

Notes on Two Hundred Years (and More)

by Douglas H. Parkhurst



From the January 2022 *Comment*

Two hundred years is a substantial period of time in human terms. Two centuries. Six or seven generations. What was happening in 1822, two hundred years ago?

In the United States the times were known as the Era of Good Feeling(s). James Monroe was President. The Declaration of Independence had been signed forty-six years before, an event still in living memory, and the War of 1812 was over for eight. The U.S. territory of Florida was organized. In Connecticut the Congregational Church had been disestablished only four years earlier. Fire insurance, whaling, and the fabrication of brass were growing industries in the state. Carey and Lea's 1822 Map of Connecticut was published. Danbury was largely an agricultural community with a growing commercial center. Hatting and comb-making were leading businesses. The population of Danbury was 3,900; a stagecoach ride to Norwalk took half-a-day and a rail connection was still thirty years in the future. The village area around what is now Main Street was incorporated as a borough in May of 1822. And later that year, on December 9th, a Universalist society was formed in Great Plain. This society is the present-day Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury (UUCD).

UUCD is primarily a Universalist-heritage congregation, though beginning in the 1960s Unitarians could claim a portion of the group's history. Universalism as a philosophy and a theology, with differing definitions and evolving interpretations, dates to ancient times. Elements of universalistic thinking which later were adopted in western traditions can be found in the preaching of the Hebrew prophets, in the writings of Zoroaster, in the teachings of Christian church fathers Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Gregory of Nyssa and in the universal person of Jesus of Nazareth. In the 400s and 500s of the Common Era universalism was condemned as heretical by Christian authorities and largely lost for the next thousand years.

During the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, with the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment, universalist thinking re-emerged in central and western Europe. It was found, with varying interpretations, among Anabaptists, Pietists, German mystics, Deists, and English Protestants. When Europeans began crossing the Atlantic and settling along the east coast of North America some brought their "heretical" ideas with them. Prominent among these settlers was George de Benneville who came in 1741. John Murray arrived in 1770. There were American-born universalists, too, including Caleb Rich, Charles Chauncy, and Elhanan Winchester. It was from such forebears and their spiritual confreres and descendants that denominational Universalism, one-half of today's Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, came to be.

From the February 2022 *Comment*

A rather curious headline appeared above a story on page one of the Waterbury (CT) Evening Democrat on Thursday, February 14, 1889. It read "One Preacher Less in the Family." The story: "Danbury, Conn., Feb. 14. - The sudden disappearance of the Rev. W.J. Crosley, pastor of the Universalist church, is as much a mystery as ever. He left Danbury Sunday night, taking with him much property belonging to his wife, who is also a Universalist preacher of some note. He had tendered his resignation as pastor of the church and had collected \$100 back salary due him. His wife procured an attachment of \$2,000 against him, which covers what property he left....Crosley was last seen boarding the Washington express train bound west."

The Rev. William J. Crosley and family came to Danbury in 1887. At that time the Universalist Church was located on Liberty Street, a little east of and opposite Delay Street in the center of town. Born in 1845 in Ohio, William Crosley was the brother of two Universalist ministers and husband of a third. A farmer early in life he began preaching around 1867 after service in the 34th and 36th Regiments Ohio Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War. Crosley attended Canton Theological School in Canton, New York, and was ordained in 1870. During his ministerial career, besides Danbury, Rev. Crosley served Universalists in New Hampshire, Ohio, and Indiana. He was described as "a studious and faithful man, performing his work handicapped by a retiring disposition; a devoted pastor over several parishes in Ohio. There was no stain upon his name nor character." A year after leaving Danbury he was serving a parish in Ohio. William Crosley left the Universalist ministry around 1897 after more than twenty-five years of service.

The Rev. Charlotta (Lotta) Davis Crosley was born in Ohio in 1848. She married Sampson Gath, a Civil War veteran, in 1867; this marriage ended with the death of her husband within a year. In 1870 she married William J. Crosley. She was the mother of two sons, one by Gath and one by Crosley. Lotta Crosley attended Western College in Oxford, Ohio, began preaching in the mid-1870s, and was ordained in Ohio in 1879. Records show Rev. Lotta Crosley supplied the pulpit part-time at the Long Ridge Universalist Society (which building is the present-day home of St. Francis Episcopal Church in the northern part of Stamford) while residing in Connecticut. Perhaps she preached in Danbury as well though we do not have documentation of this. During her long career Rev. Crosley also served parishes in Ohio, Indiana, and Colorado. It was said of Lotta Crosley, "No woman in Ohio was better known for her good works.... She had spoken to rich and poor. She had gone into palaces and hovels. She had carried the divine word into the house of law-makers and behind prison walls....There was a welcome for her everywhere."

What happened between this couple in February of 1889? Did personal differences, financial pressures, or occupational stress become too much? We don't know for sure beyond what appears to have been a family split. We can infer that divorce followed the Crosleys' departure from Danbury. William Crosley married again, in Iowa, in 1895. By 1900 he and his second wife, Frances, were living in Arkansas where William owned a farm. He died in Arkansas in 1907 and was buried there. Moving back to Ohio, Lotta Crosley continued in the Universalist ministry for the rest of her life. She died in West Virginia in 1917 while on a trip to supply a pulpit. She was laid to rest in Ohio, next to her first husband Sampson Gath.

From the March 2022 *Comment*

It was just twenty years ago this month, in March 2002, that the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury (UUCD), then known as the Unitarian Universalist Society of Northern Fairfield County (UUSNFC and also called the Barn by members), took the action that confirmed its anticipated move from West Redding back to Danbury. The First Universalist Society/Church was organized in Danbury in 1822 and had three permanent homes on and near Main Street from 1833 to 1966. The Unitarian Fellowship of Ridgefield was formed in 1964 and for two years rented space in the downtown there. The two groups merged in 1966 as the UUSNFC and met in other rental space in Danbury before the purchase of the Barn property in West Redding in 1970.

By the late 1990s interest was growing among members of the UUSNFC to relocate to a larger and more visible location in Danbury. A Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC) was formed to explore this possibility. The CPC met regularly to weigh the pros and cons of this change, what steps would be needed to accomplish it, and to determine how to proceed. The Rev. Dr. Daniel O'Connell, Society minister at the time, gave his full support and encouragement to a plan to move.

In early 2002, the process of relocating was in full motion. This is an excerpt from the minutes of a Board of Trustees meeting held on February 20th:

"Bruce Berg [a CPC member] was invited to give his presentation on the CPC's proposed meetings with the congregation....and if this proposal passes on March 9, the architect must be chosen very shortly. There will be immediate need for many committees to give feedback on their space needs in the new building. There would be discussion about what feelings from the Barn do we want to take with us. There must be [consideration of] meeting immediate needs as well as future expansion. The Board members asked for clarification on many issues."

The proposed informational meetings and group discussions were conducted soon after. Questions were asked and answered and opinions shared. On March 9, 2002, a congregational meeting was held to address the issues and come to a final decision. Here is an excerpt from the minutes of that meeting.

"The congregation...was meeting to make a decision about the selling of the Barn and buying of property on Clapboard Ridge Road....Ross [Fenster, President of the Board of Trustees] pointed out that a 2/3s vote was required to pass this resolution....Don Schober, chairperson of the CPC, made the motion to sell/buy. Marilou Parkhurst seconded it. There was some discussion and clarification of issues, most of which had been covered in the informational meetings....Henry Lewis called for the question and Betty Lewis seconded.

The voting took place and motion was carried to support the resolution by the following numbers:

85 total votes

79 yes

4 abstaining

2 no

20 absentee ballots

The meeting was adjourned...with a champagne and chocolate toast."

One year later at a congregational meeting on March 16, 2003, with the physical move to Danbury only months away, the members of the UUSNFC voted to change the name of the Society. This process began during summer 2002 and continued into the autumn. Informational meetings were held and comments and suggestions were solicited. More than fifty people provided input. In the end, five choices were presented by the Name Change Consideration Committee chaired by Wayne Raulerson. They were, in alphabetical order:

1. Unitarian Universalist Church of Danbury
2. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury
3. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Danbury
4. Unitarian Universalist Society of Danbury
5. Unitarian Universalist Society of Northern Fairfield County (no change)

This writer remembers the meeting well. The attendance at the Barn was almost a full house. Opinions were offered and reasons given. The final selection came down to a choice between numbers 2 and 4 above. The name Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury was adopted and remains so today.

From the April 2022 *Comment*

The 1896 *History of Danbury* by James M. Bailey and Susan B. Hill includes a chapter on early churches in town. The Rev. James Vincent, then pastoring the Danbury Universalists, contributed a four-page history of his church to this book. Rev. Vincent began his article by saying that in September 1807 Rev. Hosea Ballou preached at the courthouse the first Universalist sermon ever heard in Danbury. The New England Convention of Universalists was meeting nearby in Newtown and Ballou, a rising star in the denomination, attended this gathering. There is little doubt that Hosea Ballou did visit Danbury during this time. Whether his late summer appearance at the courthouse was the first time Universalism was preached in Danbury bears further investigation.

Universalism came to Connecticut around the time of and following the Revolutionary War. John Murray, known to history as the founder of American Universalism, arrived in New Jersey from England in 1770. Before long, Murray began a career of itinerant preaching along the coast from the Middle Atlantic colonies to New England. Universalist stirrings were also being felt inland. In Connecticut Universalist societies were formed in Norwich, Stafford, Windsor (Poquonock), and possibly Southington before 1800. In 1801, the New England Convention ordained an Episcopalian named Solomon Glover, from an old Newtown family, as "a minister of the gospel and pastor of the church of Universalists in said Newtown." It is hard to imagine that Rev. Glover did not soon spread the good tidings of Universalism into Danbury, only a short distance away. In 1821, a Danburian named Josiah Dikeman was fellowshipped and ordained by the General Convention of Universalists meeting in Hudson, New York.

Then, on December 9, 1822, a group of twelve men in Danbury formed a Universalist Society. It met at first in the Great Plain area of town, lay-led and meeting in private homes and a nearby schoolhouse. The group later moved to the central village and used meeting space in the courthouse. By 1824 this new Society was part of a circuit of Universalists served by the Rev. Thomas F. King of New York City, then in his 20s and at the beginning of what proved to be a relatively short but significant ministerial career (one of his sons was the eminent Thomas Starr King). Other preachers came and went during the first decade, too, and Danbury's Universalist Society grew large enough by the 1830's to construct a building on the northwest corner of present day Main and Wooster Streets and to sponsor a Sunday school. Today this Society is the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury (UUCD), in continuous existence under a variety of names and at different locations since 1822. It is among the oldest churches in Danbury. Those which pre-date UUCD, with their present names, are First Congregational Church (1696); St. James Episcopal Church (1762); Baptist Church of Danbury (1790); United Methodist Church (1812); Central Christian Church (1817); and Long Ridge United Methodist Church (1820). A Sandemanian Church was organized in Danbury in 1765 but is long extinct. Also, Congregational Church of Brookfield (1754 when Newbury parish was created from parts of Danbury, New Milford, and Newtown) and First Congregational Church of Bethel (1759 when Bethel parish was created from the southeast part of Danbury) both pre-date UUCD.

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury stands in good and venerable company.

From the May 2022 *Comment*

Of enduring interest to Unitarian Universalists (UUs), and of some curiosity too, is the symbol of the "off-center cross," a circle enclosing open space with a small Latin cross in the lower left quadrant. It was and still is used today by some UU churches as a symbol of Universalist faith. UUs also may see a resemblance between the off-center cross and the still widely used Unitarian Universalist symbol of an off-center (to the right) flaming chalice within an intertwined double circle. Some today consider the off-center cross as a continuing connection to the Christian roots of [Unitarian] Universalism, though this was not its original meaning or intent. The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury (UUCD) possesses a fine example of an off-center cross, fashioned of metal, and dating from the 1950s.

The off-center cross was associated with a group of young clergy calling themselves the "Humiliati." This was in the late 1940s and early 1950s. These ministers were mostly Universalists and mostly students and recent graduates of the School of Religion (also called Crane Theological School) at Tufts College. The Humiliati developed a theology they called "emergent Universalism;" it was to be "functional, naturalistic, theistic, and humanistic." During the first part of the twentieth century the Universalist denomination suffered from declining membership and the perception that the church's distinctive and traditional messages of "no hell" and the universal restoration of all souls were narrow and perhaps outdated. Universalists were long interested and had worked in social service and social reform movements. In addition, religious humanism was making itself felt in the denomination. Humanism was strongly influencing Unitarians as well. While many Universalists took issue, influential leaders in the church encouraged changes in thinking, even radical changes, and a move from Universalism's historic grounding in liberal, universalizing Christianity to acceptance of an evolving concept of a "new" Universalism as a world religion, a universal faith.

