

## Rhoda (Castle) Chase



MRS. RHODA CASTLE CHASE.

If there was ever a story written about a woman's love, courage, and faith, the life of Rhoda (Castle) Chase would be that story. Her life began November 28, 1833, in Oneida County New York. The family later moved to Barrington Illinois. Rhoda worked hard on her education and became a local teacher. It was in the schoolyard that she met a fellow teacher, Ira Chase, who she married in 1859.

It was a great time for the couple as they settled into married life, but America was about to be drawn into the Civil War. Like so many men of the time, Ira joined in the war effort. He was the first citizen of Barrington Illinois to enlist.

In 1862, Rhoda got word that her husband was ill in a hospital at Nashville. Rhoda made the journey with her infant child. When she arrived, she was told she could not help her husband because only Army nurses could help the serviceman. Desperate to help, Rhoda decided to enlist. She immediately began caring for her husband as well as the other sick, wounded men.

She took a grim joy in her work, but a new tragedy came when her baby died. Somehow, she managed to hold back her grief and take care of her soldier patients. When Ira was released, he and Rhoda returned home, but tragedy still followed her. It seems that just before she mustered out, she had been exposed to smallpox which struck her shortly after they arrived home.

She survived the smallpox, but the disease left her blind. Rhoda refused to allow blindness to stop her from living a full life. She raised five children; she was a model minister's wife, for Sergeant Ira Joy Chase who became a Christian preacher; she kept house, doing the thousand and one tasks of a housewife. She also supported her husband in his political career.

Ira Joy Chase was sworn in as Lieutenant Governor of Indiana in 1889 and served as governor of the state of Indiana from 1891 to 1893. Upon his death in 1895, Rhoda moved in with her daughter, Electa (Chase) Murphy. The family moved to Muncie in 1905.

After moving to Muncie, Rhoda became very active in the community. Her greatest devotion was the Jackson St., Christian Church. At age 91, blind, crippled, and nearly deaf, she was carried into the polling place by her son-in-law. Unable to physically cast ballot the clerk helped her. When he asked how she wanted to vote she replied, "The straight Republican ticket."

Rhoda (Castle) Chase passed away April 28, 1926, and is buried beside her husband in Crown Hill Cemetery, Indianapolis Indiana.



A prim tintype picture of Governor Ira Joy Chase and his choice for First Lady of Indiana, Rhoda Castle Chase, shows them in happy days before she became blind. He was the only preacher-governor of the state.