

[Cohocton (Liberty Corners), Steuben Co.]

The Old Timer  
(excerpt)

There is a bit of sadness in the mind of the "Old Timer" this week. We have been writing and in the future will tell more of the churches in our town that are flourishing in our midst today. But what of some of the earlier meeting houses that from dis-use or lack of interest have fallen into ruin? We must not forget the Universalist church of Cohocton, the Evangelical Church on Brown Hill and the Free Methodist, the Wesleyan and the Baptist churches in the northern part of our town.

The members and attendants of these early churches have passed to their reward. The church building are unerring footprints of those who have toiled, believed and passed on.

About May 1st, 1829, Rev. A. H. Curtis started to hold meetings at Liberty Corners for those of Universalist faith. He said, "I think God has lighted a candle here which these devout people are determined not to conceal under a bushel. A spirit of free inquiry prevails to a great extent and I firmly believe the time is not far distant when this group will form a Christian Society."

This prediction became a reality on the 28th of January, 1833 when the Universalist Society of the Town of Cohocton was formed. Many of the earlier settlers of Cohocton were firm believers in the doctrine of the final salvation of all men [sic]. This group held large and attentive meetings at the school house until after the Methodist church was built. Because this church was erected by the united efforts of all demonstrations [denominations] it was to be used by all. The Universalists worshiped here until 1858 when they found the church door was locked when they came for the Sunday afternoon service. No one could find a key and the result was a move to build their own church. The new building was dedicated Sept. 1863. A member once said "Our society has a fine church, well finished and furnished, free from debt. We are happy to furnish a respectable place for worship to any who believe in God—the Maker and Ruler of all things. The doors of the church are always open cheerfully to our Brethren in Christ, no matter by what name." Regular services were discontinued in the early 1900's and the building was moved to Wheeler Street and remodeled into a clothing factory. It was finally destroyed by fire.

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