

NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION RECORD

RG1054.AM: Unitarian Church (Lincoln, Neb.)
Records: 1870-1964
Lincoln, Lancaster County, Neb.: Religious organization
Size: 3.5 cu.ft.; 7 boxes + oversize

BACKGROUND NOTE

The First Universalist Church started in Lincoln, Nebraska on September 1, 1870. The charter members were W. W. Holmes, S. J. Tuttle, J. H. Parker, Mrs. Sarah Parker, Mrs. Julia Brown, Mrs. Laura B. Pound and Mrs. Mary Monell. Their first church was located at 12th & H Streets. The first pastor was James Gorton, serving from 1871 to 1874. During this time funds were raised for a frame chapel with the dedication happening on June 23, 1872. Arriving in 1883 was the next pastor, Reverend Eben H. Chapin. Under his guidance, the church worked with the community on topics like prohibition and created the Unity Club. This was a study club and was for the members who were unable to get a higher education. Chapin started the *Lincoln Visitor*, a paper for the church in June 1891. The church grew with a new building in 1892. The pulpit was donated by Mrs. Stevens and daughter May. Windows in memory of past members were donated by other church goers. Financial difficulties struck during 1892-1895 and Chapin left for a new calling in July 1896. No longer able to afford the mortgage payment on the building, the members looked to the Universalist General Convention for assistance. Several attempts were made, but they were denied help. The congregation turned to the American Unitarian Association in early 1898.

The All Souls' Unitarian Church was founded on May 27, 1898 with 96 charter members. J. Lewis Marsh was the pastor for this new venture, arriving in late 1898. He would serve for ten years, leaving the pulpit in 1908. Called to the church next would be Arthur L. Weatherly. He led the congregation for twelve years, leaving in 1920. In April 1920 Reverend James W. Macdonald would take over as pastor. He brought the first Candlelight Service to Lincoln that same year. The final service for Macdonald was October 1925. From January 1926 to March 1929, Edwin G. Palmer took over the pulpit. He was interested in working with the youth of the city, especially those from international homelands. Weatherly returned to All Souls in March 1929, staying with the church for another twenty-four years. During this second tenure, he organized a group to see that Lincoln would get a city hospital. Weatherly saw to it that he and his congregation helped in all the communities of Lincoln. The congregation continued to grow during the mid-twentieth century. In 1960 they built a new church, currently located at 6300 A St. The first service in the new church was held on Oct. 1, 1961.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection is arranged in seven manuscript boxes.

The collection relates to the organization and activities of the Unitarian Churches in Lincoln. It includes a great deal of correspondence concerned with the merging of Unitarian groups in Lincoln; record books include financial records and organizational records between 1870 and

1950. Of special note is an 1872 account of the history of the church (in box 1, folder 1) and the finances to build the original frame chapel in folder 4 of the same box.

Note: See the NSHS Library for publications relating to the Unitarian Church in Lincoln. For images of the Unitarian Church, see the following photograph collections: RG0849; RG2158; RG4980.

DESCRIPTION

Box 1

Folder

1. Church History, 1870-1941
2. General Church Information, 1892-1962
3. Service Programs, 1899-1962
4. Financial Records, 1872-1946
5. Treasurer's Correspondence, 1933-1940
6. Treasurer's Correspondence, 1941-1944

Box 2

Folder

1. Treasurer's Correspondence, 1945-1947
2. General Correspondence, 1870-1872
3. General Correspondence, 1896-1897
4. General Correspondence, 1937-1960, n.d.
5. All Soul's Unitarian Church Early Correspondence, 1898
6. All Soul's Unitarian Church General Correspondence, 1899-1929
7. Newspaper Clippings, Late 1800s (see also oversize)
8. Newsletters, 1911-1962

Box 3

Folder

1. Commonplace Books of G. J. Hastings, 1860s
2. Records of the 1st Universalist Church, 1870-1898, May 20
3. Records of the 1st Universalist Church, 1887, June 17-1896, June 12
4. Universalist Books, 1870, 1871, including:
 - a) Minutes of the General Convention of Universalists, 1870
 - b) The Universalist Register and Almanac, 1871
 - c) The Sunday School Helper, 1871
5. Universalist Finance Books 1870-1872, including:
 - a) Cash Book, 1870
 - b) Finance Book, 1872
 - c) State Bank of Nebraska, 1871

Box 4
Folder

1. Universalist Association Meeting Minutes, 1877 Dec. 10 - 1879, Dec. 24
2. Class Report & Treasurer Account, 1887, Feb. 6 - 1894
3. Unitarian Society, 1892, Mar. 22-Oct. 13
4. All Souls Church Minutes of the Chaplin, 1899, Apr. 9 - 1903, Jan. 13
5. All Souls Church Cash Book, 1900-1904
All Souls Church Treasurer's Records, 1913-1917 (see oversize)
6. All Souls Church Cash, 1939-1947
All Souls Church Disbursement Ledger, 1939-1950 (see oversize)
7. Scrapbook, 1901-1913

Box 5
Folder

1. Student's Liberal Religious Union, 1915-1916
2. All Souls Church Trustees Journal, 1918-1925
3. Weatherly Club, 1942, Sept. 14-1943, Feb. 7
4. 50th Anniversary All Souls Church Guests Sign Book, 1948, Apr. 24-25
5. General Unitarian Books, 1917, 1931, n.d., including:
 - a) Descriptive Catalogue of Religious Literature, 1931
 - b) The Ultimate Principles of a Free Christianity, 1917
 - c) Student Members, n.d.

Box 6
Folder

1. Ladies Aid Society Cash Book, 1895, Mar. 4 - 1898, June 29
2. Women's Society Books, 1877-1900, n.d., including:
 - a) Women's Centenary Society, 1877
 - b) Supper & Social Department of the Women's Alliance of All Souls Church, 1899-1900
 - c) Universalist Ladies Society, n.d.
3. Women's Alliance All Souls Church Ledger, 1905, Jan. 4 - 1925 May
4. Women's Alliance Minutes 1922, Mar. - 1936, Nov. 4
5. Women's Alliance President's Book, 1942

Box 7 - Membership index cards

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Added entries:

All Souls Unitarian Church (Lincoln, Neb.)

Chapin, Eben H.

First Universalist Society (Lincoln, Neb.)

Lancaster County (Neb.) -- Churches

Lincoln (Neb.) -- Churches

Unitarian Church -- Nebraska