

**MAINTAINING THE TRADITION:
THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN IN THE
EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH –
WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?**

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In 2006 the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry published a book entitled *Courageous Past, Bold Future: The Journey Toward Full Clergy Rights for Women in The United Methodist Church* written by Patricia J. Thompson. This book chronicled the history of women preachers from John Wesley's time, through the various denominations that today make up The United Methodist Church (UMC), and the struggles these women had to go through to obtain *full* clergy rights, that is, the right not only to be ordained but to also become equal members of the annual conference with all of the rights afforded their clergy brothers.

In order to present a true history of what had been happening in all of the predecessor denominations, an entire chapter on women elders in the Evangelical United Brethren Church (EUBC) was included and an attempt was made to identify all of the women who came into the UMC from the EUBC with full clergy rights at the time of the 1968 merger. But wait, some of you may be asking, "I thought that there was an agreement between the Evangelicals and the United Brethren when they came together in 1946 that there would be no further ordination of women since the Evangelicals had never granted women the privilege of preaching?"

The answer to this question is actually "yes and no." When the original uniting committees began to meet to develop the structure for the new denomination, there was an agreement that those women who already had clergy rights would not lose them but also that there would be no further ordinations of women.¹ A pastor who was attending United Theological Seminary in 1986 named Jonathan Cooney learned in a Church History Seminar that there had been, in fact, some ordinations that had taken place in the EUBC. He decided to conduct further research on these ordinations. Cooney produced a well-researched paper entitled "Maintaining the Tradition: Women Elders and the Ordination of Women in the Evangelical United Brethren Church."² It was primarily the work of Cooney that was utilized in Chapter

¹ James E. Will, "Ordination of Women," in *Women in New Worlds: Historical Perspectives in the Wesleyan Tradition*, ed. Rosemary Skinner Keller, Louise L. Queen, and Hilah F. Thomas (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981–1982), 2:296.

² Jonathan Cooney, "Maintaining the Tradition: Women Elders and the Ordination of Women in the Evangelical United Brethren Church," (paper presented at the Church History Seminar taught by Don Gorrell at United Theological Seminary [Dayton, OH], Fall, 1986).

3 of *Courageous Past*.

Soon after the book was published, Charles Yrigoyen, Jr., the former General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History, asked the question, "Who was the *first* woman to have been ordained in the EUBC?" Despite the fact that the book had attempted to identify women "firsts" in all predecessor denominations, no attempt had actually been made to identify the first woman ordained in the EUBC. Jonathan Cooney had developed a long list of women in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ (CUBC) who did, in fact, come into the EUBC with their clergy rights and continued serving, as well as those who did get ordained after the 1946 merger. Given that, then, you might think that all that had to be done was to go back to the list and determine who was first on the list in 1946-47. As is often the case, however, the answer was not quite as simple as it appeared.

As questions began to be asked about the various women who were ordained in the first few years after the merger, some interesting information began to surface. It seems that when two or more denominations merge at the General Church level, that does not always mean that the annual conferences automatically immediately come together the following year. This was the case within the newly-formed EUBC. In a number of cases, it seems to have taken a full quadrennium (from 1947-1951) for that to happen. Thus it became necessary to dig deeper to determine exactly what happened with the ordination of some of these women.

Cooney had a version of his paper published in *Methodist History* in October, 1988, at the end of which he included a list of twenty-three women whom he believed had been ordained in the EUBC.³ After a good deal of research, mostly completed by archivists in the conferences involved, as well as the United Methodist Archives at Drew University, a number of categories became clear. Three of the names, Rea Bok, Cleo Roth and Meredith Swift, were eventually identified as males. Another name, Mrs. C. B. Boyle from Indiana, could not be identified by either the Indiana Conference Archives or the Evangelical United Brethren Heritage Center at United Theological Seminary in Dayton. Also, she could not be located on Ancestry.com, a resource which also proved to be very helpful.

Research which had been done previously had already revealed that one of the women, Esther Edwards from the Indiana South Conference, had actually been ordained in 1942 in the Salvation Army.⁴ The 1959 date which Cooney had listed was actually the year she transferred into the EUB. Further research had also revealed that another woman, Pearl Sweet from the Kansas Conference, had actually been ordained by the Colorado Conference of the CUBC in 1926. She and her husband, Arthur, with whom she served,

³ Jonathan Cooney, "Maintaining the Tradition: Women Elders and the Ordination of Women in the Evangelical United Brethren Church," *Methodist History* 27.1 (October 1988): 33.

⁴ Patricia J. Thompson, *Courageous Past, Bold Future: The Journey Toward Full Clergy Rights for Women in The United Methodist Church* (Nashville: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, The United Methodist Church, 2006), 68.

then transferred to the Kansas Conference in 1932 and served together until 1947 when her husband died. The 1947 date was, apparently, when she gained status as an active itinerant elder and began to be appointed on her own.⁵ In addition, research also revealed that Catherine Dilley, who was listed as having been ordained in the Indiana South Conference in 1946, was actually ordained *prior* to the merger, most likely, the last woman to have been ordained by the CUBC prior to the merger.⁶

All of these names were eliminated from this list, thereby leaving us with sixteen women. Further analysis revealed an interesting pattern: ten of these sixteen were ordained between 1947 and 1950, three were ordained between 1956 and 1959, and the remaining three (M. Lucile Esbenshade, Norma Kinard, and Susan Wolfe Hassinger) were ordained in 1967 and 1968, just prior to the merger. In addition, while researching for *Courageous Past*, two additional women were identified: Kathryn Bailey Moore, ordained in 1967 in the Susquehanna EUBC Conference; and Betty Jane Clem, ordained in 1969 in the Virginia EUBC Conference. The latter was the last year ordinations took place in that conference—another case where conferences continued following the 1968 merger.⁷ Following publication of the book, information was discovered about Judith Ann Stone (Olin), ordained in the Ohio Miami Conference in 1967.⁸ This brings the number of women ordained from 1967–1969 to six—for a total of nineteen women on the list.

The largest number of women ordained in one category were those ten women who were ordained between 1947 and 1950. As indicated earlier, in many cases, Evangelical and CUBC annual conferences continued to meet separately for a whole quadrennium so that it was not until 1951–1952 that all annual conferences finally came together into one EUBC Conference. This seemingly took place in the areas where there was the strongest Evangelical influence, particularly in the Midwest, including those conferences in Indiana and Ohio where there were also the largest number of women serving, and in Colorado and Nebraska as well as in a few other areas where no women were ordained.

The CUBC Conferences, however, actually published their annual conference journals under the EUBC name, so it was not clear that these conferences had not, in fact, actually merged with their Evangelical counterparts at the time. So, what seems to have happened is that women who were already in process in the CUBC were actually ordained in what were still, for all intents and purposes, CUBC conferences. Additionally, there may have been some intentional effort to get these women ordained prior to the actual mergers of the Evangelicals and the CUBC at the annual conference level though this is not at all clear. Because, as is explained in more detail in *Cou-*

⁵ Sara DeCaro, archivist, Great Plains Conference, e-mail message to author, June 21, 2018.

⁶ Ashlyn Cox, research assistant, DePauw University Archives, e-mail message to author, June 25, 2018.

⁷ Thompson, 67–69.

