



THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
HISTORY AND HERITAGE
SOCIETY BULLETIN



A History of Preserving Unitarian Universalist Heritage

By Alan Seaburg & Jim Nugent

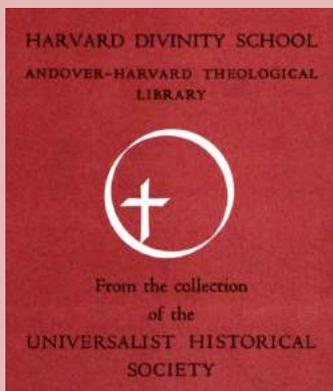
based on a manuscript by Russell Miller "The Universalist Historical Society" (1976)

UU history scholars have come to depend on digital books available on the Internet from Google Books and the HathiTrust library. Many of these books were originally collected and saved by the Universalist Historical Society (UHS). A bookplate like the one below inside scanned books from the UHS collection. The UHS, founded in 1834, is probably the oldest denominational history group in North America. The UHS collection was eventually moved to the Crane Theological School at Tufts and then to the Tufts University Library.

The Universalist Historical Society was inactive for a few years at the end of World War II. During the 1950s, the UHS was rejuvenated. This revival was the work of several young ministers, many of whom were Tufts graduates: William A. DeWolfe, Melvin C. Van de Workeen, Harry Sherman, Alan Seaburg, David H. McPherson, Robert S. Wolley, and later Theodore Webb, Carl Seaburg, Charles Vickery, and Richard Woodman. Ernest Cassara, the society's librarian and one of the editors of the Journal, was integral to this renewal process.

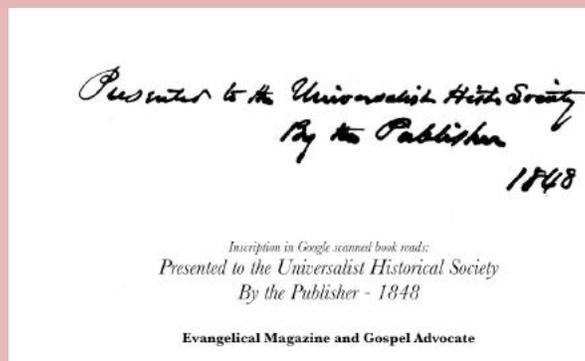
By carefully improving the Society's stock market holdings, the budget was enlarged and new programs were initiated. These included: hiring a professional librarian to preserve, increase, and catalog the library; establishing a yearly historical Journal; publishing several books, including Clinton Lee Scott's *The Universalist Church, a Short History* (1957), Cassara's *Hosea Ballou; the Challenge to Orthodoxy* (1961), Catherine F. Hitchings' *Universalist and Unitarian Women Ministers* (1975), and eventually funding the research and publication of Russell Miller's two volume definitive history, *Universalism in America, The Larger Hope* (1979 & 1985).

After the Crane school closed in 1968 the Universalist Historical Society started looking for a new home for its collection. In 1974 the UHS members voted to move it to the Andover Harvard Theological Library. Four years later the Universalist Historical Society and the Unitarian Historical Society consolidated, and the new organization was named the Unitarian Universalist Historical Society.



Left: A UHS bookplate placed by Andover Harvard Library after the Crane School at Tufts University closed.

Right: An inscription from an 1848 copy of the "Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate," a Universalist publication. Copies of the magazine were donated to the Universalist Historical Society Library, held in the home of a UHS member, and later moved to the Crane School.





FROM THE HISTORY CHAT

The UUHHS history chat-line (for information visit <http://lists.uua.org/mailman/listinfo/uuhs-chat>) has been buzzing recently about the posthumous publication of George Hunston Williams' 1400-page history of the Harvard Divinity School (three volumes). Williams was a Unitarian minister and generally considered among the outstanding church historians of the twentieth century. He taught Unitarian history at Starr King and the Pacific School of Religion before settling in as Professor of Church History at Harvard in 1947. He was later named to the historic Hollis Professorship of Divinity. Williams died in 2000 with the HDS history unfinished, but we now anticipate its publication after editing, which apparently took more than a decade. The book is welcome and timely as we prepare to celebrate this year the 200th anniversary of the Divinity School.

P.S. We hope to add Dr. Williams to our online Dictionary of Unitarian Universalist Biography (uudb.org), and are seeking someone who would be interested in researching and writing an entry (which will be substantial). If you're interested please contact the editor of the DUUB, Jim Nugent (editor@uudb.org)

Canada Gets It in Real Time

"The Life and Times of Lotta Hitschmanova" will be the subject of this year's Mark Mosher DeWolfe Lecture. In a departure from previous practice, this year's lecture will be presented by a panel of speakers, in different cities, connected to each other and their larger audience by the World Wide Web.

Lotta Hitschmanova (1909 -1990), founder and first director of the Unitarian Service Committee (USC) of Canada, is arguably the best-known Unitarian in Canada's history. (See the entry about her in the Dictionary of UU Biography: <http://uudb.org/articles/lottahitschmanova.html>)

The year's lecture is co-sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Historical Society of Canada and the USC of Canada. It will be a live webcast event. **The date of the lecture will be October 23, 2016 at 6PM Atlantic Time, 5PM Eastern, 4PM Central, 3PM Mountain, and 2 PM Pacific.** Our aim is to have every Congregation in Canada participate. Anyone with a computer and an Internet connection is invited to attend. Please contact John Marsh, current president of the UU Historical Society of Canada for further details. jmarsh@uuma.org

The Unitarian Universalist Historical Society began its annual lectureship in 1981. In 1989 the lecture was named after the Reverend Mark Mosher DeWolfe (1953-1988). DeWolfe was one of the first openly gay Unitarian Universalist ministers to be called to serve a congregation and was the first minister to die of AIDS. He was an active supporter of the Lecture during his ministries in Canada.

Of the previous lectures: two have dealt with the mix of religion and politics, two have spoken of issues related to the First Nations of Canada, three have been delivered by former Executive Directors of the Canadian Unitarian Council on their terms of office, three have covered Canadian Universalist history, two have dwelt on the Icelandic Unitarian Connection in western Canada. The Reverend Phillip Hewett, Minister Emeritus of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver, has delivered six of the lectures. He is the only person to have given it more than once.



PRESIDENT'S POST

Should we call it "Convo III"?

With this issue we start the countdown to the third History & Heritage-plus Convocation. Why the plus? Keep reading.

The first History and Heritage Convocation was held in the "neighborhood of Boston" in 2010, the second in Washington D. C. in 2013. Another three years and it's still a tradition. This time we're headed for Lake Wobegon territory: Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota on October 27-30, 2016. Unitarianism and Universalism both have long, rich histories in the Twin Cities and its environs, which today sustains many vibrant and thriving UU congregations, old and new, large and small. It's an exciting place for us to meet for our third Convo.

Geographically, the Twin Cities are part of the UUA MidAmerica Region, which includes nearly 200 congregations in thirteen states. MidAmerica was the first (and so far only) Region that voted to formally merge the three Districts that comprised its membership, with relatively little controversy. I believe this is no coincidence, since historically this territory has, since the mid-19th century, organized the Unitarian Western Conference; and relations between and among those congregations tend to endure. As always, relationships matter. Of special interest to us is the fact that there are many UUs in the Region who are aware of and care about their significant history in the growth of our movement. To my surprise and delight I learned that they have a long-standing "History and Heritage Committee" (!), which among other projects actively encourages and helps congregations interested in documenting their own history. They also have a good page on the MidAmerica website, full of short biographies and other items of interest. Take a look for yourself. I am not aware of any other UUA District that has anything like an ongoing History and Heritage Committee, but would be sincerely interested to know if they exist.

The MidAmerica folks have something worth emulating. And the current Chair of their Committee, Victor Urbanowicz, has already proved himself invaluable to our UUHHS, as he and others on his committee are participating actively in the early stages of our planning. As head of our Local Committee Victor serves on the Convo Planning Committee, which is otherwise made up of members of the UUHHS Board and UU Collegium. I am sorry to say that I did not attend either Convo in 2010 or 2013, but my impression is that though each was organized a little differently the basics have remained the same (as I trust they will this time around). Convo remains a joint gathering of UUHHS and UU Collegium, which are both responsible for its planning. The title this year, as you will see in the save-the-date announcement on page six, makes it clear that the scope of topics for papers is wide-ranging, including history, heritage, theology, and ethics. So I call it, as I did above, "History-plus."

I am more than sure that Convo 2016 will be an exciting and meaningful event, and I encourage you to put it on your calendars now.

(Somehow I doubt that Garrison Keillor will show up, but you never know....)

Earl Holt (EarlHolt@aol.com)

Membership Dues:

Student \$30; Individual \$50; Three year \$125
Membership Renewal!

Your membership expires in June of the year on your mailing label or in the Subject line of the email you received. To renew or extend your membership, contact: Paul Sprecher, UUHHS, 670 High Street, Dedham, MA 02026 or email membership@uuhhs.org. You can also renew ONLINE at uuhhs.org/Join. Simply print out the form, fill it in, drop it in the mail, or use PayPal option from that page.

A Note from the UUHHS Journal Editor

by Kathleen Parker

It's January again, and I hope you are looking forward to the spring 2016 volume of our *Journal of Unitarian Universalist History*! This issue is coming together on schedule and should be in the mail to you, per usual, by April! Four outstanding articles of original research are included, highlighting the ways in which Unitarians from disparate walks of life and far-flung locations gave shape in the nineteenth century to the liberal religious vision they claimed as their own. The first article, by James Trent, explores the influences that affected Samuel Gridley Howe working as a young physician in Greece during the 1820s. Despite troubling questions we may have about Howe in later life, this history offers new understanding of his early reform years. A second article, by Mary Johnson, tells the story of a pre-Civil War minister in Alton, IL, who went on, after fighting in the Union army, to become a newspaper editor in the West. A third article, by military historian Peter Karsten, offers a focus we have not seen lately: the ethical dilemmas faced by Unitarians in government employ in the nineteenth century -- a soldier dealing with the Mexican War; and jurists dealing with the Fugitive Slave Act, corporate liability under the law, and other questions of conscience. The fourth article, by Kathleen Parker (your editor), examines the Social Gospel ministry of an 1890s minister in Pittsburgh, PA, as he struggled to minister with "moral enthusiasm" in an industrializing city. These articles promise to illuminate our understanding of what it meant to be a Unitarian in these nineteenth-century cases, and they may inspire us as we face our own questions of conscience today. The articles are followed by fourteen fine book reviews that should spark your interest toward reading something new!

WE'VE MOVED!

All membership renewals and inquiries should be sent to:

**UUHHS
670 High Street
Dedham, MA 02026**

WRIGHT MEMORIAL LECTURE AT GA

This year for the first time the Conrad Wright Memorial Lecture, which is sponsored by UUHHS, will take place at the UUA General Assembly (GA) in Columbus, Ohio (June 22-26). It is our hope that this will attract a much larger audience than we have experienced in recent years and increase the visibility of the lectureship. Our speaker for 2016 will be announced in the next newsletter.

We are also continuing to seek contributors to help us endow the Wright Lecture and insure its future. Contributions or pledges are welcome at any time and may be directed to our Treasurer, Paul Sprecher, at our new address: 670 High Street, Dedham MA 02026. Checks can be made to UUHHS, and gifts large or small are welcome and appreciated. This year's Wright Lecture will be included in two programs UUHHS is sponsoring at GA this year. We submitted four proposals, but in a year in which available program slots were unusually scarce we felt that 50% was pretty good!



The Spiritual Heritage of Rochester's Celebrity UU Convert

By Phoebe Cos

This February 15 marks 196th birthday of Susan B. Anthony, one of Unitarian Universalism's many champions for equal rights in the human experience. At her congregation, now the First Unitarian Church of Rochester, she appeared as one of the Superheroes my RE class learned about in 2nd grade and was the namesake to one of the three community rooms at church. When my friends asked what a Unitarian was, it was a moment of pride for me to explain it was a religion that believed in the worth of everybody. "You know Susan B. Anthony?" I'd ask. "Yeah, well, she went to my church if that gives you an idea of how people practice Unitarianism." For my entire childhood, Anthony provided me with an answer for all of the dreaded questions over UU identity asked to every UU youth. It was not until recently, however, that I discovered Anthony's complicated connections to Unitarianism, this time tucked into the shadows of an attic at the National Susan B. Anthony House and Museum in Rochester, New York.

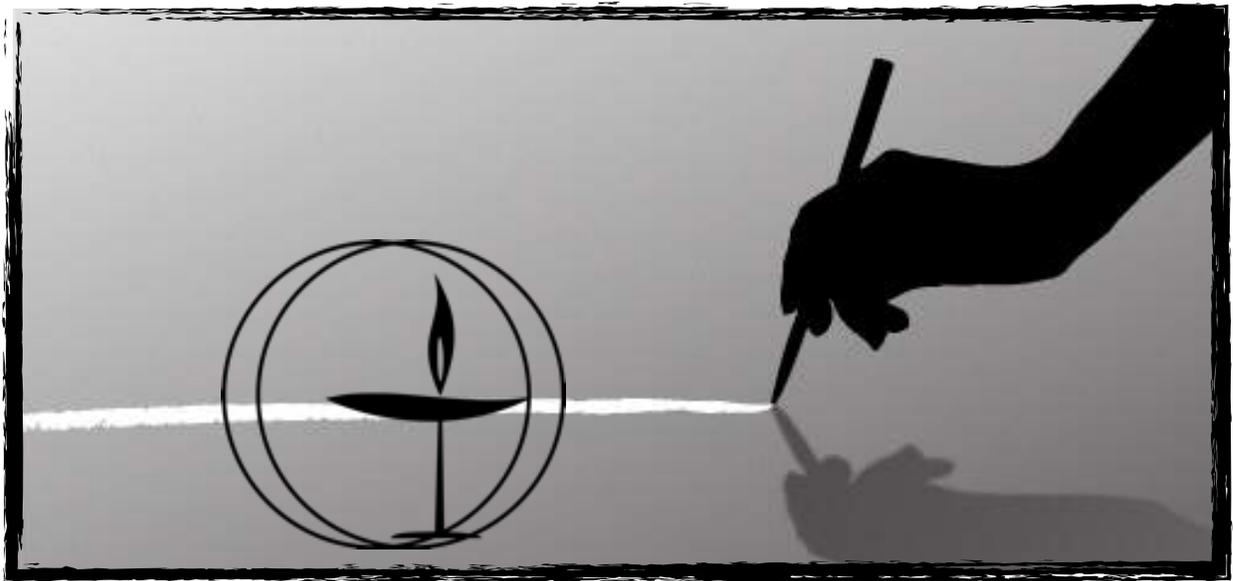
The tour I took started talking about Anthony's childhood and I eagerly waited for the moment to raise my hand and say, yes I was UU too. The time did not come, though, as we moved from room to room. "Why?" I thought. "All of this biographical information and nothing about her UU past?" The answer soon revealed itself in the form of Anthony's father, Daniel Anthony. Mr. Anthony attended the Society of Friends in Adams, Massachusetts where Susan B. Anthony was born. Raised a Protestant, his wife, Lucy Read, converted to the Quaker faith when she married Anthony. The couple raised their family in a Quaker household, teaching them to stand up for their beliefs and to value both male and female voices equally. Susan and her sisters received the same education as their two brothers. This education provided Anthony with a job as a teacher and later impacted her participation in projects to fight against social inequality towards women through her support of the temperance and suffrage movements. Mr. Anthony was a staunch abolitionist, and after moving his family to Rochester, New York in 1845, he entertained the company of many prominent abolitionists, including Frederick Douglass.

It was not until 1853-1854 that the Anthonys started attending the Unitarian church. "It was during Mr. Channing's ministrations that my dear Quaker Father contributed his first ten dollars for the support of a 'hireling ministry,' so contrary to the testimonies of his religious sect; and it was then that my father and my mother and my, now, only remaining sister – Mary – regularly attended church." Anthony wrote in a letter to the Rochester congregation in 1892. Why would Mr. Anthony break with his Quaker roots, the roots upon which he built his family and formed close social connections? By the mid-1850s, slavery threatened to rip up the nation. Mr. Anthony's two sons went to fight alongside John Brown in the Kansas border wars. The nonviolent ideologies of the Quaker faith no longer fit Mr. Anthony's stronger sentiments for the abolition of slavery. Susan B. Anthony followed in her father's stead and joined the Unitarian church, which like the Society of Friends preached equality from the pulpit, but also accepted that violence was sometimes necessary to protect others' rights. Anthony's Unitarian history appears in her museum today in the corner of the attic where the Anthony pew from the old First Unitarian Church of Rochester rests. When the city bought and destroyed the church building to construct the highway, the pew was given to the museum.

Many people in congregations today speak of themselves as "UU converts," people who discovered the UU church after a path of spiritual discovery. Oftentimes, this is spoken of as a new phenomenon, part of a new spiritually aware generation, living during a time in which religion has become more accepted as a choice in the United States and less as an expectation. The pasts of UUs like Susan B. Anthony tell a different story. Since their beginnings, Unitarianism and Universalism have drawn people to service based on their statements about current events and social values. So if it is spiritual guidance about protesting, refugees, or equality among schools that drew you to the UU church, welcome to the legacy. Conversion in support of social justice is a trend at least two centuries in the making.

Save the Date...

Beyond Boundaries: Controversies, Frontiers, and Growth in Unitarian Universalism



A Convocation Sponsored By:

UU History and Heritage Society (www.uuhhs.org)
UU Collegium (www.uucollegium.org)

Scope: Theology, History, Heritage, and Ethics

Theme: Beyond Boundaries: Controversies, Frontiers, and Growth
in Unitarian Universalism

Where: Minneapolis/St. Paul at The Airport Hilton, Bloomington, MN*

When: October 27th-30th, 2016

Why: *To share our work, engage in conversation, gain new understanding,
and explore places of difference, connection, and growth.*

Be watching! -- a call for papers will soon go out!

For questions, contact: earlholt@aol.com

* Official name: Hilton Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport Mall of America. And you thought "Unitarian Universalist" was cumbersome.