

A BRIEF HISTORY

of

THE HARLEM UNITARIAN CHURCH

Sept 11, 1949
by

Ethelred Brown

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Because the history of the Harlem Unitarian Church is intimately connected with me as its founder and only minister to date, it is fitting that this brief history of the Church should be preceded by a sketch of my own life which will high-light the events which have more or less moulded and prepared me for the great work of my life.

I was born at Falmouth, Jamaica, British West Indies, on July 11, 1875. At the age of seven years my family and I removed to the adjoining town of Montego Bay where I lived continuously until November 1899 when as a clerk in the Civil Service of Jamaica I was transferred to the ancient Capital of Spanish Town.

At this point I list some outstanding dates in my life:-

I entered the Civil Service of Jamaica on March 1, 1894 in my 19th year, having taken third place in an island-wide open competitive examination. On May 5, 1898, I was married, two months before my 23rd birthday. On November 6, 1899, I was promoted to the position of First Clerk (Treasury), and transferred from Montego Bay to Spanish Town where I remained until my tragic, but maybe providential dismissal from the Civil Service of Jamaica on April 20, 1907. On September 24, 1910, I entered the Meadville Theological School, Meadville, Pa., as a special two-year student. On June 4, 1912, I was ordained as a Unitarian minister in the Meadville Unitarian Church. On June 23, 1912, I held my first service as a Unitarian missionary in the Montego Bay Town Hall. On June 16, 1914, I arrived in the city of Kingston and immediately proceeded to organize the Kingston Unitarian Church. On Friday afternoon, February 27, 1920, I arrived in New York.

The above are significant dates. They present a bird's eye view of events relevant to the History of the Harlem Unitarian Church. They will all be referred to in the personal sketch which follows.

Let me precede the sketch with a reference to certain traits which in great measure have made me what I am. First, why am I a minister? It is not easy to answer that question, but even now I have a distinct recollection that as a child I liked to make speeches. This fondness seemed at one point in my life to be leading me into the profession of law; it led me instead into the ministry. There was, coincident with my childish experiments in making speeches, an abnormally religious temperament. In all other respects I think I was a normal boy, but at times I was seized by a religious fervor which I now know was abnormal. My favorite hymn was, "O Paradise 'tis weary waiting here." I sang it often, and as I sang, my face was bathed in tears. Why should a boy have chosen a hymn so other-worldly? Abnormal as it was, this may well be termed my religious background.

My father could not afford to make me a lawyer and I somewhat outgrew the abnormal religiousness of my youth. I did not become a lawyer, nor did I enter

the ministry. Instead, I entered the Civil Service of Jamaica on March 1, 1894. My cataclysmic dismissal from the Service on April 20, 1907 was the immediate cause of my entering the ministry. The argument which I addressed to myself in 1907 would read somewhat like this: "You ought to have been in the ministry long ago. When your brother sailed for Africa you knew then beyond doubt that you were called to the ministry, but you resisted the call because your position in the Civil Service was financially good and secure. Now God himself in his own way has deprived you of the security. Your duty is clear." Such was the argument addressed to me in 1907. It was clear, convincing and irresistible. It was a call. I heeded it and in my 32nd year I decided to enter the ministry. Therefore I may truly say that I became a minister because in 1907 I believed that I was called by God to enter the ministry.

But what were the traits which eventually piloted me into the UNITARIAN ministry? There were two childhood traits which I believe decided my Fate. I was an inquisitive youngster and a truthful child. I was disposed to ask questions. I remember very distinctly the question which I asked my teacher after the Scripture lesson on the falling of the walls of Jericho. "Why," I asked, "did God waste so much time when he could have brought down the walls on the first day?" My teacher was horrified. So much for my inquisitiveness. From accounts I heard later in life I have come to the conclusion that as a child I told the truth instinctively, or if you prefer the term, - automatically. These two characteristics - inquisitiveness and truthfulness - had much to do with the choice I ultimately made to enter the Unitarian ministry.

