

[Walker, George Delbert]

Rev. George D. Walker, 46, Found Dead in Garage
With Rifle Bullet Through Head

Rev. George D. Walker, state superintendent of Universalist churches, was found dead in the garage of his home at Carthage Monday morning. A discharged rifle lay beside his body.

Members of Mr. Walker's family who discovered the body said they heard the sound of a rifle shot coming from the garage. A rifle bullet had penetrated his head from beneath his chin, killing him instantly. Authorities said it was a case of suicide.

Mr. Walker was born in Onondaga county, near Syracuse, and had held pastorates at Hudson, Little Falls and Utica. He was graduated in 1904 from St. Lawrence University and had lived in Carthage for the past 15 years. He was editor of the Empire State Universalist, a denominational publication.

He is survived by his widow [Mattie Ullman Walker]; a son, Donald; and two daughters, Gertrude and Phyllis, all of Carthage; a brother, Warren, and a sister, Mrs. L. C. Wilson, both of Syracuse.

Journal and Republican, Lowville NY, Thu, 26 Jul 1928

Transcribed on 24 Feb 2008 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY

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GEORGE DELBERT WALKER

George Delbert Walker, State Superintendent of Churches and Secretary of the New York State Convention of Universalists for the last sixteen years, died by his own hand in a moment of mental aberration July 22nd. He had been in a very nervous and depressed state for some days and the night before did not sleep at all. But he avoided burdening his friends with his troubles and he was a man of such unusual good sense and judgment that no one was apprehensive of any such outcome. He was however, subject, whether by temperament or otherwise, to occasional spells of gloom and to what was akin to an inferiority complex at such times, and, perhaps because of these, he had a dread lest he might become unbalanced sometime. Needless to say his associates who were very intimate with him did not know this. We have learned it since from some very close to him. While it is very difficult to understand why a man of such exceptionally sound judgment could not have thrust aside worries and phobias, it is obvious that the explanation of his tragic death is to be found in connection with these facts. However we account for it, our grief is profound and our sense of loss immeasurable, for he had made himself indispensable to the work of the New York State Convention of Universalists and had endeared himself to all who had come to know him.

He was born forty-six years ago on a small farm at Onondaga, near Syracuse. His parents, George and Delphine Walker, had three children beside himself, of whom two survive, a brother Warren, and a sister Mrs. Gertrude W. Willson of Syracuse. When he was fifteen years of age he went to Syracuse to live with his uncle and aunt, Rev. Dr. [Frederick W.] and Mrs. [Mary Browning] Betts. They became a second father and mother to him so that thereafter their home was always his home. On his graduation from the Onondaga Academy, he was persuaded by Dr. Betts to enter the Theological School of St. Lawrence University from which he graduated in 1904.

While in St. Lawrence he distinguished himself among other things in athletics, being on the football and baseball teams. He became a member of the Phi Sigma Kappa Fraternity. On his graduation he began his ministry with the Universalist churches of Natural Bridge and Carthage. Thence he went to the Universalist parish at Hudson and later to that at Little Falls. From the latter place while still a young man of only thirty years he was called to be State Superintendent of Churches in New York. The invaluable service he performed is known to all Universalists in the State whose affection, good will and entire confidence he had won during those intervening years.

While superintendent, Dr. Walker had several very urgent calls to other important positions. One was the invitation some eight years ago to the

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pastorate of our First Church in Rochester. Another was the tender, oft repeated, of a business position carrying compensation large even in these days of big salaries. He was content however with the honor and dignity of untitled bishop of the Universalist Church of the State of New York. But he was plainly marked for promotion. We wish he could have sensed it in some way. We happen to know that influential people, planning quite independently of one another, intended to name him for two very important and distinct positions as soon as the occasion offered.

In 1910 he became a trustee of the Theological School of St. Lawrence University. As such he was always greatly interested and earnestly supported the school in every way. He was much interested in the present effort to increase its funds and helped materially. In 1919 the University conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

He married in 1905 Mattie Ullman of Natural Bridge, who with three children—Gertrude (B.A., St. Lawrence 1928), Donald and Phyllis—survive him.

The funeral was held in Carthage at the Walker home, Wednesday, July 24th, Dr. J. M. Atwood and Dr. T. E. [Thomas Edward] Potterton conducting the service. The burial was at Onondaga. Several ministers—W. H. Skeels (and wife), W. [Wm.] J. Metz, C. [Clinton] L. Moulton, Thomas H. Saunders, Harriet Druley, H. P. [Herbert Philbrook] Morrell, B. W. Brotherton, R. E. [Richard Eddy] Sykes, L. H. Garner—journeyed to Carthage to be present at the funeral. Rev. John Smith Lowe, D.D., represented the Universalist General Convention. Others and the trustees of the N.Y. State Convention met the funeral party at Dr. Betts' home and accompanied it to Onondaga.

Empire State Universalist, Carthage NY, September 1928

Transcribed on 14 Mar 2013 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY