

Joseph Fletcher Jordan
Universalist Minister

Born: 1863
Birthplace: Gates County, North Carolina
Died: 1929

Jordan was born of slave parents, William and Anne, in Gates County, North Carolina in that part of the state called the "Dismal Swamp." At age fourteen, he was apprenticed to a white Methodist to learn the trades of bricklaying and plastering. His earliest religious association was with the Baptist Church, which he never joined. He then served as janitor for a white Methodist Church, where he attended services and church school. Fletcher Jordan graduated at age twenty-two from the state normal school for Blacks in Plymouth, North Carolina. He later became a preacher and served for twelve years in an African Methodist Church. After studying at Canton Theological School (now St. Lawrence University), he joined the Universalist church in Norfolk, Virginia and in 1904 took charge of the mission in Suffolk, which grew under his leadership. He was an active temperance leader, wrote for prominent journals including the "Colored Universalist." In 1900, he received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Barretts College, North Carolina. He was associated with the St. Paul Mission School in Suffolk, Virginia from 1904 until his death in 1929.

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James Reeb

Unitarian Minister, Social Activist

Born: 1927
Died: 1965

James Reeb graduated from St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota and entered Princeton seminary in 1950. Ordained a Presbyterian minister, he became a Unitarian minister in 1962, serving All Souls Church, Washington, D.C. In 1964 Jim moved to Boston with his wife and four children to direct a housing program for the American Friends Service Committee. Choosing to live in a neglected working class section of the city, Reeb's family soon experienced the effects of racism, segregation, poverty, and discrimination. He became an advocate for racial justice. In March of 1965, Reeb answered Dr. Martin Luther King's call to clergy of all denominations to witness against violence toward demonstrators in Alabama. On a street in Selma with two other ministers, Reeb was attacked and beaten; he died 4 days later. Black leaders led a protest march and held a vigil for the next four days. On March 15, a historic voting rights bill was sent by President Lyndon Johnson to Congress, which later was signed into law. A memorial service was held for James Reeb at Brown's Chapel, not far from the courthouse where protesters were finally granted permission to hold their demonstration, followed by the historic march of over 30,000 in Montgomery, Alabama. Three white men from Selma were tried for Reeb's murder and acquitted; a fourth was never brought to trial.

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Lewis Latimer
Inventor, Social Reformer

Born: 1848
Birthplace: Boston, Massachusetts
Died: 1928

Latimer's parents, George and Rebecca, escaped from a Virginia plantation and migrated north to Boston before Lewis was born. Lewis enjoyed school and was talented in art and writing, but his education was interrupted at age 10 when his father abandoned the family and Lewis had to work to support them selling newspapers and other jobs. At age 16 he joined the navy. This was during the Civil War, and Lewis served as a cabin boy on a gunboat. After the war, he found a job in a patent law office where he learned the art of drafting and eventually became chief draftsman. Latimer became an inventor and created the drawings for the patent application of Alexander Graham Bell's telephone. He invented an incandescent filament for Thomas Edison's electric light bulb, allowing its practical use for home electric lighting. Latimer was the first Black inventor to be widely recognized during his lifetime for his many contributions. He designed lighting systems for cities including New York, Philadelphia, London, and Montreal. Latimer was one of the founding members of his Unitarian church in New York.

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Linus Pauling

Physician, Medical Scientist

Born: 1901
Birthplace: Portland, OR
Died: 1994

Son of a small town druggist, Linus Pauling showed an early independent spirit. He dropped out of high school and entered college instead, majoring in chemical engineering at the Oregon Agricultural College, where he was considered a prodigy for his amazing grasp of chemistry. He married Ava Helen Miller in 1923, and earned his Ph.D. two years later from the California Institute of Technology. At age 30, he had published 50 papers based on original research, and was full professor at Cal-Tech. He won the American Chemical Society Award in Pure Chemistry in 1931 and was considered by Albert Einstein, Alfred Noyes and others a formidable expert. In 1954 he received the Nobel Prize for his research into the nature of chemical bonds and molecular structure of physical matter. All his life, Pauling was not only a brilliant scientist but a tireless activist for peace. He helped organize a Congress for Peace in Mexico City in 1949. For repeatedly speaking out against the politics of war and leading peace crusades, during the McCarthy era he was denied passports as a suspected "communist." His 1958 book *No More War!* expressed deep concern regarding the hazards of radiation. In 1962 Pauling again won the Nobel Prize, this time for his work against testing of nuclear weapons and his pacifist activities since 1946 denouncing all warfare as the means of solving international conflicts. With his wife Ada, joined the First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles in the mid-1950s and continued to be an active member there for over 30 years.

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