⁸ “Reflections on a Pioneer Also Known as Mom: The Ministry of the Rev. Dr. Judith Ann Stone Olin,” in *East Ohio Today* 7 (March, 2003), 4.

rageous Past, although the uniting committees actually made the agreement that there would be no further ordinations, such agreement never became written policy. Therefore, it was pretty much left to the annual conferences.⁹

It is also helpful, as well, to look at the various categories of elder in the EUBC. There were primarily three categories for elders prior to retirement, namely: local elder, active itinerant elder, and supernumerary elder. Local elders were ordained but not received into the itinerancy for a variety of reasons. Women who were serving with their husbands as part of a clergy couple were usually classified as local elders and often did not receive any salary. Active itinerant elders were those who had been received into the itinerancy and were actively serving a church or another appointment such as one in Christian education or as an evangelist. These women were the equivalent of the women in the Methodist Church who eventually received full clergy rights in 1956. Supernumerary elders were those who had been in the itinerancy but who were temporarily unable to serve due to health reasons or some other valid reason and were left without an appointment. If they remained in that status for more than two years, it seems that they were usually also then transferred to local elder status.¹⁰

So, who were the women who were ordained between 1947 and 1950 and what was their progress through the ministry?

Susan Brown was ordained in 1948 in the Nebraska Conference. It is not clear what happened for the next two years, but in 1950–1951 she was appointed to the Rosedale Church. The following year she was reappointed but chose not to serve and apparently left Nebraska. Nothing more is known of her.¹¹

Mabel Rife Whipple, daughter of EUBC pastor Boyd Rife and sister of EUBC pastor Loyd Rife, was ordained in 1948 in the Southeast Ohio Conference by Bishop Epp, the only woman ordained by the bishop. In 1954 she married Ronald Whipple. She served as an evangelist until 1960, when she accepted an appointment at Brown Road Community Church. Mabel took voluntary location in 1969 in the UMC, and apparently served subsequently at Emmanuel Community Church, which was not a UMC congregation. But newspapers reveal that she continued her work as an evangelist well into the nineties.¹²

Vivian Sears was ordained in the Colorado-New Mexico Conference of the EUBC, in 1948, along with her husband, Alden. They were listed to-

⁹ Thompson, 65.

¹⁰ *The Discipline of the Evangelical United Brethren Church* (Dayton: Otterbein Press: Harrisburg: Evangelical Press, 1947), 111–113.

¹¹ Lona Dearthmont, archivist, Nebraska Conference Archives, e-mail message to author, May 11, 2018.

¹² “Rev Mabel Rife Whipple,” Find A Grave, accessed June 9, 2018, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/75253454/mabel-whipple>; “Minister’s Daughter Active in Evangelism, She Begins Pastorate,” *Columbus Dispatch*, August 27, 1960, 6; “Evangelistic Services Set for Enterprise,” *Logan Daily News*, March 10, 1962, 3; “Camp Meeting in 1994,” *Lancaster Eagle-Gazette*, June 19, 1994, 7; Carol Holliger, archivist, Archives of Ohio United Methodism, Ohio Wesleyan University, e-mail message to author, June 27, 2018.

gether in the Rocky Mountain EUBC conference journals at the time of their ordination and through 1952 as active itinerant elders located at York College, in York, Nebraska. Then in 1953 their address changed to Minneapolis, Minnesota. The following year they began to be listed as local elders and carry that status through 1957. Newspaper articles, however, indicate that by 1959 they were serving churches in Nebraska in the Methodist Church. Though her memoir in 2001 lists the churches that she and her husband served, Vivian is described only as a clergy spouse. It appears that she did not bring her ordination status with her.¹³

Beulah Koster was part of a clergy couple and had a son, Gerald, who was a pastor as well. Beulah received her quarterly conference license to preach in 1942 and served with her husband, Fred, until his death in 1947. She continued to serve the Racine Church after his death, serving the Syracuse church following that appointment. She was finally ordained in 1949 in the Southeast Ohio Conference by Bishop Clippinger. She seems, however, to have served churches by herself only until 1952 when she was then transferred to local elder's status. Beulah died in 1968, just at the time of the merger.¹⁴

Barbara Nolin was also ordained in 1949 by Bishop Clippinger in the Sandusky EUBC Conference and served appointments in Christian education for two years. In 1951, she married the Rev. Milton Nolin. They were appointed to First EUBC in Dayton, with Barbara serving as Director of Christian Education. Then, in 1955, Barbara and her husband both transferred to the Presbyterian Church. In 1986, however, Barbara was admitted to the West Ohio Conference of the UMC as a probationer and a full member in 1988. She took what appears to have been a permanent leave of absence in 1989 and is currently living in Indiana.¹⁵

Mary Ann Phegley was ordained in the Indiana EUBC Conference in 1950. The Indiana Conference currently has no records on her. She apparently served as an active itinerant elder in the conference until 1962, when a

¹³ Chris Haynes, research assistant, General Commission on Archives and History, e-mail message to author, October 25, 2006; *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the EUBC* (1951), 36; *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the EUBC* (1952), 7; *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the EUBC* (1953), 8; *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the EUBC* (1954), 10; *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the EUBC* (1955), 11; *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the EUBC* (1956), 13; *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the EUBC* (1957), 10; *Journal of the Nebraska Annual Conference of the UMC* (2001), 304; "Geneva MYF to New Mexico," *The Lincoln Star*; July 26, 1959, 10.

¹⁴ "Rev Beulah Haskins Koster," Find A Grave, accessed June 9, 2018, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/50657117/beulah-koster>; handwritten clergy record from Carol Holliger, archivist, Archives of Ohio United Methodism, Ohio Wesleyan University; "Committee on Conference Relations Report," *Journal of the Southeast Ohio Conference of the EUBC* (1952), 104.

¹⁵ Handwritten clergy record prepared by Carol Holliger, archivist, Archives of Ohio United Methodism, Ohio Wesleyan University; *Journal of the Ohio Sandusky Conference of the EUBC* (1955), 63; *Journal of the West Ohio Conference of the UMC* (2016), 92; "Barbara Nolin," *Elite American Public Servants*, accessed June 9, 2018, <https://eliteamericanpublicservants.wordpress.com/2014/01/10/barbara-nolin/>; Ohio, County Marriage Records 1774-1993, online database on Ancestry.com.

newspaper article reported that she was retiring with twelve years of service. She would have been sixty-eight years old at the time of her retirement.¹⁶

Martha Erskine was admitted to the East Ohio Conference of the CUBC in 1946 and granted an annual conference license. She was ordained in 1950, also by Bishop Clippinger, and was granted evangelist status. The following year she was granted active itinerant status and was listed with a California address. She served as an active itinerant elder until 1957 when she was listed as a local elder. She was listed as a local elder in the first *Journal of the Ohio East Conference of the UMC* in 1968, but interestingly, no information was included about what conference she had been a part of or when she entered active ministry as was usually the case.¹⁷

Lena Houdeshell was ordained as an evangelist-at-large in 1950 in the Southeast Ohio Conference, most likely also by Bishop Clippinger. She served as an evangelist in the conference until the late 1950's when she began serving churches in Tennessee. A 1959 newspaper article states that that she was the only woman pastor at the time in Tennessee and the first woman to serve in Middle Tennessee. By 1965, however, she was reported in a local newspaper article as being the pastor of the Nazarene Church in Port Richey, Florida, and she did not come into the UMC in 1968 at the time of the merger.¹⁸

The two remaining women, who were also ordained in 1950, continued to serve in the UMC.

Nellwyn Brookhart Trujillo was ordained in 1950 as an active itinerant elder in the Ohio Sandusky Conference, again, most likely by Bishop Clippinger. However, her appointments were always to the McCurdy Mission Schools in New Mexico. After the formation of the UMC in 1968, she continued in a special appointment from the West Ohio Conference to the Vallecitos Mission School as manager and caretaker, retiring in 1988.¹⁹

Of the ten women included here, **Wilma Harner Allen**, who was ordained as an itinerant elder in 1950 in the Indiana Conference of the EUB, is the only one who served as a pastor of churches on her own throughout her long and successful ministry, continuing into the UMC. She began preaching while still in high school and held a deaconess license from 1937 until she entered Indiana Central College in 1941 when she became a probationer. Though officially retiring in 1968, Wilma continued to pastor churches until

¹⁶ "Mary Ann Phegley," Find A Grave, accessed June 9, 2018, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/71848503/mary_ann-phegley; "Four Retiring Ministers Feted," *The Indianapolis Star*, August 9, 1962, 17.

