

MINUTES of the New York State Convention for 1844

Met at Salisbury, May 29. Called to order by Br. P. [Pitt] Morse. United in prayer with Br. H. [Henry] Lyon. Chose Br. J. [Job] POTTER, Moderator, Br. P. [Philo] PRICE, Clerk, and Br. H. LYON, Assistant Clerk.

Proceeded to call the list of delegates, when the following delegates appeared and took seats in the Council.

Allegany.—None

Black River.—H. [Harvey Boughton, P. Morse, Clerical; T. A. Granger, R. A. Murray, Lay.

Cayuga.—A. [Albert] G. Clark, A. [Alfred] Peck, Clerical; W. Babcock, Lay.

Central.—Z. [Zenas] Cook, D. S. Morey, Clerical.

Chautauque[sic].—Wm. Stowel, Lay.

Chenango.—J. T. [John Temple] Goodrich, A. O. Warren, Clerical; J. B. Gilman, Lay.

Hudson River.—C. C. Burr, H. Lyon, Clerical; J. Braman, R. Freeman, Lay.

Mohawk River.—D. [Dolphus] Skinner, Clerical; A. C. Gage, G. W. Alton, Lay.

New York.—I. D. [Isaac] Williamson, Clerical; P. Price, G. L. Demarest, Lay.

Niagara.—B. B. Bunker, Clerical.

Ontario.—None

Otsego.—O. [Obadiah] Whiston, J. H. [James Harvey] Tuttle, Clerical; H. Coleman, A. Wilcox, Lay.

St. Lawrence.—J. Potter, Clerical; L. Buck, D. Mack, Lay

Steuben.—None.

Read and approved Minutes of last session. Appointed Br. A. C. Barray, Standing Clerk of the Convention.

Br. [E. M.] Woolley, from the committee of Correspondence, reported that charges had been preferred against the St. Lawrence Association, in its action concerning certain charges against the character of a ministering brother. Referred the matter to a committee of five, consisting of the following persons: Brs. A. Peck, O. Whiston, D. Skinner, J. Braman, D. S. Morey.

Adjourned to meet immediately after the afternoon service.

Afternoon. Met according to adjournment. Appointed Brs. P. Morse, G. L. Demarest, Z. Cook, com. on Adjournment. Brs. A. G. Clark, J. A. [James Aikin] Aspinwall, C. S. [Charles Starr] Brown, com. to designate the preacher of the next Occasional Sermon. Brs. D. Mack, B. B. Bunker, J. T. Goodrich, to nominate delegates to the U. S. Convention. Brs. T. J. [Thomas Jefferson] Sawyer, E. M. Woolley, S. R. [Stephen Rensselaer] Smith, com. on Correspondence. Heard and accepted the report of the com. on Ordination. Continued the same committee another year.

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Received the following communication from Dr. Jacob Harsen, Executor of the last Will and Testament of his father, Cornelius Harsen. Referred to a committee of three, (to wit: I. D. Williamson, P. Morse and P. Price) to nominate a Board of Trustees, and report to the Council during its present session:

To the Moderator, Clerk and Members of the Convention of Universalists of the State of New York.

Gentlemen: My late father, Cornelius Harsen, of the city of New York, died on the 28th day of October, 1838, leaving, surviving him, his widow, Joanna H. Harsen, who also died July 10, 1843. By his last Will and Testament, made the 21st day of June, 1838, he devised in the words following, as will more fully appear, reference being made to the record of the same in the office of the Surrogate of the City and County of New York:

"I do hereby give and devise to my Executors hereafter named, all and singular my Real Estate, whatsoever and wheresoever situated of which I may be seized at the time of my death, in Trust, for the uses and purposes hereafter mentioned, and to pay the legacies hereafter given, that is to say, to take possession of all my said Real Estate and immediately after the decease of my said wife Joanna, and within one year or as near thereto as conveniently may be after her decease, to sell and dispose of the same at Public Auction, and out of the proceeds of the sale, they or he shall first pay to the Moderator and Clerk for the time being, of the New York State Convention of Universalists, and to such three Laymen as shall be chosen by the said Convention, who shall constitute a committee to receive the same, the sum of Six Thousand (\$6000) dollars, to be applied by them to the uses and benefit of sick and infirm Clergymen of the Universalist Faith, and to the uses and benefit of the Widows and Orphans of deceased Clergymen as hereinafter mentioned, which sum of money I hereby bequeath to the Moderator and Clerk for the time being, and three Laymen, for the uses and benefit of said sick and infirm Clergymen, and Widows and Orphans.

"I further will and declare, that the sum of Six Thousand (\$6000) dollars, as before directed to be paid by my Executors out of the proceeds of my Real Estate after the decease of myself and my said wife, to the Moderator and Clerk for the time being of the New York State Convention of Universalists, and to such Three Laymen as shall be chosen by the said Convention to receive the same, to whom I give that sum to be applied by them to the use and benefits of sick and infirm Clergymen, and of the Widows and Orphans of deceased Clergymen as hereafter mentioned; to prevent any misunderstanding as to its application, and to constitute the same a Permanent Fund, I do hereby give and bequeath to the Moderator and Clerk for the time being on the Trust hereafter mentioned, that is to say, the said five persons shall as soon as the same or any part thereof is

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received by them, invest the whole of it in Bond and Mortgage on unencumbered Real Estate of at least double the value thereof, for the best interest which can be gotten thereof, which Six Thousand (\$6000) dollars shall constitute a fund to be called "The New York Universalist Relief Fund," the interest monies of which fund (but no part of the principal) so invested, shall be applied by the said Moderator and Clerk of the said Convention of Universalists for the time being and three Laymen to be chosen by the said Convention, to the relief, uses, and benefit of the sick and infirm Clergymen of the Universalist Faith and of the Widows and Orphans of deceased Clergymen of the Universalist Church, who previous to their death were in fellowship with the said Convention of the State of New York, which Moderator and Clerk for the time being with three Laymen to be chosen by the Convention, shall constitute a committee of Trustees to take charge of the said fund, which they shall keep invested as aforesaid, to receive applications for relief, ascertain the situation of the applicants, collect the income arising from the fund, (the committee may authorize an individual member to collect the same,) and annually report their doings to the Convention; but no relief shall be granted by the Committee but on the vote and direction of the said Convention, all vacancies in said Committee to be filled by the Convention, three (3) Laymen shall at all times constitute a part of the Committee."

In consequence of certain Leases of portions of the Real Estate named in the above devise, the Executors have deemed it inexpedient to sell within the year, but will dispose of the same "as soon thereafter as conveniently may be," and in order that the desire of my late father may be carried out, and that those whom he intended to relieve may be the recipients of the income of his bequest, the Executors will be enabled to pay over the legal interest of the sum of Six Thousand (\$6000) dollars so devised agreeably to the provisions of the will, quarterly or half-yearly, as the Convention may elect, until such time as the Real Estate can be disposed of without prejudice to the parties interested therein; in effecting a sale there shall be no unnecessary delay, and in the meantime the intentions of the Testator may be fully accomplished. The interest will commence on the Tenth (10th) day of July, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty-four, (1844) and continue until the principal sum of Six Thousand (\$6000) dollars is paid over to those authorized by the Testator to receive it.

With these explanatory remarks I commit the subject to the actions of the Convention.

With great respect,

I am your obedient servant,

JACOB HARSEN, *Executor*

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Of the last Will and Testament of Cornelius Harsen, dec'd, New York, May 25th, 1844.

Heard reports from Associations in reference to the condition of our cause.

The following Preamble and Resolution were unanimously adopted:

Whereas, This Convention is deeply impressed with the importance of establishing a uniform system of discipline,

Resolved, That our Delegates to the U.S. Convention be instructed to introduce this subject before the Council of that body at its next annual session.

Adjourned to half past 7 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Thursday morning.—United in prayer with Br. O. Wilcox. The Committee on a preacher of the next Occasional Sermon, reported to Br. D. S. Morey. Reports accepted and adopted.

