

Early Unitarian and Universalist Churches in Knoxville, Tennessee

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and
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The First Independent Congregational Church and Society (Unitarian)

Why the American Unitarian Association decided to establish a Unitarian society in Knoxville, then a small town of less than 9,000 persons, is unknown. The person chosen for this task was Dr. Seth Saltmarsh, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, who had trained for the Unitarian ministry at Harvard University.

A notice appeared in the Daily Press and Herald of February 21, 1868, that “services of the First Congregational Church (Unitarian) will be resumed in the room of the Philharmonic Society-Union Bank building-on Sunday next.” The response was good enough for the church to continue for about eight months (a Sunday school was even organized), but after that time the notices-and evidently the meetings-stopped. Dr. Saltmarsh remained in Knoxville, practicing as a physician, until 1880.

The archives of the Unitarian Universalist Association have a listing for “The First Independent Congregational Church and Society, 1868-1875.” The different names reflect the fact that early Unitarian churches still had roots in Congregationalism. The discrepancy between newspaper accounts and the archives reflects the irregularity of accurate church records (both local and national).

The Unitarian Church of Knoxville

There is no record in the Unitarian Universalist Association archives of the second attempt to establish a Unitarian church in Knoxville. The town had grown into a small city by the 1890s (32,637 population in 1900). Most of the business district was along Gay Street between First and Second Creeks.

William Rule in his Standard History of Knoxville wrote:

The Unitarian Church of Knoxville was organized February 17, 1895, by Rev. Henry Westall, though the Unitarians had previously held meetings among themselves, and had listened to sermons delivered by Rev. Seth Saltmarsh; by Mrs. Edna Dow Cheney, who preached Nov. 4, 1894; by Mrs. Botume; Miss Channing, daughter of the great Channing; Mrs. Bigelow of Massachusetts, and Mrs. L. C. French, at whose home at 620 Cumberland Avenue, West, meetings were for some time held. When the organization was effected . . . about 20 members joined, mostly Northern people, and the church continued to prosper for about two years, meeting sometimes in private homes and sometimes in public Halls. When their numbers became too few, . . . they met at the home of Mrs. J. C. Tyler, . . . and finally ceased to hold meetings, sometime in 1897, after about 18 months of labor in the city, which is not ready for Unitarian doctrines.

That this church existed at all and lasted as long as it did, was probably due to three women, led by Mrs. Lucy C. (Crozier) French. Earlier she had founded Ossoli Circle, the still-existing women's club named for the New England feminist and Unitarian, Margaret Fuller Ossoli. She also started the Women's Educational and Industrial Union to improve the position of women in the community. In the early 20th century she became an outstanding leader in the women's suffrage movement.

Like Mrs. French, Annie McGhee McClung was a native Knoxvillian and a member of two of Knoxville's leading families. Her granddaughter, Helen Ross McNabb, gave her portrait, which hangs over the fireplace in TVUUC's Fellowship Hall.

The third woman, Mrs. J. C. Tyler, was a "northerner" because she had not lived in Knoxville very long. She was the grandmother of native Knoxvillian, writer James Agee.

These women doubtless were influenced by and encouraged by a prestigious gathering of women of the Association for the Advancement of Women, which met in Knoxville in late 1894. Several were prominent Unitarians—Julia Ward Howe, famous for writing the words to "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," was president. One of the speakers was Antoinette Brown Blackwell, known as the first woman ordained in the United States. Eva Channing, granddaughter of William Ellery Channing, spoke to the Barbara Blount Literary Society at the University of Tennessee (women had been admitted only the year before). It was at this time that Mrs. French declared herself "an out and out Unitarian." This must have been a surprise to her friends and associates, who knew of her family's long connections to the Episcopal church. She probably shocked some of them with her talks to the Unitarian Church on topics such as "Scientific Religion or the Motherhood of God."

Since the First Unitarian Church never had a regular minister or meeting place, it is not surprising that it lasted only about 18 months. The Rev. Westall of

Asheville, N.C. began a series of talks in March, 1895 and occasionally led Sunday evening services. In April the Rev. George L. Chaney, Southern agent of the AUA, preached at both Sunday morning and evening services. Another minister, the Rev. W. H. McGlauflin of Harriman, although a Universalist, conducted several Unitarian services.

