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Earl Clement Davis Papers

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1954

### Obituary for Earl Clement Davis, Unitarian Yearbook

Dan Huntington Fenn

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## NECROLOGY

### GEORGE HENRY BADGER

George Henry Badger, Dean among our ministers, went out peacefully in his sleep at his home in Orlando, Florida on the 11th of May in his 95th year. The oldest of our living ministers, he was born March 27, 1859 in Charlestown, Mass., educated at Williams College, receiving his A.B. in 1883. He studied at Andover, 1883-1884 and was graduated from Harvard with an S.T.B. in 1886. He married Alice S. Hamilton and they had two daughters, Evelyn (Mrs. Edward T. Paxton), and Elizabeth A. He served our churches in South Natick and Dover, 1886 to 1892; Rutherford, New Jersey, 1892-1898; Ridgewood, New Jersey, 1896-1898; Nantucket, Mass., 1898-1899; San Antonio, Texas, 1912-1918; Orlando, Florida, 1919-1936. From 1899 to 1903 he was Field Secretary for New England, and from 1903 to 1912, Secretary for the Middle States Conference.

His was a full, rich and rewarding life. He died not only full of years but with a wealth of achievement. His active ministry covered a full half century with its crowning accomplishment in the strengthening and building up of our strong and active church in Orlando. In all his labors, his wife was his wise, efficient and loving helpmeet. He was in a very real sense, a true pastor, generous with his time and talents, an interesting, inspiring and instructive preacher, and withall, a man deeply loved and respected by both his congregation and the community. His interests were many and varied, and no good thing that

contributed to the world of values was alien to him. He was especially gifted in the field of literature, not only from the standpoint of a keen and sensitive appreciation and valuation, but also in a creative sense. Thus his gospel was the "good news" from many widely separated fields, and his interpretation of religion transcended all dogmatic divisions and took on the elements of the universal. Thus passes another one of our strong and rapidly lessening links that ties our world of yesterday to our world of today. And to those of us who knew him, our sense of loss is sweetened and beautified by the great realities by and for which he lived, — and which remain as a living memorial to a valiant and radiant spirit.

— George F. Patterson

### EARL CLEMENT DAVIS

After a prolonged illness Earl C. Davis died in Petersham, Massachusetts on May 19, 1953. For twenty years he had built himself so completely into the life of the village and of its people that he had become, in a unique way, the leading citizen of the community.

Mr. Davis was a true lover of people, an informed and active liberal who understood and lived, in a rare way, the life of a genuine religious liberal. Born in Poland, Maine, on June 3, 1876, he was educated at Bowdoin College from which he graduated in 1897. After a period of teaching as the Principal of High School in Billerica, Massa-



chusetts, he entered the Harvard Divinity School from which he received his S.T.B. degree in 1904. His first pastorate was in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, where he was ordained April 7, 1905. This ministry was marked by his important contribution to the community life as the Local Administrator of the War Labor Board, where he served with outstanding success because of his trusted integrity and his wise advice in the difficult field of labor relations, and especially in the adjustment of a serious strike in 1918.

In 1919 he was called to the church in Lancaster, Pennsylvania which he served until 1923 when he went to Concord, New Hampshire as the minister of the church and the administrator of the Downing Fund for the welfare of the churches and ministers of the whole state. Under his leadership the church membership increased and the church came to occupy an important place in the city. During the pastorate in Petersham, (1933-53) Mr. Davis served for a period as the Chairman of the Editorial Board of "The Christian Register," of the Tract Commission three times, as Chairman of the Ministers' Institute and other denominational positions of significant influence. In the village his official positions included those of President of the Village Improvement Society, of the Handicrafts Society, and Chairman of the National War Fund and of the Library Board.

Few men had his ability to keep abreast of the times through steady and discriminating reading; few men were so informed in so many fields of human interest; few men had such a clear sighted optimism and deep joy of living as he. In the pulpit he had a peculiar power of his own, generated by his deep and logical thinking and utter sincerity of mind and heart which made his con-

gregation think with him and feel with him in sermon and prayer.

Mr. Davis is survived by his widow, four children, and thirteen grandchildren.

— Dan Huntington Fenn

#### PAUL HARRIS DRAKE

Paul Harris Drake who died May 17, 1953 in his 65th year while in the active ministry of our Nantucket, Massachusetts Church, was a man of deep conviction and outstanding sincerity. Ordained in the Universalist ministry in 1910 in Beverly, Massachusetts, he served two Universalist and five Unitarian churches. For a period of twenty-four years he withdrew from the active pastorate to conduct a real estate business, but the ministry was always his first interest and religion his consuming passion. He had a profound belief in the necessity of the application of religious principles to all social problems and was an indefatigable worker for peace. For him the politics of eternity should interpenetrate and control the politics of time. This led him to a vigorous espousal of what were frequently unpopular causes, but the kindness of his nature and the obvious sincerity of his beliefs robbed his views of much of the sting they would have had for those who disagreed with him. An outstanding parish minister, he was conscious always of the deep needs of the individuals of his church family and was always ready to respond. Sanguine in temperament, incisive in mind, deeply spiritual and yet realistic in his outlook, generous always in his evaluation of his fellows, Paul Harris Drake made a sure place for himself in the hearts not only of those whom he so faithfully served, but also in those of his col-