

This is the third church edifice in which the Unitarian Society of Houlton has worshipped since it was organized here in 1835. This building was erected on its present site after the fire of 1902 had destroyed the second Unitarian Church building which then stood on part of the present Monument Park.

# First Unitarian Society Services Held Here In 1835; Church Built In '37

By Mrs. Cora C. Putnam

The early history of the Unitarian Church in Houlton may be read as that of the organization of the First Congregational Church in 1811 because it was from this denomination that six or eight families withdrew about 1835 to organize a Unitarian Society here and build a church.

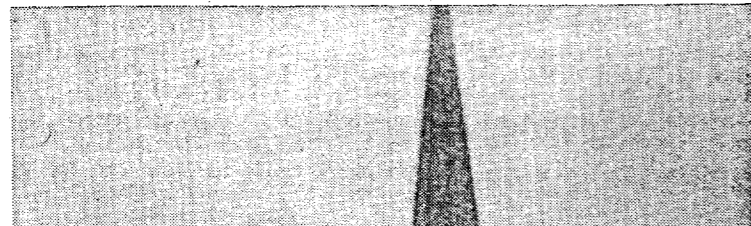
### UNITARIAN CHURCH

In the "History of the Church of Franklin County, Massachusetts," the Rev. Theophilus Packard states (this in 1854): "Unitarianism began in 1804 when a Mr. Gould became minister. He, like the Rev. Alpheus Harding, was a graduate of Harvard Divinity School which had become Unitarian in teaching, if not in name."

The Rev. Mr. Harding was a schoolmate of Aaron Putnam and

preacher was the Rev. Augustus Wetherall for whom one of our former leading citizens, Augustus Wetherall Ingersoll, was named.

When the Unitarian church was without a pastor, visiting missionaries of various denominations were invited to use the meeting house. Later some of the leading Unitarians looked after the Sunday School; among them were John H. Bradford, Charles P. Tenney, Mrs. Jotham Donnell, Miss Martha Packard (Mrs. Lyman Putnam).



the same date the women of the parish formed a sewing circle. The following were elected officers: Mrs. Jotham Donnell, president; Mrs. Lysander Putnam, vice-president; Miss Susan Packard, secretary; Miss Hannah Putnam, treasurer; and Mrs. S. H. Hussey, Mrs. Edward Mayo, Mrs. C. P. Tenney, Mrs. Llewellyn Powers, Mrs. Adrian Vandine, and Miss Adeline Mansur were chosen as a Ways and Means Committee to raise funds for the purchase of an organ. This Committee succeeded, and the pipe organ was installed, and the first recital held on March 4, 1865.

In 1868, the Rev. Mr. Piper, after more than 20 years of faithful service to his congregation, was succeeded by the Rev. O. K. Crosby, the latter remaining as pastor for ten years.

wife were very active in church work and in establishing a Women's Club on a firm basis. A district nurse was secured for the townspeople. Rev. Mr. Weeks was especially successful with the young boys of the church. He was followed by the Rev. Mr. Weston, who was also a strong support to the parish.

### HOME LEFT TO CHURCH

After the death of Mrs. Hudson T. Frisbie her beautiful home on Court Street, with all its furnishings, was left to the church. This building was later sold and is today the annex of the Northland Hotel. The Rev. George Dana Sanders of Patten, a graduate of Colby College, next came to the parish. Owing to ill health he was unable to do much towards building up the church. He died in Houlton and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

His successor was the Rev. Frank A. Gilmore, whose plan was to unite the Unitarian churches of the county under one pastor. His sudden death did not prevent the plan from being carried out, and the Rev. Dwight F. Mowery took over the pastorate for Aroostook County Unitarian churches, in 1919, preaching in Houlton, Presque Isle, and Fort Fairfield. Three State Conventions have been held in the Unitarian Church—once in 1864, again in 1900, and the latest one in 1945.

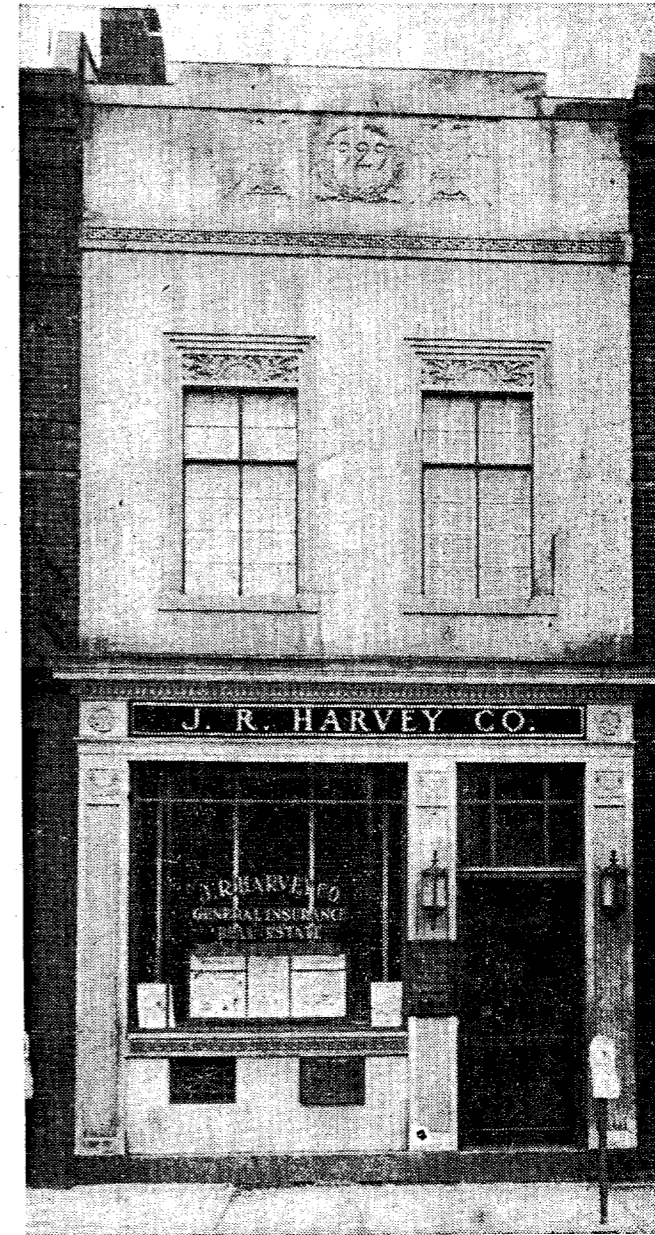
The following pastors have contributed much to the church: Rev. George Cook, 1920-1925; Rev. William A. Atchinson, 1926-1928; Rev. George B. McKay, 1928-1932; Rev. Howard Matson, 1932-1936; Rev. Arthur Newell Moore, 1936-1945; Rev. Arthur Heeb, 1945-1948; Rev. Robert Bath, 1948-1950. During one winter, Rev. Wilson of Rockland substituted; and Rev. Wm. E. Billingham served in 1952-1955. Mrs. Edna Arnold has been organist for the past several years.

When fire destroyed the church edifice of the Congregationalists here on New Year's morning, 1956, the pulpit of the Unitarian Church had been vacant. Accordingly, after some discussion, both churches agreed once more to worship together and Rev. Royal Davis, minister of the Congregational Church assumed the pastorate of the combined churches.

*It happened in . . .*

**1904**

# 52 Years in the insurance business . . . .



*. . . . is a record of*

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The Rev. Mr. Harding was a schoolmate of Aaron Putnam and doubtless had a weighty influence in all the affairs of the Houlton church. When the Unitarian Association was founded in Boston in 1825, Mr. Harding and most of the members of his church in New Salem found themselves in sympathy with this new movement, and identified themselves with it.

Some ten years later (about 1835), the Rev. Mr. Harding again visited Houlton to explain the new organization to his friends. After several days of earnest discussion, some six or eight families decided to cast their lot with the Unitarians, and withdrew from the organization of 1811. At once they took steps to build a church to be known as the Unitarian Society of Houlton, and it is so recorded in the year book published in Boston in 1852.

