

[Victor, Ontario Co. NY]

### The First Universalist Church

This denomination from a scattered few, has become one of the strongest in the town. Its organization dates from 1834. The compact is thus expressed: "We, whose names are hereto signed, believing in the universal love of God to man as manifested through the meditation of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and believing that Christ hath tested death for all, and hath thereby made sufficient atonement for the sin of all mortal fallen beings, and that He will finally reconcile the whole Adamic family to God, deliver them from sin and mortal defilement, and bring them into a state of perfect holiness and consequent happiness; and feeling desirous of coming into society and relationship for the edification and growth of each other in love, and for the more convenient support of the preaching of the gospel, do therefore unite and form ourselves into a religious society by the name of the 'First United Universalist Society', of Victor, and hold ourselves under obligations to observe the rules of said society. Stephen Miles, Ezra Wilmarth, Asel Berray, Samuel Richardson, Seth Washburn, John Kronkhite Jr., Elisha Peck, Henry Brown, Sellick Richardson, Mary Wilmarth, Betsey Lewis, Caroline M. Dryer, Orin Miller, Darius J. Lewis, M. C. Dryer, John Powell, Samuel Gillis, Dinah E. Berray, Naomi Gillis, Sophronia Caldwell, Jonathan West, Eli K. Frost, John Brace, Truman Dryer, Calvin Brookins, William Seavery Jr., Lydia Rawson, Polly Miles, John Ladd, Holon Miles, George McLean, Thomas Wright, Kneeland Townsend, Huldah Guyant, Cornelia Rowe, and Maria R. Rawson."

Their first meeting was held June 1, 1834. Organization took place December 21, 1844, with 45 members. The preacher for the society was Rev. Stephen Miles. William J. Reese was the first pastor previous to organization. He came to them in 1825, when members were few and far apart. Services were held in the Methodist meeting house. When the society met as a church, Rev. James Cook was the pastor, and served them some time. Other pastors have been Revs. S.[Seth] W. Fuller, L. L. Saddler, Oliver Ackley, George W. Montgomery, Stephen Miles, Daniel R. Biddecome, Kneeland Townsend, James Cook, J. R. Johnson, Charles S. Skinner, Thomas Bartholomew, Thomas Whitcomb, W. W. Dean, Charles Fluhrer, Rev. Goodenough and Thomas Borden (the present pastor). As Presbyterians in the use of the house; and finally obtaining a deed from the owners living, they sold the lot for \$500 and afterwards desiring it for a parsonage site, paid \$2,200 for two thirds of it. The present edifice was projected after abandonment of the old building. Preparatory to building, the trustees bought a lot early in the spring of 1856 from Melancthon Lewis, paying for it, \$1,000. It was dedicated in June 1857, by J. M. [Rev. John Mather] Austin. The society has continued to flourish to the present date.

Frederick W. Beers, *History of Ontario County NY* (1878) p. 203