I was a choir boy of the Montego Bay Episcopal Church when the first ray of light broke through my Trinitarianism. It was on Easter Sunday. We did not as usual sing the Athanasian Creed; it was recited alternately by the priest and the congregation. The strangeness of the Trinitarian arithmetic struck me forcibly - so forcibly that I decided then and there to sever my connection with a church which enunciated so impossible a proposition. By a strange coincidence on the afternoon of that very day I was introduced to Unitarianism by means of a distinctive Unitarian sermon - Channings Baltimore sermon at the ordination of Jared Sparks. I followed that up by reading other Unitarian literature and as a result I became a Unitarian without a church. For some years I attended no church, and then on a Sunday morning in 1895 I was drafted to take the place of the sick organist of the Montego Bay Wesleyan Methodist Church. On that day I began four years of service as organist of that church. On my transfer to Spanish Town in 1899 I was placed in charge of the choir of the Wesleyan Church of that town. Thus for nearly twelve years I forgot my Unitarian theology as I was engaged in the service of organist of two Trinitarian churches. Then came 1907, - the year of decision.

As stated above, my dismissal in 1907 from the Civil Service of Jamaica under peculiar circumstances was interpreted by me as a definite call to the ministry. But with that call came a very urgent and important question, namely this, - into the ministry of which denomination should I enter? All the doubts and questionings which were lulled to rest during the years of my active service in the Wesleyan Methodist Church were reawakened. The conviction deepened that I could not honestly be a Methodist minister. Circumstances very soon created a conflict and forced a decision.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church of America had recently started work in Jamaica. After many interviews I was persuaded by its resident Representative to apply for admission into the ministry of that church. I did; but I had not

well posted my letter of application when my outraged conscience violently protested. Four days later another letter was posted, strangely addressed, - "To any Unitarian Minister in New York City," seeking information as to the possibility of entering the Unitarian ministry. That letter ultimately reached Rev. George Badger, then Secretary of the Fellowship Committee of the American Unitarian Association who referred it to President Franklin Southworth of the Meadville Theological School.

The mail which brought a reply from the Bishop of the A.M.E. Church which was practically an acceptance, brought also a reply from President Southworth. The latter informed me that the school did not conduct a correspondence course, and that therefore I would have to come to Meadville, and that as there was no Unitarian Church in America for colored people, and that as white Unitarians require a white minister he was unable to predict what my future would be at the conclusion of my training. The issue was clear; the conflict was short, but sharp.

On the one hand was the acceptance into the ministry of one church with the opportunity to begin my ministry at once, and on the other hand there was the imperative of years of training away from home, with no certainty as to the future. I decided that I was not compelled to be a minister of religion at all; but if I did enter the ministry I was under moral and spiritual compulsion to be a minister only of that church in which I would be absolutely honest. I therefore withdrew my application to enter the ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and continued my correspondence with President Southworth. That correspondence ended with my acceptance as a special two-year student of the Meadville Theological School.

In August 1908 I sailed on a fruit boat from Montego Bay, my home town, for Baltimore, Maryland, intending to proceed from Baltimore to Richmond, Virginia, to serve as accountant for a colored building contractor until the end of September when I would leave his employment to enter the Meadville Theological School. Such was my intention, but thus was it not to be. Having secured my appointment as an accountant before entering America, and having so informed Immigration officials, I was declared a contracted alien and was ordered deported. After an absence of two weeks I was again in Montego Bay, no longer a Wesleyan Methodist but a self-declared Unitarian.

Under the law I could not return to America until the expiration of one year after deportation. During the year of waiting I established a Unitarian Lay Center in Montego Bay. Open air meetings were held at which the gospel of Unitarianism was preached. September 1909 arrived. My passage for my second trip to Meadville by way of New York was booked. Again was I disappointed. My father who had promised to finance my passage withdrew his promise at the eleventh hour. I was booked to sail on Tuesday. On Saturday evening I said good-bye to my fellow clerks, but to the surprise of all I was at my desk on Monday morning. The boat that was to have taken me to America took a letter to President Southworth explaining my second failure to present myself at Meadville.

