

# Mrs. Henry D. Chapin, 84, Dead; Founder of the Adoption Service

Mrs. Alice Delafield Chapin, pioneer in the adoption field here died yesterday in Lawrence Hospital, Bronxville, N. Y. She was 84 years old.

A well known story relates that one chilly spring night in 1910, a patrolman in Central Park heard a plaintive wailing near a bench and, thinking it might be a kitten, investigated. What he found was a baby girl suffering from malnutrition and exposure.

The police officer transported the child to the station house and thence to a hospital where she came to the attention of Dr. Henry Dwight Chapin, a specialist in infants. When it became apparent that the child needed, more than anything, "the therapeutics of a mother's love," Dr. Chapin consulted his wife.

"Bring the baby home and we will try to save her here," Mrs. Chapin is said to have decided.

## New Wing Being Built

Thus began an association with foster care and adoption that developed into the Spence-Chapin Adoption Service, 6 East 94th Street, which now has 1,500 children in foster homes and last year placed 384 for adoption. A measure of the organization's scope is the million dollar wing nearing completion.

Dr. and Mrs. Chapin established the Alice Chapin nursery in 1911 after one year of looking after undernourished

and neglected children in their home. Mrs. Chapin was president of the nursery for 20 years while her husband directed the babies ward at Post-Graduate Hospital for more than 30 years. He died in 1942.

The following year the nursery joined with the Spence Alumni Society to form the Spence-Chapin Adoption Service. Its first home being at 304 East 33d Street.

She expanded her work first into the Children's Aid building at Lexington Avenue and 127th Street and then purchased a "lovely old Chelsea house" at 444 West 22d Street.

## 'Retired' in 1936

Mrs. Chapin "retired" in 1936 when her husband became ill but remained active for years as honorary president of the Spence-Chapin service.

Mrs. Chapin, who was childless herself, was also president of the Speedwell Services for Children, established by Dr. Chapin to facilitate foster care.

Born in Ballston Spa, N. Y., in 1879, the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Walter Delafield, an Episcopal minister, she was interested in child welfare from her earliest years.

The Spence-Chapin Adoption Service attracted the support of the well-to-do and fashionable women of New York who for years have raised funds at the annual Tiara Ball.

A funeral service will be held tomorrow at 3:30 P.M. in the Reformed Church of Bronxville.