

[Richfield (Monticello), Otsego Co. NY]

The Second Universalist Society of Richfield, N.Y.

(Article Read at Dedication of State Marker)

The records of the Second Society of Richfield, N. Y., as far as can be ascertained, consist of two books, "The Minutes of Trustee Meetings" and "The Treasurer's Account." Neither book gives prolific mention of meetings or other business.

The first recorded meeting was held at the home of Miss E. M. [Malvina] Churchill on the 31st day of May, 1879, but no mention is made of business done other than the election of officers.

As the next recorded meeting was May 31st, 1880, and the church was dedicated on October 15th, 1880, though no mention was made of its being built, it was erected during the Summer and began to function with a recorded membership of 41.

The church was a commodious one, located diagonally across the road and a little below the Baptist Church on land now owned by Henry Berberic. The pulpit was in the north end and there were eight stained glass windows, one erected to the memory of Daniel Loomis by his family. The others were given by living members. The donors were: Miss E. M. Churchill, Bradley Griffin, Clarke Lock, John Ames, John Brown, Abraham Jacobson and Miss Barnes, (a friend of Miss Churchill). Like the Baptist Church it was painted white, with a bell tower that never contained a bell.

The Reverend S. R. [Samuel Roland] Ward officiated at the dedication and his name appeared on the Treasurer's books as minister during the years 1880 to 86.

J. E. Rider was pastor in 1887 and 88. On April 14, 1889 the Reverend Charles Segal [Legal] preached as candidate and evidently proved acceptable for he began a regular service on June 30th. Payments to him in 1890 show he was still officiating.

From that time to 1897 there is no record of regular services though the minutes of the trustees have the following: "At a meeting of the Second Universalist Society of Richfield at their Church on June 1st, 1891, with Miss E. M. Churchill, chairman and A. F. Allen, secretary, the following named delegates were chosen to attend the Otsego County Association [probably the Association of Universalists] , held at Cooperstown, June 17th and 18th: L. C. Lock, Mrs. L. C Lock, Mrs. Sybil Loomis and Miss E. M. Churchill, for the church, George T. Brockway and Mrs. George T. Brockway for the Sunday School. In 1895 the Reverend E. N. Bruce preached three Sundays and her name appears at intervals. The lady was a college chum of Miss Churchill and when her guest, would hold services.

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The yearly Trustee's Meetings were recorded and in the years 1897 and 98, we find services were held by the Reverend E. A. Perry, A. L. Partridge, B. M. Jarvis, S. R. Ward and Charles Legal. Then for over a year no services are recorded until the Reverend E. A. Perry officiated on October 8th, 1899, between then and the close of the year Reverend Daniel Ballou preached three times. In 1900 services were held at frequent intervals with Reverend Jarvis and Ballou officiating. On October 28, 1900 the 20th anniversary of the dedication of the church was held with Reverend S. R. Ward officiating, and on September 19, 1901 he preached a memorial sermon on the death of President McKinley.

In 1902-1903 the Reverend J. L. Dawson preached occasionally. In 1904 Reverend Charles Vail's name appears. In 1908 Reverend Frank Hokerk and in 1909 Reverend Lamphere was apparently the last to hold service as no other record appears. The only items being for repairs and items received for storing road machinery.

And so the church which had echoed to songs of praise and the earnest words of the pastors for nearly 30 years stood silent and empty until it was sold to "The Eastern Orthodox Church Society" of Herkimer. Then it was torn down and rebuilt in the Valley town, where it still resounds with the praise of God.

Nearly all of those whose names appeared on the early list of members have answered "the last roll call" and are resting from their labors. Many of the older generation still recall the large gatherings at "Elder Ward's Donations" when the hotel at Monticello would be filled with those who came to dance and partake of the splendid suppers provided by the ladies of the community. The DAR Society of Richfield Springs hopes that this marker to the two churches will serve to keep the memory of their activities alive and that though only a site is marked the good that was accomplished still lives on.

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Transcribed on 22 Jan 2022 by Karen E. Dau of East Rochester, NY