leaders to realize that Sarah had been called by God take an active part in the ministry. So at age 39, Sarah A. H. Lindsey became the first Seventh-day Adventist woman--among scores of men--to receive a ministerial license to preach, hold evangelistic meetings, and lead out in business and committee sessions. This rare honor reflected the high esteem the church held for her spiritual gifts.

For the next ten years she and her husband John (who received his ministerial license years after she got hers) traveled all over western New York and Pennsylvania, preaching, teaching, and giving Bible studies. Both John and Sarah loved their work and gave their best to the cause.

One fall the Barnum and Bailey Circus came to town for a number of performances. The Lindseys were sure that attendance at their meetings would be small. But as it turned out, the Lindsey's audience was larger than the one at the circus--especially when Sarah did the preaching!

When John turned 58, he asked the conference leaders for a job change. He wanted to continue his witnessing, but at a slower pace. Unfortunately he only lived two more years before dying of cancer.

Despite the loss of her husband and long-time preaching partner, Sarah kept working until she was 65.

Sarah Lindsey's career as a female preacher was by no means uncommon during our early church history. She was just one of a number of lady ministers such as Jennie A. Owen, Sarepta Henry, Ellen Lane, and Lulu Wightman.

Reference: Information provided by Brian Strayer