

[Hathaway, Agnes]

Mary Agnes Hathaway

Miss Agnes Hathaway, long a missionary of the Universalist Church in Japan, died in Tokyo March 13, 1939.

Mrs. Ezra B. Wood, president of the Women's National Missionary Association, has just received from Miss Ruth Downing of the Blackmer Home an account of Miss Hathaway's last hours and a sketch of her life dictated to Miss Downing on her death bed. Mrs. Wood writes:

Ruth Downing sent me the enclosed sketch of Miss Hathaway's life. May I quote from Ruth's letter to me:

"This will confirm the sad news which has, I am sure, already reached you of the passing of Miss Hathaway. Martha and I were with her during the last days and hours, together with Japanese friends. Her passing, like her life, will be an inspiration to us all. Clear of mind up to an hour or so of going, she put her affairs in order and gave messages of love and advice to all her dear ones both in Japan and America. One thing which she did on Sunday, when she was already suffering a great deal and when speech was already difficult, was to dictate a brief sketch of her life, saying: "This will go to the *Leader*. The sketch itself is wonderful, I think, for it is clearly organized and expressed in English, all in the third person ready for publication. Not one word is changed. I sat by her bedside and took it down word for word in shorthand."

This will be of interest to many people, I am sure. It is a modest account of a consecrated life.

Mary Agnes Hathaway was born December 2, 1863, in Bristol, New York, the daughter of A. [Abiel] Chandler Hathaway and H. [Hannah] Augusta Cornell, all of good family.

Both grandparents and parents were earnest Universalists. Her paternal grandfather, her uncle and her great-grandfather were founders of the Universalist Society. Her maternal grandfather and aunt were the first to be baptized. She was educated in a very simple country school until eighteen years of age, and studied music with a very good Oberlin professor.

When almost twenty years of age, she went to Genesee Wesley University, Lima, New York, but stayed out two or three terms on account of poor health and for teaching. She graduated in 1888 at the head of her class. After that she taught public school in Lima [for] three years, then one term in a country school and one year in Newark, New York high school, from which position she was obliged to resign on account of her mother's death. After that she taught two terms in the Newark Valley primary school. Then she went to Lebanon Normal School for eight months. She had to give this up before graduating because of lack of money. In the autumn she took a position as a grammar school teacher in Chester, Illinois. There she taught four years.

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Then she went to Lombard College to be Dean of Women and teacher of academic studies. Three years later she became teacher of history, and studied to get a diploma, graduating in 1905 with Stanley and Frank Adams, as an honor student.

In May, 1905, she came to Japan, and with the exception of a very few years on furlough, she has been connected with the Mission ever since. She did, however, resign at the age of sixty, and went home, speaking far and wide for Japan and against the Exclusion Act. But in 1928, the Women's Board needed someone to send to Japan, and she came back for an intended period of three years.

She had one brother who died [in 1927?¹], leaving no children, so she is the last member of her branch of the Hathaway tree, though there are some cousins on the mother's side still living.

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¹ The family plot in Evergreen Cemetery at Bristol NY shows her brother's date as 1866-1910.