Members of the Humiliati created the off-center cross around 1946 with the assistance of Julia Scamman, a layperson in the Wakefield, Massachusetts, Universalist Church. What was it meant to symbolize? Here is a description from a Humiliati pamphlet of the time:

"What ideas does it portray? The religion of the unities and the universals...that universalism is the important emphasis of religion for today... that Christianity has been an important step for us in reaching universalism...

that universalism is a higher development than traditional Christianity. What does the circle represent? This is the all-inclusive circle made by a line without beginning and without ending -- that is, infinite in its conceptions. It is the ever-expanding circle that takes in all men [*sic*], binding them in a universal brotherhood. Why not put the cross in the center? Because Christianity is not central or even necessary to Universalism...

The important feature of the symbol is the circle and not the cross....Here is a new symbol which is distinctly Universalist in its impact...."

How is UUCD connected to the Humiliati and their emblem?

First through Rev. Dr. Raymond Hopkins (1919-2013), a charter member of the group and Danbury native who grew up in the church at 347 Main Street. He was active on a local and statewide basis in the Young People's Christian Union (YPCU), the Universalist youth and young adult group of his era. Rev. Hopkins graduated from Tufts (ordained in 1949) and went on to a distinguished career as a parish

minister in Massachusetts and Maine; as an advocate and long-time worker for the consolidation of the Universalist and Unitarian denominations, serving on many committees; as the first executive vice-president from 1961 to 1974 of the newly formed Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA); and as administrator of the Ferry Beach Park Association.

The second connection is Rev. Frederick Harrison (1912-1962), a Tufts graduate (ordained in 1949) and charter member of the Humiliati who served Universalist churches in Massachusetts before coming to Danbury as parish minister in 1956-57. He moved on to become superintendent of Universalist churches in Connecticut and Massachusetts. This writer remembers Rev. Harrison and his family well and being fascinated by the clerical collar he wore, as did other members of the Humiliati. At this time and later the Danbury Church displayed the off-center cross and printed it on orders of service, stationery, and the like. Rev. Harrison's daughter is a UU minister, the Rev. Jeanne Harrison Nieuwejaar.

The third is through Rev. Dr. Gordon McKeeman (1920-2013) who is indirectly connected to the UUCD. He did not grow up in Danbury or personally serve the Congregation as parish minister; his influence came later. A Tufts graduate (ordained in 1945) and charter member of the Humiliati, Rev. McKeeman was for many years minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Akron, Ohio. Later he served as president of Starr King School for the Ministry; as president of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee; and on the UUA Board of Trustees. Barbara Pescan, UUCD minister from 1988 to 1995 and now retired, and her family were laypersons in the Akron UU Church during Rev. McKeeman's pastorate there. Rev. Pescan, whose eloquent sermons and caring ways are fondly remembered, recently shared with this writer how Gordon McKeeman influenced her with his style of ministry, with his ability to be present with and listen to others, and with her own decision to enter the ministry. Continuing, Rev. Dr. Kathleen Rudoff served a year-long ministerial internship under the guidance of Barbara Pescan at the Unitarian Church of Evanston, Illinois. In 2007 Kathleen Rudoff was ordained by the Evanston Church with Rev. Pescan delivering the ordination charge. In the summer of 2021 Rev. Rudoff came to Danbury to serve the UUCD as consulting minister. The influence of the Humiliati touches another generation!

From the June 2022 *Comment*

Organized Unitarianism came to Connecticut later than did Universalism. The first Unitarian church in the state was First Ecclesiastical Society, a Congregational church in the town of Brooklyn, in the northeast part of Connecticut. In 1822 this Brooklyn church followed the lead of many Congregational churches in nearby eastern Massachusetts by calling a Unitarian, the young Rev. Samuel Joseph May, as its minister. By 1850 there were three more Unitarian groups in Connecticut, in Hartford, Norwich, and Southington. In contrast, by 1835 Connecticut had about a dozen Universalist societies and a state convention organized in 1832.

At mid-twentieth century Unitarian churches were found in Hartford and New London (Unitarian-Universalist). By then the Brooklyn church was inactive. Unitarian fellowships (see more information below) were added in Westport in 1949, New Haven in 1950, Pomfret in 1956, and Storrs in 1957. The Westport and New Haven fellowships each gained full church status soon after they organized. The Brooklyn group was identified as a fellowship in the 1961-1962 directory of the newly consolidated Unitarian Universalist Association. Several more fellowships were formed in Connecticut in the 1960s, including the short-lived Housatonic Valley Unitarian Fellowship in New Milford.

In 1945, as the Second World War was ending, the American Unitarian Association (AUA) revisited an idea from the past to organize "lay-centers" or "lay-units" in communities which lacked a formal liberal religious presence. A denominational committee was formed to oversee this effort and a layman, Munroe Husbands, was appointed director. These new groups, re-designated "fellowships," would be lay-led, with a minimum of ten members, a statement of purpose, by-laws, and a financial commitment to the AUA. Fellowships were not intended to start as full-fledged Unitarian churches though some evolved as such. Others remained small with active lay leadership and programming but no full time minister. Nor did all fellowships survive.

Denominational historian Carol R. Morris has written of fellowships that the AUA would "facilitate their birth, allowing them to find their own identity, develop their own style, and produce their own leadership." The first modern fellowship was organized in Boulder, Colorado, in 1948. By 1957 more than 200 had been established.

In the spring of 1964 George and June Volckhausen, residents of North Salem, New York, determined to form a Unitarian fellowship in Ridgefield, Connecticut. The Volckhausens were committed and enthusiastic. While living in Pennsylvania in the 1950s they helped to organize a most successful fellowship which today is the Main Line Unitarian Church of Devon. On June 4 and 21, 1964, initial meetings of the Unitarian Fellowship of Ridgefield were held at the Ridgefield Community Center, 316 Main Street. Twenty-one men and women became founding members with Sunday services and activities planned for the coming months. Guest speakers were engaged, one of the first being author Merle Miller. The Fellowship began meeting at Odd Fellows Hall on King Lane; subsequently it occupied space in a nearby building that once housed a kennel.

Given Ridgefield's proximity to Danbury the Ridgefield Unitarians and Danbury Universalists began to take note of each other. Rev. Ralph Bailey, minister in Danbury, spoke at least once at a Sunday service in Ridgefield.

Soon it was evident the two congregations could accomplish more working together than apart and in June 1966 each voted to pursue plans to merge. Rev. Bailey would continue as minister and it was agreed to sell the Danbury Universalist Church building at 347 Main Street though this latter decision came only after debate.

The merger was completed that autumn and the Unitarian Fellowship of Ridgefield and the First Universalist-Unitarian Church of Danbury (as it was known since 1960) united under a new name, Unitarian Universalist Society of Northern Fairfield County. The UUSNFC literally met in the middle at a new location, a rented building known as the old Connecticut Inn at 6 West Starrs Plain Road in Danbury, just off route 7 near the Ridgefield town line. Services were also conducted at Danbury's Morris Street School prior to the Society's 1970 purchase of property and move to West Redding. An exciting and significant new chapter was being added to an old, old story!

From the July/August 2022 *Comment*

This writer has come across a variety of news items, articles, and announcements while researching for Notes. Here is a sampling of some "oldies" plus one more recent. The first three appeared in early Universalist periodicals.

Christian Repository, 1826 - "An assembly of Ministers and Delegates in the faith of Universal Salvation, convened at the city of Hudson, (N.Y.)...and...organized the 'Hudson River Association' in fellowship with the General Convention of Universalists....The first meeting of the new Association is to be held at Danbury, (Conn.) [in] September, 1826." [Note - This was after the organization of the Danbury Universalist Society in 1822 and prior to the formation of the Connecticut Universalist Convention in 1832 and three county associations a few years later.]

The Universalist, Sat. Oct 26, 1833 - "The Connecticut State Convention, assembled in Danbury, Conn. on the 9th inst. on which occasion the house [new church building] recently erected by the Universalists in that place, was dedicated. Dedicatory Sermon by Br. M.H. Smith, of Hartford, Conn." [Note - This building stood at the northwest corner of present-day Main and Wooster Streets. It was the Danbury Universalist Society's first permanent home.]

The Christian Leader, Sat. June 20, 1874 - "Connecticut Southern Association [Universalist]: This body held its annual meeting at Meriden, June 10 and 11....Rev. D.M. Hodge, Clerk....In the afternoon Rev. E. Smiley preached from the text, 'The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life' - 2 Cor. iii. 6....The representatives of the various parishes then, under the call of the 'State of the Church,' reported as follows:....Danbury. Rev. D.M. Hodge, pastor. 40 families; average attendance, 75; Sunday School average, 70, with 10 teachers. Use the *Helper* series, and unite with other denominations in a Union Teachers' Meeting...." [Note - Dwight Hodge was minister in Danbury during the 1870s. Edward Smiley was ordained in Danbury and was pastor in 1856.]

The Pensacola [Florida] News, Fri. March 17, 1899 - "Rev. R.P. Ambler of DeFuniak Springs, will be in the city [Pensacola], and preach at the Universalist church, Sunday at 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Dr. Ambler is gifted with great ability, is an eloquent speaker, and can hold his audiences spellbound. Public most cordially invited to hear this talented divine. Seats free." [Note - Russell Ambler, a Danbury native, was fellowshipped by the Connecticut Southern Association in 1845 and was ordained in 1848. He spent many years in Florida spreading the good news of Universalism.]

Hartford Courant, Thu. May 5, 1921 - "The legislative committee on incorporations has approved a bill incorporating The Scott-Fanton Museum Corporation of Danbury....Provision for the museum was made in the will of Mrs. Laura B. Fanton who died about three years ago...leaving land and buildings on Deer Hill avenue of that city. The general object of the new corporation is to establish in the home on Deer Hill avenue a free public museum and center for the public in educational, scientific, historical and cultural duties and to encourage public appreciation in art, science, history and music." [Note - Laura Fanton was a long-time member and benefactor of the Danbury Universalist Church. The Scott-Fanton Museum has evolved into The Danbury Museum and Historical Society at 43 Main Street.]

Comment, September 2000 - "Women! Save the weekend of Friday, March 30 to Sunday, April 1 for a wonderful weekend of spirituality, togetherness, workshops, walks, talks, and just plain old fun. We have the 18th century New England Farmhouse, with fireplace, at *Wisdom House* in Litchfield already reserved....A deposit of \$50...will hold your place in either the Farmhouse or the main building. The total cost of the weekend will be approximately \$150...." [Note - This announces an early Women's Retreat sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Society of Northern Fairfield County (today's UUCD). These gatherings were first held at Wisdom House, a retreat and conference center in Litchfield, CT.]

From the September 2022 *Comment*

This year marks the two hundredth anniversary of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury (UUCD). In 1922 what was then called First Universalist Church celebrated its centennial. Let's take a look back to that noteworthy occasion!

First, a snapshot of Danbury in the early 1920s. The U.S. Census for 1920 counted 22,325 people calling Danbury home. Government was divided between the mostly urban central "city," incorporated in 1889, and the largely rural and relatively thinly populated "town" surrounding the downtown area. Hatting and associated businesses dominated the local economy though this was beginning to change. There were 135 farmers listed by name in the 1922 Danbury City Directory, most of them located beyond the downtown city limits. Eighteen churches were named in the same Directory. There were eight public elementary schools and two parochial schools in the city; five rural schoolhouses continued to operate in outlying parts of town. Danbury High School and the state trade school (now Henry Abbott Tech) were at different locations on Main Street and there was no Immaculate High and no Wooster School.

The Danbury & Bethel Street Railway (trolley) carried passengers around and near downtown Danbury's business, shopping, and residential areas and into the center of Bethel. A branch of this trolley line also ran to the Danbury Fairgrounds and beyond to Lake Kenosia Amusement Park, two premier outdoor attractions of that era. Silent movies were popular and commercial radio was in its infancy. The Taylor Opera House, long a popular downtown entertainment venue, was destroyed by fire in 1922. Candlewood Lake did not exist; it was approved for construction by Connecticut Light and Power Company in 1926 and completed in 1928. Rogers Park, the War Memorial building, Danbury Airport, and the Federal Correctional Institution were each a part of the future.

Roads and highways were being improved, with some paved, to accommodate an increasing number of motor vehicles. Railroads, long established, served Danbury in all directions. Travelers and visitors could stop at the Hotel Green on Main Street (one of several hotels downtown) for a meal or overnight accommodations. A public library; a hospital including nurse's training school; a state normal school (now Western Connecticut State University); and various associations, clubs, fraternal organizations, and trade unions all served the increasingly diverse population of Danbury.

The Universalist Register and denominational Yearbooks for the early 1920s offer a variety of church statistics. There were eleven Universalist churches or societies in Connecticut, one (New London) was federated with the Unitarians and one (Long Ridge in north Stamford) was summer only. The Hartford church (since moved to West Hartford), celebrated its own centennial in 1921.

