
Malinda Clark Slawson Pugh

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On May 18, 1852, Malinda Clark Slawson Pugh of Indianapolis gave birth to a son, Isaac Clark Pugh. By September Malinda was dead as a result of complications associated with the delivery. Isaac Pugh, Malinda's husband at the time of her death, informed his wife's former mother-in-law and father-in-law, Simeon and Martha Slawson, that Malinda had died from the consequences of a "spongy fungus substance growing in the womb." Doctors had taken out the substance, caused by failure to remove part of the placenta after the childbirth, but it had grown back, resulting in Malinda's death.¹

Malinda had married Isaac Pugh on July 23, 1851, following the death of her first husband, Delanson Slawson, six years earlier. After Delanson's death Malinda had taken care of her children and tended the family farm alone. At the time of her marriage to Pugh, Malinda was in her forties and was "beaten down" from hard work and debt. Pugh was fifteen years her senior and held "20,000 in property and had one of the best farms in Marion County."²

Regardless of Malinda's liberation from the responsibilities of her own farm, she was too worn out to have additional children with Pugh. Large families were common on the frontier, however, and many women gave birth almost annually during their childbearing years. "Procreation was highly encouraged . . . both to aid population growth and provide future laborers for the family farm or other business." According to historian Glenda Riley's "conservative estimate," the average family on the frontier had ten children, and these high fertility rates contributed to a lax or "matter-of-fact attitude

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¹ Isaac Pugh to Simeon and Martha Slawson, September 26, 1852, Slawson-Tarkington Collection (Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis). All correspondence cited in this article is located in the Slawson-Tarkington Collection.

² Malinda Slawson to Simeon and Martha Slawson, July 6, 1851. Isaac Pugh was born in 1794 in Chatham, North Carolina. He moved to Marion County, Indiana, in July, 1822. He became one of the "wealthiest farmers and most prominent men in Wayne township, being frequently elected to responsible offices." Berry R. Sulgrove, *History of Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana* (Philadelphia, 1884), 655.

regarding childbirth.³ It has been estimated, in fact, that child-bearing killed “one out of eight pregnant women in their generation.” Most died of “puerperal sepsis, the post birth bacterial infection feared by nineteenth century women as the ‘childbed fevers.’”⁴

The high mortality rate resulting from childbirth and other diseases dispels many romantic notions of the frontier. In her works *Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1841) and *Letters to the People on Health and Happiness* (1856) Catherine Beecher claimed that she had “repeatedly heard mothers say, that they had wept tears of bitterness over their infant daughters, at the thought of sufferings which they were destined to undergo; while they cherished the decided wish, that these daughters should never marry.”⁵ Cholera, influenza, measles, “the fever,” and other illnesses also caused many deaths. During the 1840s Beecher “collected evidence that women were more often ill than well, and that chronic disabilities were widespread among the female population.”⁶ Malinda Pugh’s correspondence with her family corroborates Beecher’s statements and provides a further glimpse into the hardships that women suffered in frontier America.⁷

Malinda was a religious woman, the daughter of a blind Regular Baptist preacher, John Clark, from Bennington, Vermont.⁸ During the early 1820s the Clarks had moved to Switzerland County, Indiana.⁹ No reason is given for the move other than that Clark considered many of his neighbors in Vermont to be heathens. Upon their arrival in Switzerland County, the Clarks found various religious groups already well established. In fact, the county was a hotbed of religious activity. Methodist circuit rider, Allen Wiley, had preached there in 1814 and had delivered a funeral sermon in Vevay, the coun-

³ Glenda Riley, *Frontierswomen: The Iowa Experience* (Ames, Iowa, 1981), 81. For a discussion on sexuality, birth control, and child rearing in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America see Carl N. Degler, *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present* (New York, 1980).

⁴ Jean H. Baker, *Mary Todd Lincoln: A Biography* (New York, 1987), 20.

⁵ Quoted in Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (New Haven, Conn., 1973), 214.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁷ For a discussion of “cures” that many nineteenth-century women employed to relieve their suffering, see Susan E. Cayleff, *Wash and Be Healed: The Water-Cure Movement and Women’s Health* (Philadelphia, 1987).

⁸ John Clark, Malinda’s father, was born December 14, 1769, and died October 1, 1832. Although the exact date of the wedding is unknown, he and Elizabeth (Betsey) Edgecomb, also of Vermont, were married during the 1790s. Clark was blind as a result of an illness during his youth. It was later written of him that “after being introduced to a person and conversing with him a short time—he [Clark] would recollect that person and call him by name so soon as he heard his voice, a long while, yes two or three years after his first conversation with him—he had a son (Orange Clark) living in Mississippi whom he visited occasionally, travelling all the way by land having a small boy to accompany him as guide.” Perret Dufour, *The Swiss Settlement of Switzerland County, Indiana* (*Indiana Historical Collections*, Vol. XIII; Indianapolis, 1925), 66-67.

⁹ In 1823 Lewis A. Clark, Malinda’s brother, purchased one hundred acres near Bennington, Indiana. It is likely that the Clarks founded the town of Bennington and named it after Bennington, Vermont.

ty seat, two years later. Wiley and fellow itinerant Russel Bigelow had also organized a Methodist church in Vevay in 1816.¹⁰ Lorenzo Dow, considered one of the greatest Methodist clergymen, preached in Vevay in 1814 or 1815 and again around 1817.¹¹ Dr. James Welsh was one of the first Presbyterians to preach in the county, and Regular Baptist ministers John Graham and Mordecai Jackson, along with Malinda Clark's father, preached in various schoolhouses throughout the area.¹² Other denominations soon followed.

Methodists dominated the Bennington area of Switzerland County where the Clarks resided. Malinda's future father-in-law, Simeon Slawson, made his house available to the Methodists for worship. In fact, itinerant ministers flocked to the Slawsons' home. Described as a "leader among the Methodists, a man of some means, and his wife a good cook," Slawson also had "two or three good looking girls and plenty of chickens," all of which made his home a paradise for the traveling preachers. Indeed, the Reverends Joseph Tarkington and John Winchester, both well known throughout the state, married into the Slawson family.¹³ Allen Wiley also lived in the area.¹⁴

Religious gatherings provided social intercourse on the frontier, and they were often interdenominational. Courtships were frequently conducted at church meetings as there were few other places where young adults could meet. The Clark family often attended the Methodist meetings at the Slawsons'. During one such gathering around 1830, Malinda and the Slawsons' son Delanson, who had known each other from childhood, decided to marry.¹⁵ After their wedding on May 10, 1832, they remained in Switzerland County for five years as farmers. The couple had a child, John C., in 1833, but the infant died on April 12, 1834. Following John's death, Malinda and Delanson agreed to raise a baby boy, Albert, whose parents had died of "the fever."¹⁶

¹⁰ *History of Switzerland County, Indiana* (Chicago, 1895), 1046.

¹¹ Switzerland County historian Perret Dufour remembered Dow as a "very eccentric man whether in the social circle or in the pulpit." Dufour, *Swiss Settlement of Switzerland County*, 155.

¹² *History of Switzerland County, Indiana*, 1044-46. For an excellent article about James Welsh see Emil Pocock, "'I enjoy but little sunshine on my path': Reverend James Welsh on Three Frontiers, 1790-1825," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXXVI (December, 1990), 347-73.

¹³ *History of Switzerland County*, 1154.

¹⁴ Allen Wiley and his wife, Margaret, are buried in the Slawson cemetery near Bennington, Indiana.

¹⁵ Delanson Slawson was born January 8, 1810, in Orange County, New York. His family moved to Switzerland County, Indiana, in 1818. Ida M. Archer, "A History of Pioneer Families—Manser, Slawson, and Graham," *Vevay Reveille-Enterprise*, December 4, 1947, p. 1. Delanson had ten siblings. In a thirteen month period from December, 1830, to January, 1832, five of his brothers and sisters died from typhoid. Joseph Tarkington, *Autobiography of Rev. Joseph Tarkington: One of the Pioneer Methodist Preachers of Indiana* (Cincinnati, 1899), 158.

¹⁶ Malinda and Delanson "took the child as their own." They did not tell the boy that he was not their natural child. John Tarkington [John Steventon, pseud.], *The Auto-Orphan* (Boston, 1913), 11.

