

Mrs. Lewis S. Chanler, 78, Dies; Headed Reform Bahai Movement

**Widow of Former Lieutenant
Governor Formed Society in
'29—Wrote Several Books**

Mrs. Julie Olin Chanler, spiritual leader of the Reform Bahai movement, died yesterday in the Hospital for Special Surgery. She was 78 years old and lived at Caravan House, Bahai headquarters at 132 East Sixty-fifth Street.

She was the widow of Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler, Lieutenant Governor under Charles Evans Hughes from 1906 to 1908.

Mrs. Chanler was a follower of the Persian Baha-O-Llah, prophet of a universal brotherhood in which she became interested after a visit to Haifa, Palestine, in 1926. After her husband, who was a great-grandson of John Jacob Astor, died in 1942, she gave her home at the above address to Bahai and lived on the upper floors. Her home was a meeting place for poets, artists and lecturers.

She formed the Bahai here in 1929 as the New History Society with the late Mirza Ahmad Sohrab and her husband and devoted her activities to the religious concepts laid down by Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha, founder of the cult.

Mrs. Chanler described her devotion to the cause of world brotherhood in her book, "From Gaslight to Dawn," published in 1956. She wrote for the movement's publication, The Caravan, and translated Bahai literature. One of these books, a primer for the young, was entitled: "His Messengers Went Forth."

In 1938 Mrs. Chanler led in organizing the Friends of the Duke of Windsor in America, who met on the Duke's birthday, June 23, at her home to



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constitute themselves his defenders against "ill-natured attacks upon his character and motives" and to plan annual observances of his succession as Edward VIII.

Although Mrs. Chanler was listed in the New York Social Register, her mode of life contrasted sharply with the activities she had followed in society. She was said to have devoted her fortune to Bahai and had expressed the hope that its activities would be carried on.

Her first marriage, to the late J. Philip Benkard in 1902, ended in divorce in 1921 in Paris. Two months later she was wed there to Mr. Chanler.

Mrs. Chanler is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Charles H. Clarke of Oyster Bay, L. I., and a sister, Mrs. Tracy Dows of Rhinebeck, N. Y.