

[Storrs, Carrie L.]

CARRIE L. STORRS, FORMER MUSICIAN

Was Organist at Universalist Church 48 Years

Death Occurred Thursday—

Was Daughter of One of Founders of St. Lawrence University

Word of the death of Miss Carrie Storrs, sister of Frank E. Storrs of this village, at Ogdensburg Thursday morning, came with a measure of relief to her many friends. Miss Storrs had been ill for at least ten years and death was a release from human suffering. The funeral was held from the Universalist church, which she served for forty-eight years as organist, on Sunday afternoon at three with Dr. Edson R. Miles officiating and burial being in Evergreen Cemetery.

The death of Miss Storrs is a subject of general local interest for several reasons. Her family has held a prominent place in this community for more than a century, her father, the late Levi Bidwell Storrs, having been born in this village in 1816. The brother, Frank Storrs, now at 86 years of age, is one of Canton's oldest citizens. At the Universalist church can be found a beautiful memorial stained glass window dedicated to Miss Storrs as a tribute to the many years she served as organist of that society. For several reasons the passing of this elderly lady is of historical note.

The writer as a very young man was a member of the Universalist choir while Carrie Storrs was still organist, and on many occasions either assisted or substituted at the organ handle in the little cubby hole in the rear of the organ loft where the organ received its artificial respiration from the hand-pumped bellows.

Many another youth served in such capacity and literally scores and scores of people had been members of the choir during the 48 years Carrie Storrs presided at the organ. To them and to all members of the parish, and the community, she was a familiar and loved person, one who gave graciously, generously and unsparingly of her time and talent.

The Storrs family goes far back in Canton history. The fact that they were settled here when Levi B. Storrs was born in 1816 indicates this fact. He grew to be a large-bodied man, and of broad and liberal mind. Though handicapped early in life by the loss of one leg this never hampered him as a business man. For all of forty years he stood forth as one of Canton's staunchest and most successful citizens. He and Martin Thatcher were foremost among that group which sponsored the founding of St. Lawrence University. To Levi Bidwell Storrs goes the credit of seeing that venture through to success. He served as secretary of the University from the day its first Board of Trustees was organized in 1856 until 1884, and served as its trustee for a similar period. From 1863 to 1882 he also performed the office of treasurer, these duties in addition to his own personal business affairs.

Mr. Storrs ran a tailoring and clothing business in Canton many, many years. He was a man of inventive genius and in connection with his trade produced a patented pressing machine. There was a large demand for this and as a result Mr. Storrs erected a foundry and machine shop on the island at the rear of the present Dishaw foundry. This was operated by Mr. Storrs and then by his son, the present Frank Storrs, until as recently as 1916.

[Storrs, Carrie L.]

The Storrs family became identified with the Universalist church in its early days, and being musically inclined, the members of the family found a natural place in the choir. Carrie, who was christened Caroline Louise, was born October 10, 1856 in the present family home on Court street, now one of the village's oldest and most interesting residences. Her mother, Caroline McKenzie Storrs, was of English descent, as were Levi Storrs' people. There were eight children of Levi and Caroline M. Storrs, two of them, Isadore and Florence, dying young. Besides Frank and Carrie, there were Ellen, who married a Dr. [Henry Clement] Austin of Auburn and whose daughter Ella married the late Don M. Spencer of Canton, parents of Mrs. Roy [Hazel B.] Place; Resalvo and Levi, who helped with their father in his business as did Frank; and Imogene, who married the late Robert Stocking.

Levi Bidwell Storrs loved music and early Canton records tell of his being president of the Canton band in 1841, and that he played the ophicleide. His daughter Ellen played the melodeon in the old Universalist church, and her father's place in the choir was beside her as he played a bass horn. Imogene sang in the choir. This is all pretty much ancient history now.

Carrie Storrs studied music at the Potsdam Normal Conservatory of Music of which Professor H. E. Hawthorne was then head. She graduated from the course and for many years conducted piano classes in this village, her brother recalling that she often had as many as twenty-five and thirty pupils, and that the Storrs home seemed more like a studio than a family home.

It was in 1876 that Carrie Storrs began playing the organ at the old Universalist church. She retired in 1924, at the time the memorial window was dedicated to her service...

Carrie Storrs possessed a great love for music, and her devotion and patience to her duties as organist won the affection of all who knew her. That illness overshadowed the last years of her life was a great pity. A marker will note her resting place in Evergreen cemetery, and the beautiful stained glass window in the choir loft at the Universalist church, representing Saint Cecelia, who tradition says was the inventor of the most magnificent of all musical instruments, the pipe organ, will perpetuate her memory in this community.

Surviving besides her brother Frank Storrs are several nephews and nieces, among these being Frank Stocking of Montreal, Robert Stocking of Jamaica, N.Y., Mrs. John Lynch of Bloomfield, N.J., and Mrs. Clifford [Grace B.] Watson of Philadelphia, Pa.

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Transcribed on 2 Nov 2007 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY