

HISTORY OF  
THE UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF MIDDLE GEORGIA  
1949 - 1985

Samuel W. Rose

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One hundred and fifty years ago Unitarian churches were mostly in the towns and cities of the northeast, where some "Congregational" churches were Unitarian. The number of Fellowships in the southeast began to increase faster after World War II. There were some small Universalist churches scattered around the south-east at the same time. The Unitarians and Universalists merged into the Unitarian-Universalist Association in May 1961.

Most of the following narrative was developed from a talk by Ellis Mellette at a Fellowship meeting on March 17, 1963; also from a tape-recorded forum held at the Fellowship meeting on Sept. 29, 1985. Sam Rose has cassette recordings of both and the Fellowship has one of the forum.

This is a story of a continuous struggle, with numerous trials and temporary failures and successes.

1949

The earliest known Unitarian activity in Macon was in 1949 when Ellis Mellette, Dick Stern, Bill and Pam Lundberg tried to organize a group. Ellis bought a large listing of church members for \$10 and they spent considerable time canvassing from house to house. However, after a number of weeks, their efforts hadn't produced results so they gave up. Ellis continued to be an active promoter of Unitarianism in the Macon area until he moved to Cedertown in the early 1980s.

1951

In 1951 the group attended a few meetings in the home of John Lewis, a blind musician. This was an explosive mixture of Baptists, atheists, reactionaries and Unitarians. As would be expected, there was chaos so the Unitarians left to meet in homes again.

1952

Several Unitarians made one visit to the Unity of Middle Georgia group, which takes traditional Christian tenets but interprets them in light of ideas from transcendentalism and Eastern philosophies. Dick Stern, Bill and Pam Lundberg were there, and decided to rejoin the Unitarian group.

1954

The group met at the YWCA for a short time in 1954 but, due to the policies of the YWCA at that time that blacks were not welcome, the Unitarian folks felt that this policy was not in keeping with their own beliefs, so left.

Then Bill Lundberg, of the Macon Planning and Zoning Commission, arranged for meetings to be held in a large room in the basement of the City Auditorium.

Things went quite well for a while, with attendance of 25 to 30 at times, but again the group failed.

An article about Unitarianism in Life magazine sparked interest and Major Mike Hoffman insisted that the group try again in the Auditorium. In all, the group stayed at the Auditorium for three years.

#### 1958

In 1958 the group moved to the Happy Hour Club where a Sunday School was organized. Walter and Liese Steinhaus had been active in the group for some time. He played cello and was Chairman of the Music Department at Wesleyan College. He was also first cellist with the Atlanta Symphony. She played the piano and quite often they combined with others to furnish music for meetings. During this same year, for some reason the group moved to the Seventh Day Adventist Church. After a good beginning things began going downhill, possibly caused by certain restrictions such as no smoking, so meetings were again held in homes.

#### 1959

In 1959 the group met in the bar/lounge of the Heritage Motel on Riverside Drive. In deference to visitors' sensibilities, a large illuminated beer sign was covered with a cloth. Attendance increased to an average of 18. The Rev. Cahill came from the Atlanta church five or six times, until he moved away. His honorarium was about \$35. Until this time there was little formal structure and no records can be found.

#### 1960

After the group moved in 1960 to the Cerebral Palsy Center at Fulton Street and Mikado Avenue, a more formal structure developed. The location was four miles south of the business district and made it easier for people from the Warner Robins area to attend, including Ray Dunham, Chief Warrant Officer at Robins Air Force Base, who may have been president at one time after 1964. The first meeting room was adjacent to the southeast corner of the main building, facing Fulton Street. Rent was \$30 per month.

#### 1961

About a year later the Fellowship moved to a separate brick building at the northeast of the main building. There were two rather large rooms and a small kitchen, renting for \$60 per month (later \$65). Meetings were held during the summer, to get a better start in the fall season.

#### 1962

While at the CP Center we bought the latest UUA song books, sturdy, beige folding chairs, a Hammond organ and, later, a piano. Most members bought their own personal chairs at \$4.50 each. For the first time there were board meetings, financial and other records on a continuing basis and a budget was developed for each year; and there was even a building fund. Numerous UUA ads were placed in the local newspapers. Wally and Liese Steinhaus frequently furnished piano-cello music.

Except during some summers when meetings were in the morning, meetings at the CP Center were at night. Some of the attendees were still attending their original churches in the morning and struggling to make up their minds whether to switch over to the Fellowship. This still remained a problem in 1985.

### 1950s and 1960s

During the turbulent 1950s and 1960s Macon did not have the violence that occurred in many other places, but there were problems and loud talk. Peoples' opinions on integration varied from one extreme to the other.

The Fellowship was integrated from its beginning, the first religious group in Macon to take such action. In general, the Fellowship as a group worked in the background, but individuals and small groups did such things as talking to white and black leaders, attending black meetings to give them support and visiting businesses to urge that they hire blacks. These actions caused many Macon natives to see our members as pariahs and the Fellowship as an integration society, not a legitimate religious group. Our non-orthodox religious beliefs didn't help and, at times, made the Fellowship's outlook rather tenuous, and most likely hurt attendance.

### 1963

This was a busy year as the Fellowship was involved with numerous things that required attention:

1. New minister
2. Race relations
3. Sam Oni
4. Experiment in International Living.

The Rev. Robert S. Miller agreed to come to Macon in September 1963 and stay through May 1964, at a salary of \$115 per month. We had hoped that he would help to develop publicity and promotional projects for the Fellowship, but he was not that type of person. However, attendance did hold around 25 to 30 most of the time, with 36 at one meeting. Budget for the year was \$2,972 (but remember inflation).

Mr. Miller was rather old, but active for his age. He and his wife were very nice, conservative persons, but didn't meet our expectations for developing the Fellowship. His sermons were good but some would not have been out-of-place in a Christian church. His services were not continued after May.

Dr. Walter Brown, an outspoken liberal Methodist minister who was asked to leave at least one of his churches, in 1963 was head of the Department of Religion at Wesleyan College and spoke to us at least twice.

In one talk on integration, Dr. Brown said that the solution was to send enough U.S. marshals and troops into every village, town and city in the south and settle the problem once and for all. During the talk-back, Vanderbilt Huff, a black professor at Fort Valley State College, told Dr. Brown his solution wouldn't work because he had forgotten one thing: blacks and whites had to continue to live together.

One member asked Dr. Brown why he didn't become a Unitarian minister because

of his liberal religious beliefs. He said he would be comfortable in that but could do more good by staying at Wesleyan and teaching freshmen girls about other religious beliefs and "shaking them up" about their own narrow fundamental faith.

About the same time in 1963, THE Mrs. Peabody, mother of the governor of Massachusetts, was leading an integration caravan and stopping here and there along the way to lead marches. On arrival in Macon she called Sam Rose and announced that she wanted to notify the news media and lead a parade through the downtown area the next day. He told her that she would need a parade permit and, even if she obtained it, the march would promote violence, especially since it would be led by an outsider.

She replied that she didn't need a permit; all she was going to do was march and get some publicity for integration. Rose told her that was easy for her to do, then leave town when violence broke out. His final advice to her was to go back to Boston and clean up her own backyard. She also talked to our minister. There was no marching.

Sam Oni was a Nigerian who had been converted to Christianity by the local Tattnall Square Baptist Church. He entered Mercer University and, to show his appreciation, immediately tried to become a member of the church which had converted him, but he was rejected. This caused a great deal of controversy.

He was befriended by Fellowship members who gave him moral support and he attended some of our meetings. Sam Oni received his doctorate in California and returned to his native land to hold a number of responsible positions.

In the late spring of 1963 the Chattanooga UU group called and asked if we would arrange to take care of a Taiwanese young man and a 15-member group of French young people for a month, under the Experiment in International Living. We told them that our group could handle the Taiwanese man and thought we could arrange for another local group to take the French persons, since we were too small to do both.

Sam and Kittie Rose agreed to take the Taiwanese and Liese and Wally Steinhaus arranged for an Episcopal church to take the French group. They arrived in August and as far as the writer knows, were the first to visit Macon under the Experiment program.

Ping-chuh Chen was the 23-year-old son of peasants, but had been No. 1 in every grade in school and also at the University of Taipei where he received a BS in Chemical Engineering. Ping received his doctorate at the University of Alabama and went into the import-export business on Wall Street.

#### 1961 to 1964

During the 1961-64 period, while the Unitarian and Universalist churches were being merged into the UUA, the Fellowship had a number of visitors, including Dana Greeley, UUA president; Sophia Fahs, UUA Director of Religious Education; the Rev. Clifton Hoffman, Regional Director, and the Rev. Eugene Pickett, minister of the Atlanta church and later UUA president. Numerous UUA ads and Fellowship meeting notices were placed in the local newspapers.

### 1965 to 1977

Only two records can be found for the 1965-77 period and memories have faded. Treasurer Ellis Mellette wrote a check in November 1974 to buy a gift for the departing president (Betty Frederick) and another in December 1975 to UUA in Boston as a contribution. The 1949-77 period may be thought of as the "old Fellowship".

### 1969

According to Mary Lou Dorough the last formal meetings of the old Fellowship were held in 1969. Wally and Liese Steinhaus moved to out of town, along with several others. After that, meetings were held in homes, with each host and hostess furnishing both the program and the refreshments. Betty and Harvey Stoudt were active members. This lasted three or four years, but the group faded out due to low attendance.

### 1978

Carolyn Milner initiated the drive to have a new Fellowship by calling Mary Lou Dorough in 1978. The first meeting was held in Mary Lou's home, followed by a number of meetings in other homes. It was decided to rent a room at Wesleyan College to determine how much interest there was. A notice was placed in the local paper and the meeting was held in December 1978.

### 1979

Bob Berlin arranged for meetings to be held in the Friendship House and in February 1979 the group applied for a new charter from the UUA, Boston. In the beginning, some meetings were in a circle format, similar to group therapy sessions, with individuals clinging to each other for moral support while trying to make up their minds about what to do. Attendance soared to about 30 and the room became very crowded, with people standing in the halls. There was no budget, no pledging and almost no formal structure. Carolyn Milner gradually remedied this, but her effort to set up a pledging program was voted down. The first formal structure was in place by 1983.

#### FIRST OFFICERS - 1979

Carolyn Milner, Pres.  
Ree Schoemaker, Sec.  
Ellis Mellette, Tres.

#### LATER PRESIDENTS

1980	Marlin Gilbert
1981	Doris Klepinski
82 & 83	Carol Heggoy
84 & 85	Mary Lou Dorough

During 1979, Bob Berlin arranged for the Fellowship to meet at the First National Bank & Trust Company (later the Trust Company of Georgia) on the corner of Cherry and Second streets. Meetings are still held there on Sunday mornings as this is written in November 1985.

### 1982 to 1985

Several UU ministers were here at various times during 1982-85:

1. The Rev. Frances West, a hospital chaplain in Atlanta, came periodically during 1982-83 and to conduct a memorial service for Katherine D. Rose

(Kittie) on Aug. 5, 1984 (a first).

2. The Rev. Robert Hill, Mid-South Extension Minister, for several weekends in 1983. His guidance helped the Fellowship gain in structure, organization and recognition from Boston.

3. The Rev. Walter Wieder, Minister-on-Loan, for six weeks in February and March, 1984.

4. The Rev. Beth Ide's ministry was shared with the Athens Fellowship during the 1984-85 year.

5. On Nov. 3, 1985, the Rev. Rolfe Gerhardt began his once-a-month weekends with the Fellowship.

Since 1979 many members have taken leadership roles and have pulled together with the entire membership to make a stronger Fellowship. As of November 1985, officers were:

Mary Lou Dorough, Pres.  
Fred vanHartesveldt, Vice Pres.  
Mary Ann vanHartesveldt, Sec..  
Ree Shoemaker, Treas.

There have been good newsletters, continuously. Louise Morgan, Program Chairman, provides program information in the newsletter for the entire coming month, something the old Fellowship was not able to do; and a program for the young people was started several years ago. Numerous other members have been or are "on top of their jobs". The financial condition has been under firm control, as evidenced below:

<u>PERIOD</u>	<u>INCOME</u>	<u>EXPENSES</u>
Jan. 1981 to Dec. 1981	\$ 1,728.60	\$ 1,539.73
Jan. 1982 to Feb. 1983	5,858.16	4,172.16
Mar. 1983 to May 1984	10,887.30	8,835.92
Jun. 1984 to May 1985	13,165.01	13,282.67

#### MILESTONES

1954 First semi-organized Unitarian group in Macon.  
1963 First minister. Budget: \$2,972.  
Feb. 1979 New UUA charter.  
Feb. 1983 Incorporated.  
Feb. 1983 First pledge drive.  
1979 About 30 members.  
Nov. 1985 52 adult voting members.

#### 1985

The only presently active members known by the writer to have been members of the "old Fellowship" are Dick George, Helen Ellis Heckman, Mary Lou Dorough and Sam Rose. Ellis Mellette, who moved to Cedartown, Ga., has stayed in touch with the Fellowship. Some "old Fellowship" members who are still in

this area include Lewis Gordy, and Betty and Harvey Stoudt.

On Sept. 29, 1985, a forum on Fellowship history was held. Sam Rose served as moderator and panelists were Dick George, Ellis Mellette and Mary Lou Dorough. It lasted an hour and 20 minutes and was recorded. Memories of the past were refreshed and many details were added to the few that were generally known. During the forum members were asked how many had never belonged to any church except Unitarian, Universalist or UU. There were three or about 10 percent. Fifteen members were given an opportunity to edit the first draft of this history. Many thanks to those who submitted constructive suggestions and corrections and to Lee Bollinger who wrote the conclusion. It is suggested that a revision and update of the history be made in two or three years.

#### CONCLUSION

A history is written for recording valuable information but also for interested persons to read and remember. Looking back gives us a better sense of who we are today, gives incentive to go forward with commitment and purpose to continue to pursue the way of liberal religion in our community.

The 1985-86 executive board, headed by Mary Lou Dorough, is working diligently together in comradeship, joy and curiosity in our quest for truth, dreams and ideals.

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#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Samuel Wesley Rose was born April 1, 1911, in Thomaston, Conn., the oldest of eight children. After attending 14 different schools in ten years, he graduated from Aberdeen (N.C.) High School in 1927 and immediately went to work as a carpenter.

The family returned to Connecticut in 1930 but Sam remained in North Carolina and, after breaking his arm, worked as a substation and hydro-plant operator and as a switchboard operator/dispatcher and as test engineer in a steam plant. In 1943 he went to a paper mill as assistant power plant superintendent and in charge of instruments and automatic controls in the mill.

In 1948 he moved to Macon, where he was in charge of instruments and automatic controls at Georgia Kraft Co. He then became senior engineer until retiring in 1971 when he became a coin dealer.

He became a member of the Unitarian Fellowship in the late 1950's after being a Methodist for 35 years. He was president of the Fellowship in 1962-63.

THE UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP  
of Middle Georgia  
Macon, Ga.

May 22, 1962

PROPOSED BUDGET: 1962-63

INCOME:

Pledges of members (\$123.85/month)	\$1,486. for year.
Regular donations of non-members	180.
Collection plate	134.
New member pledges	<u>200.</u>
Total Estimated Income, 1962-63	\$2,000.

DISBURSEMENTS:

	DISBURSED		BUDGET
	1960-61 9 Mo.	1961-62 12 Mo.	1962-63 12 Months
Rent	\$ 305.	\$ 270.	\$ 645.*
Furnishings	0.	232.	275.
Operating supplies	29.	96.	100.
Pamphlets	27.	50.	30.
Library	0.	0.	25.
Advertising	135.	147.	150.
Speakers, program material	275.	130.	300.
Religious education oper.	0.	0.	50.
Entertainment, recreation	0.	0.	60.
Community projects	0.	0.	25.
Delegates	10.	0.	25.
Membership fees & U.U.A.	110.	46.	65.
Incorporation fees	0.	0.	50.
Building fund	0.	167.	<u>200.</u>
Total Disbursements	\$ 891.	\$1,138.	\$2,000.

\* \$30.00 per month, May-July  
\$60.00 per month, August-January  
\$65.00 per month, February-April

Recommended by Executive Committee:

s/ Lewis E. Gordy  
Treasurer

s/  
Secretary

s/ Raymond L. Dunham  
Vice President

s/ S. W. Rose  
President



The Unitarian Fellowship of Middle Georgia  
Macon, Ga.

Budget Estimate -- 1963-64

	<u>Minimum Monthly</u>		<u>Fiscal Year</u>
	<u>June, July, Aug.</u>	<u>Sept-May</u>	
Minister	\$ 0.00	\$ 115.00	\$
Rent	61.00	52.00	
Telephone	9.59	9.59	
Pamphlets	0.00	3.00	
Stationery, stamps	2.00	4.50	
Insurance	2.50	2.50	
Checking acct fee	1.00	1.00	
U.U.A.	10.00	10.00	
Register-Leader	1.83	1.83	
District membership	1.50	1.50	
Contingencies	2.00	5.00	
Total Emergency Minimum Budget	\$ 91.42	\$ 190.92	\$1,992.54

Other Items Needed:

Building Fund	\$ 300.00
Capital Equipment	120.00
Speakers, Program Material	150.00
Advertising	150.00
Religious Education	75.00
Clean-up and Refreshments	75.00
Delegates	50.00
Community Projects	60.00

TOTAL INCOME NEEDED, 1963-64 FISCAL YEARS

\$2,972.

Sources of Income:

Plate offerings for year	\$ 200.00
Non-member donations	150.00
Pamphlet fund	25.00

Income from non-members for year	\$ 375.00
Income needed from members	2,597.00

TOTAL INCOME NEEDED FOR YEAR

\$2,972.

Average Income Needed from Members, per Week  
per Month

\$ 49.94  
\$ 216.41

Income Statement  
For The Year Ended May 31, 1985

	May	Year to Date
Beginning bank balance-checking:	\$ 3,183.57	\$ 3,732.43
Revenue:		
Offering	35.25	704.18
Pledges	589.00	9,444.39
Coffee kitty	1.45	30.04
Building fund	12.00	522.24
Endowment fund	75.00	275.00
Special contributions	0	160.48
Fund raisers	90.00	1,666.00
Interest	36.54	362.68
Total revenue	839.24	13,165.01
Expenses:		
Advertising	54.60	656.40
Postage/newsletter/Sec.supplies	78.73	518.28
Telephone	58.16	788.98
Religious Ed. supplies	62.36	443.97
Social supplies	10.23	107.33
Flowers & gifts	0	89.28
Child care	0	80.00
Membership & growth	0	66.13
Fund raisers	0	150.84
Minister	766.67	7,432.03
UUA & Mid. South dues	52.00	684.00
Legal & accounting	0	477.00
Programs & speakers	0	1,195.96
Conferences & travel	105.00	396.00
Misc. (decorations)	50.51	196.47
Total expenses	\$ 1,238.26	\$ 13,282.67
Ending bank balances:		
Checking acct: . . . . .	\$ 2,681.12	
Endowment fund-savings acct: . . . . .	593.76	
Bldg. fund-savings acct: . . . . .	1,350.54	
Bldg. fund- CD: . . . . .	1,080.84	

For the year 1984-1985: Total amount pledged was \$11,203.00  
Total amount collected was \$ 9,444.39

This is a gentle reminder to pay up on your pledges, OK, Troops?

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## UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF MIDDLE GEORGIA, Inc.

MEMBERS, OCTOBER 1985

Aldrich, David	4384 Azalea Dr	Macon	31204
Bauer, Carol	271-A Oak Haven Ave	Macon	31204
Birch, Lois	2461 Napier Ave	Macon	31204
Blackmarr, Hal	1317 Wesleyan Dr	Macon	31210
Bollinger, Lee	1125 Radio Dr	Macon	31204
Bond, Adrienne	1584 Edgewood Ave	Macon	31201
Butler, Patricia	200 Marvin Blvd	Warner Robins	31088
Buzzell, Wayne	107 Russell Pkwy	Warner Robins	31088
Caywood, Jo	153 Windermere Circle	Macon	31210
Carswell, Margaret & Geo	1776 Waverland Circle	Macon	31211
Cremers, Martine	3445-B Vineville Ave	Macon	31204
Dolce, Carla	2537 English Ave	Macon	31204
Dorough, Mary Lou & Edsel	204 Patton Dr	Warner Robins	31093
George, Dick & Rusty	5276 Zebulon Rd	Macon	31211
Gibson, Patricia	289 Albemarle Place	Macon	31204
Hargrove, Bob & Caroline	1223 Adams St	Macon	31201
Heckman, Helen	4825 Brittany Dr	Macon	31204
Heggoy, Carol	728 Winchester Circle	Macon	31204
Hynes, Connie	2433 Lenora Place	Macon	31204
Joris, Susan	2275 Gray Hwy., H-5	Macon	31211
Kight, Charles	3361 Hallwood Circle	Macon	31204
Klepinski, Doris	Rt 2, Price Rd	Macon	31210
McArthur, Dorothy	3028 Ashby Dr	Macon	31204
MacLeod, David	286 College St	Macon	31201
Milner, Bob & Lyn	4305 Dixon Rd	Macon	31206
Morgan, Louise	4644 Savage Creek Dr	Macon	31210
O'Brien, Betty	2787 Bonnie Ave	Macon	31206
Perkins, Bretta	3660 Pineland Trail	Macon	31206
Priest, Marsha; c/o The	Studio Gallery, Houston	Mall, Warner R.	31093
Robinson, Marian & Wood	110 Pierce Place	Warner Robins	31088
Rose, S. W.	4386 Mikado Ave	Macon	31206
Russell, Ellis, Jr	P.O. Box 1142	Warner Robins	31099
Schmid, Paul	1965 Dirk Dr	Macon	31201
Severson, Mary	2537 English Ave	Macon	31204
Simms, Kristina	427 N. Dooly St	Montezuma	31063
Shoemaker, Ree	416 Westcliff Circle	Warner Robins	31093
Stoudt, Betty & Harvey	409 Arrowhead Trail	Warner Robins	31088
Thomaston, Wayne	2768 Nancy Dr	Macon	31206
Thorpe, Mignon & Bill	3844 The Prado	Macon	31204
vanHartesveldt, Fred & Mary Ann,	129 Oak St	Ft Valley	31030
Wasem, Ron	302 Overlook Dr	Warner Robins	31088
Weese, Deb & Dan	129 Windermere Circle	Macon	31210
Wright, Diana & Dennis	104 Brooksdale Dr	Warner Robins	31088
Wyatt, Jim & Randy	5873 Northern Dancer Dr,	Macon	31210
Watkins, Curtis	1688 Rembert Ave	Macon	31201