Two failures were not enough to kill my desire to go to Meadville. My employer who flattered me by his determination to keep me from going to America and who influenced my father to refuse to aid me increased my salary. I saved the increase and awaited September 1910.

The third attempt to enter Meadville was successful. I arrived at last,

and in September 1910 I was duly enrolled as a special student of the school. The two years which I spent at Meadville were years that I shall ever remember. The happy days of genuine comradeship will ever remain as a pleasant memory.

On the evening of June 4, 1912, I was ordained in the Meadville Unitarian Church as a Unitarian minister, and then and there received by commission to return to my native land as the Apostle of Unitarianism.

Almost immediately after my ordination I sailed for Jamaica. Montego Bay was my Headquarters and on June 23, 1912 the first Unitarian service was held in the Montego Bay Town Hall. The flag of Unitarianism was unfurled.

The history of Unitarianism in Jamaica is an interesting story, but for obvious reasons it must only be skirted. On June 16, 1914 I arrived in Kingston having been transferred from Montego Bay to the city. The work in Kingston was full of thrills of one kind and another. While to us on the spot the work appeared to be proceeding satisfactorily, the Directors of the American Unitarian Association thought otherwise. In October 1915 the Association withdrew its grant. I went to Boston and pleaded our cause before the Directors with the result that the grant was restored. When I returned to Kingston in January 1916 I found however, that the action of the Association had done irreparable harm to our work. We nevertheless went on. But once again in November 1917 the Association acted, and this time definitively. The American Unitarian Association withdrew its financial support from the Unitarian Church of Kingston, Jamaica.

I struggled on against fearful odds with help received from a group of English Unitarian women known as the Central Postal Mission. At last the struggle proved too much, and I was forced to surrender and pull down the flag of Unitarianism. With a broken heart, but with my faith in Unitarianism still strong, I said good-bye to Kingston, Jamaica, on Saturday evening, February 21, 1920. In a fierce snow storm, my wife and I landed in New York on February 27, 1920.

And here begins THE HISTORY OF THE HARLEM UNITARIAN CHURCH.

II

At this point certain questions arise which I am not required to answer in this brief historical statement, but which may well be asked and left for the present unanswered, as a basis for future discussion. For instance, was it wise in the face of the known attitude of the officers of the American Unitarian Association to launch a Unitarian movement in Harlem in 1920 as an independent movement? Was the field surveyed? What relation if any did the fact that the foundation members of the church were Socialists bear to the early trials of the movement? No doubt the above questions assume today an importance which they did not in 1920. As stated above, I leave them unanswered.

The historical fact is that eight days after my arrival in New York I called a meeting to consider the advisability and feasibility of organizing a Unitarian Church in Harlem. That meeting was held in a room of the Lafayette Hall, 131st Street and Seventh Avenue, New York City, on Sunday evening, March 7, 1920. The question was carefully discussed and it was then and there decided to organize such a church. The following nine persons signed the roll as Charter Members, namely, Martin Luther Campbell, Grace P. Campbell, Hayward Shovington, Ella Matilda Brown, Wilfred A. Domingo, Frank A. Crosswaith, Thomas A. Potter,

Richard B. Moore and Lucille E. Ward. The church was named "The Harlem Community Church" primarily in recognition of the marked interest shown at that early stage of the venture by the Reverend Dr. John Haynes Holmes, Minister of the Community Church of New York.

The work of the Harlem Unitarian Church has been that of a great venture, admittedly undertaken without experience and without careful survey of local conditions, and without knowledge of the difficulties of the situation. This may be recorded now, as it ought to be, but it should be noted that the necessity of this survey and knowledge was not recognized then. As far as I am concerned the fact is, that I sailed from the Island of Jamaica determined to establish a Unitarian Church in Harlem, and all that mattered to me in March 1920 was that the venture should be launched without delay. And it was.

I think that at this point the following should be stated in regard to my own position at the beginning of the work, because I believe that my unsatisfactory financial condition unfavorably affected the work at the very stage when the personality and prestige of the leader were of prime importance. This fact should be noted whatever be its explanation or justification; - for seventeen years the American Unitarian Association paid no attention whatever to our work except indirectly to discourage it. I worked as an elevator operator at a downtown hotel for 5½ years, being at the church only on alternate Sunday evenings. Following this I was a speaker for the Socialist Party for three years. Then followed a period of real hardships, and then there came a break in my favor when in 1929 I secured the position of Office Secretary of "The World Tomorrow", in which position I continued to work until the magazine ceased publication in July 1934. Then followed another period of hard times. Rev. Dale DeWitt, Regional Director of the American Unitarian Association, with office at 10 Park Avenue, New York City, discovered me in 1937 as a recipient of public relief. He set out at once to seek relief from this unsatisfactory condition, and succeeded in securing an appropriation from the American Unitarian Association of \$50.00 a month which I received from November 1937 to July 1939 - a period of 21 months: When I reached my 65th birthday on July 11, 1940, I became eligible for a pension which I received, and am still receiving. The above is the financial story of the minister of the Harlem Unitarian Church from March 1920 to July 1940 - a period of 20 years. In this matter of finances it may fittingly be recorded that for some reason or other the members of the church paid no regular subscriptions until the year which began October 1, 1935.

The story of this church is a story of experiments. At this date it is easy to criticize those responsible for the mistakes made as they experimented, but to them at the time the respective experiments seemed to have been fully justified.

Take as an instance the grave mistake which was seriously and deliberately made by changing the name of the church from "The Harlem Community Church" to "The Hubert Harrison Memorial Church". That the change which took place on Sunday evening, May 6, 1928, was seriously made will be admitted after reading the following resolution the unanimous passing of which legalized our action:-

"Whereas the late Dr. Hubert Harrison unstintingly devoted the major portion of his life to the great task of sharing with his fellows the wide and profound knowledge which by much hard study he had accumulated, and thus in great measure contributed to the emancipation of many from superstition and fanaticism which are the children of ignorance; and Whereas this church has always been in full sympathy with this much needed work of education; and

Whereas Dr. Harrison has often expressed his unqualified approval of the modern and liberal interpretation and presentation of religion for which this Church has uncompromisingly stood:-

BE IT RESOLVED that as a means of commemorating this invaluable work of enlightenment, emancipation and inspiration, and as a sincere tribute to its great worth and inestimable benefit, this Church shall hereafter be named 'THE HUBERT HARRISON MEMORIAL CHURCH'."

It was then believed that the naming of the church after Hubert Harrison would draw to its support a fair proportion of the students of his "Outdoor University". It did not. On the contrary, many of these students protested against the naming of the church after Harrison in the face of his known agnostic position. This was the protest of the radicals. There was also a vigorous protest on the part of the conservatives. Reading the resolution today it reveals no good reason for the action taken. How much we suffered because of this mistake cannot be assessed.

For nine years we bore the name of a man who in his lifetime showed no real interest in our work, and each-year the anniversary of his death was recognized in a Memorial Service. Then in 1937 the church was formally affiliated with the American Unitarian Association, and without any resolution the name was fittingly changed to "The Harlem Unitarian Church".

In the month of May 1937 a very important experiment was made at the instance of the minister, namely, to suspend for four Sunday evenings - May 2, 9, 16, 23 - the then prevailing Forum type of meetings, and have four distinctively religious meetings with the minister as the only speaker at all the services. Special music was supplied by Mr. Marion Cumbo, cellist, accompanied at the piano by Miss Lydia Mason (now Mrs. Hamilton). In spite of opposition and prophecies of failure the series of services was an outstanding success. I cannot at this time venture to say what would have happened if it had been possible to have had a similar series of services in the early months of the following year. Reference may at this point be made to the fact that the mimeographer of the program for the series of services decided on his own account to remove the words in brackets (Hubert Harrison Memorial) from the name of the church. No one was disturbed about this unauthorized removal by our mimeographer who was a member of the church, and so on May 16, 1937, the church was known by the single name it now bears, namely, "The Harlem Unitarian Church".

Another experiment concerning which questions are even now being asked was the changing forms of our meetings. At first the meetings of the church were distinctively religious. In fact, as far as the form of the meetings was concerned they were not different from the services of other churches - hymns, prayers, Scripture readings and a sermon. But it was not long before we became impatient by reason of the slow growth in membership and of the unsatisfactory attendances. This impatience led to a radical change. We became what was called a Forum Church - more poetically, - a Temple and a Forum -; that is, everything continued as it was formerly, except that every sermon was followed by a free and full discussion from the floor. This change produced an immediate improvement in the attendance at the meetings and also in the enrollment of members, but in regard to the latter, as already noted above, for some years membership carried no financial responsibility. The minister ceased to be the only speaker. For years it seemed as if we had found the key to success. The church was unique. Its meetings were favorably referred to because the varied topics were interesting

and challenging, and the speakers, colored and white, were very good. And then occurred what may rightly be called a communist invasion, and with this began our troubles. The standard of our meetings deteriorated; the discussions fell from the high level attained and became irrelevant, abusive and vulgar. The forum was temporarily abandoned and a definite attempt was again made by religious services to reach religious liberals, that is, those who have outgrown the teachings of the orthodox churches but who are nevertheless religious. The attempt was a disheartening disappointment. The religious liberals did not respond and the radicals were not interested.

In February 1939, a new order was instituted, namely, a regular church service was held followed by a ten minute musical interlude, and then an open Forum: This continued to June 1939 - the end of that season. This did not meet our expectations and the next season witnessed another change. All meetings were religious services except the last meeting of each month which was a Forum. At the next season this program was intensified by the appointment of a Forum Director in the person of Mr. John Jackson and the charging of an admission fee of 25 cents to the monthly Forum. Then once more another change on October 5, 1941, the opening date of the season 1941-42. The Circular announcing the service stated, "The Trustees of the Church yielding to the demands of members and friends have decided to resume the distinctive place it held in Harlem as a Forum Church." This was a return in full form to the old Forum-church. And so on and on through succeeding seasons right up to the season of 1945-46, when one Forum session a month was held. In all honesty it must be recorded that this phase of our work with its changes and with our uncertainty as to what was best was the least creditable of all.

The Forum form of meetings was definitely ended when we began to hold Sunday morning meetings in the Chapel of the YMCA on September 15, 1946.

At this point let me refer to our meeting halls. As already said our first meetings were held at the Lafayette Hall. Soon after, sometime in 1921, we transferred them to the Lodge Rooms of the American West Indian Association, 149 W. 136th Street. In spite of the self-criticism made above we made local history in this small hall where we remained for seventeen years until we removed on January 2, 1938 to Room 101 of the YMCA, 144 West 138th Street. Here we remained for eight years, and in the face of many handicaps also did creditable work, until we made our last transfer to the Chapel of the YMCA, 180 W. 135th Street on September 15, 1946, at which time we also changed the hour of our meetings from 8:30 p.m. to 11 a.m.

At this point it will be fitting to list some outstanding dates of the 29 year period covered by this account.

On April 4, 1940 the church suffered a loss from which it has not yet recovered. On that day Miss Estelle Hay who served for years as soprano soloist was committed to Rockland State Hospital where she is now confined as a mentally ill patient. For years Miss Hay gave of her best. Her place has not been filled.

On February 25, 1943, I gave a lecture at All Souls Unitarian Church entitled "From Montego Bay to Harlem". It was well received and won the lasting and valued friendship of the minister and members of All Souls. It also did what to me is of much significance. It brought our church to the attention of Mr. Jan Rozendaal who as a result became an active and very useful member.

