

Elmo Arnold Robinson: A New England Minister in Indiana, 1914-1917

Edited by Pamela J. Bennett

The document which follows sketches and evaluates the thirty-three month Universalist pastorate of the Reverend Elmo Arnold Robinson in Anderson and Pendleton, Indiana. It is a recollection in maturity of a period of youthful beginnings. Robinson came to Indiana from a New England background. He was born in Portland, Maine, on January 1, 1887, and was reared and educated mainly in the East. He had two years experience in parish ministry before he arrived in Anderson.¹ This memoir tells of his reactions to the Middle West, his generally strained relationships with all but a few of his Anderson and Pendleton ministerial colleagues, and his own growing and changing opinions. This is the personal history; Robinson's experience demonstrates some interesting human and social interactions. In addition, the memoir provides a slice of local and religious history which increases its worth as an historical document. Of particular interest are Robinson's comments about the problems of rural churches in general and about his own denomination. Robinson made his initial contribution as an historian of Universalism during this period;² the memoir indicates the impetus toward that end.

This item first came to the attention of the *Indiana Magazine of History* staff in October, 1969, when Robinson indicated that he was writing his autobiography and wanted to publish portions of it. In December, 1969, a draft of "A New England Minister in Indiana" was submitted for review.³ This first draft differs markedly from the present version in organization and contains less detail about people and activities. Robinson omitted several things in revision: a description of his Anderson apartment, a few more details about the 1916 Chicago summer and the 1915 western trip, and a few biting remarks about the Anderson clergy. One episode which Robinson cut when he revised his essay seems important enough to a characterization of both Robinson and the Anderson situation to include here:

When we were getting into World War One, I offered a resolution expressing (as I recall it) something of the Christian witness for peace even in time of war. It was adopted rather enthusiastically. Sarber said a Baptist could have written it. But it was held over a month for final approval. At the second meeting

¹ According to records of the Pendleton Universalist church now in the Indiana Division, Indiana State Library (Indianapolis), Robinson was ordained in June, 1912. "Pendleton Universalist Church Records" (4 vols.), III, 67. Robinson graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Boston) and from St. Lawrence University (Canton, N. Y.) with a B.D. in 1912. See Robinson's autobiographical sketch reproduced on p. 131.

² Rev. Elmo Arnold Robinson, "Universalism in Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII (March, June, 1917), 1-19, 157-88.

³ Elmo A. Robinson to Donald F. Carmony, October 15, 1969.

Brundage made one of his infrequent appearances to oppose it. Everyone but Gerberding and myself backed down. Even he generously offered to make the vote unanimous, but I held out. Nevertheless, a few days later I went with Sarber and others to a meeting of ministers in Indianapolis called by the Governor.⁴

This incident occurred in May, 1917; the repudiation and his public announcement of resignation are both in the *Anderson Herald* of May 15. Although Robinson had previously indicated an intention to resign, the timing may suggest the proverbial last straw in his Anderson endeavors.

Robinson spent two years in Ohio after leaving Anderson. The first, he was minister at Plain City and Woodstock and attended the Ohio State University in Columbus "with a plan of earning a doctorate in American history and a thesis on Universalist history. . . . The second year . . . [he] substituted for Woodstock a job as bookkeeper [*sic*] and teller in a bank. This meant . . . [giving] up the university to earn a living in that war year."⁵

After Ohio Robinson moved west and held various positions in churches and educational institutions: assistant minister, Unitarian Church, San Diego (1919-1921); minister, Unitarian Church, Palo Alto (1921-1926); professor of philosophy, and at retirement department head, San Jose State College (1928-1958); minister and minister emeritus, Los Alamos (New Mexico) Unitarian Church (1959-1962, 1962-1972). He taught summers at several different institutions: University of Oregon (Eugene), San Diego State, Fresno State, Western Washington State (Bellingham), and Starr King School for the Unitarian Ministry (San Francisco, California).⁶ A chapter outline of Robinson's autobiography also indicates "Two interludes" between Palo Alto and San Jose State College—the American Civil Liberties Union in San Francisco and high school teaching in Susanville, California.⁷ Elmo Arnold Robinson died at the age of eighty-five on the evening of January 17, 1972, in Los Alamos.⁸

⁴ "A New England Minister in Indiana" (October, 1969), 10-11. The *Indiana Magazine of History* retained a copy of this draft. The resolution is in the *Anderson Herald*, May 11, 1917, and deals with the relationship of church and state in the matter of war. It was reportedly written in response to the subsequently held meeting of Indiana ministers about the war announced by Governor James P. Goodrich. The resolution was repudiated as Robinson indicates. *Ibid.*, May 15, 1917. The Goodrich meeting on May 15 in Indianapolis endorsed President Woodrow Wilson's policy and offered support. *Ibid.*, May 16, 1917. O. B. Sarber was minister of the Baptist church. Brundage and Gerberding are identified on pp. 145-46.

⁵ Elmo A. Robinson to Donald F. Carmony, January 13, 1970. The Ohio State University confirms Robinson's enrollment in the graduate school from 1917 to 1918. He received a Master of Arts in philosophy on January 9, 1931, from Stanford University (Stanford, California). Armista M. Cook, Registrar's Office, Stanford University, to Pamela J. Bennett, April 7, 1972.

⁶ Elizabeth M. Robinson to Pamela J. Bennett, March 21, April 3, 1972. Elizabeth Magers Robinson married Robinson in 1942. She graduated from the University of Illinois, received M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Iowa, and was associate professor of physiology at Vassar College from 1927-1944. *Ibid.*, March 21, 1972.

⁷ Elmo A. Robinson to Donald F. Carmony, January 13, 1970; Elizabeth M. Robinson to Pamela J. Bennett, April 3, 1972, supplied the locations.

⁸ Elizabeth M. Robinson to Pamela J. Bennett, March, 1972.



ELMO ARNOLD ROBINSON
AUTUMN, 1914

Courtesy Elmo A. Robinson.

A New England Minister in Indiana, 1914-1917¹

The influence of a few words may persist through many years. In response to my question, "Do you have anything on Universalism in Indiana?" the librarian at the Indiana State Library [Indianapolis] replied, "No, why don't you write something?" This conversation occurred, I believe, on August 27, 1915. Its outcome was an essay, "Universalism in Indiana," which appeared in two successive issues of volume 13 of the *Indiana Magazine of History*. Now fifty years later I propose to recount my experiences during three years in Indiana as a Universalist minister. During the intervening years those words of that librarian have been responsible for several essays and a forthcoming book on the history of my denomination.²

The "I" who came to Indiana

My memories of Universalist churches go back to infancy in Portland, Maine, continuing during youth in Rochester, New York, and Boston, Massachusetts. Graduating from MIT, I reverted to an earlier dream of studying for the ministry. To this I devoted three years. Although city-bred my first parishes were among farming people at the eastern end of Lake Ontario.³

¹ The memoir which follows was printed from a typescript submitted by Elmo Arnold Robinson for publication in the *Indiana Magazine of History*. This typescript version contains six footnotes; the content of some of these notes has been included in the present footnotes. When quoted, these notes have been indicated as "original note." The text published here, with the following exceptions, reproduces faithfully Robinson's typescript as submitted. The spacing and type face of subheadings has been altered. Obvious typographical errors have been corrected; [sic] is used to indicate errors not obviously typographical even though Robinson, had he lived to complete work on the memoir, doubtless would have corrected such items. The editor has added bracketed material for minor spelling corrections, expansion of names, and brief clarification of items in the text.

Unless otherwise indicated correspondence cited in the notes is in the files of the *Indiana Magazine of History*. Robinson's papers, presumably including the diary mentioned in this memoir, are now located at the University of Oregon (Eugene).

In addition to those people whose help is amply indicated by citations to their letters, the editor thanks Hazel W. Hopper, Indiana Division, Indiana State Library; Esther Dittlinger and Lois Laymon, Anderson Public Library; and the Reverend John L. Young, minister, Unitarian Universalist Church, Bloomington.

² Rev. Elmo Arnold Robinson, "Universalism in Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XIII (March, June, 1917), 1-19, 157-88. Robinson's other works include the following: *The Universalist Church in Ohio* ([Akron], 1923); "Universalism, a Changing Faith," *The Annual Journal of the Universalist Historical Society*, II (1960-1961), 1-21; "The Universalist Connections of Thomas Starr King," *ibid.*, V (1964-1965), 3-29; "The Universalist General Convention from Nascence to Conjugation," *ibid.*, VIII (1969-1970), 44-93. Robinson's book was published by the Exposition Press as *Story of American Universalism* (New York, 1970).

³ An introductory article in the city newspaper includes the following information about Robinson: "Rev. Robinson is a graduate of the department of biology and public health at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston. Soon after leaving there he began a three years' theological course which he divided among three different seminaries, Tufts, Union and [St. Lawrence at] Canton. For two years he was the minister of the Universalist churches at Henderson and Ellisburg, New York. During the past year he was assistant in physiology in the

Subsequently after a year as a laboratory assistant at Wellesley College, I again sought a pastorate. The board of the Indiana Universalist Convention communicated with Dr. Lewis B. Fisher of Ryder Divinity School (now Meadville-Ryder) at Chicago,⁴ seeking a man to serve churches in Anderson and Pendleton. Upon his recommendation I was hired, sight unseen. This arrangement now seems impulsively entered into on both sides. I was still a bookish person, assuming that other people would be interested in whatever I had found interesting in my reading. I had been west of Buffalo only once, and then only to Akron [Ohio]. I had no idea of what life was like in the middle west.

