

[Clinton, Oneida Co. NY]

SOCIETY HALL

Bought by Owen T. Burns

Another of Clinton's Old Landmarks Will Doubtless Be
Remodeled in Near Future—A Bit of the History of Church

One of the land marks of Clinton, the old Universalist Church on Williams street changed owner this past week. The building was erected by the Universalist Society and the corner stone was laid with fitting ceremonies on June 29, 1869. Its architect was H. N. White of Syracuse and its builders were Platt and Osborne of Clinton. The church was completed in 1870 and a value of about \$18,000 was placed on the grounds and church. The history of the building naturally brings to mind the history of the Universalist Society here. According to Godfrey's history of the town of Kirkland the first church erected was the brick edifice on Utica street and it was largely through the efforts of James Stebbins that this was accomplished. Though in reality it was a Universalist Church it was known as a Free Church, but in 1831 by a legal process the name was changed to the First Universalist Society of Clinton. The society remained there until the new building was completed on Williams street and moved there and dedicated the new church on October 12, 1870. The pastor at the time was Rev. W. P. Payne.

After the removal of the Clinton Liberal Institute to Fort Plain the Universalist Society gradually grew smaller until it no longer supported a church.

For several years the building was closed and about 14 years ago it was purchased by several men who undertook to make the building a rendezvous for several fraternal organizations and the building was fitted up for such purposes and called Society Hall. After a few years this did not prove satisfactory and of late years the building has simply been used for entertainments and parties. The new owner, Owen J. Burns, is one of our best known townsmen and while he has not definitely announced his plans regarding the use of the building, he can be thoroughly trusted to make some good use of the building and to improve it, so that it will be more attractive than at present.

There are various rumors about the building, some saying that the people of St. Mary's Church will worship there while their new church is being built; another report is that it is to be remodeled into flats. The old schools and now the old church are becoming things of the past and many landmarks of Clinton are passing away. While some regret exceedingly the changes in the schools, all are glad to have the old buildings put in repair or replaced by new ones as this is an age of progress and the old must be continually repaired or rebuilt.

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