INSTRUCTOR’S MANUAL

AMERICA: PAST AND PRESENT

TENTH EDITION

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CHAPTER 1

NEW WORLD ENCOUNTERS

CHAPTER OUTLINE

CLASH OF CULTURES: INTERPRETING MURDER IN EARLY MARYLAND

NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORIES BEFORE THE CONQUEST

• The Environmental Challenge: Food, Climate, and Culture
• Mysterious Disappearances
• Aztec Dominance
• Eastern Woodland Cultures

A WORLD TRANSFORMED

• Cultural Negotiations
• Threats to Survival: Trade and Disease

WEST AFRICA: ANCIENT AND COMPLEX SOCIETIES

EUROPE ON THE EVE OF CONQUEST

• Building New Nation-States

IMAGINING A NEW WORLD

• Myths and Reality
• The Conquistadores: Faith and Greed
• From Plunder to Settlement

THE FRENCH CLAIM CANADA

THE ENGLISH ENTER THE COMPETITION

• Birth of English Protestantism
• Militant Protestantism
• Woman in Power
• Religion, War, and Nationalism

AN UNPROMISING BEGINNING: MYSTERY AT ROANOKE
CONCLUSION: CAMPAIGN TO SELL AMERICA

FEATURE ESSAY: THE COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

OPENING THEME

THE “OTHER”

Your students will understand Chapter 1 more fully if they at least dip their toes into the murky waters of modern literary theory. It is argued that we make sense of important experiences by constructing stories that give them coherence and meaning. As the author points out, the unexpected meeting of Native Americans, Europeans, and Africans in the Western Hemisphere after 1492 was interpreted differently by each of the parties involved. The Europeans explained it as the triumph of Christianity and progress over ignorance and idolatry. But the European interpretation was only one of the ways in which the events of 1492 were understood. Native Americans and Africans constructed very different stories.

Literary critics have recently turned their attention to the vast literature that accompanied the first contacts between Europeans and Native Americans in America. Two aspects of the stories told by both sides seem especially interesting. The first is the conscious construction of histories by the Spanish explorers and conquistadores to explain or justify actions that might not have been premeditated. Columbus, for example, was probably not as visionary before 1492 as he later believed himself to be. In the contract he made with Queen Isabella before starting out on his famous voyage, he seems to have expected that he would most likely find islands like the Canaries and Azores rather than Asia. He might have expected to sail into the Ocean Sea, not across it. Similarly, the Spanish tale of the conquest of Mexico as a great Christian crusade probably disguises an original intention to establish peaceful trade. Ironically, the conquest narratives might make the Spanish seem more bloodthirsty in intention than they really were.

The second interesting aspect of contact literature is how the Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans reacted to the “Other.” The concept of the “Other” derives mainly from structuralist theory, which argues that we shape the world through language by use of such polar opposites as “high and low,” “sacred and profane,” “raw and cooked,” and “male and female.” One of the most potent of these pairs is “self and other.” This theory argues that we construct a sense of self by differentiating ourselves from others, and that we construct a sense of otherness by differentiating others from ourselves. Because we usually impart values to the distinctions we make, the “Other” is never an equal. The “Other” is either vastly superior or grossly inferior.
Scholars working with such theories have produced interesting analyses of the First Contact period. Tzvetan Todorov, for example, argues that the Spanish victory over the Aztecs was more a triumph of language than of military technology. The Aztecs, in his opinion, used language primarily to communicate with the gods, with the result that their language, and the mental universe formed by their language, was highly ritualistic, repetitive, and predictable. Europeans, on the other hand, used language in a more practical way to persuade and manipulate other humans.

In the mental universe of these Europeans, the “Other” was unpredictable but manageable. Upon First Contact, the Aztecs were dumbfounded by an “Other” they found impossible to explain. Montezuma begged the gods to tell him what to do as the Spanish approached, but the gods fell silent. Cortés, however, was able to make false promises, to disguise his intentions, to distort the truth, and even to make seemingly supernatural omens conform to his own intentions. The Spanish defeated the Aztecs because they were more adept at manipulating the signs and symbols that make up a system of communication.

The subject of the “Other” is especially interesting at a time when the possibility of contact with life beyond our planet is the subject of so much speculation. Students should be encouraged to make comparisons between 1492 and that unknowable time when we first encounter extraterrestrials. Much will depend on whether we first meet a big-eyed, sad-faced ET, or a slimy creature baring a full set of razor-sharp teeth, because we, too, like the Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans of 1492, have already met our “Other.”

CLASH OF CULTURES: INTERPRETING MURDER IN EARLY MARYLAND

The author uses a murder case in Maryland in 1635 to illustrate the difficulty that European colonists and Native Americans had in understanding one another. Each side brought preconceptions molded by their long histories into their contacts with other peoples, and each side was molded by contact with the other.

NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORIES BEFORE THE CONQUEST

America first became inhabited some twenty thousand years ago when small bands of nomadic Siberian hunters chased large mammals across the land bridge between Asia and America. During this long migration, the people who became known as the Indians or Native Americans escaped some of the most common diseases of humankind, such as smallpox and measles, but their children and grandchildren also lost the immunities that would have protected them against such diseases.

A. The Environmental Challenge: Food, Climate, and Culture

During the thousands of years before the arrival of the Europeans, the continents of North and South America experienced tremendous geologic and climate changes. As the weather warmed, the great mammals died off, and the Native Americans who
hunted them turned increasingly to growing crops, bringing about the Agricultural Revolution.

. Mysterious Disappearances

Agriculture allowed Native Americans to concentrate in large numbers in urban complexes, such as Chaco Canyon in New Mexico and Cahokia in Illinois. By the time Europeans reached these areas, the great urban centers had disappeared, either because of climate changes or overcrowding.

. Aztec Dominance

In Central America, the Aztecs settled in the fertile valley of Mexico and conquered a large and powerful empire, which they ruled through fear and force.

. Eastern Woodland Cultures

Elsewhere, along the Atlantic coast of North America for example, Native Americans lived in smaller bands and supplemented agriculture with hunting and gathering. In some cases, women owned the farming fields, and men the hunting grounds.

A WORLD TRANSFORMED

The arrival of Europeans profoundly affected Native Americans, who could be said to have entered a new world.

. Cultural Negotiations

Native Americans were not passive in their dealings with the Europeans. They eagerly traded for products that made life easier, but they did not accept the notion that Europeans were in any way culturally superior, and most efforts by the Europeans to convert or “civilize” the Native Americans failed.

. Threats to Survival: Trade and Disease

Wherever Native Americans and Europeans came into contact, they exchanged ideas, goods, crops, technologies, and so on. Part of this “Columbian Exchange” included the transmission of diseases, like smallpox and measles. As a result, the Native American population declined rapidly. For example, the Arawak population in Santo Domingo fell from almost 4 million before the arrival of Columbus to just 125 in 1570. An entire way of life disappeared.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.
WEST AFRICA: ANCIENT AND COMPLEX SOCIETIES

Contrary to ill-informed opinion, sub-Saharan West Africa was never an isolated part of the world where only simple societies developed. Just like regions on other continents, West Africa had seen the rise and fall of empires such as Ghana and Dahomey. West Africa had also been heavily influenced by the coming of Islam. The arrival of Europeans was just the latest of many foreign influences that helped shape African culture.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to come to this area, pioneering the sea lanes from Europe to sub-Saharan Africa in the fifteenth century. They found profit in gold and slaves, which were supplied willingly by native rulers who sold their prisoners of war. The Atlantic slave trade began taking about 1,000 persons each year from Africa, but the volume steadily increased. In the eighteenth century, an estimated 5.5 million were taken away. Altogether, Africa lost almost 11 million of her children to the Atlantic slave trade. Before 1831, more Africans than Europeans came to the Americas.

EUROPE ON THE EVE OF CONQUEST

The Vikings discovered America before Columbus, but European colonization of the New World began only after 1492 because only then were the preconditions for successful overseas settlement attained. These conditions were the rise of nation-states and the spread of both new technologies and old knowledge.

A. Building New Nation-States

During the fifteenth century, powerful monarchs in western Europe began to forge nations from what had been loosely associated provinces and regions. The “new monarchs” of Spain, France, and England tapped new sources of revenue from the growing middle class and deployed powerful military forces, both necessary actions for establishing outposts across the Atlantic.

Just as necessary to colonization were the advances in technology, especially in the art of naval construction. The lateen sail allowed ships to sail into the wind, better techniques were devised for calculating position at sea, ancient scientific works were examined, and the printing press disseminated new knowledge rapidly.

IMAGINING A NEW WORLD

Spain was the first European nation to meet all of the preconditions for successful colonization. After hundreds of years fighting Moorish rule, she had become a unified nation-state under Ferdinand and Isabella. In 1492, the year made famous by Columbus’s discovery of America, Spain expelled her Jews and Muslims in a crusade to obliterate all non-Christian elements in Spanish culture. Spain had also
experienced the difficulties of colonization in her conquest of the Canary Islands before turning her attention to America.

. Myths and Reality

Christopher Columbus (Cristoforo Colombo), born in Genoa in 1451, typified the questing dreamers of the fifteenth century. He believed it was possible to reach the Orient, the goal of all adventurers, by sailing westward from Europe. Undeterred by those who told him the voyage would be so long that the crews would perish from lack of food and water, Columbus finally persuaded Queen Isabella to finance his exploration. Although Columbus found in America a vast treasure-house of gold and silver, he had expected to find the great cities of China, and even after four separate expeditions to America, he refused to believe he had not reached the Orient. He died in poverty and disgrace after having lived to see his discovery claimed by another, Amerigo Vespucci, for whom America is named. As a further cruel irony, the all-water route to the East Indies that Columbus hoped to find was actually discovered by Vasco da Gama, who sailed from Portugal around the southern tip of Africa. The net result of his efforts had been frustration and ignominy for Columbus; however, he paved the way to world power for Spain, which claimed all of the New World except for Brazil, conceded to Portugal by treaty in 1494.

. The Conquistadores: Faith and Greed

To expand Spain’s territories in the New World, the Crown commissioned independent adventurers (conquistadores) to subdue new lands. For God, glory, and gold they came. Within two decades they had decimated the major Caribbean islands, where most of the native population died from exploitation and disease. The Spaniards then moved onto the mainland and continued the work of conquest. Hernán Cortés destroyed the Aztec Empire in 1521 and the conquest of South America followed in the next two decades.

. From Plunder to Settlement

The Spanish crown kept her unruly subjects in America loyal by rewarding the conquistadores with large land grants that contained entire villages of native people (the encomienda system). As pacification of the natives progressed, the Spanish crown limited the autonomy of the conquistadores by adding layer upon layer of bureaucrats, whose livelihoods derived directly from the crown and whose loyalty was therefore to the officials who ruled America from Spain. The Catholic Church also became an integral part of the administrative system and brought order to the empire by protecting the native population’s rights and by performing mass conversions. By 1650, about half a million Spaniards immigrated to the New World. Because most were unmarried males, they mated with Indian or African women and produced a mixed-blood
population that was much less racist than the English colonists who settled North America.

Spain’s empire proved to be a mixed blessing. The great influx of gold and silver made Spain rich and powerful, but set off massive inflation and encouraged the Spanish crown to launch a series of costly wars in Europe.

THE FRENCH CLAIM CANADA

France lacked the most important precondition for successful colonization: the interest of its rulers. French kings sent several expeditions to America, most notably that of Samuel de Champlain, who founded Quebec in 1608, and even established an empire in America that stretched along the St. Lawrence River, through the Great Lakes, and down the Mississippi, but the French crown made little effort to foster settlement.

THE ENGLISH ENTER THE COMPETITION

England had as valid a claim to America as Spain, but did not push colonization until the late sixteenth century, when it, too, achieved the necessary preconditions for transatlantic settlement.

. Birth of English Protestantism

England began to achieve political unity under the Tudor monarchs who suppressed the powerful barons. Henry VIII strengthened the crown even further by leading the English Reformation, an immensely popular event for the average men and women who hated the corrupt clergy. Henry’s reason for breaking with the Pope was to obtain a divorce, but he began a liberating movement that outlived him. During the reign of Queen Mary, Protestants were severely persecuted, but the Reformation could not be undone.

. Militant Protestantism

The Protestant Reformation had begun in 1517 in Germany when Martin Luther preached that humans were saved by faith alone, as a gift from God, and not through the sacraments and rituals of the Church. Other Reformers followed, most notably John Calvin, who stressed the doctrine of predestination, the belief that humans could do nothing to change their fate in the afterlife. The Reformers shattered the unity of the Christian world and religious wars broke out all over Europe.
. Woman in Power

Elizabeth II, the second daughter of Henry VIII, inherited the crown in 1558 and ruled England successfully for nearly fifty years. She avoided a religious civil war by reconciling her subjects to an established church that was Protestant in doctrine, but still Catholic in many of its ceremonies. When the Pope excommunicated her in 1570, she became more firmly attached to the Protestant cause.

. Religion, War, and Nationalism

Spain, the most powerful European nation at the time, was determined to crush Protestantism in Europe. In retaliation, English “seadogs” attacked the Spanish in the Caribbean. By 1588, the king of Spain decided to invade England and launched the famous Armada. England’s providential victory over the great fleet convinced the English people that they had a special commission from God to preserve the Protestant religion.

AN UNPROMISING BEGINNING: MYSTERY AT ROANOKE

Although England had the capacity for transatlantic colonization by the late sixteenth century, its first efforts were failures. In 1584, Sir Walter Raleigh sent a fleet to colonize Roanoke in what is now North Carolina. The effort failed, despite Raleigh’s continued attempts to reinforce it. Sometime between 1587 and 1590, the colonists disappeared. To this day, it is uncertain whether they were killed or absorbed into the native populations in the area. By 1600 there were no English settlements in the Western Hemisphere.

CONCLUSION: CAMPAIGN TO SELL AMERICA

Despite Raleigh’s failure, Richard Hakluyt kept English interest in America alive by tirelessly advertising the benefits of colonization. He did not mention, however, that those English people who went to America would encounter other peoples with different dreams about what America should be.

FEATURE ESSAY: THE COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

Changes in the global environment brought about by human actions are not only a recent phenomenon. The Columbian Exchange is a term for the era of New World exploration in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Explorers from Europe brought new animals, new crops, and, most devastatingly, new diseases to which the native populations were not immune. All these imports from Europe changed the societies and environment in the New World. Native Americans began to structure their societies around previously unknown plants such as corn and potatoes, and new animals like the horse.
LECTURE TOPICS

Discuss pre-Columbian Native American culture, stressing the diversity and complexity of indigenous societies in the New World. Point out differences in population dispersal and density and the variety of religions, architecture, art, and political and economic organization in these cultures. Discuss the meaning of the term “civilization” and what modern-day Americans mean when they describe a society or culture as “civilized.” Have students question the traditional historical assertion that American history began with the arrival of Europeans and suggest that European settlement simply initiated another phase of American history.

Present a discussion of the factors contributing to the development of European interest in exploration and settlement of the New World. A complete treatment of the issue would examine both political and individual reasons for movement into the New World. Include in the political discussion such issues as the national pursuit of a mercantile economic policy, the political power associated with the acquisition of empire, the expansion of military power, and the missionary motive. How did religion, economic hardship, and the lure of adventure impact many people’s decisions to go to the New World?

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

Compare and contrast Native American, European, and West African society on the eve of contact. How did beliefs regarding land ownership, family, religion, and law and justice impact relations among these groups? How did each group regard the others, and why?

Compare and contrast European perception and treatment of Native Americans and Africans during the sixteenth century. What negative impressions did Europeans hold about each society? Did they see anything positive or worthy in either culture? Discuss the distinction between race and culture. To what extent did race and culture define the European perception and treatment of each group? Which of these factors—race or culture—contributed most to the European perception of Native Americans? Which contributed most to the European perception of Africans?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Discuss ecological change in the Americas. Topics could include changes among animal species, ecological damage caused by humans, and the introduction of new flora and fauna into the Americas. Address the biological and cultural exchange between Europeans and the Native Americans.

What is Africa? Discuss the importance of religion in Africa. What were the major religions of Africa? How did they influence culture and events?
CONNECTING TO THE PAST

Columbus recorded his first encounter with the Taíno people on the island they called Guanahani when he first made landfall in the Western Hemisphere. This meeting of two worlds and two cultures proceeded rather peacefully, with the exception of a strange incident. Columbus took out his sword to show it to one of the natives, who apparently thought he was being offered a gift. He took it and cut his hand. What did a Stone Age people think when they first saw the power of metal? And why had Columbus unsheathed his sword? See the translation of The Log of Christopher Columbus by Robert Fuson (Camden, ME: International Marine Publishing Company, 1987).

The log itself is fascinating, and Fuson fully discusses the controversy over which island in the Bahamas was the one the native inhabitants called Guanahani and Columbus called San Salvador.

One of the most dramatic encounters in American history was the meeting between Hernán Cortés and Montezuma. Both men behaved with solemn courtesy until Cortés attempted to embrace the emperor in the friendly Spanish abrazo. Montezuma’s bodyguards grabbed Cortés by the arm and stopped him, explaining that an embrace would greatly insult the emperor. That small episode epitomizes the difficulties Europeans and native peoples had in cross-cultural communication. For more on this topic, see Bernal Diaz, The Conquest of New Spain (New York: Penguin Paperback, 1967).

POINTS OF MASTERY

Identify the role of geography and environment in African history and development.

Understand the basic outlines of West African geography and culture.

Understand the developments of various West African civilizations.

Define the term “Paleo-Indians.”

Explain the impact of the development of agriculture on Native American society.

Define the term “culture area” and apply it to the development of Native American societies in the New World.

List the Native American societies that emerged north of Mexico and describe their distinctive cultural characteristics.

Distinguish between Catholic and Protestant Christianity and identify and chronologically place the Protestant Reformation.

List the factors contributing to the development of western European interest in exploration and discovery.
Identify Christopher Columbus and discuss his role in the European discovery and exploration of the New World.

Explain the factors that contributed to Hernán Cortés’s conquest of the Aztecs in Mexico.

Define the term “Columbian Exchange” and discuss its impact on European and Native American culture.

Identify the reasons for French exploration in the sixteenth century and describe the creation of a French empire in the New World.

Identify the major English explorers of the sixteenth century and describe their contributions to creating a British empire in the New World.

Discuss the mystery of Roanoke Island and the possible explanations offered by historians as to the fate of the settlement.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. How did Native American societies experience substantial change prior to European conquest?

Before any Europeans came to America, Native American societies developed and changed just like European societies had. When people first arrived in America across the land bridge that spanned what is now the Bering Strait during the Ice Age, they were nomadic hunters. Interestingly, these bands of hunters lost inherited immunities to diseases such as smallpox, which would later prove disastrous when they came into contact with Europeans.

At the end of the Ice Age, the native population spread across the continent and shifted from hunting to cultivating basic crops, a development called the Agricultural Revolution. This led to the development of large urban centers and sophisticated technological advances like irrigation canals and highways. However, these urban centers and the civilizations that created them disappeared shortly before the arrival of the Europeans.

In sum, Native American societies had their own complex, divergent developments, independent of but often similar to developments in Europe.

2. How would you compare the relationships Europeans formed with West Africans to the ones they formed with Native Americans?

The relationships between Europeans and West Africans were based on trade, primarily the slave trade. Because of the high mortality rate for Europeans who remained in West Africa (six out of ten died within their first year on the continent), European explorers did not attempt to establish colonies. Instead, they relied on Africans to capture slaves and supply them for trade.
European relationships with Native Americans were more complex. In many cases, these relationships were also based on trade, but not on human trade. Because they did not face the same diseases that they did in West Africa, European explorers ventured farther into North and South America, sometimes trading with the people they met, sometimes plundering them or wiping them out with diseases. These explorations eventually led to settlements, which would later necessitate the assimilation, expulsion, or destruction of Native American societies.

3. How would you contrast the role of religion and economics in the development of the Spanish, French, and English empires?

During this period, Spain was a Catholic nation and England, after the Reformation, was an increasingly militant Protestant nation. One of the major goals of Spanish exploration and colonization was the conversion of native peoples to Catholicism. Despite establishing missions, and the calls of some Spanish clergy demanding better treatment of the Native Americans, the Spanish ruled through force and acted primarily out of greed.

In contrast, France, which was also a Catholic nation and also sought to convert native peoples to Christianity, approached these natives as important trading partners. French traders lived among the Native Americans and were reliant on and grateful to them for their aid in the fur export trade.

England also hoped to convert Native Americans to Christianity, but, in practice, treated them as obstacles to their goals of settlement and colonization. As the Protestant Reformation took hold and further distinguished England from her European neighbors, nationalism drove the English to not only trade with the Americas, but also to establish permanent settlements. This approach stood in contrast to the approaches of the French and Spanish, who primarily sought wealth through trade.

4. How did a relatively small European nation like England rise to a position of world power?

After the Protestant Reformation and under the leadership of Queen Elizabeth, England became increasingly nationalistic. This nationalism and militant Protestantism led to English conflicts with Spain and Portugal, which ended with the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. This demonstration of English military superiority exemplified the powerful ideological forces that drove the English people during this period. England was determined to become a world power, and North America was ready to be taken. English colonists, encouraged by Hakluyt’s book, *The Principall Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589), flocked to the New World to find opportunity and expand the English empire.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:
This eight-part video series explores the Native American populations of North and Central America from pre-Columbian times until the turn of the twentieth century.

American Indian Artists, KAET-TV, 1975.  
This three-part video allows students to investigate Native American culture through the art of six artists from the Pueblo, Navajo, and Hopi cultures.

In Search of History: The First Americans, A&E Video, 50 minutes.  
This video examines the origins of the first human population in North America.

Roanoke, South Carolina Educational Television, 1986, 180 minutes.  
This series chronicles the mysterious history behind “The Lost Colony.”

The first episode of the nine-part Ken Burns series on the West, this film chronicles the early Native American populations of North America and the impact of Spanish conquistadores on these native cultures.

CLASS EXERCISES

Create an interactive exercise that centers on the encounter between Spanish explorers and missionaries and the native peoples of North America by having students read letters and other pertinent accounts from Columbus, Hernán Cortés, and Las Casas, determining what was fact, opinion, and inference, and discussing the impact of the Spanish presence in the New World.

Assume that you are an archaeologist or anthropologist who wants to understand and reconstruct in your region as much of the original Native American culture and typical daily life as possible from relics and other remains. Present your findings to others in various forms: oral report, written paper, table display showing artifacts and a model of Native American life, or artistic drawings or skits illustrating Native American culture. Find out which Native American tribes and nations lived in your part of the country and whether there are any archaeological working sites or remains, like Cahokia, to visit. Also, visit any museums or historical parks that feature local Native American history.

Research the primary historical resources left by western Europeans in which they recorded the events of their initial contact with Native Americans in the New World. These resources could include written records, such as journals or diaries from explorers and early colonists, or European art, particularly paintings and sketches based on a Native American theme. Discuss how these primary resources teach us about the European response and reaction to Native American culture.
Organize a group classroom activity in which students develop an understanding of Native American, West African, and European culture. Organize students in the classroom into groups so that one third of the class is working on Native American culture, one third on West African culture, and one third on European culture. For example, in a class of thirty, set up six groups of five, with two groups working on each culture. Have them examine the religion, family, politics, and the economy of their assigned society. After the groups have finished this assignment, reorganize the class into groups of three. Each group will include one member who has studied each of the three groups. Have each student teach the other two about the culture he or she has studied. You can test the material by giving a take-home essay in which the students are asked to compare and contrast the Native American, West African, and European cultures.

**MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS**

- View the Closer Look: An Early European Image of Native Americans
- View the Map: Native American Population Loss, 1500–1700
- Complete the Assignment: The Columbian Exchange and the Global Environment: Ecological Revolution
- View the Closer Look: Columbian Exchange
- View the Map: African Slave Trade, 1500–1870
- Watch the Video: How Should We Think of Columbus?
- Read the Document: Bartolomé de las Casas, “Of the Island of Hispaniola”
- Read the Document: Jacques Cartier: First Contact with the Indians (1534)
- Read the Document: John White, Letter to Richard Hakluyt and Description of Voyage to the Lost Colony (1590)
CHAPTER 2

NEW WORLD EXPERIMENTS: ENGLAND’S SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY COLONIES

CHAPTER OUTLINE

PROFIT AND PIETY: COMPETING VISIONS FOR ENGLISH SETTLEMENT

BREAKING AWAY

THE CHESAPEAKE: DREAMS OF WEALTH

• Entrepreneurs in Virginia
• Spinning Out of Control
• “Stinking Weed”
• Time of Reckoning
• Corruption and Reform
• Maryland: A Troubled Refuge for Catholics

REFORMING ENGLAND IN AMERICA

• “The Great Migration”
• “A City on a Hill”
• Limits of Religious Dissent
• Mobility and Division
• Allies and Enemies

DIVERSITY IN THE MIDDLE COLONIES

• Anglo-Dutch Rivalry on the Hudson
• Confusion in New Jersey

QUAKERS IN AMERICA

• Quaker Beliefs and Practice
• Penn’s “Holy Experiment”
• Settling Pennsylvania
OPENING THEME

FOLKWAYS

College students are a well-traveled lot and have experienced for themselves some of the regional diversity that still characterizes the United States. When asked to describe such differences, they immediately mention sectional accents. Many students have also noticed regional differences in food, architecture, and what is vaguely referred to as “style.” Considering all the forces working to homogenize American culture, it is amazing that the United States still retains vestiges of cultural diversity that can be traced back to the colonial era.

Early American historians have only recently begun to appreciate the astonishing variety of English cultures in the seventeenth century. England was a small island of little more than 4 million people in 1600, yet its residents lived in a series of subcultures that were often incomprehensible to one another. The basic division was between the heavily populated southeast and the still forested northwest, but differences between counties, or even between villages, were enormous. Only those who grew up in the vicinity, for example, would have understood that someone “stabbed with a Bridgeport dagger” had actually been hanged, the point being that Bridgeport produced excellent rope. Only local residents knew that a “Jack of Dover” was warmed-over food.

Of greater interest are those English cultural traits that crossed the Atlantic. The high-pitched nasal twang of East Anglia migrated to Massachusetts Bay and became the “typical” Yankee New England accent. People in the west of England tended to speak in a soft drawl, drawing out their vowels until “I” sounded like “Ah.” It was possible in seventeenth-century Hampshire County to hear people say, “Ah be poorly,” meaning “I am ill.” That style of speech, it is assumed, laid the foundation for today’s U.S. “Southern accent.”

Students should be reminded that many of the immigrants counted as British had little in common with the people called English. Cornish was still a living language and ancient Gaelic ways of life held the allegiance of the people of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Some historians today argue that it was the Celtic immigration that brought into America what is sometimes referred to as “Cracker culture.” If we further consider the large-scale German immigration of the eighteenth century and the even larger
influx of Africans, we can easily understand that English culture, varied as it was from the outset, would be transmuted into yet more varied regional subcultures in colonial America.

**PROFIT AND PIETY: COMPETING VISIONS FOR ENGLISH SETTLEMENT**

The author uses the refusal of Massachusetts and Virginia to aid one another during times of crisis to illustrate the remarkable diversity that quickly characterized the different colonies. Although they were all English, they differed in religious practices, political institutions, and economic development.

**BREAKING AWAY**

The English came to America for different reasons and with different backgrounds. Some wanted an opportunity to worship God in their own way; others wanted land. Some came in the early part of the century when England was relatively stable; others came at the end of the century after England had experienced a civil war. In America, the colonists had to adjust to different environments. The result was the development of different subcultures: the Chesapeake, New England, the Middle Colonies, and the Carolinas.

**THE CHESAPEAKE: DREAMS OF WEALTH**

The English colonized the Chesapeake because they believed they could obtain instant profits. These dreams faded, but they left behind the colony of Virginia, England’s first successful effort in America.

. Entrepreneurs in Virginia

The London Company settled a colony at Jamestown in 1607 that met immediate disaster. The location in a swamp had been a mistake, but even worse was the failure of the colonists to work together for the common good.

. Spinning Out of Control

Captain John Smith, a tough professional soldier, saved the colonists by imposing order. The London Company helped, too, by reorganizing the government of the colony and investing more money in the enterprise. Even so, Jamestown was actually abandoned for a few days in 1610 and was saved only by the coincidental arrival of a new shipload of colonists.

. “Stinking Weed”

Tobacco had been growing as a common weed in the streets of Jamestown before John Rolfe recognized its value. He improved its quality and found a market for it in
England. Finally, Virginians had discovered the way to wealth. The London Company, under Sir Edwin Sandys, encouraged large-scale immigration to Virginia by offering “headrights,” grants of land given to those who paid for the cost of immigration, and by giving the colonists a form of self-government in an elected body called the House of Burgesses.

. Time of Reckoning

After 1619, a rush of immigrants arrived in Virginia; few, however, survived for long. It was impossible to establish a normal family life because men outnumbered women by about six to one. The colony, therefore, could not count on a natural increase in its population. Disease and Native American attacks continued to take their toll, especially the sudden outbursts of violence in 1622 that almost wiped out the colony. Virginia remained a place to make a quick fortune and then leave before becoming a mortality statistic.

. Corruption and Reform

As the colonists died in large numbers, the London Company sank into mismanagement and corruption. In 1624, King James I dissolved the London Company and made Virginia a royal colony. Despite this change, life in Virginia went on as before. The House of Burgesses continued to meet because it had become so useful to the ambitious and successful tobacco planters who dominated Virginian life. The character of daily life also remained unchanged. A high death rate, a feeling of living on borrowed time, and the constant takeover of Native American lands so that more and more tobacco could be grown were the themes of early Virginia history.

. Maryland: A Troubled Refuge for Catholics

The founding of Maryland resulted from the efforts of George Calvert to find a place of refuge for his fellow English Catholics. After his death, his son, Cecilius (Lord Baltimore), received a charter to settle Maryland in 1632. Lord Baltimore expected that he would govern the colony along with a few of his wealthy Catholic friends, but he knew that most of the immigrants who would come from England would be Protestant. He therefore issued a law requiring Christians to tolerate one another.

Lord Baltimore failed to create the society he wanted. His wealthy friends were unwilling to relocate to America, and the common settlers in Maryland demanded a greater voice in the government. Above all, religious intolerance wrecked Baltimore’s plans. Protestants refused to tolerate Catholics, and the Protestants were strong enough to take up arms and seize control of the colony in 1655. Maryland’s early history differed from Virginia’s, but aggressive individualism, an absence of public spirit, and an economy based on tobacco characterized both colonies.
REFORMING ENGLAND IN AMERICA

Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay were the most important of the New England colonies. Plymouth was settled by the Pilgrims, a group of Separatists who refused to worship in the Church of England and who had fled to Holland to escape persecution. As they saw their children grow more Dutch than English, the Pilgrims decided to leave Holland for the new English colony of Virginia. They landed instead at Cape Cod and remained there. Led by William Bradford and helped by friendly Native American neighbors, the Pilgrims survived and created a society of small farming villages bound together by mutual consent (the Mayflower Compact). The colony, however, attracted few immigrants, and Plymouth was eventually absorbed into Massachusetts Bay.

“The Great Migration”

The second colony planted in New England was Massachusetts Bay, the home of the Puritans. The Puritans often have been caricatured as neurotics and prudes; in fact, they were men and women committed to changing the major institution of their society. Unlike the Separatists, the Puritans wished to remain within the Church of England, but they wanted the Church to give up all remaining vestiges of her Roman Catholic past.

Puritans were also intensely nationalistic and desired a foreign policy that would align England with the Protestant states of Europe. They hoped to accomplish their goals by working within the system, but when King Charles I decided to rule the country without consulting with Parliament, the Puritans despaired. Some of them, led by John Winthrop, decided to establish a better society in America. The Massachusetts Bay Company was formed, and Charles, thinking the company no different from other joint-stock companies, granted it a charter in 1629. Ordinarily, the company would have kept its headquarters in England, where the king could supervise it, but the leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Company secretly agreed to bring the charter with them to America.

“A City on a Hill”

The Winthrop fleet established settlements around Boston in 1630. The first settlers were joined within a year by two thousand more, and the Bay Colony enjoyed a steady stream of immigration during its first decade. Because the settlers usually came as family units, because the area was generally healthy, and because most of the Puritan colonists were willing to sacrifice self-interest for the good of the community, Massachusetts Bay avoided the misery that had characterized colonization in the Chesapeake.

Puritans proved to be pragmatic and inventive in creating social institutions. They had no intention of separating from the Church of England, but immediately dispensed with those features of the Church they found objectionable. The result was
Congregationalism, a system that stressed simplicity and in which each congregation was independent. Puritans created a civil government that was neither democratic nor theocratic. A larger proportion of adult males could vote in Massachusetts Bay than in England because the only requirement for voting was a spiritual one. If a man was “born again” he became a “freeman,” or voter, whether he owned property or not. The rulers of the Bay Colony were not democratic in our sense, however; they did not believe that elected officials should concern themselves with the wishes of those who had elected them. On the local level, Puritans created almost completely autonomous towns, and it was on this level that most men participated in public life. Village life was intensely communal even though townships were commercial properties, shares of which could be bought and sold.

Limits of Religious Dissent

To protect individual rights and to clarify the responsibilities of citizenship, the General Court of Massachusetts Bay issued the *Laws and Liberties* of 1648. This code of law marked the Puritans’ considerable progress in establishing a stable society.

Not everyone was happy in Massachusetts Bay. The two most important dissidents were Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson. Williams, an extreme Separatist, condemned all civil states, even one governed by Puritans. He was expelled and settled in Rhode Island. Anne Hutchinson believed she was directly inspired by the Holy Spirit, and that once a person was “born again” he or she need not obey man-made laws (Antinomianism). Because of her religious ideas and because an assertive woman threatened patriarchal authority, she was also expelled and went to Rhode Island.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

Mobility and Division

Massachusetts Bay spawned four other colonies: New Hampshire, New Haven, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Of these colonies, New Hampshire remained too small to be significant in the seventeenth century, and New Haven became part of Connecticut. Rhode Island received the Bay Colony’s outcasts (religious dissenters and Quakers for the most part), who continued to make as much trouble in Roger Williams’s colony as they had in John Winthrop’s. Connecticut, a well-populated colony that owed its first settlement to Thomas Hooker, duplicated the institutions and way of life of its mother colony.

Allies and Enemies

Puritan settlement in New England faced opposition from Native American tribes in the area, most notably the Pequots. The Pequots resented the colonists’ involvement in the fur trade, which had previously been conducted between the Pequots and Dutch
traders. These hostilities reached their peak in the Pequot War, which decimated the Pequot nation.

DIVERSITY IN THE MIDDLE COLONIES

No section of the English empire was more diverse in its history, its ethnic and religious pluralism, or its political institutions than the Middle Colonies of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware.

. Anglo-Dutch Rivalry on the Hudson

The Dutch settled New York after the voyages of Henry Hudson. The colony became the property of the Dutch West India Company, which gave New York little attention and sent incompetent officials. New York was Dutch in little more than ownership. Few immigrants came from Holland, so the Dutch population remained small. Even so, it was polyglot. Finns, Swedes, Germans, and Africans made up sizable minorities in the colony, and these people felt no loyalty to the Dutch West India Company. When England sent a fleet to take New York in 1664, the colony fell without a shot being fired.

New York became the personal property of James, Duke of York (later King James II). His colony included New Jersey, Delaware, and Maine, as well as various islands. James attempted to rule this vast domain without allowing its inhabitants a political voice beyond the local level, but he derived little profit from the colony.

. Confusion in New Jersey

New Jersey has an especially complex history. It first belonged to the Duke of York, but he sold it to two friends, Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret. When these proprietors found how difficult it was to collect rents, Berkeley sold his interest to a group of Quakers, a deal that made it necessary to split the colony in two. The Quakers introduced a democratic system of government into West New Jersey, but both halves of the colony were marked by contention, and neither half prospered.

QUAKERS IN AMERICA

Pennsylvania, the most important of the Middle Colonies, owed its settlement to the rise of a religious group, the Quakers, or Society of Friends, that was formed by George Fox in England in the 1650s.
. Quaker Beliefs and Practices

Quakers believed that each man and woman could communicate directly with God. They rejected the idea of original sin and predestination, and cultivated an “Inner Light” that they believed all people possessed. English authorities considered Quakers to be dangerous anarchists and persecuted them.

. Penn’s “Holy Experiment”

William Penn, the son of an admiral and a wealthy aristocrat, converted to the Society of Friends and became one of its leaders. He used his contacts to obtain a charter for Pennsylvania, which he intended to settle as a “Holy Experiment,” a society run on Quaker principles. In 1682, Penn announced a plan of government for Pennsylvania that contained some traditional features and some advanced features. Nearly all political power would be held by men of great wealth, but an elaborate system was designed to protect the rights of those without political or economic power. The scheme, however, proved too complicated to work.

. Settling Pennsylvania

Penn successfully recruited immigrants from England, Wales, Ireland, and Germany, and Pennsylvania grew rapidly in population. Many of these immigrants were not Quakers, however, and felt no sense of obligation to make the “Holy Experiment” work. Even the Quakers in Pennsylvania fought among themselves, and the people of Delaware, after Penn bought the colony from the Duke of York, preferred to rule themselves. In 1701 he gave in to the complaints of his colonists and granted them a large measure of self-rule. He also gave Delaware her independence. Even though Penn owned a colony that was becoming rich by selling wheat to the West Indies, it did him no good. At one point, Penn suffered the humiliation of being locked up in a debtor’s prison.

PLANTING THE CAROLINAS

Carolina differed so much from the Chesapeake colonies that it would be wrong to speak of the existence of “the South” in the seventeenth century.

. Proprietors of the Carolinas

King Charles II granted Carolina in 1663 to eight friends and political allies who expected to sit back and collect rents as the colony filled up. Unfortunately for them, nobody went to Carolina.
THE BARBADIAN CONNECTION

One of the colony’s proprietors, Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper (the Earl of Shaftesbury), realized that a more active search for immigrants had to be made. He and John Locke, the famous philosopher, concocted a plan of government that would have given most power to a hereditary elite while protecting the rights of the small landowners. He also encouraged planters in Barbados, who were being crowded off the island, to take up land in Carolina. Cooper was somewhat successful. A string of settlements grew up around Charleston, but Cooper’s plan of government failed. The Barbadians, who dominated early Carolina, wanted as much self-government as they had enjoyed in Barbados. The Barbadians, in turn, were opposed by French Huguenot settlers, who felt loyal to the proprietors. Carolina became a colony in turmoil. In 1729 the crown took over Carolina and divided it into two colonies.

THE FOUNDING OF GEORGIA

Georgia was founded in 1732 as a buffer to safeguard the Carolinas from the Spanish in Florida. Although conceived by James Oglethorpe as a refuge for persons imprisoned for debt in England, Georgia attracted few immigrants. By 1751, it had become a small slave colony, much like South Carolina.

CONCLUSION: LIVING WITH DIVERSITY

All of the colonies struggled for survival in their first phase, but as they developed, distinct regional differences intensified and persisted throughout the colonial period and even during the struggle for independence. Nevertheless, the colonists eventually saw themselves as a distinct people.

FEATURE ESSAY: THE CHILDREN WHO REFUSED TO COME HOME

Between 1675 and 1763, conflicts between England and France often spilled over into these nations’ North American colonies. As a result, approximately 1,600 English colonists were taken captive by the French and their Native American allies. Many of these colonists were killed, but others were adopted by and absorbed into Native American tribes or converted to Catholicism and embraced French culture. One of these captives, Eunice Williams, became a nun. Often, when these captives had the chance to return to their homes and the Protestant faith, they chose to stay in their new culture, which confused and frightened Protestant colonial leaders.
LECTURE TOPICS

Compare and contrast the English and the French. Establishing colonies in America was a difficult task for the English, whether they sought wealth, greater freedoms and economic opportunity, or freedom to practice the religion of their choice. The challenges of adapting to the realities of geography, climate, and the need to provide food as well as shelter and mutual protection, took a grim toll. French attempts at town-building were not as successful, nor as necessary to the success of the fur trade, as the construction of strategically located forts that provided security as well as trade opportunities. Adapting to tribal requirements for trade also proved successful in solidifying alliances that provided access to rich beaver regions.

Choose one of the three major continental colonial regions. Lecture on the British background of the settlers in that region. How did the cultural mores of each geographical region of Britain impact the nature and characteristics of the various British colonial settlements?

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

Discuss the nature of colonial political development in the British colonies. How did the political institutions created in the colonies reflect British political tradition in terms of structure and function? Do today’s state and federal political structures in America resemble the institutions created by the original British colonists? How does this reflect the element of persistence over time?

Conduct a classroom discussion that focuses on “freedom of religion.” Have students discuss the irony of the fact that we often associate freedom of religion with the Puritans who came to America to escape religious persecution. To what extent was freedom of religion a reality in the Puritan community? How did these dissenters treat dissenters within their own ranks?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Discuss the development of racism and its role in the enslavement of Native Americans and Africans.

Discuss Puritan dissenters such as Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams. How did their beliefs necessitate their removal from the Puritan community? How did their experiences serve to expand the meaning of religious freedom in America?

Compare and contrast the reasons and motivations for the settlement of each of the five main colonies and describe the relationship of each of the five settlements with the Native Americans of that region.

What made life in the Chesapeake so precarious?
CONNECTING TO THE PAST

John Smith’s whole life was so filled with improbable adventures that some historians have written him off as a hopeless liar. In his Generall Historie of Virginia, printed in 1624, Smith described how he was captured by the Native Americans and rescued from imminent death by the Native American princess, Pocahontas (Book 3, Chapter II). It would be interesting to compare the story there with two earlier accounts covering the same period. There are striking discrepancies. Philip Barbour has edited The Complete Works of Captain John Smith (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1986, 3 volumes).

William Bradford described the departure of the Pilgrims from the Netherlands and the last farewells exchanged between friends and relatives who knew they would never meet again. Bradford’s simple, graceful prose expresses the anguish that must have gripped the millions of Europeans for whom a better life in America was purchased and the heartbreak of those who stayed behind. The best edition of Bradford’s journal is the one edited by Samuel Eliot Morison, Of Plymouth Plantation (New York: Knopf, 1963).

POINTS OF MASTERY

Explain the key ideas England used to organize her empire. How was control affected by the Glorious Revolution?

Describe the changing population, social patterns, and daily life of the Chesapeake Tobacco Coast in the seventeenth century.

Define the term “joint-stock companies” and identify the major ones involved in establishing the original British colonies in America.

Describe the importance of the tobacco economy to the development of the Chesapeake area.

Describe the Massachusetts General Court and compare its structure and function to the Virginia House of Burgesses.

Define the term “headright system” and explain how this policy promoted British migration to the New World.

Discuss the differences and similarities between the earlier system of indentured servitude and slavery in the British colonies.

Describe the beliefs, social patterns, and character of village life of the New England Puritans in England in early seventeenth-century Massachusetts.

Explain the importance of the fur trade to the economic development of French holdings in the New World.
Define the term “Separatist” and explain how these individuals affected British immigration.

Understand the basic principles of the covenant theology, and understand the importance of religion as the cornerstone of Puritan culture and society.

Identify the Dutch West India Company and explain its activities in the New World.

Outline the major features of economic and social life in seventeenth-century New York and Carolina.

Describe Quaker beliefs and the efforts to build a peaceable kingdom in William Penn’s settlement in Pennsylvania.

Outline the formation of Georgia. Describe the intent of its founders and the regulations that were implemented.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Would the first Chesapeake colonies have survived if the settlers had not discovered tobacco as a profitable cash crop?

   It is certain that the first Chesapeake colonies would not have survived without discovering tobacco as a cash crop. Settlements in the area before the introduction of tobacco farming in 1617 failed due to starvation, disease, and conflict with Native Americans. Life was still short and brutal after the introduction of tobacco, but the crop offered a chance at wealth and drew settlers to the area. Despite the high mortality rate and slim chances of starting a family (men outnumbered women six to one), young settlers moved to the Chesapeake with dreams of becoming wealthy planters. Additionally, waves of indentured servants, hired to work the tobacco fields, helped grow the population of these previously failing colonies.

2. Would the historical development of New England have been different if the Puritans had developed a profitable cash crop like tobacco or rice?

   It is likely that the development of New England would have more similar to that of the Chesapeake if a profitable cash crop had been developed in the region. New England attracted settlers from a variety of different European countries, and most of these settlers worked small farms or were tradespeople. Had New England’s economy been built on a cash crop, it is likely that its population would have included a great number of poor indentured servants and that, as a result, a clearer social hierarchy would have been established, with wealthy planters who owned the majority of the land at the top. In the future, these indentured servants would likely have been replaced by slaves, as they were in the colonies built around cash crop cultivation—meaning that New England colonies might have become slave states.

3. How did William Penn’s leadership style compare to those of John Winthrop and Captain John Smith?
William Penn was a philosopher and a Quaker, who founded his government on the idea that property should be equally distributed among settlers to create a stable society. He also believed that rich and poor should have an equal voice in politics.

In contrast, John Winthrop established a government in the Massachusetts Bay Colony that was run by wealthy elected magistrates who were responsible to God. Although a large portion of the white male population in the colony had the right to vote (“freemen”), the leadership was by no means democratic. Even respected church leaders had no voice in politics.

Finally, John Smith governed Virginia strictly and practically. His approach to government was simple—no one had special privilege, and all must work equally hard to keep the colonies alive. Smith’s approach was not democratic, like Penn’s, but also not socially stratified, like Winthrop’s. Although this earned him the hatred of many wealthy and higher class colonists, this approach saved Virginia.

4. How were the European migrants who were attracted to Georgia and the Carolinas different from the migrants from the Chesapeake and Middle Colonies?

Very few European migrants were attracted to Georgia. The colony was established primarily as a buffer between the English colonies in the North and Spanish-controlled Florida, and was intended as a refuge for Londoners who were facing debtor’s prison. Despite the promise of freedom in this new colony, few English debtors were interested in relocating. Those who did immediately complained about the fact that rum and slavery were prohibited in the colony. The situation in the Carolinas was similar: Very few settlers moved to the colonies, and, as a result, the colonies recruited settlers from Barbados. In contrast to the European settlers in the Chesapeake and Middle Colonies, who came willingly to seek religious freedom and prosperity, migrants to these colonies were unenthusiastic and constantly fighting against regulations.

AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES

This episode from the six-part series created by Robert Hughes depicts the origins of American ideas about art. Ranging from the Spanish West to Protestant New England to the aristocratic Chesapeake, Hughes takes a look at how American art began and flourished.

Colonization of North America, PBS Video, 150 minutes.
An exploration of early European discovery and settlement in the New World, including such North American locations as St. Augustine, Plymouth, and Roanoke.

An examination of the search for the original Jamestown settlement, including footage from the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.
CLASS EXERCISES

Write a letter or diary entry describing the daily life of a typical inhabitant on a typical day in three of the five settlements in seventeenth-century America.

For those with nearby local museums with eighteenth-century exhibits, a visit and brief description of items and their significance will enhance understanding of daily life.

Do efforts to represent the past in terms that make sense to people today, such as the movie *The Crucible*, aid or obstruct in understanding the past? One way of approaching this question would be to compare Arthur Miller’s play, first performed on Broadway in 1953, with the movie, which came out in 1996. How did the emphasis and portrayals of characters change?

Give students shipboard lists (found in Donald M. Scott and Bernard Wishy, eds., *America’s Families: A Documentary History*) of passengers headed for Massachusetts Bay and the Chesapeake. By studying these lists, students can see the different demographic characteristics of the different groups of settlers and speculate on social results. This idea can be adapted for large classes by the use of an overhead projector, with the instructor providing the analysis.

Parts of the trial of Anne Hutchinson can be acted out for the purpose of discussion. (Excerpts can be found in Nancy Cott’s *Roots of Bitterness*, and the entire record in David Hall, *The Antinomian Controversy*.) Students can see and discuss various levels of the conflict—religious, political, and sexual. This exercise lends itself to a presentation to a large group, followed by breaking into smaller groups for discussion.

MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

- View the Map: The Colonies to 1740
- Read the Document: John Smith, “The Starving Time”
- Read the Document: James I, “A Counterblaste to Tobacco”
- Read the Document: Wessell Webling, His Indenture (1622)
- Read the Document: George Aslop, from “A Character of the Province of Maryland”
- Read the Document: John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity”
- Complete the Assignment: The Children Who Refused to Come Home: Captivity and Conversion
- Read the Document: Father Isaac Jogues, Description of New York, 1640
- Read the Document: William Penn, “Model for Government”
- Read the Document: Letter by William Penn to the Committee of the Free Society of Traders (1683)
CHAPTER 3

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS: OPPORTUNITY AND OPPRESSION IN COLONIAL SOCIETY

CHAPTER OUTLINE

FAMILIES IN AN ATLANTIC EMPIRE

SOURCES OF STABILITY: NEW ENGLAND COLONIES OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

• Immigrant Families and New Social Order
• Commonwealth of Families
• Women’s Lives in Puritan New England
• Social Hierarchy in New England

THE CHALLENGE OF THE CHESAPEAKE ENVIRONMENT

• Family Life at Risk
• Women’s Lives in Chesapeake Society
• The Structure of Planter Society

RACE AND FREEDOM IN BRITISH AMERICA

• Roots of Slavery
• Constructing African American Identities

RISE OF A COMMERCIAL EMPIRE

• Response to Economic Competition
• Regulating Colonial Trade

COLONIAL FACTIONS SPARK POLITICAL REVOLT, 1676–1691

• Civil War in Virginia: Bacon’s Rebellion
• The Glorious Revolution in the Bay Colony
• Contagion of Witchcraft
• The Glorious Revolution in New York and Maryland
CONCLUSION: LOCAL ASPIRATIONS WITHIN AN ATLANTIC EMPIRE

FEATURE ESSAY: ANTHONY JOHNSON

OPENING THEME

THE CALCULUS OF SLAVERY

Historians are interested in slavery; students in racism. Historians want to know how and when slavery originated and developed as an institution protected by law; students want to know why whites and blacks, who have so much in common, still seem to identify themselves as if they were different people with different cultures. Slavery is one of the most painful and difficult topics in American history, but you have a chance in this chapter to make the point that institutions usually reflect social demands, and that institutions designed to serve one purpose can be adapted to serve altogether different ends. American slavery clearly began as the profitable solution to an economic problem. By the time slavery was destroyed, it had become the unprofitable solution to a social problem.

The question of English racism is being reconsidered by scholars at present, but even if it existed to a significant degree in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it would have worked both for and against the introduction of enslaved Africans into the colonies. If the English hated or feared Africans enough to enslave them, why not keep Africans out of the colonies altogether? Whatever the truth about English racism, it is clear that economics played the crucial role in the introduction of slavery into British North America.

An English colonist wealthy enough to buy labor had a choice between an English or European indentured servant and an enslaved African. Until around 1700 in British North America, the choice was usually to buy a servant because that purchase made more economic sense. The planter made a series of calculations that you can present to your students in the form of a simple model. The planter weighed four factors: the initial cost of the laborer, the annual cost of maintenance, the annual output per worker, and the length of service. If it is explained that servants usually worked for five years, your students will focus on the length of service and give the economic edge to slavery, especially considering that a person enslaved for life could actually bear children, who would in turn be enslaved for life. You should require your students to pay more attention to the initial cost of a laborer. The British North American colonies were always on the fringe of the Atlantic slave trade. About 90 percent of the 10 million people taken from Africa were carried to the sugar plantations in Brazil and the West Indies. The British mainland colonies had to pay a premium to divert slave traders from their preferred routes, with the result that an African laborer in the colonial period cost four or five times more than an indentured servant, a price so high that only the largest tobacco and rice growers in North America could afford to buy people directly from Africa.

Through most of the colonial period, the up-front cost was the critical factor in determining whether to buy a servant or a slave. There was relatively little difference in the cost of maintenance. Servants did
not live luxuriously, nor could slaves be starved. The productivity of slaves and servants depended less on their status than on the quality of the soil they worked and the amount of equipment they used. When all the calculation was done, the planter wound up weighing the initial cost of the laborer against the expected length of service. A servant worked only five years or so, but these were prime working years. A slave and his or her children would work for life, but some planters doubted that a slave too young or too old was worth having. More important, the death rate in the seventeenth-century Chesapeake and in the South Carolina rice fields was so high that neither whites nor blacks could expect to live to a ripe old age. A planter who purchased a servant was taking a chance that he or she would survive for five years. A planter who paid much more for a slave was taking an even greater risk. Until about 1700, the prudent choice was to buy a servant.

If the high death rates of the seventeenth century had continued, North America would have largely escaped the curse of slavery, but times changed. After 1700, British merchants dominated the slave trade and opened a direct trade between Africa and the colonies. At the same time, life expectancy in the Chesapeake improved. The combination of these two factors, plus the desire to profit without regard for morality, fastened slavery on British North America.

What clearly began as an economic institution soon became a racist social arrangement. Even before the American Revolution, there was a common white belief that blacks were inherently inferior and had to be kept in a subordinate position, whether that was slavery or some other status. By the eve of the Civil War, white Southerners truly believed that slavery had ceased to be profitable, but slavery had become for them the only possible social system that would allow whites and blacks to live side by side, and they were willing to fight and die for that system.

The history of slavery in America will distress your students, and you should offer them the hope that the more they understand our past, the more powerful they will be to make a better future.

**FAMILIES IN AN ATLANTIC EMPIRE**

The author begins with the experience of an ordinary family who immigrated to South Carolina in the eighteenth century to remind us that colonization was the work of families, the basic unit of society. Family structure, however, varied greatly from region to region, and all were embedded in a larger social structure, the English empire.

**SOURCES OF STABILITY: NEW ENGLAND COLONIES OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**

Each region in English America developed a characteristic culture, depending on the shape or strength of the families that made up the population. In New England, for example, families were stable; in the Chesapeake, they were fragile. After 1660, a trend toward cultural convergence began, primarily because the crown imposed a set of uniform commercial regulations.
Immigrant Families and New Social Order

Most New England immigrants arrived as members of a nuclear family in which the father exerted strong authority. They therefore found it easier to cope with the wilderness and to preserve English ways. It was even possible to reproduce an English family structure in New England because the sex ratio was about even. New England families differed from the English pattern in only one important aspect: People lived longer in New England. This meant that parents could expect to see their children grow up, marry, and have their own children. New England might have “invented” grandparents, who gave an additional measure of stability to society.

Commonwealth of Families

Most people in New England married neighbors of whom their parents approved. Marriage created a new household, and a New England town was really a collection of interrelated households. This was not a society in which individualists felt comfortable. The family played an important role in every aspect of life, including both religion and education. Church membership, theoretically open to all, became so associated with certain families that the Puritans began to suspect that grace was inherited. The family was also the society’s primary educational institution, and it did a good job in this respect. Most New England males could read, and the region produced an impressive literary culture.

Women’s Lives in Puritan New England

New England women contributed to the stability and productivity of the entire society, even though no woman enjoyed full political or legal equality with men. Most women probably accepted their roles as wives and mothers, and there is plenty of evidence that New England marriages were based on mutual love. Women contributed to the stability and productivity of New England society as wives, mothers, church members, and even as small-scale farmers, raising produce and poultry.

Social Hierarchy in New England

In every colony it was necessary to create a new social order because the “natural” leaders of society, the very rich, simply did not emigrate from England. In New England, a local gentry of prominent pious families emerged, but their position as leaders was always challenged from below by men who had acquired wealth.

Most New Englanders were neither gentry nor poor. They worked small farms that they owned outright. These independent yeomen gave their voluntary allegiance to the local community rather than to their own self-interest or to some external government. By 1700, the New England Puritans were proud of the society they had created.
THE CHALLENGE OF THE CHESAPEAKE ENVIRONMENT

The high death rate suffered in early Virginia, more than any other factor, created a society far different from the one that evolved in New England.

. Family Life at Risk

Most of the immigrants settling in Virginia came as young male indentured servants and most died soon after arriving. Normal family life became an impossibility. Even if a man found a wife, the chances were great that one of the partners would die within a decade. Children had to expect to be orphaned and to grow up in a stranger’s home. Women, because they were so scarce, might have been in a good position to bargain in the marriage market, but women who did not have a family to protect them were especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

B. Women’s Lives in Chesapeake Society

Women’s lives in the southern colonies were very different from those of their New England counterparts. Because men greatly outnumbered women, women were in great demand and were often freed from indentured servitude to marry. However, many women faced sexual exploitation, rather than greater freedom, due to their low social rank. In general, women in this society married younger, faced a higher mortality rate, and died an average of twenty years earlier than women in New England.

C. The Structure of Planter Society

In Virginia, wealth meant tobacco, but growing tobacco in large quantities required large amounts of labor. Those who were most prosperous were able to amass a large number of dependent workers who could be pushed as hard as possible. The gentry regarded their servants as possessions and sometimes even gambled for them. In this way, Virginia prepared for the future introduction of a slave system.

By the late seventeenth century, Virginian society became less fluid. The death rate declined and the gentry passed on their wealth to their children. An indigenous ruling elite emerged, more interested in Virginia than in England, and they gave the colony a greater degree of stability.

Tobacco also dictated that Virginians live along the great tidal rivers within easy reach of water-borne commerce. The population therefore dispersed, and Virginia remained a completely rural society, devoid of towns.
RACE AND FREEDOM IN BRITISH AMERICA

Africans were brought to America against their will to fill the places of the Indians who had been decimated and the European indentured servants who did not come in sufficient numbers.

. Roots of Slavery

The English colonies in America received only a small percentage of the 8 to 11 million Africans taken from their native land, because North American colonies could not pay the price for slaves that the West Indies could. Nevertheless, the English colonists took as many slaves as they could acquire. They justified their purchases by claiming that they were rescuing the Africans from barbarism and heathenism.

So long as the black population remained small in Virginia, the government did not bother to define their legal position. After 1672, Virginia began to receive a steady supply of slaves from the Royal African Company, and as the number of slaves increased, their legal oppression became more strict. Africans, simply because they were black, were slaves for life, and their status was passed on to their children. White masters could even murder slaves without worrying much about the legal consequences.

. Constructing African American Identities

The slave experience differed from place to place. Some Africans lived in societies where they never saw a white, whereas others lived in communities where they were a small and distinct minority. Africans made up a majority of the population of South Carolina and nearly half that of Virginia, but were less numerous in New England and the Middle Colonies.

There was a tendency for blacks who had successfully coped with white society to look down on recent arrivals from Africa who had not yet learned English. However, all Africans participated in what was the creation of an African American culture, which required an imaginative reshaping of African and European customs.

By the early eighteenth century, Africans in America had become numerous enough to begin to reproduce themselves successfully, a fact that ensured their permanence in American life. Blacks resented the debased status forced on them and occasionally rose up in arms, as in 1739, when blacks killed several whites at Stono, South Carolina. Such rebellions, although crushed, kept whites worried. Meanwhile, black communities far apart were increasingly tied together by those who escaped the confines of the plantation. Many blacks, for example, worked as mariners, sailing from port to port along the Atlantic coast.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.
RISE OF A COMMERCIAL EMPIRE

Until the 1660s the English crown ignored the colonies. During the Restoration, the king finally realized the profits to be made by regulating colonial trade. This section discusses the mercantile system in general and the Navigation Acts in particular.

. Response to Economic Competition

Mercantilism was a set of conventional answers to particular problems. Its leading tenet was that one nation’s gain must be another nation’s loss. As the Netherlands developed into a major commercial power, England became more hostile and tried to ban the Dutch from trading with the English colonies.

. Regulating Colonial Trade

The Navigation Act of 1660 was the heart of England’s system of regulation. It restricted trade within the empire to English (including American) ships and enumerated certain cargo, such as tobacco, which could not be sold to foreigners until it had first landed at an English port. Another act, in 1663, required that most goods going to America had to come from or through England.

The Dutch resented these laws, which spoiled their profitable intermediary position, and Holland fought three wars against England to force their abrogation. The Dutch failed, but the laws fell victim to New England merchants who violated the regulations or found loopholes in them. The English government retaliated by passing even stricter regulations and by sending agents to the colonies to prosecute smugglers. The most important agent was Edward Randolph, who made himself obnoxious by sending damning reports about New England back to London.

England’s imperial officials were hardly competent to regulate colonies so far away. Often one office did something that completely contradicted what another was trying to accomplish. Nevertheless, for every new problem, England passed more laws. The most important colonial agency was the Board of Trade, created in 1696. The Navigation Acts became effective over time, mainly because colonial merchants found it to their benefit to obey them.

COLONIAL FACTIONS SPARK POLITICAL REVOLT, 1676–1691

At the end of the seventeenth century, the colonies of Virginia, New York, and Massachusetts experienced a scramble for power among emerging gentry classes.
. Civil War in Virginia: Bacon’s Rebellion

In 1676, Nathaniel Bacon, an Indian-hating recent immigrant, led a rebellion against the royal governor, William Berkeley. Bacon’s attack allowed small farmers, blacks, and women to join together to demand reforms. The rebellion, however, collapsed after Bacon died. The gentry recovered their positions and in the eighteenth century became a united force in opposition to a series of royal governors.

. The Glorious Revolution in the Bay Colony

The Puritans found it hard to adjust to English regulations. A series of setbacks, including a devastating Native American war in 1676, left New England in debt and uncertain of its future. In 1684, King James II annulled the charter of Massachusetts Bay and incorporated the colonies stretching from Maine to New Jersey under a single governor, Sir Edmund Andros. In 1689, when news reached America that James II had been overthrown in England, a rebellion broke out in Boston and Andros was deposed. The new monarchs of England, William III and Mary, gave Massachusetts a charter that took the franchise away from “saints” and gave it to those with property.

. Contagion of Witchcraft

The crises of the late seventeenth century culminated in the Salem witchcraft panic. Although witches had been arrested and executed before 1691, there had never been a case when so many people were involved. After the death of twenty victims, the panic subsided and a shocked community confessed its guilt.

. The Glorious Revolution in New York and Maryland

The people of New York also rose up when news arrived that King James II had been chased out of England, but nobody knew who had the authority to rule. Jacob Leisler, a German immigrant and militia officer, seized control. He maintained his position for about a year before he was arrested and executed by a royal governor sent from England.

In Maryland, John Coode rallied Protestants against the Catholic governor. King William approved of Coode’s rebellion and took control of Maryland out of the hands of the Calvert family. It was later returned when the Calverts ceased to be Catholics and no longer favored Catholics in the colony.

CONCLUSION: LOCAL ASPIRATIONS WITHIN AN ATLANTIC EMPIRE

All of the American colonists became more “English” as the seventeenth century progressed, but original regional distinctions remained.
FEATURE ESSAY: ANTHONY JOHNSON

Anthony Johnson, who came to Virginia as a slave and worked on a tobacco plantation, was able to obtain freedom for himself and his wife later in his life. During the period of early colonization, a greater percentage of African slaves were able to achieve freedom that at any subsequent time until Emancipation. As a free planter, Johnson was able to participate in white society and free black society. This multiracial, free society, which reflected the fluid, flexible structure of colonial American at this time, would disappear by the end of the seventeenth century.

LECTURE TOPICS

A lecture on the formation of racist attitudes can be drawn from Winthrop D. Jordan’s *White Over Black: American Racial Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812*. Also see Mia Bay’s *The White Image in the Black Mind*.

Give an account of the “profound social transition” of the Upper South, characterize the social and political nature of the southern gentry, and detail the social and economic differences between the tobacco and rice coasts and the backcountry.

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

In what ways does this chapter suggest racism is a continuing part of American life? Which came first in American society, racism or slavery? What relevance does this chapter have for today? What social or international conflicts still occur between peoples?

Discuss the Anglo-American transatlantic commerce. Explain the role of each continent, making a distinction between which regions imported raw materials and which exported finished goods. Discuss how each continent profited from the institution of slavery, regardless of how many slaves it actually possessed.

Have students describe and analyze the events of Bacon’s Rebellion from the perspective of Governor Berkeley and his council, Bacon’s followers, and people from the Susquehannock tribe. Have each version of events presented, and ask other students to choose the most compelling positions and explain their reasons for their choices.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Discuss the development and changes in status for blacks in the British colonies from 1619 through the mid-eighteenth century. Why did these changes happen?
Discuss the impact of Native Americans on the relationships among British colonists. Examples include King Philip’s War in New England and Bacon’s Rebellion in Virginia. This is also an appropriate time to discuss regional and class tensions among colonists.

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

One of the most interesting events in the period covered by this chapter was the Salem witchcraft episode. The trial transcripts give us a rare opportunity to learn about seventeenth-century women, who formed the majority of both accused and accusers. One woman, Susannah Martin, struck at the very heart of the prosecution’s case when she demonstrated from the Scriptures that evil spirits could impersonate innocent people. The best source to use is Records of Salem Witchcraft, Copied from the Original Documents (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969 reprint) because it includes the legal papers that preceded each trial. A more available collection of documents is Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, editors, Salem-Village Witchcraft: A Documentary Record of Local Conflict in Colonial New England (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1993 edition).


POINTS OF MASTERY

Describe the beliefs, social patterns, and character of village life of the New England Puritans in England in early seventeenth-century Massachusetts.

Why were Quaker women allowed to create their own organizational structures?

Compare and contrast the theologies and lifestyles of Puritans and Quakers and discuss the assertion that Quaker women were the “mothers of feminism.”

Explain how New England emerged as a family- and community-based society with an important merchant class while the Chesapeake continued to prosper as an agricultural society consumed with tobacco.

Define “indentured servitude.”

List the factors that convinced the British to convert to slave labor.
Understand the reasons for, and the development of, a system of chattel slavery in America by about 1700.

Discuss the characteristics of colonial African American communities.

Identify Anthony Johnson and discuss his significance regarding colonial slavery.

Understand the variations in plantation slavery in the South.

Examine the origins of slavery in South Carolina.

Point out the types of resistance to enslavement that emerged in African American communities in the British colonies.

Discuss the Stono Rebellion and the impact it had on planter society.

Explain the concept of mercantilism and offer examples of British trade legislation that was designed to promote this economic policy.

Describe the course and consequences of King Philip’s War in New England and Bacon’s Rebellion in Virginia.

Explain the impact of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 on the administration of the colonies.

Describe the major events surrounding the Salem witchcraft trials and discuss the various historiographical interpretations of those events.

**SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

1. **What factors would have drawn ambitious, young English people in the first half of the seventeenth century to the Chesapeake region rather than to New England?**

In the first half of the seventeenth century, colonial society in New England was highly stratified, established along the lines of the traditional English social order. Power was concentrated in the hands of an established gentry, composed of prominent, established families. Young people, particularly those who were not married or who had few financial resources, would have very little chance to advance or even fit in in New England society.

Society in the Chesapeake region was far less structured. Most colonists came to this region unmarried, and, because men outnumbered women six to one, young unmarried women had a better chance of marrying and often had the power to choose who they would marry. Additionally, although life was far more difficult than in New England and mortality rates were far worse, young, ambitious colonists had a chance to work their way into the wealthy planter class and take on leadership roles, no matter their original social status. Such social mobility was impossible in New England during this period.
2. Since living with large numbers of unfree Africans frightened whites, why did colonists continue to import so many slaves?

In the second half of the seventeenth century, fewer and fewer indentured servants came to the colonies from England; however, planter society needed a large labor pool to work the fields. African slaves filled this need. Without slaves, the industry of the southern colonies would not have been possible.

3. Did the mercantilist system best serve the interests of the English or of the American colonists?

The mercantilist system was developed by English policymakers to increase the country’s power through its colonies’ resources. The basic tenet of mercantilism is that one country’s commercial gain (in this case, England’s) is another country’s loss (in this case, the Netherlands’). Mercantilism dictated that the colonies export only to England and not to France or the Netherlands.

This system served the interests of American colonists because centrally regulated trade kept demand for and prices of exports high. Although theoretically beneficial to the English, in reality the mercantilist system served the needs of powerful individuals and interest groups, such as English merchants, the king, and members of Parliament.

4. Why did colonial rebellions of the seventeenth century not lead to demands for political independence?

Most of the rebellions of this period were based on local concerns. The roots of these conflicts were usually disagreements between different groups of the gentry about who held power and whose interests were most important. For example, Bacon’s Rebellion was a result of a disagreement between Nathaniel Bacon, an established planter, and Virginia’s governor, Sir William Berkeley, over the construction of several forts to protect the colonists from Native American attacks. Rebellion leaders from this period fought for their own interests, not for political independence or greater social change.

AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES

Suggested Documentaries and Films:


This episode from the six-part series created by Robert Hughes depicts the origins of American ideas about art. Ranging from the Spanish West to Protestant New England to the aristocratic Chesapeake, Hughes takes a look at how American art began and flourished.
This four-volume video series explores the American experience with the institution of slavery from its inception during colonial times through its abolition during the Civil War.

This video explores the slave trade from its origins in Africa to the New World.

In Search of History: The Salem Witch Trials, A&E Video, 50 minutes.
This video explores the witch trials of Salem, Massachusetts, with a look at various social, psychological, and cultural explanations for the trials.

CLASS EXERCISES

If you live in the East, you will probably be able to visit a historic house that dates from this period. In the South, see the country houses of the new gentry class or their town houses in Williamsburg. In the North and the Mid-Atlantic states, there are fine old houses of the merchant class and often of German immigrants. What do the houses suggest about daily life and about the class structure of the eighteenth century? Do you see evidence of slaves or servants? What suggestions are there about the lives of women and children? What would you conclude about the nature of work and leisure? Does the historic preservation of a house present a romanticized version of life in the past?

Ask students to do further research on the Salem witch trials. Prepare to hold a class witchcraft trial. Have students choose an actual accuser or defendant to research. They can then take roles as accused male or female witches, as persons providing evidence against the witches, as the judge, as members of the jury, and as spectators in the courtroom. Web sites or books listed below might be useful research tools.

Have students examine the relations between Africans and Native Americans during the colonial period. Have them explore the lives of African Americans such as Anthony Johnson in Virginia, who came to America as an indentured servant, became a freeman, and secured his own indentured servants. Students might also enjoy looking at the contact between the Seminole Indians of north Florida and Africans in north Florida, many of whom were fugitive slaves who sought refuge among the Seminoles.

Create a slide presentation of American colonial dwellings from New England, the Middle colonies, and the South. Trace the various architectural features to origins in England. Also, point out how the architectural distinctions reflect the cultural, social, and climate differences among the major colonial regions.

Find additional examples of colonial narrative. What do these narratives reveal about colonial life in the religious or merchant colonies? Compare these impressions with those you gain from examining the woodcuts and artifacts provided in the textbook.
Imagine yourself to be an indentured servant in the Chesapeake. Were you to write a letter home to a brother or sister, how would you describe your life? Would you encourage your brother or sister to come to the New World?

**MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS**

- Read the Document: Prenuptial Agreement (1653)
- Read the Document: Anne Bradstreet, “Before the Birth of One of Her Children”
- View the Closer Look: African Slave Trade, 1451–1870
- View the Closer Look: Plan and Sections of a Slave Ship and an Illustration of a Slave Camp
- Complete the Assignment: Anthony Johnson, A Free Black Planter on Pungoteague Creek
- Read the Document: Olaudah Equiano, The Middle Passage (1788)
- Read the Document: James Oglethorpe, The Stono Rebellion (1739)
- View the Map: Colonial Products
- Read the Document: Nathaniel Bacon’s Declaration (July 30, 1676)
- Read the Document: Cotton Mather, *Memorable Providences Relating to Witchcraft*
- Complete the Assignment: Witches and the Law: A Problem of Evidence in 1692
CHAPTER 4

EXPERIENCE OF EMPIRE: EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA

CHAPTER OUTLINE

CONSTRUCTING AN ANGLO-AMERICAN IDENTITY: THE JOURNAL OF WILLIAM BYRD

GROWTH AND DIVERSITY

• Scots-Irish Flee English Oppression
• Germans Search for a Better Life
• Convict Settlers
• Native Americans Stake Out a Middle Ground

SPANISH BORDERLANDS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

• Conquering the Northern Frontier
• Peoples of the Spanish Borderlands

THE IMPACT OF EUROPEAN IDEAS ON AMERICAN CULTURE

• Provincial Cities
• Ben Franklin and American Enlightenment
• Economic Transformation
• Birth of a Consumer Society

RELIGIOUS REVIVALS IN PROVINCIAL SOCIETIES

• The Great Awakening
• The Voice of Evangelical Religion

CLASH OF POLITICAL CULTURES

• The English Constitution
• The Reality of British Politics
• Governing the Colonies: The American Experience
• Colonial Assemblies
CENTURY OF IMPERIAL WAR

- King William’s and Queen Anne’s Wars
- King George’s War and Its Aftermath
- Albany Congress and Braddock’s Defeat
- Seven Years’ War
- Perceptions of War

CONCLUSION: RULE BRITANNIA?

FEATURE ESSAY: CONQUEST BY OTHER MEANS

OPENING THEME

PROVINCIALS

Modern American students will need help to understand the provincialism of colonial culture.
American culture today, especially American popular culture, the one most familiar to your students, dominates the world. Pearl Jam is played as ardently in Naples as in Seattle. Michael Jordan is as much an icon in Tokyo as in Chicago. Madonna is as adored in Caracas as she is in Tampa. And O.J. Simpson is as notorious in Cairo as he is in Boston. It is true that most popular culture is created in only a few places, like New York and Los Angeles, but one of the characteristics of modern pop culture is that it happens where it is consumed, not where it is produced. Wherever there is a television set or shopping mall, there is the vital center of popular culture.

It was altogether different in eighteenth-century America. Nobody would have understood the concept of popular culture and what we call “folk art” was then considered inferior workmanship. In the eighteenth century, culture was “high” culture: art, architecture, literature, opera, or sacred music. The high culture of the American colonies in that era may be considered provincial, but that word must be carefully defined. In the narrowest definition, a provincial is simply a person who lives in a province, and a province is just a district governed by a geographically remote capital, but the usual connotation of the word provincial is that of a person unaware of living out of the cultural mainstream and therefore ignorantly proud of the second-rate culture of his or her vicinity. In European literature, the provincial is always smug and boorish. The colonial American could not have been provincial in that sense. There was too much moving around and too many people constantly arriving from foreign places. Americans in the eighteenth century did not value multiculturalism, but they had to adjust to reality. Ben Franklin, for example, normally a reasonable and tolerant man, proposed restrictions on German immigration to Pennsylvania because Germans were not “White.” Nevertheless, Franklin learned to speak German.

There is a less familiar connotation of the word provincial, and it is this one that best describes colonial culture. In this sense, provincials are those so in awe of the culture of the capital that they scorn everything local and slavishly buy or copy whatever is produced in the metropolis.
The feeling of being culturally displaced may have existed at all levels of colonial society. Africans taken by force across the Atlantic dreamed still of the blessed lands in Africa to which they would return in the afterlife. German and Scottish immigrants looked to Heidelberg and Edinburgh for cultural inspiration, not to Boston or Philadelphia. It is, however, among the English Americans, and especially among the wealthiest, the most prestigious, and the most articulate, that we can best document the provincialism of colonial America.

Mrs. Jonathan Edwards, for example, glued black silk patches all over her face before going to church to hear her husband describe with vivid relish the terrors of Hell. She wore face patches because fashionable English women in the mid-eighteenth century wore them. George Washington, before he became a rebel, had his clothes made by a tailor in Old Fish Street in London. The clothes did not fit well, Washington admitted, but they were “genteel” because they were made in England. Every American male with a shilling’s worth of prestige in the eighteenth century wore a wig only because the better sort of Englishmen wore wigs. Every colonial who could hire an architect had a house built in the Georgian style, which was already becoming outmoded in England. When aspiring Americans sought to improve their writing style, they copied the essays of Addison and Steele. When deep-thinking colonials wished to ponder philosophic questions, they began, and usually ended, with John Locke or George Berkeley. When less ponderous but equally earnest Americans wanted to examine moral questions in a dramatic setting, they read novels, most notably *Pamela* by Samuel Richardson.

Provincial Americans combined their love for everything English with an often-expressed contempt for their own society. Samuel Johnson, who taught at Yale around 1720, remembered that “the condition of learning in Connecticut (as well as everything else) was very low.” Cadwallader Colden, a prominent figure in New York City society, lamented that “few men here have any kind of literature.” John Singleton Copley complained that there was not a single painting in Boston “worthy to be called a picture.” William Byrd II, one of the richest and best educated of the Virginian planters, sent his daughter to be educated in England because he feared that her character would be corrupted by the savagery of Virginian society. Thomas Jefferson described the state of music in eighteenth-century America as one of “deplorable barbarism.” This contempt for American culture resulted in a brain drain from the colonies. Benjamin West, the best painter born in the colonies before the Revolution, is the prime example, but people like Franklin, Washington, and Jonathan Edwards tried, at some time in their lives, to move permanently from America to Great Britain.

American provincialism is long gone. Just ask your students if they are impressed by an English-university accent. Political independence did not at once result in cultural independence, but new nationhood produced the people like Emerson who nudged Americans into trusting their own modes of thought, their own styles of dress, their own accents, and their own artifacts. Today, we Americans, heirs to a successful political and cultural revolution, expect others to imitate us.
CONSTRUCTING AN ANGLO-AMERICAN IDENTITY: THE JOURNAL OF WILLIAM BYRD

The author uses the journal kept by wealthy Virginian William Byrd during his tour of the “backcountry” to illustrate such key developments discussed in this chapter as the amazing growth in population, the continued diversity of cultures, the tendency toward accepting English norms, and the growing sense of an American identity.

GROWTH AND DIVERSITY

Between 1700 and 1750, the population of the colonies increased from 250,000 to over 2 million, much of it through natural increase, but also through the immigration of non-English Europeans. Much of that growth filled the “backcountry,” an 800-mile fringe of territory west of the seaboard, populated by Native Americans.

. Scots-Irish Flee English Oppression

The Scots, many of whom came from Northern Ireland, concentrated on the Pennsylvania frontier and filled the Shenandoah Valley. They were often regarded as a disruptive element because they refused to pay rent or taxes.

. Germans Search for a Better Life

Many Germans left their homeland because of the wars that racked Germany, and settled mainly in Pennsylvania. Because there were so many of them and because Germans attempted to preserve their own customs, they aroused the prejudice of their English neighbors.

. Convict Settlers

After 1715, the English government began transporting convicts to the colonies. The colonists generally resented the policy and ended it during the American Revolution, but not before about 50,000 felons had arrived.

. Native Americans Stake Out a Middle Ground

The immigration of non-English people added to the diversity of American society, but so did Native Americans who had survived conquest and disease. Many Native Americans moved into the trans-Appalachian region, a “middle ground” where no colonial power was yet established, and where they could play Europeans against one another. In this middle ground, remnants of different Native American peoples regrouped and formed new nations that successfully interacted with each other and with Europeans. In time, however, the lure of European goods encouraged Native
Americans to deal individually with traders, thus weakening collective resistance to European aggression.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

SPANISH BORDERLANDS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Spain still occupied a large part of America north of Mexico and developed a unique culture there.

. Conquering the Northern Frontier

The Spanish had explored and colonized the area north of Mexico in the sixteenth century, but Native American resistance and a lack of interest limited the Spanish presence.

. Peoples of the Spanish Borderlands

Spain never had a secure political or military hold on her borderlands, but Spanish cultural influence persisted, especially in architecture and language. Those Native Americans who agreed to live under Spanish rule suffered economic discrimination but not racial segregation.

THE IMPACT OF EUROPEAN IDEAS ON AMERICAN CULTURE

The British colonists who lived along the Atlantic seaboard also lived in an expanding, changing world.

. Provincial Cities

The vast majority of Americans lived in small towns or isolated farms, but some urban areas began to develop. Boston, Newport, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston had lifestyles distinct from rural America. Their economies were geared toward commerce; they were not industrial centers. Because of their more frequent contacts with Europe, city people led the way in the adoption of new fashions and the latest luxuries. Emulating British architecture, they built grand homes and filled them with fine furniture. However, American cities could merely hint at the grandeur of London, and it was to that city that talented colonists, such as John Singleton Copley, traveled for opportunity and inspiration.

. Ben Franklin and American Enlightenment

Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790) epitomized provincial, urban culture. Enraptured as a boy by British literature, Franklin became a writer himself, offering practical advice in
a witty way. Uninterested in religion, he dedicated himself to reason and science, always with the practical use of scientific theory in mind.

Unlike the European Enlightenment, the colonial American version was less radical. Science was esteemed, but mainly because of its practical uses, and only if it did not threaten religious ideas.

E. Economic Transformation

America’s prosperity created a rising demand for English and West Indian goods. The colonists paid for their imports by exporting tobacco, wheat, and rice and by purchasing on credit. Because so much of their standard of living depended on commerce, the colonists resented English regulations. In addition to the laws described in Chapter 3, England restricted colonial manufacture or trade of timber, sugar, hats, and iron.

D. Birth of a Consumer Society

As England entered the Industrial Revolution and began to mass-produce items for everyday use, American imports of English goods rose, and wealthy Americans began to build up large debts to English merchants. Americans also traded extensively with the West Indies and with each other. These trades usually earned a surplus and enabled the colonists to pay for English imports. Intercolonial commerce also gave Americans a chance to learn about one another.

RELIGIOUS REVIVALS IN PROVINCIAL SOCIETIES

The Great Awakening, a series of religious revivals, occurred at different places at different times. These revivals, like the one led by Jonathan Edwards at Northampton, Massachusetts, encouraged the “awakened” to question their own values and the values of their society.

. The Great Awakening

George Whitefield, an itinerant minister from England, made revivalism a mass movement. Using his abilities as an orator, Whitefield preached outdoor sermons to thousands of people in nearly every colony. Whitefield and his many imitators urged congregations to desert unconverted ministers, thereby disrupting established churches. Laypeople, including women and blacks, finally had a chance to shape their own religious institutions. The Awakening thus promoted a democratic, evangelical union of national extent before there was an American political nation.
. The Voice of Evangelical Religion

Some of the revivalists were anti-intellectual fanatics, but most were well-trained ministers whose concern for learning led them to found several colleges: Princeton, Dartmouth, Brown, and Rutgers. In addition, most of the revivalists had optimistic attitudes toward America’s religious role in world history, thus fostering American patriotism and preparing for the development of a revolutionary mentality.

CLASH OF POLITICAL CULTURES

The colonials tried to copy British political institutions, but in doing so they discovered how different they were from the English people.

. The English Constitution

The British Constitution was universally admired because it seemed to perfectly balance monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, thus guaranteeing the liberties of the people.

. The Reality of British Politics

In reality, very few of the English people were represented in the political system. Over 80 percent of the adult males had no right to vote, and members of Parliament were notorious for corruption and bribery. “Commonwealthmen,” like John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, railed against the degeneracy of English politics and urged a return to a truly balanced constitution.

. Governing the Colonies: The American Experience

Americans liked to think that their colonial governments were replicas of Parliament, but they were not. Royal governors, as a rule, were incompetent political hacks who could not have governed the colonies even if they had taken an interest. They were so bound by instructions from England and had so little patronage with which to buy votes that they were, in effect, given the task of ruling as despots without having the power to force their will on the colonists.

The colonial assemblies bore no resemblance to the House of Commons. Most white males could vote in America, so elected officials knew they could not do something too unpopular without suffering at the polls. The assemblies were, therefore, more interested in pleasing their constituents than in obeying the governor.
Colonial Assemblies

The assemblies controlled all means of raising revenue and quickly protested any infringement of their rights. When a governor did succeed in controlling an assembly, the public reacted with alarm and flooded the colonial press with arguments for a return to balanced government.

America’s ties with the mother country became closer in the eighteenth century, especially in the law courts, where English usage became more common. Americans grew increasingly aware that they shared similar political ideas, institutions, and problems with England and with each other.

CENTURY OF IMPERIAL WAR

In the eighteenth century the colonies participated in four major imperial wars that pitted England against France. The Americans, with English aid, attempted to take Canada, but were unsuccessful, despite the fact that they vastly outnumbered the French in Canada. French Canada was later subdued in 1759 by an English army. This section shows how the wars led to greater intercolonial association and cooperation.

. King William’s and Queen Anne’s Wars

From 1689 to 1713, England and France struggled for the mastery of Europe, and their colonists fought one another in America. These wars settled nothing, and the grounds for a new conflict were laid when France extended her American empire from Canada into Louisiana.

. King George’s War and Its Aftermath

From 1743 to 1748, another imperial war dragged Americans into conflict. New England troops won an impressive victory when they captured Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island, but the fort was returned to France in the peace treaty.

In the 1750s both sides realized the strategic importance of the Ohio Valley, which became the cockpit for the next round of skirmishes. The French built a fort at the head of the Ohio River, at present-day Pittsburgh. Virginia considered the area its own and sent its militia under a young officer, George Washington, to expel the French. Washington was defeated.

. Albany Congress and Braddock’s Defeat

Some Americans, such as Ben Franklin, realized that France could not be defeated by a single colony. He proposed, in 1754, a new arrangement between Great Britain and her
colonies that would give America a central government (the Albany Plan). Neither the English government nor the colonial assemblies liked the plan, and it came to nothing.

In 1755, England sent an army under General Edward Braddock to drive the French out of the Ohio Valley. On his march west, Braddock fell into an ambush, and his army was destroyed.

- Seven Years’ War

In 1756 England declared war on France and the two nations fought in every corner of the globe. The English, led by William Pitt, concentrated their efforts in North America and captured Quebec in 1759. The century of struggle for control of the wealth of a continent was now ended.

- Perceptions of War

The English and Americans learned two opposite lessons during the imperial wars. The colonists realized how strong they could be when they worked together; the English learned that the Americans took forever to organize and that it was easier to just command them to obey orders.

**CONCLUSION: RULE BRITANNIA?**

In 1763, most colonial Americans believed that they were bound in brotherhood with the English people. British culture, British consumer goods, British evangelists, and British military victories swept all Americans, even the non-English, into what seemed to be a great empire tied together by admiration and affection.

**FEATURE ESSAY: CONQUEST BY OTHER MEANS**

Colonial takeover of Native American lands took many forms, most of which were skewed toward English self-interest. One example of such a takeover is the “Walking Purchase” of lands in the fertile area of Pennsylvania that bordered the Delaware River. William Penn’s sons, eager to sell the land (which did not belong to them) for a profit, were able to obtain a vast area by procuring a dubious deed that stated that the Penns were allowed as much land as a man could walk in a day and a half and gaining the support of the Iroquois Confederacy for this claim. Three walkers set out at a gallop, and one managed to cover sixty miles. The Delaware had been swindled, and William Penn’s sons had betrayed their father’s legacy of fair dealings and peaceful coexistence with the Native Americans.
LECTURE TOPICS

Begin a lecture with a discussion of the meaning of the word “American.” It is a word with different facets, meanings, and implications during various periods of U.S. history. At this point in the course, ask students to begin thinking about what the word means. Is being American distinctive from being “European” or “Western”? Begin to talk about the development through U.S. history of a distinct and unique American culture. Have students look at the Native American, African, and European cultures that came together in the New World. Were traditional historians accurate in referring to the British colonial experience in America as a transplantation of European cultures? To what extent is this interpretation true? Was any one of the three original racial or ethnic groups that came together during the colonial period left unchanged by its contact with the other two? Can we still trace characteristics of American culture and society back to each of these groups?

Prepare a lecture on the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening as intellectual preludes to the American Revolution. Connect enlightened political thought to the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the writings of John Locke. Use these issues to foreshadow Thomas Jefferson’s writing of the Declaration of Independence. Connect the Great Awakening to the cultural unification of the colonies and the emphasis on individual religious choice and autonomy. How do these developments help prepare colonists for revolutionary thinking? Why have historians linked the tradition among colonists of American religious revolution to their experience with political revolution?

The farming society of the North was characterized by widespread land ownership and a rough kind of economic equality. In the South, plantation society was marked by the emergence of a gentry class and a labor force made up almost entirely of black slaves, while the backcountry, still in the frontier stages and settled by thousands of Scots-Irish and German immigrants, lacked the sharp class distinctions of the Tidewater region. Colonial cities, with their highly differentiated class structure and new commercial values, were on the “cutting edge” of change. In each area, women played an important role in daily life while still being subject to social and economic restriction.

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

Discuss the emergence of the institution of slavery in British North America and the Caribbean. Use this chapter to look at the origins of slavery, including the historical debate regarding the degree to which economic factors versus racial prejudice influenced the British decision to use slave labor. This chapter can also be used to discuss the differences between slavery in the northern and southern colonies.

Discuss the settlement of the American backcountry during the early eighteenth century. How did the settlers of this area differ from the settlers of the seventeenth century? Consider the religious, regional, cultural, and moral backgrounds of the settlers. How would these characteristics define the relationship between the settlers of the backcountry and the established eastern population?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Discuss the major trends in British colonial administration from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century.
Explore the importance of the Great Awakening to the American South. How did the movement impact the emergence of southern religious style? What was the particular impact of the Great Awakening on the southern backcountry?

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

One of the most interesting encounters in history occurred when Ben Franklin went to hear George Whitefield preach in November 1739. Here the Enlightenment came face to face with the Awakening, and Reason met Piety. Franklin’s description of Whitefield’s power as a preacher in his *Autobiography* is amusing, but one must remember that Franklin intended his autobiography to be published. In anonymous newspaper articles, Franklin described Whitefield as a crook who was stealing funds from an orphanage. One should keep this in mind when reading Franklin’s description of Whitefield in the *Autobiography*. This work is available in many good editions, but the most elaborate is that edited by J. A. Leo Lemay and P. M. Zall, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin: A Generic Text* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1981).

George Washington made his first appearance on the historical stage in the period covered by this chapter. It is interesting to see him as a young officer describing his defeat by the French at Fort Necessity and telling his brother that there was something “charming” in the sound of bullets whizzing past his head. King George II is supposed to have remarked that Washington could not have heard many bullets. Washington’s account of the battle can be found in the *Papers of George Washington* edited by W. W. Abbot, Dorothy Twohig, and others, published by the University Press of Virginia. The incident just described is in the Colonial Series, volume 1.

POINTS OF MASTERY

Why did the British open their colonies to immigration? How did this affect the ethnic and racial makeup of the colonies?

How did Pueblo peoples respond to Spanish military expeditions and missionary efforts?

Examine the relationship between Native Americans and English settlers. How do the actions of “savage” people differ from those of “civilized Christian” people?

Explain how, in an attempt to secure the safety of its treasure fleet, Spain used missions and forts to gain control of Native American land.

Explain Spanish expansion into North America, particularly Florida and California, and speculate about what that expansion would mean to the colonies and to the future United States.

Discuss the characteristics of eighteenth-century colonial urban centers.
Explain the Age of the Enlightenment and its impact on colonial intellectual development.

Explain the colonial system of credit and how it impacted colonial consumption of British goods.

Explain the Great Awakening and its impact on theology and religious style in the American colonies.

Explain the major events and message of the Great Awakening, including its comparative impact on New England and the southern colonies and its effects on colonial political life.

Describe the French movement into the Mississippi Valley and connect that development to the future French and Indian War.

Describe the settlement of the backcountry and explain the social tensions that emerged between the older, established eastern communities and the western backcountry.

Explain the impact of European trade on Native Americans, including economic, political, and military consequences.

List the various groups of Europeans that immigrated to the American colonies during the eighteenth century. How did these groups add to the complexity and diversity of the American colonial population?

Define the Albany Congress and the reasons for its successes and failures.

How did overwhelming British success in the Seven Years’ War lead to an imperial crisis in British North America?

**SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

1. What factors ultimately served to undermine the “middle ground”?

The Native Americans in the “middle ground” skillfully played the English against the French during the wars of this century, which, along with their numbers and military strength, maintained their position and independence. However, this military strength relied on trade with the English and French for weapons and other metal goods. These contacts grew more frequent, and soon trade was no longer centrally controlled by a group of elders; individuals traded with one another, weakening the collective power of the group. Additionally, contact with the English and French brought contagious diseases that decimated the population. Knowing this, some traders deliberately traded infected blankets with the Native Americans. In the end, reliance on trade, and the resulting diseases, undermined the “middle ground” that Native Americans had held.
2. What impact did the Spanish empire have on the culture of the borderlands?

Because the English came to dominate what became the United States, the Spanish influence on American culture, particularly in the Southwest, is often overlooked. The Spanish established missions, churches, and military outposts, which defined the character of many Southwestern cities. Spanish settlers, most of whom were single men, also mixed with the native population and had children of mixed backgrounds. Although the Spanish settled slowly and never achieved complete control over these areas, Spanish became the language of the Southwest, and remains in use to this day. The Spanish empire, therefore, influenced the architecture, religion, population makeup, and language of the borderlands.

3. What impact did Enlightenment ideas and commercial goods have on American politics?

Enlightenment ideals energized the colonists, many of whom created inventions and started a cultural movement that led to increased communication among the colonies and the formation of more cosmopolitan centers. In this sense, the Enlightenment brought groups of thinking Americans together, groups that would later become active in pushing for independence from England and the formation of a new government.

Commercial goods increased Americans’ desire for, and spending on, English imports and also fostered intercoastal trade. Both these developments eroded local identities and culture in the colonies and created a more homogenous society. Although this development can be seen as detrimental to individual identities, it brought the colonies together with a sense of shared culture, which would unite them during the struggle for independence from England.

4. What are the similarities and differences between the impact of the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening on colonial society?

Both the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening came at a time when Americans were uninspired by the religion and ideas of the original colonists. These movements provided alternatives to the staid, scholarly Protestantism that had been central to colonial life. Both movements also spread across the colonies, uniting people from very different backgrounds and creating larger “American” discourse and identities.

Beyond this, however, the two movements were very different. The Enlightenment extolled reason and practicality and rejected all traditional religion. It promoted an optimistic view of the future. The Great Awakening was based on emotion rather than rationality, and promoted a dark view of the future for those who were not “born again” in Christ.

5. Why did colonists place greater political trust in their elected assemblies than in their royally appointed governors?
The governors of the colonies were English midlevel bureaucrats close to the crown who obtained their positions through luck or family connections. They therefore had very little interest in the activities or problems of the colonies they governed, and, if they had interest, did not have the skill to implement change.

The elected assemblies came closer to representing the concerns of the colonists. Their main concern was to maintain the liberty of the colony they represented, often through vigorous disagreement with the governor. Although they emulated British law and practices, these assemblies helped shape what would become a uniquely American identity.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

*Colonization of North America*, PBS Video, 150 minutes.
An exploration of early European discovery and settlement in the New World, including such North American locations as St. Augustine, Plymouth, and Roanoke.

This video takes a look at the leader of the American Revolution and comes from the popular A&E Biography series.

**CLASS EXERCISES**

As a documentary exercise or as part of a lecture, reproduce for students (and read aloud) portions of Jonathan Edwards’s “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” to discuss the nature and impact of the theology and language of the Great Awakening. Discuss or have students discuss how Edwards’s style and theology is different from and similar to that of modern revivalists.

Have students evaluate the appeal of Edwards (or George Whitefield) from the perspective of a Puritan or Anglican clergyman, a slave, a farmer, the farmer’s wife, a New England merchant, and others. How might they differ? This can lead into a discussion of the relationship of religion to social and political norms.

Divide the class into two groups, one researching Spanish activities in the Southwest and the other exploring the English activities in the East. Explore why there were more instances of warfare between the English and their Native American neighbors than between the Spanish and their Native American neighbors.

**MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS**

- Read the Document: William Byrd II, Diary—An American Gentleman
- Read the Document: Benjamin Franklin, “Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind”
- Complete the Assignment: Conquest by Other Means: The Pennsylvania Walking Purchase
- Read the Document: Testimony by Pedro Naranjo to Spanish Authorities
- Read the Document: Benjamin Franklin on George Whitefield (1771)
- Read the Document: English Bill of Rights (1689)
- View the Map: European Claims in America, c. 1750
- Read the Document: Albany Plan of Union (1754)
- View the Closer Look: European Claims in North America, 1750 and 1763
CHAPTER 5

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: FROM ELITE PROTEST TO POPULAR REVOLT, 1763–1783

CHAPTER OUTLINE

MOMENT OF DECISION: COMMITMENT AND SACRIFICE

STRUCTURE OF COLONIAL SOCIETY

• Breakdown of Political Trust
• No Taxation Without Representation: The American Perspective
• Ideas About Power and Virtue

ERODING THE BONDS OF EMPIRE

• Paying Off the National Debt
• Popular Protest
• Failed Attempts to Save the Empire
• Fueling the Crisis
• Fatal Show of Force
• Last Days of Imperial Rule, 1770–1773
• The Final Provocation: The Boston Tea Party

STEPS TOWARD INDEPENDENCE

• Shots Heard Around the World
• Beginning “The World Over Again”

FIGHTING FOR INDEPENDENCE

• Building a Professional Army
• Testing the American Will
• “Times That Try Men’s Souls”
• Victory in a Year of Defeat
• The French Alliance
• The Final Campaign
In 1764, American colonists complained that the Sugar Act was tyranny because it was taxation without representation. The British heatedly denied the charge, and a great debate ensued. The British challenged every point in the American argument, and it would be a healthy exercise to require your students to explain what they mean by taxation, representation, and tyranny.

The Americans had a hard time defining taxation. At first they tried to distinguish between internal and external taxes, or between duties intended to increase revenues and duties intended to regulate trade. It took about a decade before they concluded that any act of a government that raised revenue was a tax no matter what form it took. Ask your students if tuition, or a fine for littering the highway, or an entrance fee to a national park is a tax. How long will it take them to reach the same definition as the American revolutionaries?

Representation was an even tougher intellectual nut to crack. The British political tradition separated representation from the right to vote. Very few Englishmen could vote, but all were supposedly represented in Parliament, especially in the House of Commons. The British explained this apparent paradox with a concept called “virtual representation.” It was argued that the interests of the members of Parliament and the nonelectors were so bound together that the men in Parliament could not pass a law that hurt the nonelectors without hurting themselves. Representation did not mean the right to vote; it meant that those who could vote invariably protected the interests of those who could not vote.

The American protest rejected this notion of virtual representation, but not entirely. Americans argued that the interests of Great Britain and the colonies were sufficiently different to make “actual representation” necessary. If Parliament wanted money from Americans, the constitutional way was to request it from the colonial assemblies, because only those assemblies represented the colonists and therefore only the assemblies had the right to tax the colonists. So far, so good—but the colonial assemblies taxed women with property even though women were denied the right to vote. Those Americans who argued that the colonists were not virtually represented in Parliament discovered that women were virtually represented in the colonial assemblies. Women did not have to vote because the men in the assemblies were their husbands, fathers, and sons, who would of course never enact legislation that would hurt women. None of your students will accept that line of argument, but pose
the problem of a ten-year-old movie star who earns $5 million a year. She pays taxes on her income, but she cannot vote. It looks like taxation without representation. What would your students do? Would they allow a millionaire to go tax-free? Or would they give the vote to all ten-year-olds? Or will they suddenly find comfort in virtual representation and conclude that the child’s interests are well enough protected by parents, guardians, or agents?

The last term of the equation, tyranny, was the most interesting intellectual problem and the one with the most far-reaching consequences. Tyranny is the denial of a person’s rights by a government, and tyranny therefore has no meaning until individual rights are first defined. On this question, colonial Americans were much divided. Many believed that their rights were defined by the British Constitution. These rights, such as trial by jury, belonged to all subjects of the British crown, but British rights did not extend to Poles or Germans or Africans, or even fully to English women. For many Americans in the eighteenth century, the British Constitution was sacred, not just because it protected a large number of personal rights and liberties, but also because it restricted the scope and degree of those rights and liberties. The British Constitution did not assume that freedom was unbounded.

In the last resort, however, the American revolutionaries had to reject the British Constitution because it certainly did not include the right of rebellion. The United States was founded on a different theory of rights that had been discussed during the colonial protest. The “natural rights” argument of the Declaration of Independence claims that every human is granted by God a vast number of rights that no government can justly take away. Many Americans were concerned that natural rights were so vague and so unlimited that it would be impossible to erect an orderly society on such a foundation. You can easily demonstrate the difficulty of defining natural rights by taking the example of marriage. Most students will believe that they have a natural right to marry whomever they choose, but every state in the United States defines marriage as a “privilege” that the state may grant or withhold. Students will resent that assertion until you ask if a father has a natural right to marry his daughter, or if a marriage may be arranged between five-year-olds, as happens in some parts of the world. If your students are too easily convinced that marriage is, after all, a privilege that the state may withhold, ask whether Virginia had the legitimate authority to deny marriage between whites and blacks, as it did until 1967. The Supreme Court struck down the Virginia law, but the Court did not rule that marriage was a natural right beyond state regulation.

At present, the abortion issue divides the nation, and probably your students. That, too, is a debate over rights, a debate that began in 1764 with the slogan, Taxation without representation is tyranny.

MOMENT OF DECISION: COMMITMENT AND SACRIFICE

The author begins by describing the price paid for independence by the Patten family. Although it was the gentry and wealthy merchants who began the protest against Great Britain, it was only because so many common folk were willing to sacrifice that the United States became a nation, and the common folk demanded that their concerns be met. The American Revolution was as much about equality as it was about independence.
STRUCTURE OF COLONIAL SOCIETY

In the period following the Seven Years’ War, Americans looked to the future with great optimism. They were a wealthy, growing, strong, young people.

. Breakdown of Political Trust

There were suspicions on both sides of the Atlantic that the new king, George III, was attempting to enlarge his powers by restricting the liberties of his subjects, but the greatest problem between England and America came down to the question of parliamentary sovereignty. Nearly all English officials assumed that Parliament must have ultimate authority within the British Empire.

. No Taxation Without Representation: The American Perspective

The Americans assumed that their own colonial legislatures were in some ways equal to Parliament. Because Americans were not represented at all in Parliament, only the colonial assemblies could tax Americans.

. Ideas About Power and Virtue

Taxation without representation was not just an economic grievance for the colonists. They had learned by reading John Locke and the “Commonwealthmen” that all governments try to encroach on the people's liberty. If the people remained “virtuous,” or alert to their rights, and determined to live free, they would resist “tyranny” at its first appearance.

ERODING THE BONDS OF EMPIRE

England left a large, expensive army in America at the end of the French and Indian War. To support it, England had to raise new revenues.

. Paying Off the National Debt

In 1764 Parliament passed the Sugar Act, which was clearly designed to raise revenue and not just regulate trade. Merchants protested, but most Americans ignored it.

. Popular Protest

The Stamp Act united the gentry and the mass of the population. The protest spilled into the streets, and groups of working men, organized as the Sons of Liberty, rioted and pressured tax collectors to resign. Boycotts became popular and allowed women to enter the protest. The more moderate protestors met at a Stamp Act Congress and petitioned the King and Parliament for repeal.
The American protest coincided with a political crisis in England. A new government took office, sympathetic to English merchants whose business was hurt by turmoil in America. The new ministry wanted to repeal the Stamp Act, but dared not appear to be giving in to the Americans. Repeal was therefore tied to the Declaratory Act of 1766, which claimed that Parliament was sovereign over America “in all cases whatsoever.” While the crisis of 1765 did not turn into rebellion, the Stamp Act controversy did cause the colonists to look on English officials in America as alien representatives of a foreign government.

In 1767, Charles Townshend, chancellor of the exchequer, came up with a new set of taxes on American imports of paper, lead, glass, and tea. Townshend also created the American Board of Customs Commissioners to ensure rigorous collection of the duties. Americans again resisted. The Sons of Liberty organized a boycott of English goods, and the Massachusetts House of Representatives sent a circular letter urging the other colonial assemblies to cooperate in protesting the Townshend Acts. When the English government ordered the Massachusetts assembly to rescind its letter, ninety-two of the representatives refused, and their defiance inspired Americans everywhere.

In the midst of the controversy over the Townshend taxes, the English government, to save money, closed many of its frontier posts in America and sent troops to Boston. Their presence heightened tensions. On March 5, 1770, English soldiers in Boston fired on a mob and killed five Americans.

Just when affairs reached a crisis, the English government changed again. Lord North headed a new ministry and repealed all of the Townshend taxes except for the duty on tea, which North retained to demonstrate Parliament’s supremacy.

Lord North’s government did nothing to antagonize the Americans for the next three years, and a semblance of tranquility characterized public affairs. Customs collectors in America, however, contributed to bad feelings by extorting bribes and by enforcing the trade acts to the letter, and radicals such as Samuel Adams still protested that the tax on tea violated American rights. Adams helped organize committees of correspondence that built up a political structure independent of the royally established governments.
The Final Provocation: The Boston Tea Party

In 1773, Parliament aroused the Americans by passage of the Tea Act. This act, designed to help the East India Company by making it cheaper for them to sell tea in America, was interpreted by Americans as a subtle ploy to get them to consume taxed tea. In Boston, in December 1773, a group of men dumped the tea into the harbor.

The English government reacted to the “Tea Party” with outrage and passed the Coercive Acts, which closed the port of Boston and put the entire colony under what amounted to martial law.

At the same time, Parliament passed the Quebec Act, establishing an authoritarian government for Canada. The English considered this act in isolation from American affairs, but the colonists across the continent saw it as final proof that Parliament was plotting to enslave America. They rallied to support the Boston colonists and protest the British blockade.

The ultimate crisis had now been reached. If Parliament continued to insist on its supremacy, rebellion was unavoidable. Ben Franklin suggested that Parliament renounce its claim so that the colonies could remain loyal to the king and thus remain within the empire. Parliament rejected this advice.

STEPS TOWARD INDEPENDENCE

Americans organized their resistance to England by meeting in a Continental Congress. This section traces the major events in the move toward independence, from the seating of the First Continental Congress in September 1774 to the decision for independence in July 1776.

Shots Heard Around the World

On April 19, 1775, a skirmish broke out between Americans and English troops in Lexington, Massachusetts. The fighting soon spread, and the English were forced to retreat to Boston with heavy losses.

Beginning “The World Over Again”

The Second Continental Congress took charge of the little army that had emerged around Boston by appointing George Washington as commander.

The English government decided to crush the colonists by blockading their ports and hiring mercenary troops from Germany. Royal governors urged slaves to take up arms against their masters. These actions infuriated the colonists. Thomas Paine, in his pamphlet Common Sense, pushed them closer to independence by urging Americans to cut their ties to England.
On July 2, 1776, Congress voted for independence, and on July 4, Congress issued the Declaration of Independence, a statement of principles that still challenges the people of the world to insist on their rights as humans.

**FIGHTING FOR INDEPENDENCE**

In the ensuing war, the English had a better trained army than did the Americans, but England’s supply line was long, and the English army faced the task of not only occupying terrain but also crushing the spirit of an entire people. Washington, on the other hand, realized that America would eventually win independence if he could keep his army intact.

. Building a Professional Army

Washington rejected advice that he conduct a guerrilla war of hit-and-run raids against the English because he wanted a “continental” army to foster a feeling of common purpose. For that reason, he never risked the Continental Army in a general engagement where it might be destroyed in a single battle.

Washington was less concerned with the state militias, whose value he underestimated. Not only did they fight the British regular army, they served as a kind of internal police force to keep Loyalists from organizing.

. Testing the American Will

During July and August 1776, English forces routed the American army on Long Island, captured New York City, and forced Washington to retreat through New Jersey.

. “Times That Try Men’s Souls”

As Washington’s army fled toward Philadelphia, the English military authorities collected thousands of oaths of allegiance from Americans, many of whom had supported independence. The cause seemed lost, but Washington rekindled the flame of resistance by capturing two English outposts in New Jersey, Trenton and Princeton.

. Victory in a Year of Defeat

In 1777, General John Burgoyne led English forces out of Canada in a drive toward Albany, New York. Americans interrupted Burgoyne’s supply lines and finally forced him to surrender at Saratoga, New York.

General William Howe, who was supposed to help Burgoyne, instead decided to capture Philadelphia, which he did easily. Washington’s discouraged army spent that miserable winter at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.
. The French Alliance

France supplied the Americans with arms from the beginning of hostilities. After Saratoga, England feared an open alliance between France and America and proposed peace. Parliament offered to repeal all acts passed since 1763, to respect the right of Americans to tax themselves, and to withdraw all English troops. The Americans, however, preferred full independence and allied themselves with France in 1778.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

. The Final Campaign

After 1778, the English turned their attention to securing the South. They took Savannah and Charleston, and in August 1780, routed an American army at Camden, South Carolina. Washington sent General Nathanael Greene to the South to command American forces, and Greene’s forces defeated English general Lord Cornwallis in several battles. When Cornwallis took his army to Yorktown, Virginia, for resupply, Washington arranged for the French navy to blockade Chesapeake Bay while the Continental Army marched rapidly to Yorktown, where Cornwallis was trapped. He surrendered his entire army on October 19, 1781. The English government now realized it could not subdue the Americans, and began to negotiate for peace.

THE LOYALIST DILEMMA

Americans who had remained openly loyal to the king during the Revolution received poor treatment from both sides. The English never fully trusted them, and the patriots took away their property and sometimes imprisoned or executed them. When the war ended, more than one hundred thousand Loyalists left the United States.

WINNING THE PEACE

Ben Franklin, John Adams, and John Jay negotiated the peace treaty that ended the Revolutionary War. By playing France against England, the Americans managed to secure highly favorable terms: independence and transfer of all territory east of the Mississippi River, between Canada and Florida, to the Republic.

CONCLUSION: PRESERVING INDEPENDENCE

The American Revolution was more than armed rebellion against England; it was the beginning of the construction of a new form of government. The question had yet to be decided whether this would be a government of the elite or a government of the people.
FEATURE ESSAY: SPAIN’S CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE
Like France, whose contributions to the Americans during the Revolutionary War are better known, Spain supported the Americans in their war against England. Spain’s motivation was simple: The Revolutionary War offered the country a chance to recapture territories lost to England and get revenge for defeats at Gibraltar and in Florida. Because England was forced to spread its troops among its colonies to defend them from French and Spanish attack, the British Army in America was weaker than it would have been, which helped the colonists achieve victory.

LECTURE TOPICS
Was the American Revolution “revolutionary”? Have students look at the nature of British colonial administration and explain how it contributed to the American love of liberty. In fighting for independence and freedom, were the colonists fighting for something with which they were unfamiliar? Were they fighting for political change or for a status of independence they had come to expect by the mid-eighteenth century?

Prepare a presentation focusing on the Stamp Act Crisis as the first example of formal American resistance to British imperial policy after the French and Indian War. Explain the disagreement between American colonists and the British regarding the concepts of virtual representation and actual representation, and discuss their disagreement over the concepts of internal and external taxation. Look at the major pieces of legislation coming out of the Grenville administration and demonstrate the distinction of the Stamp Act from the others, such as the Sugar Act, the Quartering Act, or the Currency Act. Examine the phrase, “Taxation without representation is tyranny!” and have students understand the true meaning of the words. In other words, colonists were saying, “[Internal] taxation without [actual] representation is tyranny!”

Prepare a lecture on the factors that contributed to the American victory in the Revolution. Offer treatment of a variety of issues, including these American advantages: home territory, passion and commitment to the cause, and the French alliance. Among British disadvantages, include lack of commitment or passion, overconfidence, personal and kinship ties to Americans, and distractions at home as the war evolved into a world war.

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)
Arrange a classroom discussion focusing on the content of the Declaration of Independence. Have students read the Declaration before coming to class and then present some of the following issues for discussion:

a. Focus on the philosophical connections between the Declaration and the writings of John Locke by asking students to point out specific phrases in the document that directly reflect Lockeian theory regarding natural law and the contract theory of government.

b. Ask students to comment on Jefferson’s use of the phrase “all men are created equal.” What did Jefferson mean when he used the phrase “all men”? Use this opportunity to discuss the meaning of the term “democracy” in the eighteenth-century Western world.
c. This is also a good time to initiate a conversation about the issue of historical relevancy. Have students address the strengths and weaknesses of applying twenty-first-century social and political standards to an eighteenth-century document. Explain how the assessment of history can be carried out on two levels. First, an assessment can be made based on historical relevancy. What does Jefferson’s use of the term “all men” teach us about eighteenth-century social and intellectual history? What is the historical context of Jefferson’s writings? Second, point out to students the value of assessing history based on the social and cultural changes that have taken place in America since 1776. Twenty-first-century Americans should be disturbed by the gender-specific language used by Jefferson and should use that reaction to recognize the strides that Americans have made as a nation to make the term “all men” more inclusive.

d. Explore the meaning of the phrase “pursuit of happiness.” What did it mean to Jefferson within the context of eighteenth-century philosophy? Are there connections between this phrase and the principles of a capitalist economy?

e. Have students comment on religious references in the Declaration of Independence. Did the Revolution have a moral tone? What do these references say about the American tradition of separation of church and state?

How “revolutionary” was the American Revolution? Discuss the revolution from the standpoint not only of African Americans, but also of women and white men.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Discuss the evolution of colonial unity between 1755 and 1774. Examine the Albany Congress, the Stamp Act Congress, and the First Continental Congress. What was the extent of colonial participation in each congress? What issues motivated the convening of these meetings? How successful was each in demonstrating or promoting the degree of unity among the colonies?

Read descriptions of Great Awakening camp meetings. How does this experience differ from services in the more traditional Anglican, Calvinist, or Catholic churches? Is this significant?

Hold a class discussion on the circumstances surrounding the Boston Massacre. How much do we know about what really happened? Take this opportunity to introduce to students the inconsistencies in the detail of historical research, pointing out that accounts of this incident offer divergent views of the “facts of the case.” Look at the role of Crispus Attucks in this affair. How have historians defined both his ethnicity and his actions in the event? How did Attucks’s role in this incident differ from the popularly held ideas on what it meant to be “black” during the era? How do students explain the difference?

Examine the roles of John Adams and Samuel Adams in the events leading up to the American Revolution. Study their religious, philosophical, and family backgrounds and how these aspects of their lives helped to define the nature of their support for the Revolution. Why were their roles so different, and how did their political styles complement each other?
CONNECTING TO THE PAST

In 1781, an ensign identified only as Smith, leading a small patrol of Continental troops, was informed that a large band of Loyalist cavalry was racing toward him. Smith formed his men and told them that he would kill the first man who tried to run away. When the Loyalists offered Smith a chance to surrender, he replied that he intended to fertilize the spot with Tory blood. Smith’s men held off two charges before the Loyalists broke off the engagement. In these small actions, Americans won their independence and forged a republican ideal. The incident was recalled by Benjamin Jones, one of Smith’s men, in a marvelous collection of such eyewitness accounts edited by John C. Dann, The Revolution Remembered (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

A more famous battle ended the Revolution at Yorktown, Virginia, a few miles from Jamestown, where the English empire in America began. Dr. James Thacher, a physician with Washington’s army, described the sheer joy of the Americans and the utter agony of the English troops when one of their officers shouted the command “Ground Arms!” Thacher’s account is in Henry Steele Commager and Richard Morris, The Spirit of ’Seventy-Six (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1958).

POINTS OF MASTERY

Discuss the Stamp Act Crisis. What were the legal, financial, and social factors connected to the American resistance to this law?

Understand the connection between John Locke’s contract theory of government and Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence.

Explain the terms “actual representation” and “virtual representation” and how they reflected the diverging political ideologies of the colonies and Britain.

Explain the problems facing Britain after the French and Indian War and list the parliamentary laws enacted during the Grenville administration in an effort to address these problems.

Define the provisions of the Stamp Act and why this law was distinct from the other laws passed during the Grenville administration.

Under the prophet Neolin, interior tribes united to remove the British colonists from tribal lands. Why was the attempt, called Pontiac’s Rebellion, not successful?

Define the Boston Massacre and explain Paul Revere’s sentiments.

Discuss the First Continental Congress and list its major accomplishments.

Outline the events that led the Continental Congress (and Americans in general) to support a break from England.
Explain the Townshend Duty Act and why Americans resisted this trade tax even though it was an external tax.

Explain the causes of the Boston Tea Party in terms of the provisions of the Tea Act of 1773 and its economic impact in the Boston area.

List the Intolerable Acts and explain their purpose as well as their impact on Britain’s relationship with the American colonies.

Identify General Gage and discuss the principal events leading to the beginning of armed conflict at Lexington and Concord.

Explain the circumstances and impact of the Battles of Lexington and Concord and explain why these opening shots are referred to as “the shots heard ’round the world.”

Identify Thomas Paine and explain the impact of his pamphlet Common Sense on the American movement toward independence.

Analyze the major elements of the Declaration of Independence and what Jefferson accomplished in each.

Identify the Loyalist populations in the American colonies and describe their responses to the deteriorating relations between the colonies and Britain by the mid-1770s.

Explain the importance of the colonies’ alliance with France in the Revolutionary War.

Comment on the political division within the American colonies regarding resistance to British policy and define the Whig and Tory factions.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Were British political leaders or American agitators more to blame for the imperial crisis?

   British political leaders seemed unaware of the damage their actions were doing to their relationship with the American colonists, and it was this attitude that was most responsible for the imperial crisis. Americans were angered by the idea that the British Parliament represented them, but Britain took no actions to change this situation and give the colonies any sort of official say in their politics. This situation was exacerbated when England maintained an expensive standing army in the colonies and taxed colonial goods to gain the revenue it needed to pay for the Seven Years’ War with France. American agitators responded to these perceived injustices, which British politicians did not alter until it was far too late—in fact, they imposed more taxes and limitations on the colonists, ending with the Prohibitory Act in 1775. Had British political leaders been more attuned to the concerns of and demands from the American colonists, the imperial crisis could possibly have been avoided, or at least deferred.

2. With more enlightened leadership, could the king and Parliament have preserved Britain’s American empire?
Perhaps, with more enlightened leadership, Britain could have extended the life of her American empire. However, the growing sense of unity among the colonies, an increasingly strong sense of identity as Americans, and the value that Americans placed on individual rights and liberties would have eventually caused rebellion against Britain. The Revolutionary War took place at a time when Enlightenment ideas about freedom, extolled by Thomas Paine in his pamphlet *Common Sense*, resonated with colonists who were tired of British rule for both practical (the financial burden of taxes) and ideological (their lack of direct representation in government) reasons. For the colonists, rule by Britain fundamentally no longer made sense.

3. Did Lexington and Concord make national independence inevitable?

National independence was inevitable before Lexington and Concord. The British had instituted, and continued to enforce, taxes on the colonists against which the colonists had violently rebelled (as in the case of the Boston Tea Party), and had not addressed the colonists’ concerns about representation in government. Lexington and Concord were simply the spark that set off the war for independence.

4. Given the logistical problems facing the British, could they have possibly won the Revolutionary War?

No, the British could not have won the Revolutionary War. During the war, Britain also faced challenges to its other colonies from France and Spain, which had allied themselves with the Americans. However, the British put the majority of their forces to use fighting the colonists: At one point during the war, there were more British forces in New York than in London. The American population was too large, too varied, too distant from British culture, and too ideologically set on independence to continue to exist as a British colony, no matter how much military power the British could muster.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

Based on the Joseph Ellis book, this set of videos explores six moments that dramatically impacted American history. Showcased are such founding fathers as Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison.

This film explores the life of America’s first president, offering both personal and professional perspectives on the man who originated the American presidency.

This episode from the PBS series on the American Revolution explores prerevolutionary politics in the colonies, focusing on the Stamp Act and the Boston Tea Party.

CLASS EXERCISES

Have half of the class watch *The Crossing*, and the other half watch either *Revolution* or *The Patriot*. Discuss the accuracy of these films in portraying the Revolutionary experience.

Was the American Revolution “revolutionary”? Have students look at the nature of British colonial administration and explain how it contributed to the American love of liberty. In fighting for independence and freedom, were the colonists fighting for something with which they were unfamiliar? Were they fighting for political change or for a status of independence they had come to expect by the mid-eighteenth century?

Examine the military depositions regarding the incident known as the Boston Massacre, the reports during the trial by Boston witnesses, the final decision by the court, and the engraving by Paul Revere. Debate whether the trial proceedings were fair and whether the court decision served justice.

Have the class research web and library sources on the causes of the Revolution. Divide the class into thirds, one defending loyalty to the crown, one defending the need to rebel, and one that is neutral about the political question and wants to be left alone. Have either a panel discussion or debate on whether war is necessary to correct the problems encountered in the colonies.

If you live in the East, you can visit such Revolutionary sites as Philadelphia, Boston, Cowpens, and Lexington and Concord, as well as battle sites at Bunker Hill (Breed’s Hill), Saratoga, Trenton, Valley Forge, Brandywine, and Yorktown. What interpretation is provided at these sites? Which “American Revolution” is presented? Is there any indication of the social tensions of the inner war? How do you explain the approach taken at these Revolutionary-era sites?

Films such as *The American Revolution, 1770–1783: A Conversation with Lord North; Song of Molasses; Cry Riot* (about the Sugar and Stamp acts); and *The American Revolution: The Cause of Liberty* can be used to stimulate a discussion of the English perspective and view of colonial protests as well as the colonists’ own view of their grievances. This can be followed by a lecture on the role of violence and mob action in American history.

*Estate Inventories of Early Virginians*. This is an interactive exercise that uses documents from the Library of Congress to examine the estate inventories of three elite Virginians—George Eaton, William Ireland, and Charles Burges—and in so doing gives students a personal look into the daily lives of the colonies elites and allows them to re-create their lives and the world in which they lived.
MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

- Read the Document: James Otis, The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved
- Read the Document: Benjamin Franklin, Testimony Against the Stamp Act (1766)
- Listen to the Audio File: “The Liberty Song”
- Read the Document: *Boston Gazette* Description of the Boston Massacre
- Read the Document: Thomas Paine, A Freelance Writer Urges His Readers to Use Common Sense
- Watch the Video: The American Revolution As Different Americans Saw It
- View the Map: The American Revolution
- Complete the Assignment: Spain’s Contribution to American Independence
CHAPTER 6

THE REPUBLICAN EXPERIMENT

CHAPTER OUTLINE

A NEW POLITICAL MORALITY

DEFINING REPUBLICAN CULTURE

LIVING IN THE SHADOW OF REVOLUTION

• Social and Political Reform
• African Americans in the New Republic
• The Challenge of Women’s Rights

THE STATES: EXPERIMENTS IN REPUBLICANISM

• Blueprints for State Government
• Natural Rights and the State Constitutions
• Power to the People

STUMBLING TOWARD A NEW NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

• Articles of Confederation
• Western Land: Key to the First Constitution
• Northwest Ordinance: The Confederation’s Major Achievement

STRENGTHENING FEDERAL AUTHORITY

• The Nationalist Critique
• Diplomatic Humiliation
“HAVE WE FUGHT FOR THIS?”

- The Genius of James Madison
- Constitutional Reform
- The Philadelphia Convention
- Inventing a Federal Republic
- Compromise Saves the Convention
- Compromising on Slavery
- The Last Details
- We, the People

WHOSE CONSTITUTION? STRUGGLE FOR RATIFICATION

- Federalists and Antifederalists
- Adding the Bill of Rights

CONCLUSION: SUCCESS DEPENDS ON THE PEOPLE

FEATURE ESSAY: THE ELUSIVE CONSTITUTION

OPENING THEME

“NECESSARY AND PROPER”

The men who wrote the Constitution in Philadelphia in 1787 created a strong central government, but they did not, or could not, abolish the strong state governments that already existed. As a result, the United States has a federal system of government that many students do not quite understand.

Because every American today is keenly aware of the power of the federal government, it is a good idea to remind students that Congress can pass laws only within the jurisdiction granted to it by Article 1, section 8 of the Constitution. Congress cannot do whatever it wants to do, no matter how praiseworthy its intention. Congress cannot, for example, make racial discrimination a crime in all cases, or outlaw fur coats, or ban smoking everywhere, or legislate equalized educational funding. The state governments must legislate in most areas of health and safety if there is to be any regulation at all.

Many students have heard of the last section of Article 1, section 8, commonly called the “elastic clause,” which allows Congress to pass whatever laws are “necessary and proper,” but the clause restricts Congress to passing only those laws that are necessary and proper means to achieve the ends listed in Article 1, section 8. One excellent illustration of how the elastic clause should be interpreted comes from the dispute between Hamilton and Jefferson over the constitutionality of the Bank of the United States.
As chartered by Congress, the Bank, a privately owned institution, was allowed to collect federal taxes and hold the money until the government called for it. Jefferson argued that it was unconstitutional to use a private bank as a government collection agency. He did not completely reject the notion that Congress had “implied” powers. He pointed out that because Article 1, section 8 gave Congress power to raise an army, it could be implied that the Constitution gave Congress power to draft people into military service, as a draft was clearly a “necessary and proper” means of raising an army. Jefferson, however, could not see why the Bank was “necessary” to collect taxes. Hamilton, in reply, objected that Jefferson used the word “necessary” in too restrictive a sense. The word did not always mean “indispensable” in common speech; it often meant no more than “useful,” as in the statement, “I need to wash my hair tonight.” According to Hamilton, Congress could raise taxes without using the Bank as a collection agency if it chose, but because the Bank was a useful way of collecting taxes, it was one of several legitimate means that Congress could opt to use. Hamilton’s argument has become the accepted way of reading the elastic clause, but it should be emphasized that even Hamilton did not argue that Congress could go beyond the powers listed in Article 1, section 8.

It might astound your students to learn that they live under a federal government of limited powers, but they will be better citizens for the lesson.

A NEW POLITICAL MORALITY

The author begins with the debate in Philadelphia in 1786 over a proposal to repeal the ban on stage plays. In Quaker times, the theater was considered sinful. After the Revolution, some wanted to continue the ban on the grounds that plays were frivolous and incompatible with “republican” simplicity. Others argued that the Revolution was all about individual freedom. The theme of this chapter is the conflict about the meaning of the Revolution.

DEFINING REPUBLICAN CULTURE

Americans were divided over the relative importance of individual liberty and social order, the right of private property, and the ideal of equality. A series of controversies resulted, shaping the governments created during and after the war for independence.

LIVING IN THE SHADOW OF REVOLUTION

The American Revolution, which might seem tame in comparison with revolutions that have taken place in other countries throughout history, changed American society in unexpected ways.
Social and Political Reform

Among the major reforms of American society were changes in the laws of inheritance, more liberal voting qualifications, better representation for frontier settlers, and separation of church and state.

African Americans in the New Republic

During the Revolution, African Americans demanded the natural right to be free. The Northern states responded by gradually abolishing slavery. Abolition also became a subject of serious debate in the South, but economic motives overcame republican ideals.

The Challenge of Women’s Rights

Women also demanded the natural right of equality and contributed to the creation of a new society by raising children in households where the republican values of freedom and equality were practiced daily. Women became more assertive in divorcing undesirable mates and in opening their own businesses. Nevertheless, they were still denied their political and legal rights.

THE STATES: EXPERIMENTS IN REPUBLICANISM

The state constitutions adopted during and just after the Revolution were experiments that provided insights and experience later used when constructing a central government.

Blueprints for State Government

Americans wanted written constitutions that would clearly define the rights of the people and the limits of government power. These constitutions were experiments that provided valuable lessons that were later used in constructing the central government.

Natural Rights and the State Constitutions

The state constitutions, in different ways, guaranteed freedom of religion, speech, and the press. Governors were generally weakened, and the elected assemblies were given most power.

Power to the People

Massachusetts developed a procedure for making its constitution that all the other states eventually adopted. A constitution had to be written by a convention specially elected for that purpose and ratified by a referendum of the people.
Because it was widely believed that the early state constitutions were flawed experiments in republican government, some Americans began to argue that a stronger central government was necessary.

STUMBLING TOWARD A NEW NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

The Americans first created a central government to fight for the country's independence, a task that required a highly coordinated effort.

. Articles of Confederation

John Dickinson presented a plan for a strong national government in 1776, but it failed. His proposal to give all the land beyond the Appalachians to Congress angered states like Virginia, and the large states rejected Dickinson’s proposal to continue to give each state equal representation in Congress. After years of debate, the Continental Congress drafted the Articles of Confederation, which gave the central government virtually no power to force the states to do anything. Even so, the states regarded the Articles with suspicion.

. Western Land: Key to the First Constitution

The main delay in ratification of the Articles was the problem regarding ownership of the western lands. Some states such as Maryland had no claim to land beyond their boundaries and argued that the western lands should be given to Congress for the benefit of all Americans. Maryland delayed ratification of the Articles until 1781, when Virginia agreed to renounce claims to the West. Other states followed Virginia’s example, and Congress wound up owning all the land west of the Appalachian Mountains.

. Northwest Ordinance: The Confederation’s Major Achievement

The Articles dealt effectively with the western lands, traditionally an area of little law and order. Congress provided local government and the promise of eventual statehood.

To capitalize quickly on its treasure in land, Congress sold over 6 million acres to large land companies. These companies, however, experienced difficulty in attracting immigrants or in controlling the people inhabiting the West. By 1787, Congress realized the need for closer supervision and issued the Northwest Ordinance, providing a new government for the area north of the Ohio River. The Ordinance created a number of territories, each headed by a governor appointed by Congress. As the population of a territory increased, it would acquire the right to more self-rule and eventual statehood.
The Ordinance regulated only those lands north of the Ohio River. Congress took almost no interest in the lands south of the Ohio, resulting in tremendous legal confusion about who owned what. There was even an attempt to establish a new state in the area.

**STRENGTHENING FEDERAL AUTHORITY**

The Congress established by the Articles of Confederation failed to solve America’s economic problems and failed to exert a strong foreign policy.

. The Nationalist Critique

The new government inherited an empty treasury and had to cope with severe economic problems, like runaway inflation and massive debts. Without the power to tax, the Congress created by the Articles could not cope with the situation. A group of “nationalists,” such as Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, tried to give Congress the authority to collect an “impost” on imported goods. The proposal raised immediate objections that the Congress would become too powerful. It took the vote of just one state, Rhode Island, to kill the impost. As Congress sank further in public esteem and failed even to pay the soldiers’ wages, a group of extreme nationalists plotted to use the army to establish a strong regime. When Washington learned of the plan, called the Newburgh Conspiracy, he squelched it. After a second attempt to give the Congress an impost failed, the nationalists considered the Articles of Confederation hopelessly defective.

. Diplomatic Humiliation

Congress presented such a weak face to the world that other nations were able to insult the United States without fear. England, for example, kept troops on American soil even after the peace treaty. When Spain suddenly closed New Orleans to American commerce in 1784, Congress sent John Jay to Madrid to negotiate a treaty that would reopen the Mississippi to Americans. Instead, Jay signed an agreement that ignored the problem of the Mississippi in exchange for commercial advantages benefiting the Northeast (the Jay–Gardoqui Treaty). The people of the West and South denounced the treaty and forced Congress to reject it.

**“HAVE WE FOUGHT FOR THIS?”**

By 1785, thoughtful Americans feared for the future of the United States and realized that a strong central government had become a necessity. This section describes the political ideology behind the Constitution.
The difficulties experienced by Americans in the 1780s grew in part from their republican ideals. Because they had believed themselves to be virtuous, they had constructed governments that placed no check on the popular will. But the American people soon realized that they did not always behave as virtuous republicans and that they needed a stronger government. James Madison was especially important in recasting American political ideas away from the dogma that only small republics could be free and democratic.

 Constitutional Reform

During a convention held at Annapolis, Maryland, in 1786, the nationalists agreed to meet again in Philadelphia to scrap the Articles of Confederation and write a new constitution. Before the Philadelphia convention met, a tax protest in Massachusetts turned violent (Shays’s Rebellion). Although the incident was minor, the nationalists feared it was the beginning of America’s slide into anarchy. The crisis atmosphere persuaded many Americans to support a strong central government.

 The Philadelphia Convention

During the spring of 1787, fifty-five delegates, representing all the states except Rhode Island, opened proceedings. The delegates, including people like Washington, Franklin, Hamilton, and Madison, were men of wide and practical experience.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

 Inventing a Federal Republic

Madison introduced the Virginia Plan, a proposal to create a central government that could veto all acts of the state governments. The central government would have two houses made up of state representatives. The larger the state, the more representatives it would have in these houses. The chief executive would be appointed by Congress. The small states objected to key provisions of the Virginia Plan for fear they would lose their separate identities. They pushed instead for the New Jersey Plan, which would have given Congress greater taxing powers, but would have left the Articles of Confederation basically untouched.

 Compromise Saves the Convention

The controversy over the two plans ended in compromise. The House of Representatives would be based on population, a victory for the large states, but each state would have two representatives in the Senate, a victory for the small states.
. Compromising on Slavery

Although the convention produced a new Constitution, the need to compromise permitted the slave trade to continue for another twenty years.

G. The Last Details

In the last weeks of the convention, the delegates hammered out a system for electing the president and translated their various compromises into a written document.

H. We, the People

Instead of submitting its work to Congress or the state legislatures, the convention gave the power of ratification to special conventions to be elected in each state. As soon as nine such conventions approved the Constitution, it would go into effect.

**WHOSE CONSTITUTION? STRUGGLE FOR RATIFICATION**

The nationalists who wrote the Constitution now needed state conventions to adopt it.

. Federalists and Antifederalists

Those opposed to the Constitution, unfairly called Antifederalists, came close to defeating it. They distrusted any government removed from direct control of the people and suspected that the new Constitution had been written by the rich and powerful for their own benefit. The Federalists, however, enjoyed the support of most of the news media of the time and were well organized. Starting with Delaware, the ratifying conventions approved the Constitution, and by June 1788, only North Carolina and Rhode Island had not done so.

B. Adding the Bill of Rights

The Antifederalists lost the ratification battle, but because of them, the nationalists had to promise to add a bill of rights to the Constitution. By 1791, the first ten amendments had been added.

**CONCLUSION: SUCCESS DEPENDS ON THE PEOPLE**

In the 1780s, the American people met the challenge of self-government. When they discovered that it was dangerous to give themselves too much power, they created governments regulated by a system of checks and balances that protected the people from themselves.
The ratification of the Constitution closed an era of protest, revolution, and political experimentation. The future seemed to belong to the free people of a strong nation.

FEATURE ESSAY: THE ELUSIVE CONSTITUTION

The Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787 was a secretive affair, and only three delegates kept notes of the proceedings: the convention secretary, William Jackson, Robert Yates, and James Madison. Although Madison’s notes in particular give insight into the proceedings, they are biased in what they include and in what detail it is covered. Because each element of the Constitution is the product of compromise, there never was a single original intent to which contemporary lawmakers can refer for guidance.

LECTURE TOPICS

Discuss the debate over the ratification of the Constitution. Who were the Federalists? Who were the Antifederalists? How did the regional and socioeconomic backgrounds of the two factions define their political views? What factors contributed to the Federalists’ success? Use this opportunity to set the stage for future battles by the common man to effect political change (for example, the Jeffersonian revolution of 1800, the Jacksonian era, and the Populist movement of the late nineteenth century). How has agrarian political influence changed over time?

The Constitution is now the oldest written document of government in the world. What has enabled it to survive as the basic instrument of government of a country that evolved from thirteen states huddled on the Eastern seaboard into a nation that spans a continent?

Although the Constitutional era is mostly discussed and studied in terms of the events that led to the formation of the nation’s political structures, the common people were not inactive. What role did everyday Americans play in defining the character and direction of the nation? How were they both involved in and distant from the grand narrative taking place in the halls of power?

Prepare a lecture on the nature of early state constitutions and their historical and political importance as the link between two eras in American constitutional history. Point out the roots of state constitutions in the original colonial charters as well as their use at the Constitutional Convention as models on which to base the new federal document. Choose a state such as Connecticut and provide students with copies of the original colonial charter and the original state constitution and have them comment on the similarities. What characteristics of the state constitution predict the United States Constitution?

The Articles of Confederation are often dismissed as the failed first attempt by Americans to create a federal government. Prepare a presentation on the successes of the Confederation Congress ruling under the Articles. Point out the successful negotiation of the Peace of Paris of 1783, which awarded to the United States all of the western lands east of the Mississippi River. Place special emphasis on the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, pointing out its re-adoption by Congress under the new Constitution; the
continued use of its plan for admitting states to the union; and the legal precedent it established for Congressional regulation of slavery.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)**

Discuss the impact of the American Revolution on the institution of slavery. Focus particularly on the abolition of slavery north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Often, the emancipation of slaves by northern states after the Revolution was based on the principle of gradual emancipation. How effective was gradual emancipation as a means of liberating slaves? What motivated the northern interest in emancipation: concern for the individuals enslaved, or the desire to eliminate the troubling institution of slavery from its borders?

Prepare a class discussion focusing on the concept of federalism. What is the meaning of the term, and what characteristic of the American political system does it describe? How does the movement from the Articles of Confederation to the Constitution reflect eighteenth-century American concerns about federal versus state and local power? To what extent is American fear of centralized power rooted in American colonial and revolutionary experience? Do ambiguities regarding this balance of power persist today? Invite students to comment on how modern-day Democrats and Republicans disagree on this issue. How is this disagreement reflected in their views on current political issues?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)**

Discuss the importance of sectionalism as a political force in the late eighteenth century. How did sectionalism impact foreign affairs? What decisions were made by the Confederation Congress and the Constitutional Convention that would aggravate sectional tensions in the future?

Prepare a class discussion on the socioeconomic backgrounds of the framers of the Constitution, perhaps having the students read an excerpt from Charles Beard’s *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* before the class. Was there a connection in the late eighteenth century between wealth and the rising interest in nationalism among some Americans? How could a strong federal government provide security for the upper class? Was the U.S. Constitution conceived as an elitist document?

**CONNECTING TO THE PAST**

The men who wrote the Constitution seem like mythic figures today, and, in fact, they were quite interesting men. The debates in the Philadelphia convention show individuals groping for the solution to problems that seemed intractable. On June 1, 1787, for example, the delegates debated whether there should be one chief executive or two. Should he, or they, serve for three years or seven? Today it seems natural to have one person serve for four years, but reading through the debates helps to remind us that whereas we have the answers, the men in Philadelphia had the questions. The standard source for the Philadelphia Convention is Max Farrand (ed.), *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1911).
It should be remembered that each state held a ratifying convention where, again, men walked into the unknown with only the light of experience to guide their steps. In recent times, historians have become more sympathetic to the fears expressed by the opponents of the Constitution, and it is interesting to hear what revolutionary heroes like Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams disliked about the new government. The standard source is Jonathan Elliot (ed.), *The Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution . . .* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1859). Elliot is being superseded by the monumental *Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, begun by Merrill Jensen in 1972 and being carried to completion by John Kaminski and Gaspare Saladino.

**POINTS OF MASTERY**

Explain the American philosophy of republicanism embraced during the Revolution.

Describe the generally held beliefs in America regarding who should vote and who should hold political office. Explain the differences in the qualifications for the two.

Describe the status of women in America after the Revolution.

Understand the Revolution’s impact on slavery and the issue of emancipation.

What are some of the conditions for a movement or activism to abolish slavery? Why did the movement to abolish slavery take different forms in different places?

Identify the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation as a tool of government and connect the weaknesses of the document to its eventual failure.

Identify Robert Morris and explain his proposals to improve the nation’s financial condition.

Understand how provisions in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 led to sectionalism during the nineteenth century.

Discuss the issues surrounding American access to the Mississippi River.

Outline the components of Hamilton’s financial plan for addressing the public debt.

Briefly explain the historical significance of the Annapolis Convention as a prelude to the Constitutional Convention.

Explain the historical significance of Shays’s Rebellion and understand why historians consider it a catalyst in the movement toward a new United States constitution.

Explain the provisions of the Great Compromise and point out the ways in which it drew from both the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan.

Discuss the impact of sectionalism and slavery on the proceedings of the Constitutional Convention.
Describe the constitutional provisions for a national executive.

Compare and contrast the fundamental provisions of the Articles of Confederation and the U.S. Constitution.

Describe the characteristics of the state constitutions that emerged after 1776.

Explain the concept of federalism and understand how both the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution provided for federal forms of government.

Identify the two factions that emerged during the debate over the ratification of the Constitution.

Outline the provisions of the Bill of Rights.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. What factors kept African Americans and women from achieving full political equality in the United States following the Revolution?

After the Revolution, Americans were divided about how to handle the question of slavery. The institution of slavery directly contradicted the republican principles on which the nation was founded, and African Americans actively pushed for abolition. However, many groups, primarily planters in the South whose industry relied on slave labor, but also recent immigrants in the North who did not want to compete with African Americans for jobs, opposed the abolition of slavery. The fact that most whites of the period, even if they did believe that slavery should be abolished, did not consider blacks to be their equals, undermined the cause of abolition. Because the states needed to compromise to write the Constitution, slavery remained in place.

Women faced a similar situation to African Americans. In the new republic, women increasingly shared power with their husbands in the home. They were particularly valued as mothers whose guidance would shape the next generation of Americans. However, as with African Americans, the idea of too much change was threatening to the white men who wrote the Constitution and defined the new republic. In spite of the republic’s new values, popular sentiment did not hold women or African Americans to be equal to white men, which prevented these groups from achieving full political equality.

2. During the Revolution and immediately afterward, why would so many Americans have opposed the establishment of a strong national government?

In the Revolutionary War, Americans fought to free themselves from a strong central government; as a result, they feared that if they established such a government for themselves the situation could quickly become similar to the monarchy they had rejected. Additionally, during this period Americans identified strongly with, and were most interested in the politics
of, their individual states. These states had very different priorities and concerns, and none wanted to compromise their desires to help the others.

3. Why did Thomas Jefferson fear that the new Constitution compromised the republican ideal of government by the people?

One of Jefferson’s concerns with the new Constitution was its stance on the western territories. Jefferson worried that expanding the country, and therefore the vote, to these relatively unsettled and lawless areas would weaken what he envisioned as a nation of yeoman farmers and business owners. He also worried about the moral character of those in the central government. Character, in Jefferson’s view, was the defining trait of individual Americans and of the American government, and if those with a great amount of power did not exemplify this character, the voice of the people would become secondary to individual interests.

4. Since the Federalists and Antifederalists both believed in a republican form of government, why could they not agree on the new Constitution?

Federalists and the Antifederalists disagreed bitterly about how much power the central government should be granted. The Federalists supported the new Constitution, which clearly united the individual states under a central authority. They believed that the government created by the Constitution was the government that would most benefit the individual states and individual citizens.

In contrast, the Antifederalists believed that the strong federal government created by the Constitution could infringe on states’ rights and create corruption and unchecked authority among those in power. They worried that control of government could easily be taken from the people and concentrated in the hands of a few. Both groups wanted government by the people, and agreed that there should be a central government, but the nature of and power given to this central government was the cause of debate and disagreement between these two groups.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

This six-part series presents the History Channel’s look at the birth of the American nation.

This episode features the unique love and friendship between John and Abigail Adams.

This six-hour video chronicles the birth of the American republic from the prelude of the revolution through independence and the adoption of the Constitution.
CLASS EXERCISES

Structure a creative controversy focusing on the debate over ratification of the Constitution. Divide the class into an even number of small groups. Have half the groups examine the Federalist argument supporting ratification and the other half examine the Antifederalist argument against ratification. Pair the groups (one Federalist group with one Antifederalist group) and have them debate the issue. Finally, have the groups switch sides and debate again. In this way, all students must argue both sides of the issue.

Write a paper describing the status of free African Americans in the North after the Revolution. How did the number of free African Americans change after 1783? What did freedom mean to African Americans in the northern United States after the Revolution? Were northern supporters of emancipation necessarily supporters of racial equity? How does racism figure into these issues?

MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

- Read the Document: Phillis Wheatley, *Religious and Moral Poems*
- Read the Document: The Articles of Confederation
- Read the Document: Northwest Ordinance (July 3, 1787)
- View the Map: Western Land Claims Ceded by the States
- Read the Document: Military Reports of Shays’s Rebellion
- Read the Document: The New Jersey Plan (1787)
- Watch the Video: Slavery and the Constitution
- Complete the Assignment: The Elusive Constitution: Search for Original Intent
- Read the Document: *Federalist Paper* No. 51 (Feb. 6, 1788)
- Read the Document: The Bill of Rights (1789)
CHAPTER 7

DEMOCRACY AND DISSENT: THE VIOLENCE OF PARTY POLITICS, 1788–1800

CHAPTER OUTLINE

FORCE OF PUBLIC OPINION

PRINCIPLE AND PRAGMATISM: ESTABLISHING A NEW GOVERNMENT

CONFLICTING VISIONS: JEFFERSON AND HAMILTON

HAMILTON’S PLAN FOR PROSPERITY AND SECURITY

• Funding and Assumption
• Interpreting the Constitution: The Bank Controversy
• Setback for Hamilton

CHARGES OF TREASON: THE BATTLE OVER FOREIGN AFFAIRS

• The Peril of Neutrality
• Jay’s Treaty Sparks Domestic Unrest
• Pushing the Native Americans Aside
• A New Revolution in the Americas

POPULAR POLITICAL CULTURE

• Informing the Public: News and Politics
• Whiskey Rebellion: Charges of Republican Conspiracy
• Washington’s Farewell

THE ADAMS PRESIDENCY

• The XYZ Affair and Domestic Politics
• Crushing Political Dissent
• Silencing Political Opposition: The Alien and Sedition Acts
• Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions
• Adams’s Finest Hour
OPENING THEME

HAMILTON AND JEFFERSON

Biography is the most popular form of history, and college students love to display their skills at psychoanalysis. They should be encouraged to explain why Hamilton and Jefferson differed so much in terms of character. It might be a good idea, though, to have those interested in the exercise first read James Flexner on Hamilton and Dumas Malone on Jefferson, so that they have some substance to their speculations.

Certain objective facts explain why Hamilton was so much more nationalistic than Jefferson. Hamilton was born on the island of Nevis and came to the mainland as a sixteen-year-old immigrant in 1773. He resided in New York, but formed no deep attachment to that colony and soon left to join the Continental Army, the great school of American nationalism. Like many other officers, Hamilton felt that the war effort was hampered by the narrow, self-interested view that the states took whenever they were asked to provide the army with money or supplies. Jefferson, on the other hand, was a third-generation Virginian who had spent seven years in the House of Burgesses before the United States came into being. During the war he sat in Congress and served the new nation as an ambassador to France and England, but he also served as governor of his state, and his first and deepest loyalty remained to Virginia.

The differences between Hamilton and Jefferson on issues of public policy are, of course, important, but the differences in the character of the two men are fascinating, and students might want to spend some time on that subject.

Hamilton was born out of wedlock, and when he was only ten years old his parents separated, an event the young boy blamed on his mother. Shortly after, Hamilton’s mother died suddenly, perhaps still unforgiven. Was Hamilton’s inability to trust others his continued judgment on a faithless mother? Hamilton grew up in actual poverty, but both of his parents had descended from wealthy families and described to their son their own childhoods, filled with ease and comfort. In his pretensions to gentility and his contempt for poverty, was Hamilton rejecting the childhood he had suffered and living the childhood he should have had by right? Hamilton entered an unloving marriage for money and carried on a sordid affair with a woman who blackmailed him. Is there something telling about the connection between sex and money that marked his life? Hamilton died in a duel that he could have avoided, and in which he made no effort to shoot at his rival, Aaron Burr. Hamilton stood still, waiting to be shot. He once said that he hoped “to make a brilliant exit” from the world. Students may wonder why.
Jefferson had an altogether more pampered childhood. His earliest memory was of being carried on a pillow by one of his parents’ slaves, and he grew up surrounded by people who had to work so that a few, like himself, had the opportunity to develop their minds and spirits. Was Jefferson commenting on himself when he later complained that white Southern children were spoiled by slaves? After falling in love a dozen times as a young man, Jefferson married a woman for whom he cared deeply. He and his wife enjoyed a common passion for music and raised a large family. When his wife died after ten years of marriage, Jefferson was genuinely grief-stricken, but he always found women to comfort him. He may have had an affair with Maria Cosway, a woman he met while he was ambassador to France, and he was intimate for years with Sally Hemings, with whom he had several children. Jefferson would not defy social conventions by marrying Hemings or by acknowledging her as his mistress because she was, according to Virginia’s racial laws, a “black” woman despite having had a “white” father. Nevertheless, according to her own testimony, Jefferson’s relationship with her was based on mutual love. Was it the company of adoring women that made Jefferson so self-assured and generous, so passionate a man of classical tastes? Jefferson became one of the most successful and popular presidents in our history, but he was lucky to have inherited a government that Hamilton had done much to establish. In his last years, Jefferson lived in retirement, revered by his country and honored around the world. It seems somehow appropriate that he died quietly in bed, exactly fifty years to the day after Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence. He was one of Fortune’s favorites.

FORCE OF PUBLIC OPINION

The author starts this chapter with the problem debated in the First Congress about the appropriate way to address Washington when he came to deliver a speech. “The president” seemed demeaning to some congressmen, but “Your Excellency” seemed too regal to others. The debate illustrates the theme of this chapter, the contested meaning of the American Revolution. The Hamiltonians, or Federalists, stressed the need to create a national economy to preserve the independence of the United States. The Jeffersonians, or Republicans, preferred to keep government small, local, and responsive. Federalists and Republicans agreed on ends, but differed about means.

PRINCIPLE AND PRAGMATISM: ESTABLISHING A NEW GOVERNMENT

George Washington was unanimously elected president in 1789 and gave the new government all the weight of his great reputation. He had an instinctive grasp of the power of political symbolism, and made two grand tours of all the states during his term in office. It was confidently expected that the voters would rally around such an imposing figure, and trust the government to work for the general welfare.
CONFLICTING VISIONS: JEFFERSON AND HAMILTON

The development of political parties began with the policies endorsed by Alexander Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury, and opposed by Thomas Jefferson, the Secretary of State. Hamilton wanted a strong central government, much like the English system. Jefferson believed that a new age of liberty was beginning that would make government less necessary. Hamilton hoped to make the United States a strong commercial and industrial power, whereas Jefferson hoped the United States would remain a nation of small, independent farmers. Hamilton worried that democracy would lead to anarchy; Jefferson trusted the common people. These differences, clear in retrospect, became obvious to the two men most involved only over time, as events forced the federal government to make important decisions.

HAMILTON’S PLAN FOR PROSPERITY AND SECURITY

The greatest problem inherited by the new government was the federal debt. As Secretary of the Treasury, Hamilton had to make provision for repayment. The central government owed $54 million and the states an additional $25 million. Hamilton put together a financial program that contained two proposals, “funding” and “assumption.” He also asked Congress for a national bank and government aid to manufacturing. This section treats these proposals in detail and explains why they attracted opposition.

A. Funding and Assumption

Hamilton’s Report on the Public Credit (1790) recommended that Congress redeem its debts at face value, even though most of the people holding the certificates of debt had bought them at discount. James Madison broke with Hamilton on this issue. Madison tried unsuccessfully to have Congress pay less to the present holders of the certificates to pay something to the individuals who had been forced by poverty to sell the certificates to speculators.

Assumption meant that the federal government would become liable for the states’ debts. Some states, such as Virginia, had already paid off their debts and would gain nothing from assumption. Some speculators opposed assumption because they used depreciated state debt certificates for their own profit. Madison organized the anti-Hamilton forces and defeated assumption in the House of Representatives. Hamilton salvaged the program by giving Virginia some money and by agreeing to locate the new capital on the Potomac River.

B. Interpreting the Constitution: The Bank Controversy

Hamilton also proposed that Congress charter a national bank. The bank, although privately owned, would work closely with the government. Madison believed that the bank would benefit only the rich. Jefferson did not think that the Constitution gave
Congress the power to charter a private business. When Congress did charter the bank, Washington asked his cabinet to advise him on the constitutional question. Hamilton’s response was to interpret the Constitution broadly, as giving Congress implied powers. Washington accepted this argument, but public opinion began to turn against Hamilton.

Setback for Hamilton

Hamilton next asked Congress to enact a program favorable to manufacturing, but opposition had now become organized. Madison raised the prospect of having the central government become more powerful than the individual state governments. Jefferson warned that the rise of cities would destroy agriculture and the civic virtue that farming instilled. Hamilton’s recommendations were defeated.

CHARGES OF TREASON: THE BATTLE OVER FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Foreign affairs engendered a different set of problems. The United States had to respond to the wars set off in Europe by the French Revolution, but Hamilton and Jefferson disagreed on the proper course of action. This section describes how foreign affairs divided Americans into two parties: Republicans stood for states’ rights, strict interpretation of the Constitution, and friendship with France; Federalists stood for a strong national government, central economic planning, social order, and friendship with England.

The Peril of Neutrality

Americans wanted to remain neutral when France and England went to war in 1793, but both sides made that difficult. The French sent diplomat Edmond Genet to America, where he insulted the Washington administration. The English created more serious problems. England still occupied American soil in the Northwest and violated maritime rights. Jefferson wanted to punish England by cutting off trade, but Hamilton felt that the United States must appease England because the mother country was so strong.

Jay’s Treaty Sparks Domestic Unrest

England’s provocations called for strong action. Washington sent John Jay to England to demand removal of the English from American soil, payment for ships illegally seized, better commercial relations, and acceptance of the United States as a neutral nation. Jay, however, had no chance to secure a favorable treaty because Hamilton had secretly informed the English government that the United States would compromise. Jay agreed to a treaty that gave the United States virtually nothing.
Washington disliked the proposed treaty, but sent it to the Senate where it was ratified by the smallest possible margin. When newspapers learned the contents of the treaty, they viciously attacked it and even criticized Washington. In attacking Washington, the opposition had gone too far. The nation rallied behind its greatest man, and the Federalists used the opportunity to portray the Republicans as traitors. The rift between the parties deepened.

Pushing the Native Americans Aside

Ironically, the unpopular Jay Treaty brought advantages to the United States in the West. English posts in the Northwest Territory had supplied and encouraged Native American raids on American settlements. The U.S. Army failed to defeat the Native Americans until the battle of Fallen Timbers (1794), which led to the Treaty of Greenville and Native American removal from what is now Ohio. While the Native Americans were in this desperate condition, the English deserted them and pulled back into Canada.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

In the Southwest, news of Jay’s Treaty was interpreted by the Spanish as an Anglo-American alliance against Spain. To prevent this, the Spanish suddenly offered to open the Mississippi, to settle the disputed border between Spanish Florida and the United States, and to cease supplying the Native Americans. These offers resulted in the Treaty of San Lorenzo (Pinckney’s Treaty).

A New Revolution in the Americas

During the 1790s, another country was involved in a revolution. On the island of Saint-Domingue, African slaves rebelled against their French masters in an effort to form an independent government. This presented a difficult situation for Americans, who had only recently achieved their own independence. However, popular opinion lay with the French, and George Washington gave them America’s support, in part because of fears that slaves in the United States might also take up arms and demand independence. In spite of American aid, the freedom fighters won independence and founded the Republic of Haiti in 1804.

POPULAR POLITICAL CULTURE

This section explains the vehemence of early political conflict, especially when newspapers brought politics into everyday conversation.
Informing the Public: News and Politics

Newspapers were the most influential medium of political controversy. Newspapers, usually shrill in tone and totally partisan, sprung up everywhere. Political clubs also became popular, especially “Democratic” clubs that supported the Republican party.

. Whiskey Rebellion: Charges of Republican Conspiracy

In 1794, a local tax protest in western Pennsylvania was interpreted by the Federalists as a major insurrection instigated by the Republicans. Jefferson, on the other hand, believed that the crisis had been invented by the Federalists as a pretext to create a strong army to intimidate Republicans.

. Washington’s Farewell

In 1796, Washington announced his decision to retire from public life, warning Americans in his “Farewell Address” to avoid forging permanent foreign alliances and to avoid forming political parties. But the timing of Washington’s statement was itself a partisan act because it gave the Republicans no time to organize a presidential campaign in 1796.

THE ADAMS PRESIDENCY

During the John Adams administration, the Federalist party controlled the government and tried to suppress the Republican party. The Federalists failed because they could not remain united.

. The XYZ Affair and Domestic Politics

Because of the Jay Treaty, France began to treat the United States as an unfriendly nation. French vessels even fired on American ships in the Atlantic (the Quasi-War). When Adams sent ambassadors to France, the French government demanded a bribe before negotiations could even begin (the XYZ Affair). Americans were outraged, and Federalists attempted to use anti-French sentiment to crush the Republicans.

. Crushing Political Dissent

The extreme Federalists began to build up the army, even though there was no prospect of a French invasion. The Federalists intended to use the army to stifle international opposition. Hamilton took day-to-day command of the army and filled it with officers loyal to him. All Hamilton needed was a declaration of war against France, but Adams refused to ask for one.
Silencing Political Opposition: The Alien and Sedition Acts

Congress could not declare war, but it did pass a series of acts designed to persecute the Republicans. The Alien Enemies Act and the Alien Act gave the president power to expel any foreigner. The Naturalization Act required immigrants to reside in the United States for fourteen years before becoming eligible for citizenship.

The last act, the Sedition Act, made it a crime to criticize the government. Federal courts became politicized and often enforced this law in absurd ways. Republicans were convinced that free government was on the brink of extinction.

Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions

Jefferson and Madison responded to the Alien and Sedition Acts with the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions (1798). The Kentucky Resolutions, written by Jefferson and passed by the state of Kentucky, claimed that each state had the power to decide whether acts of Congress were constitutional, and if not, to nullify them. Madison’s Virginia Resolutions urged the states to protect their citizens, but did not assert a state’s right to nullify federal law. Jefferson and Madison were less interested at this time in formulating accurate constitutional theory than they were in clarifying the differences between Republicans and Federalists.

Adams’s Finest Hour

In 1799 Adams openly broke with Hamilton. The president sent another delegation to negotiate with France, and this delegation worked out an amicable settlement. The war hysteria against France vanished, and the American people began to regard Hamilton’s army as a useless expense. By avoiding war with France, Adams saved the nation from the schemes of the High Federalists. In return, they made sure he lost the election of 1800.

THE PEACEFUL REVOLUTION: THE ELECTION OF 1800

The Federalists lost the election of 1800 because they were internally divided and generally unpopular. The Republicans won easily and the new president, Thomas Jefferson, tried to unite the nation by stressing in his inaugural address the republican values shared by members of each party.

CONCLUSION: DANGER OF POLITICAL EXTREMISM

The election of 1800 is one of the most important in our history because the transfer of power from Federalists to Republicans was achieved peacefully, but the nation had come dangerously close to suffering the chaos of an ideological civil war.
FEATURE ESSAY: DEFENSE OF SUPERIORITY

Early in America’s history, before the Revolution, comparisons between the plant and animal species found in the Old World and the New World often became nationalistic. The British argued for the superiority of the Old World species, while colonists like Ben Franklin defended and praised the flora and fauna of the New World. Such discourse was also applied to the Native Americans, demonstrating how seemingly harmless displays of patriotism and pride in one’s country (such as which land has superior bears) can turn racist and divisive.

LECTURE TOPICS

Prepare a presentation focusing on Alexander Hamilton’s financial policy and the sources of opposition to it. Who were the major critics of the program, what region of the country did they represent, and what was the socioeconomic background of their constituency? To what extent did the debate over financial policy contribute to the emergence of political parties?

Prepare a lecture that compares and contrasts the various presidencies of the New Republic. List the details of the presidencies of Washington, Adams, and Jefferson. How did the men differ in their mindset and views on class and deference? How did each man achieve political access, and what were each man’s unique ideas about his role in the government? Describe how each man met with controversy and dealt with foreign diplomacy. Also list their most trusted advisors and most problematic political enemies during their presidencies.

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

Have a class discussion focusing on the Whiskey Rebellion. Among questions for student consideration, include the following:

a. Were the people of western Pennsylvania justified in protesting the excise tax on whiskey?
b. Was the Washington administration justified in using force to put down the rebellion?
c. Two men involved in the rebellion were found to be guilty of treason. Did their participation in the rebellion constitute treason? Why or why not?
d. Who were the rebels? What was their socioeconomic background? With which class did the sympathies of the Federalists rest?
e. To what extent is a democratic government obligated to respond to the will of the people? To what extent are the people of a republic bound to support and obey the government they create?
f. What modern-day issues continue to reflect American ambiguities regarding the power of government versus the will of the people?

Have students discuss the Federalist use of the Alien and Sedition Acts against the Republican party. Among questions for consideration are the following:

a. How did Federalists justify the enactment of the Alien and Sedition Acts? How did they justify their use against members of the Republican party?
b. Have students connect the Sedition Act to the Bill of Rights. Was the Sedition Act unconstitutional?
c. Does war, or the threat of war, justify an abridgment of civil liberties? Why or why not? At what point does the exercise of free speech become treasonous? Does freedom of speech take precedence over national security?
d. Tie this issue to the future by discussing World War I and the Sedition Act of 1918. Pass out a copy of both the 1798 act and the 1918 act and ask students to comment on the two. Even though most students will not yet have studied World War I, ask them if they think the two laws were passed under similar circumstances. Was one law more justified than the other? Were both laws justified? Was neither law justified?
e. Have students consider the twenty-first-century war in Iraq. Are current laws or government policies comparable to the Alien and Sedition Acts? How do students feel about Americans who publicly oppose the war? Do actions such as those sanctioned by the Alien and Sedition Acts make the United States safer? What is the impact of such actions on U.S. power in the world?

Compare and contrast the Federalist and Republican parties with the modern-day Republican and Democratic parties. Is there any similarity between the issues that divided Americans in the eighteenth century and the issues that divide Americans today? In making the comparisons, look at policies related to federalism, economics, socioeconomic sympathies, foreign affairs, and regionalism.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Discuss the Louisiana Territory and how the debate over its acquisition reflected changes in the Federalist and Republican parties during the first Jefferson administration. Why did Federalists oppose the purchase? Why did Republicans support it? Comment on the Republicans’ willingness to overlook constitutional issues to preserve relations with France and guarantee the growth of Republican support. To what extent were Federalists sounding like old Republicans and to what extent were Republicans sounding like old Federalists? How did gaining control of the federal government change Republicans?

The election of 1800 marked the first peaceful transfer of power from one party to another. Why this was so merits consideration. Could it be attributed simply to the genius of the Constitution? To the commitment of the Founding Fathers to their country and to the democratic process? Or to the fact that, despite the heated rhetoric, the differences between Federalists and Republicans were not all that great?

Describe the United States’ relationship with foreign countries during the era and specifically outline diplomatic relationships with France, Great Britain, and Spain in the first years of the Republic. How did the Federalists differ from the Republicans regarding each of these nations?

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

Final passage of Hamilton’s financial program resulted from a political deal that won approval of the federal government’s assumption of the states’ debts, while Virginia was promised that the capital of
the United States would be located on the Potomac River. The deal was worked out at a dinner party hosted by Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson wrote two accounts of how the dinner came to be held. The second account, written more than thirty years after the event, differs significantly from the earlier account, but is better known. It might seem improbable that a chance encounter on the streets of New York could lead to a dinner where the future location of the capital of the United States was decided over soup, but politics worked like that then, and probably still does. For Jefferson’s account of the dinner, see *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, edited by Julian Boyd (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), volume 17, pp. 205–208. The Boyd edition of Jefferson’s works is still the standard, but it is being gradually superseded by a new edition edited by Charles Cullen and others.

Another dinner, less momentous, was described in the journal of William Maclay, a crotchety, pure Republican congressman, ever alert to any hint of creeping monarchism in the new nation. He wrote a hilarious description of, among other things, a dinner given by George Washington at which Washington told a feeble joke about a New England farmer. Maclay’s *Diary*, with notes on debates in Congress, has been edited by Kenneth Bowling and Helen Veit (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1988).

**POINTS OF MASTERY**

Explain the reasons why Jefferson believed an agrarian society was essential to political liberty.

Did George Washington, elected unanimously by the Electoral College and dealing with only one party, the Federalists, have an easy time as the first president of the United States?

What were the major crises faced by the Washington administration?

Describe the roles of Madison and Hamilton in the formation of the first American political parties. (Chapter 6 should also be referenced.)

Describe the foreign ministry of John Quincy Adams.

Compare and contrast the family lineage and earlier years of Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton.

Explain the Bank Controversy and differentiate between Madison and Hamilton’s stance during this debate.

Distinguish between the terms “strict interpretation” and “broad interpretation.”

Identify Edmond Genêt and explain his impact on the growing tensions between Federalists and Republicans.

Outline the provisions of Jay’s Treaty and explain why it was poorly received in the United States.
Explain Spain’s reasons for negotiating the Treaty of San Lorenzo.

Explain the circumstances surrounding the Whiskey Rebellion, and discuss its impact.

Describe the events surrounding the election of 1796 and explain what was unusual about its outcome.

Describe the events surrounding the XYZ Affair.

List the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 and explain the provisions of each.

Understand the meaning of the terms “nullification” and “interposition” as they relate to Jefferson and Madison’s Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions.

Define the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions. Describe Jefferson and Madison’s intentions behind these statements.

Discuss the election of 1800 in detail. Briefly discuss the sweeping changes and effects on the nation. How did the candidates differ? How did the views of their parties differ?

Define the term “peaceful revolution.”

Describe the origin of the Twelfth Amendment.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. How were the disagreements between Hamilton and Jefferson a reflection of popular culture in the country during the 1790s?

The disagreements between Hamilton and Jefferson continued many of the disagreements between Federalists and Antifederalists that had divided the country during the writing and ratification of the Constitution. Hamilton favored a strong central government, as did many Americans, and felt some apprehension about “common” Americans having too much power in government. His vision of an America of commercial development, modeled on Britain’s banking and credit system, reflected the views of entrepreneurs and business owners in the United States.

Jefferson, in contrast, reflected the values of the agrarian population. He believed the country’s political future was in the hands of responsible citizens and that its economic future would be found in expanding trade in agricultural products.

Overall, Jefferson trusted the common people and wanted to ensure that they had the most powerful voice in government and the greatest amount of liberty possible. Hamilton spoke for property owners, businesspeople, and those more interested in civil order than in liberty.
2. How did American foreign policy during the 1790s influence the growth of political dissent?

Foreign policy during the 1790s was filled with disagreement over international affairs. In particular, the war between France and England put Americans in the position of siding with one nation or the other, calling those who opposed them traitors. The two major parties in the U.S. took opposing sides: The Republicans sided with France, and the Federalists sided with England. The charges of treason based on which side one supported in a foreign war led to increased political dissent and increased partisanship.

3. How important were popular opinion and party politics in poisoning the Adams presidency?

Although Adams was a successful president, able to avoid what appeared to be inevitable war with France, his actions and policies had divided his party, the Federalists, to the point that it was impossible for him to win reelection in 1800. His most divisive action was dismantling the army that Hamilton, also a Federalist, was building in anticipation of conflict with France. This move had public support, but it lost him the support of important Federalists. Adams had made other unpopular decisions, such as passing the Alien and Sedition Acts, which earned him criticism and ridicule in the public press, but it was his refusal to act according to his party’s policies that lost him reelection and poisoned his presidency most.

4. How could a constitutional republic justify the passage of highly partisan legislation such as the Alien and Sedition Acts?

The only way a republic like the United States could justify such a piece of legislation was through fear. When the public is afraid of war, and feels united against a common enemy (in this case, France), it is more likely to accept the restriction of individual liberties. Examples from later U.S. history support this point: Lincoln’s suspension of habeas corpus, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and the passage of the Patriot Act during the “War on Terror.” However, public opinion was strongly against the Alien and Sedition Acts, and their result was more political dissent, not less.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:


The second episode of Robert Hughes’s series on American art examines the work of the early Republican era. This video looks at the impact of early American political ideals on the development of national art.


Based on the Joseph Ellis book, this set of videos explores six moments that dramatically impacted American history. Showcased are such founding fathers as Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison.

CLASS EXERCISES

Find an Indian treaty for the Native Americans in your region and discover what it suggests about the attitudes and values of both the white and Native American treaty makers.

What is an American? Students should be asked to read several of the leading writings by Crevecoeur, Tocqueville, Hamilton, Jefferson, and others who sought to define an American citizenry and character at a stage when the nation was experiencing growing pains. What is an American? What does the pursuit of an answer tell us about ourselves?

Create a dialogue between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. The students may either write the dialogue or present the material in the form of a debate or theatrical account. Describe their competing visions of the Republic and their ideals on government in general. How did sectionalism play a part in their mindset? How did they differ on deference, economic issues, and foreign diplomacy?

Ask the students to read some of the best-known Federalist Papers (Nos. 10, 51, and 78, for example), analyzing them line by line and paragraph by paragraph to learn how to read important political documents from the time of the nation’s founding. Other crucial documents could include Washington’s Farewell Address, the letters to Washington by Hamilton and Jefferson on the national bank debate, and Jefferson’s Inaugural Address in 1801. In large lecture classes this can be done with an overhead projection of the text.

Although many believe that George Washington was mythologized in the nineteenth century, the process actually began in the Revolutionary period, as a study of graphics suggests. Discuss the process of mythologizing national heroes. Wendy Wick’s *George Washington: An American Icon* has 101 prints, some of which could be reproduced for students to study for themselves or made into slides for a lecture.

MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

- Watch the Video: George Washington: The Father of Our Country
- Read the Document: Alexander Hamilton, Opposing Visions for the New Nation
- Read the Document: Proclamation of Neutrality (1793)
- Read the Document: The Jay Treaty (1794)
- Complete the Assignment: Defense of Superiority: The Impact of Nationalism on Perceptions of the Environment
- Read the Document: The Treaty of Greenville
- Read the Document: The Treaty of San Lorenzo (Pickney’s Treaty) (1796)
- Read the Document: George Washington, Whiskey Rebellion Address to Congress (1794)
• Read the Document: The Alien and Sedition Acts (1798)
• Listen to the Audio File: Jefferson and Liberty
CHAPTER 8

REPUBLICAN ASCENDANCY: THE JEFFERSONIAN VISION

CHAPTER OUTLINE

LIMITS OF EQUALITY

REGIONAL IDENTITIES IN A NEW REPUBLIC

• Westward the Course of Empire
• Native American Resistance
• Commercial Life in the Cities

JEFFERSON AS PRESIDENT

• Jeffersonian Reforms
• The Louisiana Purchase
• The Lewis and Clark Expedition
• Conflict with the Barbary States

JEFFERSON’S CRITICS

• Attack on the Judges
• Politics of Desperation
• Murder and Conspiracy: The Curious Career of Aaron Burr
• The Slave Trade

EMBARRASSMENTS OVERSEAS

• Embargo Divides the Nation
• A New Administration Goes to War
• Fumbling Toward Conflict

THE STRANGE WAR OF 1812

• Hartford Convention: The Demise of the Federalists
• Treaty of Ghent Ends the War

CONCLUSION: REPUBLICAN LEGACY

FEATURE ESSAY: BARBARY PIRATES AND AMERICAN CAPTIVES
OPENING THEME

“YOUNG AMERICA”

College students believe that they belong to a distinct generation, different from the generation that produced their parents and teachers. Furthermore, every college student has been told, more than once, that he or she is destined to become a future leader of this nation. In truth, it is difficult to distinguish between generations, but at least once in our history it can be said that political power passed from one generation to another at a discernible point in time. The experience of that new generation should be of interest to college students today.

The generation of Americans from Ben Franklin (born in 1706) to Alexander Hamilton (born in 1757) won a war for independence and established a nation that has endured strong and free for over two centuries. By 1811, these men and women, leaders and average citizens alike, had served their country well and were becoming part of history. Franklin, the first of this generation, died in 1790; George Washington and Patrick Henry in 1799; Samuel Adams in 1803, and Alexander Hamilton, the youngest of this group, was killed in 1804. Of course, some of the revolutionary generation still lived. Thomas Jefferson, sixty-eight years old, continued to give advice on national affairs.

As the text mentions, the Congress that convened in 1811, the Twelfth Congress, was filled with young men serving for the first time. A new generation of Americans had come on the scene, in Congress and in the country, and they were to shape the destiny of the United States for the next forty years. Of this new generation, the ones who would be best remembered by posterity were Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams, both born in 1767, and the remarkable trio of John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, and Martin Van Buren, all born in 1782.

This new generation experienced the American Revolution in a way their fathers had not. Most knew it only from books or stories told by their elders; even those who had been born before 1776 (like Jackson, who had nearly died in a British prisoner-of-war camp) were only boys when the war ended. For these men, the American Revolution and the adoption of the United States Constitution, its logical conclusion, were great and glorious events. They never understood how difficult it had been to be a “patriot” before 1776, when attachment to the “mother country” ran deep in every American. They never understood how painful the war of independence had been and why it had divided Americans. They never understood that some Americans had preferred the Articles of Confederation to the United States Constitution. It was this new generation that elevated George Washington to a position of demi-divinity and that spoke of the Constitution as if God had given it to Washington on Mount Vernon.

Much of the difficulty between the Twelfth Congress and President Madison, who was sixty years old in 1811, reflected a generation gap. Having lived through the Revolution from beginning to end, the president dreaded another war with England. Even preparations for war raised problems for Madison, who had seen Americans rebel once before against taxes. He doubted that his constituents would ever consent to be heavily taxed by a central government. Clay and Calhoun, who were members of Congress, simply did not understand Madison’s concern. Certainly, Americans would support the
national government, Calhoun replied. It was their government, was it not? And why bother to prepare for a war with England, these young men asked? We had beaten England before; we could easily do it again. Clay boasted that he could conquer Canada with the Kentucky militia.

It is tempting to apply a bit of psychohistory at this point. Can it be that the young men of 1811, so fervent in their praise of their forefathers, felt inadequate in comparison? Was the War of 1812 a psychological necessity for them? And did they proclaim their victory so loudly because they finally felt relieved that they had proved themselves worthy of their fathers?

LIMITS OF EQUALITY

The author begins with a cute story about a maid who refused to think of herself as a servant. In the new America, all people were equal—in ideal. The theme of the chapter is the contradiction between the ideal of equality and the reality of a society in which most people were not equal in wealth or rights.

REGIONAL IDENTITIES IN A NEW REPUBLIC

This section offers an overview of the most important developments that occurred during the period from 1800 to about 1820: prosperity, rapid population growth, especially in the West, and the emergence of sectionalism.

. Westward the Course of Empire

The growth in the West typified the incredible population growth of the whole nation. Areas that had been populated by Indians and fur traders became the states of Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio. The mix of people in the West led to the creation of a new regional culture of a rootless, optimistic folk.

. Native American Resistance

Native Americans stood in the way of westward movement and suffered the consequences. Defrauded and terrorized, some Native Americans resisted. Tecumseh, a Shawnee chief, took up the tomahawk, but was decisively defeated. So, too, were the Creeks. For Thomas Jefferson, and many others, Indian wars were wars of extermination; there could be no coexistence between whites and Native Americans.

. Commercial Life in the Cities

Agriculture and trade, carried on in traditional ways, remained the foundation of the economy. American shipping enjoyed a spurt of prosperity between 1793 and 1805, but suffered when England and France restricted America’s rights as a neutral nation. Cities were closely associated with international trade, but still played a marginal role
in the life of the rest of the nation. Industrialization and mechanization were just beginning to frighten skilled craftsmen.

JEFFERSON AS PRESIDENT

Thomas Jefferson personified the contradictions in Republicanism: He despised ceremonies and formality and dedicated himself to intellectual pursuits; at the same time, he was a politician to the core. He realized that his success as a president depended on close cooperation with Congress.

. Jeffersonian Reforms

Jefferson gave top priority to cutting the federal debt and federal taxes. He trimmed federal expenses, mainly by slashing military spending. Reduction of the army had the further benefit of removing a threat to republican government.

Though badgered by loyal Republicans for political appointments, Jefferson retained only those bureaucrats he thought competent, no matter what their party. His refusal to purge Federalists hastened the demise of the Federalist party. Many of its members retired from public life, and the more ambitious of them, such as John Quincy Adams, became Republicans.

. The Louisiana Purchase

Americans had assumed that they would someday buy or take New Orleans from Spain, which did not have the military strength to resist the United States. In 1801, however, France, which could block America’s westward expansion or close New Orleans, bought Louisiana from Spain.

Jefferson sent a mission to France to buy New Orleans. Napoleon, for reasons of his own, offered to sell all of Louisiana, an area larger than the United States at that time, for only $15 million.

. The Lewis and Clark Expedition

Even before purchasing Louisiana, Jefferson sent an exploring party into the area (the Lewis and Clark Expedition). Their report on its economic prospects reaffirmed Jefferson’s desire that it belong to the United States. When he received the French offer, he worried that Congress might not have the constitutional right to make the purchase, but Jefferson urged Congress to complete the deal anyway, fearing that Napoleon might change his mind. He departed even further from Republican principles when he established a government for the new territory. Because most of the inhabitants were French and Spanish, Jefferson did not entrust them with self-rule, and
the area was governed from Washington. Nonetheless, the American people
thoroughly approved of Jefferson’s actions and reelected him in 1804.

. Conflict with the Barbary States

Jefferson ended his first term by sending the Navy into the Mediterranean to fight the
North African states who demanded tribute from ships sailing through the
Mediterranean.

Although the United States could not defeat the Barbary States, the show of force
induced them to respect American rights. The American people thoroughly approved
Jefferson’s actions, foreign and domestic, and reelected him in 1804.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

JEFFERSON’S CRITICS

The success of Jefferson’s first term disguised growing American problems. This section examines
three: Jefferson’s attack on the federal court system; conflicts between Republicans; and the sectional
dispute over the slave trade.

. Attack on the Judges

Before transferring power to the Republicans in 1801, the Federalists created a number
of new circuit courts, filled with loyal Federalists. When Jefferson took office,
Congress repealed the Judiciary Act of 1801, thus abolishing the new courts. The
Federalists complained that this violated the tenure of judges, a right guaranteed by the
Constitution. In a related case, Marbury v. Madison (1803), the Supreme Court ruled
that the Judiciary Act itself had been unconstitutional. As Chief Justice John Marshall
intended, the Republicans considered the ruling a victory and overlooked the fact that
the Court had judged the constitutionality of an act of Congress (judicial review).
After their “victory” in the Marbury case, Republicans pressed their attack on the court
system. One judge, certifiably insane, was impeached and removed from office. Some
Republicans now began to fear a complete destruction of an independent judiciary, an
important element in the system of checks and balances. When Jefferson sought
impeachment of a judge who, though partisan, had committed no crime, Republican
unity disappeared. The trial itself made clear that impeachment could be voted only on
narrow political grounds. A Republican Senate refused to convict, and the attack
against the judicial system ended.
Politics of Desperation

As the Federalist party waned, so did the need for Republican unity. Jefferson faced two major defections from his party. One group, called the “Tertium Quids” (“a third something”), led by John Randolph, stood for an ultra-pure Republicanism. They acquired a brief popularity when they attacked large grants of land in the Yazoo region of Georgia to companies that had bribed the state legislature. A later legislature attempted to rescind these sales, but much of the land was already owned by innocent third parties. The Supreme Court ruled in *Fletcher v. Peck* (1810) that the state legislature could not revoke a contract, even if it had been obtained by bribery. The ruling established the Court’s right to nullify state laws if they violated the Constitution.

Murder and Conspiracy: The Curious Career of Aaron Burr

Vice-President Aaron Burr also broke with Jefferson. In 1804 he ran for governor of New York and tried to enlist Federalist support. He was blocked by Alexander Hamilton, whom Burr then killed in a duel. Burr fled to the West and hatched a scheme to invade Spanish territory. His motive for this bizarre scheme is still not known, but Burr was arrested for unknown reasons and tried for treason. John Marshall ruled that the Court must follow the very strict criteria the Constitution requires for a conviction of treason, and Burr went free. Marshall’s precedent made it difficult for later presidents to use the charge of treason as a political tool.

The Slave Trade

Congress prohibited the slave trade after 1808, but northern and southern Republicans disagreed over the issue. Northerners wanted to free any black smuggled into the United States, but Southerners succeeded in having a law passed that handed such persons over to state authorities, who could even sell them into slavery.

EMBARRASSEMENTS OVERSEAS

When England and France resumed full-scale hostilities in 1803, American commerce was caught in the middle. The English issued “Orders in Council,” and Napoleon issued the Berlin and Milan Decrees, the effects of which were to make American ships subject to seizure. Jefferson bore these insults because the expense of a war would have wrecked his financial reforms. This section explains the Embargo, Jefferson’s alternative to war.

Embargo Divides the Nation

In 1807, Congress prohibited American ships from leaving port. Jefferson reasoned that France and England needed American goods so badly that they would quickly
agree to respect American rights. The Embargo, however, proved to be unpopular at home. In order to enforce it, the government supervised commerce in minute detail, and when smuggling became commonplace, Jefferson sent in the army. New Englanders especially resented the Embargo because it destroyed their economy. Worse, it did not hurt England. In 1809, the Embargo was repealed.

A New Administration Goes to War

James Madison was selected as Jefferson’s successor by a caucus of Republican congressmen. He won the election of 1808 easily, but was not temperamentally suited to exercise leadership.

Under the terms of the Non-Intercourse Act, the United States committed itself to resume trade with England and France if those nations promised to cease their seizure of American vessels. When a minor English official made such a promise, Madison opened trade with England, but the English government promptly seized those ships Madison had put to sea. Congress replaced the Non-Intercourse Act with another law just as poorly conceived (Macon’s Bill Number Two). This time Napoleon promised to observe American rights, but when Madison opened trade with France, Napoleon broke his word.

Fumbling Toward Conflict

In 1811, the anti-British mood of the country intensified. In the West, the uprising led by Tecumseh was widely believed to have been the work of British agents. In Congress, a group of fiercely nationalistic representatives, the War Hawks, demanded a war against England to preserve American honor.

On June 1, 1812, Madison finally sent Congress a declaration of war. Had there been a telegraph between London and Washington, the war might not have begun because England had just suspended the Orders in Council. This confusing preamble typified the war in general. The vote for war in Congress was close, and nobody seemed to know what the United States intended to gain from victory.

THE STRANGE WAR OF 1812

Americans expected victory even though they were unprepared for war. To ensure that Republican financial reforms would not be undone, Congress refused to raise taxes. New England, where the Federalist party was still strong, refused to take an active part in the war effort. The United States Army was small, and state militias proved inadequate to fight well-trained veterans.

In 1814, England planned a three-pronged attack on the United States: a march from Canada into the Hudson River Valley, an amphibious assault on the Chesapeake Bay region, and occupation of New
Orleans. The decisive campaign was in New York State, where Americans stopped the English on Lake Champlain, near Plattsburg. As a result of this defeat, England agreed to end hostilities. In the meantime, however, English operations in the Chesapeake resulted in the burning of Washington and the siege of Baltimore. The British attempt to take New Orleans actually took place after the peace treaty had been signed, but there was no way to communicate the news in time to prevent the battle. A ragtag American army, led by Andrew Jackson, annihilated the English invading force in January 1815.

. Hartford Convention: The Demise of the Federalists

The resentment felt by New Englanders over the Embargo grew during the Madison administration. When the war seemed to be going badly for the United States, a group of Federalists met in Hartford, Connecticut, in December 1814, to recommend changes in the Constitution that would have lessened the power of the South and the West. Unfortunately for the Federalists, they met on the eve of the victory of New Orleans and the conclusion of peace. After these events, the Convention’s demands seemed irrelevant as well as disloyal. The Federalist party never recovered from the Hartford Convention.

. Treaty of Ghent Ends the War

After the American victory at Plattsburg, the English government decided to end the war without addressing any of the problems that had started it. Both sides were weary, and the Senate ratified the treaty unanimously. For Americans, the war succeeded splendidly. They had won a “second war of independence.”

CONCLUSION: REPUBLICAN LEGACY

The Founding Fathers began to pass away around 1830. Jefferson and John Adams died on the same day, July 4, 1826, exactly fifty years after the Declaration of Independence had been adopted. The last of the Founders, James Madison, died in 1836, in despair that the principles of the Declaration had not yet been extended to African Americans.

FEATURE ESSAY: BARBARY PIRATES AND AMERICAN CAPTIVES

After the United States won independence, the country’s commercial vessels were terrorized by pirates from North Africa. In 1793, the American commercial ship Polly was captured and plundered, and its crew was taken captive. Rather than pay the ransom the pirates demanded, Jefferson chose to respond militarily, blockading Tripoli’s harbor. This response was an embarrassing failure, and, in the end, the administration paid the ransom. The result of the crisis was an increased nationalism and pride among American citizens and the establishment of a permanent navy.
LECTURE TOPICS

Deliver a lecture on the fundamental principles of Jeffersonian democracy. Start with the premise that the evolution of American politics has generally been a movement to the left, in that we have generally directed political reform toward expanding the principle of democracy and making it more inclusive. How did the emergence of Jeffersonian democracy initiate this process? Explain Jefferson’s reverence for the yeoman farmer, his contempt for the growth of business and industry, and his vision of American political leadership as an “aristocracy of the talented.” Place Jefferson in a historical context by asking students if he was more democratic than the Federalists who preceded him and if his political ideology seems democratic to Americans today.

Research the life of Aaron Burr, focusing on his role in the Republican Party. Trace his career from his being chosen as Jefferson’s vice presidential running mate in 1800 to his brush with conviction for treason after the Burr conspiracy in 1807.

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

Ironically, as a result of Jefferson’s attack on the judiciary, the decision in Marbury v. Madison and the failure to remove Justice Chase helped to establish the federal judiciary as a powerful and independent third branch of government. Discuss. Discuss the relationship between the different branches of government during the time and elaborate upon each specific individual’s motives and ideology.

Discuss the transformation of the Republican Party between 1800 and 1824. How did Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe contribute to altering the original ideology of the Republican Party? Look at issues such as states’ rights, the agrarian ideal, the appeal to the common man, and strict construction of the Constitution and assess the extent to which Republican views on these issues were preserved or altered during the party’s domination of national politics between 1800 and 1824.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Discuss the War of 1812 as the Second War for American Independence. What issues pushed the United States into war with Britain? Were all the factors that contributed to the war defensive, or was there evidence of some degree of aggression among War Hawks? Even though the war ended as a draw, did Americans succeed in proving anything to themselves or to Britain? What issues were resolved as a result of the war?

Discuss American foreign policy between 1800 and 1824. What issues defined American foreign policy during the early nineteenth century? Was American policy defensive or aggressive? Were there sectional implications in foreign policy? How did foreign policy during this period promote nationalism?
CONNECTING TO THE PAST

Every American sings the national anthem with some frequency, but the words have become so familiar that most of us no longer hear them. If, however, one knows the context in which Francis Scott Key, on the approach to Baltimore, wrote his poem describing the siege of Fort McHenry, it becomes impossible to hear the anthem again without feeling the words more keenly. Unfortunately, Key left an inadequate account of the siege in a letter he wrote to his mother; however, a lively, accurate account of the episode can be found in Walter Lord’s *The Dawn’s Early Light* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972).

“Before the land was ours,” Robert Frost said, “we were the land’s.” Before the Louisiana Purchase was concluded, Lewis and Clark had begun their exploration of the Far West. Through their journal, we begin to understand why the West exerted such a strong pull on the American imagination. Their journey along the great Missouri River was a veritable odyssey, filled with adventure and sights of stampeding bison, unconquered Indians, and monstrous grizzly bears. The definitive edition of *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition* is the one edited by Gary E. Moulton, published by the University of Nebraska Press, but its cost, about $1,000, makes it less available. A cheaper, but still excellent alternative is: Elliott Coues, *History of the Expedition Under the Command of Lewis and Clark* (New York: Dover Publications, 1965 reprint).

POINTS OF MASTERY

Explain the fundamentals of Jefferson’s stance on politics.

Identify Tecumseh and the Prophet Tenkwatawa and explain their roles in the development of the pan-Indian resistance movement.

Describe the elements of Albert Gallatin’s fiscal program and contrast it with the fiscal program of Alexander Hamilton.

List the reasons why Jefferson was interested in securing the Louisiana Territory from France, and list the reasons why Napoleon was willing to part with it.

Explain the circumstances surrounding the Supreme Court case *Marbury v. Madison* and understand the historical significance of the court’s decision.

What factors prompted Jefferson to sponsor the Lewis and Clark expedition?

Describe how Alexander Hamilton died during a duel with Aaron Burr.

Outline the provisions of the Embargo Act of 1807 and explain its impact on the American economy.
Identify the Chesapeake and the Leopard and discuss their importance regarding Jefferson’s second term. Did the actions of the British navy demonstrate that Britain considered the United States a free and independent country?

Identify William Henry Harrison and his role in the Battle of Tippecanoe.

Explain the emergence of the War Hawks and identify the leading figures within this Congressional faction.

Describe the provisions of the Treaty of Ghent of 1814.

Outline the causes and significance of the War of 1812.

Explain the emerging dominance of the Republican Party and the decline of the Federalists.

What were the arguments for and against western expansion?

On a number of issues, Federalists and Republicans seemed to reverse their positions in the early nineteenth century. What might have caused these reversals?

The chapter emphasizes the attempts of the Jeffersonian Republicans to reshape national political life and to realize their vision of liberty in an agrarian republic.

In the field of foreign affairs, Jeffersonians attempted to fashion policies that would free the nation from entangling alliances with European powers, eliminate foreign troops from American soil, and protect American maritime interests.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. During a period of international instability and conflict, how was the nation’s economy able to expand so impressively?

Westward expansion, which led to the expansion of farming and agricultural exports, and the growth of large-scale manufacturing in urban centers expanded the nation’s economy during this period. Additionally, clever policies like “broken voyages” allowed the United States to trade with France during French-British conflict. The European countries’ need for American goods was a boon to the nation’s economy.

2. Was Jefferson a weak president, as some Federalists at the time claimed? Provide reasons to support your position.
Military, Jefferson was a weak president. As a result of cutting military spending, he was unable to successfully rescue American hostages from Tripoli and was forced to pay a ransom to free them. His military was also unprepared for involvement in the conflict between Britain and France, which led to embarrassments like the Royal Navy’s hostilities against the American warship Chesapeake. The policy of peaceable coercion and the Embargo Act, Jefferson’s attempts to avoid conflict while maintaining the nation’s income from exports to Europe, was ineffective and unpopular. Under his successor, James Madison, the policies he had established led to American failure and humiliation during the War of 1812.

3. Was Jefferson justified in his attacks on the federal courts?

Jefferson was not justified in his attacks on the federal courts. Anti-Federalist politics were the primary motivation for Jefferson’s attacks on the courts. The goal of the Judiciary Act was to remove the Federalists, whom John Adams had appointed, from their powerful positions in the federal court system, and thereby weaken their voice in government. Both the Judiciary Act and Jefferson’s later attempts to impeach judges like Pickering and Chase violated the Constitution and were met with widespread public disapproval. In sum, Jefferson’s politically motivated attacks ran counter to both the Constitution and the will of the American people.

4. In what way did the resolves of the Hartford Convention contribute to the demise of the Federalist party?

The Hartford Convention provided a platform for New England Federalist politicians, who were angry about Jefferson’s Embargo Act and the resulting economic losses they suffered and Madison’s inaction when British troops occupied villages in Maine during the War of 1812, to express their disappointment with the government and to draft amendments to the Constitution that would weaken southern Republicans and advance their own interests. These actions allowed Republicans to criticize this group—and Federalists more generally—as disloyal citizens and advocates of secession. This characterization weakened the Federalist party and contributed to its demise.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

*The Duel: The American Experience*, Oregon Public Broadcasting, 1999, 60 minutes. This video chronicles the relationship between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr, a political rivalry that culminated in the most famous duel in American history.

Jefferson’s Bloodline. Frontline Series. Thomas Lennon, 2000, 60 minutes. This video explores the controversy regarding Thomas Jefferson’s relationship with his slave Sally Hemings.


CLASS EXERCISES

Have the students develop a position paper supporting or rejecting war with Great Britain from the point of view of a member of Congress from the South, the West, and New England. What would be the differences among the positions and specific arguments of the three congressmen?

Compare and contrast the survival strategies of the Cherokee, Shawnee, and Creek nations and evaluate how well you think their different strategies worked.

Investigate the controversy surrounding Thomas Jefferson and his position on the issue of slavery. One approach to such a paper would be to research Jefferson’s thoughts and writings about slavery and liberty and explain how Jefferson was able to reconcile the two. A more personal approach would be a study of the relationship between Jefferson and his female slave Sally Hemings.

MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

- Read the Document: Charles William Janson, The Stranger in America
- Read the Document: Margaret Bayard Smith, Reflections on Meeting Jefferson
- View the Closer Look: The Louisiana Purchase
- Watch the Video: Lewis & Clark: What were they trying to accomplish?
- Read the Document: Opinion of the Supreme Court for Marbury v. Madison
- Complete the Assignment: Barbary Pirates and American Captives: The Nation’s First Hostage Crisis
- Read the Document: Congress Prohibits Importation of Slaves
- Read the Document: James Madison, Inaugural Address
- View the Map: The War of 1812
- Hear the Audio: Star Spangled Banner
- Read the Document: The Treaty of Ghent
CHAPTER 9

NATION BUILDING AND NATIONALISM

CHAPTER OUTLINE

A REVOLUTIONARY WAR HERO REVISITS AMERICA IN 1824

EXPANSION AND MIGRATION

• Extending the Boundaries
• Native American Societies under Pressure
• Settlement to the Mississippi
• The People and Culture of the Frontier

A REVOLUTION IN TRANSPORTATION

• Roads and Steamboats
• The Canal Boom

EMERGENCE OF A MARKET ECONOMY

• The Beginning of Commercial Agriculture
• Commerce and Banking
• Early Industrialism
• The Growth of Cities

THE POLITICS OF NATION BUILDING AFTER THE WAR OF 1812

• The Republicans in Power
• Monroe as President
• The Missouri Compromise
• Postwar Nationalism and the Supreme Court
• Nationalism in Foreign Policy: The Monroe Doctrine

CONCLUSION: THE END OF THE ERA OF GOOD FEELINGS

FEATURE ESSAY: CONFRONTING A NEW ENVIRONMENT
OPENING THEME

THE BIG APPLE

New York City still represents a great challenge to college students. If they can make it there in finance, art, theater, sports, or fashion, they can make it anywhere. Despite the city’s obvious problems, despite the loathing it inspires among so many Americans, New York continues to import bright young people, who give the city so much of its vitality. The predominant position of New York in American life, however, was by no means preordained by geography or history. The city began its rise in the 1820s because of a particular set of circumstances, and there are plenty of signs today that New York’s position is rapidly eroding.

In 1776, it seemed likely that Philadelphia would become the economic, cultural, and political capital of America, and that it would become as central to the life of the new nation as London, Paris, or Vienna were in their respective nations. Philadelphia’s population of thirty thousand at the end of the colonial period ranked the city as the third largest in the British Empire. It was America’s greatest seaport and the broad gate of entry for most immigrants. It was probably the most refined and cosmopolitan city in the colonies. Philadelphia was home to a college, the American Philosophical Society, the largest community of first-rate doctors in America, an impressive number of scientists and intellectuals, and, not least, Ben Franklin. When the Continental Congress chose to meet in Philadelphia, the city became the political capital of the colonies.

Philadelphia continued to grow after 1776, but New York grew more quickly and finally surpassed Philadelphia, becoming America’s largest city by 1820. Philadelphia’s population went above 100,000 in 1820 and stood at 161,000 by 1830. New York, however, grew from 123,000 in 1820 to 202,000 in 1830. By that time it was apparent that New York would become the great metropolis of America.

New York became predominant for several reasons. It possessed a more capacious harbor than Philadelphia, and New York merchants might have been more aggressive. In 1816, England arbitrarily chose to dump her tremendous inventory of unsold goods in New York, a considerable boon to local merchants. Most of all, the Erie Canal made New York City great.

The key to commercial prosperity was the import–export trade with England. To dress properly, a respectable woman in the early nineteenth century wore about one hundred yards of material, usually wool or cotton, nearly all of which came from England through an American seaport. Americans paid for their underskirts with flour sent to England through an American seaport. The Erie Canal gave the lion’s share of this trade to New York City. Merchant houses in New York City received orders from country stores for dry goods, ironware, and a thousand other imports from all along the route of the canal, all along the shores of Lake Erie, and from deep in the Northwest Territory. And with those orders, they sent barrels of flour. In 1820, New York shipped less flour than Baltimore or Philadelphia, but by 1827, New York sent out more flour than both cities combined.
New York’s increasing trade in dry goods and flour created a need not only for dock workers but also for commission merchants, scriveners, auditors, brokers, and bankers. In 1816, Philadelphia was the financial capital of the United States, but by 1828, the New York Customs House collected enough revenue to pay all the daily expenses of the federal government, and by 1860, New York had more bankers than the rest of the nation. Success, of course, breeds success. The ancillary services that had grown up around the port of New York made the city even more attractive to shippers. New York became the great entrepot of the cotton trade. And just as cargo ships entered America by way of New York, so did immigrants. By 1830, New York received thirteen immigrants for every one who arrived in Philadelphia.

It is hard to see how Philadelphia, with its air of refinement, could ever have become the capital of a society so inchoate, so pulsing, so vibrant as early nineteenth-century America was. New York was a better symbol of the new nation, but even New York failed to become the Paris of America. New York grew so large, so rich, so sophisticated, and so foreign, that the city soon appeared to most Americans, and to most New Yorkers as well, as a world apart.

A REVOLUTIONARY HERO REVISITS AMERICA IN 1824

The author uses Lafayette’s visit to the United States to introduce a description of the great changes that had occurred in the fifty years since the Declaration of Independence. New lands were being opened to settlement, a transportation revolution was taking place, and a mood of confidence prevailed.

EXPANSION AND MIGRATION

After 1815 the American people shifted their attention from Europe and began to look westward. They saw a rich, unsettled continent, parts of which were still held by the English, Spanish, and Native Americans.

. Extending the Boundaries

John Quincy Adams, secretary of state from 1816 to 1824, deserves the most credit for expanding the nation’s boundaries during that period. Taking advantage of Spain’s decline, Adams negotiated two treaties: the Adams-Onis Treaty and the Transcontinental Treaty. Under the terms of these treaties, the United States secured all of Florida and reached as far as the Pacific. In terms of actual settlement, however, the “West” was still east of the Mississippi River.

. Native American Societies under Pressure

Almost sixty thousand Native Americans lived in the Southeast in 1815, most of whom had adopted a “civilized” way of life, including agriculture and slavery. Nevertheless, the U.S. government was determined to move them beyond the Mississippi River so
that their land could be given to whites. The Native Americans resisted in different ways. The Cherokees in a sense became more “white.” They wrote a constitution modeled on the U.S. Constitution and adopted a written language. The Seminoles chose to take up arms and fought a series of wars with the United States army. Neither method was successful.

Settlement to the Mississippi

The government sold the land from which the Native Americans were evicted to large land speculators, who in turn sold the land in small parcels to actual settlers. By 1840 more than one third of the nation’s population lived west of the Appalachians. Because so many settlers began their farming by being in debt, many immediately went into commercial farming and therefore needed access to markets. The trans-Appalachian West was dotted with small family farms tied to market towns and regional centers.

The People and Culture of the Frontier

The West was settled by immigrants who carried their cultures with them and who came to escape overpopulation, rising land prices, and worn-out soil. Because farming a new frontier meant starting with fewer tools and less available labor, cooperation and a strong sense of community became necessary for survival.

The frontier farmer often saw his or her land shoot up in value in a few years. Many took the opportunity to sell out and move on, thus adding a touch of rootlessness to the frontier character.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

A REVOLUTION IN TRANSPORTATION

Two important and interrelated developments marked this era: rapid improvement in transportation and the increasing use of money and credit in the economy.

Roads and Steamboats

In an effort to “conquer space,” the national government built the National Road, from Cumberland, Maryland, to Wheeling, then in Virginia. In addition, a web of turnpikes came into existence, built by private entrepreneurs. Usually, however, the roads did not return a profit, and, although beneficial to the public, they lost their attraction for investors.

Nature blessed the United States with a network of rivers that constituted a natural transportation system that greatly encouraged America’s economic development.
Flatboats carried cargo from the upper Mississippi and Ohio Valley to New Orleans, and all along the lower stretches of the great river, cotton planters built their wharfs.

Flatboats traveled in only one direction, with the flow of the river, but, after 1811, steamboats churned the waters of the West and drove transportation costs down. The steamboat, actually less important than the flatboat, stirred a sense of romance in the American people. Congress even abandoned its usual hands-off policy toward private enterprise to regulate safety standards on the great paddle-wheeler.

. The Canal Boom

No river and no road linked East and West before the state of New York, led by Governor De Witt Clinton, built the Erie Canal between Albany and Buffalo. Even before its completion in 1825, the canal was an enormous success. Easterners and Westerners paid less for one another’s goods as a result, and New York City grew rapidly as a commercial center. Other states, such as Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Michigan also build elaborate canal systems.

EMERGENCE OF A MARKET ECONOMY

The revolution in transportation had a decisive effect on agriculture. Lower transportation costs meant greater income for the farmer. The sale of a farmer’s produce to distant markets meant participation in a complex system of credit. The greatest profits went to those who switched from mixed farming to a single crop. Most agriculture became generalized by region. The Ohio Valley became a major wheat-producing area, but the most spectacular success was in the Deep South when it turned to cotton. Several factors were responsible, such as the invention of the cotton gin, increased demand, and the extensive use of slave labor.

. The Beginning of Commercial Agriculture

Commercial farming and regional specialization demanded a new system of marketing. Farmers were less likely to sell their crops directly to the consumer. Instead, they sold their harvests to local merchants, who in turn sold the crops to regional merchants, who then sold to national or international traders. While farm products flowed in one direction, credit flowed in the other. Farmers were paid for crops before they were planted. The farmer, of course, paid interest on these loans, and the efficiency of the whole operation lowered total costs and increased profits for everyone.

. Commerce and Banking

The greater use of credit stimulated the banking system. After 1812, the number of state banks grew rapidly, and as they competed to make loans, they made money easier
and cheaper to obtain. Congress, fearful of a boom–bust economic cycle, created a Second Bank of the United States in 1816 to check the irresponsible behavior of the state banks. Instead, the Bank of the United States added to the problem by making loans easy. In 1819, the nation suffered the inevitable collapse of its money supply.

. Early Industrialism

Manufacturing increased after the War of 1812, but most manufacturing was still done at home; what changed was the way the process was financed. Merchants owned the raw materials, which they “put out” to farm families. Only in the textile industry did a fully developed factory system emerge. The most spectacular example was the complex operated by the Boston Manufacturing Company at Lowell, Massachusetts.

The increasing success of industry in New England prompted businesspeople in that area to shift their investments from shipping to manufacturing, and the politicians there began to pay more attention to ways in which government could aid industry. Even so, America was not yet an industrial nation; it was the growth of a market economy of national scope that was the major economic development of the period.

D. The Growth of Cities

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the number of people in the United States who lived in cities went from 6 percent to one in six. The ease of transportation created by roads, canals, and railroads, combined with the growth of the market economy, drew Americans to cities in the Northeast and Midwest.

THE POLITICS OF NATION BUILDING AFTER THE WAR OF 1812

Because the United States had a one-party system following the War of 1812, contending interest groups no longer took their differences into the political arena. Except for the Supreme Court, the national government became almost irrelevant to the domestic economy.

. The Republicans in Power

Once the Federalists were out of the way, the Republicans did not need to follow a strict party line, and they even began to adopt Federalist measures. In 1815 and 1816, Republicans enacted high tariffs and established a national bank. Some Republicans, such as Henry Clay, wanted the national government to adopt measures that would have made the nation economically self-sufficient (the “American System”), but presidents Madison and Monroe had constitutional scruples about federal aid going to internal improvements.
In addition, grants for such improvements provoked sectional conflict. Congress retreated from its earlier attempts to stimulate economic growth, and even the National Road fell into disrepair.

. Monroe as President

James Monroe was elected President in 1816 and reelected in 1820. He was determined at all costs to preserve national harmony. When a major financial panic swept the country in 1819, Monroe did nothing to control it or to mitigate its effects, because he felt the president should stand above such matters. At the time, most Americans agreed. What is remarkable, however, is that Monroe provided no leadership in the controversy over Missouri.

. The Missouri Compromise

The Missouri controversy arose when the Missouri territorial assembly applied for statehood in 1817. Missouri would be a slave state, and many Northerners already resented what they believed to be the South’s overrepresentation in the House of Representatives. James Tallmadge of New York persuaded the House to reject Missouri’s application unless it abolished slavery. The South considered Missouri’s admission crucial, because at that time there were eleven slave states and eleven free states. The South feared any change in this balance.

Congress debated the issue in December 1819 and worked out a compromise. Missouri was allowed to become a slave state, but Maine was also allowed statehood as a free state. More important, Congress banned slavery from any part of the Louisiana Purchase (except for Missouri) above the latitude of 36°30’. Even more important, the Missouri controversy demonstrated a fundamental rift between North and South.

. Postwar Nationalism and the Supreme Court

Between 1801 and 1835, John Marshall served as chief justice of the Supreme Court and used his position to encourage the growth of the nation. Because he believed that the Constitution existed to protect the industrious, whose exertions to enrich themselves would benefit the entire nation, he sought to protect individual property rights against government interference, especially from the state legislatures. In a series of decisions, Marshall limited the powers of the states, usually by holding them to a strict observance of contracts.

. Nationalism in Foreign Policy: The Monroe Doctrine

When Spain’s colonies in Latin America rose in rebellion, the United States responded favorably toward the new nations. In Europe, however, the ruling classes feared that rebellion might prove contagious, and France was encouraged to squelch Spain’s rebellious colonies and, perhaps, to keep them for France. Neither Great Britain nor the
United States would tolerate French involvement in Latin American affairs, and England asked the United States to cooperate in preventing it. John Quincy Adams persuaded President Monroe that the United States alone should guarantee the independence of Mexico and the states in South and Central America. In 1823, Monroe issued the Monroe Doctrine, warning European nations to stay out of the Western Hemisphere. The Monroe Doctrine had no real effect when it was first proclaimed, but indicated America’s growing self-confidence. In promising not to interfere in European internal affairs, America detached itself from worldwide struggles against tyranny and betrayed part of its revolutionary heritage.

The shift of American focus from Europe to national affairs was one of the important themes of the period following the War of 1812. Americans now looked inward and liked what they saw.

CONCLUSION: THE END OF THE ERA OF GOOD FEELINGS

In its tremendous expansion, the United States developed a host of contending interests, many of which expected the government to favor them. The Era of Good Feelings could not last.

FEATURE ESSAY: CONFRONTING A NEW ENVIRONMENT

During the 1830s, both Native Americans and settlers from Europe moved west, beyond the Mississippi. The Native Americans were forced to migrate; the Europeans sought prosperity and opportunity. Both groups were unaccustomed to the treeless prairie landscape and to the diseases, and settlement meant adapting to an entirely new way of life in an unfamiliar land.

LECTURE TOPICS

Deliver a lecture on the Monroe Doctrine and why it is considered the most important piece of American foreign policy in early U.S. history. Why did Monroe issue the statement? How does it reflect diplomatic nationalism? Ask students to comment on its importance to future American relations with Latin America.

Prepare a lecture on the Congressional debate that culminated in the Missouri Compromise. Outline and explain the provisions of the Tallmadge Amendment. Establish the question of debate: Did Congress have the authority to regulate the institution of slavery? Explain the use of property rights in the Fifth Amendment and the claim to equal access to new lands as the foundations of the southern opposition to the amendment. Then, explain how the North used the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 as a legal precedent allowing Congressional regulation of the institution of slavery. Is the debate over slavery in 1820 primarily a legal argument or a moral debate?

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

Many historians characterize the years from 1815 to 1824 as a period of nationalism in American history. Conduct a class discussion in which you ask students to consider the extent to which nationalism is a valid term to use in describing the United States during this period. Introduce and
define the terms “nationalism” and “sectionalism.” Look at the trends that historians generally associate with nineteenth-century nationalism and ask students to comment on the ways in which they reflect nationalism. Then, have students look at the Panic of 1819 and the Missouri Compromise and connect them to sectionalism. Were these sectional concerns new issues that temporarily interrupted nationalism, or was nationalism a temporary reprieve from the persistent aggravation of a sectionalism that dated back to colonial times?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Look at the election of 1824 as a turning point in American political history. Use the election to explore the status of the Republican Party by 1824. How did Americans feel about the loss of democracy through the entrenchment of Republican elitism? How would many Americans feel about Jackson’s loss of the presidency in 1824? How had the way been opened for the emergence of Jacksonian democracy?

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

Lafayette was only one of the great number of foreign visitors who came to observe and report on America between the War of 1812 and the Civil War. Everyone realized that the United States was in the process of creating a new and different society. Nearly all Americans were optimistic about the results; Europeans, however, varied in their opinions, as indicated by the accounts of Charles Dickens and Frances Trollope.

Dickens, with his ability to draw pictures in prose, gives a poignant description of the Eastern Penitentiary in Philadelphia, a humane attempt to reform criminals by placing them in solitary confinement. Dickens encountered a man who had lived in such confinement, in the same cell, for eleven years. When Dickens spoke to the prisoner, he remained silent, intent on picking the flesh on his fingers. This account can be found in Dickens’s *American Notes*. The 1968 Peter Smith reprint has a good introduction by Christopher Lasch. *Barnaby Rudge* is also interesting reading, especially those sections that deal with Barnaby’s sojourn in the United States. It is a good example of Dickens’s remarkable ability to create fiction out of his personal experiences.

Frances Trollope threw a refreshing dose of cold water on everything American. Her description of a “literary” conversation in Cincinnati with a scholar who was too prudish to mention the title of Pope’s *Rape of the Lock*, and her description of the House of Representatives, its members wearing hats, spitting, and slouched in their seats, are amusing and insightful. They can be found in Trollope’s *Domestic Manners of the Americans*. The most recent edition was published by Penguin Books in 1997.
POINTS OF MASTERY

1. Define the term “industrialization” and identify the parts of the United States where industrialism took hold between 1830 and 1860.

2. Explain the importance of the Adams-Onís Treaty on America’s boundaries.

3. Explain the dichotomy between traditional and assimilated Native Americans and the role of the Cherokee.

4. Describe life and hardships on the frontier.

5. Explain the growth of the city.

6. Examine the significance of the steam engine.

7. Consider the consequences of the market economy in the context of a discussion of artisan labor.

8. Why did the Erie Canal have such a significant impact on the nation? Would canals built at other locations have the same impact?

9. Explain how the election of 1824 signaled the end of the Era of Good Feelings.

10. How was the country divided over the tariff?

11. List and explain major factors contributing to economic growth and explain how changes in transportation were of critical importance.

12. Discuss the role of women in industrialization.

13. Discuss the ways in which changing patterns of societies influenced the geography of cities such as Cincinnati.


15. Explain why the Second Bank of the United States became unpopular.

16. Explain the provisions of the Missouri Compromise and how it exacerbated sectionalism and institutionalized racial discrimination.


19. Identify and explain the historical significance of the Monroe Doctrine.
20. Identify the sectional divisions over land policy in the West.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. How did new developments in transportation influence westward expansion?

New developments in transportation allowed western cities, such as St. Louis and Chicago, to become commercial centers. Both the population of, and the opportunities available in, these urban centers grew exponentially with the development of canals and railroads.

Additionally, new methods of transportation caused a shift in farming methods. Because rapid delivery of goods allowed buyers to purchase agricultural products and distribute them to end users, both in the eastern United States and abroad, farmers found that it was more profitable to grow a single crop rather than a variety of crops. Cotton and sugar in the South and wheat and corn in the West replace the mixed farming that had dominated agricultural production in the United States.

Overall, easier access to western lands created closer ties to eastern commerce and served to transform the West from a frontier environment to one much closer to the more-established eastern colonies.

2. What was the relationship between westward expansion and the institution of slavery?

Westward expansion provoked controversy over slavery every time a new state joined the Union. Southern politicians wanted to maintain an equal number of representatives from slave states and free states in the Senate. To do this, the United States had to have the same number of free and slave states.

This issue came to the fore of American politics when Missouri applied for statehood. Because there were already thousands of slaves in Missouri, it appeared that it would enter the Union as a slave state. Northern politicians fought this. The struggle over how to manage slavery during westward expansion was settled, temporarily, by the Missouri Compromise, which brought Missouri into the Union as a slave state, brought Maine into the Union as a free state, and established latitude 36°30' as the line below which slavery would be allowed and above which it would not. However, the issue of slavery would continue to arise with each new western colony that applied for statehood.

3. Why do you think some political leaders saw a connection between a growing market economy and a strong national government?

Henry Clay’s American System epitomized the connection between the market economy and the national government. This system advocated a high protective tariff, which would promote the purchase of American-made goods by making imports significantly more expensive, and also supported government spending on national infrastructure.

This tariff, combined with developments in transportation and technology, allowed manufacturing in the United States to develop and grow in a way that might not have been possible without government intervention.
AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

This two-part series, crafted by Ken Burns, chronicles the life of Thomas Jefferson while exposing students to the art, architecture, and literature of Jefferson’s time.

CLASS EXERCISES

Instruct the students to write an article for a Cincinnati newspaper evaluating some of the changes in work in the antebellum period if you were the owner of a furniture factory, a widow taking in piecework, or a former cabinet maker now working in the factory. Or create an assignment where each student will write a diary entry for one day in the life of a Lowell mill girl in the 1830s. These entries should give a clear sense of one’s daily schedule as well as response to that job and free time. How would these entries differ if each student were an Irish girl in the 1850s?

If you live in or near a Northeastern, Middle Atlantic, or South Atlantic city, plan a walking tour to the part of the city constructed during the period covered by this chapter. What kinds of buildings date from that era? What were they used for? Are there any examples of housing? What class of persons might have lived in these houses? Are there any remaining vestiges of working-class neighborhoods? Visit an early mill complex. What can it tell you about the industrial process, the nature of work, and the reality of life in a mill community?

MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

• Read the Document: The Cherokee Treaty of 1817
• Complete the Assignment: Confronting a New Environment
• View the Map: Expanding America and Internal Improvements
• Listen to the Audio File: The Erie Canal
• Read the Document: The Harbinger, Female Workers at Lowell (1836)
• Read the Document: Henry Clay, “Defense of the American System” (1832)
• View the Map: The Missouri Compromise
• Read the Document: The Opinion of the Supreme Court for McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
• Read the Document: The Monroe Doctrine (1823)
CHAPTER 10

THE TRIUMPH OF WHITE MEN’S DEMOCRACY

CHAPTER OUTLINE

DEMOCRATIC SPACE: THE NEW HOTELS

DEMOCRACY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

• Democracy and Society
• Democratic Culture
• Democratic Political Institutions
• Economic Issues
• Labor Radicalism and Equal Rights

JACKSON AND THE POLITICS OF DEMOCRACY

• The Election of 1824 and J. Q. Adams’s Administration
• Jackson Comes to Power
• Indian Removal
• The Nullification Crisis

THE BANK WAR AND THE SECOND-PARTY SYSTEM

• Mr. Biddle’s Bank
• The Bank Veto and the Election of 1832
• Killing the Bank
• The Emergence of the Whigs
• The Rise and Fall of Van Buren

HEYDAY OF THE SECOND-PARTY SYSTEM

CONCLUSION: TOCQUEVILLE’S WISDOM
OPENING THEME

THE SPORT OF POLITICS

Students often consider politicians as somehow irrelevant to the political system itself. In fact, of course, those who serve in office shape the system as much as written laws or constitutions do. Students should know that government in the United States was not always the province of politicians. It was once the avocation of “gentlemen” and became the business of professionals at a certain time only because of particular circumstances.

There were no professional politicians in the 1700s. People like Madison, Jefferson, Hamilton, and John Adams could be political, but they were not politicians in our sense of the term. They did not derive an appreciable part of their income from public office, nor did they spend much time campaigning for votes. By contrast, the leading public figures of the early nineteenth century—Martin Van Buren, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and John C. Calhoun—were hardly ever out of office and spent most of their time devising ways of advancing themselves politically. Unlike Jefferson or Washington, who suffered financially from serving in government, successful public officials in the later period tended to leave office richer than when they had entered.

The growing federal and state bureaucracies made it possible for ambitious young men to make politics a career. By the 1830s, the Democrats and Whigs rewarded their workers with civil service jobs. In return, these bureaucrats “kicked back” a part of their income to the party, which used the funds to finance other campaigns. At the center of each political party, there was a corps of professionals, usually living off the public payroll, whose careers were inextricably tied to the success of the party. As one New York politician confessed, he would vote for a dog if his party nominated it.

Coincident with this development was the disappearance of all real issues from American politics. In the 1790s, politics was intensely ideological, partly because of the influence of the French Revolution and partly because party leaders were intellectuals. The second-party system emerged in a nation where it seemed the white, Protestant, small farmer and his family made up the soul of society and that only their interests should be protected and advanced. There were differences of opinion about how this was to be done, but these were disputes about means rather than ends.

Because politicians must campaign on something that resembles an issue to distinguish themselves from their opponents, they created issues. The ideal issue was one that everyone agreed on so that endorsing it would not lose votes. Unfortunately, it was hard to get votes by being for motherhood and apple pie, because any opponent would be just as enthusiastic about them. Nevertheless, then, as now, politicians would suddenly proclaim undying devotion to common verities, which always seemed to be in danger of extinction whenever an election took place. The second best issue was one that was too complicated for the average person to understand. The tariff fitted this qualification. In his autobiography, Van Buren recorded an instance of how artfully he used the complexity of the tariff question to befuddle an audience. After his speech on the subject, he mingled with the audience and overheard the following conversation:
“Mr. Knower! that was a very able speech!”
“Yes, very able,” was the reply.
“Mr. Knower! on which side of the Tariff question was it?”

Van Buren was infamous for evasion and was accused by his contemporaries of having raised the art of double-talk to a true philosophy, called “noncommittalism,” but even the plain-speaking Andrew Jackson found the tariff an excellent opportunity for his own species of political hedging. Jackson never budged from his support of a “judicious” tariff, nor did he ever explain what that meant.

To say that there were no real political issues does not mean that there were no real issues. Slavery clearly violated the fundamental ideals on which the nation had been founded, and slavery was an issue that would not go away. Because divisive, controversial issues were avoided at all costs by professional politicians, the second-party system closed the political forum to the question of slavery. Emancipation, when it came, had to come from outside the normal political process.

The second-party system extended the reality of democracy in America. Parties eagerly enlisted young men of talent and financed their political careers, enabling sons of average families to seek high public office. The parties made politics what it remains today, an exciting spectator sport full of sound and fury, even if it often signifies nothing.

**DEMONCRATIC SPACE: THE NEW HOTELS**

The author uses the “hotel culture” of the early nineteenth century to exemplify the democratic culture of the new republic. The hotel welcomed all white males who could pay their way in, but excluded the poor, women alone, and blacks.

**DEMOCRACY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE**

Americans in the 1820s and 1830s no longer feared that democracy would lead to anarchy. Each individual was to be given an equal start in life, but equality of opportunity did not mean equality of result. The American people were happy to accept a society of winners and losers.

. Democracy and Society

Despite persistent and growing economic inequality, Americans generally believed they had created an egalitarian society, and in many ways they had. Political equality for all white males was a radical achievement, and Americans came to prefer the “self-made” man to one who had inherited wealth and refinement. The egalitarian spirit carried over into an attack on the licensed professions, and it was believed that any white male should have a chance to practice law or medicine, whether or not he was trained.
This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

. Democratic Culture

The democratic ethos also affected the arts in this period. Artists no longer worked for an aristocratic elite, but for a mass audience. Many writers and painters pleased the public by turning out Gothic horror stories, romantic women’s fiction, melodramas, or genre paintings that lovingly depicted the American way of life. More serious artists sought to inspire the masses with neoclassical sculpture, or landscapes of untamed nature. Only a few individuals, like Edgar Allan Poe, were truly avant-garde, romantic artists.

. Democratic Political Institutions

Democratic ideals had a real impact on the American political system. Nearly all adult white males gained the right to vote whether or not they had property. Offices that had been appointive, such as judgeships or the electoral college, were made elective. The greatest change took place in the style of politics. Professional politicians emerged, actively seeking votes and acting as servants of the people.

Men such as Martin Van Buren in New York extolled the public benefits of a two-party system, and political machines began to develop on the state level. National parties eventually developed, the Democrats and the Whigs. Although political parties often served special economic interests, it should be remembered that American politics always retained a strong republican ideology and that all parties sought to preserve equality of opportunity. The Whigs and Democrats differed on whether this could be done best with or without active intervention by the national government, but neither party gave much thought to extending rights to anyone other than adult white males. It was left to other, more radical, parties to argue the cause of African Americans, women, and working people.

. Economic Issues

The Panic of 1819 made economic issues a matter of great concern, but there was no consensus on what should be done. Some wanted to retreat to simpler times to avoid the boom and bust associated with a growing market economy, while others wanted the government to subsidize the growth of that sort of economy. These demands for what seemed like favors aroused fears that a “money power” had become a threat to liberty.

. Labor Radicalism and Equal Rights

The growth of economic inequality prompted the formation of working men’s parties, who agitated for a ten-hour working day, among other things. The same dismay at the rise of great wealth led abolitionists and advocates of women’s rights to organize to
preserve liberty and democracy. All of these movements, however, were fatally flawed because they shared the pervasive racism that would deny to blacks the rights being demanded for whites.

**JACKSON AND THE POLITICS OF DEMOCRACY**

The period from the 1820s to the 1840s is with some justice called “the Age of Jackson.” This section explains why.

. The Election of 1824 and J. Q. Adams’s Administration

The election of 1824 furthered Jackson’s political career even though he lost the election. The election began as a scramble among five men: John Quincy Adams, William Crawford, Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, and Andrew Jackson. Because no one received a majority of the electoral votes, the House of Representatives had to decide the election, and its choice came down to Adams or Jackson. When Clay gave his support to Adams, the House elected him president. Adams began his administration under a cloud of suspicion because it was widely believed that he had “bought” the presidency. By 1826, it was apparent that Adams had failed as a president. The Jackson forces took control of Congress by simply giving every special interest whatever it wanted.

. Jackson Comes to Power

The Jackson people, who became the Democratic party, were well organized for the election of 1828. The Democrats appealed to sectional self-interest and pioneered the art of making politics exciting to the average man, but the greatest asset the Democrats had was Jackson himself. Rigid and forceful, Jackson was accepted as a true man of the people, and he defeated Adams easily, especially in the slaveholding states. Jackson’s triumph was a personal one; he stood on no political platform. As president, he democratized the office by firing at will whatever officeholders he did not like, defending the practice by asserting the right of all men to a government post.

. Indian Removal

Jackson inherited the Indian removal policy from previous administrations but carried it to its harshest conclusion. He agreed with the southern states that the federal government had not pushed the Indians hard enough. He urged Congress to speed up the relocation of the Indians living east of the Mississippi, and when the Cherokees resisted, Jackson sent the army in 1830 to evict them from their homes and herd them over the Mississippi. Some four thousand Cherokees died along that “Trail of Tears.”
. The Nullification Crisis

The South had reason to fear a strong national government that might some day decide to do something about slavery. Led by John C. Calhoun, southern intellectuals began working out a defense of state sovereignty. The first major controversy between federal authority and states’ rights came when South Carolina objected to the high tariff of 1828. The South, however, trusted Jackson to be sympathetic, and South Carolina took no action on the 1828 tariff. By 1832, the Carolinians had come to distrust Jackson, partly as a result of a personal feud between Jackson and Calhoun, but mainly because South Carolina feared a forceful president and Jackson rejected the idea of state sovereignty.

When in 1832 a new tariff was passed, South Carolina, still unhappy with the rates, nullified it. Jackson responded by threatening to send the army into South Carolina. Both sides eventually retreated; South Carolina got a lower tariff, but Jackson had demonstrated the will of the federal government to rule the states, by force if necessary.

THE BANK WAR AND THE SECOND-PARTY SYSTEM

One of the most important actions taken by Jackson was his destruction of the Bank of the United States. “The Bank War” was a symbolic defense of democratic values and led to two important results: economic disruption and a two-party system.

. Mr. Biddle’s Bank

Although the Bank of the United States contributed to the economic growth and stability of the United States, it had never been very popular. In a democratic era, it was open to charges of giving special privileges to a few. Its manager, Nicholas Biddle, was a competent man who looked and behaved like an aristocrat. Also, in an era of rising democracy, the Bank possessed great power and privilege without accountability to the public.

. The Bank Veto and the Election of 1832

Jackson came into office suspecting the Bank of the United States and made vague threats against it. Biddle overreacted and asked Congress to recharter the Bank in 1832, four years before the old charter was due to expire. Henry Clay took up the Bank’s cause, hoping that congressional approval of the Bank would embarrass Jackson.

When Congress passed the new charter, Jackson vetoed it on the grounds that the Bank was unconstitutional, despite a Supreme Court decision to the contrary. Jackson
claimed he vetoed the Bank charter because it violated equality of opportunity and Congress upheld the veto. Clay and Jackson took their argument to the public in the election of 1832 where Jackson’s victory spelled doom for the Bank.

. Killing the Bank

Jackson showed his opponents no mercy and proceeded to destroy the Bank by withdrawing the government’s money and depositing it into selected state banks (the “pet banks”). Biddle then used his powers as a central banker to bring on a nationwide recession, which he hoped would be blamed on Jackson. That ploy failed, but Jackson’s destruction of the Bank cost him support in Congress, especially in the Senate, where fears of a dictatorship began to emerge.

. The Emergence of the Whigs

Opposition to Jackson formed the Whig party. Along the way, the Whigs absorbed the Anti-Masonic party, which had suddenly flourished after 1826 when it attacked the Masons as a secret, privileged elite. The Anti-Masons brought with them to the Whig party a disgust of “loose” living and a willingness to use government powers to enforce “decency.” The Democratic party was also weakened by the defection of working-class spokesmen who criticized Jackson for not destroying all banks. Furthermore, Jackson’s financial policies led to runaway inflation, followed by an abrupt depression.

. The Rise and Fall of Van Buren

Jackson chose his friend and advisor, Martin Van Buren, as his successor. The Whigs, still unorganized, presented Van Buren with little opposition in the election of 1836, but Van Buren’s inauguration coincided with the arrival of the depression of 1836, for which the Democrats were blamed.

Van Buren felt no responsibility to save individuals and businesses that were going bankrupt, but he did want to save the government funds in the state banks by placing them in “independent subtreasuries.” It was a sign of the growing strength of the Whigs that they could frustrate Van Buren in this aim for three years. Economic historians today conclude that the Panic of 1837 was international in scope, reflecting complex changes in the world economy beyond the control of American policy makers, but the Whigs blamed Van Buren for the mess.

In 1840 the Whigs were fully organized and had learned the art of successful politicking. They nominated William Henry Harrison, a noncontroversial war hero, and built his image as a common man who had been born in a log cabin. As his running mate, the Whigs picked John Tyler, a former Jacksonian, because he would
attract some votes from states’-rights Democrats. Harrison and Tyler beat Van Buren, although the popular vote was close.

**HEYDAY OF THE SECOND-PARTY SYSTEM**

The election of 1840 signaled the emergence of a permanent two-party system in the United States. For the next decade, Whigs and Democrats evenly divided the electorate. Although there was much overlapping, both parties attracted distinct constituencies and offered voters a clear choice of programs. The Whigs stood for a “positive liberal state,” which meant active government involvement in society. The Democrats stood for a “negative liberal state,” which meant that the government should intervene only to destroy special privileges. Both parties shared a broad democratic ideology, but the Democrats were the party of the individual, whereas the Whigs were the party of the community.

**CONCLUSION: TOCQUEVILLE’S WISDOM**

Alexis de Tocqueville, the French visitor who made so many astute observations about life in Jacksonian America, praised most aspects of American democracy, but warned of disaster in the future if white males refused to extend the liberties they enjoyed to women, African Americans, and Indians.

**FEATURE ESSAY: RACIAL IDENTITY IN A WHITE MAN’S DEMOCRACY**

In the mid-nineteenth century, racial identity was not clearly defined. Trials were held in the South to determine whether individuals were “black” or “white,” and therefore whether they had the rights to vote and own property. These trials examined not only an individual’s appearance but also his behavior, friends, and actions. The case of *Bryan v. Walton* (1864) provides a glimpse into how race was socially constructed during this period.

**LECTURE TOPICS**

Examine the presidential election of 1828. Is Jackson’s victory in this election an example of democracy’s impact on the presidency or is it the beginning of the presidency’s impact on American democracy? Compare Jackson’s victory in 1828 to Thomas Jefferson’s victory in 1800. Consider the following issues in the comparison: (a) parallels in regional support for Jefferson and Jackson, (b) similarities in the political ideologies of Jefferson and Jackson, (c) the role of the common man in defining the outcome of each election, and (d) the transfer of power from one party to another in each election (i.e., from the Federalists to the Republicans in 1800 and from the Republicans to the Democrats in 1828). Another interesting parallel is the fact that Jefferson and Jackson followed the only one-term presidents at that time in American history: Jefferson followed John Adams and Jackson followed John Quincy Adams, John Adams’s son.

Prepare a lecture focusing on the emergence of states’ rights political philosophy during the early national period. Using the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions, discuss the concepts of state nullification of federal law and interposition. Historically, have we considered the use of these principles to be
constitutio nal? Why or why not? Have we historically had a clear understanding in the United States about where sovereignty lies? Use this opportunity to help students anticipate the reemergence of these issues prior to the Civil War and during the Civil Rights Movement.

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

Have students compare and contrast Jeffersonian and Jacksonian democracy. How are the two ideologies similar? How are they different? Does the emergence of Jacksonian democracy continue the American ideological shift to the left? To what extent did the early nineteenth century see the expansion of democracy? What limits to Jacksonian democracy are evident to twenty-first-century Americans?

Compare and contrast the political ideologies of the Democratic and Whig parties. How did they resemble the Federalist and Republican parties that preceded them? How did they differ? Are they comparable to the Democratic and Republican parties of today?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Discuss the issue of nullification as it had evolved to this point in American history. Begin by thinking back to the Suffolk Resolves and the colonial nullification of the Intolerable Acts. Proceed to the use of the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions by Republicans against the Sedition Act in 1800. Finally, consider the nullification crisis of 1832. How do these events reflect American concerns about the powers of central authority? How justified was each act of nullification? How effective was each challenge to central authority?

2. Discuss Andrew Jackson as a Southern president. Which aspects of the Southern political agenda did Jackson actively support? If we recognize states’ rights and slavery as the hallmarks of the Southern political agenda, to what extent did Jackson support these broad issues? In so doing, was he the friend of the common man, as he is so often characterized, or was he the friend of the Southern planter? What was the most significant occasion on which he refused to support the Southern agenda?

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

Andrew Jackson dominated the political arena in the 1830s. His forcefulness was illustrated at the annual Jefferson Day dinner on April 15, 1830, in the midst of the nullification controversy. When the time for giving toasts arrived, Jackson stared at the South Carolinians present and offered, “Our Union, it must be preserved!” John C. Calhoun replied, “The Union, next to our liberty most dear! May we all remember that it can only be preserved by respecting the rights of the states and distributing equally the benefit and burden of the Union!” Contrast the two toasts and you begin to realize that Jackson’s pithiness, in an oratorical age, confirmed his reputation as a man of action. Martin Van Buren reported this incident in his autobiography, an immensely valuable source that was edited and first published by John C. Fitzpatrick in 1920 and more recently reprinted by the Da Capo Press in 1973.
Van Buren’s great rival in New York and national politics was Thurlow Weed. He, too, wrote an autobiography, now out of print and not easy to find. It is a good supplement to Van Buren’s because it gives us the Whig version of events. One of the characteristics that made Weed a superb politician was his ability to face reality. When asked by a political ally to agree that the Democrats could never answer Daniel Webster’s attack on Jackson’s veto of the Bank bill, Weed correctly predicted that, “two sentences in the veto message would carry ten electors against the bank for every one that Mr. Webster’s arguments and eloquence secured in favor of it.” Weed’s autobiography was edited by his daughter, Harriet Weed, and was published by Houghton Mifflin and Company in 1883.

**POINTS OF MASTERY**

Describe the emergence of universal white male suffrage as a characteristic of Jacksonian democratic reform.

Describe the personal background of Andrew Jackson and identify which aspects of his background would be most politically appealing to Americans of the early nineteenth century.

Explain the impact of early nineteenth-century political reform on the voting rights of women and African Americans.

Explain how Jackson’s loss of the 1824 presidential election set the stage for his victory in 1828.

Discuss why the United States did not develop a class-conscious working class.

Comment on the importance of Martin Van Buren’s support for Jackson in the 1828 election.

Discuss the results of the 1828 election in terms of regional, class, and religious support for each candidate.

Explain the political and social significance of the Eaton Affair.

Explain the spoils system and the principle of rotation.

Describe the Trail of Tears as an example of the Indian removal policy implemented by the U.S. government during the Jackson administration.

Explain why Jackson vetoed the Maysville Road bill and the effects and consequences of his decision.

Briefly discuss John C. Calhoun’s theory of nullification.

Discuss the Bank War and the degree to which it reflected Jackson’s commitment to states’ rights as well as his commitment to the common man.
Describe the original organizers of the Whig party and explain the special role played by the Anti-Masons.

Outline the basic principles of Whig political ideology.

Discuss Andrew Jackson’s presidency and the “new” democratic politics and the strengthening of the executive branch.

Explain the refinement of the two-party system in American politics.

Describe the difference between Jeffersonian democracy and Jacksonian democracy.

Outline the reasons for Van Buren’s defeat in 1840.

**SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

1. What do you think was the relationship between the new democratic culture and the emergence of the second-party system?

One of the most important changes between 1820 and 1830 was the extension of voting privileges to all white men, regardless of social class or property holdings. Voting participation skyrocketed, so candidates began to stage national campaigns to attract voters.

This increased access to, and participation in, politics meant that groups whose voices had previously been unheard now had a chance to vote for candidates whose positions supported their interests. With the emergence of the two-party system, voters interested in a government that played an active role in the economy, such as industrialists, planters, and merchants, had a platform for their views in the Whig party. Voters who wanted a small central government that was not involved in the economy, such as farmers and wage earners, voted Democrat.

Prior to the extension of voting rights, many of these groups, such as merchants and wage earners, would not only not have had the right to vote, but also would not have been informed about the politics of the day through national campaigns and the growing public press. The democratic culture of this period therefore led to distinct, active groups of voters who supported the different aims of two opposed political parties.

2. Do you think Jackson’s forceful style of leadership was a good model for the presidency? Should he have deferred more to the states or to Congress in pursuing his policies?

Jackson’s forceful leadership style was deeply divisive and contributed to the rise of the two-party system, as voters were unhappy with his policies and the ways in which he enacted them.
Whether or not Jackson’s style was a good model for the presidency is a question that is open for debate. Jackson’s stubbornness and inability to cooperate with those who opposed him meant that he was able to accomplish a lot during his presidency. He successfully avoided secession during the nullification crisis. Other policies, such as the destruction of the national bank and Indian Removal, were enacted easily by Jackson’s forceful approach. Although we look back at these policies, particularly Indian Removal, with horror today, in Jackson’s day they were very popular.

However, Jackson’s style alienated much of the country. Many saw him as a tyrant who acted unconstitutionally when he killed the national bank. Others were disgusted by his open use of the spoils system to fill his cabinet with his supporters and leave no room for opposition. Had Jackson deferred more to the states and Congress, the nation might not have been so divided after his presidency, and perhaps policies such as Indian Removal would have been less brutal.

3. Why do you think the people the Democratic Party appealed to were so worried about a national bank?

The Democratic party appealed primarily to those who had not traditionally held power in the United States, such as small farmers, workers, newly established entrepreneurs, and immigrants. These people were wary of large government institutions such as the national bank that were run by a small, elite group and did not have to answer to the public. These individuals worried that the bank would serve the interests of the wealthy and privileged because it was run by the wealthy and privileged. During this period of increased voting rights and political participation, these individuals, many of whom had previously not had the right to vote, were able to express their opposition to the national bank and promote their own interests.

AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

*How the West Was Lost?*, A&E Video, 60 minutes.
This video includes a 15-minute treatment of the Cherokee Trail of Tears.

CLASS EXERCISES

Read several accounts of Andrew Jackson’s first inauguration, especially the account by Margaret Bayard Smith. Using the Library of Congress website, you can also read about other presidential inaugurations. Be prepared to compare and contrast those inaugurations with Jackson’s in a class discussion.

www.whitehousehistory.org/04/subs/1828_b.html (Margaret Bayard Smith)
www.isidore-of-seville.com/jackson/4.htm/
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/pihtml/pihome.htm (Library of Congress)
Have the class explore the impact of the nullification crisis on John C. Calhoun’s political career. Having started his career as a nationalist who supported the War of 1812, the National Bank, and the Tariff of 1816, by 1832 Calhoun was a self-proclaimed sectionalist and the originator of the theory of nullification. Use Calhoun’s life, particularly his political transformation from nationalist to sectionalist, as a prism through which to study America’s larger transition from an era of nationalism to an era of sectionalism between 1815 and 1848.

Research the Cherokee experience on the Trail of Tears. What does this event reveal about U.S. Indian policy and the status of Native Americans living in the United States in the early nineteenth century? Why were the Cherokee considered “civilized?”

**MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS**

- Read the Document: Herman Melville, Excerpt from *Moby-Dick*
- Read the Document: Andrew Jackson, First Annual Message to Congress (1829)
- Complete the Assignment: Racial Identity in a White Man’s Democracy
- View the Closer Look: The Trail of Tears
- View the Closer Look: Indian Removals
- Read the Document: South Carolina’s Ordinance of Nullification
- Read the Document: Andrew Jackson, Veto of the Bank
- Listen to the Audio: Van Buren
- View the Closer Look: General Harrison’s Log Cabin March—Sheet Music
- Read the Document: Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*
CHAPTER 11

SLAVES AND MASTERS

CHAPTER OUTLINE

NAT TURNER’S REBELLION: A TURNING POINT IN THE SLAVE SOUTH

THE DIVIDED SOCIETY OF THE OLD SOUTH

THE WORLD OF SOUTHERN BLACKS

• Slaves’ Daily Life and Labor
• Slave Families, Kinship, and Community
• African American Religion
• Resistance and Rebellion
• Free Blacks in the Old South

WHITE SOCIETY IN THE ANTEBELLUM SOUTH

• The Planters’ World
• Planters, Racism, and Paternalism
• Small Slaveholders
• Yeomen Farmers
• A Closed Mind and a Closed Society

SLAVERY AND THE SOUTHERN ECONOMY

• The Internal Slave Trade
• The Rise of the Cotton Kingdom
• Slavery and Industrialization
• The “Profitability” Issue

CONCLUSION: WORLDS IN CONFLICT
OPENING THEME

THE MASTER CLASS

College students should be encouraged to think abstractly about social phenomena without forgetting that institutions depend on humans for their functioning. Because humans are not always logical, they sometimes service institutions they despise. Slavery is a good case in point.

Slavery might have developed during the colonial period from a series of “unthinking decisions,” but its continued existence into the nineteenth century demanded a force stronger than mere momentum. Considering the active hostility that slaves adopted toward their condition, slavery could not have lasted a week in the United States if it had not been supported by the mass of the white population, even though most whites never owned a slave and considered slavery itself unnatural and un-American.

Laws alone do not enslave people; those laws must be applied, as they were in the South. Visitors to the region were often fooled into thinking that there was no law and order in the South, but that was the case only among whites. The black portion of the population was always heavily policed. In every locality when the sun went down, armed white men went out on patrol to make sure that the night belonged to the master class. Any African American who ventured from his or her cabin without written permission risked immediate and painful “justice” from the infamous “patrollers.” Even slaves with passes had to worry about being harassed or abused.

On those occasions when slaves collected in large numbers and struck for their freedom, the white community mobilized overwhelming counterforce with remarkable rapidity. Nat Turner and his followers, for example, began to kill whites in Southampton County, Virginia, on a Sunday night in August 1831. On Monday afternoon, a young white girl escaped the slaughter and spread the alarm. By Wednesday, Turner’s band, nearly a hundred strong, was defeated in battle by armed whites. Within the next few days, militia companies from three counties plus federal troops with artillery had converged on Southampton County and began a savage manhunt for Turner, during which as many as one hundred African Americans might have been killed. When Turner himself was finally hanged, his corpse was treated with shocking brutality.

Turner’s uprising represented a rare failure of the system of daily repression designed to keep slaves down. It was not so much the gun and the whip that slaves suffered, but the routine humiliation meant to establish an impassable gap between them and free people. Whites and blacks in the South very often worked together, drank together, played together, prayed together, and even had sex together, but no matter how friendly or intimate the contact, it was expected that slaves would observe rituals of self-abasement, for example, by using a title of respect when addressing whites, such as Master or Mistress, while being addressed themselves by first name, or as “Boy” or “Girl.” Whites were expected to resent any show of disrespect and could become murderous in their rage without much fear of legal consequences.
There can be no doubt that it was the willingness of the average white Southerner to insist on the supremacy of his or her “race” that kept slavery alive, but few Southern whites approved of the slave system. Indeed, the word “slave” was more often used by Northerners; Southern whites invariably used the word “servant.” It is not even clear that most white Southerners were racists. They not only lacked any “scientific” belief in the superiority of some genes over others, but as good Christians they believed that slaves had souls, that all souls were equal and that slaves would enjoy freedom and happiness in Heaven as much as any master would. Slavery was part of the imperfect, unredeemed world that resulted from sin; it could not exist in the supernatural world. Furthermore, slavery violated the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian political values of most white Southerners because slaveholding gave special privileges to a small and shrinking minority of “aristocrats.”

Foreigners traveling in the South often observed the torment suffered by the “conscience-haunted” masters. In one illustrative episode, a Northerner in Alabama in 1853 met a local white resident who described how runaway slaves were hunted down and how some of the hunters enjoyed doing so. “Always seemed to me a kind o’barbarous sport,” the man said. And then, after a pause, “It’s necessary, though.” White southerners lived a paradox. They were a master class yearning to be free.

**NAT TURNER’S REBELLION: A TURNING POINT IN THE SLAVE SOUTH**

The author begins this chapter with Turner’s uprising to set the theme of a society in conflict with itself. In the aftermath of the rebellion, white Southerners became more repressive and more insecure, whereas black Southerners became less open but more resilient in their struggle against slavery.

**THE DIVIDED SOCIETY OF THE OLD SOUTH**

Although slavery was primarily an economic institution that created great wealth, it was also a peculiar social institution. It gave all whites a specious sense of equality despite great disparities in wealth, while it united all blacks, free and enslaved, field hands and house servants, in a common dream of freedom.

**THE WORLD OF SOUTHERN BLACKS**

. Slaves’ Daily Life and Labor

The conditions under which enslaved blacks worked varied greatly, but the great majority of them were field workers, organized in gangs, to cultivate cotton. Conditions for those workers were brutal.

. Slave Families, Kinship, and Community

Slavery made normal family life difficult. Fathers could not always discipline or protect their children, and families could be broken up at any time. Nonetheless, most
slaves grew up in strong, two-parent families. On the plantations, individual blacks were related to all others by ties of kinship, even if sometimes the kinship was fictive. All elderly men were “uncles,” all young women were “sisters.” Slave culture was a family culture, and the family, like religion, saved the individual from having to face alone the horror of slavery.

. African American Religion

Black Christianity owed much of its form and content to traditional African religion and served as the cornerstone of an emerging African American culture. Because of its subversive potential, whites tried to supervise black religion. The African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church, for example, was sometimes banned in the South; but religion, especially that practiced by slaves when they were safe from white observation, reaffirmed the inherent joy of life and the inevitable day of liberation, both in this world and in the world to come.

. Resistance and Rebellion

The most dramatic displays of a yearning for freedom were the slave rebellions in the antebellum South. Most notable are the ones led by Gabriel Prosser in 1800, Denmark Vesey in 1822, and the greatest of all, Nat Turner in 1831. Most slave resistance, however, was more subtle: They feigned illness, worked inefficiently, destroyed tools, and sometimes poisoned their masters. In their jokes and stories, slaves asserted their everyday victories against overwhelming odds.

. Free Blacks in the Old South

Free blacks in the South suffered so many legal restrictions that their condition amounted to a sort of semislavery. They felt a sense of solidarity with the slaves, but were generally unable to help them.

**WHITE SOCIETY IN THE ANTEBELLUM SOUTH**

Great planters were a small minority but they were the dominant political and economic figures in the South.

. The Planters’ World

The tone and values of the white South were set by the great planters, those who owned more than twenty slaves, even though they comprised less than 1 percent of the white population. These men, typically self-made, earned a considerable part of their income from commerce, land speculation, and slave trading, as well as cotton planting. They carried into the management of their plantations the same shrewd business mind.
that had given them their start, but some of them preferred to think of themselves as
born aristocrats who disdained money-making.

. Planters, Racism, and Paternalism

Southern planters prided themselves on their paternal feelings toward their slaves. These slaves, according to studies, enjoyed a better standard of living than did slaves elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere. The relatively decent treatment can to some extent be explained by their increasing economic value after 1808, when planters could no longer count on getting more slaves from Africa. In reality, most large planters had little to do with their slaves. Overseers managed the slaves on a daily basis, and everyone acknowledged that physical force, whipping, and the sale of troublesome slaves were actions necessary to keep the plantation in operation. Nor should it be forgotten that racism was at the core of paternalism. It was only because they could portray Blacks as inferior that slaveholders could see themselves as benevolent Christians.

This topic is discussed in the Featured Essay; see below.

. Small Slaveholders

Slaveholders with fewer than twenty slaves generally provided the worst conditions for African Americans. The slave shared the master’s poverty, and was at the complete mercy of the master’s whim.

. Yeomen Farmers

Most white Southerners did not own slaves. They worked their own farms and differed from the yeomen farmers of the North in only one important aspect: They generally lacked the urban outlets that would have encouraged commercial farming. Although small farmers in the South resented the large planters and often made a point of asserting their equality with them, the average white in the South was not likely to turn against the institution of slavery. One could dream of owning slaves someday, but, and this point best explains why the white South defended slavery, the average white feared and hated blacks and saw in slavery a system for keeping blacks “in their place.” So long as all blacks were kept inferior, all whites would be superior.

. A Closed Mind and a Closed Society

The dominant planter class feared not only slave rebellion, but also that the white small farmers might join the abolitionist crusade. The planters, therefore, created a mood of impending disaster to encourage all Southerners to close ranks. After the 1830s, it became dangerous in the South even to speak of slavery as a necessary evil. Slavery could be described only as a positive good. This position was defended on the basis that Africans were inferior in some way, that slavery was sanctioned in the Old
and New Testaments, and that slavery provided a kind of humane asylum for African Americans, who would improve as a race because of slavery. In addition, Southerners claimed that slavery was superior to the northern wage labor system.

Although books criticizing slavery were censored, people who criticized slavery were beaten and forced to emigrate, and efforts were made to keep slaves illiterate and to keep free blacks under surveillance, Southern planters never achieved a sense of security. By the 1850s, they began to believe that their safety could only be guaranteed by secession from the United States.

SLAVERY AND THE SOUTHERN ECONOMY

Before the Civil War, two distinct subdivisions emerged in the South. In the lower South, the cotton kingdom, all economic life revolved around one crop, and blacks constituted nearly half the population. In the upper South, where whites outnumbered blacks three to one, slave labor was less important.

. The Internal Slave Trade

Virginia and Maryland, the old centers of tobacco production, had become areas of mixed farming by the 1850s. They needed less labor and more capital, which they acquired by selling slaves to the lower South. As slavery loosened its hold on Virginia, Maryland, and Kentucky, these states began to take on some of the characteristics of the industrializing North. Whether the loyalty of these states would go to the North or South was increasingly uncertain.

. The Rise of the Cotton Kingdom

The great boom in cotton cultivation came with the introduction of “short-staple” cotton, which could be grown anywhere south of Virginia and Kentucky. The cotton gin made it easy to extract the seeds, and because the crop required almost constant, year-round labor, it was ideally suited to slave labor. Cotton growing began in Georgia and South Carolina and spread rapidly westward to Alabama and Mississippi, and finally to Arkansas, Louisiana, and east Texas. Cotton was grown by small farmers, but large planters with their own gins and armies of slaves dominated production, which increased by leaps and bounds. By the 1850s, the South produced 75 percent of the world’s cotton. It was sold to the textile mills in Great Britain in such quantity that cotton’s value as an export exceeded the value of all other American exports combined.

There were periods of boom and bust in the cotton industry, but planters made enough in good times to ride out the bad and, from 1849 to 1860, there was a long, sustained period of prosperity. In the 1850s, cotton was the most important business in the United States.
. Slavery and Industrialization

Southerners realized they had developed little industry and commerce and resented their dependence on the North in these areas. Many Southerners projected schemes to develop industry, some of which proposed using free white labor and others, the use of slaves. Slaves did, in fact, work in southern factories, but what effect industrialization would have had on slavery is a moot point. Agriculture offered too great a profit for planters to shift their interest to industry.

. The “Profitability” Issue

Large cotton planters usually benefited from slavery, but the South as a whole did not. White small farmers had lower living standards than most northern farmers, and slaves, of course, did not do well. It is true that cotton was an expanding, profitable business before the Civil War, but its profits were not well distributed, and the slave system that the South felt was necessary to grow cotton caused the South to waste its human resources and remain an undeveloped region.

CONCLUSION: WORLDS IN CONFLICT

Despite a booming economy, the South was a fragile society, divided as it was by color and class, by culture and geography.

FEATURE ESSAY: HARRIET JACOBS AND MARIA NORCOM

Women in the antebellum South, whether slave or free, faced a wide variety of challenges. Harriet Jacobs was a slave on a Southern plantation who was abused by her master, whose wife was Maria Norcom. Although enslaved women like Harriet had no legal rights or recourse against sexual assault by their masters, these masters’ wives also lived under the complete control of their husbands.

LECTURE TOPICS

White owners became alarmed that the increase in the slave population could encourage slave rebellions. The number and frequency of slave patrols increased. Rumors of rebellions, like the Vesey and Prosser Rebellions, were quickly and harshly dealt with. The unexpected success of the Turner Rebellion confirmed that suspicions were accurate and encouraged the further use of terror to keep any potentially rebellious slaves under control. Another result of these rebellions was the increasing restriction of free-black activity. Some Southern states evicted free blacks from their borders.
Introduce students to the concept of historiography by reviewing some of the classic works on the institution of slavery. Use a variety of historical treatments of this issue to help students understand the idea of revisionist history and to help them see how a historian’s objectivity is situated within a historical context. Some classic historical treatments of the issue of slavery include U. B. Phillips’s *American Negro Slavery* (1918), Kenneth Stampp’s *The Peculiar Institution* (1956), Stanley Elkins’s *Slavery* (1959), Eugene Genovese’s *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (1972), and Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman’s *Time on the Cross* (1974).

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)**

Compare slavery with the “wage slavery” of Northern workers. Compare the degrees and types of racism in the antebellum South and North. Explore this question: Who is free when slaves and masters are bound to each other?

Prepare a presentation on historical myth with a focus on the antebellum South. Begin the class with a clip from the film *Gone with the Wind* and ask students to comment on the images they associate with the antebellum South. Then, discuss the reality of life in the Old South. Ask students why Americans have created myths about their history in general and why we have created myths about the antebellum South in particular.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)**

Discuss the connection between religion and politics in the slave community. What roles were played by the black preacher in the slave community? Examine the lyrics of spirituals and have students point out the connection between the lyrics of these religious songs and the slaves’ political agenda of freedom. Play some spirituals for the class to give students a feel for the power of the music. An excellent collection is Spirituals in Concert by Kathleen Battle and Jessye Norman.

Discuss the status of women on the antebellum Southern plantation. Consider both plantation mistresses and female slaves. Describe the living conditions of each, and their relationship with each other. How did the sexual mores of Southern planters impact the lives of both female slaves and plantation mistresses? How did the patriarchal system of the antebellum South validate this situation?

Discuss the film *Amistad*. How is it a realistic portrayal of the historical events? How is it not realistic? What is the role of film in a history class? Why do you think Steven Spielberg made the film?

**CONNECTING TO THE PAST**

Nat Turner’s Rebellion in 1831 seared the South; it demonstrated like no other slave uprising the depth of black rage. One of the most chilling incidents happened at the very beginning of the revolt. Having
slaughtered his master’s family, Turner and his confederates left the house and proceeded some distance before they remembered that they had left an infant alive in a crib. They went back and finished the massacre. A complete collection of documents relating to the rebellion, including trial transcripts and Turner’s “confessions,” can be found in Henry Irving Tragle, editor, *The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971). Some scholars doubt the authenticity of Turner’s confession, which was taken down by a white physician. William Styron used the confession rather loosely as the basis for his novel, *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1967).

Rebellion was the most extreme form of resistance to slavery and involved not only risking one’s own life, but the willingness to kill whites whom one knew and perhaps even liked. More frequently, slaves sought freedom through flight, as Frederick Douglass did in 1836. His recollection of the planning and successful execution of his escape from Maryland is dramatic, but especially revealing is his discussion of the force of ignorance, fostered by white planters, that made the prospect of flight so terrifying. Douglass, for example, did not know that the states of New York or Massachusetts existed. Douglass actually published three editions of his autobiography, all of which were reprinted in the Library of America edition in 1994 with notes by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

**POINTS OF MASTERY**

Discuss how yeoman farmers were different from plantation elites and the role of both in the slave system.

Distinguish geographically, economically, and demographically among the Upper South, the Lower South, and the Border South.

Examine the labor of slaves, contrasting urban slavery and field slaves.

Describe the physical characteristics and operation of a Southern plantation.

Understand the role of punishment in slavery.

Describe the characteristics of family life in slave communities of the antebellum South.

Understand the role of black institutions, specifically the church and the creation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Describe African Christianity and explain its effect on slave identity and indirect resistance against the institution of slavery.

Summarize the diversity and complexity of the nonslaveholding Southern white community.

Explain why white Southerners were increasingly on the defensive after 1830.

Describe the role of women regarding the institution of slavery.
Identify three examples of slave conspiracies in the antebellum South and comment on the success or failure of each.

Identify Henry “Box” Brown and discuss the different methods of running away.

Explain the meaning of the term “Underground Railroad” and explain its connection to the issue of slave resistance.

Southern slaveholders claimed that their paternalism justified their ownership of slaves, but paternalism implied obligations as well as privileges. Did slaveholders live up to their obligations?

Describe the reasons for the revitalization of slavery as an institution.

Explain the impulse for the colonization of blacks and the different approaches of whites and blacks to colonization.

Discuss the difficulties of the slave trade within the American states.

Identify the factors that led to the expansion of cotton cultivation in the South.

List the factors that contributed to the rise of short-staple cotton as a profitable commodity in the Old South. Explain why slave labor was considered by Southern planters to be particularly suitable to the cultivation of cotton.

Conceptualize the institution of slavery as an economic endeavor involving profits and capitalism at the expense of human rights.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Do you think the booming cotton economy benefited all members of Southern society, or only certain segments?

   The cotton economy of the South benefited only the large plantation owners; it was terrible for the slave population and was also detrimental to small farmers and other poor whites. Cultivating cotton required expensive machinery, like the cotton gin; expansive fields; and slaves to work in the fields. These requirements meant that growing cotton was beyond the means of most Southern farmers, who relied primarily on subsistence farming and whose standard of living was generally lower than that of farmers in the North.

2. What difference did it make in a slave’s life if he or she belonged to a great planter or to a small farmer?

   Slaves who belonged to great planters usually received better treatment than those who belonged to small farmers. The owners of large plantations had the money to properly care for their slaves, whom they viewed as an investment, like a piece of machinery. In contrast,
smaller farmers often struggled financially and were unable to meet their own needs, much less the needs of their slaves. It was often necessary for these farmers to sell slaves when they were unable to pay for them, which meant that it was also more likely that a family would be split up.

3. What do you think is the connection between slavery and racism? Why did slaveholders begin defending slavery in racial terms in the 1830s?

Southern slaveholders were overwhelmingly Christian, and forcing other human beings to work without pay and live without rights runs counter to Christian teachings. However, at this point in history, the Southern economy was so reliant on slave labor that slaveholders had to justify its existence in such a way that it was compatible with their religious beliefs.

By believing that one race (in this case, black Africans) is inherently inferior to another (in this case, whites of European background), slaveholders were able to deny slaves’ basic humanity. Because of their race, slaves weren’t really people, and were therefore not entitled to the rights that people deserve. Some slaveholders went further, arguing that slavery actually served to educate and civilize slaves. In sum, racism allowed slaveholders, who needed slaves to maintain their wealth, to justify their un-Christian treatment of other human beings.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

This four-part series examines the American experience with slavery from 1450 until the abolition of the institution during the Civil War.

*Ship of Slaves: The Middle Passage,* A&E Video, 50 minutes.  
This video explores the story behind Steven Spielberg’s 1997 movie *Amistad.*

*Frederick Douglass: When the Lion Wrote History,* WETA/ROJA Productions, 1994, 90 minutes.  
This three-part series examines the life and times of Frederick Douglass, the African American leader of the abolitionist movement.

**CLASS EXERCISES**

*The Living History of Slavery.* Although the role of slavery in the American story has only slowly made its way into the historical depictions of historical sites, now that it has, and all groups agree on the necessity of its inclusion, controversy has plagued its presence. Both African Americans and whites find its depictions uncomfortable, often too closely identifying with its negative behaviors, feelings, and beliefs. How can slavery remain a part of the story and not evoke such negative emotions? Students are left to decide.

Have the students read slave narrative accounts of life as a slave during the antebellum period. How valid are slave narratives as historical sources? How accurate do you think they were? What questions would you ask slaves if you could?

Listen to some slave spirituals and work songs and analyze them. What do they reveal about the slave experience and about attitudes toward religion? Notice their double meanings and symbolism.

Explore the multitude of slave lives. Although the vast majority of slaves lived on plantations, there were many who did not. In what ways were their lives similar to the lives of America’s poor whites? Were urban slaves better off than household slaves, than plantation slaves? Why were some slaves permitted to purchase their freedom and others not?

If your location permits, have students visit plantations from the antebellum period. If not, contact historical sites such as Natchez, Mississippi, or Charleston, South Carolina, or visit websites (e.g., for Natchez, see http://www.visitnatchez.org; for Charleston, see http://www.charlestonmuseum.org) and show students slides of the various architectural styles and varying degrees of opulence reflected in the Southern plantation lifestyle.

Write a paper on the circumstances surrounding the Nat Turner revolt. How successful was the revolt? What factors contributed to the outcome? Slave rebellion was generally unsuccessful in the antebellum South. Why, then, did Southern whites fear it so strongly?

**MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS**

- Read the Document: Confessions of Nat Turner (1831)
- Read the Document: Overseer’s Report from Chicora Wood Plantation
- Listen to the Audio File: When the Roll is Called up Yonder
- Complete the Assignment: Harriet Jacobs and Maria Norcom: Women of Southern Households
- Watch the Video: Underground Railroad
- Read the Document: George Fitzhugh, The Blessings of Slavery (1857)
- Read the Document: Poem, “The Slave Auction”
- View the Closer Look: Slave Auction in Richmond, Virginia
- View the Map: Slavery in the South
CHAPTER 12

THE PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

CHAPTER OUTLINE

REDEEMING THE MIDDLE CLASS

THE RISE OF EVANGELICALISM

- The Second Great Awakening: The Frontier Phase
- The Second Great Awakening in the North
- From Revivalism to Reform

DOMESTICITY AND CHANGES IN THE AMERICAN FAMILY

- Marriage for Love
- The Cult of Domesticity
- The Discovery of Childhood

INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

- The Extension of Education
- Discovering the Asylum

REFORM TURNS RADICAL

- Divisions in the Benevolent Empire
- The Abolitionist Enterprise
- Black Abolitionists
- From Abolitionism to Women’s Rights
- Radical Ideas and Experiments
PHRENOLOGY

History, for many students, is a process of continual enlightenment so that each age is more informed than the one before, our own age, of course, being the most intelligent of all. The progress of human intelligence, unfortunately, is more fitful than many students realize. In the nineteenth century, advanced thinkers accepted science as the measure of truth, but “science” then, as now, could be perverted for the sake of profit and sheer nonsense could become big business. Phrenology is the best case study.

Phrenology was the invention, or “discovery,” of two German scientists, Franz Gall and Johann Spurzheim, both of whom had impeccable academic credentials. They began with the propositions that the brain was the mind, that the brain was divided into a number of organs, that the size of each organ could be estimated by measuring the part of the skull covering it, that each organ had its own function, and that the organs could be improved through exercise.

Phrenology made its way to America slowly, mainly through the efforts of Spurzheim, who lectured in the United States in 1832, and of George Combe, a Scottish philosopher whose book, *The Constitution of Man* (1828), made a deep impression. Although phrenology attracted intellectuals such as Henry Ward Beecher, Sarah Grimke, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Horace Greeley, and Walt Whitman, it was not until the 1840s that Orson Fowler made it a mass phenomenon and a commercial success.

Fowler was converted to phrenology as a student at Amherst College and, in 1842, became editor of the *American Phrenological Journal and Miscellany*, the house organ of the movement. In 1844, he joined with Samuel Wells to organize the firm of Fowler and Wells, which lasted until 1863 and was undoubtedly the most profitable phrenological shop in America.

To illustrate how phrenology worked, take the example of an organ Fowler and Wells were especially proud of because they had discovered it: Sublimity. This organ, as a trained phrenologist knew, was located “on the side-head, directly above Acquisitiveness … and behind Ideality.” It was this organ that allowed a human to perceive the grandeur of nature or of art, such as mountain scenery or “the roar of artillery.” According to Fowler and Wells, one could cultivate Sublimity by looking at mountain scenery or presumably, by getting shelled. Sublimity was an organ that could be exercised as much as possible, but most organs had to be restrained if they grew too large. For example, when overly developed, Secretiveness (located at the inferior edge of the parietal bone “immediately above Destructiveness”) caused the afflicted person to wear tight neckties or high-buttoned dresses. The organ could, however, be reduced by appropriate exercise.
It was best to actually come in person to Fowler and Wells at 27 East 21st Street in New York for a reading, or to go to an accredited graduate of the American Institute of Phrenology, but Fowler and Wells would perform analysis by mail for those who sent two photographs and the appropriate cranial measurements, plus the fee.

Phrenology was both liberating and dangerous. Because it asserted that the mind could be improved, it helped free many Americans from the still powerful doctrine of Original Sin. Elizabeth Cady Stanton is an example. Convinced during a religious revival that she was a hopeless sinner, she fell into a depression so profound that her family feared for her sanity. She was rescued by reading Combe’s works on phrenology. Phrenology was inherently dangerous, however, because it encouraged the belief that anatomy was destiny. Phrenologists spoke about the ability for improvement of the mind, but they always used African American physiognomy to demonstrate the worst development of the organs, and it turned out that all Jews had the “Commercial Nose.” Although most white Americans took this kind of racism in stride, phrenology posed dangers to everyone. Some employers hired, fired, and promoted on the basis of phrenological examinations. There were even proposals, never acted on, to examine children and to imprison, on the basis of an examination, those who would turn out to be criminals.

REDEEMING THE MIDDLE CLASS

The author uses the revival organized in Rochester, New York, in 1830 as one example of the way members of the middle class, especially in the urban North, attempted to reform themselves and the society around them.

THE RISE OF EVANGELICALISM

The separation of church and state gave all religious denominations equal opportunity to attract members and encouraged all denominations to seek converts actively. Alarmed by what they considered “infidelity,” pious Protestants formed voluntary associations to combat sin.

- The Second Great Awakening: The Frontier Phase

Camp meetings provided not only emotional religion for the frontier but also one of the few opportunities for social life for rural people whose everyday lives were often tedious and lonely. Camp meeting revivals, however, did not usually lead to organized social reform because the thrust of the religious message was so intensely personal.

- The Second Great Awakening in the North

There were two branches of evangelical revival in the North. The first started in New England, where theologians such as Timothy Dwight and Lyman Beecher preserved, but modified Calvinism by emphasizing the doctrine of “free agency.” The second branch took root in upstate New York, an area of transplanted New Englanders. There,
the greatest revivalist was Charles G. Finney, who paid no attention to theology and preached an unqualified doctrine of free will. Finney successfully experimented with revival techniques, such as the “anxious bench,” and his revivals often led to the organization of more churches.

From Revivalism to Reform

The Northern revivals stimulated reform movements by appealing to middle-class citizens who had been socially active before their conversions, and who now found a way to preserve traditional values in a rapidly changing world. The various evangelical reform movements, known collectively as “the benevolent empire,” actually did alter American life. The temperance movement, for example, enlisted over 1 million members, mostly women, who successfully persuaded Americans to cut their consumption of alcohol by more than 50 percent.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

DOMESTICITY AND CHANGES IN THE AMERICAN FAMILY

Evangelicals and reformers assigned the family, and especially mothers, a crucial role in developing self-disciplined Christian children.

Marriage for Love

By the nineteenth century, marriage had changed profoundly. Upper- and middle-class women expected to marry for love, more forcefully demanded an end to the sexual double standard, were less deferential to their husbands, and were more willing to express their love in private correspondence and public display.

The Cult of Domesticity

“The Cult of True Womanhood” placed women in the home, but the home was glorified as the center of all efforts to civilize and Christianize society. Most women who were married to farmers or laborers still contributed to family income, but more and more middle- and upper-class women could afford to dedicate themselves to the home, making it a sanctuary from the outside world. Many women who found themselves liberated from the drudgery of farm chores used their leisure to improve themselves, to get to know other women, and to lead crusades against vice; above all, however, they attempted to become ideal mothers.

This topic is discussed in Law and Society; see below.
The Discovery of Childhood

In the nineteenth century, the child was placed at the center of family life. Each child was looked on as unique and irreplaceable. Ideal parents no longer “broke” a child’s will; they formed his or her character with affection. Parental discipline was meant to instill guilt rather than fear, so that the child would eventually learn self-discipline.

INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Reformers hoped that public institutions such as schools would continue what the family had begun, or that institutions such as asylums and prisons would mend what the family had failed to do.

The Extension of Education

Between 1820 and 1850, public school systems expanded rapidly, especially in the North. Originally demanded by the working class as a means for advancement, the public schools were seized by middle-class reformers, who saw them as the ideal instrument for inculcating values of hard work and responsibility. Horace Mann overcame the objections of taxpayers who resented having to subsidize the education of the poor by pointing out that public schools would save children of the poor and immigrants from becoming like their parents: vile and troublesome and a public expense. Many parents, especially Catholics, resented public schools, believing they alienated children from their parents.

Discovering the Asylum

For those who lacked self-discipline, the poor, the criminal, and the insane, reformers hoped harsh measures would lead to rehabilitation. Prisoners, for example, were put into solitary confinement and had to conform to a strict daily schedule at such “model” prisons as the one at Auburn, New York. Rehabilitation, however, seemed not to work. Public support was always skimpy, and most prisons, asylums, and poorhouses became warehouses for the unwanted, who lived in abysmal conditions despite the heroic efforts of Dorothea Dix, who worked tirelessly to bring some decency to these institutions.

REFORM TURNS RADICAL

Most reformers wanted to improve society, but some of the more radical wanted to destroy society as it existed and create a new, perfect social order.
Divisions in the Benevolent Empire

By the 1830s, radical perfectionists had become impatient with moderate reform and began to form their own societies. The temperance and peace movements split into moderate and radical wings, but the split among the opponents of slavery had more important consequences.

Moderate abolitionists hoped for a gradual end to slavery, which they saw as the only realistic possibility, and they even supported removal of blacks from the United States as a concession to white racism. Radical abolitionists, like William Lloyd Garrison, demanded immediate emancipation and formed the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833.

The Abolitionist Enterprise

Abolitionists grew from the evangelical tradition and drew strength from it. A good example is Theodore Dwight Weld, an itinerant minister who had been converted by Finney. When he became an abolitionist, Weld simply adapted his revivalist techniques to a new cause. Weld was extremely successful in northern Ohio and western New York, where he held mass meetings. The abolitionists appealed mainly to ambitious and hard-working inhabitants of small towns, but often encountered opposition from members of the working class, who disliked blacks and feared their economic and social competition, and from solid citizens, who regarded abolitionists as anarchists.

Abolitionists tended to weaken their influence by perpetual infighting. Garrison disrupted the movement by associating it with other radical reforms such as pacifism and feminism. White Southerners, ironically, helped the abolitionists by trying to suppress the right of petition and by censoring the mail to prevent abolitionist literature from being circulated. These attempts backfired. The abolitionist movement succeeded in making slavery a matter of public concern, despite opposition from without and divisions from within.

Black Abolitionists

African Americans always made up the majority of abolitionists, but black abolitionists had to struggle to achieve leadership positions within abolitionist societies. Some, most notably William Douglass and Sojourner Truth, became nationally known, and in 1830 the Negro Convention gave blacks an independent organization. African Americans also published their own abolitionist newspapers, and were the most important figures in running the “Underground Railroad.”
. From Abolitionism to Women’s Rights

The abolitionist movement gave many women an opportunity to engage in a public reform program. In advocating freedom for blacks, women began to realize their own inequality. When they discovered that many male abolitionists refused to accept women as equal partners in protest, women led by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton organized the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, which was the beginning of the movement for female rights.

. Radical Ideas and Experiments

In addition to the reform movements inspired by evangelical piety, other attempts were made to create perfect individuals or a perfect society. For example, a number of utopian communities were established, such as the Oneida Community or Brook Farm, but most were short-lived. Intellectuals, repelled by the crudities of the revivalists, sought intense religious experience in a literary and philosophical movement called transcendentalism. Finally, weird reform movements, such as phrenology, spiritualism, and diet fads, promised perfect health or instant self-knowledge.

CONCLUSION: COUNTERPOINT ON REFORM

Perceptive critics, like Nathaniel Hawthorne, regarded the nation’s pursuit of perfection with a skeptical eye, but the reform impulse, no matter how eccentric at times, opened the way to necessary changes in American life.

FEATURE ESSAY: THE WAR AGAINST “DEMON DRINK”

The temperance movement, one of the longest-lasting social revolutions in American history, began in the mid-nineteenth century. In the early nineteenth century, drinking was part of every aspect of American life, from parties to work. The early colonial system of employment, in which apprentices learned trades from masters, whose work often took place in their homes, fostered this type of drinking.

By 1830, consumable goods were increasingly mass produced and American producers began to value efficiency and productivity. As a result, movements to curtail drinking among Americans, who, at the time, consumed three times as much alcohol on average as Americans today do, flourished. They associated alcohol not only with laziness, but also with immorality.

What began as a push for individual improvement, through temperance groups such as Washingtonian societies, transformed into a push for legal regulation—the high point of which was prohibition, enacted in 1920 by the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution.
“Coverture” was a law based on the medieval English feudal system. Under this law, women were completely subjected to their husbands and maintained no legal rights after marriage. They could not own property, form contracts, sue or be sued, or exercise any legal control over their children.

In mid-nineteenth-century America, women such as Harriet Douglas (whose situation is discussed at length in this essay) began to question and propose alternatives to these laws. Women’s rights groups, like abolitionists and temperance groups, drew on the energy of the Second Great Awakening to further their cause. These reformers’ work led to the Seneca Falls Convention and to a series of laws that gave women more independence and greater legal power.

LECTURE TOPICS

Prepare a lecture on changing gender roles in the American middle class during the nineteenth century. Focus on the separation of men and women in American middle-class society and the increasing distinctions in their roles, as men were identified with the world of work and women with home and hearth. Why do we associate these gender role changes with the middle class? How were gender roles in the middle class distinctive from gender roles in the upper class and the working class?

Prepare a lecture focusing on the temperance movement as a middle-class reform movement. Although there was a religious agenda involved in the movement, were there other more secular issues at stake? With what population did most middle-class Americans associate unacceptable drinking habits? Of what class and national origin was this population? How was the issue of alcohol consumption connected to the laboring class? Was the rise of the temperance movement in any way connected to the rise of nativism during the nineteenth century? Were there as many secular as religious motivations for promoting temperance in the nineteenth century?

Prepare a diagram showing the development of the American political party system from the 1790s to 1840—specifically party names, leaders, principles, programs, campaign issues, and sources of popular electoral support.

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

How did the abolitionist movement lead to the women’s movement? What types of conditions were women under in mid-nineteenth-century America, and how did some come to recognize their inequality and oppression? Why was the women’s movement not successful at the same time as the abolitionist movement?

Discuss the Second Great Awakening and the strengthening of evangelical Christianity in America during the early nineteenth century. Focus particularly on the impact of the movement on the American South. How will the religious image of the South be more clearly defined through this movement?
What will the movement mean to the state of religion in the Southern backcountry? Will evangelical religion threaten or strengthen the Southern institution of slavery?

Discuss the types of antislavery reform that emerged during the early nineteenth century. Be sure to address the following questions, connecting antislavery reform to racism:

a. Could a person in the nineteenth century oppose slavery without being an abolitionist?

b. Could a person in the nineteenth century oppose slavery and be a racist?

c. Could a person in the nineteenth century be an abolitionist and be a racist?

d. Did abolitionists actually appeal to Northern racist fears in an effort to popularize the agenda of the abolitionist movement?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Compare and contrast Irish and German immigrants of the early nineteenth century, focusing on the numbers of people of each nationality who came to the United States and the levels of economic security reflected in each population.

Choose one of the nineteenth-century American utopian societies and discuss its origins, leadership, defining philosophy, and success of the community. What was it about nineteenth-century American society that sparked the creation of the community, and how effective were its members in offering a workable alternative lifestyle? What characteristics of American culture and which American values have made it most difficult for Americans to embrace communal living as anything more than a passing fancy?

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

The cult of self-improvement was strongest among the respectable and the cultured. Of the many ideal societies established in the period, Brook Farm was the most famous because it attracted many New England intellectuals. Nathaniel Hawthorne became a member for a short time in 1841. His notebook for the period related that he tossed apples to the farm’s swine and performed other such chores, the kind of work that ennobled the soul. The notebook also demonstrated how incurably artistic Hawthorne was, even when he dug up potatoes. When he finally realized that “a man’s soul may be buried and perish under a dungheap … just as well as under a pile of money,” he left the community. The best edition of Hawthorne’s works is The Centenary Edition published by the Ohio State University Press. The American Notebooks, edited by Claude M. Simpson (1972), is Volume 8 in that edition. Hawthorne later wrote The Blithedale Romance, based on his experiences at Brook Farm.

Most Americans still gave allegiance to traditional, old-fashioned Calvinist Christianity, and it was this force that gave meaning to individual lives and stability to society. On the frontier, innumerable itinerant ministers, especially Baptists and Methodists, spread the Gospel to people who sometimes did not want to hear it. Peter Cartwright, one of the most successful Methodist itinerants, left an account of a trip he once took from St. Louis to Pittsburgh on a steamboat filled with “a mixed multitude; some
Deists, some Atheists, some Universalists, a great many profane swearers, drunkards, gamblers, fiddlers, and dancers.” Cartwright persuaded a group of Army officers to leave off playing cards to discuss religion, but when Cartwright insulted the memory of Tom Paine, the great apostle of “natural religion,” the discussion almost became violent. (See *The Autobiography of Peter Cartwright*, edited by Charles L. Wallis, New York: Abingdon Press, 1956.)

**POINTS OF MASTERY**

- Identify the Second Great Awakening as the second major example of a popular religious revolt in American history.
- Define the term “evangelical Christianity” and describe its impact on American theology and religious style.
- Does either the religious revival movement or the interest in literature tell us anything of importance about Jacksonian America?
- Explain the relationship between evangelical Christianity and women. How did evangelical Christianity affect the black community?
- Define the term “temperance” and explain why this issue became so popular during the nineteenth century.
- Define the cult of domesticity, explain the reasons for its development, and describe new views of childhood.
- Describe urban class structure and compare it to rural class structure.
- Describe the workingmen’s movement as a reflection of the first political demands for free tax-supported schools. Explain why New England played a significant role in the school reform movement.
- Identify Horace Mann and explain his historical significance in the area of school reform.
- Summarize the reform philosophies that shaped early nineteenth-century asylums.
- What distinctive American themes did the writers, artists, and builders of the nineteenth century express in their works?
- Define the term “benevolent empire” and explain its organization during the early nineteenth century.
- In what ways were abolitionism and antislavery different?
Identify William Lloyd Garrison and explain his antislavery philosophy. Point out his unique contributions to the organization of a national abolitionist movement.

Explain the role of the abolitionist movement in the emergence of the nineteenth-century American women’s movement.

Why did women enjoy an unusual degree of participation as active members of almost every reform group?

Explain the reasons for the split in the American Anti-Slavery Society, as well as the characteristics of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and the Liberty Party.

Describe the role of black institutions, specifically the church and newspapers, in the abolitionist movement.

Define the term “gag rule” and explain its connection to the issue of slavery by 1836.

Identify the major examples of American experimentation with utopian communities during the early nineteenth century.

Identify and explain the historical significance of the Seneca Falls Convention and its adoption of the Declaration of Sentiments.

Explain the main ideas of transcendentalism.

Describe the factors that led to a resumption of immigration to the United States and the impact of that immigration.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Do you think it was healthy for American politics that religion played such a strong role in antebellum political movements?

The religious fervor of the Second Great Awakening led to important political advances in America. Although in the early nineteenth century revivalism aimed primarily to increase church membership and renewed faith and morality, later in the century this energy turned toward causes like abolitionism, women’s rights, public education, and temperance.

American society in the mid-nineteenth century was stratified and left many without opportunities, rights, or even basic freedom. Applying the best aspects of religion—fairness, concern for others, and equality—to politics started movements that would continue, in many cases, to the present day. The fact that the initial impulse for these movements was religious does not take away from the fact that they extended freedom and liberty in America.

2. In your view, were women helped or harmed by the doctrine of “separate spheres,” and why?
Although the doctrine of “separate spheres” might have improved the lives of some middle- and upper-class women of this period, this doctrine was harmful to women. Women during this period were limited by laws of coverture, which did not allow them to own property, make contracts, sue or be sued, or have any legal say over the lives of their children. In theory, this doctrine may have given women more power in their households and a greater sense of equality in their marriages; the degree to which this was true was entirely up to their husbands.

Female power in the household, as exemplified in the “Cult of Domesticity,” gave women a voice and a sense of value. However, this sense of value did not come with any legal rights, and was therefore harmful to women.