Since 1893 Danbury Universalists had been meeting in the building they constructed at 347 Main Street, a few doors south of the railroad crossing. Built of granite, brick, and brownstone with a tower overlooking the street this structure was valued in 1922 at \$40,000 (perhaps \$650,000 today). Church membership followed the old New England pattern of society and church. The numbers recorded in the Yearbooks are somewhat ambiguous among categories; for example, figures from 1923 show 56 families/75 individuals/97 parish members/120 church members.

For much of 1922 the congregation was without a settled minister; Rev. Elliott B. Barber had served from 1912 to 1920 (and still lived in town) followed by the brief pastorate of William P. Farnsworth in 1920-21. Miss Adelaide Grabert was church organist and choir director. Chairman of the board was Royal F. Foster, Frank P. Rollins was clerk, and treasurer was Luman L. Hubbell. Hubbell, also a church deacon, served the Connecticut Universalist Convention as the only lay member of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. There were two women's organizations in the Danbury church and one men's group. Ernest Stuckey supervised the Sunday School which had five teachers and enrolled 40 children. The local chapter of the Young People's Christian Union (YPCU), for Universalist youth and young adults, had 30 members; Clifford Taylor was president, succeeded by Arthur Olson. Danburians were also prominent in the Connecticut YPCU. Paul Voegle was president of this group and Miss Bessie Pierce (later Jackson) recently completed a term as vice-president.

Our one hundredth anniversary was celebrated over four days in early December 1922. We can assume that most if not all of the events and activities took place at the church. This building was spacious, well-equipped, and had a friendly feel. The sanctuary was furnished with pews and could seat perhaps two hundred. Sliding wooden doors opened into a large adjoining room where if necessary chairs could be placed and more people accommodated. A large fellowship hall upstairs, with kitchen to the rear, was used for dinners, meetings, social events and other gatherings.

Music played a significant part in the celebration. Organ and choral music for the several services were under the direction of Adelaide Grabert. By this time Miss Grabert had been associated with the Universalist Church for more than thirty years.

Events began on Friday evening, December 8th, with the ordination of Gustave H. Leining, a twenty-nine year old native of Meriden, Connecticut, and recent Phi Beta Kappa graduate of St. Lawrence University with preparation at its Canton Theological School. He had been called to Danbury the previous summer to fill the recent ministerial vacancy. Officiants were Rev. Theodore Fischer, DD, minister in New Haven and Superintendent of Universalist Churches in Connecticut; Rev. John Murray Atwood, DD, Dean of Canton Theological School; and Rev. Fred C. Leining of Providence, Rhode Island, Gustave's older brother. Dr. Atwood delivered a sermon on "The Spiritual Authority and Leadership of Jesus." Rev. George W. Roesch, PhD, of the local Methodist Episcopal Church extended a welcome to the new Rev. Leining on behalf of the local community.

The next evening, Saturday, December 9th, there was a parish supper, one hundred years to the day after the First Universalist Society was organized. Presumably the supper was prepared and served upstairs in the church. Longtime member Luman Hubbell read a historical paper and reminiscences were offered by several of those present. The Rev. Lee S. McCollester, DD, Dean of Crane Theological School at Tufts College was in attendance and spoke briefly, as did Rev. Gustave Leining and former Danbury minister Elliott Barber.

At the Sunday morning service on December 10th Dr. McCollester spoke on "The Contribution and Evolution of American Universalism." Nine people were received into church membership and a baby was christened by the pastor. At 7:30 that evening a special service was conducted. The Rev. Joseph Fort Newton, DD, minister of Church of the Divine Paternity (Fourth Universalist Society) in New York City was present and addressed "The Future of the Church." During his long career Dr. Newton served Baptist, Universalist, Episcopal, and non-sectarian churches. The previous

year he delivered the Occasional Sermon when the Universalist General Convention met in Detroit. Dr. Newton was well known and highly regarded for his liberal and ecumenical approach to religion. [See note below.] Clergy and visitors from local Baptist, Congregational, Disciples of Christ, and Methodist congregations were in attendance and the Danbury Universalist Church was reported to be "filled to overflowing" for Dr. Newton's appearance.

On Monday evening, December 11th, a fellowship meeting was conducted. Among those present was Alpheus Baker representing the Danbury City Council; Rev. Ellis Gilbert, president of the local ministers association; State Superintendent Dr. Theodore Fischer; and Herbert Belden of Hartford, treasurer of the Connecticut Universalist Convention. Rev. Alfred J. Cardall, minister in Danbury from 1903-1909 and Rev. Elliott Barber extended greetings and letters were read from former Danbury ministers who could not be present.

So concluded the first hundred years of First Universalist Church of Danbury. Might the "twelve apostles" of Great Plain, those who organized this Congregation two centuries ago, have anticipated what maintained and grew their little group through all those years? The same can be asked of the women and men of the Ridgefield Unitarian Fellowship, the more recent side of our local heritage, from almost sixty years ago. How and why did this small town and later small city church survive when others did not? Will the goals, practices, and traditions of the free and broad faiths represented by our forebears continue as the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury enters its third century?

The Rev. Barbara J. Pescan was with us in West Redding from 1988 to 1995. She has written:

"Because of those who came before, we are;
in spite of their failings, we believe;
because of, and in spite of the horizons of their vision, we, too, dream.
Let us go remembering to praise,
to live in the moment,
to love mightily,
to bow to the mystery."

[Note - From 1908 to 1916 Joseph Fort Newton was minister of The Liberal Christian Church (Universalist and later Unitarian) in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This is the same church, today known as The People's Church, which was pastored by Rev. Dr. Linda M. Hansen nearly a century later. Dr. Hansen ministered to the Danbury UUs between 2003 and 2008.]

[Note - The Barbara Pescan quote is from *Singing the Living Tradition* Readings No. 680.]

From the October 2022 *Comment*

So far this year Notes has looked at some old history of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury (UUCD) and some not so old. This month let's look again at more recent happenings. We'll see what was going on during October 2000, courtesy of the UUCD newsletter *Comment*. A generation ago *Comment* was printed on paper and distributed by U.S. mail; this writer's vintage copy from October 2000 carries a 33 cent first class stamp.

The UUCD was still called Unitarian Universalist Society of Northern Fairfield County (UUSNFC) in October 2000 and was known as "the Barn" to members and friends. The Society was meeting in a converted and remodeled barn (sanctuary, kitchen, and storage) and farmhouse (named Founders House and containing classrooms, offices, kitchens, and meeting space) at 9 Picketts Ridge Road, West Redding, just east of route 7, near the Ridgefield town line. Rev. Dr. Daniel Simer O'Connell had been UUSNFC minister since 1996 and was starting a four month sabbatical. Cheryl Kunst was secretary/office manager. Rev. David Bryce, then of First Unitarian Society of Westchester, New York, was acting as minister-of-the-month. Rev. Bryce was well-known to many Society members. Some ten years earlier he had been a ministerial intern at UUSNFC under the guidance of Rev. Barbara Pescan. The theme of David's front page essay in the October 2000 *Comment* was the varied meanings of "coming home."

Michael Searing, who with wife Barbara were long-time active members of UUSNFC, was President of the Board of Trustees. In his monthly column Mike touched upon the upcoming Every-Member/Friend Canvass including preliminary efforts by John Miglietta and Bob Bollinger. A Comprehensive Planning Committee was being re-formed to investigate in depth the possibility of the Society moving back to Danbury. Mike also recognized Kathleen Green for her efforts over two years in organizing and implementing a summer religious education program at the Barn. [Note - Kathleen Green is now Rev. Dr. Kathleen Rudoff, consulting minister of UUCD.]

A round-robin potluck dinner, an ever popular social activity among members and friends, was announced for Saturday evening, October 21st, at the home of Judy and Joe Teagarden. A short piece appeared in *Comment* about becoming a member of the Society. Paul Lacombe wrote about a Men's Retreat later that month at Camp Sloane in Lakeville, Connecticut, and Sky Kimball was collecting the \$100 fee from those planning to attend. Bob Weston put out a call for the loan or donation of a VHS format video projector needed for the 4th annual diversity film series sponsored by the Open Door Alliance. "Wheel of Life" milestones were shared by about a dozen people, including Joanne Davidson, Bill McWilliams, Jackie Alexander, Mary Collins, and Marcia Brooker.

Karen Judd, Director of Religious Education, announced RE Open Houses to be held on Sunday, October 15th, after each service. [Note - At that time worship services and religious education classes were held at both 9 and 11 AM on most Sundays.] Karen was looking for two teachers needed for pre-first grade classes. The first Children's Chapel of the church year was planned for Sunday, October 29th, to include the pre-first through sixth grade age groups. And, on the last weekend of the month the Senior High Youth Group would be heading for Summit, New Jersey, to participate in a "Spooky CON."

Adult RE classes were scheduled for fall, including a Reiki Workshop by Karen Judd. Joanne Wells was offering Fun With the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator; Jean Renjilian would lead Your Passionate Path; and Bob Bollinger was doing UU History and the Barn. A Retirement Investment Strategies class was also offered. These programs were planned for a variety of days and evenings so those interested could participate in more than one.

Starting in the early 1960s what is now the UUCD was part of the Metropolitan New York District of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). [Note - UUA districts have mostly been abolished over the past decade.] A Fall Leadership Conference sponsored by the District was scheduled for October 14th at Community Church of New York and on November 4th a "hands-on, nuts and bolts" follow-up workshop on developing a Stewardship Plan was being offered in Plainfield, New Jersey.

The Society calendar showed meetings of the Membership, Religious Education, and Finance Committees, and the Open Door Alliance. A Women's Retreat Planning Session was scheduled as was the monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees. On the last Friday of the month volunteers from UUSNFC would man the Homeless Shelter in Danbury.

The *Comment* for October 2000 included two inserts. One advertised the Goods & Services Auction to be held at the Barn on Saturday evening, November 4th. Admission for adult members and friends was \$3.00 each and child care would be available. Donations of various kinds were solicited; refreshments and a silent auction would begin at 7:00 with the main auction running from 8:45 to 10:00. The second insert announced two activities planned at Green Chimneys in Brewster, New York. The first was "Little Folk Days" on October 4th and 5th and the second was "City & Country Family Farm Day" on October 28th.

Upcoming Sunday services were listed on the back page of the newsletter. They were as follows:

- October 1st Confidence & Leadership. By Marcia Brooker and the Sunday Service Committee. The congregation was asked to bring short readings to share on these two topics.
- October 8th Dorothy Day - A Revolutionary. By Bob Weston, Mary Collins, Ross Fenster, and Donna Lawrence. Paul Hines, co-founder and board member of Dorothy Day shelter in Danbury would also speak.
- October 15th A Faith that Sustains. Sermon and service by Rev. Susan Davison Archer, UU District of Metropolitan New York.
- October 22nd Life Changes. Sermon and service by Rev. David Bryce, First Unitarian Society of Westchester.
- October 29th Beyond the Barn. An update on activities of the UU Service Committee; UN Office; Youth Groups; and the UUA General Assembly. By Doris Henderson and the Denominational Affairs Network.

For some readers this article is a trip down memory lane. For others it is a series of snapshots of a busy month almost a quarter-century ago of what we know today as the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury. For all of us it is a reminder of how important, how critical, the involvement and commitment of each lay-person is in the on-going life of the church. I trust this was both enjoyable and informative!

From the November 2022 *Comment*

Danbury Universalists, both before and after organizing in 1822, met in a variety of locations. These included private homes, a schoolhouse in Great Plain, and perhaps even in barns and the open air when weather permitted. Later the group began meeting in the court house in the borough of Danbury, on present-day lower Main Street. As told in Bailey's *History of Danbury* (1896) the local Methodists and the Universalists would have together built a union meetinghouse sometime prior to 1828. This did not work out, however, and the Universalists retired from the project. By the early 1830s the Universalist Society was well enough established to construct its own building at what is now 88 Main Street, facing the court house. Bishop Curtis Homes stands on this site today.

The Connecticut Universalist Convention (state governing body) was formed in 1832 and on October 9, 1833, met in Danbury on which occasion this new Universalist meetinghouse was dedicated. The dedicatory sermon was delivered by Matthew Hale Smith, then pastor of the Hartford Universalist Society. Smith was at the beginning of a checkered career that saw him renounce Universalism at least twice. He went on to become a Congregationalist minister, militia chaplain, lawyer, journalist, author, and popular lecturer.

Delegates to the General Convention of Universalists (national governing body) assembled in Hartford in September 1835. At this gathering a representative of the Connecticut Convention offered reports, more than thirty in all, on the condition of the state's Universalist societies, churches, unorganized groups, and preaching. Danbury's Society was described thus:

"Here is a flourishing society, consisting of twenty-nine members, and a church connected with the society. The brethren here have recently erected a large and beautiful house of worship. They have now no settled clergyman, but usually have employed one half the time. The brethren are steadfast, persevering, and increasing in numbers, and meetings are generally well attended."

John Warner Barber's 1836 *Connecticut Historical Collections* detailed history, geography, and interesting facts about towns in the state. The chapter on Danbury was illustrated with four engravings depicting local scenes and buildings. Two of these illustrations clearly show the Universalist church. The building is two and one-half stories and rectangular in shape with a narrower end facing Main Street. There are windows looking south on each main floor and to the rear facing west. We can assume windows also graced the northern and eastern sides with public entry from Main Street. A tower and steeple rose over the center front. The building appears substantial.

Here was home to the First Universalist Society for eighteen years. Worship, as before, was conducted depending on the availability of preachers, though laypersons were encouraged to meet and lead Scripture reading, prayer, discussions, and the like. Perhaps seven clergy, not counting guest preachers, served the Society during this time, an average of one every two years. In 1835 and 1847 there was no settled pastor. Two ministers were ordained in Danbury: Albert Case in 1834 and George H. Deere in 1849 [see note below]. A choir was formed in the 1830s and denominational records show a Sunday school established by 1838. We can assume that a variety of social events, programs, and fund-raising activities took place during these years. The Southern Association of Connecticut comprising Universalist groups in Fairfield, New Haven, and Middlesex counties was organized in Danbury in 1836. The Connecticut Universalist Convention also met in Danbury from time to time.

The fortunes of the Society appear to have declined during the late 1830s to the mid-1840s. In early August 1847 Rev. Salmon C. Bulkeley, who was settled in Danbury from 1836 to 1838 and would return in the 1850s, paid a visit to his former pastorate. He wrote the following for the *Universalist Union* periodical of August 14, 1847:

"That society has passed through many vicissitudes....We do most sincerely regret the necessity that existed for mutilating their beautiful church in the manner it has been done, but since it was thought best, we will not complain, but rather rejoice that the society is now free from debt, with a neat and convenient place for worship free of incumbrance....All that now seems to be needed to secure them a greater degree of prosperity than they have ever before enjoyed is a faithful and judicious pastor, and union and a healthy cooperation of all the friends of our cause, with him in his labors...."

The nature of the "vicissitudes" which plagued the Society can only be guessed at. Perhaps the nationwide economic Panic of 1837 and years-long depression which followed played a part. How the church building was "mutilated" is likewise lost to history though we can infer that some degree of interior remodeling and/or exterior change, which distressed Rev. Bulkeley, was carried out.

Times and fortunes can improve, however, and in 1851 the Danbury Universalists were ready to construct a new church on Liberty Street, just east of its intersection with Main, on a lot later numbered 30. And there was an interested buyer for their meetinghouse on Main Street.

[Note - Albert Case served in Danbury for less than a year. George Deere ministered from 1849 to 1851. In Universalist practice ministerial fellowship (to be licensed to preach) and ordination (to conduct all clerical activities) were authorized not by local churches but by a denominational body, such as a county or regional association, a state convention, or the General Convention. Associated ceremonies often took place in local churches, however.]

To be continued in December 2022...

From the December 2022 *Comment*

...Continued from November 2022

The early 1850's was a time of transition for First Universalist Society. At a meeting on April 1, 1850, the group voted to amend the Society's Constitution. The 1850 preamble states:

"We, the subscribers, thankful for the privilege of worshiping our heavenly Father agreeably to the dictates of our own conscience, and desiring with the Father's assistance and protection, to extend a knowledge of that Truth which frees from sin and error, do hereby unite and form ourselves into a Society under the name of the First Universalist Society in Danbury."

Ralph Waldo Emerson, radical Unitarian and leading transcendentalist, reportedly delivered a public lecture in Danbury in 1850. Did any of our Universalist forebears attend? This was long before the 1961 consolidation of the Universalist and Unitarian denominations. Emerson was a popular speaker. We would presume that if indeed Emerson lectured in Danbury that year at least a few Universalists were there.

The church was seeking a minister in the spring of 1851. Rev. George H. Deere came to Danbury in 1849 and served for two years before moving on to a parish in Massachusetts. His successor, Rev. Salmon C. Bulkeley, was not settled at the Society until the following year. It would be Rev. Bulkeley's second pastorate in Danbury. He was previously at First Universalist from 1836 to 1838.

In June 1851, the Society voted to sell its lower Main Street home of eighteen years. William S. Peck, Society clerk, was appointed special agent to act in this matter on the group's behalf. Curiously, only two months before, the Universalists had made arrangements with Second Congregational Church, then being organized, to use the Universalist meetinghouse during the coming year.

The reason(s) for selling and making a move are not recorded; perhaps it was something as straightforward as a desire for more modern and up-to-date facilities. Because Danbury's center of commercial, industrial, transportation, and social activity was trending north on and near Main Street, especially with the railroad coming to town, there may have been a desire to move with the flow. Or perhaps it was a combination of these or other factors and an attractive offer for the Society's building came along at the right time. In any case "...the Church, Bell, Organ, Lamps, Stoves, Carpets, Table and five chairs..." were soon sold to St. Peter Roman Catholic parish.

The parish of St. Peter had been formed only a few months before, on March 30, 1851. A decade earlier there were perhaps a hundred Catholics living in Danbury, their spiritual needs met through periodic visits by priests from lower Fairfield County. Earliest services were held in private homes. The 1840s brought an influx of Irish Catholic immigrants to Danbury, seeking work as domestics, day laborers, railroad construction workers, and in hat shops. As the local Catholic population grew to several hundred, services moved to larger halls in the borough. Permanent quarters were needed. Rev. Thomas Ryan, newly assigned to St. Peter's, was instrumental in arranging the purchase of the Universalist church. James H. O'Donnell in his *History of the Diocese of Hartford* (1900) relates how the sale was concluded:

"The manner in which this purchase was consummated throws a light upon the prejudices entertained against Catholics at that time. Bishop O'Reilly was in town on the day of the sale, and during its progress walked up and down the opposite side of the street, an anxious, though an apparently indifferent spectator. To manifest interest openly in the sale would have defeated his purpose, for the Know-Nothing element, then rampant, would not have permitted property to be sold to Catholics, especially for church purposes. Nevertheless the purchase was affected through the shrewdness and liberality of three Protestant gentlemen, William H. Clark, Aaron Seely [Seeley] and Samuel Stebbins, whose names are still fondly cherished by the older Catholics of Danbury." (See notes below)

Three sources of information about the sale of the Universalist meetinghouse offer three different sales figures. The archives of First Universalist Society note a sum of \$1,500. The O'Donnell history gives a purchase price of \$2,750. *The History of Fairfield County, Connecticut* (1881) by D. Hamilton Hurd puts the price at \$3,000. In today's dollars these equal an average of perhaps \$85,000.

In August 1851 the Universalists purchased a building lot on Liberty Street, a short distance east of its intersection with Main. By the following spring a new meetinghouse was constructed which would be home to First Universalist Society for the next forty-one years. A photo of this second church building appears in the Scott-Fanton Museum publication *As We Were....A Pictorial Remembrance of Old Danbury* (Second Edition 1979).

What is the rest of the story of what was the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury's first permanent home? St. Peter's soon fitted the former Universalist building for parish use and dedicated the same in the fall of 1851; it does appear the infant Second Congregational Church was able to meet there for at least a few months. Subsequently Second Congregational built a church a stone's throw north on the same side of Main Street where it stayed for about a decade before selling this building to St. Peter parish and moving to a new home on West Street. At that point St. Peter's began using this former Congregational church for worship and redesignated the old Universalist church as St. Peter's Hall.

An 1875 L. R. Burleigh map of downtown Danbury shows James Vaughn's Carriage Manufactory occupying the former St. Peter's Hall. A Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from 1884 shows carriage manufacturing, a paint shop, and a blacksmith shop in the building. The structure is missing from an 1889 Sanborn map.

St. Peter Convent was built on this site and dedicated in 1896 to house the Sisters of Mercy who taught at the recently constructed St. Peter School next door. Today this former convent at 88 Main Street has been repurposed as a senior housing facility, Bishop Curtis Homes. The Danbury Universalists would return to another Main Street address in 1893 but that is a story for another time.

[Note - The American Party, also called Know-Nothings, was a nativist, anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant political movement. It dominated the Connecticut legislature for a time and elected a governor during the 1850s.]

[Note - William H. Clark was a local merchant and treasurer of First Universalist Society. He later became a Congregationalist. Aaron Seeley was a prominent local bank and insurance executive and a Congregationalist. Samuel Stebbins was a local merchant, later a banker, and likely a Methodist.]

From the January 2023 *Comment*

During the past year it has been this writer's pleasure and privilege to relate bits and pieces of the history of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury (UUCD) on the occasion of the Congregation's 200th Anniversary. Articles have appeared in each of 2022's eleven issues of *Comment*, the UUCD's monthly newsletter. Many thanks to Sherry Kyriacou, church congregational administrator and *Comment* editor, for editing and fitting them in.

I minimized footnotes and source references in the articles to make reading friendly and as a way to save space. This month I will share some of the sources I used in preparing "Notes." I emphasize "some" as this is not an all-inclusive listing.

The archives of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Danbury are indispensable. These include, but are not limited to, meeting minutes along with membership and financial records, some dating to 1850. Unfortunately, there are many gaps in these records both before and after 1850 and much information is missing.

A most valuable resource is the 132 page book *The Story of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Northern Fairfield County 1822-1995*. This history was written by Reverdy Whitlock, a New Haven bookseller and writer on local Connecticut topics. Prepared in time for the UUCD's 175th Anniversary, this book surveys people and events in the church's long history. Of special interest are chapters on Rev. Harry Adams Hersey (the UUCD's longest serving minister) and on the first twenty-five years (1970-1995) of life at "the Barn" in West Redding. Copies are available through the UUCD.

The book *From Heresy Toward Truth* was researched and written by Donald Watt. Published in 1971 to detail the first 150 years of the Universalist Church of West Hartford, it also touches on the development of Universalism in Connecticut.

A comprehensive two volume history of American Universalism titled *The Larger Hope* was researched and written in the 1970s and early 1980s by Professor Russell E. Miller of Tufts University. This history traces the development of the Universalist denomination from the time of John Murray to consolidation with the Unitarians in 1961. A one volume much abbreviated version of *The Larger Hope* and titled *The Larger Faith* was prepared by Rev. Charles A. Howe, parish minister and UU historian, in the early 1990s.

What might be considered a companion volume to *The Larger Faith* is a study of American Unitarianism edited by Professor Conrad Wright of Harvard University and titled *A Stream of Light*. This one volume study portrays the history of American Unitarianism from 1805 to 1961. Both *The Larger Faith* and *A Stream of Light* are interesting and useful short histories.

The Unitarians and the Universalists by David Robinson is another recent account of the development of the two denominations which became one Association in 1961. This title is part of the Denominations in America book series and was published in 1985. There has been a copy available at the UUCD, check the bookshelves near the fireplace in the meeting room of the house.

Universalists and Unitarians in America: A People's History was published in 2011. The author is Rev. John A. Buehrens, writer and now retired parish minister who served as president of the Unitarian Universalist Association from 1993-2001.

Harvard Square Library (www.harvardsquarelibrary.org) is a digital library of assorted Unitarian Universalist topics.

Harvard Divinity School Library (<https://guides.library.harvard.edu/hds/uu-congregations>) has digitized versions of Unitarian and Universalist and UU registers and yearbooks along with links to a variety of UU biographies, histories, and other resources.

Two recent Danbury histories may be of interest to those seeking information about the geographic cradle of our present-day Unitarian Universalist Congregation. These are *As We Were....A Pictorial Remembrance of Old Danbury* edited by Evelyn S. Durgy and *We Crown Them All: An Illustrated History of Danbury* by William S. Devlin. Both books were sponsored by the Danbury Museum and Historical Society (Scott-Fanton Museum). Each includes images of the UUCD's previous buildings in downtown Danbury.

Two books from the nineteenth century contain short histories of Danbury churches, including the Universalist. These are D. Hamilton Hurd's 1881 *History of Fairfield County, Connecticut* and the 1896 *History of Danbury, Conn. 1684-1896* by James M. Bailey and Susan B. Hill. Both books can be found in digital form on the internet.

The Danbury Museum and Historical Society (Scott-Fanton Museum) (<https://DanburyMuseum.org>) has a Universalist Church file among its archival subject collection, along with microfilms of Danbury newspapers dating to the 1800s. The museum is located at 43 Main Street. Brigid Guertin is executive director and Patrick Wells is research associate. Telephone 203-743-5200.

Enjoy your reading and researching!