

## JOINT OWNERSHIP NOW PROVEN

### Universalists and Methodists Equal Partners in Sullivan Church

#### BUILDING AND LAND SOLD

Church Now to Become a Barn—Proceeds of \$194 to Be Divided—Universalists Hold First Deed

The old Methodist church and lot in Sullivan were sold at public auction last Monday morning at 10:30 by District Superintendent W. H. Giles of the Cazenovia District Conference. The church building was purchased for \$167 by Mrs. Scoville and her sisters, Miss Clara Brown and Mrs. Edith Morrow, all of Sullivan, while the lot was bought by Charles Brown for \$27. The building will be moved and used as a barn and the lot will be made a part of the farm of Mr. Brown.

There has been a great deal of controversy as to who really owned the property. It was understood to have been built by the Universalists and Methodists but that the Methodists were the only ones holding a deed to the property. After an investigation the Methodists actually believed this to be the only construction and started a sale of the property on that ground. On the day of the sale a surprise was sprung by the Universalists, when Attorney Welcome Betts appeared on the scene with a deed dated as far back as 1827 conveying to the trustees of the 1st Universalist church of Sullivan, a half interest in the church property as it then was. At that time the church was not built, only the land upon which it stands was the part deeded to the Universalists. In 1830 the church was constructed by both denominations, while the only deed extant at that time to actually show any ownership, was the deed of half interest being held by the Universalists. It was not until 1832 that the Methodists were given the other half interest and filed their deed to show the same; also the church had been built two years before the Methodists had any claim on the property whatsoever. Therefore the doubtful origin of ownership has been cleared up as the deeds conclusively show that each denomination has a half interest.

On the day of the sale, Superintendent Giles was somewhat surprised to discover that the Universalists laid claim to a half ownership, but after a conversation with Attorney Betts, he decided that the best thing to do was to accept the proposition of Mr. Betts which was to sell the property and divide the proceeds. It was further decided that if after a conference of the representatives of both churches, they should come to no agreement, then the sale would be void. Should there be a disagreement of the representatives, in all probability a trustee would have to be appointed by the Supreme Court to make a proper division of the property.

The church was built in 1830. At that time Sullivan had a good sized population which was made up of different denominations. These denominations had been in the habit of worshipping together in a hall over a store in that village. They saw the necessity of a suitable place of worship and consequently set about to find an available location to build a church. It was at about this time that Timothy Brown, and old settler, donated the land upon which the church was erected. It was three years after the land was given before the church was put up. At that particular time the Universalists, being the largest denomination, secured a half title to the property. The Methodists being the next largest denomination joined in with the Universalists in 1830 and built the structure. The first pastor was a Universalist and his name was Rev. Adolphus Skinner, a very talented man who supplied the pulpit there for several years. The last Universalist minister was Rev. W. H. Bruce in the year 1868. The name of the first Methodist pastor is not known but the last one was Rev. Wesley Tooke in the year 1870. The two denominations used the church alternately up to 1868 when the Universalists ceased their services. The Methodists continued to occupy it until 1901.

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Transcribed on 14 Dec 2010 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY