

THE TRADITION CONTINUES: A GENDERED PERSPECTIVE*

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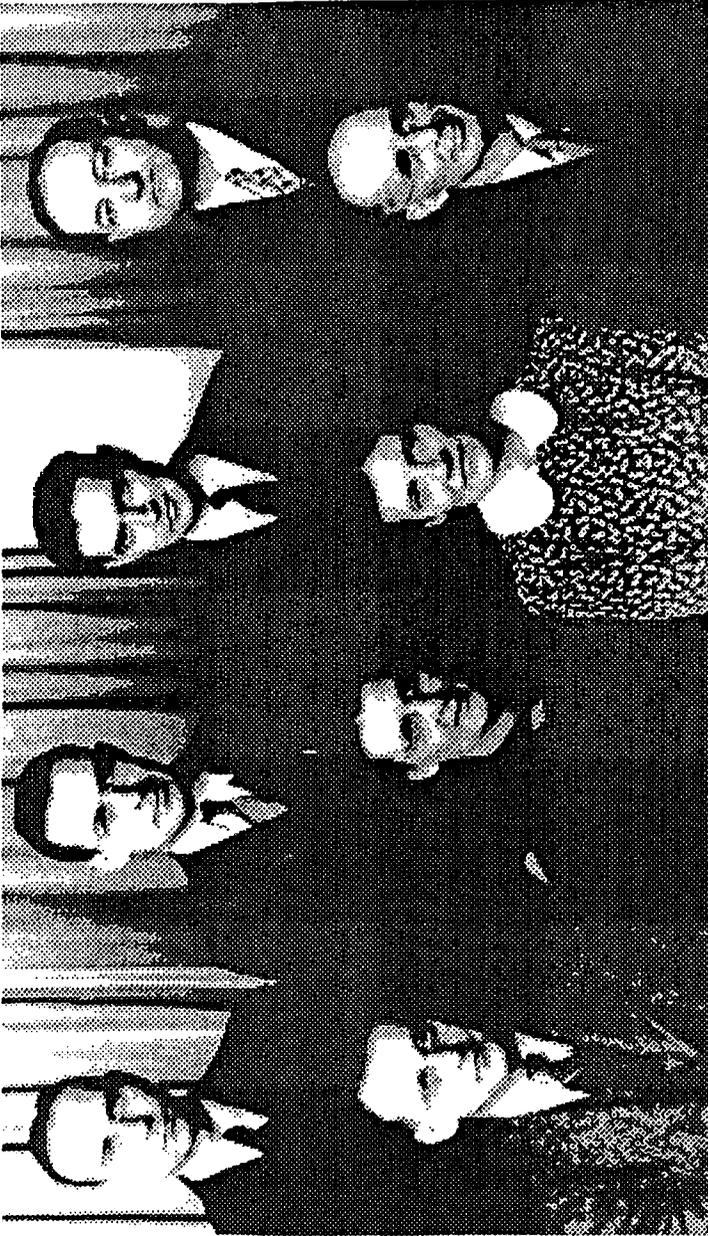
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Concerns were voiced by the American Sociological Society in 1984 about the small numbers of tenured women in sociology departments throughout the United States. A guideline for remedying this deficit was established and in 1990 the situation was reevaluated to see if the proposed guidelines had been effective. The following article investigates the situation at the University of Kansas from its inception to the present day. Included in the article is a biographical sketch of the first female professor in the Sociology Department at the University of Kansas: Mabel A. Elliott.

In 1984 the American Sociological Association (ASA) reported a lack of tenured women in sociology departments throughout the United States. A guideline was established that recommended "the proportion of women holding tenured positions in academic departments of sociology in 1990 should be equivalent to the proportion receiving Ph.D.s between 1950 and 1980. The appropriate figure is 27%, or approximately one in four" (ASA 1984, p. 5). Ironically, this was exactly the percentage of male to female professors at the University of Kansas the first year it opened its doors. In 1867, the University of Kansas began its academic tradition with four professors: three men and one woman. Cynthia A. Smith, Professor of French language and Literature, taught at KU for two years for a salary of \$1,000 per year while her three male colleagues were each paid \$1,600 per year. The ratio of Smith's salary to that of the male professors was 62.5%, a percentage that has been pervasive in the female/male wage structure throughout this country's history (Ferree and Hess 1985).

While the University itself started with a 25% female faculty ratio, it was 95 years before women professors represented a quarter of the faculty in the Department of Sociology. The Department of Sociology at the University of Kansas began its operations in February, 1890, when Frank Wilson Blackmar taught the first "Elements of Sociology" course (Sica 1983). It was thirty-nine years, however, before the first woman became a member of the faculty. Mabel A. Elliott was hired as an Assistant Professor in 1929 and remained on the faculty until she resigned in 1947.

