

9-13-13

Dr. Phoebe R. Sprague, 1845-1904

r. Phoebe R. Sprague was the daughter of Daniel Sprague of an old and influential family from Holley. She was born on a farm two miles northwest of Holley on Dec. 11, 1845. After acquiring her early education in a district school, she attended Albion Academy, Holley Academy, and Brockport Collegiate Institute. In 1870 she went to Chicago and entered the Woman's Hospital Medical College, where she graduated in 1873.



Dr. Phoebe R. Sprague

In 1871, while still in college, she was connected with the Hospital for Women and Children, and during the great fire in Chicago she was sent to Lincoln Park, where she won special honors in caring for and nursing the sufferers from the fire. In 1874 she went to Springfield, Mass., where she began the general practice of medicine, and for 25 years was a

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icians advised rest. A trip to California was taken, but on her return there was no rest for her in Springfield, where her practice had been extensive.

Eventually she gave up this practice and in 1899 returned to her family home near Holley. In due time, she purchased a lot on Geddes St. in Holley and built a home for herself, her sister and two nieces. She also had two brothers who lived out of state.

During the summer of 1904, prior to her death in November, she was instrumental in having a Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star organized. She was immediately elected their first Worthy Matron and this Chapter of OES

was named the Sprague Chapter in her honor. Dr. Sprague was also a member of the Charity Rebecca Lodge and the Albion Historical Society. In 1902 Governor Odell appointed her one of the managers of the Women's House of Refuge at Albion where she was subsequently elected secretary of the board. Indeed, Dr. Sprague was an outstanding and progressive woman for the times, one who was a credit to her profession and an inspiration to other women.

"She was a woman full of good works and her charities extended far beyond her own family.... She was possessed of an indomitable will, which, combined with her great energy and perseverance, made her life a success."

A historic marker denotes the site of her residence at 39 Geddes St. in Holley near the Merrill Grinnell Funeral Home.