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Universalism In Indiana

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PIONEER UNIVERSALISM

The scope of this paper does not permit a detailed discussion of the pioneer Universalist immigration into Indiana. Only a few of the points of contact with the denominations in the Eastern States can be indicated.

Somewhat out of the main line of Indiana Universalism are the Rappites, who came to this State in 1813. Their teaching concerning the future life came through the channel of German Mysticism, and apparently had no contact with organized Universalism.

The early history of the Universalist church in Indiana is closely connected with the development of the denomination in Ohio. Gen. James Mitchell Varnum, the president of the Ohio Company, which was organized in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1786, was a factor in the story of New England Universalism. Capt. Winthrop Sargent, the secretary of the company, and adjutant to the first governor of the territory, was one of the Sargent family of Gloucester, Massachusetts, whose loyalty to the Rev. John Murray contributed largely to the establishment of this division of the liberal church in America. A number of early settlers in the Northwest Territory were Universalists. The list includes such names as Col. Joseph Barker, Aaron Waldo Putnam, Ludlow, Armstrong, Perin, Durham, Buckingham, Snider, Baldwin, Cary, Laboyteau, Capt. W. H. Harrison, Maj. I. S. Gano, T. Goudy, George

Gorden, T. Gibson, Charlotte Ludlow, Maj. J. M. Lovell, C. Smith, Capt. B. Shamburgh, Eliza Sellman, Eliza Symmes.

The earliest recorded preaching by a Universalist minister in what is now Ohio was in Rome township, Athens county, in 1807, by Rev. Abel Morgan Sargent, from Maryland or Pennsylvania. He did not become a resident until several years later, when he moved, first, to Gallia county, then to various other Ohio points, including Cincinnati, and finally to some point in Indiana—said to be either Rising Sun, New Albany or Evansville—where he died in August, 1839. During a part of his work in Ohio he organized Halcyon churches, which held to the doctrine of annihilation.

The first resident Universalist preacher in this region was Rev. Timothy Bigelow, who came into northern Ohio from Winchester, New Hampshire, in 1814 or earlier. In 1815, in Cincinnati, John Jenkinson published an English edition of a widely circulated book on universal salvation, entitled *The Everlasting Gospel*, by Paul Seigvolck (George K. Nicolai).

By 1821 there were sufficient Universalists in northeastern Ohio to call a meeting at Palmyra and to organize the Northern Ohio Universalist Association. They mention "a large body of brethren still further to the west" who are about to organize. Rev. Timothy Bigelow, who was chosen clerk at the Palmyra meeting, wrote a few months later to an eastern paper that there were ten Universalist ministers in his part of the State.

Rev. Sebastian Streeter and Rev. Thomas Whittemore visited Cincinnati about 1825 and preached there, probably in the old courthouse. A group of people calling themselves Universalians existed there at that time, and were supposedly the pioneers of the church organized in May, 1827. Rev. J. C. Waldo came as their first pastor in 1828 and remained three years. Cincinnati soon became the headquarters for traveling clergymen and for resident printers, whose missionary journeys and journals penetrated the wilder regions of Indiana.

There was a meeting at Jacksonburg, Ohio, in 1826. (This may be the present Jacksonboro in Butler county.) Here was organized the Convention of Universalists of the Western

States. The second session was held in October, 1827, near Franklin, Warren county. Samuel Tizzard was the first president and P. J. Laboyteaux the first secretary. A conference was arranged for the month of May at Mt. Pleasant. The session of 1828 met at Eaton, with Rev. Jonathan Kidwell, president, and Rev. A. H. Longly, secretary. A hymnal was proposed in 1829. The next year at Oxford a constitution was adopted and the name changed to the Western Convention of Universalists. Delegates were to be chosen by the various associations. Professors McGuffy and Scott, Presbyterians, of Miami University, are mentioned for friendly hospitality. A committee reported having received books from the London (England) Unitarian Society. Mr. Samuel Jenks, living near Somerset, Franklin county, Indiana, was appointed a subscription committee for the support of an itinerant preacher. Dayton was chosen as the place of meeting for 1830.

The session of 1833 was held at Philomath, Indiana.¹ Delegates were present from the Richland, Central Ohio, and Western Union Associations. John Winn served as moderator and Samuel Tizzard as clerk. Educational matters were discussed and the republication of Bellamy's *Translation of the Five Books of Moses* was proposed. In 1834 the constitution was revised and the name again changed to the General Convention of the Western States. Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Tennessee were especially urged to send delegates. A resolution favoring temperance was adopted. In 1835 at Ashland, Richmond county, Ohio, no church could be obtained for the convention. A Mr. Whitney "erected, enclosed, and prepared a house for the reception of 500 worshippers, and in the short space of three weeks." In 1837, in response to a growing demand in Ohio, the scope of the organization was limited and the name became the Ohio State Convention of Universalists.

The year 1826 also witnessed the removal of Rev. Jonathan Kidwell, a native of Kentucky, to Sulphur Spring, near Abington, Wayne county, Indiana. At the age of 18 he had begun

¹ This town was laid out in the northwest corner of Union county in 1833 by Jonathan Kidwell and J. Adams where they founded a Universalist college and press.

the work of a Methodist minister, but seven years later sought greater liberty among the Disciples. In two years more he had discarded orthodoxy, and for a time even religion itself. But upon rereading his Bible, he became a Universalist, and from 1815 to 1849 he labored in behalf of that interpretation of Christianity, meeting with much opposition and even personal violence. He traveled in a circuit comprising seven counties in eastern Indiana and nine in western Ohio. When he first moved to Indiana he estimated the number of Universalists in this region to be about 200; three years later he stated that there were about 2,000, and that in one season five church buildings were being erected.

In July, 1827, the above-mentioned Abel Sargent, now living in Cincinnati, began the publication of a magazine, *The Lamp of Liberty*, which continued, however, for only about two years. Another more permanent publication made its initial appearance at Eaton, Ohio, a few weeks later than Sargent's. This was *The Star in the West*. The editors were Jonathan Kidwell and D. D. Hall, and the printer Samuel Tizzard. At first the numbers appeared monthly in a little pamphlet form of eight pages, measuring nine by six inches each. But two years later the office was moved to Cincinnati, the paper changed to a weekly of increased size, and the name to *The Sentinel and Star in the West*. Rev. J. C. Waldo replaced Mr. Hall as an editor. In 1833 the place of publication was changed to Philomath, Indiana. This venture was unsuccessful and Mr. Tizzard soon returned to Cincinnati with his paper, securing Rev. George Rogers as editor. This partnership continued until 1837, when *The Star* passed into the control of Rev. John A. Gurley.

In 1829 Indiana agents for *The Star* were to be found in Milton, Richmond, Connersville, Indianapolis, Danville, Greencastle, Eugene, Attica, Lawrenceburg, Covington, Harrison, and Patriot. In addition to these the following places are mentioned in the list for 1831: Montezuma, Terre Haute, Leavenworth, LaFayette, Versailles, Bloomington, Rome, Brookville, Somerset, and Logansport.

The following paragraph is quoted from J. A. Stoner's essay on *Before and After Winchester*:

For a number of years Jonathan Kidwell continued to serve as field agent for the *Sentinel* (and *Star*), as it was called. He visited the remotest parts of the country, and frequently preached where Universalism was but little known. While on a business trip to Indianapolis, in the winter of 1829, Mr. Kidwell, by request, preached a number of times in the State House. At the close of his last lecture, Rev. Edwin Ray, a young Methodist minister of the capitol city, arose and announced that he would reply to the arguments that Mr. Kidwell had advanced. He was promptly invited to do so then and there, but firmly refused. A challenge for a joint public debate quickly followed. The discussion took place in the Methodist meeting-house, January 21, 1830, and drew an immense crowd of interested people. The legislature voted to adjourn in order that the members might attend the debate. The clergy of the city were solidly arrayed against the champion of Universalism, and the local papers manifested a bias in favor of Mr. Ray. As usual orthodoxy claimed the victory, but it was evident that they were surprised at the capable defense made by Mr. Kidwell, for Mr. Ray's friends would not consent to the publication of an official report. Mr. Kidwell on his own account prepared *A Series of Strictures*, or notes, on the debate, filling about one hundred pages: and these, with some additional matter, were printed in book form and widely circulated.

In 1830 there appears a notice in the *Star*, calling a conference at Milton, Wayne county, to meet on August 14 and 15 "for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of our brethren organizing themselves into societies." This seems to imply that hitherto Indiana Universalists had not organized churches to any extent. In the same issue there appears a letter from an ex-Presbyterian minister living near what is now the Fincastle church, asking that a Universalist minister be sent there. He mentions the names of Messrs. Purley, Jennison, Gleason, and John Foster as being Universalists. Rev. A. H. Longley was preaching during this year at Liberty.

In the next few years there was a rapid increase in the number of clergymen, especially of itinerants. A list of preachers in the western States in 1836 and 1837 includes the names of E. Beals, A. Bond, J. Bradley, A. A. Davis, S. W. H. Jolly, Sweet, Truman Strong, Daniel R. Biddlecome, T. H. Johnson, J. J. Hollister, D. Tenny, N. Wadsworth, E. Richardson, L. L. Sidler, W. Y. Emmet, C. Rogers, George Rogers, Leidy. The homes of most of these men were in Ohio, but many of them traveled in Indiana. George Rogers and Sidler were in Cincinnati. Erasmus Manford took his

first missionary journey through southern Indiana on his way to New Orleans.

It is difficult to estimate the strength of Universalism at this time. Kidwell's rather glowing statement of conditions should be compared with one by A. C. Barry, D.D., to the effect that at this time it had only a scant and weak foothold in Ohio and Indiana. According to the denominational publications, E. B. Mann and Jonathan Kidwell were the only resident ministers, but Col. R. P. De Hart's *Past and Present of Tippecanoe County* on page 253 refers to Rev. Hiram Curry as a preacher of Universalism in Dayton as early as 1828. Little is known concerning E. B. Mann, but he appears to have been an early and sturdy pioneer preacher in Floyd and other Ohio Valley counties. For a number of years he made his home at Leavenworth.

The theology of pioneer Universalism is indicated by an echo of the "Restorationist" controversy which temporarily split the denomination in New England. There is a reference in the *Star* to Reverend Robert Smith, who about 1840 was living at New Trenton and who was the author of a book entitled *Both Sides of Religious Ceremonies*. This book argued against public prayer; excessive opposition to his views led Mr. Smith to transfer his fellowship to the Disciples. The *Star* says that Mr. Smith was the "only Universalist minister to our knowledge that does not advocate and practice public prayer. However, Rev. Mr. Parker, a Restorationist, as he calls himself, agrees with him." The Restorationists were Universalists who believed in punishment after death, whereas, the word Universalist, at that time, implied the "death and glory" theology. In response to an inquiry made probably a few years earlier, Rev. J. C. Waldo, of Cincinnati, said, "Mr. R. is thoroughly acquainted with the Universalists in every section of this country. The Restorationists, he says, are comparatively nothing." Similarly, Jonathan Kidwell replied that "There is but one preacher within my acquaintance, calling himself a Universalist, who believes in future punishment, and there are but few private individuals." These statements would be far from true in 1917.

These early Universalists were believers in religious freedom and unity. To emphasize this some of their predecessors

in Ohio had for a time taken the name of the Free Church. In Indiana they contributed frequently to the building of Union churches, and of churches of other denominations which were to be open to any religious society. When they built churches of their own they frequently provided that the buildings were to be open for all meetings of a religious, moral or educational character. Sometimes these situations led to misunderstandings. For example, the Otto United Brethren Church of Franklin county built a church which was to be free to all denominations who believed the essential doctrines of Christianity. The Johnson Fork Universalist Church was refused permission to use the building. A little later the latter were provoked by an attack upon the character of one of their deceased members. Reverend Robert Smith, after holding a service outside the door of the church upon a cold day in February, made application to the court for, and obtained, an injunction permitting them to use the building. But even then almost a riot took place on the day appointed for the meeting.

A case of a slightly different character is that of the Universalists of the White Water Society, who attempted to maintain a Sunday school, which they had organized on June 3, 1838, on a non-sectarian basis. Failing to get the support of the community in this, they relate that they were obliged to "go for the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." Their school thereupon became prosperous, and two years later was in a vigorous condition.

The progress of pioneer Universalism may be summed up by the following statement from the *Indiana Gazetteer*, published in Indianapolis in 1849 (page 75).

Universalism has been preached in this State, more or less, for 20 years, but not until within six or seven has there been much attention paid to organization; and at this time it is supposed there are more believers out of the churches of this denomination than in them. Within a few years, there has been a rapid increase of the adherents to that form of Christianity, and it now has unyielding advocates in all parts of the State. There are 29 preachers, 15 meeting houses, 55 societies, 10 associations, and 1 convention of that denomination in the State, and they publish two periodicals, *The Western Olive Branch*, Indianapolis, E. Mann, editor and proprietor, and the *Independent Universalist*, Terre Haute, E. M. Knapp, editor.

ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCHES

Inheriting the custom from Congregationalism, New England Universalists were organized upon the dual basis of parishes and churches. In Indiana there were few if any instances of such a separation between the business and religious phases of church work. The word parish was not used. The term society, however, was common, but apparently was synonymous with church. The officers were frequently moderator, clerk, treasurer, three trustees and two or more deacons.

The following list is a partial summary of places where Universalist churches have existed in this State. The first date indicates the date of organization; dd indicates building built or dedicated; D stands for dormant or dead; c for about, b for before, and R for reorganized. * shows that the church is still in existence. The location of a few of the places mentioned is uncertain.

- 1860 ABINGTON, D b 1897.
- *1841 ANDERSON, R 1896, dd 1916.
- 1853 ANDERSONVILLE, D b 1872.
- 1870 ANNAPOLIS, D b 1897.
- 1877 AURORA, D b 1897.
- b1844 BEAR CREEK, Perry co., D b 1872.
- 1890 BEECH GROVE, Clay co., Dd 1890, d b 1916.
- BEAVER PRAIRIE (near Morocco).
- 1870 BIG SPRING.
- b1847 BLOOMINGTON, Dd 1847, built by a Mr. Labertaw.
- 1855 BLUFFTON, R 1878, dd 1879, sold 1906.
- 1843 BONO, D b 1872.
- *b1868 BOSTON (Manford was once arrested here for preaching in a school-house)) R 1868, dd 1870.
- *1881 BROOKSTON, Dd 1891.
- b1844. CAMBRIDGE, D b 1872.
- *1898 CASTLETON, Dd 1908.
- 1858 CENTER SQUARE, sold 1886.
- *1894 CLAYPOOL.
- *1845 CLEVELAND, D b 1872.
- 1844 CLOVERLAND.
- 1891 COLLAMER. Building project interrupted by bank failure.
- 1878 COLUMBIA CITY, Dd 1879, sold 1906.
- 1843 COLUMBUS, D b 1872.
- 1843 COVINGTON, D b 1872.
- 1843 CRAWFORDSVILLE, Dd 1844, r 1895 by Ballard and Guthrie, d.
- *1891 CROMWELL, Dd 1891.

- 1841 CUMBERLAND, D b 1872.
*1895 CUNOT, R 1906.
1850 DANVILLE, Db 1879.
c1839 DAYTON, Dd 1839, r 1848, d b 1897.
*c1840 DEVON, organized by Babcock. First met in houses, and once entertained an Association in a mill. R 1869.
b1844 DICKSON SCHOOL HOUSE, D b 1872.
*1842 DUBLIN, Dd c 1848, r 1864.
1871 DUNDEE, active only a few years.
1892 ELWOOD, organized by Ballard; active only a few years.
b1844 EVERTON, Dd 1844, d b 1872.
1848 FAIRFIELD, six years of preaching preceded, dd 1850, burned 1902, disorganized.
*1914 FAIRVIEW, (Near Lexington.)
b1866 FARMERSVILLE, D b 1872.
b1866 FILLMORE, D b 1872.
*b1861 FINCASTLE, date of first building unknown, a minister desired 1830. R and dd 1871.
c1843 FORT WAYNE, Dr. Thompson, physician, active in organization. R by Crosley 1875, d b 1897.
c1843 FRANKFORT, D b 1897.
1843 FRANKLIN, D b 1872.
*1894 GALVESTON, by Fosher, dd 1896.
1858 GERMAN TOWNSHIP, St. Joseph co., Dd shortly after.
b1845 GOSPORT, D b 1872.
1871 GRANTSBURG, D b 1897.
1841 GREENFIELD, D b 1872.
1836 GREENVILLE, D b 1872.
1871 HARMONY, D b 1897.
c1854 HARRISON TOWNSHIP, Cass co. Dr. Edwards, physician, active in organization, Dd 1857, Edwards moved away c 1860, gradually dwindled, building removed 1878, traces of graveyard said still to remain.
b1845 HARTSVILLE, D b 1872.
b1836 HIGH BANKS, D b 1872.
1842 HIGHLAND, D b 1872.
*1874 HOBART, Unitarian with Universalist cooperation.
1860 HOLTON.
*1850 HUNTERTOWN, by a Dr. Vanderhyden, dd soon after.
1872 HUNTINGTON, Dd c 1879, d b 1897.
1833 INDEPENDENT, D b 1872.
*1844 INDIANAPOLIS, Longley here before Manford; the latter came in 1838. Foster an early resident. Organization of 1844 not permanent. R 1853 by Foster. A second church had a short life c 1860. Excellent opportunity to purchase lot on circle neglected. Foster continued pastor many years. R 1884 by Ballard. Present lot given by Mr. John Herron 1889, dd 1894, parsonage 1896, completely remodeled 1916.