The decline of the church is indicated by the sporadic notices in the newspapers during the summer and fall of 1895. Nevertheless, an announcement of January 5, 1896, called for the "regular annual meeting" and requested "full attendance." The last newspaper notice discovered was on May 31, 1896.

During this short period, the struggling church had met at the GAR Hall, Harris Building; the WEIU rooms in the Lamar House, or White House (both given); Knights of Pythias Hall in the Henson Building; the Windsor Building, and the Golden Cross Hall, in addition to the homes of Mrs. French and Mrs. Tyler.

The Universalist Church of Knoxville

The church of the 1860s and the Unitarian Church of the 1890s were not the only ancestors of modern Unitarian Universalism in Knoxville. After services were held on March 10, 1895, by the Rev. W. H. McGlauflin, . . . a committee was appointed to prepare a constitution and bylaws of church government, looking to the organization of a church of this denomination (Universalist) in this city. The committee consisted of Mrs. E.M. Brown, Mrs. Washburn, C.F. Borden, C.A. Greenwood, Mr. Estes, Mr. Heabler, and Rev. McGlauflin, the latter gentleman having been preaching in Knoxville occasionally for those who accepted the doctrine of universal salvation.

The group decided to have regular services; McGlauflin would preach twice monthly, and the laity would conduct the other services.

Rev. McGlauflin was asked to preach about why he became a Universalist. He stated that its doctrines conformed to what he believed was right. Although some people joined the church because freedom of thought was allowed and some because they didn't like the idea of the "open grave" being the last chance, he came to Universalism because it is founded on love.

The Universalist Church prospered for a while, but only a few meetings were reported in the newspapers. On December 22, 1895, the Rev. G.S. Weaver preached, and in February 1896 Rev. Weaver and the Rev. O.H. Shinn conducted a series of meetings. These two clergymen seem to have taken turns filling the pulpit; Rev. Shinn preached his "closing sermon" on March 22, 1896, and the next Sunday Rev. Weaver was in charge, with the Lord's Supper observed at the morning service. Services may have been irregular, but the Young People's Christian Union met regularly.

On June 21 the Rev. C.S. McWhorter, "an able lay minister," addressed the church, one of his subjects being "Does the Bible teach endless punishment?"

Like the Unitarians, the Universalists had to meet in public halls and had no permanent minister. Probably it never occurred to either the Unitarians or the Universalists to combine their congregations, although that might have given them the resources to survive. But the Unitarian doctrines were too liberal (for the times), and the Universalists were too linked to traditional Christianity.

The Unitarian Society of Knoxville

Ben Franklin Allen was born in 1891 and ordained a Baptist minister at the age of 19. He held pastorates of one year each in Oklahoma and South Dakota between 1910 and 1912. In 1917 he was in Knoxville, leading a group of people who wished to become established as the (Unitarian) Peoples Church of Knoxville.

This group met weekly in the Lyceum Building on Walnut Street and Cumberland Avenue (rented on Sundays for \$8 per month) for forums on philosophical topics and social issues. Mr. Allen and other persons spoke, and the presentations were usually followed by discussions from the floor. There was very little stress on religion. In November of that year, 23 people in this group signed a petition asking to be recognized as a Unitarian Church:

We, the undersigned, being lovers of Truth which shall ultimately make us free and feeling the necessity of uniting together for our mutual development of Character by consecrated service to mankind in the spirit of Jesus and the love of Truth do hereby bind ourselves together in "The Peoples Church" Knoxville, Tennessee and appeal for fellowship as a Church in the American Unitarian Association.

It is not clear what eventually happened to this group. The AUA while desiring to support fledgling churches, was understandably concerned that this group was led by a Baptist minister only now desiring to become a Unitarian minister, the gathering seemed more of a philosophical club than a congregation of worshippers, and this "church" would need considerable financial aid. The Association sent two different representatives to Knoxville to investigate. Their reports indicated that Mr. Allen was "quite inexperienced, and has . . . given the movement an unfortunate background of misdirected effort and misplaced emphasis." They also noted that Knoxville "is a very conservative community and the orthodoxy which is prevalent and entrenched is of a very narrow and bigoted type. Many persons . . . would like to identify themselves with our movement, but dare not for business or social reasons."

This group did organize as the Unitarian Society of Knoxville with a slate of officers, including John A. Switzer as president. However, it evidently soon

fell apart. Mr. Allen relocated to New Jersey (in a Unitarian church) in 1918. And late in 1920 plans were being laid for another attempt at a Unitarian church in East Tennessee.

The Unitarian Church of Knoxville

This new effort to establish a liberal church in Knoxville was carried on very differently, possibly as a result of the failure of the 1918 church. This time the AUA was in full control, choosing the ministers, sending hymn books and tracts, and providing financial support.

The first minister sent to Knoxville by the association was completely different from Ben Franklin Allen; the Rev. Joseph H. Crooker was an older man nearing the end of a distinguished career which included the authorship of a number of books and tracts, the presidency of the Unitarian Temperance Society for seven years, participation in international Unitarian meetings, and the chaplaincy of the Montana State Senate (while at the Unitarian Church in Helena); most importantly, he had completed very successful ministries in two university centers, Madison, Wisconsin, and Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Joseph Crooker's wife was also a person of note. Florence Ellen Kollock Crooker was an ordained Universalist minister who had served a number of congregations, one of which (in Chicago) she had increased from less than twenty to about 400 members in two years and had presided over the construction of two church buildings, the second after the first had been outgrown. She may have helped gather the Universalists in Knoxville into the new fellowship. She was definitely instrumental in starting a Women's Alliance almost as soon as services began.

Crooker was sent to Knoxville to preach for two months and to assess the situation with regard to the potential for establishing a successful church. His first service drew 37 people, the sermon was titled "Why a Unitarian Church in Knoxville," there was "good singing with one solo," and the collection totaled \$8.05. The attendance the following week was 48, the sermon "The Supremacy of Jesus as Taught by Unitarians," the collection \$10.40. His assessment was favorable:

Mrs. Crooker and I feel strongly that there is good encouragement so far, that Knoxville greatly needs a Unitarian church, and that one can be established if the right man is located here and the movement is sustained long enough to create confidence and a sense of permanence. As there have been four failures in the past 30 years—one Universalist and three Unitarian, and our last the worst—it will need great patience and much perseverance. The minister must be strong, constructive, positively religious, not a recent accession from Orthodoxy. . . .

Crooker was over 70 when he came to Knoxville, and he had come with assurance from the AUA that he would be here only a couple of months. He found the work here more difficult than anticipated and was therefore anxious to leave as soon as he had satisfied his commitment. He was followed in April by the Rev. Julius F. Krolfifer, one of the early ministers-at-large in the AUA Church Extension Department.

Earlier serving Presbyterian and Congregational churches, Krolfifer had joined the Unitarian ranks in 1918; he had served only one Unitarian congregation prior to his arrival in Knoxville. (After leaving Knoxville he served several other congregations and spent five years on the AUA's Board of Directors.)

During Krolfifer's two and a half months, the Women's Alliance met on the second and fourth Fridays in the afternoon in members' homes. Bible classes on Tuesday evenings were devoted to the first three Gospels. Efforts to put the church on some kind of formal basis continued, and a meeting for the organization of the church was called for Sunday, May 8, after the service.

On May 14 eye-catching notices about two and a half inches by four inches began running in the Knoxville Sentinel; it seems reasonable to assume these were a result of some discussion on May 8. The first two read as follows:

UNITARIANS FOLLOW JESUS

During the Unitarian Church service, Sunday morning at 10:45, the Rev. Julius F. Krolfifer will preach on "The Mark of the Christian," the first of a series based on "The Sermon on the Mount." The Bible class on Tuesday evening at 7:30 studies the first three gospels. All who desire a religion that is frankly in harmony with the best modern thought and yet spiritually satisfying are cordially invited to worship and study with us. We meet at the Woman's Building, Walnut and Cumberland Streets.

WHEN JESUS SAID:

"Ye are the salt of the earth and the light of the world," he was speaking of the power of the Christian's influence. The Rev. Julius F. Krolfifer will deal with this part of the "Sermon on the Mount" in his sermon during the

UNITARIAN SERVICE—SUNDAY 10:45 A.M.

At Walnut and Cumberland Sts. (Woman's Building)

You Are Cordially Invited to Attend

(Bible Class Studies First Three Gospels Tuesday, 7:30 P.M.,
Woman's Building)

These notices ceased at the end of June (at the time of Krolfifer's leaving). But by that time other churches had taken note and had started running theirs (not nearly so interesting as the Unitarian ones!).

On June 6, 7, and 8, the University of Tennessee held a great celebration in connection with the 1921 commencement and the dedication of some important new buildings (including Ayres Hall). Dignitaries and guests and alumni were invited; their names, pictures of the buildings, and the schedule of events for all three days were given in the Journal and Tribune. And the city churches were asked to join in the celebration.

Krolfifer seized the opportunity. He contributed an article which must have been printed in its entirety (500 words!), right along with the other articles concerning the building dedications (not on the page of church news). The gist of his article was that "the University rightly claims that it is the servant of the state and as such should have the support and cooperation of the citizens" including "adequate financial help." He tied education to religion, saying,

. . . the fact is plain that the underlying purpose of the University is a deeply religious one. The implicit teaching of the state university is just this—the state offers you this training freely in order that you may be better equipped for the service of the commonwealth, in which you dedicate yourself by accepting this education. . . . The teaching of the state university is equivalent to the words of Christ, who said, "Seek Ye First the Kingdom," which is to say, the common good, the social ideal.

It is my earnest hope that the religious people of the state will recognize the essentially religious character of the work of the state university. In which I hope I am faithful to the tradition of three men of my faith: Horace Mann, father of the public school and normal system; Charles W. Eliot, who has extended the benefits and raised the standards of university education; and Thomas Jefferson, founder of the first state university in America—the University of Virginia.

Krolfifer was the only minister with an article like this in the whole newspaper. He also was the only one to preach a sermon the following Sunday specifically mentioning the university in its title: "The University and America."

By the first of July the church's permanent minister had arrived. The Rev. Alva Roy Scott, Ph.D., was another leader in the shape of Joseph Crooker: an experienced older man known for his scholarly sermons and an "intellectual honesty equaling his emotional earnestness." Earlier in his life he had been a high school principal, a Presbyterian minister, and a scholar at Harvard and Clark universities. He made two trips to Europe to study the municipal, industrial and social conditions there and lived for a time at the London social settlement, Toinbee Hall. After his pastorate in Knoxville he and his wife remained here for their retirement. (His will provided for handsome bequests to several universities, including one to Harvard to endow a lectureship on the general subject of "Human Betterment.")

During Scott's first months that summer there were a few changes. The Sunday service announcement ended with "The public is cordially invited to a

service of meditation and worship"; this is the first mention of meditation in the newspaper announcements. And Mrs. Scott was conducting a children's Bible story hour each Sunday during the time of the sermon.

In the fall the church had a covenant:

In the love of truth and the spirit of Jesus Christ we unite to worship God and to serve our fellow men.

It also had a Sunday school:

The Sunday school will be organized according to the best methods of religious education, and the literature used is of the highest order, prepared by many distinguished scholars and educators.

In December, 1921, the Knoxville Sentinel ran an article headlined "Unitarian 'Follow Up.'" It announced that the Rev. Scott had been appointed chairman of the church membership campaign in Knoxville. Three paragraphs, obviously sent out by the AUA, boiled down to the fact that the denomination was trying to get the many nonmembers who were active in Unitarian churches on a regular basis to enter into full membership; Scott, being the only Unitarian minister in the only Unitarian church in Knoxville, was the obvious choice for the appointment.

Unfortunately, this is the last information available regarding Scott's ministry. He remained at the Knoxville church for three years, during which time the church congregation was split by a faculty-administration problem at the University of Tennessee. How he dealt with the problem, how it affected his ministry or his personal life, we just don't know. In a letter of April, 1924, he wrote that Unitarianism "is badly and falsely misrepresented by the whooping revivalists" and that the professors who lost their jobs at the university were replaced by ones "safe for orthodoxy." It is possible that his retirement in 1924 at the age of 61 came about partly because of his discouragement over the split in the congregation. However, he and Mrs. Scott continued participating (or interfering, as some would say) in the church's activities until the church closed its doors in 1929.

The university controversy that would so seriously affect the church began when Mrs. A. M. Withers and J. W. Sprowls were informed by the university in the spring of 1923 that they would not be rehired the following year. Mrs. Withers, assistant professor of art, had refused to teach dressmaking. There was little reaction at the news of her being let go, perhaps because some of her colleagues felt she was a bit difficult to get along with anyway. The firing of J. W. Sprowls, professor of secondary education, however, upset a number of other faculty members. Sprowls claimed that he was given no

reason for his dismissal but felt it was directly related to his classroom use of James Harvey Robinson's book, *The Mind in the Making*, which assumed an evolutionary viewpoint:

It is now generally conceded . . . that if we traced back our human lineage far enough we should come to a point where our human ancestors had no civilization and lived a . . . life similar to that of the existing primates with which we are zoologically closely connected. . . . We are all descended from the lower animals.

A group of faculty members met to discuss Sprowls' firing. Three issues of an anonymous clandestine newspaper, *The Independent Truth*, appeared on campus, complaining among other things, that the bookstore had returned its copies of Robinson's book and that the official campus newspaper, *Orange and White*, had been given instructions not to discuss the problems of the art department or the firing of Sprowls.

Churches in Knoxville and Cookeville supported the university (in its efforts to prevent the "teachings of unsound doctrine"); students continued supporting Sprowls (the number of students in his summer class doubled). Rotary and Kiwanis clubs supported the university; Edward J. Meeman, editor of the newly established *Knoxville News*, supported Sprowls and criticized university President Harcourt A. Morgan for his crushing of legitimate demands of the faculty and students.

In July the university fired Asa A. Schaeffer, professor of zoology (an excellent teacher and scholar, the president of the university chapter of the American Association of University Professors, and a supporter of Sprowls), R. S. Radford, professor of Latin and Roman archaeology (a supporter of unpopular causes but not an agitator), Maurice Mulvania, dean of pre-med and associate professor of bacteriology (writer of a letter to President Morgan requesting a code to clarify faculty and administration matters), Robert S. Ellis, professor of psychology and philosophy (an outstanding teacher who was receiving the maximum salary given at the school), and John Randolph Neal, professor of law (popular with the students, unpopular with the dean of the college of law, but not active in the Sprowls controversy).

It is unlikely that any other church in Knoxville was much affected by this controversy. However, of the six main faculty terminations (Mrs. Withers' firing didn't seem to carry much weight), Asa Schaeffer, R. S. Radford, and Maurice Mulvania attended the Unitarian Church, and John R. Neal came from time to time. Like many other Knoxvilleans, a significant portion of the congregation, along with the Rev. Scott, sympathized with these men and blamed their firings on a repression of academic freedom. John A. Switzer, however, another church member and the university's professor of hydraulic and sanitary engineering,

did not. He felt the firings were thoroughly justified to control faculty insubordination. And he was the church's chairman of the board.

The church membership was drawn heavily from university faculty. Any serious problem at the university was bound to affect the congregation. In this case, the congregation split into pro and con factions, the minister on one side and the chairman of the board on the other, creating dissension and bitterness that lasted until the end, seven years later.

But the university controversy, which took a long time to die down locally, was not the only factor. There was also the growing fundamentalism; it was during this decade that this area was called for the first time the Bible Belt. At the university, students were required to attend chapel services; a study lamented that only 87 per cent of the student body regularly attended their own churches; and it was reported that 75 per cent of the men disapproved of (and refused to participate in) social dancing. Professor W. W. Stanley was criticized for visiting the Great Smoky Mountains National Park on a Sunday. Finis J. Garrett, congressman from the Ninth District, spoke at the university commencement exercises, "In the beginning God created Adam—the physical, intellectual and spiritual equal of civilized man of today. The powers of steam and electricity were known to Adam." (Note not only the creationist theory but the religious tone of the commencement address.)

Bills to outlaw the teaching of evolution were proposed in at least ten states, mostly in the South. The bill in Tennessee was introduced in January 1925 by George Washington Butler ("the Butler Bill"); it forbade the teaching in public schools of "any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible, and to teach instead that man has descended from a lower order of animals." The penalty for conviction was a fine of from \$100 to \$500. The bill became law (remaining on the books until repealed in 1967), John Thomas Scopes was convicted, the newspapers had a field day, and Tennessee became known as the monkey state. Joseph Krutch, a Knoxville native, was incensed that the university, governor, and others had failed to mount any strong protest: "In Tennessee, bigotry is militant and sincere. Intelligence is timid and hypocritical, and in that fact lies the explanation of the sorry role which she [Tennessee] is playing in contemporary history." This then was the atmosphere surrounding the new church. At one and the same time it made a free church more desirable and more vulnerable. And it eventually impinged directly on the congregation.

The Rev. Alva Roy Scott was followed by the Rev. Daniel Welch, the first minister of this congregation who had not been ordained originally in some other denomination. And he was the only minister of the church of the 1920s to also serve the present church (his picture hangs with the other previous ministers of TVUC).

In 1924 Daniel Welch, having earlier served Unitarian churches in Virginia and Massachusetts, was teaching history at Knoxville High School and attending

the Unitarian Church of Knoxville. When Scott resigned and it looked as if the church doors would close, Welch offered to preach without salary while continuing his teaching. His offer was accepted, and a small salary was offered.

However, while the church was trying to deal with the bad feelings among members because of the university controversy and was having to get along for the first time with a part-time minister, the Scopes trial took place in Dayton, Tennessee. Possibly because of certain publicity surrounding the trial—such as the arrival in Dayton of Unitarian minister Charles Francis Potter from New York City or the amicus curiae brief filed by the Unitarian Laymen's League or the chief counsel for Scopes being John Randolph Neal (one of the professors fired from the University the previous year and an occasional attender at the Knoxville Unitarian church)—certain school board members in Knoxville began to object to history courses in the high school being taught by a Unitarian minister. Welch was told by the board that he couldn't continue holding both jobs. Walter Reid Hunt, president of the AUA, described in 1930 what happened:

Knowing the rather feeble situation in our church and the permanence of his teaching position, together with its salary, I counseled him and the trustees to by all means acquiesce in this decision of the Board of Education, give up his preaching appointment, and confine himself to the teaching. Mr. Welch, however, through his earnestness in the church and his desire to preach, took the other course, resigned his position in the schools, and became minister of the church. We increased our appropriation but the situation was precarious financially and the old sore between Prof. Switzer and Mr. Scott persisted and people began to take sides.

In 1928, partly because he could no longer support his family on what the church and AUA paid him, and partly because of the dissension still remaining from the university controversy (the Scotts being quite antagonistic and vocal in this), Welch moved to New Hampshire to take a Unitarian church and a teaching position at Proctor Academy. (Welch was subsequently active in the New Hampshire state House, the Norris [Tennessee] Religious Fellowship, the Asheville Fellowship [which he brought to full church status], and TVUC where he preached numerous times.) For the fifth time in eight years a new minister was needed in Knoxville.

The Rev. John Hanckel Taylor, previously an Episcopalian, was sent to the church by the AUA in March after Welch left. By June it was evident that he would not fit, partly because of his lack of experience and partly because he was not Daniel Welch (who was greatly esteemed in the congregation for sacrificing his secure school position for the sake of liberalism and who for a time could live on \$2,000 a year because he owned his own home). During Taylor's pastorate the

congregation diminished to half a dozen members. He was clearly not the man needed.

John A. Switzer (president of the 1917 church, chairman of the board of the 1920s church during the university controversy, and in 1928 still an important spokesman for the congregation) wrote to the AUA:

If I may be permitted to say so, I believe it was a mistake for Mr. Taylor to have been sent here, where the need was for one well-seasoned in our ministry. Conditions here were so difficult that it does not seem to me fair to let his failure to make good here count too heavily against him.

The last minister of this early church was the Rev. George Kent, a widower of 72. He had already been in the ministry 50 years, having served very successful pastorates recently in New Orleans and Lynchburg, Virginia. He was liked by all who knew him and seemed to be the perfect solution. He remarried soon after coming to Knoxville.

Arriving in the fall of 1928, Kent took hold immediately. By the end of November, Switzer was writing to the AUA about the plan developed by Kent and the congregation to buy a residence for \$13,000; the first floor would serve as a church and the second as a parsonage. The problem was money; could the AUA help? Unfortunately, the congregation could not raise its half of the purchase price, and so the AUA would not provide the other half.

As 1929 progressed, more negative factors came to light. The Scotts were still feuding with certain members of the congregation and airing the dirty linen in public, thereby discouraging potential visitors. Taylor's ministry had been "disastrous from every point of view." One person who visited several times complained of "egotism on the part of a few and an unfriendly attitude in general" and "a polar atmosphere of frigid selfishness." She concluded,

No preacher, no matter how famous or learned, can sail his craft into seas besieged with human icebergs and find the sailing pleasant and profitable and successful. Would love to have a church here of the kind you dream, where liberals could go and meet a welcome.

By November of 1929 the church was six months in arrears in paying its part of the minister's salary. And Kent had come to the conclusion that the whole effort should terminate with the end of the year. A long quote from his letter of November 18 to Walter Reid Hunt at the AUA tells why:

I hate to bother you with so long a letter, but I want to tell you why I feel that we ought to give up the mission here—my wife and I—with the end of December. We have come to know the field and its conditions so thoroughly that for the first time in our lives—and she has helped to keep

the liberal church in Halifax going rigorously for 40 years—we think it best to surrender and lay down our arms.

We have both made ourselves of service in the city, my wife especially. She has the Senior Study Class in the big Woman's Club, with its 400 members; a large group is profiting by her free-given service and is appreciative. But not one, outside of our own tiny group, has either called upon her or invited her to call.

Not a minister, nor a man, but our son, has called on me. I haven't been invited to address a single audience, although I've sought various fellowships and made acquaintances of the friendliest.

And our own people seem to be clean forspent. All but the half dozen that we can count upon as long as they live. But little by little my wife and I have learned of the woeful feuds and spites that have alienated the most dependable workers among the women, and of the factions that seem unforgettingly and unforgivably to divide them. The few devoted ones that are ready to work with any of the others—they hardly number half a dozen—can't get the rest to undertake anything.

And a long-time member wrote:

Today there is a deadly indifference; the majority of members stay away from church altogether, and what is more, they have no intention of returning. The visitors are conspicuous by their absence. . . . The rift that started in the association here about four or five years ago had grown to such proportion before Dr. Kent came to Knoxville, that the word "disassociation" would better express it than "association," and there has never been a time since this rift started, that there was the remotest possibility of any mortal man building up a successful Unitarian church here.

And so the Kents departed from Knoxville, and the Unitarian Church of Knoxville ceased to exist. However, Walter Reid Hunt's last letter from the AUA to treasurer E. L. Thomas in Knoxville expressed not only sorrow but a bit of hope:

Your letter of the 24th with its check enclosed has been received and the check has been handed to our treasurer's department. I need not tell you how sorry we all feel that this has seemed to be the wise and perhaps the only course to pursue at the present time. I sincerely hope that in the not distant future it will seem to us all, wise to make a new start and this time carry on to a successful conclusion.

Almost 20 years later a group of people met and established the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Church. Three members of the early church became charter members of the new one: C. C. Cloud, Nellie S. Cloud, and C. D.

Beardsley. Elsa Walburn Stong, another TVUC charter member, was the daughter of Bertha Walburn Clark, a charter member of the 1917 church and probably a member of the 1920s congregation.

There were additional connections between the two churches. Margaret Switzer's wedding took place in 1951 in Unitarian House, and David Switzer joined the church in 1958; their father was the John A. Switzer of the two early churches. The 1920s church even shared a minister with TVUC: Daniel Welch, who was the early church's minister for over three years, became the interim minister at TVUC in 1949 six weeks before Dick Henry arrived; he also preached occasionally throughout the next 15 years when Henry had to be out of town.

But perhaps the most interesting connection, even though more tenuous, came about in the spring of 1957 when two persons from Bangor, Maine—signing the guest book as the "Misses Mug" or perhaps "Meig,"—visited TVUC. Several weeks later the church received two \$500 checks to be applied (anonymously) toward the new church building in memory of the Rev. and Mrs. Alva Roy Scott, who had served their church in Bangor before coming to Knoxville in 1921.

Ministers Speaking at Unitarian Churches in Knoxville: 1868 -1896

Seth Saltmarsh, MD	Henry L. Veasey
Henry Westall, Asheville	George L. Chaney
W.H. McGlauflin, Harriman	G.S. Weaver, DD, New York

Ministers Speaking at the Universalist Church in Knoxville: 1895 - 1896

W.H. McGlauflin, Harriman	G.S. Weaver, DD, New York
Quillen H. Shinn, Chattanooga	C.S. McWhorter, Baltimore

Unitarian Ministers in Knoxville: 1917 - 1929

Ben Franklin Allen	1917-1918
Joseph H. Crooker	February 1921-April 1921
Julius F. Krolfifer	April 1921-June 1921
Alva Roy Scott	June 1921-August 1924
Daniel M. Welch	September 1924-February 1928
John Hanckel Taylor	March 1928-August 1928
George Kent	September 1928-December 1929

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