Nevertheless I was game to find out. I had plans for marriage. I wanted a job. To move so far from my native New England was a challenging adventure. I accepted. On September 4th, 1914, with my bride, Olga Kelsey⁵ of Fort Covington, New York, I arrived to begin my residence in Anderson. Meanwhile I had made a brief visit there, had met a few of the people, and had leased a Langell Apartment on [126] West 12th Street.

The Indiana to which I came

The Indiana which I came to know was largely limited to the area of which Anderson was the center. As we had no automobile, all our expeditions afield were by public transportation. Facilities for this were excellent. Our two railroads gave excellent service in four directions, with one branch line to the south. When visiting my parents in Oak Park [Illinois], we had a choice of three rail routes to Chicago. Interurban electric lines took one quickly to nearby com-

department of hygiene at Sellesley [sic] college Massachusetts." *Anderson Herald*, September 4, 1914. See also Robinson's 1916 autobiographical sketch in *The Prod to Progress* reproduced on p. 131.

⁴ Lewis Beals Fisher (1857-1936) was ordained a Universalist minister in 1881. He was president of Lombard College and Ryder Divinity School, Galesburg, Illinois, from June, 1905, to June, 1911, and became dean of Ryder when it affiliated with the University of Chicago in 1911. *Who Was Who in America* (4 vols., Chicago, 1942-1968), I, 400. "Ryder Divinity School had been the theological department of Lombard College, a Universalist institution founded in 1851 in Galesburg, Illinois. In 1917 Ryder moved to Chicago (the college remaining in Galesburg), and affiliated with the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. In 1928 Ryder officially united with Meadville Theological School, which had recently moved to Chicago from Meadville, Pennsylvania. Lombard College itself closed in 1930. By virtue of this union, Meadville became the theological department of Lombard College. A variety of affiliations have existed with the University of Chicago, but at all times students have taken much or most of their work at the University. The degree is granted by Meadville, however, whose official name has, as a result of this union with Ryder, become Meadville Theological School of Lombard College." Neil R. Jordahl to Pamela J. Bennett, April 7, 1972. Jordahl is the librarian of Meadville Theological School of Lombard College, Chicago, Illinois.

⁵ Olga Kelsey Robinson was also a Universalist minister licensed in 1915. Robinson, "Universalism in Indiana," 184. She and Robinson obtained a divorce in 1942; she died in 1964 in Palo Alto, California. Elizabeth M. Robinson to Pamela J. Bennett, March 21, April 3, 1972.

THE PROD TO PROGRESS

A MONTHLY PAPER DEVOTED TO THE
ANDERSON UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

SUBSCRIPTION FREE—POSTAGE EXTRA MONDAY SEPTEMBER 4, 1915

Calendar of Church Events.

WORSHIP every Sunday evening at 7:30. The session for this month will deal with the life, death, and resurrection of the first generation of Christians.

Sept. 12 "The Word of New Testament Times."

Sept. 17 "The Establishment of Christianity in Antioch."

Sept. 23 "An Early Church in Europe."

Oct. 1 "The Church Problem of the Corinthians."

SUNDAY SCHOOL every Sunday morning at 9:30.

BENJAMIN RUSH SUNDAY SCHOOL on Ohio Avenue near 16th Street, every Sunday morning at 9:30.

LECTURES on "The Appeal of My Party to the Christian Voter" by representatives of four political parties, on the respective Wednesday evenings beginning Sept. 23.

TRUSTEES meeting Oct. 6.

WOMAN'S MISSION CIRCLE September 15 and 27 at the Church, 2:30 to 4.

LADIES' AID September 7 and 21 at the Church, 10 to 4.

All these meetings, except that of the trustees, are public. A cordial welcome is extended to all. Come and get acquainted with the Universalist Church.

IT MAY BE YOUR CHURCH.

UNIVERSALIST
EVANGELISM

COMING: October 4-8
Indiana Universalist Convention

October 10-21
Rev. E. Deas Elderwood, of Ellettsville

What the Universalist Church Stands For

There are many churches in Anderson, most of them have a mass of fine edifices. One to keep their expenses paid, few of them are filled on Sunday. Why, because the Universalist Church is adding another organization to the list which the people have to support? Why should a small group of people struggle along bravely for several years and finally own another building for no hope? The fact, and again obvious are that the other churches are not meeting the needs of the city. We say this kindly, with all respect to the loyal and courageous ministers and people. But fight it out for yourself. Our latest estimate of Anderson's population is about 31,000. How many of those people are in our churches Sunday? A very small proportion. A leading minister of the city two years ago estimated that there were at least four persons in the city, who were not connected with any church. The churches are multiplying, but the home is much larger. Yet the psychologists tell us that man is naturally religious, and that religion is naturally a social affair. Clearly, then the existing churches are not connecting the type of religion that men and women of today demand.

Granting that the needs of today call for a religion of a new type, have we any reason to suppose that the Universalist Church can meet this need? Yes, we have a reason and a good one. It is this: The Universalist Church has a fundamentally different interpretation of Christianity, and one which is applicable and adaptable to the problems of the present. Although there are broad and independent thinkers in every denomination, yet most of the theology of today is 200 years or more behind the times. The Universalist Church, born in the eighteenth century and made in full maturity in the nineteenth century, has always recognized the problems of the twentieth century with the greatest freedom and sincerity.

OUR HISTORY

Even before the Christian era, there were Universalists. The New Testament is full of suggestions of Universalism. The noble Christians of the first century, the "Church Fathers," especially taught the ultimate salvation of all men. But there was an Universalist Church until a little over a hundred years ago. It began when the great mass of people believed in the doctrine of infant damnation, which punishment of the wicked, crude theories of the moment, etc. Moral leaders of America began to teach universal salvation, and to organize our church.

Since the early days our faith has grown. Today there is a great variety of opinion among our ministers and people about matters of theology, of church policy, and of applied Christianity. But we do not quarrel. Our faith is too dear to be easily shaken.

—THE UNIVERSALIST, 1871, 1872.

We believe in the universal Fatherhood of God. The evidence of existence and in logic seems to teach that lack of the natural phenomena of the universe, lack of the laws of astronomy, lack of the phenomena of evolution, in a controlling Force which men call God. This God has many aspects, and many words are needed to describe him, but none so fits him as the term Jesus used—"Father." We believe that God is the father of every human soul, that he has incarnated himself in every human life, that there is a divine spark in us all. In other words there is no personality of evil in the world. There is no devil, and there are no children of the devil.

THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.

We believe in the universal brotherhood of man. Not a kindly wish, brotherhood, but a fact one, which religion teaches, the one God has created us all and has made of one blood all the nations of the earth.

—Continued on Page 4.

Directory of Church Officers and Committees.

Minister: Rev. Elmo Arnold Robinson, 125 West 12th Street, Phone 3106.

Treasurer: Home Committee—John Hickman, 1110 Nichol Ave. Mrs. Margaret Hunkins, Charles Williams.

Finance Committee:—Wm. W. Farrier, 222 Cedar St. William Brown, 816 1/2 North Central Committee:—Mrs. Iva Crook, 2005 Central; Charles Shaul, Albert Greenwood.

Clark: Mrs. Anna Shaul, 22 West 12th Street.

Treasurer: Mrs. Gertrude Brennan, 1429 Park Street.

Superintendent of Sunday School: Mrs. Corbetta Pettus.

Officers of the Mission Circle:—Mrs. Margaret Brown, Mrs. F. P. Jackson, Mrs. Olga Robinson.

Officers of the Ladies Aid: Mrs. A. J. Brauer, Mrs. Iva Crook.

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WILL BE OUT OCT. 3.

Mixed Religion and Politics

It is a familiar saying that religion and politics won't mix. And certainly if by politics is meant the game as it is played by the professional politicians of the old school, the statement is true. Or again, if it is meant that a church can not afford to endorse a political party, the statement is still true.

But there is a growing feeling among the American people that if Christianity is true it ought to have a little more influence in our public life. So much of our official and partisan activity is permeated with graft and insincerity that we are now demanding that at least enough religion be mixed with politics to replace these defects with the spirit of honesty and service.

Sept. 13 "The Appeal of the Socialist Party to the Christian Voter." Mr. William W. Farmer, of Anderson, candidate for Governor.

Sept. 20 "The Appeal of the Progressive Party to the Christian Voter." Mr. Thomas A. Daily, of Indianapolis, candidate for Governor.

Sept. 27 "The Appeal of the Prohibition Party to the Christian Voter." Probably by one of their candidates for State Senator.

On one of the above dates, to be definitely announced later, there will be an additional speaker representing the Republican Party.



A Bit of Autobiography

The editor of this paper is also the advertising agent, business manager, proof reader, as well as boss of a booth at the Free Fair. All this in addition to the usual duties of being a preacher. Having just come in from a three-day tramp after ads among the merchants of the city, (by the way, read over our ads) and being congratulated by the printers cry for more copy, he has come to the conclusion that he may be dead before the next issue comes out. Hence he decides to cast aside the great issues of the day, and the problems of eternity, for the purpose of writing his own autobiography.

MILLER

*Just A Word In Regard
to Cleaning Clothes*

**THE BEST
Is a New Suit**

**NEXT BEST
Is to have MILLER clean
the old one**

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rain as to the studies to pursue here, I was led to "Biology and Public Health" by the head of that department. During this course I was introduced into the mysteries of physics, chemistry, biology, bacteriology, and water and food analysis.

During my residence in Boston I continued to keep in touch with one of our churches there, but not until near the time for graduation did I again seriously consider the ministry. Much to the disgust of my Tech friends I finally decided to try theological school for a year. They gave me a painful send-off by enacting a little farce called "Once a Biologist, Always a Minister."

I began my theological course at our former school in Boston—Tufts College. But in the middle of the year I moved down to New York and entered Union Seminary. This is the school you read about in the papers every time the Presbyterian General Assembly meets. It is really un-denominational, but Presbyterian influence predominates. I was the only Universalist among about 150 students, and I learned a lot. After a year and a half here I moved again, this time to St. Lawrence University at Canton, N. Y. Here I finished my course in June 1912.

During this year I began the active work of the ministry as pastor of the Universalist Churches at Hemmerson and Ellensburg. I had not been preaching very long before I set the world on fire, for one night the latter church burned down. A new one was built during my pastorate.

In 1913-14 I was an assistant at Wellesley College, (Massachusetts), in the department of physiology. Somehow I couldn't stay out of the ministry very long, and so two years ago I sold my Maxwell, got married, and came to Anderson, where I have lived happily ever after.

I believe in my job. I believe that the message of the Universal Brotherhood of Man, the Universal Fatherhood of God, and the Universal Salvation of all souls from sin and sorrow is the message this old world needs. I am glad I am a minister of this gospel, and it is a source of special satisfaction to feel that I am one not because I can't get another job, but because I have chosen this work myself.

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History of the Anderson Universalist Church

A Universalist Church was probably organized in Anderson vicinity as early as 1841. Alton Makepeace, Zenas Beckwith, and Jacob S. Then are mentioned as the delegates to an Association meeting. But this organization was evidently not a permanent affair.

Anderson was frequently visited by the Rev. Erasmus Manford, an itinerant Universalist clergyman, who used to cover the whole of what was then "The West" in his travels. There are records of his visit in 1844, when he gave five addresses, 1872, and 1875. He was doubtless here many other times, for on the last occasion he wrote that there "were here" some good friends, but they seldom have a meeting save when we come along. His addresses on this visit were given in the Disciple Church.

In June 1896 the Rev. Jesse B. Foster, pastor of the Pendleton Universalist Church, began the organization of the present church in Anderson. He continued for three years, and was then succeeded by Rev. Sara L. Steiner, also of Pendleton. In March 1903 the Rev. J. E. Hallner, formerly a resident of Muncie, became the pastor in Anderson, and came to this city to live. The work so ably begun under his predecessors continued to prosper under his leadership. Mr. Hallner's departure was deeply regretted by the church, because he was willing to undertake the pastorate for some years. For a brief time the Rev. F. W. Evans and for a longer period the Rev. F. D. Adams, supplied the pulpit from Pendleton and Indianapolis respectively. In September 1914 the present pastorate began.

During all these years the church had owned no church home, but had met in various halls. There was considerable discussion about building or buying a church, but no definite plans were worked out. Then when the Congregational Church began to talk of disbanding, negotiations were made with that body, looking to a union of the two small churches into a larger and stronger one. On account of certain legal reasons, this plan failed, and an attempt was made to lease the building of the Congregationalists with the privilege of buying, but this arrangement was prevented by the sale of the property to the Friends.

Unable for the present to secure a church building, the membership finally decided to purchase the dwelling house and lot at 214 W. 6th. The house was slightly remodelled & for about two years was used as a church, during which time it was paid for. Upon the arrival of the present pastor plans were laid for raising of a building fund to erect a church on the Sixth street lot. A beginning was being made on this when an opportunity came to purchase the old Church of God at 14th and Brown Sts. This opportunity was immediately seized upon and in a short time the transaction was completed. The old St. property was sold and during the present summer the new home is being repaired and rearranged for the winter's work.

THE FINAL APPEAL

"But one resource has been found to satisfy the longings of the soul throughout the ages—this is RELIGION.

When a man is hungry with a hunger that is of the soul and which physical bread only mocks, when he thirsts with a thirst which the things of sense can not quench, when he is tired so that no bed can rest him—wary in mind and heart and soul and tired of life (itself) when hope fails and courage declines; when the currents of human friendship and love seem to freeze; when sorrow and disappointment crush his spirit—then what shall be a man's resource?

In all man's thousands of years of search and experience only one adequate resource has ever been found to satisfy the deepest longings of the soul in its titanic struggles with life and death; and that this is to be found in the range of experience which, for a lack of a better term, we call RELIGION.

The conscious opening of all the doors of the human soul to the incoming tides of the Infinite Life, of which we are a part, by some chemistry we do not understand, is mingled with our finite soul and become to us a tonic such as no mortal can brew. As the tides of the Infinite Life flow through ours somehow the ocean's music becomes a part of our inheritance and we become sea-born souls, with bays and rivers and islets opening everywhere into the universal life.

—B. G. Carpenter

UNIVERSALISM

—IS—

MODEKNIZED
CHRISTIANITY
SOCIALIZED RELIGION
CHRISTIAN RATIONALISM
SPIRITUAL SCIENCE
INTERNATIONALISM

A QUEST FOR THE BEST IN
THE WHOLE OF LIFE
FOR ALL.

Are You A Universalist?

A Word on War.

Ev' for war, I call it murder.—
There you hev it plain and flat;
I don't want to go no furdur;
Than my Testament for that;
God hex sed so plump and fairly,
It's ez long ez it is broad,
An' you've gut to git up airy
Ef you want to take in God.

Taint your epyettes an' feathers
Make the thing a grain more
Right;
'Taint a fellerin' your bell-wethers
Will excuse ye in His sight;
Ef you take sword and dror it,
An' go stick a feller thru,
Guv'ment aint to answer for it,
God'll send the bill to you.

Wat's the use o' meetin' goin'
Every Sabbath, wet or dry,
Ef it's right to go amosin'
Feller-men like outis an' rye?
I durno but wat it's poorty
Trainin' round in bobtail coats,
But it's curus Christian dooty
This 'ere cuttin' folk's throats.

—James Russell Lowell

THE CITIZENS BANK

Facts about the
Universalist Church

According to the Register for 1916 there are 726 Universalist parishes.

There are 55,730 church members.

There have been 2947 additions since January 1. This is about 5.6 per cent.

There are 540 Universalist ministers.

There are three preparatory schools, three colleges, and three theological seminaries under the guidance of Universalists.

"The Universalist Church, though small in numbers, has ever been alive to the championing of social rights. In 1790 the Universalists put themselves on record against the holding of human beings as slaves. A slave was a charter member of the First Universalist Church in America."

Rev. Adin Ballou, a Universalist, founded an early cooperative community at Hopdale, Mass.

The first journal devoted to working women in this country was organized by a Universalist minister at Lowell.

The first national body of women in the United States was a Universalist organization.

The Universalists were first to actively promote a woman ministry.

The second college to introduce coeducation was Lombard, a Universalist school.

The first great agitation against capital punishment, the first proposal of parole, and the first prison paper were instigated by Universalists.

Universalists have been agitators for peace. Clara Barton was a Universalist.

They have been intimately connected with the temperance movement; one of the first temperance papers was run by a Universalist.

Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia was instrumental in organizing one of the first Sunday schools in America. He was a Universalist.

Universalism has a social message for today.

munities. It was a simple matter to spend an hour, an evening, a day in Pendleton. Indianapolis was easily accessible.⁶

Anderson was a city of small factories. Several years earlier, so I was told, it had received an influx of cheap labor from the south. From our centrally located apartment we could walk without difficulty to any part of the city. Few of its inhabitants, I suppose, had ever attended college—probably none from my congregation. There was a good public library, a Lyceum course of lectures and concerts, and an adequate daily newspaper, *The Anderson Herald*. A friendly editor accepted my items without question, and sometimes even asking me to report a lecture or concert for him. So far as I can recall, the schools were good.⁷

Anderson citizens were chiefly factory workers and their families, served by a number of business and professional people. There were some good physicians, one of whom, a Dr. Miley, we chose.⁸ Specializing among them was just beginning, with the so-called specialists still in process of learning their trades. The city's most popular physician used to describe his cases to a knowledgeable pharmacist, asking his advice about what to prescribe.⁹ I had a low impression

⁶ Robinson's original note indicates: "To Chicago direct via Pennsylvania; or through Indianapolis and thence via Monon or New York Central." According to a contemporary publication by the Chamber of Commerce, "Anderson is situated on the main divisions of the P. C. C. & St. L. Ry., The Big Four Division of the New York Central Lines, The Central Indiana Railway (leading direct to coal fields) and the Union Traction Company of Indiana, which operates an interurban system over the entire state and is connected with other interurban lines throughout Ohio, Michigan and Illinois." Henry R. Fish, *Illustrated Anderson, Indiana, U. S. A., 1915* (photographic reproduction, with street addresses added, Anderson, 1966), 7.