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On October 1, 1944 at the opening of the season 1944-5 it was publicly announced that the Harlem Unitarian Church was an inter-racial church. For the full season the white ministers of the Metropolitan Conference preached for us on alternate Sunday evenings and brought members of their congregations with them. Rev. John Haynes Holmes, Minister of the Community Church, enthusiastically approved what we had done and asked to be enrolled as an honorary member. Rev. Donald Harrington, Associate Minister of the Community Church of New York and his wife enrolled as members. We enrolled later a white student from the South and a white woman, both of whom have since left New York. It was in many respects an inspiring and revealing season.

In January 1946 the church boldly launched a campaign to secure \$15,000 to purchase a house to be transformed into a church building. The campaign was opened with a Recital on January 27 given in All Souls Unitarian Church (and directed by Edward Margetson, Organist of the Church of the Crucifixion.) This was followed by a Rally held in the Harlem YWCA on Sunday evening, May 5. Both functions were successful. Unfortunately the year 1947 passed without any effort in behalf of the Building Fund. In 1948 the 1946 pattern was followed. A Recital was given on our behalf by Miss Roberta DuForda at All Souls Church on Sunday afternoon, February 15th, and a Rally was held at the Harlem YWCA on May 2. Again our efforts were crowned with success. The net result of these special efforts is that at this date our Building Fund has to its credit the sum of \$1980.00. We have a long way yet to go, but when we remind ourselves that on January 1, 1946 we had not a cent we are not discouraged. In fact as we start the season of 1949-50 on this Sunday morning, September 11, 1949, we are buoyed with a strange optimism which emboldens us to look forward to 1950 as our year of destiny - the year in which the corner stone of a Temple of Religious Liberalism will be laid.

On May 6, 1948 the Harlem Chapter of the Unitarian Laymen's League was organized with H. Shovington as President and Jan Rozendaal as Secretary-Treasurer. Two Forum meetings have been held, one on May 15 and the other on June 26, 1949. The development of the Laymen's League and the popularization of its Forums will, I am sure, be of great assistance to the general work of the Church.

On Sunday morning, April 11, 1948, the Church took a very important legal step leading to its incorporation. At a Special Meeting called for the purpose the members unanimously passed the following resolution:

"RESOLVED that this Church, the Harlem Unitarian Church which is now un-incorporated shall be incorporated under the laws of the State of New York, and that the name of the said incorporated Church shall be 'THE HARLEM UNITARIAN CHURCH'."

The Certificate of Incorporation was duly filed with the Clerk of the County of New York on May 13, 1948. Sincere thanks are due and were tendered to Attorneys G.E. Moesel and Chester T. Krouse of the law firm of Covington and Moesel for preparing and filing the necessary papers of incorporation. Mr. Krouse in addition attended the Special Membership Meeting on April 11 as our legal adviser. All services were rendered without fee. I record my personal appreciation of the invaluable assistance of the gentlemen named.

I have come at last to the present stage of our work, namely, to the three years in which we worshipped in the Chapel of the Harlem YWCA. Until October 1934 our services were held at eight o'clock in the evening. In October 1934 we

held two services each Sunday, one at 11 a.m. and the other at 8 p.m. The attendances at the morning services were so small and the psychological effect was so obviously harmful that they were discontinued after January 27, 1935. When we changed our meeting place to the Chapel of the YMCA on September 15, 1946 we also changed the hour of our services from 3 p.m. to 11 a.m. The change has worked well. For the present the Chapel of the YMCA suits us admirably.

Our dues-paying membership at this date is only 17. No good purpose will be served in pretending that after 29 years of unbroken efforts so small a membership is satisfactory. It is decidedly not. It is almost disheartening, but we must not be disheartened. We started on March 7, 1920 with only nine members. Let us conceive this Sunday, September 11, 1949, which is the date of this brief history as a new beginning. We started the day with 17, and at the close of the service one was enrolled as a member. Therefore we start this new season with 18 members. This is a membership of men and women who have a clear and definite purpose. We now know that we are a Unitarian Church, and that our aim is to erect in Harlem as early as possible A TEMPLE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM.

We must now set out to increase our membership. Let us work to secure in the next two years a membership of say one hundred men and women dedicated to the cause in behalf of which we as members and friends and minister have faithfully labored in the years now rolled into the past.

I referred above as a matter of record to the indifference of the American Unitarian Association to our missionary work in Harlem. It should be definitely stated that that reference was to the administration of long ago. For the last twelve years we have been much encouraged by the sympathetic understanding both of our aims and of our difficulties, and also by the practical assistance of the national officers of the Association at 25 Beacon Street and of the Regional Director, Rev. Dale DeWitt of 10 Park Avenue, to all of whom this word of appreciation is tendered.

It is also fitting to record herein a note of sincere appreciation of the varied services rendered by the following persons and churches:-

- (a) To Dr. John Haynes Holmes for his personal friendship and his genuine interest in our work in the days when friendship and interest were invaluable.
- (b) To Dr. John Howland Lathrop and his church for continued interest and practical help to the church and to me throughout many years.
- (c) To All Souls Unitarian Church of New York which has indeed become our Mother Church, and to its minister Rev. Laurance Neale for the many things done by him in behalf of our work.
- (d) To the Syracuse Unitarian Church for the special effort put forth in behalf of our Building Fund which resulted in an appreciable contribution and to the Cleveland Unitarian Church for its annual gift.
- (e) To all the ministers of the Metropolitan Conference who have kindly and willingly helped us in many and varied ways and to all the Churches which have contributed to our Building Fund.

Special and appreciative reference should also be made to the service rendered to the church by Justice Harold H. Burton of the Supreme Court of America, and to Dr. Frederick May Eliot, President of the American Unitarian Association, for participating in two of the most significant and successful meetings of the church.

Justice Harold H. Burton (then Senator) attended the 25th Anniversary of the church on Sunday evening, March 25, 1945 in his official position as Moderator of the American Unitarian Association and delivered the principal address. Dr. Frederick May Eliot, as President of the A.U.A., was the principal speaker at the first Building Fund Rally held on Sunday evening May 5, 1946. Both meetings were held in the large auditorium of the Harlem Y.W.C.A., and were presided over by Rev. Dale DeWitt, Regional Director of the A.U.A.

This brief history should have been confined to the facts of the situation, but it was very difficult, nay impossible so to confine it. For the same obvious reason plus my present optimism I must transcend the specified limitations, and close with a poem recently written by Mr. Roger Mais of Kingston, Jamaica. The poem was not written for us, and refers not at all to our work, but so appropriate is it to our present mood that it may well have been written to our order. I therefore close this brief history of the Harlem Unitarian Church - this record of 29 years of service in behalf of Religious Liberalism, with the following poem entitled "The End of the Road."

It is at once a challenge and an appeal:-

"And now we are coming to the end
of the road, the goal in sight....
Brothers, be patient a little yet.
It was a long way and it was a
hard road,
But we have come all the way.
And no man can unsay all that we
have adventured,
All we have achieved, none unsay
the eminence we have reached, the
hazards met and bested,
none but ourselves untell the tale
and wonder of it.

Let us stand fast, hold fast our strength
and purpose and mettle attesting,
Not by posture or boasting or pride
undo, since only ourselves can undo,
gainsay, forswear
that which we have won at so much
peril,
at such cost,
ourselves only.

Therefore brothers,
Now we have come to the end of the road,
the goal in sight,
Let us bear ourselves with the dignity
and countenance and presence
of men who have come so far,
and dared so much ,
x x x x x x x x x x
x x x x x x x x x x
dare this much more, and brothers
be patient a little yet.

*With Compliments,
Ethel Browne
Minister 1920-1956*

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September 11, 1949