

[Reed, Harry Westbrook]

## DEATH OF HARRY WESTBROOK REED

Dr. Harry Westbrook Reed, pastor of the Universalist church in Watertown, N.Y. for twenty-eight years and more recently pastor of the Community Church of Mt. Dora, Florida, died at Watertown Friday, July 18. He came back from Florida in good health to spend the vacation at his summer home on Star Lake in northern New York. On Saturday night, July 12, he performed a wedding ceremony in his old parish in Dexter, N.Y. Soon after returning to the home of a niece in Watertown he complained of illness, which speedily was diagnosed as coronary thrombosis. He was removed to a Watertown hospital on Sunday, the day he was to have preached in the Presbyterian church, and lived for six days. His wife, Marjorie P. Baker Reed, his daughter, Mrs. James K. Wilson of Old Greenwich, N.Y., and his sister, Miss Genevieve A. Reed of New York City, were with him when he died.

Maud Harmon Reed, Dr. Reed's first wife, died in Watertown March 8, 1929. On May 26, 1930, at Gunnison Memorial Chapel, St. Lawrence University, he was married to Miss Marjorie Phoebe Baker of Watertown, Dr. Richard Eddy Sykes officiating.

Harry Westbrook Reed was born near Macedon, N.Y., Sept. 3, 1875, the son of Henry Hobart Reed and Dorothy Ann Dietrich Reed. His parents were Universalists and his father was a farmer. He was brought up to work on the farm and to work in the Universalist church. Before his twentieth year he did work also for Farmers Grain Drill Company of Macedon. His schools were the Macedon Central Academy, Geneva (N.Y.) High School, St. Lawrence University and the Canton Theological School. St. Lawrence gave him the degree of B.D. in 1900 and D.D. in 1917.

*The Watertown Daily Times*...has a three column biography of Dr. Reed from which we take some of the following facts.

Ordained a minister of the Universalist Church in 1899, Dr. Reed began his ministerial career as pastor of the Universalist church of Clifton Springs, where he served in 1900 and 1901.

At Clifton Springs he met and on June 26, 1901, married Miss Maud I. Harmon, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Harmon of that place.

In 1901 he was called to the pastorate of the First Universalist Church of Troy, where he succeeded Dr. Clarence E. Rice. During his six-year pastorate there, he was secretary of the Church Extension Fund of the State Sunday School Association.

From Troy he went to Joliet, Ill., in 1907 and there was pastor of St. John's Universalist Church for four years. While in Joliet he was a trustee of Lombard College.

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In 1911 he accepted the pastorate of All Souls Church in Watertown, filling the vacancy caused by the death of Dr. Moses H. Harris.

Under the leadership of Dr. Reed All Souls Universalist Church became one of the foremost in the Universalist denomination in New York State. Today it is one of the oldest and largest Universalist churches of the state. When Dr. Reed began his pastorate thirty years ago, the church had a membership of less than 200. During his administration the membership became the largest in the list of Universalist churches of the state and eighth in the denomination.

In addition to the pastorate of All Souls Church, Dr. Reed served as minister of the Universalist church of Dexter. Aside from that he aided in the promotion of the Universalist denomination in various communities and organized a church society at South Rutland.

Few men were as active in the civic life of the community as Dr. Reed. For two decades or more he served as a member of the board of trustees of the Flower Memorial Library. He was also chairman of the library's book committee.

He was a prominent Mason, served in the World War as a Y.M.C.A. secretary, and was an officer of the Community Chest of Watertown.

The New York Universalist Convention honored him with election as president for two terms, and for years he was chairman of the Fellowship Committee. One of the highest honors of the denomination came to him when he was chosen to preach the occasional sermon at the General Convention in Buffalo in 1931. St. Lawrence University some time ago made him a life trustee.

Editorially *The Watertown Times* spoke in part as follows:

He was the wise, sympathetic minister of an important church in this city for over a quarter of a century, and his parish extended far beyond the confines of All Souls. He was the minister also of that 100-year-old Universalist church at Dexter. He was known over this entire area and he was called often to participate in services and ceremonies in this county, St. Lawrence and Lewis. He was a preacher of ability. He had a gracious personality. His voice was rich and full. He was a good sermonizer and he was a diligent and sympathetic pastor always. He worked incessantly for his people and for the people of the community. He did not confine his activities alone to his parish. He recognized his obligation as a citizen. He took part in so many civic affairs. He was active in the Community Chest. He was connected for years with the Rotary Club. There was no movement for civic betterment which did not find him active and aggressive in its support.

Twenty-five or more years ago, he passed through a long period of ill-health. No man ever fought more valiantly than he. He continued

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his duties when it seemed then that he could survive only a short time. His courage was as admirable as that of any man in severest battle. When it seemed at that time that the end must be near, insulin was discovered and restored him to all but normal health again and gave him twenty-five years more of active and valuable service as a minister.

He was warm in his contact with his fellows. He had a sincere, cordial manner. He possessed a spiritual faith that was always revealed.

Funeral services were held at All Souls Church, Watertown, Sunday afternoon, July 20, and were in charge of Dr. Harold H. Niles.

Interment was at Palmyra, N.Y., the day following.

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Transcribed on 23 Jun 2009 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY