

[Riga (Churchville), Monroe Co. NY]

### The Universalist Church of Churchville

Services were held in the interests of this church as early as 1813. Though no organization was effected for many years, and many of the first settlers being Universalists, meetings were held at school-houses, or wherever convenient, and the services of regular preachers obtained, among whom were Revs. Messrs. Adams, Knapp, Sampson, Whitnell [Whitnall], and Thayer. Among the prominent individuals who composed the society were George Richmond, Billings Richmond, Joshua Richmond, Elisha P. Davis, Joseph Emerson, Samuel Shepard, Ichabod Sprague, L. Crosby, and Ashley Smith, with their families. The permanent organization of the society did not occur until 1838, and in 1839 it erected its present church building, a substantial structure, thirty-four by forty-four feet in size, and at a cost of three thousand five hundred dollars. In 1858 the society organized the first Universalist church, under the direction of Rev. William B. Cook. The first pastor, after the formation of the society, in 1838, was Rev. James M. Cook, who served three years, and was succeeded by Rev. S. W. Remington, seven years; William McNeal, two years; M. B. Smith, one year; Isaac M. Atwood, two years; William B. Cook, five years; E. R. Ottaway [Ottoway], two years; S. W. Remington, one year; E. Hathaway, two years; E. M. Grant, two years; William Vandemark, two years; and J. Frank Thompson, three years, and at present officiating. The membership in 1858, at the organization of the church, was forty-five, and at present is sixty. The present officers are— Trustees, William Walker, J. R. Bromley, and A. G. Graves; Collector and Treasurer, H. E. Richmond; and Clerk, L. Babcock. The Sabbath School was organized with the church, in 1858, under the direction and pastoral labors of Rev. William B. Cook, with sixteen pupils and two teachers, Miss Emeline Fuller and Miss Anna Gage, and under the supervision of L. Babcock, Superintendent. It now sustains five teachers, Mrs. / William Walker, Miss Belle Richmond, Mrs. Jennie Collister, Miss Dell Merriman, and Miss Emma Gage, with Miss O. E. Brigham, assistant superintendent, and a proportionate number of pupils. A library was established in connection with the school, which was begun a year earlier, in 1857. It has increased from year to year, in keeping with the advance of the school, and now contains one hundred fifty volumes, in charge of Mrs. Ann Welch, Librarian. Previous to the erection of their church edifice, in 1839, many of the active Universalists contributed liberally to the construction of the Methodist church building, and in consideration were to hold services there when not in use. But, after three or four meetings had been held, it was decided that Christian harmony could be better maintained by the erection of a separate structure, and measures were accordingly taken to secure it.

W. H. McIntosh, *History of Monroe County, New York*  
(1877: Philadelphia: Everts, Ensign & Everts), pp. 187-8