- *1856 IRELAND, R by Mitchell 1868, dd 1871.
- 1859 JACKSONVILLE.
- 1842 JEFFERSON, by Manford, D b 1872.
- b1868 JEFFERSONVILLE, merged with Unitarians in 1868.
- 1841 KNIGHTSTOWN, Dd 1844, d b 1872.
- b1836 LACONIA, D b 1872.
- 1841 LADOGA, D b 1872.
- c1838 LAFAYETTE, revived by Manford 1841, rapid growth, R 1850, dd 1852, r 1868, internal disputes led to dormancy and sale 1898.
- b1836 LEAVENWORTH, D b 1872.
- b1836 LIBERTY, Longley here as early as 1830, Dd 1845, d b 1872.
- b1856 LIGONIER, Dd 1856, sold to Disciples 1870.
- 1842 LOCKPORT, by Manford, D b 1872.
- *1857 LOGANSPOUT, Manford and others preached here as early as 1838, W. S. Clark here often c 1843, then Foster and Westfall. Revival by T. C. Eaton 1857, followed by organization. Thomas Gorman the first resident minister 1859. Services at first held in Courthouse, dd 1866, parsonage c 1898.
- c1833 MADISON, R 1869, recently sold.
- *1843 MANCHESTER, by Platts and Israel Noyes, laymen, R 1855 and 1868.
- MANWARING, no minister at first, monthly meetings at which Messrs. Rhorer and E. Gird would "talk to the people, tell them what our faith is, what it is built on, answer objections, etc." D b 1872.
- 1845 MARTINSVILLE, D b 1872.
- c1888 McCORDSVILLE, Dd 1888.
- 1844 MIDDLEFORD, D b 1872.
- *1894 MIDDLEFORK, Dd 1901.
- 1873 MIER, by Ballard, Dd 1875, d b 1897.
- *1859 MILAN.
- 1843 MONTEZUMA, by Manford, D b 1872.
- *1850 MT. CARMEL, Dd 1886.
- c1875 MT. PLEASANT, D b 1897.
- *1859 MUNCIE, by Foster. Earlier preaching secured through efforts of Samuel Watson. Dd 1860, several times remodeled.
- 1878 MURRAY.
- 1859 NEW ALBANY, Dd \$12,000 building 1861, d b 1872.
- b1845 NEW DISCOVERY, D b 1872.
- 1865 NEW HAVEN, by Merrifield at home of H. W. Loveland, lot 1878, D b 1897.
- 1854 NEWVILLE, D b 1875.
- 1843 NEW YORK, D b 1872.
- *b1878 OAKLANDON, Dd 1878, r 1883.
- 1835 PATRIOT, for first few years met weekly with only occasional preaching, Dd 1839 attended by large party from Cincinnati, recently sold.

- 1873 PAWPAW, (first church in Miami county), D b 1897.
- *1859 PENDLETON, Dd ----, remodeled.
- PERRYSVILLE, by Marble, five meetings a month—two religious, two social, and one business, library to loan to non-members, Dd 1841, sold c 1852.
- b1845 PHILOMATH, D b 1872.
- 1865 PIERCEYTON, by Crary, Dd 1869, sold b 1879.
- b1843 PINE TOWNSHIP.
- 1883 PLEASANT GROVE (Wilkenson), by Brown, Dd 1883, sold 1915.
- 1847 PLEASANT HILL, Dd 1852, d b 1916.
- 1870 PLEASANT LAKE, Dd 1872, d b 1897.
- *1891 PLEASANT VALLEY, by Pope, Dd c 1893.
- PORTLAND, preaching here and in vicinity by Marble, D b 1872.
- 1844 PORTLAND MILLS, D b 1872.
- 1843 PRAIRIETON, D b 1872.
- 1843 RAINSVILLE, D b 1872.
- b1845 RICHLAND CREEK, D b 1872.
- *1893 RICHMOND, by Fosher, R by Jones 1907.
- b1845 RIPLEY COUNTY, south of Versailles, D b 1872.
- *1840 RISING SUN, Dd c 1841.
- *1875 ROANN, Dd 1875.
- ROME, D b 1872.
- b1845 SAINES CREEK, D b 1872.
- *1893 SALEM (near Peru), by Pope, Dd 1893.
- *b1848 SALUDA, Dd 1855.
- b1840 SHELBY COUNTY (Flat Rock).
- 1865 SOUTH BEND, D b 1875.
- 1859 STRINGTOWN, D b 1897.
- b1859 SUGAR CREEK TOWNSHIP, Park county, Dd 1859.
- b1856 SUTTONVILLE.
- 1841 TERRE HAUTE, by Manford. Foster soon became pastor and a building was erected. New building after 1865. Sold 1902.
- 1843 THORNTOWN, D b 1872.
- b1866 TOBINSPOUT, D b 1872.
- 1860 TRIPTON.
- b1854 UNION CHURCH, Fountain county. Built by Universalists and Disciples; the former abandoned their interest after the war.
- 1848 UNION CHURCH, Perry county, D b 1897.
- 1870 UNION CHURCH, Union county.
- 1860 UNION CITY, Dd 1872, soon d.
- b1886 UPLAND, D b 1897.
- b1844 NORTH VERNON, recently sold.
- 1826 VEVAY, R 1861, new building 1895, sold 1916.
- 1860 WABASH, D b 1872.
- 1871 WALDRON, D b 1897.
- *1868 WALTON, Dd 1869, rebuilt 1903.

- b1866 WARREN, D b 1875.
- 1871 WEST FORK, D b 1875, Crawford county.
- 1879 WEST LEBANON, Dd 1880 and 1895.
- c1842 WEST UNION, by Manford.
- 1882 WHITESVILLE, Dd 1883, d b 1916.
- b1853 WHITEWATER, First Society on the.
- b1866 WILKENS MILLS, D b 1872.
- 1842 WILLIAMSPORT, D b 1872.
- b1874 WOODVILLE, r 1884, D b 1897.
- 1842 YANKEETOWN.
- b1845 YORKTOWN, D b 1872.

ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ASSOCIATIONS

Like many other denominations of Indiana, and in conformity to the custom of eastern Universalists, the early churches of the middle west were grouped into Associations. The plan of organization usually called for Quarterly, Semi-Annual or Annual meetings. All matters of fellowship, ordination and discipline were originally in the control of these Associations, but later such responsibilities were transferred to the State Convention.

The minutes of Association meetings have not been preserved, except in case of the Rogers Association, which is the only one having a continuous existence from its beginning to the present time. The decline of Associations and the growth of State Conventions is a common tendency throughout the denomination.

The organization of the "First Association of Universalists in the State of Indiana" took place in a three-day meeting beginning September 30, 1831, at Leavenworth. The counties of Crawford, Harrison, Perry and Pike were represented. The temporary officers were Moses Boon, moderator (resigned, and succeeded by Levi Kinman), and William Course, clerk. Committees on Constitution and Resolutions were appointed, and \$200 appropriated for the purchase of Universalist books. It was voted to correspond with a number of prominent clergymen of the eastern States—Hosea Ballou, Hosea Ballou, 2nd, William Balfour, Thomas Whittemore and Sebastian and Russell Streeter—for information and suggestions. This apparently led to the purchase of a shipment of books from Boston and their subsequent sale to

Indiana Universalists. A pretentious corps of officers for the coming year was chosen. President, Rev. E. B. Mann; vice-president, William Course; secretary, David Greggs; treasurer, John Popham; elders, Levi Kinman, Jesse Chapple, George Ewing; committee on discipline, Samuel Harding, John Cooper, Thomas Copehart; trustees, Horatio Sharp, Philip Pearce, William Vaughn.

Subsequent meetings are recorded at Rome, 1832; Laconia, 1833; Tobin's Bottom, Perry county, 1840, and the Association is known to have been in existence as late as 1879.

The Cambridge Association was organized soon after 1831. It was possibly identical with the Western Union Association. The latter met at Anderson and at Richmond as late as 1843.

The Laughery Association was first convened at Versailles in 1840. It included the counties of Jefferson, Switzerland, Dearborn, Ripley and Franklin. Reverend Thomas Hewson was elected moderator; M. L. Edwards, clerk, and E. Rudd, treasurer. During the meetings a church was organized at the home of Armit Robinson, four miles south of Versailles. In 1843 Hewson was employed as an itinerant missionary. He was succeeded by S. P. Oyler.

In 1847 the Laughery Association met at Stringtown. The Kidwell-Manford controversy (see section 5) was causing disruption here and the friends of Manford and Foster were invited to the home of S. H. Knapp, where they formed a new organization, called the Rogers Association, in honor of the Reverend George Rogers. Since then meetings have been held annually or oftener. The association has really been a kind of subordinate Convention for the southeastern corner of the State.

Other associations are as follows:

Name.	Organization	Known to Exist As Late As
Northern (Lower) Wabash-----	1842	1878
Upper Wabash -----	1842	1886
Blue River -----	1844	----
White River -----	1844	----
Decatur -----	1844	1845
Whitewater -----	1856	1906
St. Joseph's Valley -----	----	----
Central -----	----	1886
Elkhart -----	----	1894

THE OLD STATE CONVENTION

The next step in the organization of the church was the grouping of Associations into a State Convention, composed of delegates from the various Associations and from those churches which were not included in any Association. As already stated, a Western Convention had been organized in 1826, but in 1837 its scope was limited to Ohio. This same year saw the organization of State Conventions in Indiana and Illinois. The former convened at Sheets Mills, Jefferson county, on July 28, 1837. Delegates were present from the First and Western Union Associations and from the Patriot society. Among those in attendance were E. B. Mann (moderator), Em Gird (clerk), Reverends Blalock, Kidwell, Wadsworth, Messrs. D. G. Wilson, E. Milligan, J. Hicks, Sr., J. A. N. Gooch, A. Gazeley, and Dr. J. Hubbard. A constitution was adopted, after which Kidwell was elected president, Mann, vice-president, and Gird, clerk.

The session of 1840 was at Patriot, where, in the previous year, a church building had been dedicated. The delegates represented the First Association, the First Society on the Whitewater, the Patriot Society, and the First Society in Shelby county. In addition, visitors from the counties of Ripley, Dearborn, Hancock and Jennings were invited to seats in the council. By-laws were added to a previously adopted constitution. Thomas Hewson of Jefferson county and W. W. Dean of Louisville were given letters of fellowship and license to preach. E. B. Mann was chosen president; Jonathan Kidwell, vice-president, and E. Gird, clerk. The committee of last year "to inquire into the propriety of getting up a book printing establishment" was continued.

The Convention met in 1841 at Flat Rock, Shelby county, at the home of Hallick Vanpelt, five miles southwest of St. Omer. Delegates appeared from the First, Laughery and Western Union Associations and from the societies at Patriot, Knightstown, Perrysville, Marion township in Decatur county, Flat Rock, and other parts of Shelby county, and from Indiana and Kentucky. Mann, Kidwell and G. C. McCune of Knightstown were the clergymen present. Reverend Jacob

M. B. Kaler was granted ordination. Support was pledged to Kidwell's *Encyclopedia*.

The Convention of 1842 met at Knightstown. It drew a larger attendance than any previous session. There were twelve ministers present, including Biddlecome and Rogers from Ohio, and Mann, Manford and Babcock from Indiana. Rev. B. F. Foster was ordained during the meetings. He was said to be "a young man of promising talent." Subsequent years showed this talent unfolding in the service of the Universalist church, the Odd Fellows and the State of Indiana.

Subsequent sessions are recorded at Terre Haute in 1843 and 1845, Madison, 1844, Dublin, 1846, and Laconia in 1847. Meetings were doubtless held yearly from the date of organization to about 1854, but the records are frequently missing. The energy of the convention was largely expended in controversy, the story of which is related in the following section.

THE KIDWELL-MANFORD CONTROVERSY

The decade of 1840 was marked by a bitter controversy between two factions of Indiana Universalists. Although the issues came to be largely personal ones, they grew out of fundamental differences of opinion in regard to Biblical criticism and ecclesiastical policy. On the one side were the earlier pioneer preachers, led by Rev. Jonathan Kidwell; on the other, the more recent comers, headed by Rev. Erasmus Manford.

The work of the former leader has been already referred to. With no apparent educational opportunities, he became a thinker, preacher and writer of merit. For this his opponents never forgave him. Their mean and petty references to his occasional grammatical errors are phrased in abusive language that would not be permitted today. It must be confessed, however, that he did not hesitate to reply in kind. But in the little town of Philomath he edited his monthly *Philomath Encyclopedia and Circle of the Sciences*, and actually succeeded in what his opponents were many years in doing, that is, he opened a Universalist school. In addition to his magazine, he published several books on the Bible. The preface to *The Alpha* (1843) says:

The object of the Alpha is to show that the Jewish Pentateuch was not written by Moses, the Hebrew legislator; that it never existed in its present form until nearly one thousand years after Moses; that in all probability it was the work of Ezra; that the work is a heterogeneous mass of vague traditions combined with Jewish history; that it is not a work of divine authority, nor does the truth of the Christian religion depend on the truth or falsehood of the Pentateuch.

This last clause gives the real clue to Kidwell's position—that Christianity was not dependent upon certain portions of the Old Testament nor upon the miracles of the New. In this he was violently opposed by nearly all of his contemporaries, although today his propositions would be accepted.

A second point of controversy grew out of the first. The opponents of Kidwell wished to disfellowship him for his heretical opinions. This fact, and doubtless his convictions as well, led him to oppose the efforts they were making to place the Indiana Convention under the authority of the United States Convention.

The opening notes of disagreement were sounded as early as 1836, the year in which Rev. George Rogers came west. He and Kidwell were not congenial. It is asserted by Kidwell's friends that Rogers opened the attack, and that he was assisted by Manford. The peacemakers, however, succeeded in preventing any open breach.

But criticisms of Kidwell's heretical views continued to find spoken and printed expression, and he replied by accusing Rogers, Pingree, Manford and others of trying to establish a kind of priesthood, ironically calling them "little bishops." The sentiment of a unified form of church government was growing rapidly among Universalists through all parts of the country, and to this tendency Kidwell was violently opposed. In the convention of 1841 he and his friends were able to vote down the approval of such a proposition originating in the Miami (Ohio) Association, and to secure the adoption of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Universalists of Indiana are of age and consider themselves capable of self-government, and therefore can not submit to any dictation or control, either on the part of our brothers in the east or elsewhere, and that our delegates to the United States Convention be so instructed.

Kidwell's extreme individualism led him to certain ecclesiastical acts that would not be permitted by the fellowship rules of the denomination today. But it must be remembered that there were no uniform rules in those days, and indeed hardly any rules at all. The first case was of G. C. McCune, who was disfellowshipped by the Montgomery (Ohio) Association. It is related that Kidwell restored him to fellowship. This probably means that some Association in Indiana restored him through Kidwell's influence. A second case was that of Judah Babcock, who had befriended McCune. In 1842 he was notified of charges against him in the Allegheny (New York) Association. He went east and returned the next year with papers of recommendation from a large number of friends, which Kidwell published. There was no mention in these, however, concerning the disposition of the charges, which may possibly have been decided against him. A motion in the Indiana Convention of 1844 to disfellowship him was lost, by a vote of thirty in favor to thirty-one opposed, and the matter referred to the Blue River Association. Kidwell's friendship for McCune and Babcock drew this sentence from Manford, "It is well known that Philomath has been for a long time the city of refuge for outcasts of the Universalist Ministry."

A partial cause of the rivalry between Kidwell and the group of men connected with the *Star in the West*, Rogers, Pingree and Gurley, may have resulted from the competition of their papers. Their enmity continued for several years, with charges and counter-charges between the respective camps.

Technical details began to prove a matter of contention in the Convention sessions. It had been the custom to have delegates chosen by the churches, whereas the constitution declared that they must be chosen by Associations. This was pointed out by Kidwell in 1842, who claimed that many supposed delegates were not eligible to vote. His point was sustained by the president, E. B. Mann, whereupon Jordan, one of Manford's supporters, severely criticised Kidwell. This controversy was continued the following year.

In the United States Convention of 1844 a committee was appointed to draw up conditions of fellowship and a uniform

system of church government for all Universalists in the United States. Kidwell was immediately up in arms. In the Indiana Convention of that year his opponents offered a resolution that "this Convention represent itself in the councils of the United States Convention of Universalists this year, and annually, and ask for its fellowship." Kidwell then offered as an amendment "that in becoming a member of the United States Convention we do not surrender the right of legislating for ourselves, but reserve to ourselves the right of making our own laws and regulations." The amendment was adopted, 32 to 30, whereupon the main question was "thrown under the table." The Associations and churches were asked to express themselves on the whole question before the next convention.

In response to this request a few resolutions were adopted in various parts of the State. The special committee of the United States Convention reported its plan of uniform church government, and this, the "Sawyer report," was adopted. The First Association went on record as opposing this report; the Upper Wabash as favoring it. Action by the State Convention was deferred, at first one year, and eventually until the secession of 1848.

In 1846 resolutions were introduced into the Convention questioning Manford's fellowship. These were tabled. The following year at the White River Association, with which Manford held his fellowship, he exhibited documentary evidence from New Hampshire proving his ordination. He invited Kidwell to bring charges against him before the Association.

According to the custom, if not the rules of that time, the Convention had no jurisdiction over questions of fellowship, except in cases of appeal from an Association. Kidwell claimed that the above action of the White River Association constituted a trial and acquittal of Manford, and he accordingly appealed to the Convention. Manford, on the other hand, denied Kidwell's right to bring this appeal, asserting that there had been no formal charges and trial. The president, E. M. Knapp, sustained Kidwell and was in turn sustained by the Convention, 21 to 5. The White River delegates were then excluded and the minutes of their Association in

regard to Manford were "set aside." Kidwell, Babcock, McCune and Mann then preferred five charges of libel against Manford, who was allowed to reply, but given no opportunity to introduce evidence. He was voted guilty and suspended from fellowship pending confession or proof of innocence.

Manford paid no attention to this decree, but treated it as a piece of persecution. He and his friends made an "appeal to the State" by urging the organization of a new Convention. This proposition was approved by the White River, Upper and Lower Wabash, Laughery, and other Associations, and supported by several ministers. The delegates met in 1848 and accomplished the organization of the present State Convention. The old Convention continued to meet in the southern part of the State. But within a few years both Kidwell and Knapp died, and with them the strength of their organization.

Thus ended the controversy. It has been related with a detail somewhat out of proportion to the remainder of this essay for several reasons. It is probably the only instance of rival Universalist Conventions; it reflects the spirit of the day; it perhaps explains the inefficiency of later generations; and, most important, it opens up, for further investigation on the part of some other student, the interesting career of a true pioneer, Jonathan Kidwell.

(To be continued.)