The Committee on Col. Harsen's bequest, submitted the following Report, which was accepted and adopted:

To the New York State Convention of Universalists, in annual Session at Salisbury, Herkimer County, New York, May 30th, 1844.

The Committee to whom was referred the communication of Jacob Harsen, in relation to the bequest of the late Cornelius Harsen of New York, to this Convention, with instructions to report the names of suitable persons to constitute a "Committee of Trustees to take charge of said fund," in conformity with the provisions of the Testator, have attended to the duty of their appointment, and ask leave to submit the following report:

Your Committee are deeply impressed with the conviction, that a sacred charge has been committed to this body, and that a solemn responsibility rests upon its members to carry out, in letter and spirit, the intentions of our departed brother; and to see to it, that the sick and infirm, the widow and the fatherless, receive the full benefit of the bequest so liberally devised for their relief. The establishment of a fund of this kind has been agitated by some benevolent hearts for some years past, and as one after another of the laborers in the vineyard of the Great Master have been called to their rest, and the cry for relief has been heard from their widows and orphans, its necessity has been more and still more apparent. But nothing has been done; and it was reserved for our honored and departed brother to be the first to manifest by substantial acts, his regard for the permanent interests of the worn out soldier of the cross, and his widowed wife and orphan children. Considering the sacred character of this trust, and the holy purposes to which it is to be applied, your committee have felt an anxious solicitude, that its management should be committed to men of known responsibility, and prudence, whose names would be a sufficient guarantee

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to all concerned, that in such hands the treasure would be safe. Such we confidently believe are the men whose names are presented in the subjoined resolution.

Your Committee are also of the opinion that respect for the memory of our departed friend and brother indicates the propriety of entering upon the records of this Convention, some expression of the deep gratitude with which this bequest was received; for altogether the departed saint can not be affected by our praise or censure, and the "blessing of the widow and the father, and of him that was ready to perish," is a better eulogy than tongue can speak or pen can write, yet we would place upon record the truth that we see and appreciate the real worth of this truly christian benevolence. A resolution upon this subject is therefore appended to this report. With these brief expressions of our views, your Committee present the following, as embracing the present action proper in the premises.

1. *Resolved*, That this Convention receives with unfeigned gratitude the intelligence of the bequest of the sum of Six Thousand dollars, from the late Cornelius Harsen, Esq., of the City of New York, as a fund for the relief of sick and infirm Clergymen, and the widows and orphans of deceased Clergymen of the Universalist denomination, and in fellowship with this Convention.

2. *Resolved*, That the zeal of our departed brother to the cause of Christianity secured the confidence and respect of this body while he lived, and that now he has departed this life, his memory is tendered still more dear to our hearts, by this additional evidence of his practical conformity to the spirit of that "pure and undefiled religion" which "visits the widow and the fatherless in their afflictions," and seeks its purest manifestations in relieving the sick and distressed of our race.

3. *Resolved*, That the thanks of this Convention be presented to Jacob Harsen, Esq., of New York, for the prompt and obliging manner in which he has communicated this bequest of his honored and departed father.

4. *Resolved*, That Jacob Harsen and Abner Chichester, Esq's, of the City of New York, and Stephen Van Schaack, Esq., of Albany, be and hereby are appointed on the part of this Convention, in conjunction with Rev. Job Potter, of Ogdensburg, Moderator, and Philo Price, of New York, Clerk of this Convention, for the time being, a "Committee of Trustees;" and they are hereby authorized to receive, and invest, the "New York Universalist Relief Fund," as provided and directed in the last Will and Testament of the late Cornelius Harsen.

5. *Resolved*, That the communication of Jacob Harsen, Esq., together with this report and the action thereon be entered upon the records of the Convention, and that the Standing Clerk be directed to furnish each of the Trustees of the "Relief Fund" with a certified copy of the fourth resolution,

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and the Moderator and Clerk of this session, with a certificate of their appointment to their respective offices.

6. *Resolved*, That the aforesaid letter of Jacob Harsen, Esq., together with this report and the action thereon, be published with the Minutes of this session of the Convention.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

I. D. WILLIAMSON,
P. MORSE, } *Committee*
P. PRICE,

The Committee to nominate delegates to the U.S. Convention, reported the following her were appointed, with power to appoint substitutes.

Clerical.—Pitt Morse, Henderson; O. Whiston, Cooperstown; S. J. Hillyer, North Salem; B. B. Bunker, Lockport.

Laymen.—P. Price, New York; G. H. [George Henry] Roberts, Rochester; D. Mack, Canton; H. Corey, Cooperstown; S. Van Schaak, Albany; D. S. Crandel, Lockport.

The Committee on adjournment reported in favor of Cortlandville. Report accepted and adopted.

The Committee on charges against the St. Lawrence Association made a report, which, after some amendments, was adopted unanimously. Appointed Brs. I. D. Williamson, D. S. Morey and O. Whiston, a Committee to settle the matter in accordance with the recommendation contained in said report; and by a subsequent vote empowered the Committee to fill all vacancies.

The following Resolution was introduced and passed unanimously:

Resolved, That the sum of fifty dollars be and the same is hereby appropriated to the relief of the widow and children of our deceased brother, C. B. [Charles Bingley] Brown, of Hastings, Oswego county, N.Y., the same to be paid out of any monies that may be in the "Universalist Relief Fund," applicable to the objects of the same fund, within one year from the first of June, 1844.

Br. J. T. Goodrich introduced the following Resolution, which was passed unanimously:

Resolved, That the Standing Clerk of each Association in this State, who has not so reported at this session, be earnestly requested to collect and transmit to the Standing Clerk of this Convention, or publish in one of our periodicals, as soon as possible, a list of all the preachers in our fellowship, living within their bounds; of all meeting-houses, owned wholly or in part by Universalists; of all Sunday Schools, Bible Classes, Churches and Societies, and the number of their members, and all other statistics that they may deem of general interest and importance.

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The following Resolution was introduced by Br. B. B. Bunker, and unanimously passed:

Resolved, That this Convention tender its thanks to the brethren in this place who have so generously and hospitably entertained us on this occasion, and that our united prayer for them and theirs, shall be for their temporal and spiritual welfare.

Appointed the Clerk to prepare the Minutes for publication in the Union and Messenger, Magazine and Advocate, and Western Luminary.

Adjourned to meet in Cortlandville, Cortland county, on the last Wednesday and following Thursday in May, 1845.

JOB POTTER, *Moderator*

P. Price

} Clerks

H. Lyon

REMARKS.—This session of the Convention, in most respects, was a happy one. There was a large gathering of the friends, weather pleasant, the religious exercises interesting and profitable, and the proceedings of the Council were conducted in the spirit of brotherly love and kindness. There was a difference of opinion on some points, it is true, but it was a difference among *brethren*, and marked by charity.

One matter of an unpleasant nature, (which has been agitated before,) came up for consideration; but it is hoped the present action of the Convention has put it in a train for final adjustment to the satisfaction of all parties.

A reference to the Minutes will show that the Convention has been the highly favored recipient of a noble donation, for a most praiseworthy object. An appropriate expression of the feelings of the Council is embodied in the Minutes. But the deep and earnest gratitude which will well up in the hearts of the favored ones who shall hereafter participate in this charity, will be the best monument that can be erected to the memory of the generous donor.

The subject of a uniform system of discipline in the denomination occupied the attention of the Council.—There appeared to be but one opinion on the subject, and the result is given in the minutes.

On the subject of the place of adjournment, some discussion took place. A desire was expressed for it to go farther West, and an urgent request preferred for Lockport. But the committee charged with the subject, for various reasons, decided in favor of Cortlandville, and the Council was nearly unanimous in confirmation; with a tacit understanding, that another year, any request from the western part of the State should have a preference; and the western delegates were informally desired to assure their constituents of the cordial sympathy of the Council in all matters pertaining

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to their local interests; and the earnest desire of the Council to co-operate in all measures for the general good of the denomination throughout the State.

This is a subject which we are confident must sooner or later secure the serious attention of the Convention, and we therefore hope to be pardoned for an additional word. For one, we frankly confess that we are not in favor of putting the Convention on wheels, if we may be allowed the expression, and bundling it from one extremity of the State to the other, and to all points of the compass. It seems to us far better to fix a central location, on some thoroughfare, and there hold its sessions regularly; or at all events, near the same place, and always on some generally travelled route, that the place of meeting may be easy of access. However, as the Convention has for some years, been travelling about from place to place; and as the West appeared to feel neglected in this matter, we were in favor of extending encouragement to the Lockport friends another year.—But by that time, we hope to see the subject sufficiently considered and matured, for the Convention to act understandingly and decidedly upon it.

It is hoped that the resolution touching on statistics will receive *immediate* attention. It will be but little trouble to the several Standing Clerks, and we can never know our real strength, until this matter is attended to properly. The reports of our present system were very limited, and with one or two exceptions very imperfect.

Brethren, do be persuaded to give greater heed to this last subject, and then, as these Conventions come up year after year, they will enable us to send out reports of our condition, and our progress in the great work in which we are engaged, which shall animate the hearts of all, and nerve them to still greater efforts and zeal in their labors.

P. PRICE

Clergymen present.—Job Potter, Ogdensburg; B. B. Bunker, Lockport; Alfred Peck, Kelloggsville; H. [Harvey] Boughton, Watertown; J. A. Aspinwall, Fort Ann; G. S. Abbott, Dexter; O. Wilcox, Ellisburgh; A. G. Clark, M'Lean; J. [John] D. Hicks, St. Johnsville; J. S. Kibbe, Constableville; R. Queal, Stockbridge; Z. Cook, Hamilton; D. S. Morey, Clinton; J. T. Goodrich, Oxford; O. Whiston, Cooperstown; Henry Lyon, Braman's Corners; C. Hollister, Fort Ann; I. D. Williamson, New York; J. Sax, Ellisburgh; E. M. Woolley, Bridgewater; D. Skinner, Deerfield; P. [Phineas] Hathaway, Salisbury; J. M. [James Monroe] Cook, Perrinton [now spelled Perinton]; A. C. Barray, Fort Plain; John B. Gilman, Binghamton; A. O. Warren, Triangle; L. M. Hawes, Henderson; J. Douglass, Hartwick; S. Jenkins, Utica; T. L. [Thomas Lake] Harris, Minden; C. S. Brown, Cortlandville; J. H. Tuttle, Richfield Springs; B. F. Gibbs, Deerfield; J. H. [John] Stewart, Erieville; C. C. Burr, Troy; H. Burr, Schenectady; ___ Whipple, Vermont; P. Morse, Henderson; H. [Henry] L. Hayward, Auburn—39 in all.

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ORDER OF SERVICES

Tuesday evening.—Prayer by Br. A. C. Barry; Sermon by Br. T. L. Harris—(text not remembered.)

Wednesday morning.—Prayer by Br. I. D. Williamson; Sermon by Br. C. C. Burr, text Isa. lii: 13.

Afternoon.—Prayer by Br. E. M. Woolley; 1st sermon by Br. D. S. Morey, text Isa. i:18; 2d sermon by Br. O. Whiston, text 1 John iii:3.

Evening.—Prayer by Br. B. B. Bunker; Sermon by Br. A. Peck, text Eph. i: 13.

Thursday morning.—Prayer by Br. J. M. Cook; Sermon by Br. D. Skinner, text Num. xiv: 31, 32.

Afternoon.—Prayer by Br. O. Wilcox; 1st Sermon by Br. E. M. Woolley, text Ps. xxxvi: 9; 2d Sermon by Br. I. D. Williamson, text 2 Chron. xviii: 23.

Evening.—Prayer by Br. R. Queal; Sermon by Br. I. D. Williamson, text Mal. iii: 6.

Evangelical Magazine & Gospel Advocate, Utica NY, Fri. 14 Jun 1844

Transcribed with notes added in Sep 2012 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY