

Lindsey, Sarah A. (Hallock) (1832–1914)

MILTON HOOK

Milton Hook, Ed.D. (Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, the United States). Hook retired in 1997 as a minister in the Greater Sydney Conference, Australia. An Australian by birth Hook has served the Church as a teacher at the elementary, academy and college levels, a missionary in Papua New Guinea, and as a local church pastor. In retirement he is a conjoint senior lecturer at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored *Flames Over Battle Creek*, *Avondale: Experiment on the Dora*, *Desmond Ford: Reformist Theologian*, *Gospel Revivalist* the *Seventh-day Adventist Heritage Series*, and many magazine articles. He is married to Noeleen and has two sons and three grandchildren.

Sarah A. Hallock Lindsey was a licensed Seventh-day Adventist minister who engaged in evangelistic and pastoral ministry with her husband, John Lindsey, in northern Pennsylvania and southern New York state during the late 1860s and in the 1870s.

Promptings to Preach

Sarah A. Hallock was born in 1832, the daughter of a northern Pennsylvania farmer, Noah Hallock, and his wife Hannah.¹ It is not clear how Sarah became an Adventist but in 1857, she wrote about her Advent hope to the editor of the *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*.² Late in 1859 she read in the same periodical of a call for women to preach the Advent message. Indeed, the writer, B.F. Robbins, suggested female believers were “lacking in that heart consecration to God” if they were reticent to preach.³ Sarah responded by asking the editor to reconcile the article with the scriptural directives for women to keep silent in the churches and not be allowed to teach (I Cor. 14:34, 35; I Tim. 2:11).⁴ Robbins offered a reply, suggesting that Paul was not in favor of women teaching “dictatorially.” He pointed out that the apostle also affirmed both women and men prophesying in public meetings of the church (I Cor. 11).⁵ In the wake of this discussion Sarah Hallock became one among a handful of women who later rose to Robbins’ challenge.



Sarah Lindsey.

Photo courtesy of Department of Archives and Special Collections,
Loma Linda University.

Sarah married John Lindsey (1821-1881) about 1862. Lindsey was a Canadian who joined the Sabbath-observing Advent movement through the ministry of Joseph Bates in 1850. For much of the 1850s Lindsey engaged in itinerant lay evangelism in Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin with his wife, Esther. After Esther died of tuberculosis in November 1860, John and his two children moved to north central Pennsylvania, where he helped nurture the church in Ulysses in which Sarah Hallock was a member.

After Sarah and John married, he practiced his craft as a jeweller and watchmaker⁶ to support his family while continuing to provide leadership in the church at Ulysses. A daughter, Kate, destined to become a school teacher, was added to the family about 1863.

Itinerant Evangelism

In all likelihood John and Sarah first engaged in joint ministry at their home church of Ulysses. In the late 1860s they turned increasingly to itinerant evangelistic tours through the region of northern Pennsylvania and southern New York. The earliest mention of Sarah conducting a service on tour was in the summer of 1868 at Roulette, Pennsylvania.⁷ In January 1869 both of them assisted with preaching at meetings in Deer Creek near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.⁸ In the summer of 1869 they conducted an evangelistic effort at Pleasant Valley, Pennsylvania, Sarah preaching 23 times on prophetic themes such as latter-day signs and the Second Advent. Then they moved on to New York state to preach a similar series in West Union.⁹ They employed the winter of 1869-1870 to visit and conduct services with scattered members in Belfast, Crawford Creek and South Addison in New York and Liberty in Pennsylvania.¹⁰ During their travels Sarah sometimes conducted funeral services.¹¹

In general, Sarah A. H. Lindsey, was more prominently featured as a preacher than her husband. When they attended the annual New York and Pennsylvania Conference sessions, it was Sarah who told of their evangelistic endeavors of the past year.¹² At the conference session of 1869, she became, apparently, the first woman in Seventh-day Adventist history issued a minister's license.¹³ The *Review and Herald* report of the 1871 session also makes explicit that Sister S. A. H. Lindsey was among those granted a license,¹⁴ and such was likely the case annually through the mid-1870s but the reporting practices seem to have been irregular in that era. In 1878 Sarah and John were both granted colporteur rather than preaching licenses.¹⁵ The following year, the Pennsylvania Conference issued Sarah a preaching license during its first session as a conference separate and distinct from New York.¹⁶

The *Review and Herald* published a few devotional articles by S. A. H. Lindsey during the early 1870s. These articles convey something of her gifts as a gospel communicator. A sample accompanies this article in Related Content.

Later Years

The Lindseys continued their Pennsylvania-New York traveling ministry until John experienced symptoms of the liver cancer that took his life on October 11, 1881, at Wellsville, New York.¹⁷ Despite her exceptional ability as a preacher, Sarah was limited in what she could do after John's passing. It was unusual but acceptable for a husband and wife team to preach but unwise and unacceptable for a female evangelist to tour alone. Her name does not appear among the ministerial licentiates listed in either the New York or Pennsylvania Conferences after 1880, though the Pennsylvania Conference granted her a colporteur's license in 1882.¹⁸

For most of the time Sarah lived with her parents in Wellsville in retirement from public ministry. When her father passed away intestate in 1894 she successfully contested for his estate in the probate court.¹⁹ The 1900 United States Census indicates that her two grand-daughters were with her at the time in her inherited home at Wellsville.²⁰

Sarah A. H. Lindsey, the first Seventh-day Adventist woman whose gift for preaching was recognized with a conference-issued minister's license, passed away on December 28, 1914.²¹ She rests in an unmarked grave in the Hallock family cemetery at Newfield near Ulysses, Pennsylvania.²²

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NOTES

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11. See, for example, Willard W. Stebbins, "Horace Hopkins," *ARH*, September 28, 1869, 111.
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