

[Hartwick, Otsego Co. NY]

From "Missionaries and Itinerants Among the Pioneers"
by Roy L. Butterfield

Universalist. In 1802 Edwin Ferris visited Butternuts and preached the doctrine of universal salvation. The following year he removed there from New England. He was inclined toward Quaker beliefs, and opposed preaching as a profession and financial "ministerial support." However he served Universalism faithfully and well for many years, maintaining himself by his farm. In 1803 a society of twenty-five believers was gathered in Hartwick and this was probably the result of Ferris's labors. In 1805 Nathaniel Stacy met this group at the Eddy School House and organized it into a regular church which met at various places until an edifice was built for it at Fly Creek. This was the first real Universalist church in the State of New York. Rev. Stacy was the most active and devoted of the sect hereabout and established many churches including that at Morris in 1832.

A Miles T. Wooley was in Hartwick in 1804 as a Universalist preacher but his general character shed no luster on the new denomination and he was expelled the next year. In 1805 the three men mentioned, together with laymen, met at Burlington and applied to the General Association of New England for power to form the Western Association. The request found favor and such an association came into being at Columbus, Chenango County, in 1806.

Otsego Farmer, Cooperstown NY, Fri. 18 Feb 1955

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