#### BUILT ON NORTH STREET

A lot donated by Aaron Putnam located on North Street and just above his big frame house (today known as Black Hawk's Inn) was given to the Society, and in 1837 the Unitarian Church was erected. From 1839 to 1842, the Rev. William Whitwell ministered to the little flock. Another early

#### Geo. S. Gentle

(Continued from Page Four)

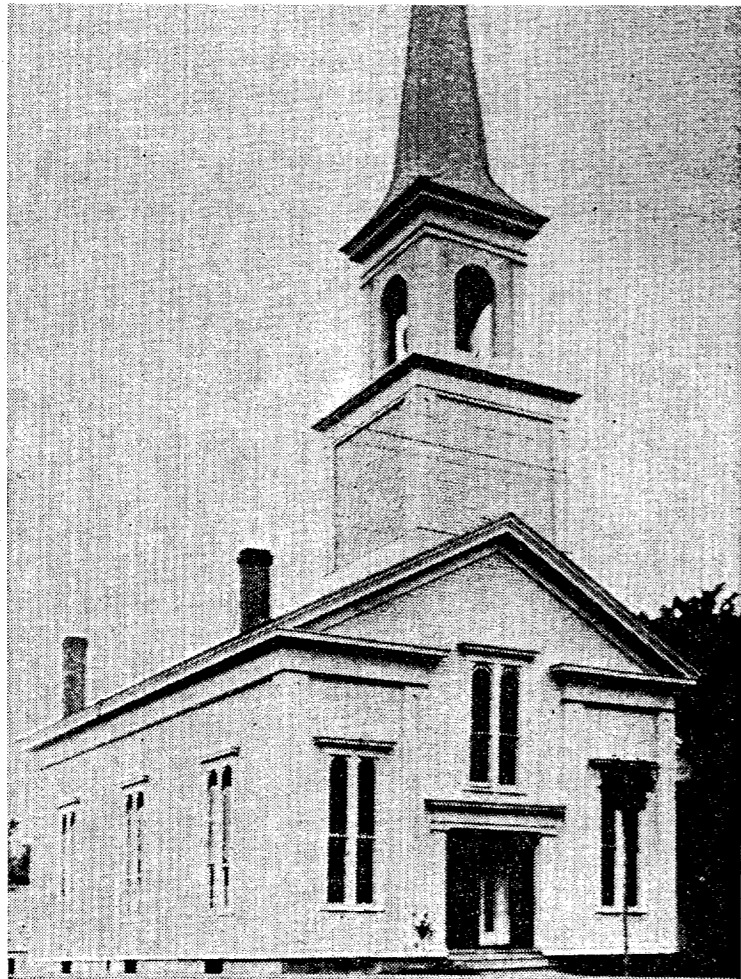
nel of the firm after 1910, came in 1926 when Berlin H. Brown, then manager of the local office of the International Fertilizer Company, resigned that position and took over the stock of Col. Frank M. Hume.

B. H. Brown continued active in the affairs of the company as well as of the community until his death in July, 1955.

The senior partner, Murdoch McKay is still associated with the company. During his almost 50 years of business life in Houlton, he has been a community leader on many projects of benefit to the town.

His son, Joseph McKay took up his active association with the company in 1946 soon after his discharge from service at the close of World War Two. He is now active in the management of the business.

Long time employees of the company include Herschel Logan, who has been on the sales and service force since 1931, Mrs. Rachel Hurley since 1943 and Mrs. Phyllis McCurdy, 11 years. Mrs. Agnes Colbath has recently returned to the company after an absence of 14 years at which time she had concluded a previous 14 year period of service.



The first church to be occupied by the Unitarian Society here was erected on North street on the spot where the residence of Norman Rogerson now stands. The land was donated by the late Aaron Putnam and the structure was first used for worship in 1837. In 1888 it was struck by lightning and partially destroyed and was then abandoned for a new church which was erected on Military street.

#### FIRST BAND CONCERT

The first band concert ever to be given in Houlton was held in the Unitarian Church. The band was formed of Houlton young men and was known as the Cornet Band. In 1861 it went to the war as the First Maine Cavalry Band; it was composed of the following young men: Warren Mansur, John Lovering, Solomon B. Cates, Jeremiah Trueworthy, Alden A. Green, Alexander S. Davis, Frank W. Pearce, Edward M. Estabrook, Leonard B. Merriam, Augustus W. Ingersoll, Randolph R. Frisbie, and Ami Trueworthy, Jr.

In 1864 the church building was repaired and put on a new foundation. An extension was built for the choir, in the rear of the building. The interior was entirely remodeled, plastered and provided with a new pulpit, and pews. It was dedicated August 15, 1864. The Rev. Mr. Hodges of Cambridge, Mass., preached the dedicatory sermon. The Rev. George I. Piper, also of Cambridge, was engaged as pastor. On

#### STRUCK BY LIGHTNING

In 1888, the church building was struck by lightning and partially destroyed. The site was then abandoned, and a new church erected on Military Street, just below the County Jail building, on land donated by Hudson T. Frisbie. Rev. Minot J. Savage of Boston came to dedicate this new church, September 10, 1890.

In the great fire of 1902, this church and two others were destroyed by the flames. The site of this old Unitarian Church is now a part of Monument Park. After this fire, it was decided to purchase a larger lot, and the one selected was at the corner of Kelleran and Military Streets, where the church stands today. The lot was purchased from R. W. Shaw after his house on it had also been destroyed by the fire. The Rev. George E. MacIlwaine became pastor, and during his stay he had the largest Sunday School in the history of the church.

The Rev. L. R. Daniels and his

# 1884

#### ICE CUTTING BIG OPERATION

On Monday 15 teams were engaged in hauling crystal ice, two feet in thickness, from the mill pond to the slaughter house of G. W. Maxfield and Co. The ice on the pond is first scraped of its covering of snow, then marked off with an ice plow into suitable sized blocks which are afterwards broken off with chisels and picks. These blocks or cakes weigh about 800 pounds each and five or six make a load for one span of horses. For one tier in the ice house it requires 900 blocks to fill the house, between 3000 and 4000 tons. A two horse team will haul from 8 to 10 loads a day and it will take between two and three weeks time to complete the work.

#### OTHER EVENTS OF THE YEAR

Events of the year included the opening of an office for the practice of medicine in the newly completed Putnam and Rice block by Dr. F. A. Nevers, the election of Frederick A. Powers for his first term in the House of Representatives in Augusta, the beginning by John B. Madigan of his course in law school in Boston. James Kidder was sent to the Legislature from Bridgewater and Charles E. Dunn from Amity. Ansel Lambert was chosen one of the two state senators from Aroostook. Toward the end of the year a singing school was organized by E. L. Cleveland with an attendance of 97, the largest school of its kind ever held in Houlton.

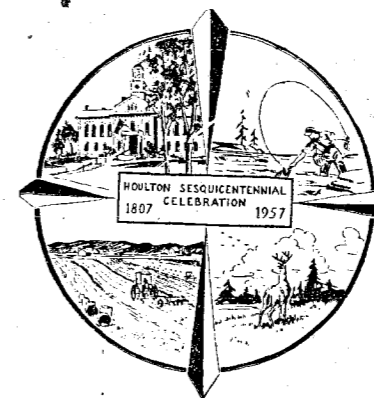
#### HOUSES CHANGE HANDS

Among the real estate transfers reported in mid-June were the sale by Stephen Lake, of his residence on Kelleran street to Fred Stimson of Linneus, and the purchase by George Dunn of Ashland of the residence of Llewellyn Powers on Main street.

#### TWO TOWN IMPROVEMENTS

Two improvements in Houlton were noted in passing, during the summer of 1884. A new street sprinkler was purchased to wet down the town streets, the town's first and a badly needed addition to the community. Also the bridge across the mill stream now is lighted by lamps on dark nights.

*which we are proud*



We are glad to have this opportunity to say — "Thank you" — to the people of Houlton and Aroostook County for the part they have played in contributing to our growth and development.

It is a pleasure for us, too, to be able to express our congratulations and best wishes to the Houlton Pioneer Times on the attainment of one hundred years of service to this community.



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HOULTON