*I wish to thank Laura Z. Barter for her invaluable assistance in collecting historical data on women faculty members in the Sociology Department at the University of Kansas.



The faculty in 1940. Back, l. to r. Marston McCluggage (1938), Loren C. Eiseley (1937), Mapheus Smith (1931), Carroll Clark (1930). Front, l. to r. Hilden Gibson (1940), Esther Twente (1937), Mabel E. Elliott (1929), Seba Eldridge (1940). The faculty was multi-disciplinary, Loren Eiseley taught Anthropology, Hilden Gibson taught Political Science, and Esther Twente taught Social Work.

Elliott remained the only female professor in the Sociology Department until she was joined by Esther Twente in 1937. Twente, who remained in the department for nine years, became the head of the newly formed KU Department of Social Service. A year later the School of Social Welfare at the University of Kansas was born and Twente was promoted to full professor and Chair with a salary of \$4,800 per year. That, however, is another rich piece of KU history that deserves its own platform.

Between 1947 and 1964 four women were on the Department's payroll, but none were given tenure-track positions. Louise Cochran taught from 1947 until 1952. Audrey Forrest taught within the Department from 1960 until 1964 and Kathryn Loy Calvin was a member of the Department from 1963 until 1966. It was not until 1964 that a tenure-track position was again offered to a woman; that distinction was given to Joy Gold Haralick. Between 1964 and 1972 the Sociology Department staffed four women: one instructor and three tenure-track professors. Gold Haralick was with the Department until 1971. M. Elaine Burgess joined the Department in 1966, remaining for only two years. Acting Assistant Juanita F. Murphy was in the Department from 1966 until her departure in 1973. By 1973 the four women mentioned above had left the Department, leaving newly hired Shirley J. Harkess in the dubious position of being the only female within a Department whose faculty members numbered 15. Professor Harkess remained in this position until she was joined by Cynthia B. Flynn in 1976.

In 1978 Joane P. Nagel and Jill B. Quadagno added their expertise to the Sociology Department. 1979 saw the addition of Sandra L. Albrecht, in 1984 Joey Sprague joined the Department and in fall 1991 Shirley Hill will become the newest female faculty member. A milestone was reached in 1989 when Carol A.B. Warren became the first female chair in the Department's history. The ratio of female to male professors gradually increased in the Sociology Department at KU throughout the 70s and 80s, and currently women represent 33% of the total tenure-track faculty members, a substantially increased ratio than when Elliott first arrived at KU.

As the first female tenure-track faculty member of Sociology at KU, Elliott embarked on a long and distinguished career that warrants attention. She was one of only two women given tenure-track positions in the first 75 years of the Department's history and her life exemplifies the experience of the unmarried "professional" woman of her day. Elliott et al. (1935) addressed emotional and physical hardships that were indicative of unmarried professional women. The following quote from *Our Dynamic Society* states:

Women of superior training who decide on a career may remain single. But remaining single may involve other serious problems because of a thwarted emotional life. Motherhood is woman's natural lot. It is not an easy matter for her to dodge the factors of biology and enter late maturity and old age with a happy and rich outlook on life. She may sublimate her emotions in active church work, in creative art and literature, or social service. But the childless woman

must always pay a price for her childlessness (Elliott et al. 1935, p. 136).

By 1961 when the fourth edition of Elliott and Merrill's text, *Social Disorganization* (1961), was still being widely used in the classroom, attitudes about unmarried professional women appeared refined. The text states that:

the emotional stress of deciding the question of career versus marriage appears to be chiefly a conflict for the middle-class woman who has gone to college and has achieved some of the satisfactions of working in an interesting profession or job (Elliott and Merrill 1961, p. 229).

Later in the same text the authors conclude that:

educated women have reacted against having their role defined in terms of biological functions...unmarried professional women seem to be relatively well adjusted and apparently have no great conflict over their single state (Elliott and Merrill 1961, p. 231).

While Elliott may have had conflicting views on the state of single, professional women, she remained in academia and continued forward, securing a place in the field of sociology that is distinguished by any standards and deserves remembrance.

ELLIOTT'S YEARS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

Born May 13, 1898 in Liscomb, Iowa, Elliott graduated from Marshalltown High School in Iowa and attended Bryn Mawr College and Northwestern University. She received her B.A. in 1922, her M.A. in 1923, and her Ph.D in 1929, all from Northwestern University. Elliott was an instructor in Sociology at the University of Minnesota and at Stephens College before she became a faculty member at the University of Kansas in 1929 (KU News Bureau, 7-14-46). She began her first years teaching "Elements of Sociology" (a five hour course open only to sophomores), "Criminology" and "Cultural Anthropology." In 1932 she began teaching "Social Pathology" and in 1933 added yet another course entitled "Development of Social Work" (University of Kansas Course Schedules, Archives). Initially hired for \$2,800 per year, Elliott's salary decreased in 1933 to \$1,900 per academic year when her teaching position was reduced to half-time. The salary reduction itself was not restricted to Elliott alone, but rather exemplified a decrease in all faculty salaries resulting from the Depression (Sica 1991). Elliott's position remained at half-time status until 1935, at which time she again became a full time faculty member at a salary of \$2,250 per year.

Elliott's course load remained the same until 1936, at which time she left KU on a leave of absence to become a Visiting Professor at the University of

Minnesota. She returned to Lawrence for the 1937-38 academic year and continued teaching at a salary of \$2,360 per year. In 1938 she became an Associate Professor but no salary increase was given with the promotion. In 1939 Elliott was given a \$40 per year wage increase and her salary remained \$2,400 until 1944. During this time, she continued teaching the same course load plus the addition of "Advanced Criminology," a course open to graduate students only. In 1942 Elliott taught two new courses at KU; "The Family" and "Social Construction of the Post-War World." In 1943 "Social Disorganization" was added to her already varied course load (University of Kansas Course Schedules, Archives).

Elliott remained an Associate Professor at the University of Kansas until 1947 when she resigned to become Professor and Chair of the Department of Sociology at the Pennsylvania College for Women at Pittsburgh. In her letter dated June 10, 1947 to Paul B. Lawson, Dean of the College, Elliott stated she felt "very indebted to the University of Kansas for the many stimulations which her position there entailed" (Letter from Elliott to Dean Paul B. Lawson, 6-10-47, Archives). The year before her departure from KU, Elliott was granted a year's leave of absence for a position as consulting sociologist to the American Red Cross.

Elliott's work for the American Red Cross placed her in charge of disaster relief research. She conducted a study of the evolution of policy and practices and evaluated the then current practices of the Red Cross in connection with floods, hurricanes, and other natural disasters. Her work took her to regional offices of the Red Cross and was part of a social audit requested by the organization. A major part of the work she completed for the Red Cross was a study of dispossessed families uprooted by disaster, the results of which were published. Elliott was the only sociologist involved in the group studies, the other project members were historians (K.U. News Bureau, 7-17-46).

Elliott participated actively in the national sociological community as well as in state and local organizations. She was a member of the ASA, serving on its research and finance committees from 1936 to 1938. She was active in the Kansas Conference of Social Work and as a member of the Kansas State Public Welfare Commission directed research from 1931 to 1933. Elliott also served as the assistant editor of the *American Sociological Review* from 1940 to 1943 (K.U. News Bureau, 7-17-46).

In 1945 Elliott was made an honorary member of the Eugene Field Society. Membership was granted on the basis of literary skill and published works. The organization, a national association of authors and journalists, was designed to perpetuate the name of Eugene Field, noted journalist and poet. In 1947 Elliott received the Distinguished Service Award from Northwestern University. She was a Phi Beta Kappa, a member of the American Association of University Women, a board member of the American Red Cross from 1929 to 1932, a board member of the Y.W.C.A. from 1933 to 1936, treasurer of the Kansas Diocesan and recipient of various fellowships throughout her academic career.

In addition, Elliott authored and co-authored numerous journal articles, monographs, and texts. Contributions made by Elliott include *Correctional Education and the Delinquent Girl* (1928), *Conflicting Penal Theories in Statutory Criminal Law* (1931) and *Crime in Modern Society* (1952). Elliott co-authored *Social Disorganization* (Elliott and Merrill 1934), a textbook used in over 250 universities and colleges and revised in 1941, 1950 and 1961. Another co-authored text, *Our Dynamic Society* (Elliott, Merrill, Grauerholz-Wright, and Wright 1935), was published in 1935. She was also an editor of the *Dictionary of Sociology* and wrote a chapter in the widely used text *Marriage and the Family* edited by Becker and Hill. Elliott's chapter, "The Nature and Extent of Divorce" (Becker and Hill 1942) illustrates her work and offers an insight to patterns and practices of divorce policies that were prevalent fifty years ago.

ELLIOTT'S RESEARCH ON DIVORCE

Marriage and the Family was published in 1942 when institutions of higher learning in the United States began setting up courses "designed to help students prepare for marriage and its responsibilities" (Becker and Hill 1942, p. v). The text was planned to incorporate both the traditional family courses (those offering a look at the historical aspect of matrimonial institutions) and the newer concept of a preparatory course that might enlighten undergraduate students about the often unforeseen realities encountered on the path to marital bliss (Becker and Hill 1942). This plan to write a bifurcated text apparently led the editors to ask Elliott to write a chapter on divorce.

Elliott's chapter on divorce covers diverse topics, some of which are still relevant today, while others have become virtually obsolete. In 1942, divorces fell under two categories; absolute and partial. An absolute divorce was the "full and final dissolution of the marriage and left both partners free to marry again. Their status became that of single persons, i.e., the same as if they had never wedded" (Elliott 1942, p. 538). A partial divorce (legal separation), according to Elliott, prohibited any further marital relations unless a reconciliation occurred. Sixteen states granted interlocutory decrees, which required a waiting period of at least one year before an absolute divorce was granted.

At the time Elliott wrote her chapter, divorces were still granted by fault. One party became the plaintiff while the other took the role of defendant. Typically, it was the woman who publicly asked for a divorce. In 1932, 73.5% of divorces granted were requested by wives. "Even when divorces are demanded by husbands they usually wish to appear gallant and are reluctant to start the proceedings" (Elliott 1942, p. 547). The following table shows the grounds for which divorces were granted in the United States at the time Elliott wrote her chapter.¹

<i>GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE</i>	<i>PER CENT</i>
Cruelty	42.4
Desertion	27.9
Miscellaneous causes	8.6
Combination of causes	8.0
Adultery	7.5
Neglect to provide	4.1
Drunkenness	1.5

The granting of divorce by fault remained intact until the 1970s, at which time the "no-fault" divorce became popular in California and quickly spread to other states. By 1980, only Illinois and South Dakota limited divorce to fault-based grounds (Adams 1986). Elliott seemed to be intuitively aware that the real reasons for seeking a divorce rarely coincided with the formal legal grounds expressed. She writes:

The actual reasons for dissatisfaction in marriage might be better summed up, however, in the term 'incompatibility.' Thus far only New Mexico and Alaska have adopted statutory legislation frankly acknowledging this fact. With these statutes we may have an entering wedge for divorce by mutual consent and the beginning of a new trend. Incompatibility as ground for divorce emphasizes personality differences and makes needless the absurd charges of grave offenses where no blame can be laid honestly (Elliott 1942, p. 556).

Also included in Elliott's chapter were rates of divorce occurring in the United States. She speaks of the high divorce rate as a recent phenomenon and reports the following information:²

<i>YEAR</i>	<i>NUMBER OF DIVORCES</i>
1920	170,509
1929	201,468
1930	191,591
1932	160,338
1934	204,000
1935	218,000
1936	236,000
1937	250,000

Elliott went on to say that there was no reason to presume that as the years increased there would be a reduction in the number of divorces granted. How right she was. Adams (1986) states that since 1975 over 1 million divorces

have been granted each year and Ferree and Hess (1985) contend that couples remaining married 30 years or longer is only 50%.

One subject area covered in Elliott's work on divorce that is plainly absent from today's marriage and family texts is the concept of migratory divorce. By establishing a short and often fictitious residence in another state, couples residing in states that held rigid divorce laws could eliminate the lengthy divorce process. In 1861 Nevada adopted marriage and divorce legislation that required only six months residency before divorce proceedings could be initiated. Little attention was paid to this unusual law until 1909.

Then a lawyer with an eye to its commercial possibilities conducted an advertising campaign in New York City, where he pointed out the advantages of securing a respectable divorce after a short residence in Nevada. The lawyer was subsequently disbarred, but the seeds of migration had been sown (Elliott 1942, p. 557).

Nevada eventually learned that the divorce trade brought with it revenues and the legislature reduced the residency restriction from six months to three months in 1927. Other states, seeing the ability to profit from the divorce trade, began changing their residency laws to compete with Nevada. Arkansas advertised Hot Springs as a dual vacation spot and divorce mecca. Idaho and Florida soon followed suite by introducing new 90 day residency laws. The phenomenon soon spread beyond the borders of the United States when Mexico and Cuba enacted laws which made it possible to obtain legal divorces in a matter of days (Elliott 1942).

