

# The Unitarian Universalist Association

## ~ Chronology, before 1900 ~

- 1741 American Universalism had its direct origin in the work of George DeBenneville, a lay theologian who came under the influence of the early Brethren, Friends of God, and German Pietists in Pennsylvania. He preached his gospel of universal salvation as he practiced medicine among the settlers and Native Americans.
- 1770 When John Murray, a Wesleyan evangelist, came to New Jersey, he found groups of universalist-minded people scattered along the Atlantic coast. He became the minister to the group in Gloucester, Massachusetts, and later served briefly as a Revolutionary War chaplain.
- 1784 The first organized church to turn to Unitarianism as a body was the Episcopal King's Chapel in Boston. However, most American Unitarianism developed when members of the liberal wing of the Congregational Church in eastern Massachusetts asked that they not be required to subscribe to a creed; they were branded then as "Unitarian."
- 1790 The Universalists met in Philadelphia to draft their first declaration of faith and plan of government. Their declaration was adopted by a group of New England Universalists in 1793.
- 1805 Hosea Ballou, published the *Treatise on Atonement*, which gave Universalists their first consistent philosophy.
- 1805 Many older and larger Congregational churches moved toward Unitarianism in the second half of the 18th century. The split within Congregational churches came into the open in 1805 with the appointment of Henry Ware as professor of theology at Harvard.
- 1819 William Ellery Channing of Boston preached his famous Baltimore sermon outlining the Unitarian view.
- 1825 The American Unitarian Association was formed.
- 1865 A national Unitarian conference was organized.

## ~Records, Resources~

In May 1961, the Unitarian and Universalist churches in the United States and Canada consolidated as the Unitarian Universalist Association, becoming one of the most influential liberal religious bodies.

Neither the Unitarians or the Universalists seem to have lost their original ideology, theology, or purpose. No minister, member, or congregation "shall be required to subscribe to any particular interpretation of religion, or to any particular religious belief or creed."

Three of our American presidents were Unitarian: John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and Millard Fillmore.

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## ~Bibliography~

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