

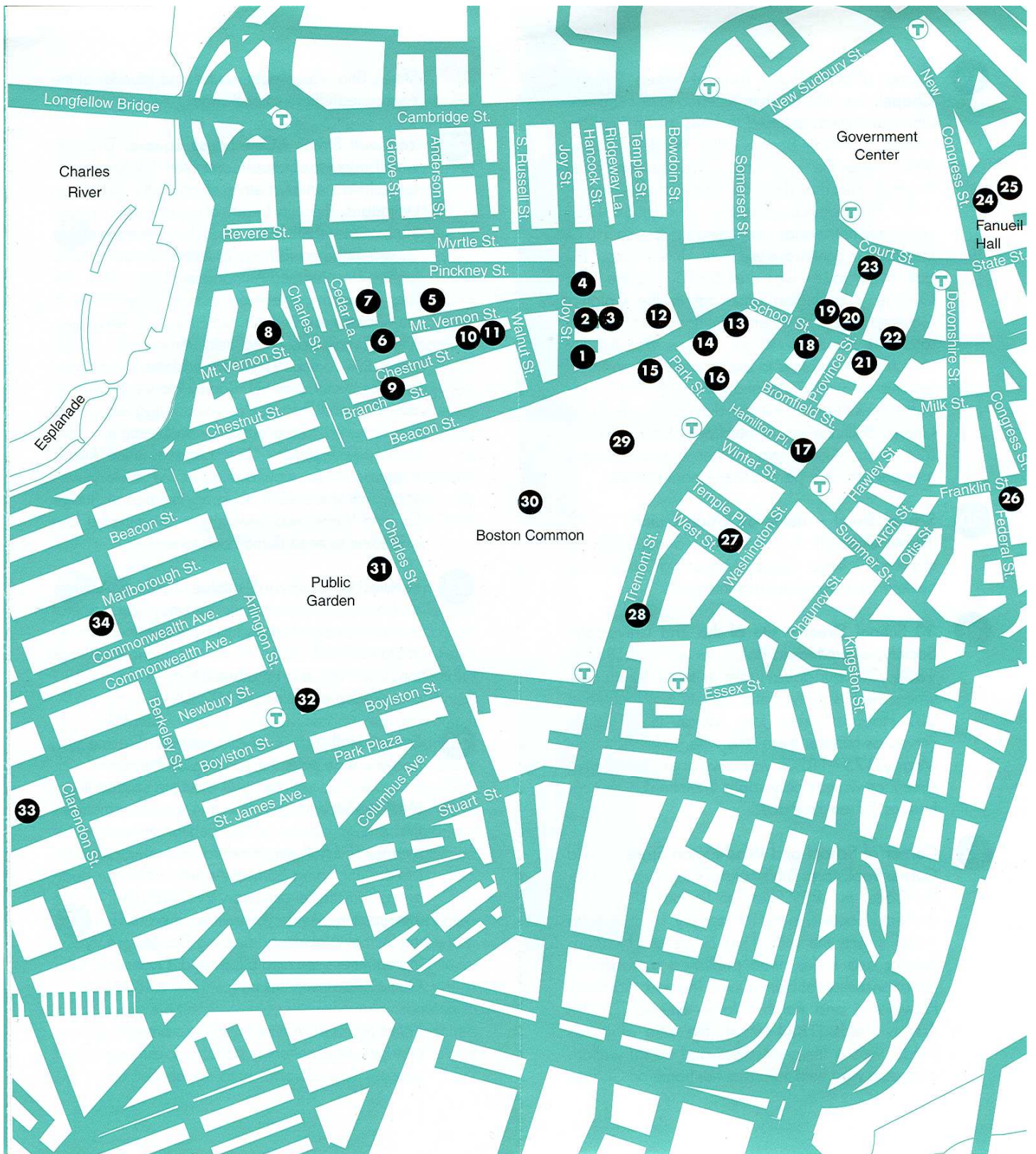
HISTORICAL

Walking Tour

OF UNITARIAN AND UNIVERSALIST BOSTON

Created by Christine Jaronski
for the 2003 Boston GA

Copies of the original pamphlet available
through the UUA's Office of Information and Public Witness,
while supplies last.



