

Newsletter Articles

Beginning in January, 2006, articles related to our history under the heading “**Marvelous History Corner!**” were included in the church newsletter as another means for informing church parishioners and friends about and generating interest in our history. They are shown below. The date shown after each number is when it was written. It was published in the next church newsletter after that date.

2006

1. (1/1/06) I wasn't quite sure why I agreed to become church archivist. Yes, I love history and like to dig through old books and papers. I also knew some help was needed. When recently going through all the MMUUS archival materials stored at Syracuse University to understand what was there, I found the real answer. Reading through the Sam May file folders, Rev. May mentioned several times working with William Ingersoll Bowditch in his various abolition and underground railroad activities (there is a William Bowditch house in Brookline, Massachusetts, preserved because of its extensive use as an underground railroad stop). In September our daughter married Sean Bowditch, so I asked his mother (who had done research on the family) and, lo and behold, Sean's great-great-great-great uncle is William. So, with six degrees of separation Janet and I can claim a direct connection to Sam May. How is that for a resounding confirmation of why I volunteered and it shows the enjoyment that can come from understanding MMUUS history? Look for a table in the social hall on January 15 where some of our historical documents will be on display and dream about your own connections to our past. Think, too, about volunteering to help preserve our history. There are many ways you can help. *Rog Hiemstra, Archivist*

2. (1/18/06) “The Book” has been preserved electronically! Yes, that red ledger everyone signs when agreeing to become a member has been preserved through Bob Burdick's great digital photography skill. From that first page starting with Joshua Leonard and several others who “signed” (those first few year's worth of names were actually copied over) on September 3, 1838, to those many pages later when seven people signed the book on November 20, 2005, the book has now been photographed. So, give Bob a pat on the back or “thanks” when next you see him.

We now have a new web page related to MMUUS history. If you are interested you can see it at history.mmuus.org/index.html If you enjoy a stimulating sermon, you will find several of them from our past settled ministers (and from favorite daughter, Rev. Elizabeth Padgham) you can link to. If you find time to read them, tell me your favorite. I'll keep a running tally and provide the results later. *Rog Hiemstra, Archivist*

3. (2/2/06) It has been a real joy and very informative to journey through the ten boxes of material MMUUS already has stored in the Syracuse University archives unit. I am a little over half way through and keep discovering exciting “nuggets” that have helped me feel even more a part of the glorious history that is May Memorial. We, as an institution, as well as each of our past ministers (and many past church members), have made tremendous contributions to the greater Syracuse area and beyond.

On Sunday, February 19, there will be another History display in the Social Hall after the church service. Plan to see it. In addition to some more historical artifacts and another annual scrapbook from many years ago, come see a picture of the most handsome minister we ever had, Rev. Albert Willard Clark, associate pastor of May Memorial, 1902-1904. Look, too, for a special display on Rev. Dr. Samuel Robert Calthrop, our minister from 1868 to 1911. Outstanding preacher, scientist, poet, and athlete, he made a huge mark in Syracuse. Don't miss it! A brief display on our former church locations and buildings will be included. Also on display will be a copy of *The Children's Bible*, signed by our sixth minister, Rev. Robert Romig, and former RE Director, Dr. Elizabeth Manwell. These bibles were given to all children in the 1940s. It was recently donated by a former member.

Remember, too, the [new web page](#) that provides photos, information, and links to sermons for all past settled parish ministers, Rev. Elizabeth Padgham (MMUUS' favorite daughter), and Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Strong, our Minister of Religious Education from 1988 to 2001 and our first settled woman minister. You can see it at the following URL: history.mmuus.org/index.html Finally, look for a handout describing the various ways you can volunteer to be part of preserving our history. *Rog Hiemstra, Archivist*

4. (2/22/06) We are proud to announce that MMUUS has won a small grant (\$3200) from the New York State Convention of Universalists to help with preservation of our church archives during the next 12 months. This grant will enable us to purchase archival quality file cabinets, acid free storage containers, archival quality memory scrapbooks, and other archival supplies. In addition, there will be some financial support for the repair and mounting of the Sam May marble tablet. Look for a rededication service later this year. Finally, we will be able to purchase some equipment for obtaining an oral history of church memories from people long associated with the church. Volunteers will be welcome for some of these activities.

We also have an archival committee (George Adams, June Card, Mary Louise Edwards, Frank Healy, and Harsey Leonard) that will work with me to develop a record management policy and implement procedures for gathering and preserving information related to the ongoing history of MMUUS. Look for our efforts in the near future.

Finally, if you have not recently looked at the web site I developed on our church history (history.mmuus.org/index.html) you are invited to do so as much of the material shown in both the January and February history displays have been included. Remember, too, to read some of the outstanding sermons by past ministers that you can link to from this web site. A final note: If you have any church-related historical material, contact me to see if it should be included in either the archives at May Memorial or in the archival collection stored at Syracuse University. *Rog Hiemstra, Archivist*

5. (3/06/06) We have had some prestigious ancestors. You have already been introduced to Rev. Elizabeth Padgham, our favorite daughter. She and her sister, Clara, were accomplished musicians. From an August, 1879, newspaper clipping, it was noted that Elizabeth played "Hebe" in Gilbert and Sullivan's "Good Ship Pinafore" at the old Weiting Opera House in Syracuse. At age 5 and known as "Baby Padgham," she had a "strong voice and was a thoroughly self-possessed little performer." She was in several other types of performances and operettas growing up and continuing in musical activities in college. Her father, Amos, who

“signed the book” in 1884, was a County Supervisor, and was first elected to our church Board of Trustees in 1889.

Another early leader was Dudley Phelps, who joined the church in 1839. He was a member of the New York Assembly in 1855. He was early opposed to slavery and was a delegate to the 1848 Free Soil Convention in Buffalo. The Free Soil Party was a short-lived U.S. political party (1840-1856) that was opposed to the extension of slavery into any of the then existing U.S. territories. Frank Hiscock, who also became a member in 1884, was a prominent Onondaga County Judge. He was an active member of our Board of Trustees from 1919 into the 1930s.

Finally, there is John Wilkinson who became a member of the church in 1839 and was instrumental in its early development. John was Syracuse’s first lawyer, first Post Master, and instrumental in bringing railroads to the Syracuse area. He also came up with the name “Syracuse” for the town, suggesting it based on his knowledge of Syracusa in Italy. His wife, Laura Starr Wilkinson, was an early home economist (called then Domestic Economy) and helped form the first professional home economics association, the National Columbian Household Association, in 1893. One of Sam May’s daughters married a Wilkinson son. Many of you know Jack Wilkinson who graced our church halls for many years, a direct descendent of John. *Rog Hiemstra, Archivist*

6. (4/4/06) Those who attended our Sam May Day service on March 26 heard a wonderful presentation by David Kaczynski. You also heard how fervently Rev. May expressed his own views against the death penalty, with the six reasons why capital punishment should be abolished from his July 25, 1851, *New York Daily Tribune* article. The more you learn about Sam, the more you realize how fortunate we were to have his heritage as such an important part of our church history.

Thus, in the Sam May web page are three new items for your reading pleasure. One is a wonderful thesis written in 1964 by Catherine Covert Stepanek entitled, [*Saint Before His Time: Samuel J. May and American Educational Reform*](#), showing another important aspect of Sam’s many contributions to Syracuse. Irene Blakeslee is converting it to a digital format for our web site. Thanks Irene and Bob. Another is a paper also written by Catherine, entitled, [*Heretic in Syracuse: Samuel Joseph May, 1845-1871*](#). The third is an address by Catherine given in this church on February 13, 1972, entitled, [*The Remarkable Mr. May*](#). Dr. Stepanek’s executrix, her daughter Carolyn Holmes, has kindly given us permission to include these three documents on our web page.

Incidentally, Carolyn also loaned me a copy of the *Life of Samuel J. May* that her mother owned. This book, a memoir, was published in 1873. It makes for great reading and although I have only read parts of it, I have already learned so much new about the amazing Sam May. I will share some excerpts at a later date. *Rog Hiemstra, Archivist*

7. (4/17/06) Many who read this newsletter think fondly about several past and present social activities: Friday Night Pub, square dancing, talent shows, potlucks, concerts, potlucks, Garnet Hill ski weekend, etc.. Such socializing opportunities are very important and help make attending MMUUS so wonderful. But, socializing has been very important since this church was formed. In 1838 through the latter part of the 19th Century, Syracuse was dominated by Calvinists. Presbyterian principles ruled and most of the leading people were Presbyterian. In

many ways it was stifling for our ancestors and the Calvinists simply refused to associate with us because we would not accept Trinitarian beliefs. The archives contain reports of how being with each other became crucial. Thus was born lovely and lively Unitarian social evenings of food, entertainment, games, and conversations, church hallmarks that have continued for nearly 12 decades.

Here is the origin of “chore boy” mentioned during the Sam May Day service. It is from the *Memoir of Samuel Joseph May*, Thomas Mumford (Ed.), Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1873 (available online at www.hti.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=moa;idno=ABJ1200), p. 232, and attributed to Transcendentalist Amos Bronson Alcott (www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/authors/alcott/), Sam’s brother-in-law: “Mr. A. B. Alcott was once at Syracuse when Mr. May was engaged from morning until night in errands of mercy, -- visiting the sick, burying the dead, helping fugitive slaves and canal boys, and prisoners who wish to reform. When he reached home at evening, and was drawing off the boots from his weary feet, Mr. Alcott said: ‘I have found a new name for you. You are the Lord’s chore boy. You do the Lord’s chores.’ ”

Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

8. (5/10/06) Florida Tracy, an active member of May Memorial during much of the first half of the 20th Century, was a fount of information about our church. Her involvement, observations, and memory are recorded in many places throughout the archives. Here are some of her remembrances. During WWI, May Memorial was the first church in Syracuse to provide recreational activities for soldiers of the U.S. Army’s Rainbow Division (part of the New York National Guard and 42nd Division, the first Division sent to Europe in 1918 to support French troops) being trained in the Syracuse area and camped at the State Fair grounds, known as “Camp Syracuse.” Six days a week in the church dining room from noon to the evening we provided a free cafeteria service with church women serving as hostesses. Showers were installed in the cellar and our church President at that time, Irving Merrill, taught literacy classes in arithmetic. WWI affected us in other ways, too. Our minister during the time period, Rev. Dr. John Henry Applebee, took a leave to serve as a Red Cross Chaplin. This war service on battlefields and in hospitals undermined his health. On his return he found that his wife, Alice, was suffering from cancer and died after much suffering. He never really recovered.

The Women’s Alliance, an active church women’s group during this time period and up into the 60s, carried out a number of community service activities. For example, each year the Alliance provided a noontime Christmas dinner and entertainment on the last day of school before the holiday for 75 to 100 of the poorest first and second graders in two nearby public schools. Eventually as the need for a meal lessened, it morphed into the “Mitten Tree,” a traditional still carried on today. Church sewing groups also provided clothes and bandages for the Red Cross to use and after both world wars this energy went to producing clothing for refugee babies. As can be expected, and I am talking to the men of the church now, where would we all be without the tireless efforts, great energy, and super leadership of May Memorial women. *Rog Hiemstra, Archivist*

9. (5/17/06) May Memorial has been blessed throughout its history, and continuing right up until today, to have had many pillars that step up, often very quietly, to take on important and/or needed roles in the church. From unsigned material in the archives, someone provided testimony to two such people in our past. The first was Dr. Marion Sylvester Dooley, an active

member during the first part of the last century, who made it a life long habit to visit people when they were ill. Many people in our church were sustained by visits from Dr. Dooley and his wife. A doctor of medicine, for many years he was Professor and Head of the Department of Pharmacology at the Syracuse College of Medicine. He wrote some valued books related to pharmacology and drug therapy during the 30s and 40s. He was President of our Laymen's League, a member of the Board of Trustees, and Chair of the Unitarian Service Committee. All members of his family were active church members, too.

Miss Elizabeth Ann Lewis was thought of as a saint, tireless worker, and premier thinker in our church and our denomination regarding religious education. She was director of our church school during the twenties and introduced liberal textbooks and liberal teaching in the curriculum. She worked cooperatively with a few other advanced thinkers in the Unitarian church to influence the direction of curriculum building committee at our national headquarters. She also taught numerous adult education courses in our church. She helped provide leadership for our lending library, the social action committee, and neighborhood discussion groups active during that time. She was very active in the greater Syracuse community, too. MMUUS' heritage is so rich because of people like Marion and Elizabeth. It makes me proud to be part of this wonderful institution.

Finally, if you have not looked at the Sam May link on our web page, there are four new pieces there about Sam. Two from historian, Dr. Catherine Covert Stepanek, and two sermons from Rev. Richard (Rick) R. Davis, First Unitarian Society of Salem (Oregon). All four are terrific and you certainly will gain new insight into Rev. May's life. *Rog Hiemstra, Archivist*

10. (6/6/06) **The Other Sam** – Our third minister was Rev. Dr. Samuel Robert Calthrop, a minister for 43 years (1868-1911) and pastor emeritus after that. Rev. Calthrop was truly a renaissance man. See history.mmuus.org/index.html and history.mmuus.org/backwardglance.html for more information and a marble bust of Sam stands in the little foyer just before entering the RE area.

Born in England, he entered Cambridge at the age of 19 where he excelled. However, he refused to sign 39 Articles of the Anglican church faith required by the university which prevented his graduation and eventually led him to the United States and Unitarianism. He was an excellent scientist having patented a streamlined train, discovered numerous sunspots, and learned to predict the weather. He lectured in our church and elsewhere on a wide variety of topics beyond religion such as astronomy, botany, financial management, flowers, geology, physical training needs, and even raising tomatoes. He was a personal friend of Sir Isaac Newton and Susan B. Anthony. Like his predecessor, Sam May, he was very interested in education and youth. A teacher prior to becoming a pastor, he organized the Syracuse Boys' Club, established the first playgrounds in Syracuse, and even taught at Syracuse University.

Dr. Calthrop was a very physically fit individual most of his life. Tall, with a big frame, and a great white beard, he was an expert boxer in his younger days, and skilled at billiards, crew, cricket, hockey, rowing, and tennis. His true passion was chess where he was known as one of the best in the country by winning local and state championships. He beat opponents while playing blindfolded and by playing several at the same time. Able to quote verbatim from Greek and Latin Classics, he was widely published, a gifted poet, and a sought after orator. All of this while maintaining his pastorate here and being well loved and respected by both May

Memorial church members and people throughout Syracuse. Renaissance man, indeed. Wow, were we lucky or what. *Rog Hiemstra, Archivist*

11. (6/26/06) As most who read this newsletter know by now, the marble tablet honoring Sam May that was in the James Street church, once thought lost, was found. It will be repaired, hung on the southwest outside wall of the church, and dedicated on October 1. An exciting and meaningful time for us, so I'm ruminating just a bit more on our beloved Rev. May.

In many ways, Sam was always ahead of his time. He helped found the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. Hear the power, poignancy, and even irony in his words when he spoke on May 8, 1834, at the 1st anniversary meeting of that Society in NYC: "By the laws which sustain slavery, millions of human beings are held as chattels. Yes . . . they are driven along the streets of Washington, with less liberty than cattle, in the sight of that proud capital, where the national flag is flying, and where so many fine things are *said* in the favor of liberty." He spoke with such fervor for years throughout the Northeast and was mobbed five times for the voice he refused to quiet. No wonder he brought that fire here and eventually was front and center in the "Jerry Rescue" saga. As our own Rev. John Fuller said in a 1966 sermon about Dr. May and the Jerry rescue, "He was a man on fire for the freedom of all men, on fire for righteousness, on fire especially for his poor brothers in slavery."

He was ahead of his times in so many other ways, too. You know of his stance against the death penalty, but did you know that in 1826 at age 29 he founded one of the earliest Peace Societies in the U.S., the Windham County (Connecticut) Peace Society. When he was President of the Syracuse Board of Education he abolished corporal punishment. Peace, forgiveness, and do no harm obviously were part of his lifelong motto. One can go on and on about our Sam May, so once that marble tablet is in place, walk by occasionally and thank him for being who he was. *Rog Hiemstra, Archivist*

12. (8/9/06) History Committee members have been involved in various preservation activities this summer. For example, George Adams is inventorying our many files, folders, and boxes; Harsey Leonard is retrieving images from slides and other media. Mary Louise Edwards and I are removing acid from old papers and preparing material to be stored at Syracuse University. It is hard work at times, but most enjoyable, and we keep learning more about our wonderful history. We do need more help so please volunteer some time.

I can't resist sharing one of the items Harsey retrieved from an old microfilm. Someone photographed old scrapbooks years ago and many delightful items have come alive. Let me take you back to yesteryear, near the birth of our beloved church. The year is 1862 and this delightful piece shows up in the local newspaper:

The Ladies of the UNITARIAN SOCIETY, will repeat their entertainment
"An Evening with Dickens,"

In Wieting Hall On Monday Evening, Feb. 3, 1862

PROGRAMME:

1. Tableau – The Soldiers Dream.
2. Pantomime Ballad – Mistletoe Bough.
3. From Dombey & Son – [and it goes on from there for 13 acts]

Admission 25 cents – Children 15 cents

Can't you just picture people from throughout Syracuse coming out to watch the Unitarian ladies and their entertainment activities? As Big Russ would say (for those who have read Tim Russert's *Big Russ and Me*), "what a country" and what a city where Unitarians can entertain people of varying faiths with material from Dickens. It must have been something!

Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

13. (8/29/06) On September 12 we can celebrate the 209th anniversary of Sam May's birth. Not necessarily a special occasion, but nearing his birth date prompted me to read through an inspirational little book, *In Memoriam. Samuel Joseph May*. This book was published in 1871 a few months after Rev. May's death, July 1, 1871. A committee consisting of Rev. Samuel Caltrop and several church members and friends (Mr. C. D. B. Mills, Mr. D. P. Phelps, Mr. H. N. White, Mrs. Mary E. Bagg, and Mrs. Rebecca J. Burt) prepared and published this testimony to the life of Sam May.

Just reading about the July 6 funeral service brings both tears to the eyes as well as renewed awe regarding the many lives that Sam touched. Many people participated in the service, some traveling long distances to do so. This from the address of Mr. William Lloyd Garrison, publisher of the very respected anti-slavery newspaper, the *Liberator*, sums up well the sentiment expressed in many ways that day: "I have lost a most affectionate and unswerving friend, an early and untiring co-worker in the broad field of freedom and humanity, a brother beloved incomparably beyond all blood relationship. Syracuse has lost one of its most useful and esteemed citizens; the nation one of the worthiest of its sons; the world one of the purest, most philanthropic, most divinely actuated of all its multitudinous population." Happy birthday, Sam, and thanks for gracing our church and our community with your devoted service.

One of Rev. May's least touted contributions, but, perhaps, one of his most important, was his untiring championing of better education for the youth of our community and our country. Historian Catherine Covert wrote a well researched and delightful Master's thesis on her way to a PhD in History and distinguished teaching career at SU: *Saint Before His Time: Samuel J. May and American Educational Reform*. Thanks to the able assistance of Irene Blakeslee in converting a photocopy of this 1964 document to a digital format and the permission of Catherine's daughter, this wonderful document is now on the Sam May web page along with two other of Dr. Covert's pieces related to Sam May (www.mmuus.org/who-we-are/history/sjmay.html). They are highly recommended reading for anyone interested in education.

Finally, put the afternoon of October 1 on your calendar as we rededicate the Sam May Memorial Marble Tablet that hung on the wall of our former James Street church. More details will follow later. *Rog Hiemstra, Archivist*

14. (9/17/06) I just love it when an article sort of writes itself. On September 12 Janet and I were election inspectors for the primary. Where I was assigned, one of my fellow inspectors was an 81 year old man by the name of Walt Slagle. I thought nothing of the name, but during our nine hours together I mentioned my involvement with May Memorial. He then proceeded to tell me that he used to attend May Memorial at the former James Street church. He taught Sunday School as soon as he was old enough and he fondly remembers riding in 1941 with a carload of May Memorial boys driven by Reginald Manwell (Hank's dad) to a Rowe, Vermont,

Unitarian church for a youth conference. He remembers most fondly Rev. Robert Romig (our minister from 1941 to 1946) who he said was a wonderful man.

But here is where the fun began. I knew I should know that name. Then he told me that his Mom was May Slagle and it all “clicked.” I remember her name from pouring over old documents, but some who read this newsletter will remember May as a long time and indispensable office manager of May Memorial. As noted in *May No One Be A Stranger* (p. 45) “in the minds of many church school children who heard their parents mention May Slagle, she, not the minister from 100 years ago, was the source of the church name.” May was one of the most active of all our volunteers in the school lunch program the church sponsored and ran during WWII. She edited the church newsletter, for many years, too. She retired in 1974 and died in May (what other month could it be) of 1978 at the age of 85. Walt remembers that Nick Cardell did a beautiful memorial service for his Mom. Incidentally, his brother Eugene went to our church and his Dad ran a woodworking center for youth in the James Street basement. His aunt, May’s sister, Helen McKnight, was an active church member and served as church historian for several years (thanks, Helen).

So this article is dedicated not only to May Slagle, but to all the wonderful people who have served as office manager, treasurer, sextant, custodian, and many other important staff positions during our 168 year history down to people such as Karen and Leslie today. This church could not have happened without you. We send a big thanks and salute back through the ages. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

15. (10/3/06) The dedication service on October 1 was wonderful and the rains stayed away. The choir sang, we all sang, and several people spoke, including former member and Historian, Jean Hoefer. She and Bill traveled from afar to be with us for the dedication. In addition, Professor Ron DeRutte from SU described how he will repair and mount the tablet this fall.

Here is a bit about the tablet’s history. It was installed below a stained glass window in the James Street church in 1886 as a memorial to Sam May. The sermon delivered at its unveiling was by a good friend, Rev. William P. Tilden, who had been influenced by Sam during Sam’s ministry at South Scituate, Massachusetts. Rev. Tilden described Sam this way in words so consistent with what we have come to know about Sam May: “Calm as a June morning, but firm as Gibraltar, he was a Moral hero” (from this document found by Betsy Fuller – Vinal, W. G., 1954, *Old Scituate churches in a changing world*, Norwell, MA: Ladies Alliance of The First Parish Church, p. 34). See history.mmuus.org/windows.html for a look at all the stained glass creations in that church and click on the name being honored shown at the bottom of each window to read a description. The tablet was broken while being removed from the church in 1963 before its razing, transported to the Onondaga Historical Society, then lost. Fortunately, it was rediscovered last summer, transported to May Memorial, and soon will adorn our outside southwest wall. Somehow it feels fitting that it will look out on the Memorial Garden and Pavilion. See history.mmuus.org/maytablet.html for a color photo of the tablet. The inscribed words are difficult to read in the photo, so here they are as they were written one hundred and twenty years ago:

In memory of Samuel Joseph May, born in Boston September 12, 1797, died in Syracuse July 1, 1871. The beloved minister of this church during twenty-four years, his life

diffused the radiance of piety and charity throughout this community. A loyal follower of Jesus, he loved God supremely and his fellow-men as himself. He helped the erring and sorrowful and uplifted the downtrodden. In the struggle against slavery he was among the earliest, most fearless and most constant. A fervent, devout preacher, an assiduous, loving pastor, an untiring apostle of education, temperance and peace, a steadfast defender of spiritual liberty. Trusting wholly in the ideal right he labored from youth to age to bring in the kingdom of God. When death was near he said: "I may have hereafter a clearer vision, I can hardly have a surer faith."

I close with the words read by President, Fred Fiske, as the official dedication of the tablet and pavilion: "We have gathered here today to remember Ernie Archambault as a representative of the many MMUUS parishioners over our history who have stood for selfless commitment to May Memorial and to remember Samuel J. May as a representative of the many ministers and others throughout our history who have provided leadership for May Memorial to maintain an important place in the greater Syracuse Community. May this pavilion and this marble tablet stand as symbols of such devotion for many generations to come. We so dedicate these symbols." Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

16. (10/17/06) I looked through material recently and reread the October 9, 2002, *Post Standard* article on Rev. Nick Cardell's death and what he meant to MMUUS, the Syracuse Community, and so many people. It reminded me of his memorial service and all the things said about Nick by various people. Then my "archive" mind lead to searching for similar material on perhaps our two most famous historical figures.

In a May 14, 1917, *Syracuse Herald* article about Rev. Dr. Samuel Calthrop (see his marble bust now located in the Memorial Room near Sam May's bust), the author described how hundreds visited our James Street church for "one last look upon the face of Dr. Calthrop." A high bank of flowers had been built in front of the chancel; over the pulpit and communion table, reaching from the ceiling nearly to the floor, hung an American flag. Entering the church a visitor saw only the flag and flowers and it was not until coming closer that within the bier of flowers could be seen the coffin of the beloved pastor. Rev. Calthrop was crowned with his black skull cap, without which he never appeared in public other than when he delivered a sermon. He lay as if in peaceful sleep and looked just as though he had sunk into an afternoon nap. Mothers lifted their children to see his gentle face among the flowers and tears streamed from the eyes of many who mourned his loss and revered the 49 years of service he gave to May Memorial and the greater Syracuse community.

Rev. Samuel May's funeral on July 6, 1871, had drawn an even bigger gathering of devoted worshipers, friends, community and national dignitaries, and townspeople who respected his great service. At 10 that morning his body in a metallic casket was moved to the Church of the Messiah, our second church building, which had been decorated, and placed before the pulpit from which he had spoken so many faithful, earnest words (see history.mmuus.org/MMUUSchurchbuildings.html). The church doors were then opened and hundreds filed by for a last look at his loving face. Subsequently, every church seat was filled, the porch was crowded, and the stairway and yard outside filled with the old and young, rich and poor, all eager to join in doing honor to the name and memory of a man who had done so much for so many. Fittingly, Rev. Calthrop gave a moving prayer during the service that brings

tears to the eye just reading it some 135 years later. A memorial book to Sam May published in 1871 is being prepared for inclusion on the [church web page](#). It contains much more information about his life and the funeral service that honored his living, contributions, and meaning to May Memorial. It stands as a testament to the many leaders who have served this church so well. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

17. (11/8/06) At Dave Ashley's urging, I've looked at material in our church archives and the Syracuse University archives regarding the enormous work by so many associated with conceiving, planning, designing, and building our current church. Especially gratifying was reading through a two inch file at the Syracuse University archival collection regarding the famed Dean Pietro Belluschi's numerous architectural contributions to our church. It was intriguing to see the various push and pull discussions and a willingness by many people to meet our needs while maintaining the design integrity. Getting behind the scenes of our fascinating venture in the early 1960s was a real treat.

So many people from May Memorial contributed countless hours to enable 3800 E. Genesee St. become the wonderful place that we know. More than 100 people participated via a dozen crucial committees to make it all happen. Some of the current members involved included Doug Aird, Howland Auchincloss, Mal Clark, Al Obrist, Helen Obrist, and Dorothy Riester. The next time you see one of them ask about their memories of this important time in our church history. To look at some related photos and papers, go to history.mmuus.org/churchbuilding.pdf.

Many thanks go to Lisa Obrist (with help from Helen and Al) who was able to identify several people in photos from that time our current church was being built. Thanks also to Verah Johnson, newest History Committee member, and Irene Blakeslee and Lyn Coyle who have typed much of the new Web page material that has been added recently as noted below.

Finally, three new Web page items have been added that are well worth your perusal. One is Dr. Catherine Covert's wonderful Master's thesis: *Saint Before His Time: Samuel J. May and American Educational Reform* at www.mmuus.org/who-we-are/history/covert-may-thesis.html. Another is a very moving story of Sam May's life, death, funeral, and burial: *IN MEMORIAM – Samuel Joseph May*. This can be viewed at history.mmuus.org/inmemorialsjm.html. The third is *May No One Be A Stranger* by Jean Hoefler and Irene Baros Johnson at history.mmuus.org/stranger.html. This wonderfully written history of our church from 1838 to 1988 has been enhanced with many links to relevant support material. Both these latter two will be added to the church web page in the near future. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

18. (11/21/06) I, like so many, stand in awe of Dan and Doris Sage, who along with Dick Weiskopf, Sam Feld, and Phil and Donna Muhs-McCarten recently traveled to Fort Benning, Georgia, to bear witness in this ongoing travesty against social justice. Now called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), the school trains Latin American soldiers, police, and government officials, many of whom return to their countries to perpetrate various human rights abuses. Dan and Doris, along with Nick Cardell and other Syracuse residents paid a huge price in the past for their witness there, even by serving a six month jail term.

May Memorial members and leaders actually have a long history of heroic acts in the

name of social justice. This began with our direct ancestors in the 1830s who braved isolation, hostility, social ostracism, and even persecution to start our religious home in Syracuse. Our many ministers, too, have been courageous leaders for social justice issues. To name a few, Sam May quickly comes to mind for his work with anti-slavery, anti-capital punishment, women's rights, peace, and educational issues just to name a few of his many accomplishments. We also should not forget Rev. Calthrop and his advocacy for the Syracuse Boy's Club, Rev. Argow and his work with public health and housing, Rev. Applebee and his work with the Red Cross during WWI, Rev. Fuller and his work in civil rights, and Rev. Cardell and Rev. Strong's work with Planned Parenthood.

But it has been our many church wide efforts that have marked May Memorial as an institution dedicated to social justice. Our various women's groups over the years have provided playground equipment for Onondaga County orphans, bought and distributed milk for undernourished children in the schools, provided reading and social rooms for unemployed people during the depression, given financial support to a residence for elderly women, created a USO-type social environment for soldiers being trained at the State Fair Grounds during WWII, fed lunches to children whose mothers were working during that same war, and collected food and clothing for European relief soon after its end. More recently, our sanctuary efforts some two decades ago during El Salvador's horrendous history of abuse, our ongoing homeless and hungry efforts through the collection of food and other items, and our preparation of meals at St. Paul's church serve as examples of that continuing social justice commitment.

There actually is not room enough in this short article to give all the credit that is due to the May Memorial people who have devoted countless hours and many dollars to such important issues. You can read more about this devotion and why it is easy to take pride in this church for its ongoing social justice history by reading through history.mmuus.org/backwardglance.html and history.mmuus.org/stranger.html . So "tip your hat" to Dan, Doris, Dick, Sam, Phil, and Donna the next time you see them and say thanks as fine representatives of our great social justice heritage. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

19. (12/4/06) Barbara Mihalas recently pointed out to me a great UU web site for church history buffs, the dictionary of UU biography: www.uua.org/uuhs/duub/index.html . There is a great Sam May biography there. I've now been asked to write one on Sam Calthrop and may do others later. Speaking of web resources, an 1885 booklet devoted to the October 20, 1885, James St. church dedication is now online. It makes for some great reading. See especially the sermon by Sam May's son, Rev. Joseph May. It is a classic. This booklet is available on the church web site (history.mmuus.org/maychurch.html).

I recently interviewed Hank Manwell as part of the History Committee's efforts to talk with long time May Memorial members so we can learn more about our church history. We hope to make several interviews available online some time in the future and they will serve as an important archival resource so current and future May Memorial members can better understand our past. It was a delightful interview and I gained much new information. Some of what I learned will appear in later newsletters and it triggered the heart of this article. We are looking for other volunteer interviewers; we will do the training and supply the digital recorder.

I've long been intrigued with the years of service given to May Memorial by Hank's parents, Dr. Elizabeth Manwell, our DRE from 1935-1949, and Dr. Reginald Manwell. Hank

provided great first hand knowledge of their long term involvement with our youth. See *May No One Be A Stranger* (history.mmuus.org/stranger.html) to find out more about their impact on the church.

Reginald, for example, wrote with Sophia Lyon Fahs the classic Beacon curriculum text *The Church Across the Street* (Beacon Press, 1947; a revised edition was published in 1962). Reginald's work was based on his May Memorial church school classes that studied other religious groups and visited many different congregations in the city. A wonderful scrapbook in our archives captures the work that he and various young people did during the 1940-1941 year learning about numerous churches. During then they visited and studied such Syracuse religious institutions as Jewish temples, a Russian Orthodox church, a Catholic cathedral, a Lutheran church, an Episcopal church, a Presbyterian church, a Congregational church, a Methodist church, a Baptist church, a Christian Scientist church, and the Society of Friends. I can only imagine the knowledge and memories taken away by the young people in Syracuse and around the country exposed to this curriculum and certainly envy their experiences. This paragraph can best be ended by paying tribute to all the people in May's history from the 1830s right up through today who have given of their time and talent serving the youth of our church. We owe them much. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

20. (12/30/06) I am very happy to report that the repaired Sam May marble tablet now resides on our outside west wall overlooking the Memorial Garden. It is so beautiful and takes your breathe away when you think that it first adorned our James Street church wall in 1885. When Jill Evans and I first saw it on December 17 sitting in a protective cradle built by Dale Sherman while the silicone epoxy was drying, it was truly an emotional moment. Professor DeRutte did a marvelous job and thanks to those who helped in various ways, especially in mounting it at its final resting place. Give Dale a big thanks when next you see him for all the volunteer hours he put into its restoration and step down to the Memorial Garden and see this true work of art.

In keeping with our tablet's history, in the archives is a collection of moving memories about the James Street church. Back in the very early 1960s, a committee headed by a Mrs. Kenneth Kindelsperger and a Polly Lape, asked a number of current or former members of the Women's Alliance, a very active group at May Memorial for many years, to reminisce about the church. The decision had already been made to build a new church and they decided it was important to gather some recollections. We are indebted to their insightfulness. This newsletter piece and at least the next one will report some of these nuggets. For example, Florida Tracy remembers how in the 20s and 30s special collections were taken during Sunday services to meet the needs of several community charities that we having tough financial times because of the depression. She also remembered Mrs. Bigelow, a stately older women, from one of the wealthy Syracuse families, who wore small bonnets tied with a velvety ribbon under her chin, basque [corset shaped] fitting dresses, with billowy skirts. Mrs. Bigelow had told Florida that she remembered making lemonade as a little girl for the annual picnic day that the Unitarians held for lower income children. [We were doing our social justice in many ways a century ago.]

Helen Eager, who was two years old in 1885 when the James Street church was dedicated, remembered her grandmother telling about the very early days of the church when Sunday meetings were sometimes held in cellars and in secret because the negative feelings

toward Unitarians in Syracuse were so intense. Helen also remembers the last day of Sunday School each year as being very special. The children would bring in wild flowers and those they picked from parents' gardens for decoration. Yards of daisy chains also were hung and the church always looked very lovely. Finally, in *May No One Be A Stranger*, Jean (see elsewhere the sad news about Jean Hoefer's death from an auto accident) and Irene talked about the memorial tree tradition that was started by Nick Cardell (p. 51, history.mmuus.org/stranger.html). In the early 1900s we had another "tree" tradition, the Mitten Tree, where mittens and other warm clothing were hung on a tree and later donated to people in need. This tradition even carried over into our current church. It has been fun peaking in on these great memories and more will be shared later. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

2007

1. (1/9/07) When you get an opportunity, stop down to the Memorial Garden area and look at the Sam May marble tablet. It will take your breath away when you think that it first adorned a May Memorial church wall in 1885 and now it rests on an MMUUS church wall once again. Thanks to all who helped in some way in the process of this becoming reality. Go to our web page (www.mmuus.org) and click on the link to the Samuel May plaque home at last for more information. Look, too, for a photo display just outside Rev. Marsh's office showing the process of placing the tablet on that wall.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, here are a few more priceless nuggets from the Mrs. Kenneth Kindelsperger and Polly Lape committee that gleaned some reminiscences about our church during its long history. Elizabeth Manwell, for example, remembered that for years in the James St. church, there were "Children's Sundays" several times a year and eventually with so many children they actually encircled the entire congregation. She also recalled one Sunday right after the church school had been given a victrola (wind up record player). She placed it next to a curtain that separated the religious education area from the sanctuary altar. During the junior service that first week it was there she played a rousing record of an Indian Tribal Dance to illuminate a folk story they were studying, not thinking about how the sound would carry so well through the curtain. After the service, Rev. Dr. Argow asked her quite gently not to do that again. Her music happened just as he began his prayer in the sanctuary; he thought it was coming from the organ and that the organist had missed his cue, so he kept on praying thinking the organist would figure out what was happening and stop playing. Dr. Argow told her that he just kept on praying louder and louder thinking the organ would stop, but eventually he had to stop praying thinking the organ had won until he figured out from where the music was coming. Think about that the next time any of us hear some noise in the foyer during a Sunday service and find ourselves becoming slightly irritated.

Florida Tracy talked with fondness about the wonderful work of the Women's Alliance. During the Rev. Calthrop and Rev. Applebee ministries right up until WWI, the Alliance annually gave a Christmas noontime dinner and entertainment to our church youth on a Saturday before Christmas. Eventually, the Alliance voted to include the poorest children in the two nearby elementary schools. This involved 75-100 children, ages 6-8, who typically did not have much of a Christmas simply because their parents could not afford it. She talked about the heart warming sight of seeing the wide-eyed kids before a lighted tree and then as they received food and gifts. She talked, too, that this notion of giving actually went all the way back to Rev.

May's era when church women made hospital clothing and bandages that were shipped to the Union front during the Civil War and then the making of garments and bandages that the Red Cross used in WWI and WWII. They also made garments and sleepers for refuge infants during both wars. It certainly makes me proud to belong to a church that has such a wonderful and long social action heritage. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

2. (1/20/07) I just can't resist sharing a few more wonderful tidbits from that Kindelsperger and Lape committee on recording remembrances in the 1960s about fundraising and about a couple of our past ministers. Think of our current Fine Craft show or biennial Book & CD Sale as fundraisers. Well, Helen Eager remembered not only concerts and plays as ways of raising funds, but they also had wax work shows with human models (I would love to have seen those). She was part of a large committee, too, that through Rev. Applebee's ministry in the 20s made over 400 calls to members and others who were troubled by the depression and declining economic situation. One of her memories as a youth was about Sam Calthrop and his "famous" forgetfulness: "Dr. Calthrop was a great preacher. He was an English man with a beautifully pitched voice and annunciation. He wore a skull cap over his bald dome when he thought it proper and started the service with it on. But it was not proper for the prayer. He would sometimes forget to take it off and we children would peek from beneath our bowed head to see how long it would be before he remembered to slip his hand up, sneaking it off into his pocket." She also mentioned his propensity to be a bit long-winded at times: "My grandfather was also English and he and the Doctor were close friends. Sometimes the Doctor would get too absorbed in his sermon and go on and on. Grandfather was way down in front and he would hold up his big repeater watch which the Doctor would eventually see and wind up the sermon abruptly."

It seems so common today that sports contests can be held in the evening with all the available stadium lighting. Floss Eustin remembered early in the last century when she and family members would travel to Rev. Calthrop home, known as Primrose Hill, on Sunday afternoons for picnics and visiting with others. Sam, who was a tennis enthusiast, would string lanterns around his tennis court so tennis matches could continue into the early evening and then there would be dancing until midnight. Helen Eager also remembered people frequently going to Primrose Hill after Sunday services where they could look through his telescope and he would talk about his astronomy interests. Polly Lape talked fondly about the custom of using the Sunday collection money gathered near Thanksgiving and Christmas to buy food and clothing for those in need throughout the community. She also remembered Dr. Applebee's interest in dramatics and that he engineered as a fundraiser in the church, a famous play in the 20s entitled, "The Old Peabody Pew," a Christmas romance about a country church. She later became involved in annual Christmas pageants, also used as fundraisers. Finally, Gladys Timmerman recalled another interesting fundraising activity by the Women's Alliance that "was a lot of work, but also a lot of fun, and brought people together." It was called the "Department Store," and involved the sale of various items. The Alliance also was known for its fundraising dinners that were so popular there would need to be several sittings before everyone was served. So the next time you are asked to help with a fundraising event, remember that they have been an integral part of May Memorial for many, many years. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

3. (2/5/07) Sam May's legacy is everywhere! In late January I was at Framingham State College (Framingham, MA) to deliver a keynote address on teaching adults for the college's continuing education faculty. A panel of three faculty gave a reaction to my address after I finished. I met with them a half hour before the session to determine procedures. The first to arrive was a delightful Professor of History. As the others were gathering he began describing his current research project, an examination of the past Framingham State College presidents. He said his favorite president was Samuel J. May. You could have knocked me over with a feather, as I stammered that he was the man for whom my church was named. As we both enthusiastically began sharing information, some pieces from his life prior to living in Syracuse began dropping into place.

Horace Mann, Massachusetts's initial Secretary of Education, established the first experimental normal school in the country to train women as teachers. This was in 1839 and the first Principal (top official) was Harvard educated Cyrus Pierce. Cyrus became ill and had to step down in 1842. Sam May had been minister of the South Scituate (MA) Unitarian church from 1836-1842. Mr. Mann convinced Sam that because he already had such a passion for improving education, to take on the Principal role. He served the Normal School for two full years where the enrollment doubled, the school was relocated from its first location in Lexington to West Newton, and many new faculty were hired. Upon Mr. Pierce regaining full health, Sam then accepted the position at our church. As the Normal School eventually moved to Framingham and ultimately became a state college, Sam is called the institution's second president. To read just a bit more and, especially, to see a photo of Sam in those early years and when he did not have a beard, go to this link: history.mmuus.org/normalschool.html

Just a bit more about Sam. When he was beginning his ministerial work in Massachusetts, he laid much of the groundwork for his ministry with us. He formed a Peace Society in 1826 and in 1827 called the first State Convention on Education to consider the defects of common schools. While at the Scituate church his Sunday School children became staunch adherents of Peace and Universal Freedom. In his efforts to promote total abstinence, he also organized a "Cold Water Army" of a few hundred young people, who marched through the town and chanted "eternal hate to all that doth intoxicate." He put the rum dealers and liquor establishments out of business, but the people still loved him as a pastor. That was our Sam!
Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

4. (2/13/07) Since becoming the MMUUS archivist, I have been fascinated with Sam Calthrop, our third minister. Besides being a beloved long-time minister of this church, he was well known as an athlete, philosopher, and even poet. However, one of his favorite avocations was dabbling in science. For example, on August 8, 1865, he filed a patent (No. 49,227) for "improvement in construction of railway trains and cars." This was way ahead of its time and the forerunner of what became known as the bullet train. It called for tapering the front and rear to lower wind resistance, encasing each car with a false bottom for further sleekness, raising the tender to create a bullet shape, enclosing doors to make them flush with the sides of each car, enclosing the intervals between cars with flexible hoods, rounding as much as practicable the sides of all cars, and avoiding all projecting surfaces such as window ledges. The patent material included drawings that also seemed ahead of their time even by today's standards. A

need for cash with a growing family eventually resulted in sale of the patent. Oh! If he had only kept it and willed it to May Memorial!

Another endeavor was his interest in the sun and sun spots. Using a telescope, he studied the sun for many years and began forecasting the weather based on his growing knowledge. The local Syracuse papers even relied on some of his predictions. For history buffs, an interesting related article can be found in the *Syracuse Herald*, April 4, 1915. Those non-skiers who have suffered through the cold and snow as of late can take solace in Sam's thoughts from that article: "Be patient with the present weather conditions. The longer these conditions continue, the better weather we will have during the summer." So, if you can find the sun, give it a glance and know that Sam is predicting a great summer for us.

On another note, Janet and I had a great time visiting Hank and Sally Manwell in their Melbourne (Florida) UU church a few Sundays ago. Thus, it seems fitting to quote Hank's mom, Elizabeth, from her September 20, 1964, reminiscence on the James Street Church. She remembered four great thoughts from the sermons of past ministers: Dr. Argow – "You are God. He is not up there, out there, he is the great creative force about and within all." Rev. Romig – "You have wholeness within you. Think not mainly of your immaturities, think of your strengths." Rev. Canfield – "Cultivate the growing-edge of your minds." Rev. Zoerheide – "Seek to find the hidden loveliness that is in every human being." Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

5. (3/3/07) As we are near finding our next settled minister, let's remember our past ministers. Much could be said about each, but only a few highlights are presented here. Our ministerial history begins with Rev. John Storer (1839-1844). He worked diligently to raise money for our first regular building, the Church of the Messiah. He traveled throughout the east soliciting nearly 40% of the necessary funds from friends, many of whom were not Unitarians. Most readers of this newsletter know much about Rev. Sam May, our 2nd minister (1845-1868), and Rev. Sam Calthrop, our 3rd minister (1868-1911), as several past history corner pieces have been about them (see the two web links shown at the end of this article for more information).

Our 4th minister, Rev. John Applebee (1911-1929), was very active in the Syracuse community as well as with his May Memorial activities. He headed several civic and charitable organizations and supported the Association of Workers for the Blind, learning Braille so he could transcribe literature for them. Rev. Waldemar Argow, our 5th minister (1930-1941), was highly respected for his sermons. He was actively involved in Syracuse with membership in the Onondaga Health Association and a committee to study housing needs. He also was active in denominational activities and was a member of several American Unitarian Association committees.

Rev. Robert Romig (1941-1946), our 6th minister, was not only respected as an effective church leader, he also stepped up during WWII to serve on the United War Fund that raised funds for the USO, War Prisoners' Aid, Seamen's Service, and various foreign relief agencies. Our 7th minister, Rev. Glenn Canfield (1946-1952), was active in the NAACP during his May Memorial ministry. He also chaired a Syracuse Council of Churches housing committee to improve living conditions for black residents. Our 8th minister, Rev. Robert Zoerheide (1952-1961), also served on the board of NAACP and supported civil rights and better housing efforts. He was instrumental, too, in convincing our congregation to support the Unitarian and Universalist merger. Our 9th minister, Rev. John Fuller (1961-1973), was very active in social

action activities within the community, including the Civil Rights struggle and the anti-Vietnam War effort. He also counseled conscientious objectors and women seeking legal abortions outside of New York.

Rev. Nick Cardell (1974-1995), our 10th minister, served as Chairperson of the Planned Parenthood board during the 1970s. He also protested the School of the Americas (SOA) at Fort Benning, Georgia, was subsequently arrested, and served a six-month jail sentence. Rev. Liz Strong (1988-2001), our first female minister (of Religious Education), also was heavily involved with the Planned Parenthood. In addition, she coordinated a strong adult education program for May Memorial. Our most recent settled minister, Rev. Scott Taylor (1997-2004), helped organize our efforts with the Southside Interfaith Housing Corporation and facilitated numerous Soul Matters adult education groups. Wow! What energy, dedication, and devotion to May Memorial and our community from them all. The heritage they helped create provides a solid foundation upon which the new minister will build our future. Check out history.mmuus.org/backwardglance.html, history.mmuus.org/stranger.html, and our church web page for even more information. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

6. (3/20/07) On behalf of the History Committee, I am pleased to announce that MMUUS has received another grant from the New York State Convention of Universalists. This will enable us to continue our preservation activities, create some additional history display areas, and even share what we have learned as a committee with others in the St. Lawrence District. We still welcome anyone who would like to join the committee or volunteer to word process old material, scan documents, prepare documents for Syracuse University Library, etc.

There have been many pieces in this column written about Sam May, but there is so much information pertaining to our namesake that can be shared. Thus, here is another piece. As many already know, Sam grew up in a fairly privileged home. He had eleven siblings but, as was often the case in the 19th Century, eight died as youths or as young adults. Only one sister and brother lived beyond their mid 30s. Sam therefore had many opportunities in terms of education, obtaining private schooling as a young person and then two Harvard degrees, including graduation from divinity school. The circles in which he was able to travel meant that he knew people like William Ellery Channing, Horace Mann, and Daniel Webster. Later in life he became friends with notables such as Susan B. Anthony, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Garrit Smith, and William Lloyd Garrison (publisher of the anti-slavery newspaper, *The Liberator*).

He had many interesting relatives, too. One relative in the 17th Century published a history of the English Parliament. On his mother's side a great grandfather was minister of Boston's Old South Church, another relative wrote the first anti-slavery book in 1700 (*The Selling of Joseph*), great-aunt, Dorothy, married John Hancock, and great grandfather Chief Justice Joseph Sewell of Salem, was the first official to expose the Salem witchcraft delusions. His father, Joseph (a successful businessman who would have become a minister had not the Revolutionary War intervened), was a long-time Warden (lay leader, often involved in day-to-day church operation) and ardent supporter of King's Chapel in Boston, the first Unitarian Church in the United States. In fact, Joseph is buried in a church crypt. Andy Tripp shared a photo he took of the explanatory marble tablet. It can be seen at history.mmuus.org/crypt.html. Finally, his sister, Abigail, was the wife of Transcendentalist, Amos Bronson Alcott, and their daughter was Louisa May Alcott who authored *Little Women* and many other books. Sam

obviously led an interesting life, including the time he spent in Syracuse with our congregation. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

7. (4/2/07) Father Roy Bourgeois' April 1st Sam May day presentation on his ongoing work to bring about closure of the United States' shameful School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia, was most meaningful. He said many things that conjured up connections to our history. Obviously, we all feel tremendous pride in the sacrifices Nick Cardell, Dan Sage, Doris Sage, and several others from Syracuse and throughout New York made directly related to the SOA watch, but there are other historical connections.

Quite early Rev. Bourgeois said, "our greatest enemy is ignorance." Sam May is remembered for his important work in abolition and his foundational efforts in the eventual repealing of the dreaded Fugitive Slave Act. However, what many don't know is that Sam overcame some initial ignorance about slavery to reach these crucial efforts. Sam preached his first sermon on the evils of slavery in 1820. In 1829 he became an active member of the Windham County Colonization Society. The colonization movement's goal was to ship all slaves and even "free Negroes" from America to Liberia as a believed humane way of ridding the country of various related social and political problems.

It was William Lloyd Garrison who helped Sam overcome his ignorance about the injustice of the Colonization Society's approach. After hearing an October 15, 1830, speech by Garrison, Sam and others talked for hours with him and Sam had what he later called his "midnight conversion." He said "that night my soul was baptized in his spirit, and ever since I have been a disciple and fellow-laborer of William Lloyd Garrison." Fortunately, out of that initial ignorance grew a leader who became so important in helping to rid the country of slavery.

There have been many others in May Memorial's history that followed Father Bourgeois' words, "the truth cannot be silenced." Think of the three past MMUUS ministers who marched in support of Civil Rights (Cardell, Fuller, and Papandrew). Think of Lilian Reiner's relentless pursuit of eliminating the death penalty. Think of the courageous church leaders who turned MMUUS into a safe haven for El Salvadorian refugees, even at the risk of criminal prosecution had the government decided to pursue such action. Think of the current Thursday morning church members who are creating such history by holding vigil against the Iraq war. There have been many other examples in our history, but space limitations means such information is saved for later articles. Suffice to say, there is much for which we can be proud that echo Rev. Bourgeois' words, "not in our name." Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

8. (4/14/07) The story of Sam May and Prudence Crandall, a Quaker, is a forerunner of his advocacy both for education and abolition while in Syracuse. Prudence opened a Female Boarding School in 1833 in Canterbury, CT, near Brooklyn, CT, Sam's first ministry. Within a few weeks Prudence enrolled Sarah Harris, daughter of a black farmer. The entire village soon was in an uproar and several leaders demanded she dismiss Sarah. She courageously refused and community members began pulling out their children. Sam heard about it and wrote Sarah offering to help in any way he could.

