

[Chapin, Augusta J.]

FIRST WOMAN D.D. IS DEAD

Rev. Dr. Augusta J. Chapin Succumbs in St. Luke's Hospital

The Rev. Dr. Augusta J. Chapin, said to be the first woman doctor of divinity, died last night in St. Luke's Hospital, Manhattan. Mrs. Chapin was born at Lakeville, near Rochester, and was the daughter of Almon Morris Chapin. She was a descendant in the eighth generation of Deacon Samuel Chapin of Springfield, Mass. She took the A.M. degree at the University of Michigan in 1882, and was made a doctor of divinity by Lombard University in 1893. She preached her first sermon in Portland, Mich., May 1, 1859, and had since been a regularly ordained Universalist minister.

She resigned the pastorate of the Mount Vernon, N.Y., church a few years ago and had since been a public writer and lecturer.

She was chairman of the women's general committee of the World's Parliament of Religions in 1893. She belonged to Sorosis and other prominent clubs.

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NECROLOGY

AUGUSTA J. CHAPIN, D.D., born in Lakeville, N.Y., July 16, 1836, died at St. Luke's Hospital, New York City, June 30th, 1905. She was a forward scholar in her childhood, and at the age of fourteen taught school. Two years later she entered Olivet College. "The college was under control of the Congregationalists, and in those days rigorous in its religious training. Here alone she worked out for herself the belief in Universalism, and said that from the moment she believed the doctrine it was a matter of course that she should preach it. After leaving Olivet she desired to take a course at Lombard, but the immediate calls for work in the ministry prevented. The College, however, learning of her desire and her attainments, in 1868 conferred upon her the degree of Master of Arts; and later at the time of the World's Fair in Chicago, when she was one of the directors of the World's Congress of Religions, the same college made her a Doctor of Divinity, she being the first woman to achieve that honor in America."

Miss Chapin began her ministry in Michigan, preaching her first sermon in Portland, in 1859, and she was ordained at Lansing, in 1863. She had pastorates at Portland, Lansing, Decatur and Lapeer, Mich.; Mt. Pleasant and Iowa City, Iowa; Aurora and Blue Island, Ill.; Milwaukee, Wis.; San Francisco, Cal.; Allston, Mass.; and her last at Mt. Vernon, N.Y. She also won a large place outside of her ministry, as a writer for the press, lecturer, champion of woman suffrage, traveller and conductor of parties [e.g. tour groups] to Europe, and was an active and prominent member of Sorosis.

The late Dr. Hanson voiced the estimate of those who knew her best, when he said, some years ago: "Her pulpit manner is eminently appropriate and fitting, and her sermons are characterized by good sense and entire absence of all affectation. She impresses her hearers with a conviction of her sincerity and that she treats her theme conscientiously and thoroughly."

*The Universalist Register*, Boston MA, 1906, pp. 102-3