Where you should go

Boston was the center of Unitarian and Universalist activity during the nineteenth century. Many prominent ministers, educators, social activists, writers and artists were Unitarian or Universalist, and many were friends or associates. It was a time when the issues of slavery and women's suffrage were fiercely debated. Many of the sites on this tour look exactly as they did in this period, so take a step back in time, and enjoy.

- 1 25 Beacon Street – Unitarian Universalist Association.** Dedicated in 1927, this building stands on land once owned by John Hancock, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. UUA headquarters is on the site of the home of Boston mayor Samuel Eliot, who was a founder of the American Unitarian Association in 1825. Samuel's son, Charles W. Eliot, a president of Harvard College, was born here. Charles later served as president of Harvard College from 1869 to 1909. Charles' son, Samuel Atkins Eliot, served as secretary of the American Unitarian Association from 1898 to 1900 and as AUA president from 1900 to 1927; his long years of service helped to shape the Unitarian movement in the twentieth century.
- 2 7 Mt. Vernon Place – Pickett House.** This UUA guesthouse was purchased in 1981 and named for O. Eugene Pickett, who served as UUA president from 1979 to 1985.
- 3 6 Mt. Vernon Place – Eliot House.** Purchased in 1959 by the American Unitarian Association and named for Fredrick May Eliot, who served as AUA president from 1937 to 1961. Now a UUA guesthouse.
- 4 41 Mt. Vernon Street – UUA and Beacon Press offices.** Founded in 1854 as the publishing imprint of the American Unitarian Association, Beacon Press remains active today as "Unitarian Universalism's voice for good in the world."
- 5 83 Mt. Vernon Street – Home of William Ellery Channing.** One of the most important Unitarian ministers of his time, Channing lived here from 1835 to 1842. In his 1819 Baltimore Sermon, Channing defended reason as a source of revelation and a way to understand the Bible. He had a strong influence on his parishioner Dorothea Dix, who first learned of the deplorable conditions in prisons while teaching Sunday school to prisoners through Channing's church. Although there was a parsonage at his own church on Federal Street, Channing lived here at the end of his ministry.
- 6 92 Mt. Vernon Street – Studio of Anne Whitney (1821-1915),** sculptor of more than one hundred busts and statues, including one of Samuel Adams, which stands today in Statuary Hall in Washington, D.C., and one of Charles Sumner, located in Harvard Square, across from First Parish Unitarian. Later in this tour we will see a duplicate of Whitney's Samuel Adams statue at Quincy Market.
- 7 10 Louisburg Square – Home of Louisa May Alcott.** Author of *Little Women* and daughter of self-styled philosopher Amos Bronson Alcott, Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888) is more often associated with Concord, Massachusetts, where she knew Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. Alcott lived in various homes in the Boston area for 27 of her 55 years. This house represents Alcott's rise from rags to riches and reflects the tremendous success of *Little Women* (published in 1868) and the sequel novels. Alcott's entire family lived here during the last two years of her life.
- 8 70 Charles Street – Charles Street Meeting House.** Designed by Unitarian architect Asher Benjamin and built in 1807. Originally a Baptist church, then an African Methodist Episcopal Church from 1876 to 1939. From 1949 to 1979, this was a Universalist church known for its innovative forms of worship and social action.

9 **50 Chestnut Street – Home of Francis Parkman**, noted American historian and Unitarian. He lived here from 1865 to 1893.

10 **17 Chestnut Street – Studio of artist Elizabeth Bartol**, daughter of Unitarian minister Cyrus Bartol, who preached at the funerals of Louisa May Alcott, her father Bronson and her mother Abigail.

11 **13 Chestnut Street – Home of Julia Ward Howe and Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe**. Most famous for writing the words to the Civil War anthem "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" (1861), Julia Ward Howe was an author, lecturer, organizer and reformer. She was a leader in the women's suffrage movement and instituted Mother's Day as a day to demonstrate for peace. Influenced by Theodore Parker, Howe was a lay preacher at James Freeman Clarke's Church of the Disciples, on Warren Street in Boston. In 1908 she became the first woman elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Her husband, Samuel Gridley Howe, founded the Perkins Institute for the Blind and was an active abolitionist.

12 **Massachusetts State House**—Completed in 1798, the original building (central portion now) was designed by Unitarian architect Charles Bulfinch (1823-1893).