She found solace and courage in his encouragement, making it known her school would be opened to "young ladies and little misses of color." The community's uproar became even more intense and she wrote to Sam requesting assistance. He quickly came to Canterbury and

found much about which to be concerned. He returned to Brooklyn and rallied others to provide her support. She asked Sam and Calvin Philleo, who later became her husband, to represent her as attorneys at a Canterbury town meeting. Sam and Calvin were vilified there and even physically threatened.

Prudence eventually had several black students, but there was much harassment by community members, including physical damage to the school and her home. The Connecticut state legislature even enacted a "Black Law" which forbid the establishment of any black school unless approved by school district voters. However, Prudence kept her school open, was then arrested, and jailed. She was brought to trial in August, 1833, and the state's Supreme Court eventually overturned a sentence. Unfortunately, the community continued tormenting Prudence and the students, almost succeeding in burning down the school. Prudence finally closed it out of fear for their safety. Sam May was the one to tell students the school was closing and later stated how much agony he felt: "I felt ashamed of Canterbury, ashamed of Connecticut, ashamed of my country, ashamed of my color." This all is a sad reminder of how little we have changed during the past 175 years.

Three quick notes: (a) Photos of Sam and Lucretia May's headstones are at www.mmuus.org/who-we-are/history/may-headstone.html; photos of headstones for our third minister, Sam Calthrop, and his family are at history.mmuus.org/calthropfamily.html; (b) Betsy Fuller recently shared a delightful book, *Letters of Love and War: A World War II Correspondence*, by Helen Dann Stringer – Helen lives at the Nottingham and was active at May Memorial years ago – the book beautifully displays 575 letters exchanged between Helen and her husband, Syd, an army doctor during WWII (May Memorial and Rev. Romig are mentioned a few times); and (c) We need any church mementos you might be willing to donate to our archives such as *Lillian Reiner, Gutsy Lady*, Sam May's *Some Recollections of our Antislavery Conflict*, any other books written by or about church members, etc. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

9. (5/3/07) I was delighted a few months ago to discover in our archives an 83 page manuscript written in 1939 by Edith Calthrop Bump, Rev. Sam Calthrop's daughter. It is a biography of Sam's early years, including when he lived in England and then into his first several years in the U.S. Edith donated it to our archives where it has languished for these past several decades. Lyn Coyle recently volunteered to word process it and I added numerous links so that it now serves as a way of getting to know Sam better, but at the same time provides an historical journey through England and the United States for several decades beginning in 1829. This delightful read is at history.mmuus.org/SamCalthropBoyhoodStory.html

For example, read about his very early years, including his time at a boarding school. Gain some insight into why he became such an incredible thinker, how he developed an interest in science, and the process by which he became such a talented athlete. Read about his skill development as a chess player, including descriptions of how he defeated several older opponents. Experience his growing skills as a teacher.

In terms of this web page as a history guide, see how he came to know William Henry Waddington, a school mate, who eventually became a French Prime Minister. Learn when Robert E. Lee asked him to teach West Point cadets how to play cricket. Enjoy the first time he met such notables as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Julia Ward Howe. He

even preached for several months in Theodore Parker's (a famous early Unitarian minister) church in Boston before coming to Syracuse. An enjoyable chapter is Edith's description of how her father invented and patented the "Air Resisting Train."

Another delightful experience (archivists have all the fun) was discovering in our archives several weeks ago a 380 page unpublished manuscript that is a biography of Sam May. Authored by Professor W. Freeman Galpin (a long-time SU history professor until his death in 1963), it provides a wonderful new glimpse into Rev. May's life. I gained a much deeper understanding of Sam by reading it. The good news is that it can soon be shared with everyone. I obtained permission from his daughter to include it on our web page:

history.mmuus.org/galpin-may.html. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

10. (6/4/07) Several things came together compelling this article: (a) Feeling so gladdened by Paul Darmody-Latham's safe return from Afghanistan; (b) hearing John's powerful Memorial Day sermon; (c) our weekly anti-war vigiling efforts; (d) viewing *The Ground Truth*, about the struggles many U.S. men and women face after returning from Iraq; and (e) thinking about Michael and Mariah Dillon's daughter currently in the military as we all hope she stays out of harm's way.

The angst many of us feel about war, patriotism, and political wrangling is real, but not new in our church history. Sam May experienced much personal conflict throughout life regarding people's suffering because of war, slavery, gender discrimination, and many other issues. He was especially torn as the Civil War approached. Sam felt deeply that war was a sin but also believed that any peace built on continuing slavery was a bigger sin. From his diary in July, 1862: "Nothing but slavery seems to be so bad as war." He finally came to the agonizing decision that the war must be fought to end slavery.

This type of agonizing has existed for May Memorial parishioners and leaders for decades. Several of our past church members served in the military, with many war-related deaths in World Wars I and II. Rev. John Applebee (minister from 1911-1929) so agonized over WWI that he received a leave of absence to work with the Red Cross overseas for several months. Rev. Nick Cardell (minister from 1974-1995) was a prisoner-of-war during the second world war. Nick Cardell, Dan and Doris Sage, and others in the Syracuse community even served prison time after protesting this government's training of South American military leaders who, in turn, brutally suppress people in their own country.

It is, of course, naïve to assume that such agonizing will ever cease. Our inability to get along with others seems a constant, and new generations usually repeat the errors of the past. Perhaps the cries for peace, justice, and good will that reach us down through the history of May Memorial will sustain us in our own efforts to work together even more successfully through our new Covenant of Right Relations.

Ending on a brighter note, June Card was pleasantly surprised in leafing through 1947 Beacon Press *The Church Across the Street* by Reginald Manwell and Sophia Fahs to find a photo (p. 285) of the minister in the church where she attended as a young person. He also came out of retirement to officiate at her wedding to Howard. Finally, two new web page tributes are available: one to Sam May at history.mmuus.org/maytribute.pdf and one to our church buildings at history.mmuus.org/churchtribute.pdf Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

11. (7/16/07) I've recently read what has been on my "to do" list for some time, a sermon preached by Sam May to our predecessors on Sunday, September 15, 1867. By my reckoning, it must have been nearly two hours in length, but, wow, was it revealing. Entitled "A Discourse," it turned out to be Rev. May's resignation sermon. It no doubt caught many parishioners by surprise, but the energy, compassion, and retrospective insights he packed into what was eventually labeled as "A Brief Account of His Ministry," must have kept the audience captivated throughout.

Fortunately, as often happened during that time period, a power packed sermon deemed worthy of historical capture immediately resulted in several church leaders formally requesting by letter that Rev. May make his copy available. Then a group placed his hand written message into a publishable form and disseminated it. A copy survived and was included with Sam's papers donated to Cornell University after his death. You can read this fascinating account of his life as a minister at dlxs.library.cornell.edu/m/mayantislavery/index.htm Then click on "Search the Collection," next click on "Search" within the text description of the collection, and, finally, type in "a brief account of his ministry" within the "Find" box and hit "Search."

Read about Sam's views on the rise of Unitarianism, how he became involved with abolition, education, intemperance, Native American conditions, pacifism, the deplorable conditions of "canal boys" and other orphans, and women's rights. Sam was revered throughout his life and after his death as a person consistent in his beliefs and one who truly lived by a firm mental and moral discipline. He was referred to by many as God's Chore boy and reading this discourse you really come to understand why. I heartily recommend this moving sermon and am confident you will obtain a greater understanding of our namesake. (The biography of Sam entitled *God's Chore Boy*, by W. Freeman Galpin. It, too, makes for great reading: history.mmuus.org/galpin-may.html)

Finally, the History Committee will be coordinating the Sunday Service on August 12. We'll take a walk down memory lane regarding our past church buildings with slides, narration, and reflections by several church members who were part of our church community bridging across the former James St. church to our current site. We hope you can join us. Immediately following the service there will be a formal dedication of permanent photos of our past ministers in the Memorial Room. Join us there, too. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

12. (8/19/07) Harsey Leonard and I, assisted by other History Committee members conducted the August 12 Sunday Service (see history.mmuus.org/aug12oos.pdf for the Order of Service). Slide shows supplemented the "sermon" presentations (see history.mmuus.org/churchbuilding.pdf) as well as a handout (see history.mmuus.org/buildinghistory.pdf). We were gratified by a large summer attendance and appreciated the support of Doug Aird, Malcolm Clark, Hank Manwell, and Al Obrist as they shared some memories. This was followed by a dedication service for our past ministers' photos now hanging in a permanent "memories" display on the east wall of the Memorial Room. See history.mmuus.org/dedicationprogram.pdf to examine the related material and see the photos when next you are in church.

A few weeks ago I learned that the SU Special Collections had purchased 12 letters (eight by Sam May), written 1852-1858, on Sam's efforts to develop a school for youth on the Onondaga Reservation. Reading them was enjoyable and I'd recommend the experience. See

history.mmuus.org/sammayletters.pdf for more information. About the same time President Fred Fiske shared with me a new Beacon Press book. Titled *Beacon Press and the Pentagon Papers*, it is a fairly quick read but excellent discussion of Beacon Press' courageous decision to publish the Pentagon Papers in the early 1970s and the legal entanglements that followed. The book is chilling in many ways and as one reviewer noted, it is a message for our own time.

I was recently doing research on Sam Calthrop and came across a fascinating description of him in *The Craftsman*, an October, 1905, publication by Gustov Stickley. It is worth examining just to see the neat ads of Stickley furniture. You can read it at digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/DLDecArts/DLDecArts-idx?id=DLDecArts.hdv09n01 .

Finally, here is a bit of MMUUS history trivia. Why did Rev. W. W. W. Argow have so many names? He was a fifth generation minister and his parents may have expected he, too, would go into the ministry. His first name, Wendelin, was for the father of Transcendental philosophy, German scholar Wendelin Meyer. The second name, Waldemar, was for the bishop of West Goths, who in 390 A.D. brought Christianity to the pagans of the Teutonic woods. His third name, Weiland, stood for the father of spiritualistic or idealistic poetry as noted in our early church history, *A Backward Glance O'er Traveled Roads*. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

13. (9/05/07) Janet and I recently visited the John Brown farm and grave in North Alba, New York (www.nyhistory.com/gerritsmith/nelba.htm), near the Lake Placid Olympic ski jumping complex. We are both reading Russell Bank's *Cloudsplitter*, a recounting of abolitionist John Brown's life, including the legendary raid on the Harpers Ferry armory, so the visit seemed appropriate. It was a wonderful experience and I highly recommend both the visit and the book.

We had a wonderful guide, whose great, great grandmother helped John's wife, Mary Ann, when John was gone because of his abolitionist activities. The guide provided an excellent tour of the home and regaled us with many facts and stories. It was clear that Mary Ann, like many spouses of abolitionists, had to carry a very heavy load just to keep the family afloat, as John was away from home more than he was there. John's death, as well of the deaths of several sons during the raid, was a tremendous blow to be endured throughout the remainder of her life.

It reminded me of the huge load Lucretia May had to carry when Sam was so heavily involved in abolitionist activities and away from his family for many weeks at a time. In one letter Lucretia said, "I have counted the days and shall begin to count the hours till your longed for return; don't disappoint us, but come, come speedily to warm hearts if not wise heads." A more telling lament was in a later letter: "You have been gone four weeks tomorrow and perhaps are beginning to be weaned from us. I should not be at all surprised if you were, you must have so much more peace and quietness than when subjected to the . . . interruptions caused by wife and children. But my greater wonder is that we ever marry at all, especially those who intend to be world reformers and pass their time at a distance from the families. It would seem to me more wise and more judicious as well as more kind to avoid such entanglements and such burdens altogether." Wow! (See history.mmuus.org/galpin-may.html for more insight into Sam and Lucretia's lives.)

No doubt John Brown, Sam May, and the many others who chose to be away from family for long stretches of time thought about what was being left behind and lamented, too, about the

sacrifices. Obviously, this still happens today and those of us fortunate enough to be able to spend quality time with family can count our blessings. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

14. (9/20/07) MMUUS will host the Samuel Calthrop Chess Championship on December 1. It is a chance for us to showcase Rev. Calthrop and an opportunity for chess players in the area to become acquainted with our church. Perhaps some readers of this newsletter will consider participating. At Anton Ninno's urging, I developed an informational piece for the media and any others who may want to know more. Here are some of the highlights.

Our beloved minister for 43 years, the longest pastorate in our history and one of the longest in the history of Unitarianism, Sam made many contributions to Syracuse. He started the Syracuse Boy's Club and gave lectures and offered classes to church members as well as others on a wide range of subjects, including botany, philosophy, poetry, geology, and astronomy. His skill in predicting the weather by studying sun spots led Syracuse newspapers to rely on his forecasts. He even grew the first tomatoes ever shown at the State Fair.

Rev. Calthrop was a gifted athlete, too, excelling in numerous sports during his lifetime, including billiards, cricket, crew, tennis, rugby, and boxing. He made local news when one night he discovered a prowler in his house and dropped the poor man to the floor with a left to the chin. When he awoke, the burglar found the police ready to take him to jail. Sam Calthrop's athletic prowess made him much desired as the person to teach others and during his time in the U.S. he coached crew teams for Yale, Cornell, and Syracuse Universities. He also coached the West Point cadet cricket team.

One of his biggest loves, however, was chess. Having learned as a youngster, he grew in skill and began playing some of England's best in his teens. He continued his passion for chess in the U.S. He was one of 16 players invited to the first American Chess Congress held in New York City in 1857. After moving to Syracuse he accomplished more chess feats, winning the New York State Championship in 1880 and 1883. When chess genius Harry N. Pillsbury once played ten simultaneous games of chess while blindfolded, his only loss was to Sam Calthrop. Sam, too, loved to play blindfolded and also play several games simultaneous. Among Syracuse friends with whom he played regularly were a rabbi, priest, and Presbyterian minister. Ah, Sam, our ecumenical pastor. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

15. (10-3-07) I could write every newsletter article about Sam May for years to come and only begin to scratch the surface of his complexity. I anticipate that in many ways he thought of himself as no one unusual, just committed to things in which he believed. But, oh, there were so many things! In this article I provide a brief chronology of just his first three years in Syracuse where only a few of his many activities, endeavors, and interests give some insight into his varied life.

- 1845: April, arrives in Syracuse; July, delivers a speech on the evils of war; July, delivers a principal address at the Sons of Temperance celebration; October, among 170 Unitarian ministers to sign a protest to American Slavery; November, preaches a sermon in our church on what will become his famous "Rights and Conditions of Women" (lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?naw:3:./temp/~ammem_33Hy:)
- 1846: June 1, writes an anti-war (Mexican-American war) letter to be published in the *Syracuse Star* and is publically called a traitor by the editor; June 18, petition of protest in *Syracuse Star* has 110 names (including many from our church); June 24, Sam's letter

appear in the *Star*; August, delivers a lecture “The Education of the Faculties and Proper Employment of Young Children” (it is published the following year); chosen a member of the Board of Managers of the State Temperance Society

- 1847: August, present at the founding of the Free Soil party (opposed to an extension of slavery into the U.S. territories newly acquired from Mexico) in Buffalo; September, Sam May and Frederick Douglass are leading speakers in a Syracuse abolition meeting; September, Sam attends the Syracuse meeting of the Liberty Party (anti-slavery in focus) and is selected as a delegate to the national meeting.

Sam also was devoted to our church and seldom missed a Sunday service. He also found the time and means to minister to his “flock,” even though he frequently had to travel within New York and beyond. No doubt his time with his family was not what he wanted it to be, but Lucretia bravely kept the home fires burning. What little time he could spend with her and his children was precious indeed as he noted in his diary and in letters home.

For those who want more insight into his hectic but important life, and he kept up the pace hinted at above throughout his adult years, here are some selected web sites:

Heretic in Syracuse (www.mmuus.org/who-we-are/history/may-heretic-in-syracuse.html); *Saint Before His Time* (www.mmuus.org/who-we-are/history/covert-may-thesis.html); and God’s Chore Boy (history.mmuus.org/galpin-may.html). Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

16. (10-28-07) Our district Executive, Rev. Dr. Thomas Chulak, took many of us through an interesting exercise Friday evening, October 27. He helped us recall and reflect on how we came to be who we are as a church community. For example, after several Unitarian families had moved to Syracuse in the 1830s, they invited Unitarian ministers from the east to come for rare but welcome visits. After formally organizing in 1838, a small chapel was built in time for our first minister, Rev. John Storer, who was called and arrived in 1839. The congregation immediately began to outgrow the chapel and Rev. Storer worked tirelessly to raise funds for a larger building. His success led to construction of the Church of the Messiah on Burnett Street in 1843.

The arrival of our second minister, Rev. Samuel May, in 1845, resulted in the strong ministry known by many of us that lasted until 1868. Rev. May’s various efforts in abolition, women’s rights, education, and other areas began the commitment to social justice that continues as a hallmark today. He was followed by Rev. Sam Calthrop, who was our minister for 43 years. An intellect, scientist, athlete, and educator, Rev. Calthrop set a standard for a commitment to a church and community that also has continued within our church. During these initial years, church leaders were mainly men of wealth who made patriarchal decisions.

In more recent times, our ninth minister, Rev. John Fuller (1961-1973), brought a strong sense of involvement within the Syracuse community, a commitment to social justice, and an ability to create invigorating Sunday services. Church leadership was changing, too, reflecting the times, as women became more involved and decisions were made more democratically. He was followed by Rev. Nick Cardell (1974-1995), who became involved within the Syracuse community, facilitated new energy and excitement among church members, served the UUA in various ways, and made personal commitments to social justice that resulted in personal hardships.

During Rev. Cardell's ministry, our first settled female minister, Rev. Elizabeth Strong, was called as our Minister of Religious Education. She served from 1988 to 2001, bringing a professional sense to May Memorial's educational efforts for youth and adults. Rev. Scott Tayler's ministry (1997-2004) brought a stress on personal spiritual development and changes in ministerial style characteristic of the times.

Better understanding this history and how we came to be who we are today through the skill of Rev. Chulak's facilitation was a helpful exercise. He ended by asking us to reflect on how the nature of church leadership and ministry have changed during the past 170 years, how females have played an increasingly larger role, and on why we called Rev. Jean Wahlstrom. The overall impact of the evening was an opportunity for everyone to understand how history informs us as we move to our future. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

17. (11-05-07) Sam May's influence was wide and long-lasting. You probably know this well in terms of our church name and various physical objects we have honoring Sam. However, he influenced people outside our church and community in many ways. Betsy Fuller recently loaned me a book that illustrates this. The book is about *Walter D. Edmonds: Storeteller* by Lionel D. Wyld. Edmond's mother descended from the May family, with his great grandfather being Rev. May. He introduced Sam in one of his early novels as "a Reverend Mr. May from Syracuse," a liberal minister who runs a branch of the Underground Railroad and who preaches sermons about "Universal Brotherhood." Sam no doubt influenced his niece, author Louisa May Alcott (*Little Women*), too, as she became an abolitionist and supporter of women's rights in her later years.

Even though Sam influenced many people during his lifetime, throughout it he was simply a wonderful person who truly believed in universal brother and sisterhood. Just before his death he donated over 10,000 items from his personal library to Cornell University for what is now known as the Samuel J. May Anti-Slavery Collection. When Sam died, his friend Andrew D. White, then president of Cornell, spoke of him as "the best man, the most truly Christian man, I have ever known."

Here is a section for young people so, parents, please read this part to your young children or ask the older ones to read it themselves. A few weeks ago RE Director, Jennifer Hamlin-Navias, during the first part of a church service, gathered our youth around her and told the interesting history of Sunday Schools. Many years ago they served to help young people, often children from nearby neighborhoods who did not have many opportunities to attend regular schools, come to a safe place, at least on Sundays, and learn something about reading and writing. This helped me to remember one way that Rev. Samuel May worked with young people in his church and community.

When Rev. May was minister of the South Scituate (Massachusetts) Unitarian church (his second church as minister) in 1838 he was very much against the use of liquor because he believed it ruined peoples' lives. He recruited the youth in his church and community into what he called the *Cold Water Army*. He sometimes would lead as many as 500 area children in parades throughout the community in which banners were flown and chants were chanted and even barrels of liquor were smashed open with an axe. He and the children's actions were successful as all the liquor shops in the community eventually closed. Now that is Kid Power and shows what you can do when gathering old batteries, collecting money for good causes,

helping to feed adults in community and church events, and in many other ways. Keep up your great work! Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

18. (11-23-07) **Love Was In The Air** Rev. Sam May and his family lived at 941 James Street. During this time in the 1800s, that part of James Street was considered out in the country. Dr. May collected wood in a nearby forest to build a summer house in the back of the property and a porch at the front of the house. It was under this porch, a regular stop on the Underground Railroad, that escaped slaves from the south found shelter in their travels toward freedom in Canada. Because of his many actions to shelter, save, and even help break slaves out of jail, many in the Sound reviled our Sam.

Keep this sentiment in mind when you read about the romance and the marriage that could have been. Winnie Davis, daughter of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America during the Civil War, came to visit friends in Syracuse during the summer after the war ended. She met Fred Wilkinson, the grandson of Sam May. He was described as tall and handsome.

He wooed her that summer and they fell in love. Unfortunately, what could have been a wonderful and even ironic love story was put to a screeching stop. When Winnie returned home and her father and her friends, actually many in the south, found out about the romance, there was a rebellion once again between the North and South in terms of feelings. Very quickly all thoughts of a wedding had to be forgotten.

Can't you just imagine the possibilities? Fred and Winnie walking down the aisle of our Church of the Messiah, Jefferson in his old West Point uniform giving her away, Sam conducting the wedding, and years later the progeny--possibly a young Jefferson May Wilkinson--being ordained a Unitarian minister..... Oh well, we can dream can't we?
Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

19. (12-04-07) **The Samuel May Medallion** This is the time of year when we grab a chance to stand in front of the fireplace in our church foyer if there is a blazing fire. The next time you stand there or even pass by, look up at the lovely sculptured marble medallion under glass and in the wooden frame that is just above it. It honors Rev. Samuel May and has a wonderful history.

On Wednesday, October 20, 1898, there was a celebration in our James Street church in memory and honor of the one hundredth anniversary of Sam May's birth. During the afternoon service there were several things of note. One was an address by Susan B. Anthony that will serve as the focus of a later History Corner article. Another was the presentation of that beautiful work of art over our fireplace.

Rev. Ezekiel W. Mundy (initially a Baptist minister who was befriended by Sam May and who later became head librarian of the Syracuse Public Library) presented the medallion during the last part of the celebration. During the earlier part of the celebration, it was covered on an easel. I can only imagine the gasps of wonder as Rev. Mundy uncovered it and described its origin. The medallion was a gift from John J. May, Sam May's cousin. It was the work of Mr. Alexander Pope, Jr., a famous sporting artist who specialized in animal and still life paintings but who also produced sculptures throughout much of his career. He made two copies; one that went to the American Unitarian Association in Boston and one that came to us.

Some may know where the medallion resided in the James Street church, but that is not recorded in our archives. We are fortunate, however, to have it in a place of honor over the flames that keep us warm in our cold months. I believe Sam would be pleased, if not humbled, to know he looks out at the entrance to our sanctuary. So, the next time you pass by, give him a glance and say “hi.”

On another topic, former member Joanne Ashley sends this interesting suggestion from her home in Bismarck, North Dakota. Those interested in early church history might want to consider a self-study course on *Emerson, Thoreau, and the Transcendentalist Movement* from “The Teaching Company,” including lectures on Sam May’s brother-in-law and niece, Amos Bronson Alcott and Louise May Alcott. Check out their web page at www.TEACH12.com. Look under Philosophy and Intellectual Courses. Hiemstra, Archivist

20. (12-17-07) **Susan B. Anthony and Sam May** As was mentioned in the last newsletter, Susan B. Anthony was part of the ceremonies in 1898 at our former church celebrating the 100th anniversary of Sam May’s birth. Susan had first become acquainted with Sam when she was a youth and Rev. May would occasionally travel to Rochester to exchange pulpits in the Universalist church. Susan and her family, who were Quakers, would travel to hear Sam as Susan’s father believed he was an inspired minister.

Her first involvement with Sam as an adult was at an anti-slavery meeting in 1851. The following year she was part of the Daughters of Temperance delegation in Albany that attempted to participate in the Sons of Temperance meeting. All women were blocked from speaking as the chairman said that women were to look, listen, but not speak. All women then left and found a place to meet by themselves. Soon Sam May came to their meeting to counsel them on how to organize themselves. He was the only man there.

Then in the fall there was a Woman’s Rights Convention in Syracuse. Susan was there, as were other women leaders like Matilda Gage and Lucretia Mott. However, Susan noted that women were still unused to running meetings and speaking in front of a large group. She said that many women would read a paper in voices that were hardly audible even three seats away. At that point Rev. May rose to the occasion and said to all delegates that every person there could make themselves heard if they were asking children who were outside to come in for a meal. He noted “Now what you want to do here, my dear sisters, is to feel and act as you would if you were at the front door of your own home.” He said to fix their eyes on the remotest person in the audience and “your voice will adjust itself to the distance.”

At the 100th anniversary ceremonies, Susan said, “Was that not beautiful? I shall always remember Mr. May for giving us that lesson as to how to be heard. And that is a sample of the way he helped us women to grow into a knowledge of how to do and how not to do. He would take us by the hand and lift us up.” Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

2008

21. (1-19-08) **History Factoids!** It has been a history filled past several weeks. Mariah Dillon and Jennifer Hamlin-Navias provided me with the names of two people who know much about MMUUS’ past and I am in the process of gathering some of those memories. Mariah and Jill Evans gave me photocopies of different items about our history. I also had five wonderful weeks as an RE guide conducting, with the help of other guides, history scavenger hunts around our church. Ask your children who participated about some of the history facts they remember.

Speaking of history facts, it is always fun for me to gather little factoids about our church and past ministers or leaders. Here are a few of them. Many of you know about the Franklin cars and may even have seen Hank Manwell drive to church in his Franklin on some warm day. What you may not know, though, is that John Wilkinson, grandson of the John Wilkinson who came up with the name of Syracuse for our community in 1819 (it had been called Cossit's Corners until then) designed the first Franklin motor car with an air-cooled engine in 1901. All the Wilkinsons were stalwart members of May Memorial.

That first John, also the first postmaster of Syracuse, was a member of the committee that traveled to Lexington, Massachusetts, to call Sam May to our church. Therefore, it was fitting that when Sam and his family moved to Syracuse, John and his young son, Alfred, met that train. Thus, one of the first people Sam's only daughter, Charlotte, met when she disembarked was Alfred, her future husband.

Many years later Sam May joined in efforts to establish what became St. Joseph Hospital. A gold headed, ebony cane was to be raffled off and given to the most popular clergyman in Syracuse as one of the fund raising activities. Sam coaxed many in his congregation to buy raffle tickets and vote for his good friend Father O'Hara of St. Mary's. However, Father O'Hara had a similar idea and convinced many in his much larger congregation to vote for Sam. That cane was one of Sam's prized possessions for the remainder of his life.

Back to his daughter, Charlotte. After Lucretia died and as his health began to wane, he spent his remaining years living with Charlotte and Alfred. The night before he died on July 1, 1871, Charlotte came into his bedroom and gave him a kiss and good night wishes. That kiss was his last contact with life. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

22. (2-03-08) **Latter-Day Fraters** Rev. Wahlstrom loaned me a brief history of the Fraters of the Wayside Inn after 1971 written by Rev. Charles Howe, former FUUS minister. The Fraters actually began in 1903 as an annual retreat for Universalist ministers in the Boston area to promote spiritual growth, intellectual stimulation, and interpersonal bonding. "Unitarians" were admitted into membership in the late 1970s and female ministers began attending in the late 1980s. Nick Cardell first attended in 1979, even served as Prior (annual organizer) in 1998. Jean Wahlstrom became a member in 2003, and presented papers on more than one occasion, including 2008.

In 1990, Rev. Cardell presented a paper at the Frater's annual meeting that resides in our archives. It is entitled, *The Ministry: What Keeps Us In It and At It?* Nick noted that one factor for him was our Flaming Chalice as it symbolized a search for truths, a freedom to be one's self, a challenge to grow, a welcoming inclusiveness, and a caring community. It is easy to see how the opening words he used each Sunday Service evolved. These are words Jean repeated on a recent Sunday.

Later in the paper, Nick talked about a need to be involved in creative contributions to a civilized and humane world as part of his reasons for remaining in the ministry: "I suspect it is a need, at least similar to that, that leads people into all of the helping professions. But I discovered that there were more specific and personal needs finding expression in my ministry. Emerson once said something to the effect that 'The preacher deals out his life to the people, life passed through the fires of thoughts.' To the extent that I have been able to do that, I have learned much about myself. And that must be listed as one of the things that keeps me at it."

As Rev. Wahlstrom passes through the installation formalities into years of service with us at May Memorial, it is as though through the bonds of Frater comradeship, Nick provides those words above to help guide her efforts. I believe I can speak for all MMUUS members in saying that through love and fellowship we will do all we can, Jean, to keep you “at it” here in Syracuse for many years to come. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

23. (2-11-08) **Turmoil Among Unitarians!** To begin with, I had a delightful interview with Mr. and Mrs. Charles "Ted" Tracy at the Nottingham recently. Ted turns 97 soon and is the youngest son of James and Florida Tracy. James was church president from 1929-1931 and Florida was involved in maintaining our church history for many years. I have mentioned Florida several times in past articles. Ted had many delightful memories and remembered Rev. Applebee and Rev. Argow quite well. At some future point we will make several of our interviews available so that interested people can also delight in such wonderful recollections. Speaking of past newsletter articles on our history, you can now read them online at history.mmuus.org/newsletterarchives.pdf.

Now to that notion of turmoil mentioned above. Sam May was among a few leading Unitarian ministers more than 150 years ago who worked diligently to convince leaders of the American Unitarian Association (AUA) to take a strong and decisive stance in support of abolition, but in vain. In his *Recollections* book he stated the following: “The Unitarians as a body dealt with the question of slavery in any but an impartial, courageous, and Christian way” (p. 336). Dr. Henry Ingersoll Bowditch, a leading abolitionist of the time, noted that Unitarians as a body were “as rotten as ever” on the topic of slavery (this comes from a paper entitled “Abolitionist Minister: Samuel J. May Opposes the Fugitive Slave Law” written by Rev. Armida Alexander, minister of the Glacier Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Kalispell, Montana, soon to be available on our supplemental web page). A number of Unitarian ministers actually lost their positions due to their antislavery activities, including our Sam May’s nephew, Rev. Samuel May, Jr.

It was mainly through the efforts of abolitionists like Samuel Joseph May that the AUA was forced to redefine its relationship to all Unitarian ministers. But in Sam’s mind, the change was very slow to come as most Unitarian ministers wanted calm and stability in their churches because, after all, many leading politicians, business owners, and community leaders were often in their pews and they did not want to rock the boat. Sam expected more of his colleagues and in his *Recollections* he said this about the power and duty of the pulpit to effect change: “The pulpit has no higher function than to expound, assert, and maintain the rights of man” (p. 358). He believed that when the pulpit was “false to its charge,” there were horrible consequences throughout society. He was very disappointed, too, in national leaders like former friend, Daniel Webster, and President Millard Fillmore, a Unitarian, who supported the Fugitive Slave Law.

But Sam, like a few other Unitarian ministers, kept up the fight. After the President of the Syracuse and Utica Railroad heard one of Sam’s antislavery sermons, he ordered his employees that if they ever saw any recaptured fugitive slave on his train they were to stop it, remove the irons, and set the person free. And, of course, the famous Jerry Rescue helped to mobilize people in New York and beyond, beginning a true wave of repulsion against the Fugitive Slave Act. Unfortunately, it wasn’t until 1889 that the AUA began efforts to reconcile the many

differences among its members. I'm sure that Sam would have been happy to know it eventually happened. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

24. (3-1-08). **The Infamous Fugitive Slave Act and Jerry McHenry's Rescue** Information in this article was inspired from the material written by Rev. Armida Alexander, the UU minister mentioned last time. We all can be proud to know that when the infamous Fugitive Slave Act was signed into law in September of 1850, many people in Syracuse were outraged. As news about the Act and its implications became known, concerned people in our community gathered in City Hall with the Mayor even presiding. Several resolutions denouncing the law were passed and protection was promised for anyone who might be affected. Sam May quickly organized a group (including several in our own church) who pledged to help financially anyone arrested for opposing the law. Perhaps most important, a Vigilance Committee was formed (including Sam) and they quickly established a rendezvous location and a signal (church bells ringing – including our own) for whenever action was needed.

About a year later in October, 1851, the clarion call came when William (Jerry) McHenry, a cooper (maker of barrels, tubs, etc.), was detained by slave hunters and some federal marshals. Sam, already seasoned in facing much opposition pertaining to abolitionism, was ready for this incident. He had long preached on the evils of slavery, had faced angry mobs of people in various locations when he talked about such evil, and counseled resistance to the Law. In one of his sermons at our church in late October, 1850, he noted the following:

A law of the land requiring you, as the Fugitive Slave Law does, to disobey the Golden Rule is, indeed, a far more grievous encroachment upon your liberty of conscience than a law prescribing to your faith any creed, or any rites and ceremonies by which you must worship God. . . . I declare that you are, every one of you, under the highest obligation to disobey this law, – nay, oppose to utmost the execution of it. (May, *Recollections*, 1869)

So typical of Sam, those fiery words with which he challenged our May Memorial ancestors were put to personal action when he was part of the group that helped Jerry escape from jail and eventually arrive safely in Canada through the Underground Railroad. Most readers of this newsletter know the Jerry Rescue story. More about it can be found on our web page. Suffice to say, Sam personified the selfless courage so needed to resist those who practiced injustice. We all need to find ways of embracing such courage in resisting the injustices we still see today. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

25. (3-11-08). **Sam May's Impact on William Ellery Channing** I recently was reading in a file on the 2003 Sam May Day service in which Rev. Dr. Frank Carpenter, minister of the Cincinnati church, delivered a sermon on Dr. William Ellery Channing, an important and influential Unitarian minister in the first half of the 19th Century. Our 9th minister, Rev. John Channing Fuller, was related to Dr. Channing. Dr Channing served somewhat as a mentor to Sam May early in Sam's training and ministry. For those who may remember that 2003 Sam May Day, it was a remarkable sermon.

Dr. Channing actually had an interesting take on slavery, including what must have been some confusion and conflict as he grew to manhood. On the Channing side, some relatives were involved with the slave trade and his father was decidedly pro-slavery. His angst was no doubt created on the Ellery side, as his mother's father, William Ellery (with whom he was quite

close), was a Customs Collector in Rhode Island who commanded searches and even seizures of suspected slave vessels. Thus, Rev. Channing began developing a few antislavery essays and sermons in the early 1830s.

However, people like William Lloyd Garrison and Sam May believed that he was too mild in such efforts. Dr. Channing, in turn, thought that the abolitionist were too intolerant, too abusive in their language, and too confrontational in their approaches. Sam eventually moved beyond thinking of Dr. Channing as a mentor to that of frustration as he believed the famed Unitarian leader was not using his voice to further the antislavery cause.

Sam eventually confronted Dr. Channing and recalls in his *Recollections* (1869, p. 174) saying the following: “Why, sir, have you not spoken to the nation long ago, as you, better than any other one, could have spoken?” After a long and embarrassing silence, Dr. Channing finally replied in a kind voice: “Brother May, I acknowledge the justice of your reproof. I have been silent too long.” That began Dr. Channing’s turn around as a more direct and vocal critic of slavery. It helped make a difference in our country’s struggle with slavery. Way to go, Sam, once again! Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

26. (4-2-08) **The Tenacious Prudence Crandall** About a year ago I wrote about one of the true heroines who interacted with Sam May, Prudence Crandall. As a young woman, this plucky lady opened a female boarding school in 1833. It was in Canterbury, CT, a community near Brooklyn, CT, where Sam had his first ministry. Prudence soon enrolled Sarah Harris, a very able daughter of a Black farmer. An uproar began almost immediately because of the inherent prejudice within the community. Leaders demanded she dismiss Sarah. Instead, she not only refused, but soon enrolled additional Black girls whom she believed warranted a good education. Even though Sam was one of the first to offer her help and tried to work with community officials, she and her Black students were harassed so badly psychologically and physically, that she eventually had to close the school out of fear for their safety and probably her own.

She left the community and the story might have ended there. However, I have learned from the material written by Rev. Armida Alexander (I’ve mentioned her previously and her work will soon be available on the Internet), that Prudence eventually was recognized by community members for the positive work she had tried to do.

Prudence soon married and moved west where she opened another school, raised two stepchildren, and, according to Susan Strane (*A whole-souled woman: Prudence Crandall and the education of Black women*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), continued to be both independent and forward thinking in what she did.

Although it did take awhile, in 1866 voters in Windham County, in which Canterbury and Brooklyn both existed, cast a vote in favor of Negro suffrage. The citizens of Canterbury finally repented their behavior in regard to Prudence and her school. Some twenty years after the Civil War, they petitioned the Connecticut legislature to recognize the wrong done to Prudence and, after a few more years, she was granted a small monthly stipend from the state of Connecticut. In this way, Canterbury publicly recognized that Prudence had had a right to run a school for Black children in Connecticut. Prudence is another example of the courageous women who made a real difference in the 19th Century. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

27. (4-19-08) **Nick Cardell's Treasure Trove** Regular readers of this column have heard me say before that historians get all the fun. Well, it has certainly happened again. Through the assistance of Kathy Cardell and Vicky Schipper, I have been going through some file folders representing Rev. Nick Cardell's ministry at May Memorial, as well as earlier in his career. This opportunity to gain some new insight into Nick's thinking, sermon preparation, and work as a minister is both satisfying and awe inspiring. Although I've only examined a small percentage of these folders, I certainly look forward to viewing the remainder.

As an example, Nick kept his treasure trove of materials in either labeled folders or thematic collections. I loved how he built his folders with actual finished products and some of the inspirational material he gathered to help him create them. He also had several folders with such intriguing names as "sermon ideas," "gestating sermons," "future sermons," and "seasonal sermons." I even discovered one folder that provided lists of sermons by titles and dates for several years. This will be very helpful as the History Committee works to compile as comprehensive a collection as possible of his work, especially during his time at May Memorial.

Just as an example of how his mind may have worked, he had a folder that described his work on what he called the four tyrannies. This resulted in a sermon he delivered at the Barneveld church in 1964 long before he came to May Memorial. From that idea seed years later he gestated four individual sermons, some of which long time May members may have heard: *The Tyranny of Freedom*, *The Tyranny of Peace*, *The Tyranny of Perfection*, and *The Tyranny of Words*. I even found later sermons where he went further with this "tyranny" notion.

Thus, it is the History Committee's long-range plan to organize this treasure trove and make some of it available to scholars and others interested in Nick's work. We anticipate a portion of the material will be housed at Syracuse University, some in our own church, and some on the Internet. Nick, like all of our past ministers, left us with much information to help us understand the growth of liberal religion in Syracuse. We are all that much richer because of it.

Here is an update on Rev. Armida Alexander's wonderful piece on Sam May that I referenced in the past few newsletters. The information is now available on the web page and I highly recommend it because she presents some fresh new insights into Sam's life. You can read it at history.mmuus.org/armida.pdf Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

28. (5-3-08) **Sam May – The Consummate Educator** We know Sam as an outstanding minister, a tenacious abolitionist, and a long time supporter of human rights. We also know a bit about his involvement as an educator throughout his adult life, including the work he did in Syracuse with the School Board during his later years. However, I keep discovering new material by Rev. May, and am especially fascinated by a speech he gave at a meeting of The Normal (Teacher's) Association in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, August 8, 1855. Entitled "The Revival of Education," this 153 year old speech has much relevance for educators today.

In his presentation, which must have been at least two hours in length, Sam initially provided a very learned history of youth education throughout Europe and into the United States. I thought I knew a little about this history, but there was much information new to me. Sam also described how he became involved with adult education, my particular field of

interest. As a young man he met Josiah Holbrook, the founder of the American Lyceum movement, a system for providing popular lectures, performances, and debates throughout this burgeoning country on various topics by outstanding orators in the 1820s up until the Civil War. Sam worked with Josiah to establish Lyceum opportunities in New England and gave numerous lectures over several years.

Then he launched into a part of his presentation meant to inspire the many teachers in attendance, especially the younger ones. He spoke words that would fit right in with today's emphases on learning how to learn and helping learners take responsibility for their own learning. He noted, "The office of a teacher is second only in its importance and sacredness to that of a parent . . . The first duty of a teacher is to lead his [*sic*] pupils *to think*, to observe and reflect on what they observe . . . Children should be led to use their own powers and opportunities for the acquisition of all knowledge . . . The teacher should be to his pupils . . . not so much a dictator as a guide."

It is the History Committee's intent to place this presentation, as well as several other little known publications and little read presentations authored by Sam, on the Web in the near future. The more you find out about Sam, the more appreciative you become of his depth, breadth, and passion for improving life on earth. Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

29. (5-20-08) **Sam May's Demeanor Could Change** Almost everything you read about Sam indicates that he was quite "Saintly" in his demeanor. He was kind, respectful of others, and even-handed in the way he dealt with people. Terms like "Peaceful Warrior," "Christ-like," and "brother to all" were commonly used to describe Sam. Yes, he supported passionately many social causes and fought vigorously to right the many societal wrongs he saw, but he did so in a way that people still respected and often loved him even in disagreements.

However, Sam finally reached an end to his tolerance level when the Fugitive Slave Act was passed. It allowed slave holders to send hired "gun men" into the "free" states for purposes of capturing escaped or presumed former slaves. He was especially irked with some fellow Unitarians who did not stand up to fight the related injustices. From one of his publications he stated, "The Unitarians as a body dealt with the question of slavery in any but an impartial, courageous, and Christian way." The American Unitarian Association (AUA) tried and failed to deal with the Fugitive Slave Law at its October, 1850, convention. Sam, the following year, having been so appalled that many prominent Unitarian ministers had actually supported the Law, proposed that the AUA condemn both the Fugitive Slave Law and these prominent leaders. He named such people, calling them "unsound" and obedient to the law of not upsetting their wealthy parishioners.

Unfortunately, the resolution failed to carry by three votes. Rev. May expected more because he believed in the power and duty of the pulpit to effect change. He said, "The pulpit has no higher function than to expound, assert, and maintain the rights of man." He felt that when the pulpit is "false to its charge," the societal consequences are huge and horrible. In essence, what we all can learn by Sam's example is that there are times when you simply must stand up for what you believe. It is no wonder, then, that at Sam's funeral in 1871, Black people in Syracuse put on mourning badges and lowered their flags to half-mast. At his funeral Blacks,

whites, and Native Americans sat side by side, a microcosm of integration that took many, many decades to achieve in our country.

As a closing note, I am pleased to announce the outstanding unpublished biography of Sam May that we discovered in our archives is finally all online. It was written in 1947 by SU Professor W. F. Galpin. I heartily recommend it as there is much more to learn about Sam. It is long, but well worth the time. You can read it at history.mmuus.org/galpin-may.html Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

30. (5-31-08) **Two Past Ministers** I have enjoyed a recent opportunity to look through several archival files new to me. I have learned much and will share some of it through this newsletter format. To begin with, I discovered what appears to be all the material related to a wonderful sermon given by Rev. Nick Cardell on October 12, 1997. Entitled *Judas By Proxy*, in it Nick talks about the School of Assassins (SOA) at Ft. Benning, Georgia, and the terrible toll visited on people in many Latin American countries by graduates of that school. He mentions both Father Roy Bourgeois, who organized the SOA Watch in 1990, an annual vigil outside the Ft. Benning gates, and Syracuse's own Ed Kinane. Both Father Roy and Ed had been arrested and subsequently jailed for crossing those gates. The church was honored to award the Samuel J. May Citation for Community Action to Ed in 1997. In addition, Father Bourgeois was our Sam May Day speaker April 1, 2007. You can read Nick's sermon at history.mmuus.org/judasbyproxy.pdf

His words were an almost eerie precursor to what followed. At some point during that service Nick said one way we could use our "response-ability" in closing the SOA was to join him, Dan Sage, Doris Sage, and Ann Tiffany at Ft. Benning on November 13-16, 1997. Many will know that subsequently they all crossed through those gates, were arrested, and eventually served several months in jail because of their convictions. Such courage so epitomizes what May Memorial membership means. For those who never saw it, I encourage you to read Nick's *Notes from Camp Allenwood* at this web site: www.uuworld.org/1999/0799feat3.html

The second set of files pertains to Rev. Ron Clark who served this church as Associate Minister from 1968-1971. Ron is remembered fondly for the many innovative programs he brought to our Religious Education program. Ron went on to be a minister at two other Unitarian churches and worked several years with the UUA. Sadly, Rev. Clark died nearly two years ago at the age of 70. Here is a site that provides more information, some photos of Ron and his family, and a link to one of his sermons: history.mmuus.org/ronclark.html

I end on a personal note of gratitude to the many readers of this column during the past two plus years who have mentioned how much they appreciate it and learn about our church's marvelous history. I truly enjoy writing these articles and have to come to appreciate even more this church I love. I feel so proud to be a member. Here is a reminder that you can read past newsletter articles in an online archival repository: history.mmuus.org/newsletterarchives.pdf Rog Hiemstra, Chair, History Committee

31. (6-19-08) **Fund Raising Throughout Our History** At our annual meeting on June 1 we learned that a committee would be formed whose purpose will be fund raising. As we all know, history repeats itself, in that our church has had financial ups and downs throughout its existence and special efforts to raise funds dot our historical landscape. Here are a few of those

efforts that this committee might find instructive where members as well as interested community members contributed through entrance fees, purchases, and donations:

- The Laymen's League sponsored lectures by the famous minister John Haynes Holmes, a prominent Unitarian minister, pacifist, and anti-war activist.
- The Women's Alliance presented a Pageant of Shawls with a program of ethnic dancing at the art museum.
- The Alliance coordinated programs for church and community children put on by the Clare Tree Children's Theatre Troupe
- Church members, including children, put on plays, theatrical performances, and musicals.
- Garden parties were held at the homes of prominent church members.
- One of the money raising events was called the Department Store and in 1905 it brought in a record sum of \$256.52.
- The women of the church put on an annual two-day May Faire that used the church and church grounds to raise funds through such activities as an antique sale, bazaar, business men's lunch, carnival corner, flea market, food sale, game room, garden shop, gourmet shop, pancake lunch, pony rides, puppet show, salad bar, sidewalk art show, and even a stamp and coin booth. [If you would like to see a poster of one of these fund-raising events, see history.mmuus.org/mayfaireposter.pdf.]
- The society raised money with a series of roast beef dinners, cooked by John Fuller, that were open the public.
- The Christmas tree sale organized by forestry professor Gerry Lanier became a popular annual fund-raising event that involved a majority of members.

So think creatively when you are asked for ideas on how we best can raise funds in this coming year. There are many ways similar to those above that might be tried, but many wonderful possibilities exist in your minds and experiences. Rog Hiemstra, Chair, History Committee

32. (7-12-08) **Marvelous Women in our History** Even venturing down the road implied by the above title is a perilous one, especially for someone of the male gender. I no doubt will miss many deserving women, some of whom may be your own favorites. However, here are some of the terrific women who have been associated with May Memorial. You can google many of them to find more information.

I start with Harriet May Mills who was born in 1857 and named after Sam May. After graduation from Cornell in 1879, she was influenced by Susan B. Anthony and Lucy Stone and began active work in the campaign for woman's suffrage. She later ran for Secretary of State in NY, the first woman to run for a state-wide office. Blanche Weaver Baxter, who was a niece of Matilda Joslyn Gage, had a 30 year career on Broadway and, upon her retirement, returned to Syracuse and worked tirelessly with youth in the arts, even founding the Syracuse Little Theater. Rev. Elizabeth Padgham, whom I have written about before, a successful Unitarian minister who grew up in our church and returned here after retirement to serve our church in many ways.

Dora G. Sedgwick, married to Frederick Hazard, was daughter of abolitionist Charles B. Sedgwick. Dora was an early proponent of family planning and helped develop programs for young Black people (which evolved into the Dunbar Center). The Hazard Branch of the OCPL contains a memorial plaque recalling her public service. The middle of the last century saw RE

leaders like Elizabeth Manwell and Jo Gould who not only served this church but also had a national impact.

I can't forget Verah Johnson, our church's first woman president, so many leaders of our Woman's Alliance throughout much of the past century, RE leaders Pat Hoertdoefer and Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Strong, both of whom spent the latter part of their terrific careers working for the UUA in Boston, and current RE Director, Jennifer Hamlin-Navias.

You can see I have left out so many, but I can beg off because of space constraints. However, I must end with our current church leader, Rev. Jean Wahlstrom. Check out her photo in the Memorial Room. Thank you Jean for adorning our Memory Wall and gracing our sacred Hall. Rog Hiemstra, Chair, History Committee

33. (8-5-08) **The Sam May and Luther Lee Debate** It was Tuesday evening, February 28, 1854, in downtown Syracuse. The day had warmed a bit, a little snow remained, but it had turned windy and cooler as 7 pm approached. City Hall was filled to capacity with an anticipatory crowd and hundreds more thronging the building unable to get in but straining to hear what they could. This began eleven such evening debates, ending on March 23, regarding what became the famous Lee-May theological debate regarding the doctrine of the Trinity. Lee and May were friends, but very different in their views of theology.

Rev. Lee, a local Wesleyan (Methodist) minister, believed and supported the notion of a Trinity, i.e., (a) God, (b) Jesus as a manifestation of God, and (c) the ever present Holy Spirit. This was a basis for his religious views and what he called "three persons in unity of the Godhead" (from page 4 of *Discussion of the Trinity*, Wesleyan Book Room, Syracuse, NY, 1854, available at SU's Special Collections unit). Rev. May, our minister, believed in a "God," and notions of an historical Jesus as a "manifestation of God to men and that God's Holy Spirit which was so fully manifested in Christ is ever present, the spirit of truth, purity, and mercy" (p. 6).

Subtle, perhaps, but very real differences. Rev. Lee spun out his convictions over the eleven debates fervently believing and defending notions that the bible provided all the evidence needed to support such views. Rev. May, on the other hand, providing support for his views, including many quotations from the bible, that would find much acceptance in our pew today other than views of an everlasting "God" which may differ from many of our own. He disavowed the notion that ministers must believe in the doctrine of Trinity to be legitimate ministers and was convinced that interpretations made by philosophers and religious leaders two and three centuries after the birth of Christ were both incorrect and leading to Trinitarian beliefs still held today.

Debates held in 1854 may have been less contentious than today's political debates, for example, and we can guess that both Rev. Lee and Rev. May were polite, but passionate, in the defenses they made of their beliefs. At the conclusion of the debates, Sam said, "And here, Brother Lee, after all our disputing, is my right hand of fellowship if you are willing to receive it." I envision them clasping right hands as Rev. Lee said "I take your hand, and fellowship you as a man and a philanthropist, but I have no fellowship with your theology." Sam seems to then have had the last word as he concluded with, "Nor I with yours! I suppose that your theology is just as unlike to mine, as mine is to yours" (p. 160).

Those lucky enough to have heard these brilliant men describing their beliefs were no doubt awed, and some may even have changed their personal views one way or the other. Interestingly, the steadfast adherence to a literal translation of the bible today by many continues to lead to misunderstandings and even violent clashes. Now we just need to find a way to have those who disagree with each other clasp hands in friendship and agree to disagree, but in loving ways. Rog Hiemstra, Chair, History Committee

34. (9-7-08) **Ric Masten – A Unitarian-Universalist Original** Sadly, the Fall, 2008, issue of the *UU World*, announced the passing of Rev. Ric Masten, a true original, after a long and courageous battle with prostate cancer. You can find a chronicling of his battle with this terrible disease on the web simply by goggling his name. Ric was known as the “troubadour minister,” because he performed for years with music and poetry before many UU congregations across this country. Although he attended several colleges, he never received a degree as he struggled with dyslexia and a troublesome hearing impairment. He probably was the only fellowshipped UU minister who never graduated from college or a seminary, being ordained in 1971 at the UU church in Arlington, Virginia.

Ric had a long history with May Memorial, having appeared here several times in the 70s and 80s, usually with a 12 string guitar in tow, his wonderfully animated voice, and a large repertoire of poetry and song. His first appearance here may have been in 1971, at least that is the first mention of him in the archives. To see a photo of that visit, go to history.mmuus.org/ricmasten.pdf. To see a more recent photo during the period of his struggle with cancer go to history.mmuus.org/RicMasten2.jpg

I was fortunate to see him in the early 80s in what may have been his last visit to May Memorial. I remember being enthralled and he certainly seemed to captivate all of us in attendance. He talked openly about the problems he had faced in life, including the marital struggles he was undergoing. If memory serves me correctly, his wife, Billie Barbara Masten, poet, author, and actress, performed with him that evening. I seem to remember them talking together about the struggles of staying married with his and their hectic travel schedules when she went with him. They even split at one point, remarried, and then maintained a ritual of reaffirming their marriage with stated vows each year, an activity that Billie insisted upon until the end.

A winner of many honors, in his last award ceremony this past January he told the crowd in attendance, “All you have to do is catch a fatal disease and the awards just fall out of the trees like apples.” His ashes were spread on a steep dirt road leading to his California home as per his wishes so he could “leave behind a little winter traction for his neighbors.” His passing is very sad, but he left behind a legacy of quirky (he was even a quick-draw artist with a pistol) but beloved troubadouring. Rog Hiemstra, Chair, History Committee

35. (10-15-08) **Heroes – Past and Present** Many past May Memorial heroes have been mentioned in this newsletter, but many have been missed. This month and next month, that will be somewhat rectified. If you know of others who should be mentioned, please let me know. Many of the names contained in these two articles also have important historical connections to the Syracuse community.

- Right from our beginning in the 1830s, we were persecuted because of the beliefs by many that Unitarians were non-Christians or even heathens. This meant our forbearers had to be

strong, courageous, and quiet heroes, such as our church initiators Stephen Abbott, Dr. Hiram Hoyt, Joel Owen, and Elisha Walter.

- Many know of the Jerry Rescue history in 1871, when Sam May helped break out of the Syracuse jail a former slave who was illegally placed there. However, there were many Unitarians also involved in various ways, including George Barnes, Oliver Burt, Dr. Lyman Clary, Captain Hiram Putnam, and Charles B. Sedgwick.
- Our church finances were finally put into the plus column in the late 1890s through the ability of Amos Padgham, long-time clerk and treasurer, and father of Elizabeth Padgham who became a well-know Unitarian minister and then a long time supporter of May Memorial after her retirement. About this same time Mary Redfield Bagg created a graded course of religious study for youth that was introduced at May Memorial and eventually adopted by many other Unitarian churches.
- In the 1920s, Dora Sedgwick Hazard and her sister Kitty Burlingame worked with Black community leaders to organize a youth recreation program at the AME Zion Church (this eventually became the Dunbar Society).
- A few years later in the early 1930's when the unemployed men of the Syracuse had no place to go for recreation of any kind, reading and social rooms were provided for them at our church, with Mrs. Frederick R. Hazard taking the lead to supply them with refreshments, games, and reading material. Give a passing thanks and hearty congratulations to these wonderful people. Rog Hiemstra, Chair, History Committee

36. (11-15-08) **From Prisoner of War to Prisoner of Conscience** Those who have read this column for awhile know that I feel the privilege is all mine in being able to pour over our archives. There is so much to learn, I gain so much inspiration from our past leaders, and my awe on what has already been accomplished by May Memorial people over the years continues to grow. This remains so true as I now go through the material of Rev. Dr. Nicholas C. Cardell, Jr., our 10th minister (1974-1995).

Many readers know that Nick spent time in prison on two occasions. Once was as a Prisoner of War during WWII and 54 years later as a Prisoner of Conscience when he served time in a Federal Prison Camp, joined by active members Dan and Doris Sage, for their demonstrations against the School of the Americas. You can read more about the despicable background of the U.S.'s School of the Americas at <http://history.mmuus.org/judasbyproxy.pdf> in a sermon by Nick in the fall of 1997. Several months years later Dan, Doris, and Nick's prison terms began. Go here to read some about his experiences: <http://www.uuworld.org/1999/0799feat3.html>. Such commitments based on conscience establish a role modeling atmosphere explaining so well why I am a Unitarian Universalist and why I so love this church. I encourage parents with young children to talk about this with them and read some of Nick's words.

I recently discovered an undated sermon by Nick entitled *From POW to POC*. It was written sometime in 1999. You can see it at <http://history.mmuus.org/From%20POW%20to%20POC.pdf> It, too, is well worth reading. Nick talked about the feelings people have when they do something that is truly based on their conscience and knowing that they know how to distinguish right from wrong in terms of the way you deal with others: "There is a joyful exhilaration in risking something with others for the sake of some deep-down fundamental conviction that has to do, I think, with belonging and

caring—with loving. It is a spiritual experience.” In essence, I believe Nick was describing how spirituality comes about in so many different ways. Rog Hiemstra, Chair, History Committee

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37. (1-15-09 **Our Holtkamp Organ** As the May Memorial congregation began exploring a new building in the late 1950’s, there was a parallel conversation about a suitable organ for the new structure. The organ in the James Street Church was built in 1911 by the Hutchings Organ Company of Boston. By 1959 the instrument was stylistically dated, and in poor repair, although it has been rumored that the condition might have been exaggerated in the hopes for a new installation.

The Organ Committee, with Dr. Howland Auchincloss as chair, soon decided that rebuilding the old organ would not be the best choice, both artistically and financially. Instead, they found four builders for a new instrument, with the Holtkamp Organ Company of Cleveland, Ohio, at the top of the list. Walter Holtkamp, Sr., had built organs for Syracuse University with the concert instrument in Crouse College finished in 1950. This organ was built for Professor Arthur Poister, and is one of Holtkamp’s most impressive and most famous creations. May Memorial hired Dr. Poister as a consultant, and with the influence of then Director of Music Frank Macomber, a Syracuse University professor, it’s easy to see the influence the Crouse organ had on May Memorial’s choice.

One major setback was the death of Walter Holtkamp, Sr. in 1962, several hours after a phone conversation with the May Memorial committee. (No connection between his death and the Music Committee!) The firm became controlled by his son, Walter “Chick” Holtkamp, Jr. After checking the health of the company, and the expertise of Chick Holtkamp, May decided to stay with their first choice. (Chick Holtkamp has since retired, and the company is being run by his son.)

Cost was also an issue but after a generous gift by the late Sarah Auchincloss, the church signed a contract for the larger of the two designs, for a total of \$31,380.00. The organ has 27 ranks, or sets, of pipes, and was delivered in April, 1965. Current replacement cost is approximately \$700,000.00, almost twice the original cost of the entire building. Chick Holtkamp worked closely with architect Dean Pietro Belluschi, especially in regard to the woods he used, and overall look. The organ does seem to grow out of the room in a unified way that is rarely seen in organ installations.

The people that have presided over the instrument as Music Director are only four. Frank Macomber came from the James Street Church. He was followed by Rob Kerner, cofounder of the Kerner/Merchant Organ Company that still maintains the organ. Rob left to become Curator of Organs for the Eastman School of Music. Dr Allison Evans Henry then served for five years, leaving for the First Presbyterian Church of Syracuse. I accepted the position in 1992, after being the musician for First Universalist on Waring Road in the 1980’s. A very quick 17 years it has been!

Our Holtkamp has been a source of great delight to me over my tenure. Come hear it once again in recital on Sunday, March 22 at 4:00 pm, as I celebrate my 50th birthday with a concert of some of my favorite works. Everyone is invited! Glenn Kime, Music Director

38. Church School Reflections While exploring the files in the church archives, I came across some interesting Religious Education historical items. There were three religious education pamphlets – from 1916, 1963 and 1964.

The first was a “Prospectus for 1916 – 1917 of the May Memorial Sunday School”. There was a motto: “Be Faithful” and a good photo of the James Street church on the cover. The program description on the inside indicated four departments covering ages 4 through 17. Each department handled four school grades, with two grades taught in each of the two groups in the department. Each group taught two courses – one each year. Courses included God the Loving Father, Jesus’ Way of Love and Service, Old and New Testament stories, Paul of Tarsus, Work of the Apostles and more. The program also included an emphasis on service, with contributions to The Syracuse Boys Club and the Syracuse Women’s and Children’s Hospital. In addition, each class undertook some actual work of service. During 1916-17 they also maintained a scholarship at Tuskegee. The stated hope of the May Memorial Sunday School was to “train the spirit, the mind, the heart.”

Next came a pamphlet from the 1963 – 64 May Memorial Unitarian Church, School of Religion. The church was still at 472 James Street, with the Church School office at 466 James Street. Mr. Robert Burdick was chairman of the Religious Education Committee, and Mrs. (Mary) Burdick was a member of the committee. William Chaffee, MD is listed as the doctor for the school. Mrs. Lawrence was listed as the School Director, Bob Coye was a fifth grade teacher and Mrs. John Fuller was in charge of worship. There was a class for every grade from Nursery 3’s through tenth grade and a special class for 11th and 12th graders. The Beacon Press book series was extensively used.

The following year was the first year in our new building at 3800 E. Genesee St. The 1964-65 May Memorial Unitarian Church School of Religion pamphlet included a nice drawing of the new church by Miss Joanne Ashley. In addition to describing the courses, it also shows a floor plan of the original Sunday School room assignments. Grade 9 and the class for grades 11-12 met on the upper level. The Beacon Press series was apparently only used through grade 5.

It is interesting to note the changes in Religious Education over the years. Some of the changes parallel changes in the attitudes and beliefs of the congregation. Other changes result from changes in curriculum and teaching philosophy and changes in youth perceptions. In spite of these continuing changes the statement about “our new building” in the 1964-65 pamphlet still holds true today: “Here young and old will gather as a family under one roof. The arrangement of space and the simplicity of adornment permit emphasis upon the process of becoming which is education. Here we establish anew, for ourselves and for our children, a church that shall be a house of friendship ... of freedom ... of truth seeking ... of beauty ... a cradle for our dreams and a workshop for our learning and doing together.” George Adams, Guest Contributor, History Committee Member

39. (3-15-09) Oral History Project One of the projects of the MMUUS History Committee, under the leadership of church archivist Roger Hiemstra, involves interviewing and recording long-time members and friends of May Memorial. This project was undertaken with the following purposes in mind: “to preserve oral histories and personal memories of the church; to obtain personal insights and perspectives on what has taken place in the life of the

church; and to help in obtaining an overall picture of various church-related events, experiences and activities.”

As a first step, Roger purchased a small digital audio recorder with history committee funds, and we generated an extensive list of people to be interviewed, starting with more senior members of the congregation. The history committee also developed a set of questions covering several areas, such as early experiences with church/religious education, involvement with the Unitarian Universalist religion in general, and with May Memorial in particular, memorable events in the life of the church, and hopes for the future of MMUUS. Each interview is structured around these areas and questions. This will make it easier to excerpt information on certain topics from the interviews and, if desired, to put short audio clips on our website. (The use of digital technology makes this process more manageable and also allows us to save each interview on more than one computer hard drive and compact disk.)

One of the interview questions concerns what brought the individual to the Unitarian/Universalist church, and specifically to May Memorial. It is interesting to note that some of the reasons given by people who came to MMUUS 40 years ago are remarkably similar to those we hear today. For example, interviewees have talked about the desire to find a religious home where they could explore their own spirituality and discover their own religious path, as well as the desire to find a strong religious education program for their children.

Thus far we have recorded about a dozen interviews. This is a good start, but given the number of members and friends to be recorded, it is important to get more people involved. We hope that this column will raise awareness of the oral history project and interest some of you in participating. No special skills are required; all that is needed is an interest in listening to the stories and memories of some of our long-time members, a willingness to try something new, and a little free time. If you would like to learn more, please send an email to mledward@twcnny.rr.com. The history committee would welcome your participation in this interesting and gratifying oral history project. Mary Louise Edwards, Guest Contributor, History Committee Member

40. (4-15-09) **Our Wonderful Organ** I begin with a huge thanks to Glenn Kime, George Adams, and Mary Louise Edwards who contributed wonderful articles during the time I was away. I know they were enjoyed by many.

Janet and I got home from our trip just in time to enjoy Glenn's wonderful 50th birthday celebration with a masterful organ recital on March 15. Well, when Glenn was just about 4 years old, and perhaps before he he had decided on becoming a professional organist, many forces were in movement that eventually resulted in the acquisition of our organ.

In 1963 when the building of our current church was underway, Howland Auchincloss (then Chair of the Music Committee) was working hard on plans for an organ. Cooperating closely with Frank Macomber (then church organist) and Dr. Arthur Poister (music director at Syracuse University's Hendricks Chapel from 1948 to 1965 and organ professor from 1948 to 1967), Howland had contracted with Walter Holtkamp (Holtkamp Organ Company) to come up with designs for an organ. Costs, of course, were an issue with the better organ some \$3,000 more. To help with the decision making process, Howland brought a committee of people from May Memorial to Crouse College on the SU campus where a Holtkamp organ already existed. Dr. Poister, by manipulating stops, played several compositions as they would approximately

sound on the two organs. The unanimous verdict from the committee was that the more expensive organ was identifiably different and preferable with a larger, fuller, and more satisfying sound.

Howland then argued clearly and concisely in a December 3, 1963, letter to Henry Mertens, chair of the new building's oversight committee, for the better organ. Henry and the overall committee members were convinced and they recommended its purchase in a report to the Board of Trustees. A positive decision was made and we now have this fantastic instrument.

But wait, there is more (as the TV ad people often say)! A generous contribution by Dr. Wilbur Le Page in 1965 enabled Howland to accept a recommendation from Walter Holtkamp to add 32 Chalumeau Pipes. This enhanced our organ's sound. Be sure to ask Howland's for his recollections regarding this story and thank Glenn once again for making the most of our instrument. Rog Hiemstra, Chair, History Committee

41. (5-8-09) **A Peak at the Past** Before peaking at the past, I need to provide some updates. To begin with (and thanks to someone who told me but I forgot who), it was reported that Lucretia Coffin May's headstone was in need of some repair (go here to see a picture: <http://www.mmuus.org/who-we-are/history/may-headstone.html>). I recently checked them both and each needs to be anchored more firmly back to their pedestals before they fall over and become broken. I reported this to the Oakwood Cemetery officials; they will do an assessment and report back to me.

Some wonderful new additions have been made to the web page (<http://history.mmuus.org/>): (a) A recent find in one of the Nick Cardell archival boxes is a delightful sermon by John Fuller entitled *Slavery, Dr. May, & Jerry*, delivered September 30, 1962 (look under Rev. Fuller's section); (b) a beautiful engraving of the Church of The Messiah building from the 1873 Syracuse city directory (look under MMUUS – Our Buildings); (c) an absolutely wonderful book published by David Ashley's Mom, Dorothy (a terrific portrait painter), entitled *Some Portrait Adventures* (you will not be disappointed taking time to look at this book under Miscellaneous Information); (d) a church yearbook for 1897-1898, including wonderful addresses by Susan B. Anthony, Rev. C. D. B. Mills, and Lewis Douglas (Frederick's son) – in addition, look at the membership list toward the end, a who's who of prominent families in Syracuse (look under Miscellaneous Information; and (e) the 35th anniversary celebration on April 26, 1903, of Rev. Calthrop's installation at May Memorial with delightful pieces on his general influence, as an interpreter of science, and his impact on our church (look under Rev. Calthrop's section).

Now for that peak at the past, here are a few handwritten Board of Trustees notes tucked into an archival folder and copied from various board minutes some 35 years ago. Someone no doubt had a delightful time culling out these gems:

- 4/9/74 Nick Cardell to candidate for 8 days, April 28-May 5 “very nearly fitting the ideal candidate for our new minister.”
- 5/5/74 – 128 of those present voted to call Nick C. as minister.
- 6/4/74 – Bob Holmes (then our interim minister) suggested that the congregation move out beyond ourselves for social application of our religious convictions. He warned that so much self-awareness can cause the loss of sight of our outer dimensions of life.

President Mal Clark followed up by saying let's come out of our introspection and reestablish our church as a strong religious force in the community.

- 8/13/74 – The BOT voted to install a soda machine.
- 1/14/75 – Canvass was \$49,000 from 289 pledges, \$7,000 short of the budget needs (to put that in perspective in terms of our current budget problems, it represented a 12.5% shortfall).
- 5/13/75 – The budget deficit was hoped to be overcome by 2 or 3 large fundraisers and 4 small ones (gee, does that sound familiar?)

[And the beat goes on.....] Rog Hiemstra, Archivist

42. (6-10-09) **Nick and the Unitarian Universalist Merger** “It Happened in Syracuse,” a conference to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the meeting held in Syracuse resulting in a merger between the Unitarians and the Universalists will be held on October 30 and 31 at the Hotel Syracuse. You will be reading more about that event in future newsletters. Long before he ever thought about coming to May Memorial, Nick Cardell played an role in that activity that should not be forgotten.

When he was a minister at the Unitarian church in Plainfield, NJ. Nick was a ministerial delegate to the meeting. His main role was helping to deal with the conflicts between Unitarians and Universalist on the stated principles and purposes. For example, the Universalists were concerned about how language associated with Jesus could or should be included in written material and the Unitarians were not concerned with that aspect. There was some heated discussions and Nick pleaded for a more moderate position. From an interview he had with Jean Hofer in 1986 he remembered saying this to fellow Unitarians: “Is it going to hurt us to include something that is going to make them feel more comfortable.” We don't know what the responses were, but can speculate that Nick's plea for moderation had an impact.

Nick spent most of his time at the War Memorial for the intense discussions taking place there. He only got to the May Memorial building on James Street one time for a service. He also talked about how the communication between Unitarians and Universalists (who were meeting elsewhere – Nick remembered they met at the Universalist church) by telephone as the discussions continued on were very important.

So come to the October 31 meeting to hear more, see some associated displays and photos, and obtain a better understanding of that important meeting. The birth and growth of Unitarian Universalism was its result. Rog Hiemstra, Chair, History Committee

43. (7-10-09) **Responding to Crises** I recently returned from Knoxville, TN, where I taught in the University of Tennessee's summer session. While there I attended the Tennessee Valley UU church, site of the two murders and wounding of others by a crazed shooter one year ago. I'm not sure what I expected to see; I guess visible reminders of the tragedy, memorials, and flowers, but it all seemed quite ordinary, a busy church with many things going on that reminded me of MMUUS. Sure, there probably were and are many related reminders that our friends at Tennessee Valley deal with all the time, but it got me thinking about how our own church has dealt with past crises or tragedies.

Perhaps the most talked about crisis was the Jerry Rescue in October, 1851. Jerry McHenry, a former slave was “an athletic mulatto, who had resided in Syracuse for a number of years . . . as a cooper,” (Sam May, *Some recollections of our antislavery conflict*, Boston:

Fields, Osgood, & Co., 1869, p. 375) was arrested under the infamous and despicable Fugitive Slave Law. This must have been most disconcerting to our church ancestors, and because Sam May was right in the middle of an ultimate rescue of Jerry from jail and the illegal transporting of him to Canada, it no doubt put some church members in a quandary about Rev. May's actions. However, parishioners continued to shower him with love, concern for his health, and tolerance for his continued work on behalf of abolition. Of course, as we all know they named the church after Sam upon his death in 1868.

Our church experienced a very real tragedy in the winter of 1852 when it was destroyed "by a hurricane which struck the spire; threw it directly upon the ridge pole, crushed down the whole roof, burst out the side and end walls, . . . [demolishing] the entire building excepting the front and the foundation" (*May No One Be A Stranger*, <http://history.mmuus.org/stranger.html>, p. 10) After recovering from realizing their church had been destroyed in a few moments, members quickly organized themselves, began holding church services in City Hall, and initiated the process of not only rebuilding the church but also the house next door that had been destroyed by our falling debris. Our church was rebuilt and rededicated in the spring of 1853.

There are several other instances in our history when church members have responded to wars, community tragedies, community problems, and even world conflicts with quiet courage and determination. However, here is one more in recent times that describes how the current "we" dealt with trauma as did our ancestors. In 1998, Dan and Doris Sage as well as long time minister, Nick Cardell, spent several months incarcerated as prisoners of conscience for their active demonstrations against the atrocious School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia (Chronology of SOA Prisoners of Conscience, <http://www.soaw.org/article.php?id=339>). As a church we addressed these heroic acts of courage by showering Dan, Doris, and Nick with love, correspondence, and even Unitarian Universalist "prayers" during their sentences. After their return this recognition continued and they were honored along with two colleagues by receiving the 1998 Samuel Joseph May Citations for Community Action Award Recipients. Our response reminders are not always immediately visual either, but they are heartfelt and indicative of what we are as a community. Rog Hiemstra, Chair, History Committee

44. (8-12-09) **Bravery Can Be Misunderstood** I begin by encouraging you to read John Allen's "Going Green" article in this newsletter. I am so pleased to play a role in Rick Weinstein speaking at May Memorial on September 20. I really encourage you to attend as his updated information about climate change is such an eye opener and very sobering. Second, I am pleased to announce that there are two new additions to the MMUUS History Page. One is a beautiful story Doris Sage wrote for her grandchildren before she went to prison. The second includes the testimonies from Doris and 24 other people during their trials. Six of the 25 people were from the Syracuse area: Nick Cardell, Ed Kinane, Megan Rice, Dan Sage, Doris Sage, and Ann Tiffany. Their bravery and convictions, although misunderstood by the U.S. legal system, is to be forever honored. Go to <http://history.mmuus.org/> and find those two links at the bottom of the page.

Their bravery was similar to those of our church ancestors relative to stances they took against slavery. This has been mentioned in various ways before, the most famous being Sam May's work in abolition and with the Jerry Rescue. Unfortunately, and obviously my biases and naiveté in understanding the law are showing in this article, those efforts also were

misunderstood within the legal system. Daniel Webster, a well known figure in U.S. history, was a part of this misunderstanding or, perhaps, it was a misappropriation of the legal system for political reasons. I have spoken before about Sam's disgust with what had happened to his onetime hero Webster, who became increasingly more conservative as he grew older.

In the spring of 1851 former Senator Daniel Webster was barnstorming the country in defense of the despicable Fugitive Slave Law. On May 26 he arrived in Syracuse upon the invitation of the local Whig party (somewhat equivalent to today's conservative wing of the Republican party) to speak in the old Frazee Hall (located at Washington and Montgomery Streets). He began talking to a large crowd about the Constitution and the sanctity of law and turned to the Fugitive Slave Law. Here are some of his remarks as noted by W. Freeman Galpin (*The Jerry Rescue, New York History, XXVI, January, 1945, pp. 19-34*):

I am a lawyer . . . and I tell you if men get together and declare a law of Congress shall not be executed in any case and assemble in numbers to prevent the execution of such a law, they are traitors and are guilty of treason and bring upon themselves the penalty of the law . . . It is treason! treason! TREASON! and nothing else . . . Depend upon it the law will be executed in all great cities, here in Syracuse . . . if the occasion shall arise.

That Law was soon to be tested in Syracuse by the imprisonment of Jerry and his subsequent rescue and transportation to Canada – most of you know that history. If you read the testimonies of Doris, Dan, Nick, and all the others, there are chilling similarities between 1851 and 1997 at least in how some lawyers and judges interpreted the letter of the law versus what was right and just. Given the sometimes ugly tones presented today in many cities in what should be civil discussion of issues, it suggests that from 1851 to 2009 some things have not changed, and perhaps they never will. Sad to contemplate isn't it? Rog Hiemstra, Chair, History Committee

45.(9-14-09) **The Other Side of the History Door** Two years ago I wrote about the almost marriage of Fred Wilkinson, grandson of Sam May, to Winnie Davis, a daughter of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America during the Civil War. This article was written primarily from the viewpoint of Fred, as best I could capture it from an historical viewpoint. My colleague, Karen Dau, NYSCU and First Universalist Church of Rochester Historian, subsequently sent me some information that gives the same story from Winnie's viewpoint. This information comes from *Crowns of Thorns and Glory* by Gerry Van Der Heuvel (NY: E. P. Dutton, 1988).

When Winnie and Fred fell in love in 1888 after she had visited friends in Syracuse, they both knew there would be problems with their respective parents, especially Jefferson Davis and his wife Varina, who were still smarting over the loss of the Civil War and his imprisonment for a period. Because Sam May, who had died in 1868 three years after the war ended, was still known throughout much of the south as one of those "abolitionists" who had been thought responsible, in part, for causing the war, they were none too happy about this romance. Jefferson was very much against it and let her know it. She had been born in 1864, in Richmond, Virginian, in the "White House" of the confederacy and was actually known throughout the south as the "daughter of the confederacy," so there was much at stake here. Winnie was so distraught over all the disagreement that she became very thin and run-down. Jefferson then convinced her to go with friends on a cruise to Europe. Unfortunately, when she

was in Paris in December of 1889, her father died. Her resulting grief added to the depression she felt over the unfortunate love affair.

Varina then decided that she did not want to sacrifice her daughter's happiness because of past Confederacy issues and actually announced their engagement in April of 1890. The furor in the southern newspapers was actually much greater than anyone had even anticipated. About this time inquiries were made by some of her family members into Fred's circumstances and the word came back that he would have trouble supporting a wife and eventual family. As a consequence, Fred learned of these inquiries, became angry, and wrote Winnie a fairly heated letter. One thing led to another and Varina used the newspapers once again to say the wedding was postponed. By the fall of that year the engagement was finally broken off.

It is difficult to know how much that broken engagement affected her. She did go on to become somewhat fairly well known as an author, but her health never regained its full vigor. She died in September of 1898 at the age of 34. She was buried with full military honors. Standing in the back of the church during the services was none other than a very saddened Fred Wilkinson. What could have been was never to be. Rog Hiemstra, Chair, History Committee

46.(10-13-09) **Our Church Buildings – From Genesee St. to Genesee St.** The history of our church buildings has an interesting twist. Our first church building was on Genesee St., but close to downtown. Our current church, also on Genesee St., is about five miles East of that first building. In essence, it took 125 years to move those five miles.

After meeting in homes, an unoccupied schoolhouse, and even an old Baptist Church on West Genesee St. from 1836 through 1838, our first church building was a small wooden structure not much bigger than our current Memorial Room. It was built for \$607 and the first service was conducted in January of 1839. Our first minister, Rev. John Storer, arrived in 1839, too, and after taking his first look at the church building, he called it his "Little Tabernacle," as it barely held the 40 members usually in attendance each Sunday. Today much of that location is occupied by the Hiscock and Barclay building. Its founder, Judge Frank Hiscock, was an active leader in our church during the early part of the last century. An important note: Where our building stood would have been on part of what is today a parking lot.

That little building served us well for only five years as our membership grew steadily. Standing room only constraints on parishioners resulted in the construction of our second church building at the corner of Burnett and Lock (now State) Street, very near the Erie Canal. The building several times larger than the first one, was completed in the fall of 1843 for the price of \$5000. Named the Church of the Messiah, it was an imposing structure. To see photos of this and our other buildings, go to this Internet site:

<http://history.mmuus.org/churchbuildings.pdf>. Today that building is gone, and in its place, you guessed it, a parking lot.

Unfortunately, a railroad track was laid down quite near the Church of the Messiah, and the resulting noise overpowered services, meetings, and even weddings. Thus our next building, named in honor of our second minister, was called May Memorial church, a name we still hold today. It was built at 472 James St. for the cost of \$50,000. This beautiful church served us very well from 1885 through 1964. Unfortunately, we eventually outgrew it and had our current church constructed. Would it surprise you to know that today 472 James St. is a parking lot?

Our 3800 E. Genesee St. church was built for \$447,000 and was dedicated on October 10, 1964. It, too, has served us very well for these past 45 years and we do have a fairly large parking lot! Rog Hiemstra, Chair, History Committee

47.(11-15-09) **Path to Peace** As President Obama struggles with a possible path for peace in the Middle East, I thought about Sam May's own path to his work with peace. Growing up he would have been introduced to such ancients as Homer, Plutarch, Ovid, and Seneca who all argued for peace. There are, of course, comments about peace and avoiding war in both the Old and New Testaments, but Sam's early connections with religion would have shown that this often was a bit hypocritical with Popes, Kings, and the Crusaders frequently using war as a means of settling various differences.

His actual involvement with peace probably began when he heard of Rev. William Channing's sermons or it may have been when as a Harvard student he became aware of the recently established Massachusetts Peace Society. His father, Joseph May, became a member of that Society in 1816, right when Sam was studying at Harvard and beginning to think about many things and becoming acquainted with many people. One was a college friend, Gorham Parsons, who was a neighbor of Rev. Noah Worcester. Noah printed around the same time a famous peace tract entitled, *The Solemn Review of the Custom of War*. Upon being introduced to Rev. Worcester during a visit to Gorham's home, Sam later talked about how inspired he was during this meeting and thus began a long friendship with Rev. Worcester.

Soon after Sam became an officer in the Windham County Peace Society and within a short time published his very first of what would be many tracts, entitled the *Exposition of the Sentiments and Purposes of the Windham County Peace Society*. From that point he began accelerating his work through publications, attendance at peace movement meetings, and various sermons in his first pastorate. These latter created some problems for him as many in that congregation objected to a minister who was so vocal on a complicated issue.

Thus began the ridicule that Sam was to face throughout most of his remaining life for his strong stands on societal issues. Not only did he face criticism within his own church, but within his community of Brooklyn, Connecticut, and increasingly throughout much of the east. His views on peace were greatly enhanced when in 1827 he met William Ladd, who was known at the time as the "Apostle of Peace." William then enlisted Sam to help form a national peace organization, what would become the American Peace Society.

That beginning led naturally to Sam's work with injustice of any sort and the abolitionist movement. When he was considering the move to Syracuse, he let our ancestors know exactly what his views were on peace, slavery, and the injustices he saw even in his initial visits to our community. Knowing all of this, our forbearers eagerly invited him to continue his ministry here and the rest is history. It is no wonder that May Memorial has had such a long and rich involvement with social justice issues. Thanks, Sam! To read more about Sam's path to peace advocacy read the biography, *God's Chore Boy* at <http://history.mmuus.org/galpin-may.html>
Rog Hiemstra, Chair, History Committee

48.(12-15-09) **Oh, Tiffany of Ours** You may have read in the *Post Standard* recently that a Baptist church in Vermont is selling its Tiffany stained glass window that has hung there for almost 100 years to raise much needed cash. The highest bid so far is \$75,000. In our former James Street church we had a beautiful Tiffany stained glass window honoring our first church

president of record, Edward Judson, who died in 1902. What it is worth today is priceless in terms of our church history. Named the *Tiffany Palms* and designed by the famous Louis Comfort Tiffany, it was known as the “New Jerusalem.” To see a photo of this window as it stood in our old church go to this link: <http://history.mmuus.org/windows.html>.

When the James Street church was being razed, it is the only one of the 10 stained glass windows saved and it has hung in the Everson Art Museum for many years. Many May Memorial parishioners and thousands of others have enjoyed its beauty over the years when visiting the Museum. Nancy Pease recently visited the museum and was surprised when looking for it to note its absence and asked officials there where it was. She mentioned this to me and here is the wonderful and honorific story of its current journey.

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts has organized in collaboration with the Musée du Luxembourg in Paris and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond a touring exhibit of Tiffany Glass. This exhibition is one of the most significant ever mounted of Tiffany’s works and celebrates this renowned designer who achieved original and spectacular effects in hand-blown glass vessels, leaded glass windows and lamps, and other decorative objects. The exhibition’s curators are from the Montreal museum, the NYC Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Rutgers University. In addition to choosing pieces from the collaborating museums, the curators visited several venues where Tiffany pieces are housed, including the Everson. From all the Everson Tiffany pieces they chose our window. Everson Registrar, Karen Convertino, even travelled to Paris for its installation there.

The exhibition’s approximately 170 objects includes blown-glass vessels, lamps, leaded-glass windows, and other decorative objects. Currently, in its first 12-week exhibition at the Paris museum until the end of December, it is known as “Tiffany Glass: A Passion for Colour” (Couleurs et Lumière). Starting mid February for another 12 weeks it will be at the Montreal museum where it will be known as the “Fusion of Colour: The Glass of Louis C. Tiffany.” Its final 12 week exhibit will begin at the end of May in the Richmond museum where it will be known as “Tiffany: Color and Light.” Anyone for a trip to Paris, Montreal, or Richmond for a wonderful experience and seeing in person how our window has complemented this exhibition? If you do visit, take photos. Rog Hiemstra, Chair, History Committee