

Spring 2020



THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
HISTORY AND HERITAGE SOCIETY
BULLETIN



Black Lives Matter. UUHHS is in conversation about how we lift up black voices and histories as an organization. Please join us in this conversation during this year's virtual GA Conrad Wright Lecture by Dr. Sylvester Johnson on inclusive democracy (more details on page 6)!

The Journal is On Its Way

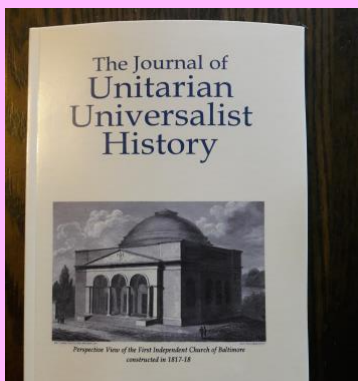
News from Our Journal Editor, Kathleen Parker

The significance of Baltimore in our history as UUs becomes abundantly clear in the upcoming issue of our *Journal of Unitarian Universalist History*. We know this city best as the location where William Ellery Channing preached at the ordination of Jared Sparks in 1819, in the process affirming the legitimacy of Unitarian Christianity for liberal Christians in America. It was an important turning point for Unitarianism and for Baltimore.

Volume 43 of the journal – which UUHHS members will soon be holding in their hands (!) – brings this story to life in new ways. It begins with Rev. Fred Wooden sharing his experiences of growing up in the Baltimore church. He then urges UUs to rise to the current challenge of “spiritual climate change” – as Channing did in his generation. Current writers offer thoughtful responses to his challenge, as well as probing church histories.

As for Channing and his generation, how many of us know that the magnificent newly constructed Independent Church of Baltimore, where Jared Sparks was ordained, became engulfed in a financial crisis created by the faulty investments of its own members? This crisis – the backdrop for Sparks' arrival in Baltimore – led to the national economic collapse known as the Panic of 1819! How many of us are aware of the nuance in Channing's message, calling on Unitarians to find value in other religions? Who among us has considered the “iconoclastic” nature of Channing's message as relevant to our Unitarian Universalist faith today? And what of the enslaved men and women who were led from Virginia to freedom in Ohio by way of Baltimore?

Recently our UUHHS president John Buehrens reflected that the stories found in our UU history inspire each of us in ways we cannot know. As editor of our journal, I expect and hope this is true. Indeed, I believe that the stories found in our “Baltimore issue” will enrich our understanding of this episode from our past, and from this, enliven the continued living our faith in the present.



Make sure the Journal can get to you!

If your mailing address and/or email has changed in the last year, please email Kathy at krparker.4487@gmail.com with your updated contact information.



FROM THE PRESIDENT OF UUHHS

LOOKING BACKWARD, LOOKING FORWARD

For the past decade, the UU History and Heritage Society has co-sponsored a Convocation every third year, along with Collegium, the network of UU scholars, include those who focus on ethics and theology. The most recent Convocation, held in Baltimore last fall, celebrated the 200th anniversary of Channing’s famous sermon in that city, and anticipated this year’s 250th anniversary of Universalism in America, as dated from John Murray’s arrival in 1770. The presentations at the Convocation, and the new connections made there, were invaluable. You will find some of the best presentations in the forthcoming issue of *The Journal of UU History*.

Following the Convocation, the Board of UUHHS received a letter from leaders of Collegium proposing a conversation about merging the two groups. That conversation revealed a broad consensus that doing so could have a number of advantages. While we are not quite ready to name the new entity, which may be “the Society for Unitarian Universalist Studies,” or something similar, nor to settle on governance details, bylaws, and dues, it now seems likely that the Annual Meeting of UUHHS will ask the membership to authorize such a step. That meeting will take place on Saturday, July 18, by Zoom. Members will receive an invitation via email.

Collegium has heretofore held annual face-to-face gatherings. They have proposed that conferences of the new entity take place in alternate years, starting in 2021. That seems right. Such meetings are a valued way for scholars, students, and lay people to make connections beyond their own institutions. Funds brought by UUHHS would continue to support the annual Conrad Wright Lectureship, *The Journal of UU History*, awards, and support for congregational historians and archivists.

As you will see elsewhere in this newsletter, the online *Dictionary of UU Biography* has a new editor, Rev. Connie Simon of First Unitarian Church in Cincinnati. A number of important biographies are still awaiting volunteers to write them. Connie is also eager to make this valuable online tool more user-friendly in format and appearance.

Among other things, we intend to move into the future making more and more use of electronic communications as a means for strengthening historical scholarship and the theological and ethical reflection that goes with it. If nothing else, the challenges of the current pandemic show us how vital such resources can be.

Yours in shared leadership,

John Buehrens, President, UUHHS

SAVE THE DATE!

**UUHHS Annual Meeting
Saturday, July 18th, 2020
7pm EST**

**Members and friends welcome!
Hope you can join us!
*More details on Page 4**



News from the Dictionary of Unitarian Universalist Biographies (DUUB)

Farewell and Hello!

For ten years, Jim Nugent has served as editor of the Dictionary of Unitarian Universalist Biographies, affectionally known as the “DUUB.” During his tenure, he has fact checked and edited almost 100 biographies and authored another dozen himself. He maintained the website, managed writing assignments, and answered countless inquiries from researchers all over the world. Along the way, he found time to work with the Journal of UU History and to serve the UUHHS as treasurer and IT guru.



Jim Nugent

Jim recently decided it was time to put aside his editor’s pencil and step down from his many roles with the DUUB and the UUHHS. We are grateful to Jim for his years of service and his dedication to making the DUUB an invaluable resource for UU researchers everywhere. Farewell and thank you, Jim!



Connie Simon

What will become of the DUUB? That’s the “hello.” Hello and greetings to all! My name is Connie Simon, UUHHS Board member and newly appointed editor of the DUUB. Originally from southeastern Pennsylvania, I currently live in Cincinnati where I serve as minister of the First Unitarian Church. Prior to ministry, I enjoyed a 30-year career in business and government. I’ve been a member of the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia since 2009 and served as Intern Minister at the Unitarian Society of Germantown from 2015-2018. I am a graduate of the Northeastern University School of Law and Meadville Lombard Theological School. It was at Meadville that my love of Unitarian, Universalist and UU history was born.

As editor, my goal is to continue to expand the DUUB while maintaining its high standards of scholarship. To that end, and with the support of the UUHHS board, I’m announcing my immediate priorities as editor:

1. Appoint an editorial board of five to seven members
2. Review all empty and incomplete entries and assign or reassign them as needed
3. Explore enhancements to the DUUB site that will make it easier to navigate
4. Review existing entries for any necessary revisions and/or updates

It is also my hope that the DUUB can become even more of a resource for those interested in the stories of UUs with marginalized identities and that the articles it contains will examine and explore its subjects through a multicultural anti-oppression lens.

Is there anything else you would add to this list? If so, let me know! You can reach me by email at editor@uudb.org.

I am very excited to begin this journey with the DUUB and look forward to hearing your ideas and suggestions.

-Connie Simon

New to the DUUB?
Check it out the histories of hundreds of influential UUs online at <https://uudb.org/>



UUHHS Annual Membership Meeting

The Unitarian Universalist History and Heritage Society is delighted to announce that its 2020 annual membership meeting will take place at **7 pm ET on Saturday, July 18, 2020, via Zoom**. The annual membership meeting is an opportunity to hear reports on the Society’s finances, journal, general assembly activities, and other news, and to welcome newly elected board members and officers. This year we will also hear an update on merger conversations currently being conducted between UUHHS and UU Collegium, with the goal of creating an all-inclusive scholarly society in accountable relationship with the Unitarian Universalist movement. Because of the possibility of imminent merger, we will not be bringing new members on to the board this summer, but those board members and officers whose terms are currently expiring have agreed to stand for re-election. These include treasurer Rali Weaver, secretary Dan McKanan, and board member Phoebe Cos. Because this year’s meeting will be conducted on Zoom, this is a great opportunity for members who are not able to travel to Boston to renew your connection to the Society. Please join us on July 18!

The Zoom link:

<https://harvard.zoom.us/j/92368278669?pwd=MVILNWNQbDVQZ2tkL1FxMkhKY3pLdz09>

BECOME A MEMBER of UUHHS TODAY

We invite you to become a member of the UU History & Heritage Society.

Here are some of the benefits of membership:

- a copy of the *Journal of Unitarian Universalist History* (<https://uuhhs.org/journal-of-uu-history/>);
- supporting and expanding the resource **DICTIONARY OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST BIOGRAPHY**: <http://uudb.org> ;
- the Annual Conrad Wright Lecture;
- announcements for lectures and other special events;
- support a listserv for UU history questions and community;
- supporting the larger work of the UU history and heritage society and encouraging and supporting the interpretation, analysis, and preservation of Universalist and Unitarian history.

It only takes a moment to become a member. Membership dues are:

- Individual one year \$50
- Individual three years \$125 (Recommended)
- Student or Low Income \$30

JOIN online through the website <http://uuhhs.org/join/>

OR send a note requesting membership and a check. Please include in your note your name, address, email, and phone to:

UUHHS
670 High Street
Dedham, MA 02026

The Society is one of the oldest Unitarian Universalist organizations dating back to the founding of the Universalist Historical Society in 1834 and the Unitarian Historical Society in 1901. The two organizations merged in 1978 and the Women’s Heritage Society, founded in 1980, became a part of the society in 2001.



SAVE THE DATE! DR. SYLVESTER JOHNSON TO GIVE CONRAD WRIGHT LECTURE AT GA 2020

The Unitarian Universalist History and Heritage Society invites you to join us at General Assembly ONLINE for the Conrad Wright Lecture entitled, “Charting a Future for Inclusive Democracy” by Dr. Sylvester Johnson.

Dr. Johnson’s lecture explores the trend of the next decade where inequality is set to exceed anything the world has seen before. His talk examines structural disparity by attending to race, wealth, and technology. Drawing on anti-racist activism, it identifies major challenges to democracy and proposes transformative strategies to chart a bold future for inclusive democracy.

Dr. Johnson’s lecture will be Thursday 10:00 a.m. ET / 9:00 a.m. CT / 8:00 a.m. MT / 7:00 a.m. PT
To access Dr. Johnson’s talk, go to the Virtual GA Participation Portal at <https://gaonline.uua.org/>. GA registration is required to view/participate.

Dr. Johnson is the director of Virginia Tech’s Center for the Humanities, assistant vice provost for the humanities, and the executive director of the university’s Tech for Humanity Initiative. Nationally recognized for his scholarship, his research and writing interests include technology, race, religion, and national security.

Dr. Johnson earned his Doctorate from Union Theological Seminary. His first book, *The Myth of Ham in Nineteenth-Century American Christianity*, examined the intersection of race and religious hatred and won the American Academy of Religion’s Best First Book Award. His second book *African American Religions, 1500-2000*, traces five centuries of the interplay of religion, empire, colonialism, and the concept of freedom in the Atlantic world. Dr. Johnson co-edited *The FBI and Religion: Faith and National Security Before and After 9/11* and has published more than seventy articles, reviews, and essays. He is a founding co-editor of the Journal of Africana Religions. Dr. Johnson’s current book project explores the concept of human identity in the age of intelligent machines and human-machine symbiosis.

The first annual Conrad Wright lecture was given in 2008 by J.D. Bowers on Joseph Priestley and English Unitarianism in America. Past lecturers have included Charles Capper, Christopher Cameron, Megan Marshall, James Ishmael Ford, Emily Clark, Kathryn Gin Lum, and Tisa Wenger.

Unitarian Universalist History and Heritage Society Board 2019-2020

John Buehrens, *President*

Nicole Kirk, *Vice President*

Dan McKanan, *Secretary*

Rali Weaver, *Treasurer*

Kathleen Parker, *Journal Editor ex officio*

Earl Holt, *ex officio*

Phoebe Cos, *Newsletter Editor*

Patrice Curtis, *Board Member*

Mark Hicks, *Board Member*

Gail Forsyth-Vail, *Board Member*

Joshua Leach, *Board Member*

Connie Simon, *Board Member*

Tisa Wenger, *Board Member*

****HAVE AN INTERESTING HISTORIC UU FIND THAT YOU WANT TO SHARE WITH UUHHS?***

Please send any submissions about your local UU history and heritage to the UUHHS newsletter!

Send all submissions to newsletter editor, Phoebe Cos at phoebekates16@gmail.com by August 1st. We look forward to hearing your stories!