The following two statues flank the Beacon Street entrance:

- *Statue of Daniel Webster* (1782-1852), a Unitarian lawyer, statesman and orator. He served in the U.S. Congress and Senate and was secretary of state.
- *Statue of Horace Mann* (1796-1859), a Unitarian lawyer, statesman, Massachusetts legislator, U.S. representative, secretary of the State Board of Education and advocate for free public education for all. He became president of Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

"Hear Us" women's memorial (1st floor corridor). Three of these plaques are of Unitarian women. Dorothea Dix (1802-1887) crusaded for prison

reform and the rights of the mentally ill. During the Civil War, she served as the country's first supervisor of nurses. One of her nursing recruits was Louisa May Alcott, who later wrote *Hospital Sketches*, drawing on this experience. Lucy Stone (1818-1893), suffragist and abolitionist, was the first woman in Massachusetts to earn a college degree, and was an editor of the *Women's Journal*. Florence Hope Luscomb (1887-1985) was a suffragist, peace and labor activist and leader in the League for Women Voters.

13 **10 1/2 Beacon Street – The Athenaeum**. This substantial private library was founded in 1807 by a group of prominent Bostonians that included Unitarian minister Joseph Stevens Buckminster and William Emerson, the father of Ralph Waldo Emerson. The library now houses the book collection given to King's Chapel by William and Mary of England in 1696. When this building was in danger of being torn down, Unitarian Amy Lowell was instrumental in saving it. Unitarian Hannah Adams became the first woman to gain reading room privileges in 1829.

14 **16 Beacon Street – Chester Harding house**. Given to the American Unitarian Association in 1919 by two women, the Angell sisters. The AUA allowed the Universalist Church of America to use it rent-free as headquarters from 1933 until the two denominations consolidated in 1961.

15 **54th Regiment Statue** – One of Boston's most celebrated Civil War monuments, this statue, sculpted by Augustus St. Gaudens, portrays the Civil War's first black regiment, led by its commander, 26-year-old Unitarian Robert Gould Shaw. This regiment marched up Beacon Street past the State House to salute Unitarian governor John A. Andrew, who gave the soldiers their colors (flags) as they headed for the South on May 28, 1863. Outnumbered, Shaw and many of his men were killed in the unsuccessful assault on Fort Wagner, South Carolina, on July 18, 1863. An active abolitionist, Governor Andrew commissioned this statue.

16 **5 Park Street – Offices of the Women's Journal,** founded in 1870 and edited by women's suffrage leader and abolitionist Lucy Stone, who was a Unitarian. Stone chose this location so she would be close to the State House in order to petition the legislature frequently. Universalist Mary Ashton Rice Livermore was also an editor of this weekly newspaper. Called "the queen of the platform," Livermore was known for her speeches in support of temperance and women's rights. She was married to the Universalist minister Daniel Livermore.

17 **Orpheum Theater – site of the old Music Hall.** This is one of the sites where minister Theodore Parker preached his radical Unitarian theology and impassioned anti-slavery message to throngs of Bostonians. Parker was a friend of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Frederick Douglass and an inspiration to Julia Ward Howe and Louisa May Alcott. Alcott attended the weekly salon evenings at Parker's home and even modeled one of her fictional characters after him. Parker's parishioners included black leader Lewis Hayden and his wife Harriet. Both born slaves, they worked with Harriet Tubman and offered their home at 66 Phillips Street as a stop on the Underground Railroad. Harriet Hayden left a scholarship for "needy and worthy colored students" to attend the Harvard Medical School.

18 **School and Tremont – Parker House.** Many famous Unitarians have dined and stayed at this hotel over the years. Ralph Waldo Emerson was a faithful member of the Saturday Club, which met here. One celebrated guest was the internationally known actress Charlotte Saunders Cushman (1816-1876). As a young girl, she sang in the choirs of several Unitarian churches, including Second Church during the time when Emerson preached there. An abolitionist herself, she gave several performances to benefit the Sanitary Commission (a forerunner to the Red Cross), donating over \$8,000 to aid sick and wounded soldiers in the Civil War. At the end of her life, Cushman lived at the Parker House, and she died here on February 18, 1876. Her funeral was held across the street at King's Chapel, and she is buried in Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

