

## THE FIRST UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY AND CHURCH OF THE CITY OF HUDSON

The First Universalist Society and Church of The City of Hudson (such is its corporate name) was organized March 17, 1817, at which time or shortly afterwards seventy-nine persons signed the compact and declaration of faith.

The first pastor was Rev. Joshua Flagg; and Grayer Gardner, Hezekiah Dayton, Miron Acly, Joseph Watson, William R. Macy, Peter Taylor, and William Bates were the first trustees. The deed of the original church lot, situated at the southwest corner of Third and Allen streets, bore date May 28, 1817, and was a gift from Captain John Hathaway. He died in the following March, and the discourse delivered over his remains was the first funeral sermon preached in the house of worship. The building, now St. Mary's school-house, cost \$3000.

Previously to its erection, the Universalists held religious services in the court-house. A document still preserved leaves little doubt that Rev. Abner Kneeland was regularly employed during a part of that time; but whether any other it is impossible now to determine. Rev. Joshua Flagg closed his pastorate in October, 1817, shortly after the consecration of the church edifice, and was succeeded by Rev. David Pickering, then in his prime, whose services, extending through nearly six years, were eminently conducive to the prosperity of the church. He was followed, in 1823, by Rev. Thos. F. King, father of the distinguished Thos. Starr King, who about a year later was succeeded by Rev. Richard Carrique, whose pastorate of a single year gave place to civic honors which he continued to enjoy in the city to the close of his life. Early in 1825, Rev. Mr. King returned to his charge, and during nearly three and a half years more he performed its duties. Another ex-pastor then returned—Rev. Joshua Flagg,—and at the expiration of a year he gave place to Rev. T. [Thomas] J. Whitcomb. Under Mr. Whitcomb, in August, 1830, the Sabbath-school was organized, with the pastor as superintendent. Rev. William Whittaker succeeded in September, 1832, without any interval, and continued in charge six years. Then after Rev. D. Acly's brief term of eighteen months was then filled by Rev. B. B. Bunker, when Rev. Gamaliel Collins, now, and during the war, a chaplain in the United States army, gave six years of most efficient service, retiring to accept a charge in Philadelphia. Under him the Sabbath-school attained to large numbers and usefulness. Revs. L. [Lewis] C. Browne, Thos. Borden, A. R. Abbott, and Nelson Snell followed in the order named. The present pastor, Rev. Charles W. Tomlinson, is now in the eleventh year of his service.

In February, 1869, the new house of worship, situated upon the north side of Warren street, near Fifth, was dedicated; the sermon upon that occasion being preached by the pastor. The corner-stone had been laid in October, 1867. It is in the Romanesque style, with spacious auditorium, fine organ, and well-appointed lecture and classrooms. Its cost was nearly \$40,000, and it was entirely freed from debt the year following its completion. The parish also owns a fine brick parsonage adjoining the church, valued at \$9000, which, together with extensive improvements upon it and a fund for its preservation, was the generous gift of Miss Sarah A. Gage. Hon. Robert McKinstry, long one of Hudson's most honored business men, and for more than fifty years a trustee of the parish, bequeathed to the church, subject to certain life claims, a residuary sum of \$20,000. Thus there is an unencumbered church property of about \$70,000.

The present deacons are Lemuel Holmes and Richard Macy; trustees, J. W. Hoysradt, H. W. Rogers, C. H. Evans, Lemuel Holmes, C. C. Terry, W. H. Crapser, and C. A. Van Deusen. C. C. Terry is the superintendent of the Sabbath-school, having twenty-five teachers and officers to assist him. The pupils number about one hundred and forty. There are nearly eight hundred volumes in the Sunday-school library, and over five hundred more in that of the Young People's Union. The latter organization was accomplished three years ago, through the labors of the present pastor, and is intended to serve the social and intellectual needs especially of the young. Hon. J. W. Hoysradt is president of the Union.

Franklin Ellis (Capt.), *History of Columbia County, New York* (1878) pp. 186-87