



**A Brief Tribute to Rev. Sam May**  
**Our Second Minister – 1845-1868**  
**(For Whom Our Church Is Named)**

# Biographical Information on Sam May



- Born September 12, 1797, in Boston, 10<sup>th</sup> of 12 children
  - Parents were Colonial Joseph May and Dorothy Sewell
  - Educated at Chauncey Hall School (Boston Day School for Boys), Harvard (1817), Harvard Divinity School (1820)
  - Died July 1, 1871, in Syracuse
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## Sam May's Interesting Relatives



- Father, Joseph, King's Chapel (first U.S. Unitarian church) Warden and supporter throughout his life (actually buried there)
- Mother, Dorothy, granddaughter of Chief Justice Sewell, of Salem, the first to expose the Salem Witchcraft delusions
- Sister, Abigail, wife of Transcendentalist, Amos Bronson Alcott – their daughter was Louisa May Alcott (*Little Women*, etc.)
- Son, Joseph, well known Unitarian minister

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## Sam May's Primary Occupational History



- **Minister, Unitarian Church, in Brooklyn, CT (1822-1835)**
- **Full-time agent for the Massachusetts Antislavery Society (1835-1836)**
- **Minister, First Parish in South Scituate, MA (1836-1842)**
- **President of the Normal School at Lexington, MA (1842-1844)**
- **Minister, Unitarian Congregational Society of Syracuse (1845-1867)**

## Photographs of Sam May Ages 56 and early 60s



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# Photographs of Sam May Ages 68 and 74



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## Sam May's Many Passions



- Anti-Slavery Work
- Rights of Women/First Feminist Minister
- Peace/Anti-war/Pacifism/Non-Violence
- Against Death Penalty
- Temperance Work
- Very Strong Advocate of Education
- Historical Society/Orphans Home/Hospital Work/Native Americans

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## Sam's Anti-Slavery Work



- Founding member of New England and U.S. Anti-Slavery Societies (1882/1883)
  - Used Full Force of His Pulpit (3 churches)
  - Sought after Speaker on Anti-Slavery Issues Across the Country
  - Underground RR Work with Canada connections
  - Key Role in Syracuse's Famous "Jerry Rescue"
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# Discovering the Lost Marble Tablet Honoring Rev. May



Hung in our previous church on James St.  
– thought lost in church’s razing – found  
(2005) in basement of Onon. Hist. Society

## Repairing the Marble Tablet



**Repaired by Prof. Ron DeRutte, SU  
Assisted by Dale Sherman**

# Hanging the Marble Tablet Outside West Wall of Church



**Hung on December 31, 2006**

# Home At Last! Sam Must Be Smiling.....