19 **Corner of School and Tremont Streets – King’s Chapel.** The first church in America to declare itself Unitarian, it was founded in 1686 as an Anglican church in Puritan Boston. After the Revolutionary War, under the leadership of its minister, James Freeman, the church became Unitarian in theology in 1787. The present building was constructed in 1756 and contains the original building’s pulpit, said to be the oldest in continuous use in the United States. The bell in the tower was cast by Paul Revere, and George Washington once sat in the Colonial Governor’s pew for a concert in honor of his inauguration as president. King’s Chapel was the first church in the colonies to use an organ as part of its worship service (1714), and it hosted the first concert of Boston’s Handel and Haydn Society. Architect Charles Bulfinch was a member of King’s Chapel. Louisa May Alcott’s grandfather was a prominent member, and her parents were married here.

20 **School Street – statue of Josiah Quincy** (1772-1864), Unitarian mayor of Boston and president of Harvard College. Quincy Market was built during his term as mayor and is named after him.

21 **30 School Street – site of the 2nd Universalist Society,** where Hosea Ballou served from 1817 to 1852. Our tour doesn’t take us to the North End, where the First Universalist Society was located at 332 Hanover Street. John Murray (1741-1815) served as minister there. His wife, Judith Sargeant Murray (1751-1820), was a writer and pioneering American woman playwright. Their home was near here at 5 Franklin Place.

22 **Corner of School and Washington Streets – Old Corner Bookstore.** This bookstore, opened by Timothy Carter in 1829, was an important center of intellectual activity in the 19th century. From 1840 to 1865 it was the publishing house of Unitarians Ticknor and Fields, who published such famous Unitarian authors as Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Annie Adams Fields (1834-1915), the wife of James Adams Fields, was a literary hostess and social welfare advocate who held salons at her home on Charles

Street. She was a poet, writer and founder of the Associated Charities of Boston.

23 **26 Court Street – Courthouse Square.** This site, which is now the School Committee Building, marks the culmination of a story of particular interest to Unitarians. The story begins at our next stop, Faneuil Hall, on the night of May 26, 1854, when a volatile crowd gathered to hear speeches on behalf of a fugitive slave named Anthony Burns. Unitarian minister Theodore Parker motivated the crowd to storm the Courthouse, which was then located here, where Burns was being held. Among the participants this famous night were Unitarian activists Bronson Alcott, Samuel Gridley Howe, Nathaniel Bowditch and Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Here the protesters faced police, who threatened them with raised pistols. One protester was killed, Higginson was wounded, and the military was immediately called in to keep the peace. Judge Edward Loring was unwilling to overturn the law and ruled to send Burns back to slavery.

24 **Faneuil Hall Courtyard – statue of Samuel Adams,** sculpted by Unitarian Anne Whitney. The original marble statue of this Revolutionary War hero stands in Statuary Hall in the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. This is a bronze replica, made in 1880 and placed at this site in 1928.

24 **Faneuil Hall.** This is a National Parks Service site, and you may enter the building by the central rear staircase. Faneuil Hall itself is on the second floor. (All Parks Service sites close at 4 PM, and sometimes this one is closed to the public during special events.) This hall was a central gathering place for orators, including Samuel Adams, and their audiences from the Revolutionary War days well into the 19th century. Inside you will see a painting depicting Daniel Webster addressing Congress in Washington. There are also a bust and a portrait of John Quincy Adams in this hall.

At this point you may wish to take a break at Quincy Market, which offers a variety of restaurants and shops.

If time is short, you may wish to skip the next stop because urban development has erased all evidence of the Federal Street Church except for a plaque on the side of a high-rise office building. However, many important events happened on this site. If you skip it, follow the map to number 27.

- 26** **Corner of Franklin and Federal Streets – site of Federal Street Church**, the predecessor of today's Arlington Street Church. If you look carefully you will see a plaque on the corner of this high rise honoring the Federal Street Church, an extremely important Unitarian church of its time. William Ellery Channing preached here from 1803 to 1842. In 1825 the American Unitarian Association was founded here. The parsonage was behind the church on Berry Street, a street that no longer exists. The name of the Berry Street Lectures at General Assembly comes from this street. The first Peace Society of America was founded in Channing's study. The Great Fire of 1872 destroyed almost the entire area from Washington Street to the harbor and from State Street to Summer Street.

