

Concord Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey

Universalist Church (1897)

References

Pre-construction of Present Church Building

Reverend I. George was Minister of the Universalist Church in 1846. Concord Cavalcade.

The Universalist Church on the northeast corner of Franklin and Chapel streets was disbanded and the building sold in 1879. Proceeds given to the New York State Convention of Universalists. Concord Cavalcade.

Interest in the Universalist Church revived. 1896 the second First Universalist Parish founded. Concord Cavalcade.

Construction of Present Church Building

"The Universalist Society of this place are to build a new church on South Buffalo street. Money is now being subscribed for that end." Springville News, April 22, 1897.

"Reverend H. M. Wright of the Universalist Church of this village is to be ordained to the Christian ministry . . .", Springville News, May 20, 1897.

"The contractor of the Universalist Church has commenced the foundation." Springville News, July 22, 1897.

"The Universalist Church which is being built on Buffalo street, is rapidly nearing completion. The studding up and rafters on." Springville News, August 12, 1897.

"The new Universalist Church is about done. The outside work and plastering is to be finished this week. The church will be seated with opera chairs." Springville News, September 16, 1897.

The new Universalist Church dedicated on December 16, 1897. Concord Cavalcade.

"Universalist services next Sunday morning and evening. Morning service at 11, sermon by Pastor. 7:30 pm sermon on the theme the 'Heavenly Invitation'". Springville News, December 16, 1897.

The Universalist Church disbanded in 1923 and "gave (their building) to the village of Springville for use as a library." Concord Cavalcade.

Modifications to Building

In July of 1987 the Universalist Church building (AKA "Old Library") was made accessible for the disabled. Informal telephone conversation with Town Clerk Beth Bolt.

TOWN OF CONCORD

COUNTY OF ERIE
TOWN HALL

SPRINGVILLE, N. Y. 14141-0187

RONALD A. WENDEL
TOWN SUPERVISOR

PHONE
(716) 592-4946

July 15, 1992

Mr. Harold H. Burkart
1250 James Street
Syracuse, New York 13203

Subject: Springville Public Library and
New York State Convention of Universalists

Dear Mr. Burkart:


At our July 13, 1992 Town Board meeting, the Board voted unanimously to accept your boards offer to Convey the former First Parish of Springville land and building. We also agreed to install a plaque, attached to the building, with the inscription as follows:

THE NEW YORK STATE CONVENTION OF UNIVERSALISTS HAS DONATED THE LAND AND BUILDING ON THIS SITE TO THE TOWN OF CONCORD FOR USE AS A PUBLIC LIBRARY OR FOR OTHER MUNICIPAL PURPOSES OF BENEFIT TO ITS CITIZENS. THIS SITE WAS THE HOME OF THE FIRST UNIVERSALIST PARISH OF SPRINGVILLE FROM 1897 TO 1924.

At this time we are considering to use the building as a Court House and possibly a Senior Citizen Center. Our Community shall always be most grateful to the Universalists Church, for your wonderful generosity to us.

I am sure that the facility will be held in the highest regard, and will be considered a jewel in the Crown of our Civic Center. Again, please accept my sincere thank you, on behalf of our entire township. Please feel free to visit us, at any time convenient to you and your staff.

Yours truly,


Ronald A. Wendel
Supervisor

Dale J. Manchester, Esq.
Town Attorney
Town Hall, Town of Concord
Springville, NY 14141-0187

Subj: Springville Public Library & New York State
Convention of Universalists (NYSCU).

Dear Mr. Manchester:

The NYSCU Executive Board has approved the changes to the deed which conveyed to former First Parish of Springville land and building to the Springville Library. The changes remove the restrictions, which limited the use of the building to library purposes. The approval is made on the condition that the premises are only to be used for municipal purposes.

The Board also specified, however, that a plaque, containing the following inscription, should be provided by the Town and attached to the building:

THE NEW YORK STATE CONVENTION OF UNIVERSALISTS HAS
DONATED THE LAND AND BUILDING ON THIS SITE TO THE TOWN
OF CONCORD FOR USE AS A PUBLIC LIBRARY OR FOR OTHER
MUNICIPAL PURPOSES OF BENEFIT TO ITS CITIZENS. THIS
SITE WAS THE HOME OF THE FIRST UNIVERSALIST PARISH OF
SPRINGVILLE FROM 1897 TO 1924.

If, in the future, the building is removed from the site, the plaque or its equivalent, should be appropriately located on the site.

If this is agreeable to the Town Board, please so advise me and I will forward the signed papers to you. Please excuse the delay in this response.

Yours truly,

Harold H. Burkart
16 June 1992

NEW YORK STATE CONVENTION OF UNIVERSALISTS

EXECUTIVE BOARD

President

Gale Alexander
4 Meeting House Hill Road
New Fairfield, CT 06812
(203) 746-2162
(516) 765-5706 (summer)

Vice President

Alberta Brown
10669 County Rd. 15
Fillmore, NY 14735
(716) 567-8441

Secretary

Michael L. Scott
54 Laconia Parkway
Rochester, NY 14618
(716) 271-3143
scott@cs.rochester.edu

Treasurer

Charles Ellis
25 Harts Hill Circle
Whitesboro, NY 13492
(315) 736-7217

Trustees

David Blanchard
First Unitarian Universalist Society
250 Waring Road
Syracuse, NY 13224-2294
(315) 446-5940
revdsb@aol.com

Alyson Lefevre
84 Caroline Street
Rochester, NY 14620
(716) 271-5233
allyann@frontiernet.net

Judith Quarles
12 Ford Ave.
Oneonta, NY 13820
(607) 433-8816
judyq@magnum.wpe.com

Tom Reese
P.O. Box 124
Marathon, NY 13803
(607) 849-6100
stlawtom@aol.com

Marshall Webster
3 Factory St.
Oneonta, NY 13820
(607) 432-0118

Deborah Welty
24 Davis St.
Binghamton, NY 13905
(607) 724-2516
debwelty@juno.com

Archivist

Karen Dau
54 Starling Street
Rochester, NY 14613

22 October 1997

Dale J. Manchester, Esq.
Deputy Town Attorney
Town Hall, Town of Concord
Springville, NY 14141-0368

Dear Mr. Manchester:

I am writing in response to your letter of October 7, which was discussed by the Executive Board of the New York State Convention of Universalists at its meeting last Friday, October 17. I am happy to convey the Board's approval of your plans for use of the old Universalist Church building, as outlined in your letter.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Michael L. Scott
Secretary

Cc: Gale Alexander, Frank Helman (NYSCU attorney)

ONE HUNDRED YEARS IN SPRINGVILLE

December 16, 1897 The Universalist Church held the first service
 in their new church at 23 North Buffalo Street.

December 16, 1997 The Universalist Church is rededicated as The
 Lucy Bensley-Concord Historical Society Genealogical
 and Research Library
 and The Springville-Concord Senior Citizen Center.

Welcome: Margaret Mayerat, Historian

Invocation: Rev. Robert Peck, First Presbyterian Church

Pledge of Allegiance, American Legion and VFW

History of the Universalist Church: Leo Lubke

History of the Old Springville-Concord Library: Donald Orton, Acquisition Director

Memories of Miss Lucy: Margaret Mayerat

Introduction of Senior Citizen Officers by Grace Gentner, President

Introduction of CHS Officers by David Batterson, President

Words of Thanks to John Allan and the Town Board: David Batterson

Also introduction of new Town Supervisor

Cutting of the Ribbon

Invitation for Refreshments

Benediction: Rev. Robert Peck

First Universalist Church of Springville

The first Universalist Church of Springville was organized in 1846. Rev. I[saac] George, Abram Dygert, I. B. Childs and Jonathan Mayo were the first trustees.

The church was built in 1847. Rev. I[saac] George, the first pastor, preached the dedicatory sermon. Rev. I. George was succeeded as pastor by Rev. C[harles] H. Dutton, he by Rev. T[homas] J. Whitcomb, and he by Rev. J. B. Saxe, the last one who preached regularly to the Society.

In 1879 the church edifice was sold to the Messrs. Morris Hall and I. B. Childs, who remodeled it into the present Opera House [in 1876]. The avails of the sale were given into the keeping of the New York State Convention of Universalists, as a fund to be used for the benefit of the denomination.

From Erasmus Briggs, *History of the Original Town of Concord* (Maine, Picton Press reprint: 1992), p. 218

1897 - Dec. 16, New Universalist church dedicated (p. 17)

1928: Universalist Church Society, upon disbanding, donates their building as a new site for the Springville Public Library (p. 24)

From the *Springville, New York Sesquicentennial 1834-1984*

Miss Lucy Bensely became librarian in 1903. When the Universalist Church disbanded in 1923 they gave their building to the village [of Springville] for use as a library.

After [Morris Hall] burned, Isaac B. Childs purchased the Universalist church building, which was no longer used as a church. He removed the spire, moved the building closer to the street, and put "additions on the sides" [i.e. porches and railings]. This was known as Child's Opera House. It was used for community gatherings... It burned January 23, 1902.

From the *Concord Cavalcade*, July 1-7, 1962, no page numbers