

Dedication at Fly Creek, N.Y.
[excerpt of a letter to Rev. Nathaniel Stacy]

Cooperstown, January 19, 1862

Rev. Nathaniel Stacy:—

Dear beloved Father in Israel: Knowing what joy it gives you to learn of the prosperity of our churches, and especially of those with which you have had personal association, I am moved to write you of the recent dedication of our house of worship at Fly Creek, Otsego Co., N.Y. That church has a history with which few are acquainted. It is related, in a peculiar manner, to the entire history of Universalism in this country.

In your 'Memoirs' you make mention of a Sabbath, in the summer of 1805, spent in the north part of the town of Otsego, upon which occasion you received a visit from Miles T. Woolley, who had organized a small society in the adjoining town of Hartwick. Neither in your "Memoirs" nor in S.[Stephen] R. Smith's "Historical Sketches," is further mention made of that society. It is certainly worthy of note that it is still in existence, and in a flourishing condition. The same society worships to-day in the tastefully modernized house at Fly Creek.

The point in the town of Hartwick where it was organized is little more than two miles from that village; and when, in 1819, it was determined to erect a church edifice, it was long debated, as the records show, whether it should be located in the neighborhood of the original meeting-place or at the village. Finally, however, on the 15th of January, 1820, at a meeting, the call for which embraced "the inhabitants of Hartwick and Otsego," it was determined to build at Fly Creek. And on the same day a legal organization was effected, bearing the same name as that formed by Mr. Woolley, and composed largely of its members—"The First Universalist Society of the County of Otsego." That church was dedicated, as you doubtless remember, in the autumn of the same year. It will afford you pleasure, I know, to learn that your text and sermon on that occasion are still distinctly remembered by those then in the flush of youth, now trembling, like yourself, with whitened locks... "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people," were words engraved on the hearts of the fathers and mothers. May they be long cherished by their children.

...

Next June the Otsego Association is expected to meet in that house. O what joy it would give us could you be present! Fitting, indeed, would it be that you...should stand there in the evening of your life, and speak again the message of Heaven, heard from you when that society was alone in the state enlisted in the advocacy of Universal Grace. Come, and let us have in the reunion, a pentecostal season from the Lord.

Your brother in Christ, and son in the faith,
CHARLES W. TOMLINSON

The Christian Ambassador, New York, NY, Saturday January 31, 1863