Elliott suggests that the reason for the increase in migratory divorces is directly related to the legal systems of those states that retain rigid divorce legislation. She states "the so-called divorce mills are making it possible to secure a respectable release from an unbearable tie for those who cannot secure a dissolution or can secure a divorce only on scandalous grounds (Elliott 1942, p. 560)." Elliott felt there was no point in forcing couples to live in an intolerable relationship and that "greater honesty in divorce legislation would permit incompatibility as a general ground for divorce" (Elliott 1942, p. 565), eliminating the hypocrisy involved in fault-based divorces and migratory divorce practices.

Migratory divorce patterns are no longer a common practice in the United States and are therefore not covered in modern marriage and family texts. The ability to gain a divorce in today's society has become increasingly easier and in some instances "emergency" divorces can be requested and granted within one week. The arguments concerning divorce legislation appear to be as prevalent in today's society as they were when Elliott penned her requested chapter on divorce. Some still believe that the individual should be part of a nuclear family and to simplify the laws will merely invite more divorces. Others, however, believe that divorce is a safety valve for the family system and should be made as painless as possible for all involved (Adams 1986). Elliott herself seemed to vacillate between the ever present hypocrisy

of rigid divorce laws and the need to safeguard the family institution. In summarizing her chapter, Elliott states:

What we need in the final analysis is not more liberal divorce laws but better education for marriage and better marriage counseling. Only in this way can we help the family to sacralize itself (Elliott 1942, p. 566).

CONCLUSION

Throughout her career as a professor at the University of Kansas, Elliott taught a total of thirteen different sociology courses. Her beginning salary as an Assistant Professor was \$2,800 per year and when she left the institution 18 years later as an Associate Professor her annual income was \$3,000. While Elliott's career at KU was not without its difficulties--her independent nature often alienated other faculty members (Foulke 1991)--she dedicated her life to the field of sociology and her presence at the University of Kansas has enriched its academic history.

When the ASA first voiced its concern about the ratio of female to male tenure-track professors in 1984, a primary concern was the resulting lack of role models and mentors for female students. "This situation is especially serious because 51% of graduate students in sociology are now women" (Howery 1990, p. 6). As Beeghley and Van Ausdale make clear, the lack of role models and mentors for female graduate students in the field of sociology decreases the chances of women becoming successful within the profession (Beeghley and Van Ausdale 1990).

The Department of Sociology at the University of Kansas has been doubly blessed in reference to the above concerns. Although the female/male ratio before the 1970s left much to be desired, by 1984 the department already had a 22% ratio of female to male faculty members. That ratio continued to climb throughout the remainder of the decade and women now hold five of the fifteen faculty positions within the department. This number is of particular importance because women comprise 55% of the total number of graduate students in the Sociology Department at KU. The presence of highly qualified, committed and dedicated female professors at the University of Kansas (in the tradition of Mabel A. Elliott) will help ensure the academic success of both female and male graduate and undergraduate students at this institution. The result will be the continuation of an honorable sociological tradition that first began at the University of Kansas more than 100 years ago.

ENDNOTES

1. These figures were taken from the Bureau of Census, 1932. This was the latest data available at the time the text was written. The Bureau of Census did not report divorce statistics after 1931 until 1940. The 1940

statistics were not available when *Marriage and the Family* went to press in March, 1942.

2. The decrease in divorces from 1930 through 1932, according to Elliott, was due to the fact that the Depression brought with it financial instability and divorces merely became too expensive.

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WOMEN AND MEN FROM MARS:
EDITORS OF THE *MID-AMERICAN REVIEW OF SOCIOLOGY**

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As we celebrate the centennial of the department of sociology at the University of Kansas, it seems appropriate to remember not only the faculty of the past, but the students as well. A graduate student run journal (first entitled the Kansas Journal of Sociology and later the Mid-American Review of Sociology) has existed since 1964. As far as we know, it is the only current graduate-student run sociology journal, other than the Berkeley Journal of Sociology, which makes the endeavor here at the University of Kansas unique. This article relays the impressions of former editors about their experiences with the journal.

In 1976 the *Kansas Journal of Sociology* became the *Mid-American Journal of Sociology* with the efforts of Wayne Derx as Managing Editor and Cynthia Flynn as the faculty advisor. Since then the journal has had ten other editors: Prudence O' Keefe, Alan Johnson, Herbert Haines, Michael G. Lacy, Renee M. Zimmerman, Robert John, Patrick Akard, Christopher Bohling, Tracy X. Karner, and Mary E. Kelly. The authors were able to interview ten of the eleven editors through letters or phone conversations, to find out what their experiences as *MARS* editors were like.

THE BIRTH OF MARS

Many of the editors of *MARS* have emphasized the importance of Flynn to its beginnings. Lacy credits her for many of the defining features of the journal (many of which have subsequently been changed by current editors, much to the chagrin of past ones).

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