Malinda and Delanson moved to Indianapolis in 1837 after the Slawsons had given their son a quarter section of land, known as the "Sugar Flats," located four miles north of Indianapolis. John Tarkington, Delanson's nephew, described his uncle as "tall and strong, the match of any two men at the clearings and barn-raising." Delanson cleared one-fourth of his land, cutting down the large maple, elm, and walnut trees. He built a "substantial farm-house and barn, while a thrifty orchard soon bore abundant fruitage for the cider mill and cellar."¹⁷

Malinda Slawson was certainly not the "Mary Vial Holyoke" or "pretty gentlewoman" described in Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's classic work *Good Wives*.¹⁸ Malinda had little time for sipping tea or admiring fine silver. In addition to her domestic duties she worked beside her husband clearing land and building her home. A married woman on the Indiana frontier, as Ulrich pictured New England women at a similar period in their lives, was simultaneously "a housewife, a deputy husband, a consort, a mother, a mistress, a neighbor, and a Christian."¹⁹ Hoosier wives could also be compared to Horace Kephart's view of Appalachian women at the beginning of the twentieth century: "The mountain farmer's wife is not only a household drudge but a field hand as well. She helps to plant, hoes corn, gathers fodder, sometimes even plows or splits rails. It is the commonest of sights for a woman to be awkwardly hacking up firewood with a dull axe."²⁰ As was true in eighteenth-century New England, social organization in early nineteenth-century Indiana linked "economic responsibilities to family responsibilities."²¹ Malinda's duties included long back-breaking hours hoeing, thinning, and harvesting a "kitchen garden" or "truck patch," which was the primary source of food for the family.

Following the Slawsons' agreement to raise Albert, Malinda gave birth to five additional children between 1834 and 1845.²² In frontier Indiana and elsewhere pregnancies generally did not interrupt work cycles; consequently, Malinda, while pregnant, continued to help her husband build fences and feed livestock and to perform other required duties.

When the Slawsons arrived in Indianapolis, the small town was an unhealthy area, and the family was constantly plagued by illness. On April 30, 1839, Delanson wrote to his mother and father that

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁸ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York, 1980), 71.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁰ Horace Kephart, *Our Southern Highlanders: A Narrative of Adventure in the Southern Appalachians and a Study of Life among the Mountaineers* (New York, 1913), 331.

²¹ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 34.

²² The children's names were Flavins, John, Mary, Martha Jane, and Martha D. The birth dates are unknown. Most of the Slawson family records were destroyed by fire when the Slawson home in Switzerland County burned around 1900.

Albert and Malinda were sick with the chills but had received some medicine from a doctor. He claimed that two or three doses would break the chills. On November 16, 1840, he disclosed that he was sick and had not been able to work since August 10. A week before the letter was written, Malinda had given birth to a baby that they named John. One month later Delanson reported that Malinda was ill with the "chills" and that the baby had a cold. When Malinda was sick, Delanson was forced to do the milking and cooking. In 1843 measles struck, and winter fever was a problem.²³

As the Slawsons had discovered, diseases were a constant threat on the central Indiana frontier. Harrison Burns stated that in the "wilds of Tipton County" there was

a great deal of malaria; nearly every one in the county had the "ague." There were not enough well people in the town [Sharpsville] to wait on the sick, and the only physician in the place lay in his bed and measured out medicine, mostly quinine, to persons who were able to come for it. I had never been sick, and did not have the regular fever and ague, but my system became full of malaria and I had a spell of fever which confined me to my bed and finally developed what is called the "dumb ague."²⁴

Although much of Delanson's correspondence with his mother and father dealt with illness, many of his letters were filled with news about his farming activities. In one letter he wrote that he had logged five acres during the day and that he had ten acres fenced, had bought an old peacock plow for six dollars, and had thirty acres in corn, four in oats, and sixteen pigs a week old. Corn, he said, sold for only twenty cents a bushel in the summer of 1840. He had procured ten barrels of salt from Lawrenceburg in November of 1840 and had sent a worker, "Uriah," to Madison in December of that year "with a drove of about 1,000 hogs." He added that it took sixteen to eighteen days to complete such a task. Delanson boasted that he and Uriah could "shuck sixty-five bushels of corn in a day and put it in a crib." He also commented on economic hardships in other areas of Indiana. In January, 1845, people from adjacent Boone and Hamilton counties were suffering a severe corn shortage. Delanson hired a Hamilton county man, Issac Richards, and paid him seventeen bushels of corn to do ten days farm work.²⁵

The Slawsons were almost self-sufficient. Malinda made their clothing, preserved foodstuffs, and helped Delanson butcher and cure meat that was stored for the winter. Historian Elizabeth Jameson claims that families such as the Slawsons were an "interdependent economic unit." Nevertheless, "work was divided as in most cultures, along gender lines. Men plowed, planted, and cared for the sheep,

²³ Delanson Slawson to Simeon and Martha Slawson, April 30, 1839, November 16, December 18, 1840, March 5, April 9, 1843.

²⁴ Harrison Burns, *Personal Recollections of Harrison Burns as written in 1907* (Indianapolis, 1975), 52.

²⁵ Delanson Slawson to Simeon and Martha Slawson, June 18, November 16, December 18, 1840, January 26, 1845.

horses, and pigs. Women raised and processed vegetables, kept the dairy and the poultry, made clothing, cared for the sick, and did housework." Alice Kessler-Harris notes, however, that the division of labor was not clearly defined. Although women did the bulk of "internal domestic chores," husbands often did spinning and weaving when farm work was complete, and "wives routinely developed competency in their husbands' businesses."²⁶

Malinda often scribbled a few lines in her husband's letters to the Slawsons. She told of milking cows or making linen and reported that she had made "straw hats for the boys and sold 6½ pounds of butter a week." The children were attending school, she wrote, and daughter Martha Jane was "very mischievous." In March of 1843 she commented, Flavins "wishes to inform you that he has shed two of his teeth." The Slawsons told their parents or friends from Switzerland County who had moved near them in Indianapolis and noted that some of Allen Wiley's family lived in the vicinity. Occasionally Malinda and Delanson mentioned other interesting events. In August, 1845, for example, Delanson related: "court is now in session . . . 3 or 4 convicts for lower house for steeling and Negro killing."²⁷

Much of Delanson and Malinda's correspondence reflects their loneliness. They complained when they did not receive mail from family members. Malinda was sometimes critical of the Tarkingtons and her brother Lewis for not writing. In March of 1842 she reported that she had not heard from the Tarkingtons "since their babe was three weeks old." Evidently her complaints were effective. In July she wrote that she had received a letter and that "they are all well."²⁸ Delanson and Malinda generally visited Switzerland County in the fall of the year after the crops had been harvested, and they constantly begged Simeon and Martha to visit them at their farm near Indianapolis. In one letter Delanson told his father "to come out and see if he was doing things right." In another he offered to serve his parents "a fat shote," sweet potatoes, and corn dodgers if they would come. In July, 1843, he again pleaded with his mother to visit and stated, "a person out of debt could."²⁹

²⁶ Elizabeth Jameson, "Women as Workers, Women as Civilizers: True Womanhood in the American West," in *The Women's West*, ed. Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson (Norman, Okla., 1987), 150; Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York, 1982), 7.

²⁷ Delanson Slawson to Simeon and Martha Slawson, March 5, July 14, 1843, August 3, 1845. For an account of the murder of John Tucker, a former slave from Kentucky, see Gayle Thornbrough and Dorothy Riker, eds., *The Diary of Calvin Fletcher*; Vol. III, 1844-1847, *Including Letters to and from Calvin Fletcher* (Indianapolis, 1974), 164-65.

²⁸ Delanson Slawson to Simeon and Martha Slawson, June 18, 1840, March 28, July 10, 1842. The infant to which Malinda referred was William Simeon Reeves Tarkington, who was born at Liberty, Indiana, November 5, 1841.

²⁹ Delanson Slawson to Simeon and Martha Slawson, April 30, 1839, February 2, 1841, July 14, 1843.

Delanson and Malinda often wrote of religious matters in their letters.³⁰ In 1840 they reported that there was “preaching” at their home “every 2 weeks.” The Slawsons lived on the Noblesville circuit, and the two circuit riders who visited them were named Berry and Smith. In another letter Malinda mentioned a camp meeting that was to commence “in three weeks.”³¹ The Slawsons found comfort in their religion when disaster struck. On February 2, 1841, Delanson informed his parents that his daughter Martha Jane had died of the “scarlet fever.” Flavins was the first to become ill with the disease, but he had escaped death. Martha Jane was not so fortunate. Delanson reported that “Br. Crawford preached her funeral sermon then she was taken to her cold and silent grave.” Malinda expressed much guilt over the death. She felt that she was being “severely chastened of the Lord for my unfaithfulness to him.” The day before Martha Jane became ill, Malinda wrote, the child had gotten her hymn book and “sit in my chair and sing with all her infant simplicity my prayer to God.”³²

Family correspondence reveals that the Slawsons viewed a crippling injury or death as a “warning for all to prepare for death.”³³ Their religious beliefs comforted and helped them through such tragedy. Malinda’s mother-in-law, Martha, had dealt with death and grief. Between December 27, 1830, and January 30, 1832, she lost five of her children to typhoid.³⁴ Martha had also lost a child in 1814 and wrote that she had “resign[ed] its Little Soul into the arms of God.” In spite of Martha’s pain, she felt that it was sinful to grieve too much. She wrote to family members John and Rhoda Slawson, “But Oh that we may consider our afflictions aright and not offend the lord by over mourning for the Dead.”³⁵

Studies of early nineteenth-century family life suggest that Calvinist stoicism, like Martha’s, or other forms of mourning did not completely suppress grief over the loss of a loved one, especially a child.³⁶ Although religion provided solace for frontier families, death was not taken lightly. One Iowa family, for example, “kept their dead child’s miniature rocking chair in the living room of their home for forty years after her demise.”³⁷ And historian Ann Douglas depicts women

³⁰ Malinda had joined the Methodist church after marrying Delanson and moving to Indianapolis.

³¹ Delanson Slawson to Simeon and Martha Slawson, June 18, 1840, July 10, 1842.

³² Delanson Slawson to Simeon and Martha Slawson, February 2, 1841.

³³ Hanna Burnett to Martha Slawson, August 16, 1807.

³⁴ David L. Kimbrough, *Reverend Joseph Tarkington, Methodist Circuit Rider: From Frontier Evangelism to Refined Religion* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1997), 71-72.

³⁵ Martha Slawson to John and Rhoda Slawson, September 13, 1814.

³⁶ Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York, 1981), 219.

³⁷ Riley, *Frontierswomen*, 81.

and clergymen as so concerned with death that they might be considered necrophiles.³⁸

As a boy, John Tarkington spent his summers "during every long school-vacation" at his Uncle Delanson's farm. John enjoyed visiting his uncle and playing with Albert since the boys were near the same age. During the summers the two "wrestled with equal strength, had gone paw-pawing, had harvested, had joyed in old-time country dances, frolicked in our work in the fields and gone fishing in White River."³⁹ John also remembered an old song that he had learned there:

For to plow, for to sow,
For to reap, for to mow,
For to be a farmer's boy.⁴⁰

In September, 1845, Delanson died, at least in part because he had overworked himself doing the "Fall-plowing" and "Fall wheat-sowing."⁴¹ He was buried beside his daughter Martha Jane. Malinda was devastated and left with five children. On the evening of Delanson's death Tarkington reported that the family "met as usual, in the family-room, and by the candlelight on the stand, the mother—(Malinda, honey sweet, as was her name)," read the Twenty-third Psalm.

Then, with all the family kneeling, she recited the Lord's Prayer. Tarkington observed: "an awaiting silence followed, into which alone, slowly and falteringly, crept a low, tear-dropped 'Amen.'"⁴²

At Delanson's death Malinda told thirteen-year-old Albert that he was not her natural child. Tarkington reported that Albert was alarmed: "He looked around upon his brothers and sisters of a moment ago, and they were not. He gazed open-mouthed and big-eyed upon his dying father and heard the stumbling words of his mother as they fell sobbing between tears; and father and mother had vanished." After a period of time one of Albert's relatives came to Indiana and took the boy back to Memphis, Tennessee.⁴³

Malinda was faced with many hardships after Delanson's death. She was forced to take on her husband's duties as well as continuing with her own domestic responsibilities. Although church members would sometimes assist needy members of their congregations, towns and counties generally "had no interest in supporting all women and children whose husbands or fathers had died or deserted."⁴⁴ Malinda was no exception. Along with backbreaking work and personal illness, she found herself in debt following her husband's death

³⁸ Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York, 1977), 240.

³⁹ Tarkington, *The Auto-Orphan*, 10.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴¹ Overwork was Delanson's constant companion. In a letter to his parents in May, 1843, for example, he recorded that he had planted 10½ acres of corn in five days while doing many other tasks.

⁴² Tarkington, *The Auto-Orphan*, 12-15.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁴ Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience* (New York, 1984), 28.

and often complained that her children were sick. In a letter to Simeon and Martha Slawson, she stated that she owed her brother-in-law, Joseph Tarkington, 150 dollars. In order to pay the debt she sold Delanson's carriage and harness. In the same letter Malinda relayed that she had not given up her religious convictions and added, "the lord will provide."⁴⁵

In subsequent letters to the Slawsons, Malinda wrote that she had lost children to death and that her father had perished. She had done the planting, harvesting, and butchering; made apple and pumpkin butter; grown a truck patch; assisted in digging a well; and bought her dead husband a four-foot tombstone with scriptures engraved on it. Malinda also taught Sabbath school and walked two miles to church to hear ministers preach on such texts as "acknowledge God in all thy ways and He shall direct thy steps."⁴⁶ A "cold spell" in the spring of 1849 killed her fruit crop. There was the constant threat of disease. Cholera was "not yet in Indianapolis" in midsummer, 1849, she wrote, "but is in every direction."⁴⁷

