

[Pittsford, Monroe Co. NY]

The First Universalist Society of Pittsford

A society of Universalists was organized in the village of Pittsford at a very early day. Its services were held sometimes in the school-house of district No. 2 and sometimes in private houses. The principal preachers were Rev. Thomas Billinghamurst, Rev. Stephen Miles, and Rev. Liscomb Knapp. The latter published a Universalist paper in Pittsford village in 1815-16. The printing was all done at his own residence, by himself and wife—he—Mr. Knapp—mainly setting the types. It was a very small folio sheet, and published once a week, under the name of the *Gospel Herald*. This was the first paper published in the county of Monroe, antedating the *Rochester Gazette* several months, and was continued in publication a little more than one year. Mr. Knapp lived in a house long owned by Mr. Fosmore, and located on land now belonging to David Barker. It was torn down several years ago. Two or three copies of the *Gospel Herald* are believed to be still in existence. The Universalists were quite strong in the southern part of Pittsford in its early days. Joshua Armstrong, one of the first members of the Baptist church, was excluded, in 1810, for embracing Universalist doctrines. After the death of Stephen Miles, in 1851, the Universalist meetings were mostly abandoned. The society never had a house of worship.

W. H. McIntosh, *History of Monroe County, New York*
(1877: Philadelphia: Everts, Ensign & Everts), p. 238

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