⁷ According to *Illustrated Anderson* the Public Library was made possible by funds from Andrew Carnegie and the city combined. It was dedicated April 20, 1905. In 1915 holdings reportedly were 24,000 volumes and there was "an average of 201 books loaned each day, besides the loan of books to public schools" (p. 7). *Illustrated Anderson* also indicates that the public schools are "noted throughout the United States. Anderson has 12 splendidly equipped school buildings that house over 6,000 pupils" (p. 6); this included Manual Training High School. Apparently the lyceum course was initiated shortly after Robinson arrived in Anderson. The Redpath Lyceum Bureau and the Anderson Ministerial Association planned to manage jointly such a project early in September, and season tickets were advertised by early October. *Anderson Herald*, September 15, October 7, 1914. Lyceum announcements occur in various issues throughout the next thirty months. The *Herald* was begun in 1868 and went through several owners until it was purchased and modernized by Wallace B. Campbell in 1895. Campbell was aided by E. C. Toner editorially and Charles H. Neff on the business aspects. It reportedly was a Republican paper and ranked "high in the newspaper field. Mr. Toner has continued to serve as editor, since first assuming charge of this department." James J. Netterville, comp., *Centennial History of Madison County Indiana: An Account of One Hundred Years of Progress, 1823-1923* (2 vols., Anderson, 1925), I, 140. No reviews by Robinson have been located, but such items were generally not bylined.

⁸ Weir M. Miley, M. D. (1885-?) graduated from Indiana University and then Jefferson Medical College (Philadelphia) in 1910. After an internship in Philadelphia, he returned to Anderson. In 1917 he enlisted in the United States Army Medical Corps. Netterville, *Centennial History*, II, 47-48.

⁹ According to Robinson's original note, "This information was furnished by a friend, the owner of the pharmacy."

MADISON COUNTY



of the courts, where some of the attorneys sat with feet on courtroom tables, and proceedings seemed disgracefully lax.

There were several churches, employing perhaps twenty or thirty ministers, including two or three Negroes. A delightful memory is that of evening singing in one of the Negro churches near our residence. The predominant sect was Christian, with Baptists and Methodists as runners-up. The leading Christian Church was near us, with the First Methodist across the street from us. Socially the church to belong to was the Presbyterian, or else the less pretentious Episcopalian. An integrated city ministerial association met monthly for programs and luncheons.¹⁰

Pendleton was something else. It had a rural setting and yet was a compact village. Only one of my congregation, Isaac Jones, actually lived on a farm. To me the people seemed more typically Hoosiers than did those of Anderson, and their community on the whole was a cut above the larger city in cultural standards.¹¹

Universalism in Indiana

My essay of fifty years ago¹² sketched the history of our movement in the state. Here I shall very briefly condense that story. After the United States gained its independence, westward migration brought into the Ohio Valley from the Atlantic states settlers of divergent religious convictions. The region was a field of rival sectarian competition, with lengthy and bitter debates. Among these newcomers were many Universalists, both laymen and preachers. The latter, often restless, tended not to stay with the churches which they had gathered. They had come on their own initiative, without support from older societies to the east. Some of their Indiana churches

¹⁰ *Illustrated Anderson* indicates that there were thirty-five churches (p. 6). John L. Forkner lists with addresses twenty-eight churches in Anderson in *History of Madison County Indiana: A Narrative Account of Its Historical Progress, Its People and Its Principal Interests* (3 vols., Chicago, 1914), I, 247. There were generally fifteen to twenty churches mentioned in the column of church announcements which appeared each Saturday in the *Herald*. Ministerial Association reports appeared regularly in the *Herald* following the meetings.

¹¹ Forkner indicates that Pendleton was easily accessible by both rail and interurban. "The Pendleton of the present day has a modern school building, four churches, a weekly newspaper, well paved streets, two banks, several well equipped mercantile establishments and a number of handsome residences." Forkner, *History of Madison County*, I, 125. A column featuring Pendleton news appeared frequently—often every issue—in the *Herald*. There are abundant references to various kinds of cultural activities. Census figures for the two locations indicate a substantial difference in size and strong growth for Anderson in the decade during which Robinson spent three years there: Anderson, 22,476, Pendleton, 1,293, in 1910; Anderson, 29,767, Pendleton, 1,244, in 1920. U.S., *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910*. Vol. II, *Population, 1910* (Washington, 1913), 538, 540; U.S., *Census, 1920 State Compendium—Indiana*, 20, 22.

¹² This refers to "Universalism in Indiana" published in the *Indiana Magazine of History* in 1917. The dating here places composition of this memoir as early as 1967. Robinson obviously wrote over a period of several years, and his revisions update the article to 1970.

were in cities; many were in small towns or rural areas, where supporters were too few to employ a resident minister, even though money and labor might provide a suitable or even attractive building.

When I arrived in Indiana many of these societies were practically dormant, although still listed in the denominational yearbook. Usually they retained enough vitality to keep their buildings in repair and to bring in a clergyman for weddings, funerals, and a few services each year. There were but few ministers employed full time: Will Couden in Indianapolis, Edward G. Mason at Muncie, John Carpenter followed by Charles E. Petty at Logansport. H. C. Beckett and also Leon and Martha Jones were giving part-time help to rural churches. A Rev. Mr. Wicks in Indianapolis was the sole Unitarian minister in the state.¹³ My diary records visiting churches nearby at Oaklandon and Castleton, and at unidentified Cunot and Devon.¹⁴ To the north I called on Universalist families in Alexandria, Summitville, Jonesboro, and Marion. In the farm country to the south around Markleville there were clusters of Universalist families, some of whom were identified with the church at Pendleton. None of them thought to use their new automobiles to attend on Sunday.

What had been happening was a decline in rural churches. Concerned leaders in all denominations were trying to counter the trend. Previously I had attended Country Life Institutes at St. Lawrence and Cornell.¹⁵ Our denomination, being strongly rural, was losing churches. These losses were a factor in the later consolidation with the Unitarians.¹⁶ In 1914 I did not fully grasp the situation, still considering our rural churches to be a field for religious renewal.

¹³ Frank Scott Corey Wicks (1868-1952) was ordained a Unitarian minister in 1895. He was installed as pastor of All Souls Unitarian Church, Indianapolis, in 1905. *Who Was Who in America*, III, 914. Jacob Piatt Dunn praises Wicks for his contributions to religion and the community in an extensive article in *Greater Indianapolis: The History, the Industries, the Institutions, and the People of a City of Homes* (2 vols., Chicago, 1910), II, 1078-79. The other ministers Robinson mentions have not been identified except for full names and dates of ordination, given in parentheses: William Coudon (1902), Edward Gilman Mason (1892), John Randolph Carpenter (1887), Charles Ellsworth Petty (1899), Henry C. Beckett (1896), Leon P. Jones (1894), Martha Garner Jones (1894). Neil R. Jordahl to Pamela J. Bennett, April 7, 1972.

¹⁴ Mention of these towns has been located in various places including Robinson's "Universalism in Indiana," 9. Apparently they no longer exist as towns, and further information about them has not been located. A Cunot in northern Owen County does, however, appear on various older maps of Indiana.

¹⁵ Robinson reported on these two conferences in the *Universalist Leader*: "Country Life Institute at Canton, N. Y.," XVI (January 4, 1913), 12-13; "Country Church Conference at Cornell," XVI (March 8, 1913), 303-304. This movement was widespread, and concern apparently was officially recognized when Theodore Roosevelt appointed the Commission on Country Life in August, 1908. L. H. Bailey, *The Country-Life Movement in the United States* (New York, 1911), 216. The National (later American) Country Life Association held its first meeting in Baltimore, Maryland, in January, 1919. *Proceedings of the First National Country Life Conference: Baltimore, 1919* (Ithaca, N. Y., [1919]).

¹⁶ This merger occurred in several stages. In 1953 the denominations, the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America, formed

Officers of the Indiana Universalist Convention in 1915 were president, John F. Clifford of Connersville; vice-president, Clay Whitely of Muncie; secretary, Nellie Stouder of Muncie; treasurer, Melvin A. Beagle of Oaklandon; trustees, Orlando Moseley of Peru, Andrew Taff of Madison, and Peter Disher of Indianapolis.

My tasks

On this background I shall try to describe my three years in Indiana, the years of a bookish man now given to impulsive activities, of a well-educated man unprepared for the tasks confronting him. First the Anderson story, although programs there were often repeated at Pendleton.

My formal installation was arranged for September 20th.¹⁷ Already I had plunged into the typical routine of the conventional ministry: preaching services, Sunday School, and pastoral calling. The only auxilliary [*sic*] organization was a Ladies Aid. Now and again I gathered a youth group, a men's club, a boy's club, and a study club. Interest in these was slight. They were short-lived. But the boys and I managed one camping trip to Idlewold.¹⁸

An early Universalist organization in Anderson in 1841 had left no impression on the city. The new group (1896) had had one previous pastor, J. E[dward] Haffner, who had since left the ministry for a business career in Birmingham, Alabama. I met him when on two occasions he returned to visit his former parishioners. His leadership had led to the purchase of a small building, partly paid for, at 214 West 6th Street.¹⁹ It was an unattractive dwelling with three rooms, arranged for temporary religious use.

the Council of Liberal Churches (Universalist-Unitarian) which "brought together the religious education, public relations, and some of the publishing activities of the two denominations." In 1956 a merger commission was formed, and in 1961 a true consolidation resulted in the Unitarian Universalist Association. Ernest Cassara, ed., *Universalism in America: A Documentary History* (Boston, 1971), 40-41.

¹⁷ The program for Robinson's installation is in the *Anderson Herald*, September 19, 1914.

¹⁸ Idlewold has not been definitely located but Herbert R. Hill of the Department of Natural Resources and his wife "have the hazy recollection that there was an Idlewold picnic and recreation facility near Pendleton at the time of World War I." Herbert R. Hill to Pamela J. Bennett, March 27, 1972. The Anderson Public Library indicates that there is an Idlewold Golf Club near Pendleton at the present time. Donna Cumberland to Pamela J. Bennett, March 26, 1972.

¹⁹ The *Anderson Herald* indicates that "The Universalist Church has been without a pastor since the departure last winter of Rev. F. D. Adams, during whose pastorate the church purchased the present temporary quarters at 214 West Sixth street." September 4, 1914. Robinson has indicated that Haffner left in 1909 and that Frank D. Adams, located at Indianapolis, also preached at Anderson; Adams left Indiana in 1914. Robinson, "Universalism in Indiana," 182, 178. Forkner indicates that the Anderson Universalist church had not been strong enough to erect a church and met at 710 Jackson Street. *History of Madison County*, I, 245. See also the history of the Anderson church in *The Prod to Progress* reproduced on p. 132. Haffner's presence was announced at the church for Sunday, November 5, 1916. *Anderson Herald*, November 4, 1916.



ANDERSON UNIVERSALISTS OUTSIDE WEST SIXTH STREET BUILDING,
ANDERSON, INDIANA, C. AUTUMN, 1914

Courtesy Elmo A. Robinson.

My first task seemed to be to make Universalism known in the city. One method was to rent slides for illustrated lectures, sometimes about places of which I knew little. But after the summer of 1915, described below, I could talk about the San Francisco Exposition and Glacier National Park. For such lectures the press gave good publicity.²⁰

Irregularly other programs were presented. The Presbyterians lent their auditorium for a concert by a Universalist octette from Muncie. We had a lawn party with a once-act [*sic*] play. We manned a booth at the Anderson Free Fair.²¹ Wicks came from Indianapolis to deliver his oft repeated lecture on "Good Men in Hell." Rev. Frank Adams, already known in this area, returned to Indiana to speak for us. For several weeks I issued a printed four-page throw-away paper, *The Prod to Progress*, paid for by advertising. It featured news of our church, announced my sermons, and supplied information about our point of view.²² I took an impish delight in knowing that it must irritate my orthodox colleagues. My wife became genuinely interested in poor families in the Ohio Avenue neighborhood. She started a Sunday School among them, somehow finding money for a small building.²³

In those years our denomination was promoting "Universalist Evangelism." A week or more of widely publicized meetings would be announced, usually at the Easter season, from which the emotional sensationalism of the usual revival was eliminated. The purpose was to renew and expand moral insights, communicate Universalist teachings, and secure new members. For such services I had the assistance of visiting ministers: Edward Mason, Charles Petty, [E.] Dean Ellenwood, George Baner, and Wesley Price. Resulting additions to our membership were few, but enough to encourage us.²⁴

²⁰ For example, the Pendleton church was to host an illustrated lecture series on six Tuesday nights on six European countries and their people. *Ibid.*, February 17, 1915. "Ten Good Times Ahead" was the name given a series of Friday evening illustrated talks, lectures, and social evenings directed by Robinson and others at the Pendleton Universalist church. *Ibid.*, October 7, 1915. There was occasional followup publicity.

²¹ Presumably this refers to the Madison County Free Fair which had reportedly four successful days after opening in Anderson on September 1, 1915. *Ibid.*, September 1, 1915; see also issues for succeeding days.

²² See reproductions of one issue, September 4, 1916, on pp. 130-33.

²³ *The Prod to Progress*, reproduced on p. 130, refers to the Sunday school under "Calendar of Church Events." An earlier article in the *Herald* about Robinson's leadership in Anderson indicates that "Last May a mission Sunday school was organized on East Eighteenth street. The beginning of a temporary structure to house the school was made this week, a part of the spirit of progress that exists in the church." *Anderson Herald*, October 28, 1915.

²⁴ By far the most frequent religious activity reported in the *Herald* was the denominational revival. The Universalists, like other denominations, received their best newspaper publicity for such events if total column inches is a fair indication. Throughout October and November, 1915, issues there are almost daily reports and summaries of the meetings conducted by evangelist Wesley G. Price of Pennsylvania who was in Anderson for three weeks (October 18-November 8) and

Plans for a church building were discussed early, even to the point of consulting an architect at Elkhart. Meanwhile I solicited funds to complete the payment on the Sixth Street property. This was soon sold. Before building plans matured, however, officers of the state board assumed direction. In June 1916 a large, plain, ugly barnlike building was purchased from the Church of God. Its location, near our residence, was excellent. The building should have been torn down, making room for a smaller, more attractive structure. Instead one corner was remodeled for our use. This we occupied the following September. During an interim period our services were held on the lower floor of the Public Library.²⁵

The building project might have developed more happily, if friction had not arisen between some members of the state board and me. Believing that the church had an obligation to inject moral ideals into the political situation, I invited representatives of five political parties to lecture (republican, democratic, socialist, progressive, prohibition). The president of the board, who was also a non-resident member of

then went to Pendleton for two weeks. The notices are enthusiastic about Price and indicate that he was quite successful. Apparently this was true since he extended the Anderson revival one week. Apparently also Price was impressed with Robinson: "Mr. Robinson recently received an offer to assist the Rev. W. G. Price . . . in a months' campaign in New York city. He was invited to take care of the newspaper and other advertising, and the group work." Robinson did not accept because of local duties. *Ibid.*, December 21, 1915. Robinson presented a series of Sunday night sermons on "Universalism Versus Orthodoxy" from March 5 through April 23, 1916. *Ibid.*, March 4, 1916. In October, 1916, as part of a three week revival, evangelist Ellenwood received enthusiastic and lengthy reports of his meetings beginning with his second talk reported *ibid.*, October 19, 1916. Mason finished the meetings when Ellenwood was called home on October 25 for a funeral. *Ibid.*, October 26, 1916. A report of an annual meeting of the Anderson church indicates that membership in 1915 increased from forty-seven to sixty-three persons. *Ibid.*, January 13, 1916. No figure was located for 1916. Everett Dean Ellenwood, Elgin, Illinois, was ordained in 1905; George Cross Baner, Akron, Ohio, was ordained in 1899; Wesley G. Price, Titusville, Pennsylvania, was ordained in 1906. Neil R. Jordahl to Pamela J. Bennett, April 7, 1972.

²⁵ One report indicates that building plans had been discussed relatively early in Robinson's ministry at Anderson. Several members of the church apparently considered plans for the Sixth Street lot, but action was deferred until after consulting with the state board. Plans reportedly were "for a brick building to seat between two and three hundred persons." *Ibid.*, March 4, 1915. No further mention of such plans has been located, but, when the Universalist option on the property at Fourteenth and Brown streets was announced, the article mentions that the state board recently set aside \$2,000 for a "church home" in Anderson. *Ibid.*, October 28, 1915. The deal on this property was closed on November 9, 1915, and the Universalists were to take over on June 1, 1916, when the Church of God lease for the building was to expire. *Ibid.*, November 10, 1915. At their 1916 annual meeting it was announced that the land debt for the Sixth Street property had been paid off. *Ibid.*, January 13, 1916. The Sixth Street property was reportedly sold on April 6, 1916; meetings until June 1 took place in the library. *Ibid.*, April 7, 1916. Apparently several services were held in the new building during June, but activities were suspended during the summer while Robinson was in Chicago. Services were resumed on September 10 in the "partly remodeled building." See for example *ibid.*, June 3, September 9, 1916. The building was dedicated on October 8, 1916, as part of the annual session of the Universalist Convention of Indiana held in Anderson. The report of the dedication service indicates that pledges for \$2,000 to lift the full indebtedness had been received. *Ibid.*, September 28, October 8, 10, 1916.

the Anderson church, objecting to my plan, wrote to some of the speakers, urging them not to accept. Under these circumstances the lectures were unsuccessful; perhaps they would have been any way.²⁶ I still think my critic was out of order, but I now see that I failed to convince in advance the members of the church of the supposed wisdom of my policy. There was a second area of friction, presently to be described. My greatest error in Anderson was in permitting alienation between the board and myself.

My chief task should have been to provide an inviting, dignified, and useful building. To achieve this additional members were needed. No one had thought the problem through. No one formulated the task for me, or gave me counsel. I knew nothing about building construction or fund raising.

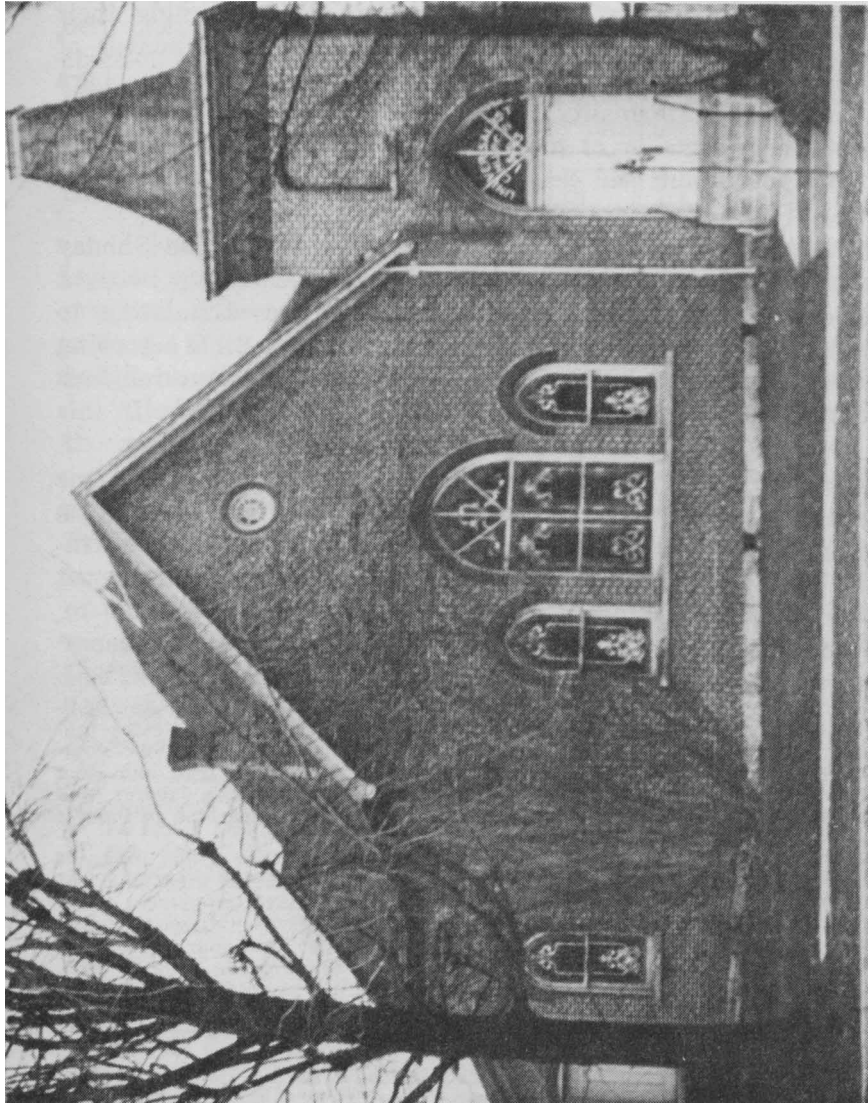
Anderson had its social classes. One option open to me was to appeal to members of the working class, including socialists. Price might have helped with this. Another option was to cultivate middle class people like those of the Indianapolis or Muncie churches. Ellenwood might have sparked this. In his series of meetings he was beginning to do so, when an emergency called him home. Class lines meant nothing to me. Our little band, fine devoted people, were not the type to attract the more affluent. One woman told me frankly that to join us would hopelessly shock her friends.

The parents of Senator Frederick Van Nuys were neighbors. The father was a Unitarian; the mother, a Universalist. With the father I used to play chess. When they died within forty-eight hours of each other, the son could not quite trust me with the funeral. I assisted the Presbyterian minister.²⁷ This was, I suppose, another demonstration of class lines.

Neither memory or records can supply many names of active supporters of our movement. I do recall, however, Cordelia Britton

²⁶ A series of speakers representing four political parties was announced in September, 1916. The first speaker was William Farmer, Socialist gubernatorial candidate and a member of Robinson's church. The second speech by Thomas A. Dally, Progressive gubernatorial candidate, was fully reported. The third speaker Elwood Haynes, Prohibition party nominee for the United States Senate, was given good publicity; his meeting reportedly "was one of the best of the series." *Ibid.*, September 9, 16, 21, 28, 1916. No other reports of speakers were located. See also *The Prod to Progress* announcement on p. 131.

²⁷ Mrs. Catherine Custer Van Nuys died on October 13, 1915; Dr. David Henry Van Nuys died on October 15, 1915. Both had bronchial pneumonia; the report makes much ado about the fact that they died exactly forty-eight hours apart. Their funeral was held on Sunday, October 17, 1915, with Robinson and Birchard F. Brundage officiating. *Anderson Herald*, October 14, 16, 17, 1915. Frederick Van Nuys (1874-1944), a lawyer, graduated from Earlham College, Richmond, and the Indiana Law School, Indianapolis. After several official positions in Indiana, Van Nuys was elected to the United States Senate in 1932 and 1938. In 1916 he was a member of the Indiana State Senate. *Memorial Services Held in the House of Representatives and Senate of the United States, Together with Remarks Presented in Eulogy of Frederick Van Nuys, Late a Senator from Indiana* (Washington, 1946), 5, 15. This publication contains proceedings and memorial exercises related to Van Nuys in the Senate and House in 1944 and 1945.



**UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, PENDLETON, INDIANA
C. AUTUMN, 1914**

Courtesy Elmo A. Robinson.

and her brother (small merchants), Ida Eckel (teacher), Glen Brennan and his mother, Victor Cook and his mother, Mrs. Margaret Hutchins, Mr. and Mrs. John Hickman, William Farmer, a Mrs. Shipley and a Mr. Carney.²⁸

The Pendleton church

Pendleton Universalists had organized in 1859, erecting their building in 1895. It was acceptably servic[e]able by standards of that time and place.²⁹ The auditorium, equipped with noisy opera chairs, encouraged informality. Couden in Indianapolis, annoyed by the noise and informality of his group, once preached on the texts, "Now when the tumult had ceased" and "Let all things be done decently and in order."

Here as at Anderson I conducted services, guided the Sunday School, arranged lectures and social events, and made calls. I sought to make my sermons educational, interesting, and stimulating to thought and moral insight. In some I interpreted the Bible according to modern scholarship. Many themes were drawn from religious and secular history, and from contemporary social problems. In this field I had been influenced by Baptist Walter Rauschenbusch.³⁰

Here also there were annual series of evangelistic meetings. One unusually successful entertainment was a mock trial in the form of a breach-of-promise case. Participants entered into it with so few inhibitions that the audience, of sufficient size to fill the room, almost accepted it as the real thing.

The regular congregation included several Hicksite Quakers,³¹

²⁸ See *The Prod to Progress* directory on p. 130 for some full names and additions to this list. Information from the Anderson Public Library indicates that Cordelia M. Britton was a clerk for Wallace E. Britton, a grocer at 630 West Fourteenth Street. Ida Eckel was a bookkeeper for Gedge Brothers Iron and Roof Company. There are two possibilities for Mr. Carney: Thomas, a laborer, and Joseph, a patternmaker at Remy Electric Company. Donna Cumberland to Pamela J. Bennett, March 26, 1972.

²⁹ Forkner lists several of the founders of the Pendleton church and indicates that in 1859 "a frame house with a seating capacity of about 400 was erected, at the cost of \$2,500, on the corner of Main and Water streets. In 1895 the present building of brick, on the same site, was erected. *History of Madison County*, I, 245. The Indiana Division, Indiana State Library (Indianapolis), has four manuscript volumes of Pendleton church records dating from its founding in 1859 to 1929. The records include the original constitution, minutes, parish records, and treasurers' records. Subsequent references to these records will be indicated "Pendleton Universalist Church Records," with the volume number designated by the State Library.

³⁰ Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918) was ordained a Baptist minister in 1886. He was professor of church history at Rochester Theological Seminary beginning in 1902. His many works include *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (New York, 1907) and *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York, 1917). *Who Was Who in America*, I, 1011.

³¹ "In April, 1827, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends split into two new and bitterly antagonistic organizations. The [Hicksite-Orthodox] Separation spread and soon involved most Friends in America." The controversy mainly concerned the teachings of Elias Hicks (1748-1830), a Quaker

retired couples, elderly single women, and teachers. A few I recall, by name: George W. [B.] Routt, superintendent of schools; Claude Fosher and his wife [Cora?] (Claude's father was a retired Universalist minister); Frances Brownback, widow of Dr. Orlando Brownback, and their daughter; Moses and Mary Rent; Charles and Kate Frampton; Mollie Dunwoodie [Dunwoody] and her sister; Isaac Jones, our farmer member.³² One Sunday Isaac took me home to dinner, unannounced. Soon we were seated at a table loaded with chicken, sweet potatoes, breads, jams, jellies, pies, cakes, and canned peaches. At the end Mrs. Jones apologized, "If I had known I was to have company, I would have had white potatoes too."