Other than cutting wood, Malinda performed every farm task that Delanson had previously done, generally without the help of her eldest son, Flavins. Malinda probably did not require Flavins to work very hard. Tarkington commented that "the boy was bright of wit, strong of muscle and affectionate. If any difference was ever shown in the regard of the farmer and his wife for the children it was in favor of that boy." In the spring of 1848 Flavins went to live with the Slawsons on their farm in Switzerland County. Malinda requested that his grandparents "send him to school" and make him plow and plant. She wanted him to attend church and directed Flavins to "keep the Sabbath . . . read the Bible . . . and write."⁴⁸

Flavins returned home in the fall of 1849 and planted four acres of wheat.⁴⁹ He did not remain long. By January, 1850, he was living with his Aunt Maluda and the Reverend John Winchester near Greensburg. Residing with the Winchesters was no vacation. Flavins was required to cut all the wood used for cooking and heating and to feed the livestock. All the Slawson women believed in education. Maluda, self-educated and creative, was no exception. She required her nephew to "get two pages of philosophy every night." In 1851 Flavins enrolled in Indiana Asbury at Greencastle. In addition to her other burdens, Malinda paid his tuition.⁵⁰

Malinda remained active in church and community affairs. She complained to the Slawsons that the Methodists needed a church.

⁴⁵ Malinda Slawson to Simeon and Martha Slawson, December 9, 1845.

⁴⁶ Malinda Slawson to Simeon and Martha Slawson, July 8, December 15, 1848.

⁴⁷ Malinda Slawson to Simeon and Martha Slawson, April 21, July 22, 1849.

⁴⁸ Malinda Slawson to Simeon, Martha, and Flavins Slawson, April 21, 1849.

⁴⁹ Malinda Slawson to Simeon and Martha Slawson, July 22, 1849.

⁵⁰ Malinda Slawson to Simeon and Martha Slawson, January 29, 1850, February 7, May 28, 1851.

She held Methodist class meetings in her home; church was conducted in an old schoolhouse. She assisted in getting subscriptions for a new church, raising 186 dollars from other people and donating 30 dollars of her own money in spite of her financial difficulties. Malinda sold horses and other livestock simply "to get by."⁵¹

In July, 1851, Malinda decided to marry Pugh. Feeling obligated to the Slawsons, she asked for their permission. She had kept in close contact with her husband's parents because her own were dead.⁵² Malinda stated that she had known Pugh many years and had discussed the marriage with friends. She emphasized that she had suffered many hardships since Delanson's death.⁵³ The Slawsons agreed to the marriage.

Malinda left her farm and moved to Pugh's estate. Although her financial difficulties were relieved, she continued to be plagued by illness. To compound her health problems, she became pregnant in September. Malinda and Pugh visited the Slawsons in Switzerland County in late 1851. After their return on November 12, Malinda's daughter Martha D. died of scarlet fever—as had Martha Jane earlier—and was buried near her father.⁵⁴

Grief over the death of her daughter along with complications associated with the birth of her son resulted in Malinda's death. "Unfortunately, gynecology was an area of medical practice shrouded in ignorance, superstition, and nineteenth century standards of 'modesty.' Various referred to as female ailments, complaints, weakness, diseases, difficulties, and problems, the whole matter was seen as part of woman's lot in life."⁵⁵ The demands of the frontier killed Malinda as it had Delanson. Many women perished under the same conditions.

Pugh buried Malinda beside her first husband. He wrote the Slawsons that he had given her clothes to a Mrs. Samuel Walker, who was moving to Iowa.⁵⁶ Malinda's children went to Switzerland County to live with their grandparents. Life on the frontier moved on.

History has not dealt kindly with women like Malinda Clark. Their efforts and accomplishments have been overlooked, their place on the frontier rarely recognized. Yet their contributions to history, if not heroic, were undeniably great. Malinda Clark Slawson Pugh deserves to be remembered.

⁵¹ Malinda Slawson to Simeon and Martha Slawson, February 7, 1851.

⁵² Elizabeth Clark had died in 1832; John Clark in 1844.

⁵³ Malinda Slawson to Simeon and Martha Slawson, July 6, 1851.

⁵⁴ Isaac Pugh to Simeon and Martha Slawson, November 15, 1851.

⁵⁵ Riley, *Frontierswomen*, 82.

⁵⁶ Isaac Pugh to Simeon Slawson, February 3, 1853.