¹⁷ *Journal of the East Ohio Conference of the CUBC* (1946), 7, 54–55; *Journal of the East Ohio Conference of the EUBC* (1950), 24, 56–67; *Journal of the Ohio East Conference of the EUBC* (1951), 20, 72; *Journal of the Ohio East Conference of the EUBC* (1952), 9; *Journal of the Ohio East Conference of the EUBC* (1957), 9; *Journal of the Ohio East Conference of the UMC* (1968), 19.

¹⁸ "To Hold Meetings," *The Logan Daily News*, October 3, 1950, 3; *The Logan Daily News*, March 7, 1952, 2; *The Tennessean*, July 18, 1959, 5; *The Leaf-Chronicle*, November 19, 1962, 11; "Did You Know?," *The Newark Advocate*, June 22, 1965, 6.

¹⁹ Thompson, 69.

1995 and then served as a pastor of visitation until 2002. She is still living today.²⁰

None of the women mentioned fell into the category of the “first” to be ordained by a fully merged EUBC annual Conference. This brings us to the three women who were ordained in 1956, 1957, and 1959. It is interesting to note that these ordinations took place after the following paragraph appeared in the 1955 EUBC *Discipline*:

Receiving Women Ministers:

Question: Although through the use of the masculine article, paragraph 353 seems to imply that only male Ministers can be received from another denomination into the Evangelical United Brethren Church, is this paragraph to be interpreted that an ordained woman, coming from a denomination that ordains women as Ministers, cannot be received into our ministry?

Answer: While there was agreement in the Joint Commission on Church Federation and Union ‘That in the new Church there be no ordination as Ministers granted to women,’ it was also agreed that ‘Church union as such, will not change nor take away the ministerial status of any man or woman in such ministry at the time of union.’ Whereas the Board of Bishops finds no specific paragraph in the Discipline that denies a woman to be licensed to preach or to become a Minister among us, therefore, be it resolved that the Annual Conference is competent to decide for itself with respect to the question raised above.²¹

It is also interesting to note that 1956 was the year that the women in the Methodist Church were finally granted full clergy rights, as well.

It might be concluded, then, that it would be easier for women to have been ordained in the EUBC. This does not seem to have been the case, however, since only three women were identified by Jonathan Cooney as having been ordained in the years immediately following the 1955 statement in the EUBC discipline and women in the Methodist Church finally receiving full clergy rights. The third among these women was **Achsah Miller**, who was ordained in the West Virginia Conference in 1959. Miller was the wife of the Rev. Henry Miller. She received her quarterly conference license to preach in 1946, the year her husband retired from full-time active ministry, so it appears she never actually served with him in any official capacity. She finally became a probationer in 1956, was ordained in 1959, and officially retired two years later in 1961, but she continued to serve churches after she retired and was still serving in 1968 after the merger. As a result, she should have been included in *Courageous Past*.²²

This leaves the two women ordained in 1956 and 1957, **Marilyn Chivington** and **Crystal Maxine Krisher**. But who was ordained first? Well, in fact, even here the answer is not a simple one. Yes, Chivington was the first woman to be ordained. She was, however, ordained as a local elder in 1956 and her memoir states that she was the first woman ordained as a local elder

²⁰ Thompson, 66.

²¹ ¶ 2455, quoted in Thompson, 68.

