

WHO'S WHO OF OUR UU

by Mikki Morrissette

© 2008 First Universalist Church of Minneapolis

Article #2 in a special 150th anniversary series

www.firstuniv150.org



Washburn, Pillsbury, Lowry, Crosby, Loring, King.

These are not merely the namesakes of our streets and parks and schools. Or the names carved into notable tombstones at Lakewood Cemetery. Or the founders and supporters of Minneapolis flour and lumber industries, the parks and library system, the city's early transportation, the Washburn Orphanage, the Institute of Arts.

These are the names of some of the local citizens who launched the First Universalist Church of Minneapolis and the Unity Settlement House, which helped to take care of the city's hard-working impoverished families. They found inspiration in the sermons of Reverends Keyes, Tuttle and Shutter as they fueled the progressive, ground-building actions that put Minneapolis on the map.

Following are quick profiles of just three of the more notable contributors from our history. All were part of an interesting chain of families that started in Maine and ended up in Lakewood Cemetery.

William Drew Washburn (1831 – 1912)

Born to a large Maine family and educated in the East, Washburn was one of four brothers who eventually became U.S. Senators. Political ambition and drive might not be genetic traits, but in the case of William, he parlayed his family's natural strengths into a vision of how to build a community from the ground up. He came to Minnesota in 1857 to join in the milling operation of a brother — the eventual General Mills company — but parlayed his entrepreneurial spirit and growing financial assets into civic-minded duty. He presided over that very first Universalist meeting in 1859, served on the church's board of trustees for its first 50 years (even after he was elected Senator in 1888), and had the financial excess to give the gift of a \$15,000 organ to our first church in 1866, and bells for our second church (eventually inherited by St. Olaf Church). He helped bring the Northern Pacific Railroad, the Anoka flour mills, and Minneapolis street railway into fruition. When he died in 1912, he was one of the state's wealthiest men.



William D. Washburn

Dorilus (1814-1897) and son Clinton (1842-1913) Morrison

Like their Washburn neighbors of Livermore, Maine, the Morrison family arrived as lumbering pioneers in 1855. His start was modest: common school education, starting work with a farmer and tradesman at age 18 for the salary of \$7/month. But it was clear he had a mind for business. He left his employer in his third year when he did not get a raise to \$12/month, but was eventually persuaded to return for \$25/month. He became a partner in the business, saved \$4,000 over five years to launch his own lumbering business, and by 1854 had amassed \$20,000, which was capital he brought with him to settle initially in St. Anthony in 1855.

Although Dorilus is noted as Minneapolis's first mayor (1867), who led the development of the dam, canal and water power of the Mississippi River falls, he and sons George and Clinton extended and prospered as they built the Morrison Brothers saw mills and logging operations, built and sold saw and flour mills along the river, and owned the North Star woolen mill. Dorilus was elected to state senate in 1864, served on the board of education starting in 1871, was commissioner of the fledgling park board, and served on the board of the Athenaeum, precursor to the public library. Through it all, the Morrises, including son Clinton and his wife Julie (nee Washburn) were staunch

supporters of our church. Dorilus served on the board of trustees from 1866 to his death in 1897. Clinton, along with Thomas Lowry, ushered in a church extension in 1903 with donations of \$9,000 (and also gave 10 acres to the city for the site of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts).

Caroline Macomber Crosby (1871 – 1960)

[excerpted from material written by Rev. Sarah Barber-Braun]

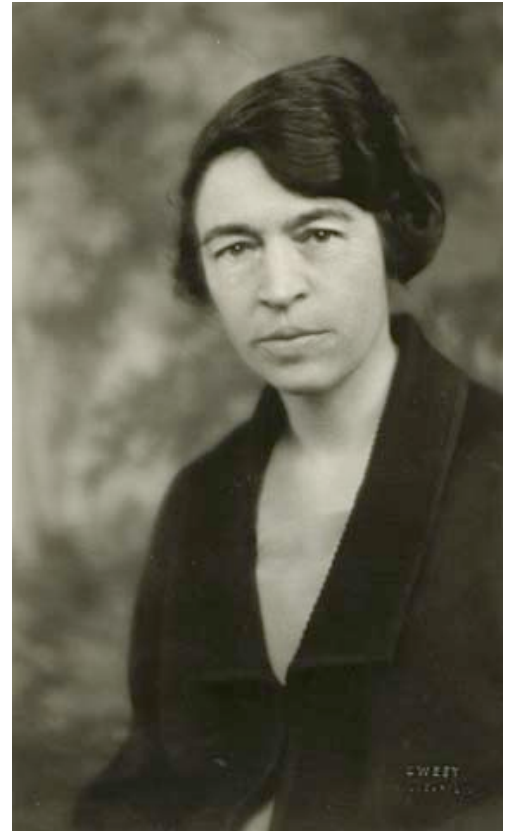
The Unity Settlement House began its work in Minneapolis in 1897. Rev. Marion Shutter and the board of trustees eventually tapped into Caroline Crosby as its head resident, in 1904. They knew what they were doing. For 13 years, she brought her considerable volunteer energies to helping develop free kindergarten, a mother's club, a day nursery, a sewing school, library, gymnasium, and a probation office connected with the juvenile court to oversee 81 boys and seven girls.

Prior to her work with our Church of the Redeemer (as it was called at the time), Caroline majored in botany at the University of Minnesota, before heading in 1900 to the Hawaiian Islands on an expedition to collect samples of algae and lichen.

After returning to Minneapolis, and taking on her role at the Unity House, the unmarried Caroline became a central figure in the philanthropy of the Crosby family. Many of the people served by Unity House were members of families that worked in the Washburn-Crosby Mills. Many of those who helped to create Unity House were from the privileged mining families. Caroline was a major contributor to the annual budget.

Eventually, Caroline left Unity House to serve the Red Cross during World War I, and to positions with the Children's Protective Society, the Infant Welfare Society, and the Children's Home Society.

In 1934 she went on another botanical expedition, collecting algae in New Zealand and Australia.



*Stay tuned for the next installment,
about the controversy about evolution that directly touched our Rev. Tuttle.*

If you have story ideas to contribute on this topic, share them at the firstuniv150.org website

REFLECTING THE RAINBOW PATH AND OUR 7 UU PRINCIPLES

Believe in our ideas and act on them (blue)

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large.

A discussion guide for youth and adults about this article

In 50 years, when we're re-examining the profiles of some of our congregation's members today, what do you want to be recognized for yourself? Write your own future biography.

The energy and reach of our pioneering members is almost exhausting to imagine replicating today. Why do you think it's harder to achieve the level of prominence some of our congregation's founders were able to accomplish in their time? How can we regain some of our vitality in the community at large?