

[Chapman, Marguerite Gurley]

rites held for local historian

Funeral services were held Tuesday afternoon for Mrs. Marguerite Gurley Chapman, 78, 15 Bay St. Potsdam, local historian, author and long-time trustee of the Potsdam Library and the Potsdam Public Museum.

The Rev. Max Coots, pastor of the United [Unitarian] Universalist Church, Canton, officiated at the services held at 2 p.m. Tuesday at the Seymour Funeral Home. Bearers were Howard H. Smith, Raymond Hamel, Dr. Alfred Thatcher, Robert Gibson, William Cubley and F. A. (Ted) Anderson. Burial followed in Bayside Cemetery.

Mrs. Chapman died June 27 in the Potsdam Hospital following a long illness.

The daughter of William and Etta MacGowan Gurley, she was born in Potsdam on Jan. 21, 1891. She graduated in 1909 from the Potsdam Normal School and in 1912 from St. Lawrence University. She taught school in Springfield, Mass., and in Ithaca, N.Y.

On Oct. 21, 1921 she was married to William J. Chapman of Skaneateles in the family home at 15 Bay St. The Rev. Albon McKnight performed the ceremony. The Chapmans always resided in Potsdam. Mr. Chapman died in March, 1968.

Mrs. Chapman was a historian and writer. She helped organize the Potsdam Public Museum, Civic Center, in 1939 and served as president of the museum board of trustees from 1940 to 1968. She was named trustee emeritus of the museum in 1968.

She authored two books on local history: "Early History of Potsdam" which she wrote in 1956 and which will be reissued this summer, and "The Clarkson Family of Potsdam," which she wrote in 1958.

She was a member and trustee of the St. Lawrence County Historical Association and member and past regent of Nihanawate Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. She wrote a history Of Nihanawate Chapter in 1968.

As a historian she was asked to assist with the naming of a number of the new buildings at the State University College at Potsdam. Research inquiries about local history and geneology [sic] were referred to her and she spoke often to school and adult groups about local history. She addressed a historical society meeting in New York City about the Clarkson family in Potsdam.

Mrs. Chapman had been a member of the Potsdam Library Board of Trustees since the 1920's when the library and reading room was located at the corner of Market and Depot Streets. She was a member of the Potsdam

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Universalist Church, located at the corner of Elm and Park Streets, and was instrumental in encouraging the congregation of that church to give its building to the village as a library when the church disbanded in 1934. She was past resident and secretary of the library board and served as a trustee until 1968, when she was named trustee emeritus.

She was also a member and past president of both the Potsdam Hospital Guild and the Bayside Cemetery Association.

Survivors include two cousins, who reside in Florida. The late Alan R. Gurley, Potsdam, was a second cousin.

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