²² 1967 Pastoral Service Record, West Virginia EUBC, provided to author by Brett Miller, Director of Library Services and Archivist, Annie Merner Pfeiffer Library, West Virginia Wesleyan College; *Journal of the West Virginia Conference of the UMC* (1969), 34.

in the Ohio Sandusky Conference of the EUBC. Like many of the women before her, she too, was also a clergy spouse, married to Claude Chivington. Marilyn continued her status as a local elder until 1962 when she was then assigned supernumerary status, which she held until 1971 when she was granted voluntary location in the UMC. During all of that time Marilyn was never actually assigned to a church but co-pastored with her husband while obtaining her teaching degree, teaching full-time for twenty-one years. It was not until 1987 that Marilyn was received into full connection in the UMC and was finally assigned to three churches of her own. She continued serving until her retirement in 1995.²³

The journey was not an easy one for Marilyn, however. Her son, David, who is currently an active elder in the West Ohio Annual Conference, wrote the following in answer to an inquiry about his mother's journey:

The story I remember was that when mom was presented to the Committee on Ordination, they were going to turn her down. Bishop [Dennis] intervened. He argued that she met all qualifications for ordination and deserved to be passed. The compromise was that they would let mom in but Dennis would bring no other women to the committee. On hearing this compromise, mom then compromised by not asking for a separate appointment but asked to join her husband at the Harmony/Bloomville Charge. I am not sure how that got listed but it was less offensive if it looked like she was serving under dad. After dad retired and mom wanted to take a charge, she had been teaching school; it was discovered that she had simply fallen off the page. There was no explanation given for this bookkeeping. [This was apparently when Marilyn had been listed as taking voluntary location].

When mom told her story she believed that she had been the only female ordained in that EUBC conference. We never bothered to check. [But it was, of course, true.]

Dad and mom served Harmony/Bloomville until they became separate stations and then continued to serve Bloomville until 66 or 67. When they were serving a two-point charge mom went to one church and dad to the other. Next week they switched. As a kid it was fun to get to choose where I went. Somewhere in that time, dad had a fight with the church leaders about salary and pension and got angry that they expected mom to work for nothing. He demanded mom receive professional reimbursement for travel and expenses. I do not believe she ever was on salary. That may explain the category she was placed in by the conference.

Our next appointment was Vaughnsville in Putnam County. Mom became a school teacher during this time. But kept her credentials. When we moved to Continental in 73, mom became more involved with the District, now United Methodist. She did a fair amount of vacation supply and was told by one DS that her presence in the District made his job easier to appoint female pastors because of her good reputation. When dad retired, mom decided it was time for him to support her ministry. She retired from school teaching and she asked for a church. That is when it was discovered that she had fallen off the page of clergy and the conference was forced to bring her back into an active status. When she retired a second time, this time from preaching, she then joined me on my staff. At the time we wondered if there were many other mother and son teams in ministry. She felt she was a pioneer even in retirement.²⁴

²³ Year-by-year typewritten list of appointments provided by the Archives of Ohio United Methodism; Memoir for Marilyn Florence Chivington Hardman, *Journal of the West Ohio Conference of the UMC* (2016), 327.

²⁴ David Chivington, e-mail message to author, June 18, 2018.

After receiving this response from David, an inquiry was placed on the chat list of the Historical Society of The UMC asking whether or not anyone was aware of any other mother and son teams. There were no responses that indicated that this was the case. There is a clergy couple from Maine who have a clergy son, but they have never served together. So, most likely, Marilyn was truly a pioneer. She served with her son, David, from 1995 until 2002, finally retiring at age seventy-four.²⁵

Crystal Maxine Krisher, on the other hand, who was ordained the following year in 1957 in the Ohio Southeast Conference, had been serving churches on her own prior to being ordained. She received her probationer's license in 1948, one year later than Marilyn Chivington did, and began serving the Laurelville Circuit on her own in 1953. Although she retired in 1977, Maxine continued to serve churches for 20 more years until 1997, not fully retiring until she was eighty-seven years old, completing fifty-six years in the ministry.²⁶

So after all of this research, a great deal of it completed by Carol Holliger, the archivist for the Archives of Ohio United Methodism, it *seems* that the answer to the question which Yrigoyen had originally asked and which sparked the research for this paper, is two-fold:

Marilyn Chivington from the Ohio Sandusky EUBC Conference was the first to be ordained elder, though as a local elder, in 1956, and Crystal Maxine Krisher was the first to be ordained as an active itinerant elder with full clergy rights in the Ohio Southeast EUBC Conference in 1957.

However, in answer to a question regarding one of the women on the earlier list, Beulah Koster, Holliger had forwarded the Conference Relations Committee Report for the Southeast Ohio Conference for 1952, which listed the various pastors in process and the recommendations that the Committee was making regarding their status. The item just below Beulah Koster states: "We recommend that *Constance Thompson* be transferred from the roll of Local Elder to that of Active Itinerant Elder."²⁷ Thus, it seems that there *may* have been a woman ordained prior to Chivington in the Southeast Ohio Conference of the EUBC in the person of **Constance L. Thompson**.

Thompson did appear on Jonathan Cooney's original list. Although there was no ordination year for her, she was listed as a "LE [Local Elder]" in 1951. Further research, both from the Ohio Conference Archives and from local newspapers, reveals that Thompson was, indeed, ordained as a local elder in 1951 in the first fully merged annual conference of the Ohio Southeast of the EUBC, therefore making her the first woman to be ordained in a fully merged EUBC Conference, and by the same Bishop Dennis who supported Chivington five years later. Constance's father, Homer Thompson, was the

²⁵ David Chivington, e-mail message to author, June 19, 2018.

²⁶ Thompson, 68; year-by-year typewritten list of appointments provided by the Archives of Ohio Methodism.

²⁷ "Committee on Conference Relations," *Journal of the Southeast Ohio Conference of the EUBC* (1952), 104, emphasis added.

leader of the district at the time and her brother, Homer Thompson, Jr., was appointed to MacArthur in the same district. The following year, in 1952, her status changed to Active Itinerant Elder and she was appointed to the Rio Grande Charge as an active itinerant elder where she served for three years through 1954. In 1954 and 1955, she did not receive an appointment, and in 1956, she was recommended for local elder's status because she had been without an appointment for two years. She retained local elder's status through 1959 when she was listed as living with her father who had retired the year before. She then appears to have no further status as a minister. As she notes in her father's memoir that his ministry was brought short by failing eyesight, it is probable that she was caring for her father by then.²⁸ This then, renders Thompson as the first ordained elder and the first itinerant elder in a fully merged EUBC Conference, albeit for a very short period of time. Both Chivington and Krisher, however, seems to have been the earliest EUBC ordained pastors who continued in the UMC and rendered service for many years.

There were no further ordinations until 1967–1969 just prior to the merger of the EUBC and the Methodist Church. By then, there seems to have been little resistance, and as recorded in *Courageous Past*, there was little knowledge that there had ever been any kind of prohibition against ordaining women clergy.²⁹

In conclusion, it is interesting to notice how many of these women either served as a clergy couple at some time or other in their ministry or came from a family of pastors. Vivian Sears, Beulah Koster, Barbara Nolin, Achsah Miller, and Marilyn Chivington, were all part of clergy couples, a trend in the EUBC which Jonathan Cooney had noted.³⁰ Mabel Rife Whipple and Constance Thompson were both daughters of pastors, with brothers who were also pastors and both Marilyn Chivington and Beulah Koster had sons who also became pastors.

²⁸Year-by-year typewritten list of appointments provided by the Archives of Ohio Methodism; Memoir for Homer G. Thompson, *Journal of the West Ohio Conference of the UMC* (1978), 241.

²⁹ Thompson, 66.

³⁰ Thompson, 65.