Other denominations and their ministers

I joined the Anderson ministerial association, attending regularly in spite of some unfriendliness. We met at a host church for a program, followed by a luncheon with the usual Indiana abundance of food. Once at a Negro church supply was so generous that dishes had to be piled on top of each other. At one session I gave a paper on "Christian Socialism" and once took part in a debate on this theme.³³

In some instances it was difficult to respect my colleagues. Average educational level was low. It was perhaps for this reason that Presbyterian Birchard F. Brundage seldom came. One highly popular pastor cribbed his address at a state institution. Once the leader of our "devotional" service used his time to attack me and my denomination. One man whom I respected was O. B. Sarber of the Baptist church. Many of these men probably thought my preaching was sending many souls to hell. My publicity methods must have irritated them.³⁴

minister from Long Island, New York, whose major doctrine was the preeminence of the Inner Light in a man's salvation and a rejection of the trinitarian concept of God. Robert W. Doherty, *The Hicksite Separation: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Schism in Early Nineteenth Century America* (New Brunswick, N. J., 1967), 3, 25, 26, 27.

³² Bracketed insertions and corrections are based on information in the "Pendleton Universalist Church Records," which also list members, officers, and ministers for the years 1859-1928. The Reverend J. B. Fosher is listed as president of parish organization for 1896-1899. *Ibid.*, III, 14. Robinson also indicates that Jesse B. Fosher preached in Pendleton, Anderson, and Richmond and moved to Illinois in 1899. Robinson, "Universalism in Indiana," 181. Orlando W. Brownback, M. D., began his practice in Pendleton in 1867. He was apparently still alive around 1923 according to Netterville's discussion. His wife Kate King Baird Brownback (1869-1918) was active in the Universalist church and is mentioned often in the Pendleton records. They had two daughters, Frances Brownback Hays and Katherine who was connected with the Insurance Department of the Pendleton Trust Company. Frances Brownback is mentioned in the Pendleton records. Biographical information is in Netterville, *Centennial History*, II, 63-66.

³³ The presentation of this paper was reported in the *Anderson Herald*, May 11, 1915.

³⁴ Birchard F. Brundage was minister of Anderson's First Presbyterian Church from 1912 until 1917 when he took leave to become a chaplain in the United States

I had three ministerial friends. With Nathaniel Bigelow of the Episcopal church, an older man, I used to play chess and billiards. With our wives we visited in each other's homes. I gave talks to his men's club. An even closer friend was a man of my own age, Richard Gerberding of the Lutheran church. He and I, disagreeing about most matters of theology, were drawn together by our even greater disagreement with our other colleagues. With our wives we made a congenial foursome for evenings of conversation and music. Eventually he attained a position of prominence in his denomination.³⁵

My third friend was George Moffett, a graduate of Yale Divinity School, and pastor of the Christian Church of Pendleton. Both in our homes and otherwise we saw much of each other. We often arranged for our congregations to hold union services, sometimes on Thanksgiving Day. On one occasion we were joint hosts to the surviving members of the Grand Army of the Republic. George and I conceived our own ecumenical project: a union Sunday School for the entire community. This plan was killed by the Methodist pastor refusing to cooperate. His first duty, he told us, was to the Methodist Board of Publication.³⁶

An unhappy experience came from allowing myself, through Moffett's urging, to sponsor a tabernacle revival, conducted by a travelling professional evangelist. He so disregarded promises made by his advance agent as to disgust me, and otherwise to so behave himself as to alienate Moffett.

In Anderson I attended many functions in other churches, although only rarely asked to appear on the program. These functions included regular and special services of worship, vespers, missionary conferences, revivals, ministerial farewells, concerts, receptions, men's clubs, suppers, banquets, and lawn socials. Thus I was educated by Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians, Methodists, United Brethren, Christians, and the Church of God. It all sounds impossibly youthful now, but at the time, in spite of exposure to concentrated doses of orthodoxy, I enjoyed it.

Army. He returned after the war and served until 1921. The Reverend Dr. Brundage was educated at McCormick Theological Seminary and universities at Edinburgh, Scotland, and Jena, Germany. First Presbyterian Church, *The First Hundred Years, 1851-1951* (Anderson, 1951), 60-61.

³⁵ Richard H. Gerberding is mentioned in connection with St. John's English Lutheran Church, Anderson, in June, 1915. His resignation to go to Cleveland, Ohio, "not later than August 1" was reported the same day as Robinson's resignation. *Anderson Herald*, June 9, 29, 1915; May 15, 1917. According to his son, who is preparing information about him, Gerberding died on January 12, 1972. David R. Gerberding to Pamela J. Bennett, May 17, 1972.

³⁶ George Lee Moffett was born in Veedersburg, Indiana, in January, 1885, and graduated from Butler University in 1911. He received a B. D. from Yale Divinity School in 1913. *Eighth General Catalogue of the Yale Divinity School: Centennial Issue, 1822-1922* (New Haven, 1922), 473. Moffett and Robinson acted as hosts to the Grand Army of the Republic and the Women's Relief Corps at a Memorial Day Sunday service in Pendleton on May 28, 1916. *Anderson Herald*, May 18, 30, 1916.

Community activities

In addition to these "religious" contacts I engaged in other activities. As a substitute teacher I taught briefly in the high schools of both communities. I helped organize a Sunday afternoon forum in Pendleton and joined a choral group there. In Anderson I served on a committee for the concert series. Infrequently I attended the Masonic Lodge. To the temperance cause I gave sporadic support through the WCTU [Women's Christian Temperance Union], the No Liscence [*sic*] League, a temperance convention, an effort to keep the Third Ward dry, and the Anti-Saloon League. The latter, as I then knew it, did not merit the wide-spread harsh criticism it later received. My wife and I supported the Franchise League (for woman suffrage), and she attended its convention in Indianapolis. In the same city I attended the convention of the National Conference of Charities. My wife and I visited public institutions: the jail, the courts, the poor farm, the orphans' home, and the industrial school. My diary also mentions a county Sunday School convention, the Grange, the Farmers' Institute, Labor Forum, YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association], YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association], Old Ladies' Home, County Medical Society, an Odd Fellows social, Rebeccah social, trade-at-home banquet, bird club, art exhibit, and Riley Club. Sometimes I spoke for one of these groups; more often I observed and listened.³⁷

The chief non-religious organization with which I was allied was the Anderson local of the old Socialist Party. As a "dues-paying member" I regularly attended its usually uninspired meetings, occasionally speaking for it. One would need to read the early novels of Upton Sinclair to understand the devoted loyalty of its members, some of whom by their participation risked the welfare of their families. Yet meetings were often as dull as business meetings of churches.³⁸ I recall long discussions about the proper disposal of an outworn refrigerator. It was the personal and moral qualities of the

³⁷ Robinson reportedly was instrumental in the founding of the Anderson Anti-License League by the Ministerial Association. *Anderson Herald*, June 22, 1915. The Woman's Franchise League of Indiana was founded in 1911 to work for universal suffrage. "This organization soon became the leading feminist body in the state, with sixty branches and a total of three thousand members by May, 1916." Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana In Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920* (Indianapolis, 1968), 501. There are frequent announcements about meetings of many of these organizations and occasional references to Robinson's participation in various of them in the *Herald* during this period.

³⁸ *The Jungle* (New York, 1906), an exposé of the Chicago meatpacking industry, first indicates Sinclair's conversion to socialism. James D. Hart, *The Oxford Companion to American Literature* (4th ed., New York, 1965), 771. Meetings and activities of the Socialist party are frequently printed in the *Herald* during Robinson's residence in Anderson. When he left Anderson in June, 1917, Robinson reportedly was the Socialist nominee for Anderson city clerk. *Anderson Herald*, May 15, 1917.

members which fascinated me. Some of them were among the accessions to our church.

During my Indiana sojourn there were two unusual events. On Sunday March 11th, 1917, we watched a tornado pass over the city. It hit nearby Newcastle, and hit it hard. Relief funds were collected and Brundage delegated me to deliver the money. This I did a week later, seeing at close range the trail of wreckage which such a storm can leave.³⁹

The other event, very different, was a MIT banquet in Indianapolis on January 14th, 1916. Simultaneous banquets were in progress in Boston and other large cities. This was prior to development of radio and television. At each place was an individual telephone, through which one could hear speakers on both sides of the continent and the repartee among men from all over the nation. So far as I know, it was unique.⁴⁰

The wider Universalist field

To the active Universalist churches of the state I used to go for pulpit exchanges or special programs. There were dedications of remod[e]led buildings at Indianapolis and Oaklandon. Farther afield I preached in New Madison, Plain City, and Woodstock (Ohio), Oak Park (Illinois), and Boone (Iowa). I met with mid-west clergymen in Chicago and attended the Illinois convention in Joliet.⁴¹

Naturally I attended the annual sessions of our Indiana convention in Indianapolis. My interest in rural churches led me to believe that not enough was being done to revive and serve our dormant societies. At the 1916 session I led a rebellion against the board of trustees, becoming the secretary of the convention. In this capacity I visited our dormant or semi-active churches, in many of which I gave an address. In the southeastern section during the first week I made contacts in Fairview, Saluda, Milan, Rising Sun, Aurora, and Manchester. During the second week I was in the northwest: Fin-

³⁹ The initial and longest coverage in the *Herald* appeared under a banner headline "Newcastle Suffering Great" on Tuesday, March 13, 1917. Relief poured in from all over the state. The *Herald* contains stories about the disaster for many days after the event. The *Herald* was not published on Mondays.

⁴⁰ A story about this Golden Jubilee Banquet indicates that, besides being "the most elaborate trans-continental telephone stunt ever staged," there were three million dollars in gifts pledged to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that night. Thirty-five cities participated in the event which included remarks by Alexander Graham Bell and Orville Wright. Credit for the telephone hookup was given to J. J. Carty, chief engineer of the American Telephone & Telegraph Company. Carty's explanation is not printed, but each alumnus "had individual watch-case receivers." "A Memorable Banquet," *Technology Review*, XVIII (July, 1916), 540, 542, 540-55.

⁴¹ Robinson was attending a conference of Midwest Universalist ministers in Chicago in January, 1916. Anderson *Herald*, January 29, 1916. According to the *Herald* for Friday, October 2, 1914, he was attending the Universalist convention of Illinois "this week."

castle, Brookston, and Morocco. To the west [mainly eastern Indiana] I went in the third week, visiting Mt. Carmel, Ireland, Boston, Dublin, and Richmond. In the final fourth week I went to points in the eastern counties [mainly central and northeast]: Logansport, Salem, Roann, Huntertown, Cromwell, Castleton, and Oaklandon. On these expeditions I also visited other communities which I cannot now identify.⁴²

The hoped-for a[g]gressive campaign to revive rural churches got nowhere. Insensitive to the magnitude of changes going on in country life, we rebels had no adequate plan. Even with greater wisdom, achievement would probably have been impossible. Working against the long-time members of the board interfered with team work needed to develop the work in Anderson.

One benefit from my travels was an opportunity to talk with the elderly Rev. T. E. Ballard at the home of his son in Crawfordsville. Many years earlier he had been a vigorous evangelist for the Universalist cause in Indiana, often debating with orthodox opponents. Disapproving of doctrinal changes among Universalists, he had transferred to the Methodists.⁴³ Conversations with him aided in my writing of "Universalism in Indiana."

In the summer of 1915, together with my wife, my parents, and other relatives, I attended Universalist conventions in California.⁴⁴ Our party left Chicago in two special trains on July 2nd. The afternoon of the Fourth was spent in a tour of Salt Lake City, where Bostonians were surprised to find a hotel "just as good as anything in Boston." In Pasadena we were housed in a beautiful cottage hotel and served an abundance of fruits and vegetables. The Los Angeles area, smog free, charmed us all. After the convention sessions we visited the expositions in San Diego and San Francisco. Here on July 18th Universalist Day was observed as Rev. Marion D. Shutter⁴⁵

⁴² The Universalist Convention of Indiana met on February 25, 1916. Mrs. Robinson and Cordelia Britton were elected trustee and president of the Women's Missionary Association. In addition, Robinson "was instructed to prepare a history of Universalism in Indiana in connection with the Indiana Centennial year." *Ibid.*, February 26, 1916. This history, as already noted, was published in the *Indiana Magazine of History*. In the spring of 1916 Robinson announced a several weeks tour of daily visits to all Indiana Universalist churches for progress reports as instructed by the state committee. *Ibid.*, May 16, 1916. Robinson reported on these trips under the heading "Indiana News Letter" in the *Universalist Leader*, XIX (April 22, June 10, July 1, 1916), 397, 565, 645-46. In the text here Robinson has confused some of his directions as indicated by the bracketed insertions.

⁴³ Tillman E. Ballard withdrew to the Methodist church in 1901. Robinson, "Universalism in Indiana," 178.

⁴⁴ The "California State Convention [was] organized in 1887, and . . . was still holding its annual meetings [in June or July] through 1919." Neil R. Jordahl to Pamela J. Bennett, April 7, 1972.

⁴⁵ Marion Daniel Shutter (1853-1939) was ordained a Baptist minister in 1881. He changed his views and became pastor of the First Universalist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1886. He was president of the Universalist General Convention from 1911-1915. Shutter seems best known for his book *Applied Evolution* (Boston, 1900), "which was widely advertised and read, [and] had been given

talked to an audience shivering in the fog. The return journey was made through the northwest and Glacier Park. In late August we returned to our home in Anderson. During the summer the *Anderson Herald* had published my story of these events in four installments.⁴⁶

Subsequent to the years of which I have been writing many changes have occurred. Two denominations have consolidated to form the Unitarian Universalist Association. Population shifts have accelerated. Climates of interest and opinion have shifted. Today (1970) there are seventeen Unitarian Universalist societies in Indiana, of which twelve are new since 1939. Of the other older organizations three were Universalist: Manchester (1844), Muncie (1859) and Oaklandon (1870). Two were Unitarian: Hobart (1872) and Indianapolis (1900).⁴⁷

Personal items

The residence of my parents in Oak Park made possible frequent visits back and forth. We spent our first two Christmases there, enjoying theater and opera. Our first-born, Arnold Herrick Robinson, arrived in Anderson on December 11th, 1916.⁴⁸ We managed to visit my wife's parents in northern New York.

During our second summer I was a student at the University of Chicago, enjoying courses in "Early Christianity and Contemporary Religions" with Shirley Jackson Case, "History of the Idea of God" with Shailer Mathews, and "New England Church History" with Professor Christie.⁴⁹ During all of these years I was busy with re-

first as a series of lectures to his church in Minneapolis. . . . it reflected a boundless optimism concerning man's limitless possibilities on earth." Cassara, *Universalism in America*, 38. Cassara prints excerpts from *Applied Evolution*, *ibid.*, 230-40.

⁴⁶ The stories were letters written from various points in the West. *Anderson Herald*, July 14, 25, August 8, 29, 1915.

⁴⁷ The 1972 *Directory*, Unitarian Universalist Association (Boston, [1972]), indicates that there are now twelve societies in Indiana new since 1939: Michigan City (1954), Bloomington (1949), Bartholomew County (Columbus, 1967), Elkhart (1961), Evansville (1951), Fort Wayne (1939), Indianapolis (1971), Richmond (1964), Rushville (1952), South Bend (1949), Terre Haute (1955), Lafayette (1947). It indicates that Hobart was organized in 1874 and All Souls in Indianapolis in 1903.

⁴⁸ Arnold Herrick Robinson graduated from San Jose State College, was in the service during World War II, and is married and now living in Lompac, California; he is in the field of computers. Elizabeth M. Robinson to Pamela J. Bennett, March 21, 1972. The Robinsons had another son Kelsey Barton Robinson, born February 5, 1921, in San Diego, California. He graduated from San Jose State, works in electronics, and is married and now living in Palo Alto, California. *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Shirley Jackson Case (1872-1947), a Baptist, was professor of New Testament Interpretation (1915-1917) at the University of Chicago. She was later chairman of the church history department and dean of the Divinity School. Among her extensive publications are *The Evolution of Early Christianity* (Chicago, 1914), *The Social Origins of Christianity* (Chicago, 1923), and *The Social Triumph of the Ancient Church* (New York, 1933). *Who Was Who in America*, II, 106-107. Shailer Mathews (1863-1941) was a Baptist and was professor of history and comparative theology at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago from 1906-1933. Among his published works are *The Church and the Changing Order*

search for, and the writing of, my "Universalism in Indiana."

My earned income for the two years and nine months came from four sources. From the Anderson church I received \$1253; from Pendleton, \$1038; from our state convention \$808; and from fees, \$160. The total of \$3259 was nearly matched by expenses: about \$3000.

Three factors contributed to my decision of [*sic*] leave Indiana: the typical restlessness of young ministers faced with a situation from which they see no way out, the growing conviction that I was accomplishing little either for the cause or for myself, and the desire for further graduate study. Arrangements were made for me to register in the department of American history at Ohio State University and to become minister of Universalist churches at Plain City and Woodstock. Here I began my work on June 16th, 1917.⁵⁰

I look back over my Indiana years with much satisfaction. They were the years of early married life, of the birth and infancy of my first child, of close relationships still with those of my parental household. I can now be somewhat amused at my feverish activities, with the accompanying delusion, at least at first, of achievement. Probably I did succeed to the point of making Andersonians aware that there was such an institution as the Universalist church. The California trip turned our faces westward. The decision to undertake graduate work led to a renewed interest in productive study and intellectual development. The publication of my essay in *The Indiana Magazine of History* encouraged me to further research and writing.

(New York, 1907), *The Gospel and the Modern Man* (New York, 1910), and *The Growth of the Idea of God* (New York, 1931). *Who Was Who in America*, II, 350. Francis Albert Christie (1858-?), a Unitarian layman from Massachusetts, was professor of church history at Meadville Theological Seminary from 1893 to 1925. *Who Was Who in America*, IV, 172. There is "evidence in old issues of the *Annual Register of the University of Chicago* that [Christie] . . . taught a course entitled 'The Church in the Nineteenth Century,' in the Summer of 1916, 1917, and 1918. In the Summer of 1915 he taught a course called 'New England Religious History.'" Albert M. Hayes to Pamela J. Bennett, April 11, 1972. Hayes is registrar of the University of Chicago.

⁵⁰ Robinson's resignation was announced in the Anderson *Herald*, May 15, 1917. A later item indicates that "Rev. Robinson has accepted a call to the Universalist church of Plain City, Ohio, beginning his work there the first of June." *Ibid.*, May 19, 1917. The Pendleton church was given notice at the monthly meeting of March 7, 1917, that Robinson's "resignation could be expected at anytime." At the May 14 meeting employing a new minister was the question at hand. "Pendleton Universalist Church Records," II, 61, 63. The parish record indicates that he resigned June 1, 1917. *Ibid.*, III, 7.