- 27** **13-15 West Street – Elizabeth Peabody Book Shop**. This bookshop was a center of female intellectual activity, with Margaret Fuller holding her "Conversations" here from 1839 to 1844. Fuller was one of the editors of the Transcendentalist journal *The Dial* and a close associate of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Widely recognized as a formidable intellect, Fuller was the only woman admitted to the "Saturday Club" at the Parker House. Elizabeth Peabody was the founder of the American kindergarten and the first female publisher in Boston. Her sister Sophia, an artist, married Nathaniel Hawthorne. Her sister Mary, an educator, married Horace Mann.

- 28** **174 Tremont Street—Fanny Farmer's Boston Cooking School**. This building once stood where the Ritz-Carlton Towers building is now. A Unitarian, Farmer (1857-1915) was famous for her cookbooks, which were the first to employ scientific measurements to guarantee perfect results. She taught and lectured on the connection between diet and health and helped design diets for diabetics.

From here you may want to return to the UUA. If you choose to continue, the last part of our tour includes three Unitarian Universalist churches still active today.

- 29** **Walk through Boston Common to Charles Street**. Imagine some of the colorful Bostonians who once walked through here. Samuel Barber relates in his 1914 book, *Boston Common*, "Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman walked up and down the Mall on the Common 'vigorously discussing' the desirability of publishing Whitman's 'Children of Adam.'"

- 30** **Obelisk**. Unitarian Henry Whitney Bellows (1814-1882), founder of the Sanitary Commission (forerunner to the Red Cross), is depicted on the plaque at the base of this obelisk. Clara Barton (1821-1912), a Universalist, founded the Red Cross. Called "The Angel of the Battlefield," Barton served as a nurse in the war and was instrumental in identifying the war dead and notifying their families when the war was over.

- 31** **Entrance to Public Garden – statue of Edward Everett Hale** (1822-1909), prominent Unitarian minister, orator and author of *Man Without a Country* among his many other writings. Hale started the Lend-a-Hand Society, which still brings aid to destitute people.

- 32** **Corner of Arlington and Boylston – statue of William Ellery Channing and Arlington Street Church**. Channing (1780-1842) was a key organizer of the American Unitarian Association and was known as "the apostle of Unitarianism." Arlington Street Church, successor to Channing's Federal Street Church, was built in 1859, the first public building on the filled land of the Back Bay. The church boasts one of the largest collections of Tiffany stained glass windows in any one location and houses the Channing pulpit, which was preserved from the Federal Street Church. Former ministers of this church include Dana McClean Greeley, the first UUA president, and Jack Mendelsohn, author of *Being Liberal in an Illiberal*

Age. Renowned theologian James Luther Adams was a member here.

33 **565 Boylston Street—Community Church.** Founded in 1920 as a non-sectarian place of worship by Clarence Russell Skinner and others, this church was instrumental in the Community Church Movement and strives to embody “a Free Pulpit in Action” for peace and justice.

34 **Corner of Marlborough and Berkeley—First and Second Church.** The building here today was completed in 1972 for the merged congregations of the First Church and the Second Church of Boston. The First Church of Boston was founded in 1630 when the Puritans moved to Boston. Puritan John Cotton was called as the teaching minister in 1633. The Second Church of Boston was an offshoot of this one, boasting Increase, Cotton and Samuel Mather as preachers from 1664 to 1741, while it was still a Puritan or Congregational Church. Both First and Second Churches became Unitarian during the 1800s. Ralph Waldo Emerson was a minister at Second Church, and his father was a minister at First Church.

End of Tour

Return to the UUA via Marlborough Street and the Public Garden to Beacon Street, or explore the shops and galleries on Newbury Street just two blocks south of Marlborough.

About This Tour

This walking tour was created by Christine Jaronski. We are indebted to the authors of the following walking tours for information provided in this tour: Edward Darling (Boston, The President’s Tour); Polly Welts Kaufman, Bonnie Hurd Smith, Mary Howland Smoyer and Susan Wilson (Boston Women’s Heritage Trail); and Byron Rushing (Black Heritage Trail). Thanks also to Dorothy Emerson and Bonnie Hurd Smith for their research on the “Hear Us” memorial and notable Unitarian and Universalist women.

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