

[Cohocton (Liberty Corners), Steuben Co.]

First Universalist Church of Cohocton

Among the earliest settlers in Cohocton there were many of the more respectable and influential citizens who were believers in the doctrine of the final salvation of all men [sic].

Such men as Peter Haight, Levi Smith, Simeon Holmes, Elizar Tucker, Benjamin Warner, David Parmenter, Lucius Shattuck, Darius Crosby, John Larrowe, were men who styled themselves Universalists; and although they did not organize as a society, they often held meetings at their own houses, or in some school-house in the town, where they listened to such ministers as the Revs. A. G. Clark, O. B. Clark, Mr. Payne, Cheny, Richardson, and others. After the Methodist Episcopal church was built in Liberty, they held meetings more frequently in that church until about 1858, when, one Sunday upon going to the church to hold services, they found themselves shut out, the door being locked, and no one knowing where the key could be found, they were obliged to adjourn the meeting for that time.

This was the beginning of a feeling which finally resulted in the building of the First Universalist church in Cohocton.

As will be seen by referring to the history of the first Methodist Episcopal Church in Cohocton, that church was built by the united means of all denominations,—with the express understanding and agreement that it was to be free to all denominations when not in use by the Methodists, and they were to use the house Sunday mornings only, except when they held their regular quarterly meetings; at such times they had the use of the house the whole day. This agreement was faithfully lived up to till the time mentioned above. As might be expected, this action upon the part of the Methodist brethren aroused a spirit of opposition among those calling themselves Universalists, and they determined upon building a church of their own. A meeting was held Sept. 19, 1859, at which D. H. Wilcox was chosen chairman. At this meeting a regular church organization was formed, and Franklin Larrowe, Amos W. Chase, and D. H. Wilcox were elected trustees. A subscription was circulated and enough subscribed to warrant the commencement of erecting a church at once. Among the more liberal in giving for this purpose were such men as John Larrowe, Franklin Larrowe, Alburtas Larrowe, N. J. Wheeler, F. N. Drake, Amos W. Chase, E. A. Parmenter, David Parmenter, P. F. Horr, T. S. Crosby, Stephen Phillips, Benjamin Warner, John Kellogg, O. C. Smith, G. E. W. Herbert, Austin Hall, S. D. Shattuck, and others. The church was commenced in the summer of 1860, but not completed and dedicated until September, 1863. Rev. J. M. [John Mather] Austin, of Auburn, N. Y., preached the dedication sermon. It is located on Maple Avenue, is a fine building, and cost about \$3000.

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Soon after the dedication the society engaged the services of the Rev. M. Tuller, who remained with them about two years, since which time they have had no settled pastor and only occasional preaching.

The doors of this church have always been opened cheerfully to their brethren in Christ, no matter by what name they may be called. During the years 1872 and 1873 the Presbyterian society being without a house of worship, they were given the free use of this church, and are at present occupying it, their own church undergoing repairs. In talking with a prominent member of the Universalist society he said: " Our society have a fine church, well finished and furnished, free from debt, and we are happy to be able to furnish so respectable a place for worship to those of any other denomination who believe in God as the Maker and Ruler of all things.

W. W. Clayton, from Town of Cohocton, *History of Steuben county, New York* (Philadelphia: Lewis, Peck & Co., 1879), pp. 244-5