3. Why do you think so many antebellum reform movements turned to politics in the 1840s?

The type of Christianity that the Second Great Awakening preached and inspired was an activist Christianity. Believers were encouraged to go out into the world and stamp out sin and immorality, rather than focus on their own lives and personal salvation. During this period, it was easy for these new activist Christians and their leaders to find examples of social injustice and immorality: slavery, the abuse of alcohol, the lack of practical and moral education for all children, and the inferior status of women. Slavery, in particular, drew Christians together. Although abolitionists were divided about how and how quickly to end slavery, they were bound together in a desire to live as “brothers in Christ” with the black Americans who were held as slaves.

4. What is the connection between women’s influence in the public sphere and the influence of evangelical religion on society?

Both these phenomena—evangelical religion in society and women in the public sphere—took voices that were previously private and confined to the home out into larger society. Prior to the Second Great Awakening, Christianity, particularly Calvinism, was concerned with the salvation of the individual, not the reformation or salvation of society as a whole. With the evangelical movement, Christian values were taken out of the home and the church and applied to the politics of the time.

Comparably, before this period, women and their concerns were confined to the home. It was through their participation in movements like abolitionism—movements that were a result of the new evangelical religion—that women began to have a public voice. When the limitations of this voice became obvious (for example, when female delegates were not allowed to attend a convention on abolitionism), women applied their newfound influence to advocate for their own legal rights.

During this period of American history, voices and forces that had been private were brought into the public sphere and shaped American politics.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:
The Irish in America: The Long Journey Home, Lennon Documentary Group, 1997. This four-part series, narrated by Michael Murphy, examines Irish immigration to the United States during the 1840s.


Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, Florentine Films, Inc., 1999. This three-and-a-half-hour series chronicles the professional lives and personal friendship of the two women who are credited with originating the American women’s movement.

CLASS EXERCISES

Visit the site of one of the several utopian communities mentioned in the chapter. Many still exist; some have even been restored as living historical museums. Depending on where you live, you might visit Hopedale or Brook Farm near Boston, Massachusetts; Shaker Villages near Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and in Kentucky; Ephrata, Pennsylvania; Zoar, Ohio; New Harmony, Indiana; the Amana colonies in Iowa, and so on. Whether or not you can actually visit the original site, you can research further into one or two particular utopian communities.

Imagine yourself as part of the community. How well would you fit in? What would you like and dislike about life in this community? Write a letter to a friend about it, or write a series of imaginary diary entries about life in the community.

You can think about similar questions when visiting other sites, for example, Seneca Falls, Mormon landmarks in Utah, or a prison asylum built in the mid-nineteenth century. A letter or diary entry could be written about your imagined participation in a Whig campaign picnic in 1840, or a revival or temperance meeting broken up by a mob, or a meeting of Mormons considering migration westward, or the women’s rights convention in Seneca Falls.

Have students read the Declaration of Sentiments from the Seneca Falls Convention; then have a class discussion focusing on some of the following issues:

a. Have students point out phrases from the document that were lifted from the Declaration of Independence. Why did the women at Seneca Falls choose to model the Declaration of Sentiments on the Declaration of Independence? What did the Declaration of Independence mean to Americans? By using the Declaration of Independence as a model, what were Stanton and Mott saying about the status of women?

b. Explain to students the significance of the year 1848 in Western history. Is there any significance to the fact that the year the Seneca Falls Convention adopted the Declaration of Sentiments is also the year of the Revolutions of 1848 in Europe and the year Karl Marx published The Communist Manifesto?
c. Have students discuss the Declaration of Sentiments as a document of its times. Have students choose phrases from the document that reflect nativism, the cult of domesticity, and the traditional nineteenth-century links among women, moral superiority, and social reform.

MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

- View the Closer Look: Methodist Camp Meeting, 1819
- Read the Document: Lyman Beecher, “Six Sermons on Intemperance” (1828)
- Watch the Video: Drinking and the Temperance Movement in Nineteenth-Century America
- Read the Document: Catharine E. Beecher, from *A Treatise on Domestic Economy*
- Watch the Video: Who Was Horace Mann and Why Are So Many Schools Named After Him?
- Read the Document: William Lloyd Garrison, First Issue of *The Liberator* (1831)
- Read the Document: David Walker, A Black Abolitionist Speaks
- View the Map: Utopian Communities Before the Civil War
- Complete the Assignment: The War Against “Demon Drink”
- Read the Document: Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Self Reliance” (1841)
- Complete the Assignment: The Legal Rights of Married Women: Reforming the Law of Coverture
CHAPTER 13

AN AGE OF EXPANSIONISM

CHAPTER OUTLINE

THE SPIRIT OF YOUNG AMERICA

MOVEMENT TO THE FAR WEST

• Borderlands of the 1830s
• The Texas Revolution
• The Republic of Texas
• Trails of Trade and Settlement
• The Mormon Trek

MANIFEST DESTINY AND THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

• Tyler and Texas
• The Triumph of Polk and Annexation
• The Doctrine of Manifest Destiny
• Polk and the Oregon Question
• War with Mexico
• Settlement of the Mexican-American War

INTERNAL EXPANSIONISM

• The Triumph of the Railroad
• The Industrial Revolution Takes Off
• Mass Immigration Begins
• The New Working Class

CONCLUSION: THE COSTS OF EXPANSION

FEATURE ESSAY: HISPANIC AMERICA AFTER 1848
BOUNDLESS AMERICA

Henry Clay once defended the acquisition of Florida by whatever means because “it fills a space in our imagination.” For Americans in the first half of the nineteenth century, there were many such places demanding to be filled. Ask your students to visualize the boundaries of the United States, and the answer is immediate: the Atlantic, the Pacific, Canada, and Mexico. How “natural” and firm, how predestined those boundaries seem today! If we are to understand the almost obsessive desire of earlier Americans to expand their boundaries, we must appreciate how vague and fluid the national borders were before 1850.

In 1783, only the eastern boundary of the United States was fixed. On the North, the frontier with Canada was not yet settled, and neither was the boundary with Spanish Florida in the South. One might think that the Mississippi River formed a definite western boundary, but a glance at the map shows that the Mississippi begins much west of where it ends, and its headwaters are south of the Canadian border. Added to these real difficulties was the abysmal state of geographical knowledge. During debates over ratification of the 1783 peace treaty, some congressmen obviously mistook the Missouri River for the Mississippi.

The Louisiana Purchase allowed the United States to take advantage of the disputed border between Louisiana and Spanish West Florida to press Spain until it finally gave up the entire peninsula. The Gulf of Mexico then joined the Atlantic Ocean in defining the coasts of the United States. The Purchase also made the Mississippi totally irrelevant as a western boundary and substituted for it a vague and vast domain that reached as far as imagination allowed. For many Americans and for Napoleon Bonaparte, Louisiana included Texas. Others erroneously believed that Louisiana extended beyond the Rocky Mountains. In the North, the Purchase petered out somewhere on the plains that stretch from the Dakotas into Manitoba.

We know now that the annexation of Texas settled the southern boundary of the United States at the Rio Grande, but we also know how porous a border it is. It is not surprising that in the 1840s many Americans considered the eastern Sierra Madre Mountains a more natural frontier between the United States and Mexico. At the same time that the Rio Grande became the southern boundary, the forty-ninth parallel became the northern border, and, shortly thereafter, the acquisition of California settled the western border. After generations of living within fluid borders, Americans in 1848 could finally define their national boundaries as we do today: the Atlantic, the Pacific, Canada, and Mexico.

These boundaries have endured for so long that they now seem fixed forever. But what would happen if Canada broke up and the people of British Columbia petitioned for annexation? Would the United States pass up a chance to make Alaska contiguous with the lower states? Would the United States some day attempt to round out its queer southwestern border with Mexico and finally acquire the mouth of the Colorado River? Once people realize that boundaries can be altered, it becomes easier for them to think that those boundaries should advance. Nations commonly expand and contract. Mexico
once included Guatemala and touched Canada. Perhaps the next turn of fortune will see her collecting
tolls on the Great Lakes and dispensing justice in Saskatchewan.

THE SPIRIT OF YOUNG AMERICA

The author begins with Ralph Waldo Emerson’s celebration of a new generation of Americans who, he predicted, would lead the nation to greatness. This chapter describes the achievements of this new generation: The West was seized from Mexico, an industrial revolution took off, and the population greatly increased through immigration.

MOVEMENT TO THE FAR WEST

In the 1830s and 1840s, American settlement pierced the line of Mississippi and reached the Pacific. Settlement often spilled over the borders of the United States and encroached on lands owned or claimed by Mexico and England.

. Borderlands of the 1830s

The dream that Canada might someday belong to the United States came to an end in 1842 when the Webster-Ashburton Treaty settled the northeast boundary. Americans looked instead to three other territories: Oregon (an area much larger than the present-day state of the same name), where the United States and England had a joint right of occupation; New Mexico, then owned by Mexico; and California, also owned by Mexico, but virtually uninhabited.

. The Texas Revolution

Americans, including many slaveholders, immigrated into Texas, which was owned by Mexico in the 1820s. These “Anglos” never fully accepted Mexican rule, especially after 1829, when the Mexican government tried to abolish slavery. After a series of incidents, armed rebellion broke out in 1835.

. The Republic of Texas

In March 1836, a convention of Texans declared independence. After a short, brutal war, Texans forced the defeated Santa Anna to sign a treaty recognizing Texas’ claim to territory all the way to the Rio Grande. Texas was independent, but Mexico refused to recognize the new nation.

Texas opened her lands to even more rapid American settlement, and most Texans desired to join the United States. President Andrew Jackson, however, fearing a war with Mexico and domestic political controversy, delayed annexation.
. Trails of Trade and Settlement

One of the trails used by Americans in their westward movement, the Sante Fe Trail, was closed by Mexico as a result of its war with Texas. Along the Oregon Trail, a heavy stream of settlers moved through the Rocky Mountains and into the Oregon country. These settlers demanded that the United States end the joint occupation with England and assume full control.

. The Mormon Trek

Among those moving west were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints. Founded by Joseph Smith in 1830 in upstate New York, the Mormon Church attempted to revive the pure Christianity believed to have once existed in aboriginal America. Because of their unorthodox beliefs and practices (polygamy, for example) Mormons suffered persecution that sent them ever westward. They established their own city, Nauvoo, Illinois, but after Joseph Smith was killed by a mob, Mormons resettled around the Great Salt Lake in Utah. They established a state called Deseret, and thanks to a strong central government and the discipline and dedication of the community, they transformed the desert into farmland.

Mormons at first resisted being governed by the United States after the area was taken from Mexico, and in 1857 the United States and the Mormons almost went to war. Both sides backed off, and Brigham Young, the Mormon leader, accepted an appointment as territorial governor of Utah.

MANIFEST DESTINY AND THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

America’s westward movement created a confrontation with Great Britain and a war with Mexico.

. Tyler and Texas

John Tyler had been placed on the 1840 Whig ticket as vice president in order to get some southern votes; Whig leaders never expected him to become president in 1841. By 1844 Tyler had broken with the Whig party, and his hopes for reelection in 1844 rested almost entirely on finding a new and popular issue. He began pushing for the annexation of Texas, which was a popular issue in the South, but the North was indifferent and perhaps even hostile to the idea of adding a new slave state. When Tyler negotiated a treaty of annexation with Texas, the Senate refused to ratify it.

. The Triumph of Polk and Annexation

At the Democratic nominating convention in 1844, southern delegates had enough strength to give the nomination to James K. Polk of Tennessee, who was strongly in
favor of annexing Texas. In order to win northern support, Polk also promised to extend U.S. jurisdiction over all of Oregon. His victory over Whig candidate Henry Clay was a narrow one, but Polk and the Congress interpreted the results as a mandate for expansion. Congress annexed Texas even before Polk was inaugurated.

. The Doctrine of Manifest Destiny

The rationale behind American expansion is summed up in the phrase “Manifest Destiny,” first used in 1845. Expansion was defended on three grounds: first, God wanted the United States, His chosen nation, to become stronger; second, as Americans took over new territories, they made these areas free and democratic; and third, the American population was growing so rapidly that the nation needed more land. The only questions were how far America would expand and whether it would use diplomacy or war to do so.

. Polk and the Oregon Question

America almost went to war with Great Britain over the ownership of the Oregon country. President Polk was actually willing to split the area with England, but his public demands for the entire territory annoyed the English, and they refused to negotiate with him. In 1846 Polk notified Great Britain that the United States would no longer agree to joint occupation. England prepared for war, but also proposed division of the area in a treaty that the Senate approved. Although the United States gained ownership of Puget Sound, a deep-water port on the Pacific, the North condemned Polk for not having persisted in his demand for all of Oregon.

. War with Mexico

When the United States annexed Texas, it also acquired a boundary dispute with Mexico. When Polk ordered U.S. forces to occupy the disputed area, a skirmish ensued, which the president used to justify a declaration of war on May 13, 1846. Polk saw the war as an opportunity to seize California and New Mexico, those states that Mexico had refused to sell to the United States.

In the war, General Zachary Taylor defeated the Mexicans in a series of battles in northern Mexico; New Mexico was taken, and California fell to American forces. The conclusive battles were won by General Winfield Scott, who took Vera Cruz in an amphibious invasion, routed the Mexicans at Cerro Gordo, and occupied Mexico City by September 1847.

. Settlement of the Mexican-American War

In the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the Mexican War, the United States gained the Rio Grande as a southern border and enlarged its size by 20 percent with the addition of California and the Southwest.
Two powerful forces limited further American expansion, racism, and anti-colonialism. The American people did not want to take in large numbers of Latin Americans, whom they considered inferior. The annexation of Texas and the war with Mexico had also aroused political contention. Most Whigs opposed the war, and many Northerners complained that the nation had been dragged into a war that benefited only the slaveowners in the South.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

INTERNAL EXPANSIONISM

Having pushed to the Pacific, Americans turned inward and developed their vast domain.

. The Triumph of the Railroad

By the 1840s and 1850s, the railroad finally began to displace the canal as the cheapest means of hauling freight. Railroad construction stimulated the iron industry, but the most dramatic side effect of the railroad boom was in the area of finance. Railroads required enormous amounts of capital, which were raised through new techniques such as bonds and preferred stock, and by large government subsidies.

. The Industrial Revolution Takes Off

Mass production and the division of labor transformed traditional crafts and made production more efficient. More and more work was done in a factory system, the essential features of which were the gathering of laborers in one place where they could be supervised, cash wages, and a “continuous process” of manufacturing. Agriculture remained of primary importance in the national economy, but even farming was becoming mechanized. In the North especially, advances in industry, transportation, and agriculture interacted to create a strong economy.

. Mass Immigration Begins

By the 1840s, American industry was capable of providing hundreds of thousands of jobs, which attracted immigrants. Between 1840 and 1860, over four million Europeans, mostly Irish and Germans, came to the United States. Although many came to escape poverty—the Irish especially—most immigrants came for the opportunity to work at higher wages. Ironically, many immigrants stayed in the port cities and gladly took low-paying jobs. Since most immigrants could only afford substandard housing, urban slums spread, inspiring efforts to reduce crime, vice, and dirt, but progress was slow.
The New Working Class

Traditionally, women and children were factory workers. Men began to enter the factory workforce in significant numbers only in the 1840s. At that time, working conditions had begun to deteriorate. Employers were less personally involved with their laborers, and the depression that followed 1837 induced employers to demand more work for less pay. Workers responded by organizing unions.

When immigrants poured into America, they replaced native-born Americans in the factories. The budding union movement was badly hurt, but the new working class did not form a docile body of employees. They resented the discipline and continuous nature of factory work and clung to traditional work habits, which the supervisors often interpreted as signs of carelessness.

CONCLUSION: THE COSTS OF EXPANSION

The new working class posed a problem for American ideals. It had always been assumed that working for wages was merely the first step toward becoming your own master. Now, it was obvious that a permanent wage-earning class had come into existence. Politicians like Stephen Douglas hoped to create a patriotic consensus based on continued territorial and economic expansion, but expansion actually created conflicts between classes and sections that the politicians could not control.

FEATURE ESSAY: HISPANIC AMERICA AFTER 1848

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo granted all the rights of U.S. citizens to Mexicans living in the territories ceded to the United States. But in areas where Hispanics made up a minority of the population, their rights were sometimes disregarded. As Hispanic Americans lost their majority status, they also lost many of their basic rights.

LECTURE TOPICS

Prepare a lecture on the philosophy of Manifest Destiny. Was Manifest Destiny the only motivation for American westward expansion? Was it the most important motivation? Have students consider the economic, political, and military issues involved. Why did Americans require more than pragmatic justifications for western expansion? Connect Manifest Destiny to Protestant Christianity.

Explore the other side of Manifest Destiny by looking at the Mexican impression of American foreign policy during the first half of the nineteenth century. How was the Mexican government impacted by Manifest Destiny? How did Manifest Destiny impact the status of Hispanics living in the Far West?

Prepare a slide and lecture presentation exploring the theme of the West in American art. Focus on the depiction of Native Americans by American artists. What is negative about American artistic images of
Native Americans? What is positive? If you discussed European images of Native Americans in earlier chapters, you may want to invite a comparison and contrast of seventeenth-century European depictions of Native Americans and nineteenth-century American depictions of Native Americans. Also, have students comment on American artists’ treatment of the western landscape. How did the West stimulate American imagination? Ask students to share their own images and impressions of the American West even if they have never actually visited the region. From where have many twentieth-century Americans derived their images of the West?

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)**

Just as slavery had implications for all regions of the nation, so too did western expansion. While the brunt of the impact and its issues was felt most keenly in the west, the policies were shaped in the east, the migrants came from both the South and the North, the nation’s social and political institutions were forced to follow, and the expansion of territorial control had a profound and sweeping impact on American society. What then did “the West” mean to all Americans?

Discuss the importance of territorial expansion to the deepening of sectional divisions in America during the early nineteenth century. What was the connection between the acquisition of western land and the sectional issues of states’ rights and slavery? Was it mere coincidence that the defining issue in the presidential election of 1844 was territorial expansion and the defining issue of the election of 1848 and every election thereafter until the Civil War was slavery?

How did Manifest Destiny impact sectionalism in America? What positions did the Whig and Democratic parties take on the issue of westward expansion? Why? Did regional issues influence the level of support for Manifest Destiny? How is Manifest Destiny connected to feelings of racial and cultural superiority in the western world during the nineteenth century?

The Turner Thesis can be used for either a lecture or a class discussion to explore the issue of opportunity in the American West and the characteristics of the American character. Begin with an anecdote drawn from letters and diaries by frontier women or gold miners.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)**

Was the Mexican War a defensive war or a war of aggression? Were Mexicans justified in attacking Americans on the Texas border? Who started the war? Did Americans accomplish their goals in the Mexican War? Why did many Americans feel that they fell short?

Discuss the impact of early nineteenth-century Irish immigration on the United States. Focus on a variety of issues, including the provision of an industrial labor force, the emergence of urban slums, and the Irish immigrants’ cultural and religious distinctions from middle-class, native-born Americans. How did their presence in the United States impact American moral and political values? How did their presence lead to the popularity of temperance and nativism as parts of the American nineteenth-century social and political agenda?
Discuss the Lowell girls of Massachusetts as an example of a labor force utilized during the early nineteenth century. Is the use of women for labor and their treatment by management at the Lowell factory an example of empowerment of women or exploitation of women? Were women strengthened by the economic rewards of labor or victimized by a patriarchal management style? Have students connect this issue from the early nineteenth century to the ongoing debate in America regarding women in the labor force.

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

As the American people moved west, large numbers of them found themselves living beyond the political boundaries of the United States. These Americans were children of the nation, and their “sufferings,” especially those living in Mexico (now Texas), elicited a tremendous emotional response in the United States. When the Alamo was besieged, its commander, William Travis, issued an appeal for aid to “All Americans in the World....” Travis’ message, which has been called the most heroic ever written by an American, has been reproduced many times. It is most easily available today in Walter Lord’s lively account of the siege of the Alamo, A Time to Stand (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1978 reprint).

Abraham Lincoln made a name for himself on the national political scene during the Mexican War. Unfortunately for him, his stand on the war nearly finished his political career. Elected to the House of Representatives in 1846, Lincoln introduced the “spot resolution” in 1847, challenging the president to prove that the war had really been started by a Mexican invasion of American soil. Lincoln’s speech against the war, given in the House of Representatives on January 5, 1848, is a good example of his ability as an orator and his political courage. The best source for this speech, or for anything written by Lincoln, is The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, edited by Roy P. Basler (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953-1955), a work that Basler and others keep up to date with supplementary volumes.

POINTS OF MASTERY

Discuss the “Young America” spirit and its implications for foreign policy.

Identify Stephen F. Austin and explain the role of American empresarios in Texas.

Identify and explain the historical significance of the phrase “Remember the Alamo!” in the Texas War for Independence.

Outline the path of the Oregon Trail and describe the overlanders who used the trail to migrate westward. Describe the particular gender roles on the Oregon Trail.

Describe the impact of the Santa Fe Trail on the settlement of New Mexico, and describe the impact of the Mormons on the settlement of Utah.

Identify Joseph Smith and explain the trek of the Mormons.
Identify the *Tejanos* and describe the role they played in the Texas War for Independence.

Compare and contrast opportunities on the mining and farming frontiers.

Explain the issues surrounding the Oregon question and how the issue helped Democrats win the presidency in 1844.

Explain the diverse regional and cultural influences that defined the culture of the Old Northwest during the early nineteenth century.

List the factors that contributed to the migration of planters into the Southwest.

Define and discuss the concept of Manifest Destiny.

Explain the importance of the Texas issue in the 1844 presidential election and comment on its relationship to the “Spirit of Young America.”

What were the different ways in which the frontiers in Oregon, Texas, and California moved from frontiers of inclusion to frontiers of exclusion?

Describe the events leading to the war with Mexico.

Define the Wilmot Proviso and discuss the importance of the issue of slavery in the territories.

Explain the impact of steam power on the expansion of industrial growth in the United States.

Evaluate the importance of the failure of the national government to enforce the conditions of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

What were the effects of the California Gold Rush on its participants, on California, and on the nation as a whole?

What issues were raised by the U.S.–Mexican War, and what issues (if any) did it solve?

Define the term “putting out system” and explain why it is so often considered the first step in the Industrial Revolution.

**SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

1. **Why do you think Americans turned from expansion beyond U.S. borders to internal expansion after the Mexican-American War?**

   The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo expanded the U.S. borders to include nearly the entire area that is now the 48 contiguous states. Manifest Destiny had been fulfilled. The treaty settled the southern boundary with Mexico. The boundary with Canada was settled in 1846. On the west was the Pacific, on the east the Atlantic. Externally, there was nowhere left to go.
What do you think was the most important force driving change in American life during the 1840s and 1850s: Technology, politics, or international movements of people? Why?

**Technology** was the most important force because the growth of automated factories led to massive economic growth and helped to make the United States a chosen destination for emigrants. The creation of a national communication system enabled the railroads to expand and fulfill their commercial purpose by greatly increasing interregional commercial activity. The growth of transportation was crucial to economic growth and to the North’s victory in the Civil War. The railroads both caused and were enabled by business developments that merged political and economic power.

**Politics** was the most important force because conflicts over expanding the U.S. borders, over whether new territories would permit slavery, and over whether free states would have to enforce fugitive slave laws led to the Civil War. Politicians’ positions on slavery determined elections, but those elected also set economic and regulatory policies that set the course of the nation.

**International movements of people** were the most important force because those people came to the United States. Over 4 million people immigrated in the 1840s and 1850s. The huge population put downward pressure on factory labor costs. The growing presence of immigrants led to ethnic and racial prejudice and immigration restrictions.

Once again in this period, economic and material changes greatly influenced the makeup of American society. What lessons can you draw from the ongoing interplay of social and material changes in U.S. history?

During this period, the United States grew in both size and diversity—diversity of both population and industry. Although the territorial growth of the United States would halt, this period foreshadowed the growth of and changes in American society that continue to this day.

As a result of westward expansion and the Mexican-American war, inhabitants of what was Mexico became Americans. The rights of these new Americans were unclear; for the most part, they were treated as second-class citizens. In the North, the Industrial Revolution created a demand for vast number of hourly workers. The existence of a large class of wage earners was new in America. To fill this demand, and in response to famine, poverty, and lack of opportunity in Europe, hundreds of thousand of immigrants came to America, primarily from Ireland and Germany. These immigrants, particularly the Irish, faced prejudice and persecution from the native-born population.

The United States continues to develop and change, and each generation sees a different influx of immigrants from around the world. By looking at the history of change and immigration, we learn that the United States as we know it is the result of immigrant labor and culture. The immigrants of today are a continuation of the social and material development of the United States that began during this period.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**
Suggested Documentaries and Films:

This two-part series looks at the defeat that turned the tide in the War for Texas Independence.

_American Visions: The Wilderness and the West_, Time, Inc./BBC/Thirteen, WNET, New York, 1997, 60 minutes.
This episode from the Robert Hughes series examines the American romance with the West. At once awed and challenged by the great expanse, American artists depicted a nation’s dream of Manifest Destiny.

This four-part series examines one of the most controversial wars in American history. It offers a fresh look at the war that was intended to see America’s realization of its Manifest Destiny.

This episode from the four-part series examines America’s western expansion from the 1840s through the Civil War.

This is the second episode of the nine-part Ken Burns series. It examines the Texas War for Independence as well as the experience of American travelers on the Oregon Trail.

**CLASS EXERCISES**

1. Write a paper focusing on the role of women in the westward movement during the nineteenth century. Excellent sources that would expose students to some primary material in this area are the edited journals left by pioneer women that describe the impact the movement west had on their lives and the lives of their families.

2. Students can write and present arguments supporting or opposing the annexation of Texas in 1844, the declaration of war against Mexico in 1846, or the ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Their positions can provide the basis for either a role-play debate or a conventional discussion.

3. Emigration songs, paintings, and slides or other visual materials are good departure points for a slide lecture on popular images of the West, of Native Americans, of motivations for emigration and who went west, of men and women on the frontier and what their experiences were like, and of attitudes toward the wilderness. Four fascinating paintings filled with images worth discussing are Thomas Cole’s five-part sequence _The Course of Empire_ (1830s), George Caleb Bingham’s _The Emigration of Daniel Boone_ (1852), Emanuel Leutze’s _Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way_ (1861), and John Gast’s _Westward-Ho (American Progress)_ (1872).

4. A study of views of the West in popular culture (movies, novels, television) can also provide the basis for a slide presentation, lecture, or discussion on “cowboys and Indians,” Latinos,
frontier women, the wilderness, and other issues that raise the question of the relationship between popular images, myths, and realities in history.

5 Explore the legends and myths surrounding David Crockett and be prepared to discuss how he used those legends and myths in his campaigns for Congress. How and why are historians attempting to debunk the myths surrounding his death at the Alamo?  
www.americanfolklore.net/myths-legends.html  
www.etext.virginia.edu/railton/projects/price/acrocket.htm  
www.austinchronicle.com/gyrobase/Issue/story?oid=oid%3A77040

6 Students who have worked in factories could be encouraged to discuss their experiences. Those who have not could be encouraged to interview factory workers. They should try to focus on the issues of discipline, control over time, and the separation between work and leisure characteristic of an industrial economy. They could present their findings to the class as part of a look at the changing character of work, a theme that runs throughout the chapter.

MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

• View the Map: United States Territorial Expansion in the 1850s
• View the Map: Texas Revolution, 1836
• Watch the Video: The Annexation of Texas
• Read the Document: Thomas Corwin, “Against the Mexican War” (1847)
• View the Map: Mexican-American War, 1846–1848
• Read the Document: Senate Report on the Railroads (1852)
• Watch the Video: Mastering Time and Space: How the Railroads Changed America
• Complete the Assignment: Hispanic America After 1848: A Case Study in Majority Rule
• Read the Document: Samuel Morse, Foreign Immigration (1835)
CHAPTER 14

THE SECTIONAL CRISIS

CHAPTER OUTLINE

BROOKS ASSAULTS SUMNER IN CONGRESS

THE COMPROMISE OF 1850

- The Problem of Slavery in the Mexican Cession
- The Wilmot Proviso Launches the Free-Soil Movement
- Squatter Sovereignty and the Election of 1848
- Taylor Takes Charge
- Forging a Compromise

POLITICAL UPHEAVAL, 1852–1856

- The Party System in Crisis
- The Kansas-Nebraska Act Raises a Storm
- An Appeal to Nativism: The Know-Nothing Episode
- Kansas and the Rise of the Republicans
- Sectional Division in the Election of 1856

THE HOUSE DIVIDED, 1857–1860

- Cultural Sectionalism
- The Dred Scott Case
- The Lecompton Controversy
- Debating the Morality of Slavery
- The South’s Crisis of Fear
- The Election of 1860

CONCLUSION: EXPLAINING THE CRISIS

FEATURE ESSAY: THE ENIGMA OF JOHN BROWN

LAW AND SOCIETY: THE CASE OF DRED AND HARRIET SCOTT
OPENING THEME

POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY

American politicians are at their most creative when faced with a controversy they want to evade. It is then that they spin webs of mystification, using the threads of high-sounding rhetoric. In the 1850s, politicians meant to befuddle voters by concocting “popular sovereignty.”

The expression fooled some of the people some of the time, and will probably confuse your students today.

You will have to explain that most of the fifty states began life as territories, owned and governed by Congress. Since nobody wanted territories to remain territories forever, Congress worked out an intelligent method for bringing territories into statehood. In the first stage, Congress appointed a governor and opened a land office. The first people who moved in had access to good land, but they gave up, temporarily, the right to vote. There was no self-government at all during the first phase of a territory. As the population grew, the people acquired more self-government and eventually were allowed by Congress to write a constitution.

If Congress approved the constitution, the territory became a state. Congress, in short, was involved in every stage of a territory’s evolution, but especially so during the first stage, when only the appointed governor yielded political authority.

Congress gave its governors detailed instructions when they were appointed and in the territories of the Old Northwest (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan), Congress told the governors to prohibit slavery. All of those territories became free states. While the Northwest Territories were moving toward non-slave statehood, slaveholding Southerners insisted that the Southwest territories (Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi) be opened to them. Congress did not have the stomach to write instructions giving explicit approval to slavery, so it simply omitted any mention of the subject from the governors’ instructions, knowing that the governors would welcome slaveholders, who were rich and powerful men.

Every territory in which Congress allowed slaveholders to settle became slave states, a result that should have surprised no one. Nevertheless, most Northerners were shocked in 1817 when the Missouri Territory applied for statehood with a constitution that incorporated slavery. When Missouri had been first organized as a territory, Congress, as usual, had given the governor no instructions about slavery, and the governor, as usual, allowed slaveholders in. As usual, the slaveowners soon dominated the territory economically, socially, and politically. When they wrote a constitution and sent it to Congress, they expected the usual rubber-stamp approval. Instead, northern members of the House of Representatives rebelled against a policy that would give all the territories to the southern slave masters. The House voted to delay statehood for Missouri until she changed her constitution to abolish slavery. The resulting controversy was settled by the famous Missouri Compromise. Congress
promised that it would prohibit slavery from any territory carved out of the Louisiana Purchase above the line 32°, 30’.

The territorial issue seemed solved, but as the nation expanded, the issue kept cropping up, and each time it did it aroused more bitter passions in the North and South, making it ever more difficult to compromise. By 1850, when Congress had to decide what to do with the New Mexico and Utah territories, recently taken from Mexico, the controversy was so severe that the nation was on the brink of civil war. It was then that the politicians came up with “popular sovereignty.” Congress suddenly discovered that it was undemocratic for Congress to tell the people of a territory thousands of miles away how they should run their lives. Let the people decide!

In fact, the “people” in the first stage of a territory had no right whatsoever to govern themselves, and had absolutely no mechanism for keeping slaveowners out, unless they resorted to terrorism. No territorial governor would keep out slavery unless he was specifically ordered by Congress to do so, and once slaveowners entered a territory, that territory was doomed to become a slave state. It cannot be emphasized enough that “popular sovereignty” was a fraud meant to deceive Northerners. In the Utah Territory, for example, the governor was instructed to stamp out polygamy, and when the Mormons there refused to obey the law, Congress sent in the United States Army. So much for allowing the people of the territory to run their own lives!

Popular sovereignty gave the Utah and New Mexico territories to the slaveholders, but the North might have shrugged off the loss because it would be years before those territories became states. Congress, however, made a colossal error in 1854 by applying popular sovereignty to territories that would be ready for statehood very quickly. The Kansas-Nebraska Act organized those territories by repealing the Missouri Compromise, which would have required Congress to instruct the governors to ban slavery. Congress would give no instructions to the governors and would let the people decide their own future, but most Northerners now understood that unless Congress banned slavery in the first stage of a territory’s existence, that territory would become a slave state. Outraged by yet another giveaway to the South, Northerners rose up in fury against the established political parties and cried out for new men and a new party to stop the expansion of slavery into the territories. Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party stepped forth to fill that role.

**BROOKS ASSAULTS SUMNER IN CONGRESS**

The author uses the assault by a Southern senator on a Northern senator to illustrate the depth of bitter feelings between North and South. It was only through astute political maneuvering that a civil war was postponed for another decade.

**THE COMPROMISE OF 1850**

In the 1840s, the North and South differed violently over whether slavery should be allowed to extend into the territories. Professional politicians, however, successfully mediated the conflict.
. The Problem of Slavery in the Mexican Cession

Traditionally, slavery had been kept out of American politics, with the result that no practical program could be devised for its elimination in the southern states. Congress, however, had the power to set the conditions under which territories became states and to forbid slavery in new states. In the 1840s, as the result of expansion, Congress faced the problem of determining the status of slavery in the territories taken from Mexico.

. The Wilmot Proviso Launches the Free-Soil Movement

As soon as the United States declared war against Mexico, antislavery groups wanted to make sure that slavery would not expand because of American victory. David Wilmot introduced a bill in Congress that would have banned all African Americans, slave or free, from whatever land the United States took from Mexico, thus preserving the area for white small farmers. This blend of racism and antislavery won great support in the North, and in a clearly sectional division, the House of Representatives passed the Proviso, while the Senate defeated it. The battle over the Proviso foreshadowed an even more urgent controversy once the peace treaty with Mexico was signed.

. Squatter Sovereignty and the Election of 1848

The issue of slavery in the Mexican cession became an issue in the 1848 election. Democratic presidential candidate Lewis Cass offered a clever solution. He proposed that Congress allow the settlers in the territories to decide the issue (popular sovereignty). The proposal found support among antislavery forces, who assumed that the territorial settlers would have a chance to prohibit slavery before it could get established. Popular sovereignty, however, was unacceptable to those who wanted a definite limit placed on the expansion of slavery. The Free-Soil Party was formed, and it ran Martin Van Buren for president. The Whigs nominated war hero Zachary Taylor, who took no stand on the territorial question and who won with less than half the popular vote.

. Taylor Takes Charge

Taylor proposed to settle the controversy by admitting California and New Mexico as states right away, even though New Mexico had too few people to be a state. The white South reacted angrily. Planters objected that they had not yet had time to settle the new territories, which would certainly ban slavery if they immediately became states. A convention of the southern states was called to meet at Nashville, perhaps to declare secession.
. Forging a Compromise

The Whig leader, Henry Clay, put together a compromise package. The North would get California as a free state and a prohibition on the slave trade in the District of Columbia; the South would get a strong fugitive slave law and a chance to settle the New Mexico territory, which was also enlarged. The Fugitive Slave Law turned out to be the most troublesome part of the compromise. Abolitionists, especially black abolitionists, became very active in helping slaves to escape from the South to refuge in Canada, and some slaveholders pushed their power to recapture slaves in the most provocative manner. One slaveholder insisted on deporting a slave from Boston even though the United States Army had to be called on to subdue the crowd of rescuers.

When Taylor, who opposed the compromise, died in August 1850, the Democrats, led by Stephen Douglas, adopted each of Clay’s proposals as a separate measure and changed them slightly. The Democrats, for example, extended popular sovereignty to the Utah Territory. No single bill was backed by a majority of both northern and southern congressmen, but a combination of northern Democrats and southern Whigs passed each separate measure. The South accepted the Compromise of 1850 as conclusive and backed away from threats of secession. In the North, the Democratic Party gained popularity by taking credit for the compromise, and the Whigs found it necessary to cease their criticism of it.

POLITICAL UPHEAVAL, 1852–1856

The sectional disputes aroused by the controversy over slavery in the new territories had been successfully handled by the Whigs and Democrats. In the 1850s, these parties collapsed as the sectional struggle raged without restraint.

. The Party System in Crisis

Once the Compromise of 1850 seemed to have settled the territorial controversy, Whigs and Democrats looked for new issues. The Democrats claimed credit for the nation’s prosperity and promised to defend the compromise. Whigs, however, could find no popular issue and began to fight among themselves. Their candidate in 1852, Winfield Scott, lost in a landslide to Democrat Franklin Pierce, a colorless nonentity.

. The Kansas-Nebraska Act Raises a Storm

In 1854, Stephen Douglas introduced a bill to organize the Kansas and Nebraska territories. These areas were north of the Missouri Compromise line and had been off limits to slavery since 1820, but Douglas proposed to apply popular sovereignty to them in an effort to get southern votes and avoid another controversy over territories. Douglas expected to revive the spirit of Manifest Destiny for the benefit of the
Democratic Party and for his own benefit, when he ran for president in 1860. The South insisted, and Douglas agreed to add an explicit repeal of the Missouri Compromise to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, thus provoking a storm of protest in the North, where it was felt that the South had broken a long-established agreement.

The Whig Party, unable to decide what position to take on the Kansas-Nebraska Act, disintegrated. The Democratic Party suffered mass defections in the North. In the congressional elections of 1854, coalitions of “anti-Nebraska” candidates swept the North, and the Democrats became virtually the only political party in the South.

In the midst of this uproar, President Pierce made an effort to buy, or seize, Cuba from Spain, but northern anger at any further extension of slavery forced the president to drop the idea.

. An Appeal to Nativism: The Know-Nothing Episode

As the Whigs collapsed, a new party, the Know-Nothings, or American Party, gained in popularity. The Know-Nothing Party especially appealed to evangelical Protestants, who objected to the millions of Catholics immigrating to America. By the 1850s, the Know-Nothings also picked up support from former Whigs and Democrats disgusted with politics as usual. In 1854, the American Party suddenly took political control of Massachusetts and spread rapidly across the nation. In less than two years, the Know-Nothings collapsed, for reasons that are still obscure. Most probably, Northerners worried less about immigration as it slowed down, and turned their attention to the slavery issue.

. Kansas and the Rise of the Republicans

The Republican Party emerged as a coalition of former Whigs, Know-Nothings, Free-Soilers, and Democrats by emphasizing the sectional struggle and by appealing strictly to northern voters. Republicans promised to save the West as a preserve for white, small farmers.

Events in Kansas helped the Republicans. Abolitionists and proslavery forces raced into the territory to gain control of the territorial legislature. Proslavery forces won and passed laws that made it illegal even to criticize the institution of slavery. Very soon, however, those who favored free soil became the majority and set up a rival government. President Pierce recognized the proslavery legislature, while the Republicans attacked it as the tyrannical instrument of a minority. In Kansas, fighting broke out, and the Republicans used “Bleeding Kansas” to win more northern voters.

. Sectional Division in the Election of 1856

The Republicans, who sought votes only in the free states, nominated John C. Frémont for President. The Know-Nothings ran ex-President Millard Fillmore as a champion of
sectional compromise. The Democratic candidate, James Buchanan, defended the Compromise of 1850 and carried the election, despite clear gains for the Republicans.

THE HOUSE DIVIDED, 1857–1860

The long sectional quarrel convinced North and South that their cultures were so different that they could no longer coexist in a single nation.

. Cultural Sectionalism

Cultural and intellectual cleavages surfaced in the 1840s. Even religion divided North and South. Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians split into northern and southern denominations because of their attitudes toward slaveholding. Southern literature romanticized life on the plantation, and the South attempted to become intellectually and economically independent in preparation for nationhood. At the same time, northern intellectuals condemned slavery in prose and poem. Uncle Tom’s Cabin, for example, was an immense success in the North.

. The Dred Scott Case

The Supreme Court had a chance to decide the issue of slavery in the territories when it agreed to consider the case of Dred Scott v. Sanford in 1857. Instead of limiting itself to a narrow determination of the case, the Court ruled that the Missouri Compromise had been unconstitutional because Congress could not restrict the right of a slaveowner to take his slaves into a territory. The ruling outraged the North and strengthened the Republicans.

This topic is discussed in the Law and Society essay; see below.

. The Lecompton Controversy

Once again, events in Kansas created sectional conflict. The proslavery faction met in a rigged convention at Lecompton to write a constitution and apply for admission as a state. Free-Soilers in Kansas overwhelmingly rejected the Lecompton constitution, but President Buchanan and the Southerners in Congress accepted it and tried to admit Kansas as a state. The House defeated this attempt. The Lecompton constitution was referred back to the people of Kansas, who repudiated it. The Lecompton controversy split the Democrats when Douglas broke with Buchanan over the issue, but Douglas made himself unpopular in the South by doing so.

. Debating the Morality of Slavery

In 1858, Republican Abraham Lincoln faced Democrat Stephen Douglass in the Illinois Senate race. In debates, Lincoln claimed that there was a southern plot to
extend slavery throughout the nation. He promised to take measures that would ensure
the eventual extinction of the institution. Above all, Lincoln made the point that he
considered slavery a moral problem, while Douglas did not. Douglas answered by
accusing Lincoln of favoring racial equality, a potent charge that forced Lincoln to
defend white supremacy. Lincoln lost the election, but gained a national reputation.

. The South’s Crisis of Fear

A series of events in 1859 and 1860 convinced Southerners that Republicans intended
to foment rebellion among African Americans and white small farmers. John Brown
tried to capture an arsenal at Harpers Ferry in order to arm slaves. When Brown was
executed for treason, the North mourned him as a martyr. The white South was
disgusted and became convinced that the Republican Party would use armed force to
abolish slavery. The only solution, it seemed, was to secede if the next president was a
Republican.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

. The Election of 1860

Republicans nominated Lincoln in 1860 because he was from Illinois and because he
was not as controversial as other Republican leaders. In order to widen the party’s
appeal, the Republicans promised high tariffs for industry, free homesteads for small
farmers, and government aid for internal improvements.

Democrats could not agree on a candidate. The northern wing nominated Stephen
Douglas; the southern Democrats nominated John Breckinridge. The Constitutional
Union Party ran John Bell, who promised to compromise the differences between
North and South.

Lincoln received less than 40 percent of the popular vote, but won virtually every
northern electoral vote, giving him the victory.

CONCLUSION: EXPLAINING THE CRISIS

The breakup of the Union would not have happened without slavery or the rise of a strictly sectional
party like the Republicans. But the conflict arose from a fundamental difference between two different
ideals of society. The South saw itself as paternalistic, generous, and prosperous, and defended slavery
on the grounds of race. The North, inspired by evangelical Protestantism, believed that each person
should be responsible for himself and free to make his own way in the world. To the North, slavery
was tyrannical and immoral.

FEATURE ESSAY: THE ENIGMA OF JOHN BROWN
Many African Americans have revered John Brown as the rare example of a white man willing to give his life for black freedom. What was his real motivation? Why did he think his violence was justified? And how could he possibly have imagined that the raid on Harper’s Ferry could succeed?

**LAW AND SOCIETY: THE CASE OF DRED AND HARRIET SCOTT**

The real story of Dred Scott’s background, his attorneys’ strategies, and the origins of his case is much more complicated than is revealed in Chief Justice Taney’s opinion. *Scott v. Sandford* remains one of the most influential Supreme Court decisions.

**LECTURE TOPICS**

Prepare a lecture focusing on the year 1857 as a turning point in the road to disunion. Look at the Dred Scott decision, the Panic of 1857, and Buchanan’s ineffectiveness in confronting sectionalism as they relate to the coming of the Civil War.

Prepare an in-depth presentation on the fundamental differences that divided the North and the South by 1860. Focus on the deep sectional differences in the industrial-agrarian balance in each section’s economy, urbanization, labor ideology, quality and quantity of internal improvements, literacy rates and commitment to education, work ethic, and degrees of social mobility. To what extent is the institution of slavery in the South connected to each of these differences?

Prepare a lecture on southern white dissent in the antebellum South. Was the white South united in its defense of slavery? Where did dissent appear, and what issues promoted opposition to the proslavery argument? How were dissenters treated by the defenders of slavery?

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)**

Have students look at the issues of morality and legality as they have related to revolutionary moments in American history. Focus on the American Revolution, the Civil War, and the Civil Rights Movement. Some questions to consider include the following:

a. In the American Revolution, was the adoption of the Declaration of Independence legal? Did the delegates of the Second Continental Congress consider their adoption of the document to be moral?

b. Prior to the Civil War, was the institution of slavery legal? Was it moral? Why would abolitionists protest the strengthening of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 as an act designed to force Americans to act immorally?

c. Prior to the Civil Rights Movement, was racial segregation in the American South legal? Was it moral? When they violated segregation laws, did the followers of the Civil Rights Movement act illegally? Did they act immorally?

Given the common belief that slavery could not thrive in arid areas such as in the southwest, what does the geography of slavery indicate about the developing sectional crisis? Discuss the impact of nineteenth-century northern economic and social change on the issue of sectionalism. How did the construction of transportation networks during the nineteenth century promote a mutually beneficial, interdependent economic relationship between the Northeast and Northwest to the virtual exclusion of
the South? How would industrialization, urbanization, and immigration impact the northern political agenda for the remainder of the nineteenth century?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Discuss the failure of political compromise as a means of resolving the slavery dispute in the United States between 1820 and 1860. Focus specifically on the Missouri Compromise, the Compromise of 1850, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act while addressing some of the following questions:

a. Which provisions of each law almost guaranteed its failure?

b. How did the provisions of each law impact sectional divisions in the nation? Did these laws ease sectional differences or deepen them?

c. Why did compromise fail? Could a different compromise have been more successful or were sectional differences so deep and fundamental that compromise was never really an option?

Consider the course of events in “Bloody Kansas” from Douglas’s Kansas-Nebraska Act to the congressional rejection of the Lecompton Constitution. Were these events the inevitable result of the political impasse in Washington, or could other decisions have been made that would have changed the outcome?

Discuss the major issues that concerned northern citizens when they discussed the impact of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, the Dred Scott v. Sanford case, or conditions in Kansas. Do these actions actually pose significant hazards to the rights and liberty of free state citizens, or is their reaction simply paranoia?

The Know-Nothings—a political party that opposed immigration and racial equality—were instrumental in keeping these issues before the public when it came to the economic, political, and social implications. At what other points in American history have these issues of uncontrolled immigration and racial equality been opposed, and to what extent have these issues improved?

Evaluate the character and actions of John Brown. Was he the hero proclaimed by northern supporters or the terrorist condemned by the South?

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

By the 1850s, North and South had become so antagonistic that one section’s hero almost automatically became the other’s villain. John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry scared the South; his execution sickened the North. Brown went to his death with grim determination, convinced as he wrote in his last note that “the crimes of this guilty land: will never be purged away; but with Blood....” Richard A. Warch and Jonathan F. Fanton have edited the volume on John Brown in the Great Lives Observed series (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973), which includes Brown’s last letters and statements, trial transcripts, and samples of northern and southern opinions on the raid.
The sectional controversy was most apparent in Congress, where it was becoming increasingly difficult to compromise. A good example of the deteriorating conditions was the remarkable difficulty in electing a Speaker of the House in the first session of the Thirty-Fifth Congress, which opened on December 3, 1849, and which would have to settle the status of the Mexican cession. Howell Cobb of Georgia and Robert C. Winthrop of Massachusetts battled through sixty-two ballots without either man achieving a majority of the House. Cobb finally won when the rules were changed to allow for a plurality. The ballots, with occasional shouts from the floor, are recorded in *Abridgment of the Debates of Congress*, sixteen volumes edited by Thomas Hart Benton, a noted politician of the era (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1861). The *Abridgment* also is an excellent source for the give and take of political discourse during the entire period it covers.

**POINTS OF MASTERY**

- Explain what transpired in the United States Senate during the Brooks-Sumner incident.
- What aspects of the remarkable economic development of the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century contributed to the sectional crisis of the 1850s?
- What issues did the Compromise of 1850 leave unsettled?
- Define the term “nativism” and explain why this issue became so popular during the early nineteenth century.
- Explain how Lewis Cass’s attitudes and ideas exemplify the point of view and rhetoric of expansionists who advocated the acquisition of new territories.
- Name the major candidates in the presidential election of 1848 and explain their positions on the sectional issues facing the nation.
- Discuss the emergence of the Free Soil Party in 1848 and why the party is often connected to the origins of the modern Republican Party.
- Briefly discuss the candidates, issues, and results of the presidential election of 1852.
- Explain Stephen Douglas’s motivation for wanting to create a Nebraska Territory in 1854.
- Outline the provisions of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and explain its impact on sectionalism.
- Define the concept of popular sovereignty.
- Describe the circumstances leading up to and the provisions of the Compromise of 1850.
- Explain the impact of early nineteenth-century immigration on the emergence of the Know-Nothing Party and point out the connection between the Know-Nothings and the emerging Republican Party.
- Outline the reasons for American interest in the Caribbean.
Define the term “Bleeding Kansas” and identify two incidents that occurred in Kansas after 1854 that earned the territory this nickname.

Briefly identify the major candidates and issues of the presidential election of 1856. Explain how the results of the election reflected sectionalism’s impact on the national political party system.

Discuss the role of Harriet Beecher Stowe and explain how her views on slavery reflected the culture of the day.

Explain the Supreme Court ruling in the Dred Scott case and the impact of that decision on the nation’s efforts to reach a compromise regarding the slavery issue.

Explain the circumstances that led to the drafting of the Lecompton Constitution.

Discuss the historical significance of the Lincoln-Douglas debates in terms of refining the national debate on slavery and in terms of defining the distinctions between the Democratic and Republican parties.

Explain the southern reaction to John Brown’s raid and why this event is often considered a turning point in the southern road to secession.

Identify the major candidates and issues of the presidential election of 1860. Connect the results of this election to the secession of the Lower South.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1 How did “popular sovereignty” reemerge as a definitive concept in the debates on slavery in new and existing states?

Originally, “popular sovereignty” sounded like freedom and democracy—the foundation of the Constitution. By the time Kansas was admitted under popular sovereignty, the concept had turned into the equivalent of mob rule—exactly what the authors of Federalist No. 10 were worried about. The Dred Scott decision declared popular sovereignty illegal, which shocked Northerners. Popular sovereignty as a practice was never examined; it was obviously inconsistent with the idea that African American slaves were people entitled to determine their own fate.

2 Which qualities did the Whig and Republican parties share? Which did they not?

The Whigs were divided along sectional lines. The Republicans were not, for they had no base in the South. Whigs were deeply divided over slavery. The Republicans were less divided over slavery—they were united in opposing slavery in new territories and in opposing fugitive slave laws—but they were divided over abolitionism. Whigs maintained a hope for continued sectional compromises, while Republicans had lost this hope. Both Whigs and Republicans were divided over nativism and immigration policy.
Political compromises made over slavery reflected the cultural divisions of this period. According to the ideology of northern Republicans, the freedom of the individual depended on equality of opportunity for everyone; in the minds of southern sectionalists, it required that part of the population be enslaved. In the North, a rising middle class adapted to the new market economy with the help of an evangelical Christianity that sanctioned self-discipline and social reform. The South, on the other hand, embraced slavery as a foundation for the liberty and independence of whites. Southern evangelicalism encouraged personal piety but not social reform and gave only limited attention to building the kind of personal character that made for commercial success. The notion that white liberty and equality depended on resistance to social and economic change and on the continuation of slavery became more deeply entrenched.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

This first episode of the classic Ken Burns series examines the prelude to Civil War through the events of the 1850s.

The fourth episode from Ken Burns’s series looks at the impact of sectional crisis and Civil War on the West, including an examination of Bleeding Kansas.

This four-part series examines the complicated personal and political life of a statesman who was arguably the greatest president in American history.

**CLASS EXERCISES**

1. Have the class examine the proslavery arguments. Why did white southerners change their perception from believing slavery to be a necessary evil to believing it to be a positive good? Discuss the fact that, by 1850, the national debate on slavery had changed from being a primarily legal debate to being a moral debate. What impact did this transformation of the debate have on the southern defense of the institution? Why was the biblical defense of the institution so critical to the argument? Divide the class into two groups to examine the Lincoln-Douglas debates. One group should read and defend the Douglas position, and the other group should cover the Lincoln position.

2. Write a paper on John Brown’s raid in Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Discuss the northern and southern responses to the raid as well as the northern and southern responses to Brown’s execution. Why was this event a turning point for both sections? Why would the South turn almost irrevocably to secession after 1859? Did all northerners embrace Brown’s actions? Why would the Union go into the Civil War singing “John Brown’s Body”??
Analyze *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as a historical artifact. Analyze Harriet Beecher Stowe. What was her mindset while writing the book? How did her family’s history affect her writing? What is the plot and summary of the book? How was the book interpreted and received during the era, and since? Have other creations of popular culture created such a political and social dialogue among Americans? Explain what other movies, plays, or novels have affected the history of the United States.

**MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS**

- View the Map: The Compromise of 1850
- Read the Document: *The Fugitive Slave Act (1850)*
- View the Map: The Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act
- Read the Document: John Gihon, *Kansas Begins to Bleed*
- Watch the Video: Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Making of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*
- Watch the Video: *Dred Scott* and the Crises that Lead to the Civil War
- Complete the Assignment: The Enigma of John Brown
- Read the Document: *John Brown’s Address Before Sentencing*
- Read the Document: Abraham Lincoln, *Debate at Galesburg, Illinois (1858)*
- Complete the Assignment: Law and Society: The Case of Dred and Harriet Scott—Blurring the Borders of Politics and Justice
CHAPTER 15

SECESSION AND THE CIVIL WAR

CHAPTER OUTLINE

THE EMERGENCE OF LINCOLN

THE STORM GATHERS

• The Deep South Secedes
• The Failure of Compromise
• And the War Came

ADJUSTING TO TOTAL WAR

• Prospects, Plans, and Expectations
• Mobilizing the Home Fronts
• Political Leadership: Northern Success and Southern Failure
• Early Campaigns and Battles
• The Diplomatic Struggle

FIGHT TO THE FINISH

• The Coming of Emancipation
• African Americans and the War
• The Tide Turns
• Last Stages of the Conflict

EFFECTS OF THE WAR

CONCLUSION: AN ORGANIZATIONAL REVOLUTION

FEATURE ESSAY: SOLDIERING IN THE CIVIL WAR
OPENING THEME

SHERMAN’S MARCH TO THE SEA

Students are generally bored with military history if it is presented as a series of battles won and lost until one side wins more or less by attrition. Military history becomes more significant if students realize that war has a psychological dimension and that civilian morale is as important as the production of artillery shells. As the text points out, the Civil War was a total war and the Union generals understood that they could not win by gaining strategic objectives or by occupying enemy territory. It was necessary to destroy the southern whites’ will to resist and to convince them that they had no choice but to repudiate secession. In the work of demoralizing the white South, no campaign was more successful than Sherman’s march from Atlanta to Savannah.

Sherman invaded Georgia with a host of nearly one hundred thousand men in May 1864, and fought his way into Atlanta four months later. The fall of Atlanta stunned the South. But Confederate leaders believed they now had a chance to destroy Sherman’s force by attacking his supply line, which ran along various railroads for more than four hundred fifty miles back to Nashville. To solve his logistical problem, Sherman detached part of his armies to keep the Confederates out of Tennessee, and, with the other half, decided to break away from his overextended supply line to strike for the ocean. There the Union navy could easily reinforce him. His target was Savannah, three hundred miles away, and his troops would feed themselves off the land as they marched.

To keep Atlanta out of enemy hands once he left, Sherman determined to complete the destruction of the city. When the mayor protested, Sherman replied, “War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it, and those who brought war into our Country deserve all the Curses and Maledictions a people can pour out.” On September 1, Sherman’s forces torched Atlanta.

The march itself never encountered much resistance. Altogether, Sherman lost about eight hundred men, compared to the thirty thousand he lost when taking Atlanta. Fanning out over an area as much as thirty miles wide, Sherman’s “bummers” destroyed shops, factories, rail lines, and anything of value to the southern war effort. They foraged and destroyed the crops so crucial to the South’s food supply, and sometimes plundered the civilians in their way. The infantry corps started with 3,476 cattle, captured 13,294 en route, and entered Savannah with 6,861.

The march went so well that the North began to joke about it. Lincoln told an audience that everyone knew where Sherman had gone into the South, but nobody knew where he would come out. When Union troops occupied Milledgeville, they broke into the capitol and held a mock session of the legislature that repealed the secession ordinance. Sherman caught the mood and presented the city of Savannah to Lincoln as a Christmas present on December 22.

For the South, however, the march was grim news. Sherman had intended to bring the war home to those who caused it, and he succeeded. A sense of utter helplessness descended over Georgia. A resident of Augusta, wondering why that city had not yet fallen to Sherman, finally concluded that
“they have only to come and take it when they are ready.” But even more devastating, as far as the white South was concerned, was the thousands and thousands of slaves fleeing to the safety of Sherman’s army. The march eventually resembled a comet, with a small head of soldiers followed by a great tail of runaway slaves. Blacks had begun to vote with their feet as soon as the Union army entered the Confederacy, but never in such numbers as they did now. Sherman considered them a nuisance and a supply problem, but the blacks themselves knew that they were free, that they had freed themselves, and that no force on earth was going to reenslave them. Sherman fought no major battles during his march to the sea, and destroyed no southern armies, but he succeeded better than he intended in rending the fabric of southern society.

THE EMERGENCE OF LINCOLN

The author begins with a short biography of Lincoln, whose election precipitated the Civil War, but whose leadership preserved the Union.

THE STORM GATHERS

Secession did not necessarily mean war. There was one last attempt to reconcile North and South, and there was much doubt about how firmly the federal government should respond to secession.

. The Deep South Secedes

South Carolina seceded on December 20, 1860, and by February 1861, six more states, all in the Deep South, had joined South Carolina in forming the Confederate States of America. Significantly, the new Confederate government was headed by men who were moderates and who had not led the secession movement. Significant, too, is the fact that the Confederate constitution resembled the U.S. Constitution. The South did not secede in order to create a slaveholders’ utopia; the South dreamed of restoring the Union as it had been before the rise of the Republican Party, and even though the Confederate constitution protected slavery, it was hoped that some or all of the northern states would join the Confederacy.

. The Failure of Compromise

There was a last-minute effort to save the Union. In Congress, support grew for a plan put forward by Senator John Crittenden, the essence of which was to settle the problem of slavery in the territories by extending the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific. Lincoln rejected this plan because he did not think it would end secession, and because he viewed it as a repudiation of the principles on which he had been elected.
And the War Came

President Buchanan had made no attempt to coerce the South back into the Union, and many Northerners wanted to let the South “go in peace.” Most Northerners, however, wanted forceful action to preserve the Union.

When Lincoln took office, he discovered that he must either quickly resupply the federal garrison in Fort Sumter, South Carolina, or surrender it. He opted for resupply and informed the governor of South Carolina of that decision. Before the supplies could arrive, South Carolina forces opened fire on Fort Sumter on April 12 and captured it. Lincoln called out the northern state militias to suppress the insurrection in the South. Lincoln’s actions united the South. Virginia seceded, followed by the rest of the upper South. Only four slave states remained in the Union: Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri. In the North, the general public responded eagerly to what they expected would be a short war.

Although the issue of slavery led to secession, people at the time defined the war in terms of whether or not the Union was indissoluble.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

ADJUSTING TO TOTAL WAR

Because the North could restore the Union only by destroying the southern will to resist, the Civil War became a “total war.”

Prospects, Plans, and Expectations

Both sides had advantages that gave them hope of victory. The South adopted a defensive strategy, thereby requiring the North to fight in an unfamiliar and hostile terrain. Lincoln took advantage of the North’s greater resources in men and material so that a two-front strategy could be adopted. He sent troops to capture Richmond, Virginia, capital of the Confederacy, and sent troops to seize control of the Mississippi River. In addition, he ordered the navy to blockade southern ports.

Mobilizing the Home Fronts

Both North and South put volunteers into the field in the first year of the war, but both sides had to resort to conscription in the summer of 1862. The North had an easier time financing the war through taxes, bonds, and paper money, and private industry kept the Union armies generally well supplied. The Confederate government, lacking an industrial base, succeeded in setting up government arsenals that kept the Confederate armies supplied, but the Confederacy found it difficult to finance the war effort, and
the South suffered runaway inflation. A more serious problem was that the Confederacy could not create an adequate transportation system to carry food to its cities and armies.

. Political Leadership: Northern Success and Southern Failure

Lincoln was a far more effective chief executive than Jefferson Davis. Lincoln greatly expanded his wartime powers by declaring martial law and rounding up about ten thousand “subversives,” who were imprisoned without trial. At the same time, northern newspapers and politicians were free to attack Lincoln, which ensured that the Republican Party rallied around him. Jefferson Davis, on the other hand, concerned himself mainly with his military duties and showed little interest in civilian morale and economic problems. Because there was no political organization loyal to him, Davis had little influence with state governments, which sometimes impeded the war effort.

. Early Campaigns and Battles

In the first year of the war, the North achieved total naval supremacy and cleared Confederate troops from West Virginia, Kentucky, and much of Tennessee. New Orleans was taken, but the drive to take control of the Mississippi stalled at the Battle of Shiloh. In the East, the Union tried several times to take Richmond, but all efforts failed. When Robert E. Lee invaded Maryland, he was defeated at Antietam.

. The Diplomatic Struggle

The South failed to gain recognition of its independence from any foreign nation. England did extend belligerent rights to the Confederacy, but wanted proof that the South could win independence on the battlefield before risking a war with the United States. France would recognize the Confederacy only if England did. “King Cotton” turned out to play virtually no role in determining the foreign policy of the European powers.

FIGHT TO THE FINISH

After 1863, the war went steadily against the South, but southern resistance continued, and the North had to adopt more radical measures in order to win, including emancipation of the slaves.

. The Coming of Emancipation

In the first year of the war, the North fought to save the Union and opposed making the struggle one for the freedom of blacks. But as the dream of quick victory faded, pressure built to do something to hurt the South. When the Union army prevailed at the Battle of Antietam, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation (September 22,
1862), giving the South one hundred days to surrender if it wished to preserve slavery. On January 1, 1863, the proclamation went into effect in those areas still in rebellion. The proclamation encouraged African Americans to flee in even larger numbers to the Union lines, thereby robbing the Confederate war effort of thousands of laborers.

African Americans and the War

Almost two hundred thousand African Americans served in the Union army, and many others were used as laborers in the northern war effort. Their contribution encouraged Lincoln to push further for their rights. He organized governments in conquered southern states that abolished slavery and persuaded Maryland and Missouri to do likewise. Finally, Lincoln and the Republicans passed the Thirteenth Amendment through Congress on January 31, 1865.

The Tide Turns

By 1863, both sides were war-weary. The southern economy was in a shambles, and desertions had become a major problem. In the North, the Democrats increasingly attacked Lincoln’s handling of the war and his emancipation of the slaves. When the federal government had to resort to outright conscription, riots broke out. In New York City, it was necessary to use army troops to restore order.

On the battlefield, the Union advance had stopped. Ulysses Grant seemed bogged down before Vicksburg, and another advance on Richmond ended with complete defeat at Chancellorsville. During the summer, the tide of battle turned. Lee invaded the North and lost the crucial Battle of Gettysburg. At exactly the same time, the Union army took Vicksburg and, with it, control of the Mississippi.

Last Stages of the Conflict

Following his victory at Vicksburg, Grant became general-in-chief of the Union army and invaded the South on all fronts. While William Sherman led the western armies through Georgia, Grant forced Lee slowly back toward Richmond. Unable to defeat or outmaneuver Lee, Grant settled into a long siege at Richmond and Petersburg.

For a while Lincoln feared that the apparent stalemate before Richmond would result in his defeat in the election of 1864, but Sherman’s capture of Atlanta revived northern morale, and Lincoln beat Democratic candidate General George McClellan by an overwhelming majority.

In the winter of 1864 and the early spring of 1865, Union forces were victorious everywhere. Lee surrendered his army on April 9. Five days later, John Wilkes Booth assassinated Lincoln, but the Union had been saved.
EFFECTS OF THE WAR

The war profoundly changed the United States. The death of 618,000 men left many women bereft of husbands and either encouraged or forced them to seek roles other than those of wife and mother. Four million African Americans were free, but not yet equal. Industrial workers suffered from wartime inflation, but hoped that the Republican Party would take up their cause.

The war gave the federal government predominance over the states, even though the states continued to have primary responsibility for most functions of government. In the realm of economic policy, the Republican Party had enacted measures to encourage business, and the federal government would continue to play an activist role in the economy.

CONCLUSION: AN ORGANIZATIONAL REVOLUTION

The war organized the American people. An individualistic society of small producers had begun the transformation toward a modern, bureaucratic state, a development celebrated by intellectuals such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, who had once espoused the autonomy of the individual.

FEATURE ESSAY: SOLDIERING IN THE CIVIL WAR

Boys and men on both sides enlisted for a variety of reasons. None was prepared for the inhuman conditions or the horror they would face in battle.

LECTURE TOPICS

Lecture on the Confederacy in terms of its government organization and effectiveness during the Civil War. Explain to students the link between a confederate form of government and the southern devotion to states’ rights. What characteristics of a confederate form of government would make it difficult for Jefferson Davis to conduct a war? How would the dominating principle of states’ rights in the Confederacy impact recruiting soldiers, raising finances, and creating the fundamental unity needed to wage war and win? Discuss the irony of the fact that the Confederacy was fighting for states’ rights, yet a states’ rights form of government would be one of the factors that would lead to defeat.

Create a lecture the history of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, focusing specifically on its performance at Fort Wagner, South Carolina. How was the regiment recruited? What is the significance of the Massachusetts 54th in terms of the lasting reputation and historical legacy of African American troops who fought in the Civil War? What was the 54th’s role in Darien affair? Who led the Massachusetts 54th? How were white officers perceived by black soldiers, or by other white soldiers? In answering this question, focus specifically on the life and death of Robert Gould Shaw.
Discuss the issue of dissent during the Civil War. Choose either the North or the South as the focus of the lecture. If the North is the focus, look at the Copperheads or at the Irish in New York City. Who opposed the war and why? In what regions of the North was dissent strongest? Is there a reason for this? Is socioeconomic background a factor? Do the same for the South. Who in the South opposed the Civil War and why? Again, is region a factor in defining dissent? Is class a factor?

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

Discuss the issue of civil rights during the Civil War. Have students respond to the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus by the Lincoln government during the war and the subsequent arrests for disloyalty. Does civil war justify this abridgment of civil rights? Should the Lincoln administration have tolerated Copperhead opposition? How does this situation during the Civil War compare to the use of the Sedition Act of 1798 by Federalists at the turn of the century? How does it compare to the use of the Sedition Act of 1918 by the Wilson administration during World War I? How does it compare to the second Bush administration’s anti-terrorism policies?

Discuss the distinctions between Union and Confederate military leadership during the Civil War. What strengths and weaknesses existed on each side regarding the quality and effectiveness of leadership? What advantages did the North have that would offset its difficulties in finding effective generals to lead the Union Army?

Discuss the role of women in the Civil War. Consider American views on womanhood during the early nineteenth century, particularly the cult of domesticity. How did the Civil War impact these ideals regarding women and the home? Compare the roles of women in the Civil War to the roles of women during earlier wars in America and to the role of women in modern wars. Are there parallels? Distinctions?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Today Abraham Lincoln is considered one of our greatest presidents, but he did not enjoy such approval at the time. List and evaluate some of the contemporary criticisms of Lincoln.

Consider the impact of the draft riots on black citizens in the North. During the New York riots, African Americans were beaten and lynched, many homes were destroyed, and the mob burned a black orphanage. Given this and the general racism in the North, is the willingness of African Americans to fight for the North surprising? If not, why not?

Have students read the Gettysburg Address, and then hold a discussion focusing on some of the following areas:

a. Have students choose phrases from the address that speak directly to the Union war aims of reunion and emancipation.

b. Have students comment on Lincoln’s meaning of the phrase “all men are created equal.” Ask students to recall where the phrase originates. What did the original author mean by it? What did Lincoln mean by it? What happened to the American understanding of equality during the period between the American Revolution and the Civil War?
c. Ask students to think about the phrase “new birth of freedom.” Again, are American ideas about freedom changing during the Civil War? To what extent? If the reference is to emancipation, how much freedom was inherent in the northern interpretation of emancipation?

Have students read a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation before class, and then conduct a discussion focusing on some of the following questions:

a. Did the Emancipation Proclamation end slavery in the United States?

b. Where did the proclamation end slavery? Were there slave states where slavery was protected and not abolished? Where were those states? Why did Lincoln protect slavery in these states?

c. Was the Emancipation Proclamation primarily the result of a moral decision or a military decision on Lincoln’s part? Was it an emotional decision or a pragmatic decision?

d. How might the Emancipation Proclamation be the result of a diplomatic decision on Lincoln’s part?

e. What is the historical significance of the Emancipation Proclamation?

5 Discuss the Civil War’s impact on gender and race relations in the United States.

Wars always have unexpected consequences. List some of those consequences for both soldiers and civilians in the North and in the South.

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

History rarely records who fired the first shot in any war, but the Civil War was different. We know precisely when and who fired the first shot. After Lincoln informed the governor of South Carolina that Fort Sumter would be resupplied, South Carolina made the fateful decision to take the fort before the convoy could arrive. At 4:30 a.m., on April 12, 1861, Edmund Ruffin fired a sixty-four-pound Columbiad and watched its shell explode on the northeast parapet of Fort Sumter. Ruffin, a noted soil chemist, was given the “honor” of opening hostilities because he had been dedicated for so long to the cause of southern independence. His diary, edited by William Kauffman Scarborough and published by the Louisiana State University Press (Baton Rouge, 1972), records the incident and gives a fascinating picture of southern life before and during the war. When Ruffin realized that the Confederacy was doomed, he killed himself.

What began at Sumter ended at Appomattox. One of the great tableaux of American history is the meeting of Grant and Lee in the McLean House. Lee was dressed in his best uniform; Grant wore a rumpled private’s uniform. After the brief exchange of notes that ended a long war, Lee walked into the front yard, faced his defeated army, and clapped his hands three times. There are numerous accounts of the surrender. Grant described the scene in his memoirs, one of the most interesting memoirs written by an American general. It was most recently reprinted by The Library of America in 1990.
POINTS OF MASTERY

Explain why the South seceded following the Republican Party victory in 1860.

At the outset of the Civil War, what were the relative advantages of the North and the South, and how did they affect the final outcome?

Briefly discuss the responses of the federal government and the Republican Party to the secession of the Lower South. Explain why compromise efforts like the Crittenden Plan were unsuccessful.

Analyze Lincoln’s position on secession, especially as reflected in the series of decisions that culminated in the firing on Fort Sumter.

Define the term writ of habeas corpus and discuss Lincoln’s suspension of this Constitutional protection during the Civil War.

Describe the obstacles to centralized authority facing the South at the outset of the war. Comment on the leadership ability of Jefferson Davis.

Describe the leadership, strategy, tactics, and outcome of the First Battle of Bull Run.

Point out the reasons the Battle of Antietam is considered a turning point in the Civil War.

Describe the response of the border states to the outbreak of Civil War.

Describe the strengths and weaknesses of General George B. McClellan as leader of the Army of the Potomac. Describe the leadership style of General Robert E. Lee as head of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Describe the response of ex-slaves and free southern African Americans to the opportunity to fight in the Union Army. Comment on the treatment of African American troops by the Union Army and explain the significance of the performance of African American troops at Fort Wagner, South Carolina.

Discuss the New York Draft Riot by identifying the participants and their reasons for protesting conscription laws.

Explain the significance of Gettysburg and Vicksburg as turning points in the Civil War.

Describe the conditions in army hospitals during the Civil War. Describe the role of women in the Civil War and comment on the conditions of camp life.

Identify the Radical Republican faction in Lincoln’s party and explain the challenge it presented to Lincoln in terms of party policy and its overall effectiveness in influencing Republican policy.

Describe the impact of the Civil War on the northern and southern economies.
Explain the significance of the fall of Atlanta to the overall Union war effort and to the outcome of the election of 1864.

Identify the candidates and issues of the 1864 presidential election.

Discuss Lee’s surrender at Appomattox.

Explain the importance of Lincoln’s assassination to the future of Reconstruction in the defeated South.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Given your knowledge of society and economy in the South and public policy in the North, do you think the Union could have been preserved through means other than outright warfare?

   No. The *Dred Scott* decision left only two peaceful means of resolving the conflict: complete acquiescence by one side, or a constitutional convention. However, sectional animosity was so great that a constitutional convention would never have led to any agreements. Economic differences could not have been resolved because there was no way for the South to replace slave labor and remain profitable.

2. How did Lincoln’s personal character affect the morale of the North and the outcome of the war?

   Lincoln believed that the Union was the basis of political liberty. He defended it wholeheartedly and sincerely, and people found that compelling. He refused to attack the Confederacy until it had attacked, enabling him to argue that the South started the war, which kept Kentucky on the Union side. He claimed unprecedented presidential powers, but he had earned sufficient trust that people did not doubt that he would relinquish them as soon as possible. He was able to keep the North united in the fight against the South even though there were tremendous disagreements among Northerners.

3. What were the pros and cons of emancipation for someone like Lincoln who supported it personally?

   The pros of emancipation range from the personal and the idealistic to the practical. Emancipation undid the injustice of slavery, which had always stood at odds with the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. On a more practical level, emancipation took away manpower from the southern war effort and added manpower and soldiers to the Union Army. It also united the North and demonstrated Lincoln’s decisiveness.

   The cons of emancipation were, for someone like Lincoln, practical concerns. Ending slavery could cause economic upheaval and confusion. Lincoln risked popular disapproval because most Americans were racist, and many in the North were opposed to emancipation because it had the potential to depress wages and create more competition for jobs that had been held by
whites. Politically, Lincoln risked alienating those who, although opposed to slavery, believed that it was a states’ rights question.

In sum, emancipation could have galvanized support for Lincoln or eroded it; in retrospect, it was a good political move and one that furthered the American ideals of freedom, which would have been particularly meaningful to those who, like Lincoln, personally supported it.

During the course of the war, did the American people shape the fate of government or did government shape the lives of its people?

During the course of the war, there was no clear-cut cause and effect relationship between the actions of government and the actions of the people. People reacted to government actions, but the government took actions based largely on how the people would react to them. It would have been impossible for the war effort to succeed without popular support, so in that sense the people guided the government. For instance, Lincoln needed to deliver the Emancipation Proclamation, but he could not do it until people were prepared by battlefield success such as at Antietam. Lincoln knew the Union Army would need to attack, so he cleverly forced the Confederacy’s hand at Ft. Sumter; he could not actually take an offensive action for fear of public reaction.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

This nine-part epic series, which made Ken Burns an icon of popular history, uses archival photos and historical narrative to chronicle the events of the most tumultuous war in American history.

*Civil War Journal: Women at War*, A&E Video, 50 minutes.
This video examines the role of women in the Civil War.

This feature film starring Denzel Washington and Matthew Broderick depicts the role of the Massachusetts 54th Colored Infantry in the Civil War.

*Images of the Civil War*, A&E Video.
Civil War historian James McPherson narrates this examination of visuals from the Civil War, focusing primarily on the paintings and illustrations of Mort Kurtsler.

Shearer presents a historical account of the events that inspired the feature film *Glory*.

**CLASS EXERCISES**

1. What was the “broader truth about black soldiers” conveyed by the movie *Glory*?
2 Study a volume of photographs of the Civil War taken by Mathew Brady and others. Choose two or three photographs and study them closely. First, describe what they contain: What objects are in each? What people? How are they dressed? What are their expressions (faces and bodies)? What appears to be the relation between them? Then draw some conclusions: What atmosphere do the photos create? Why were the photos taken and for whom? What can you learn about the Civil War by studying photos of the conflict? What are the limitations of this kind of historical evidence? How has the technological level of the equipment shaped photography?

3 Study letters or diaries written by a participant in the Civil War. You may have some in your family, or check your college or university library archives; most historical societies will have manuscript resources of this kind. There are good printed collections of letters and diaries written by soldiers. You might also want to look at materials written by people at home. What kinds of experience does your writer describe? What seems important to him or her? What understanding of the war does your writer have?

4 If a Civil War battlefield is nearby, visit it. Imagine yourself a typical soldier writing home with news of that battle. What would you say?

5 Research the military personality of William Tecumseh Sherman. Examine his innovative contributions to the northern war effort. Why is Sherman often considered the originator of modern war? What is Sherman’s legacy? How is he viewed in the South today as opposed to in the North?

MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

- Watch the Video: What Caused the Civil War?
- Read the Document: South Carolina Declaration of the Causes of Secession
- View the Map: Secession
- Complete the Assignment: Soldiering the Civil War
- Read the Document: The Emancipation Proclamation
- View the Closer Look: Black Union Soldiers
- Read the Document: “If it were not for my trust in Christ,” Testimony from the New York Draft Riots (1863)
- View the Map: The Civil War Part II: 1863–1865
- Read the Document: William T. Sherman, the March Through Georgia
- Watch the Video: The Meaning of the Civil War for Americans
CHAPTER 16

THE AGONY OF RECONSTRUCTION

CHAPTER OUTLINE

ROBERT SMALLS AND BLACK POLITICIANS DURING RECONSTRUCTION

THE PRESIDENT VS. CONGRESS

• Wartime Reconstruction
• Andrew Johnson at the Helm
• Congress Takes the Initiative
• Congressional Reconstruction Plan Enacted
• The Impeachment Crisis

RECONSTRUCTING SOUTHERN SOCIETY

• Reorganizing Land and Labor
• Black Codes: A New Name for Slavery?
• Republican Rule in the South
• Claiming Public and Private Rights

RETREAT FROM RECONSTRUCTION

• Rise of the Money Question
• Final Efforts of Reconstruction
• A Reign of Terror Against the Blacks
• Spoilsman vs. Reformers

REUNION AND THE NEW SOUTH

• The Compromise of 1877
• “Redeeming” a New South
• The Rise of Jim Crow

CONCLUSION: HENRY McNEAL TURNER AND THE “UNFINISHED REVOLUTION”

FEATURE ESSAY: “FORTY ACRES AND A MULE”
Students generally believe that the President is a far more powerful political force than the Congress. There has even been talk of an “imperial presidency” developing in the United States. Students should therefore be reminded that in any serious confrontation between Congress and the Executive, Congress will win, as Richard Nixon can testify. The man who most bitterly learned that the Constitution gives Congress ultimate authority in our system of government was Andrew Johnson, the first President to have been impeached by the House of Representatives.

Johnson was not a weak president. He vigorously exercised the ample powers given the President by the Constitution. Johnson, like Lincoln, used the power to pardon in order to reconstruct the South. This power, granted to the president in Article II, section 2 of the Constitution, is virtually unlimited. Johnson required Southerners to sign statements admitting their guilt in rebelling against the United States and requesting forgiveness. Johnson then granted their requests. Having been pardoned, the former rebels were legally innocent and should have been able to participate in all civic affairs, such as holding public office. There was a kind of ironic common sense in Johnson’s position. Because secession was an illegal act, no southern state had ever left the Union; the southern states, therefore, did not have to be reconstructed. In other words, there had never been a secession; there had been a rebellion, an act by individuals.

Congress did not believe that the problem of southern reconstruction could be accomplished by having Confederate leaders admit or pretend to admit that they had committed a crime. Unless the social and political system of the South was fundamentally altered, Congress believed, the old planter elite would again come to power, and all the sacrifice of the Union army would have been in vain. Congress, therefore, refused to seat men elected to the House and Senate from states that Johnson considered to be reconstructed.

Congress defended this exclusion on two interrelated grounds. First, Article I, section 5 of the Constitution gives Congress the right to determine the legitimacy of the election of its members. Congress ruled that all congressional elections in the South were invalid because, among other things, so many adult males (African Americans) had been unable to vote. Second, Article IV, section 4 gives the federal government the responsibility of ensuring that each state has a “republican” form of government. When the Constitution was written, the word “republican” clearly meant a government in which there was neither king nor hereditary aristocracy. By the early nineteenth century, the fear that any state might cease to be “republican” had disappeared, and Article IV, section 4 seemed like a dead letter, but in the sectional crisis of the 1850s, the Republican party began to argue that the southern states were not really republican because slavery gave all power to a small minority. “The people” had no political voice. In order to reconstruct the South so that it would be truly “republican,” Congress determined that totally new conditions would have to be created. This in turn meant, not only the abolition of slavery, but also the right of African Americans to vote.
Congress had the upper hand in its struggle with Johnson. He could pardon individuals, but no Southerner would sit in Congress until Reconstruction was done the way Congress wanted. The president tried to use his powers as chief executive to sabotage Radical Reconstruction, by vetoing bills and by firing federal officials who did their jobs too well, but Congress proved again that it had superior powers. The Republicans, after 1867, had sufficient strength in Congress to override the president’s vetoes, and Congress rattled its ultimate weapon when it impeached Johnson. Altogether, Congress got its own way during Reconstruction.

If fears linger that an “imperial” presidency is growing, it is important to remember that as long as Americans allow the Constitution to determine the ground rules of political life most power lies in the legislative branch of government, the one closest to the people.

ROBERT SMALLS AND BLACK POLITICIANS DURING RECONSTRUCTION

The author demonstrates the frustrating failure of Reconstruction through the biography of Robert Smalls, who escaped slavery in South Carolina, joined the Union military effort, and enjoyed a successful career in business and politics after the war until the return of white supremacy.

THE PRESIDENT VERSUS CONGRESS

The North split on the question of reconstructing the South. Some Northerners, led by the White House, wanted speedy Reconstruction with a minimum of changes in the South. Other Northerners, led by Congress, wanted a slower Reconstruction and demanded that the freed African Americans be protected.

. Wartime Reconstruction

Even Lincoln clashed with Congress over Reconstruction. Lincoln hoped to win Southerners from the Confederate cause by announcing a lenient policy in 1863. Congress, however, resented Lincoln’s assumption that he alone could determine policy, and some Congressmen wanted to make black suffrage a precondition for taking the South back into the Union. Most of all, Congress did not trust white Southerners. Lincoln and Congress could not agree on the issue and it was left to Lincoln’s successor to work out a Reconstruction policy.

. Andrew Johnson at the Helm

Johnson, a Southern Democrat, had remained loyal to the Union and was rewarded with the vice presidency in 1864. At first, Radical Republicans felt enthusiastic about Johnson, because he had a long record of hostility toward the great planter class. Gradually, however, Johnson split with the Republican Party. Johnson began the process of Reconstruction by instructing the Southern states to hold conventions that
would declare secession illegal, repudiate the Confederate debt, and ratify the Thirteenth Amendment. The conventions did as ordered, but did so reluctantly, and none of them gave African Americans the right to vote. In fact, the southern states passed “Black Codes” that put African Americans into a kind of semislavery. Johnson approved of the actions of these conventions; Congress did not.

. Congress Takes the Initiative

Congress insisted that African Americans be given the vote. In part, this insistence reflected political partisanship, since the Republican Party expected to get the black vote. For the most part, however, the desire to give the franchise to African Americans grew from an ideological commitment to equal rights and a fear that without black suffrage the South would again fall under the control of the great planters.

In 1866, when Johnson vetoed two bills designed to help the freedmen, Republicans felt betrayed. In order to protect the rights of African Americans from a president they no longer trusted, the Republicans pushed the Fourteenth Amendment through Congress. In the elections of 1866, Johnson organized the National Union party, which ran against Republican congressmen. The results of the election, however, strengthened the Radical Republicans in Congress.

. Congressional Reconstruction Plan Enacted

Congress began enacting measures that are collectively called “Radical Reconstruction.” The South was placed under military rule until black suffrage was fully secured. The more radical Republicans realized that the African Americans needed a long period of federal protection, but the Republican Party in general felt uneasy about the military occupation and wanted it to be short.

. The Impeachment Crisis

When Johnson sabotaged Radical Reconstruction in the way he administered it, Congress moved to remove him from office. The House impeached him in February 1868, but the Senate refused to convict. Popular opinion had begun to turn against the Radical Republicans, who seemed willing to subvert the Constitution to accomplish what they wanted.

RECONSTRUCTING SOUTHERN SOCIETY

The South was an arena with three contending parties: Southern whites who wanted to keep the newly freed blacks in an inferior position, Northern whites who moved to the South to make money (“Carpetbaggers”) or to “civilize” the region, and blacks who wanted equality. Eventually, the forces
of reaction and racism won because the federal government did not sustain its interest in Reconstruction.

. Reorganizing Land and Labor

Faced with a massive need to rebuild, the South had to find a new labor system. The ex-slaves preferred to work their own land and were sometimes given land by the federal government. Under Johnson, most of this land reverted to white ownership. The former slaveowners tried to impose a contract labor system resembling slavery, but blacks insisted instead on sharecropping, which seemed like a first step toward economic independence. Sharecropping soon proved to be a form of peonage.

. Black Codes: A New Name for Slavery?

The South became an increasingly segregated society after the Civil War. As whites returned to political power, they enacted “Black Codes,” harsh laws that reduced blacks to a condition little short of slavery. The federal government often intervened to annul the Black Codes, but a reign of terror and unpunished physical violence robbed blacks of the gains they had achieved in the years just after the war.

. Republican Rule in the South

The Republican Party was not organized in the South until 1867, and it never acquired much strength. At first it attracted three groups, all with different aims: businesspeople, who wanted government aid; small white farmers, who wanted protection from creditors; and blacks, who formed the majority of the party and who wanted social and political equality. The Republican coalition was inherently unstable and broke up when the whites left it.

. Claiming Public and Private Rights

The Republican Party in the South improved conditions in areas such as public education, welfare, and transportation, but because too many Republican state legislatures were corrupt, although no worse than those in the North, the entire Reconstruction effort was tarnished. Ironically, white Southerners mainly blamed African Americans for crooked, inefficient government, even though blacks never controlled most Southern legislatures during Reconstruction.

RETREAT FROM RECONSTRUCTION

Grant faced problems that might have defeated a better president, but he contributed to his own failure. He was not a man with strong principles.
. Rise of the Money Question

Grant won the election of 1868 because he was a war hero. There were no clear-cut issues in the campaign, but after the Panic of 1873, the money question became paramount. Debtors, especially in the Midwest, and business people everywhere, wanted the government to follow an inflationary policy by allowing “greenbacks” issued during the Civil War to remain in circulation. Bankers, merchants, and intellectuals supported a return to hard money. In 1874, Congress adopted a pro-greenback position, but Grant opposed it. In 1875 the government committed itself to hard money, thereby arousing the anger of those suffering most from the depression. A Greenback Party was formed, and it did well in congressional races.

. Final Efforts of Reconstruction

In 1869, Congress passed the Fifteenth Amendment to give equal rights to vote to black males. The exclusion of women in the amendment created a split in the feminist movement, but seemed to assure Republican political ascendancy in the South for decades to come.

. A Reign of Terror Against Blacks

Various loosely organized vigilante groups in the South, most notably the Ku Klux Klan, unleashed a reign of terror against blacks and whites who joined the Republican party. At first, Grant and the northern Republicans took a hard line against the Klan, but when the Democratic Party began to make political gains by criticizing the continued repression of Southern whites, the Republican Party became less inclined to support blacks if it meant losing white votes. Without the federal government to protect them, blacks were systematically excluded from political life, and by 1876 Republicans controlled only South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida. Forceful measures would have quashed terrorism in the South eventually, but the northern public grew tired of the effort.

. Spoilsmen vs. Reformers

During Grant’s first term, stories of government corruption disturbed many Americans and discredited the Republican Party. In the election of 1872, a new party, the Liberal Republicans, was organized and nominated Horace Greeley for president. The Democrats also nominated Greeley, but Grant won reelection easily. It was during his second term that the full story of government corruption unfolded.
REUNION AND THE NEW SOUTH

North and South reconciled after 1877, but only when it was agreed to strip African Americans of their political gains and to favor the interests of big business over those of the small farmer.

. The Compromise of 1877

Nobody knew who won the election of 1876. Democratic candidate Samuel Tilden got most of the popular votes, but there was so much dispute about the electoral vote that Republican Rutherford B. Hayes had a chance. Congress appointed a special commission to determine who should get the disputed electoral votes. When it became clear that the commission would give the votes to Hayes, the southern Democrats in Congress promised not to cause trouble if the Republicans would guarantee federal aid to the South as well as removal of all remaining federal troops. When Hayes agreed, Reconstruction came to an end.

. “Redeeming” a New South

The men who replaced the Republicans in running the South, the “Redeemers,” were more interested in commerce or manufacturing than in agriculture. They used the doctrine of white supremacy to gain and hold power, but their chief interest was in making the South a modern, industrial society.

The Redeemer regimes, often corrupt, welcomed northern investment and northern control of the southern economy. These governments neglected the problems of small farmers, black or white, who suffered from unpayable debts. In response, the small farmers organized their own political party in the 1890s.

. The Rise of Jim Crow

The Redeemers also began the process of legal segregation and invented ways of denying blacks the right to vote. Blacks trying to vote Republican were whipped or even lynched, but even blacks who wanted to vote for Democrats were turned away by cynical rules enacted for the sole purpose of keeping elections wholly white. Politically powerless, blacks were subjected to degrading segregation laws whenever they used public facilities.

FEATURE ESSAY: “FORTY ACRES AND A MULE”

Several attempts were made to enable free blacks to manage their own land and their own labor. However, the many promises of land reform and of land grants and recompense to slaves and freedmen that had been made were never fulfilled.
CONCLUSION: HENRY McNEAL TURNER AND THE “UNFINISHED REVOLUTION”

The author ends the chapter with a capsule biography of a free black who, like Robert Smalls, enjoyed a distinguished political career after the war, but who was eventually forced out of government by the return of white supremacy. At one time convinced that blacks and whites would live together in equality, Henry Turner, a Methodist bishop, ended by preaching that the only hope for American blacks was to emigrate to Africa.

LECTURE TOPICS

Prepare a lecture on the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on the women’s movement. Trace the political maturation of American women from their involvement in the abolitionist movement to the creation of the New England Woman Suffrage Association and the American Equal Rights Association. How did the fight for abolition refine women’s understanding of their own status in the United States? How did progressive supporters of women’s suffrage respond to the Fourteenth Amendment and Fifteenth Amendments? How did these amendments impact the organization of the woman’s suffrage movement? Were women poised after the Civil War and Reconstruction to become more effective in realizing their own political goals?

Who won the Civil War? Have students consider the years from 1865 to 1900. If the Civil War was intended to resolve issues connected to emancipation and the preeminence of the federal government, to what extent was it successful? Have students look at the Compromise of 1877, sharecropping, racial segregation, African American disfranchisement, and the lack of northern resistance to these trends. What did these trends in the South say about the supposed victory over slavery and states’ rights?

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

Discuss the transition from slave labor to free labor in the South after the Civil War. Consider sharecropping. How did living arrangements for laborers change with sharecropping? What were the terms of agreement between cropper and landlord? To what extent did sharecropping differ from slavery? Consider, as well, the fates of middle- and lower-class southern whites. Were they immune from the same fate as former slaves? Was sharecropping a racial institution?

What key changes did emancipation make in the political and economic status of African Americans? Discuss the expansion of citizenship rights in the post–Civil War years. To what extent did women share in the gains made by African Americans?

Discuss the successes and failures of Reconstruction in terms of providing for economic stability in the southern African American community. For a reference, Eric Foner’s *Reconstruction: The Unfinished Revolution* (1988) is one of the best assessments of the long-term effectiveness and legacy of Reconstruction. Also look at Foner’s *Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War* (1980). Have students consider some of the following questions connected to the debate on land redistribution:

a. Did the federal government have an economic or a financial responsibility to freedmen after the Civil War?

b. How far did the promise of emancipation go? Did it include personal freedom, civil rights, political rights, and economic rights?
c. During Reconstruction, even some radical Republicans opposed a federal program guaranteeing property to freedmen—especially if it involved federal confiscation of private property. Why would they oppose such a policy? What traditional American economic and political principles prevented even radical Republicans from supporting a land redistribution policy?

d. Was the failure to provide economic security and independence to the freed black population in the South the major downfall of Reconstruction? In spite of traditional American principles, was there anything unique about the ex-slave population and the economic challenges it faced after the Civil War? Did the federal government abdicate its responsibility in failing to meet that challenge?

e. Students may also want to comment on present-day debates regarding reparations to African Americans for their suffering during slavery and their involuntary contributions to the nation’s wealth.

Describe the South’s response to defeat in 1865 and understand how southern whites and blacks differed in their perspectives on the post-Civil War South.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Discuss the Compromise of 1877. Who was involved in the deal and what were each side’s motivations to “mend” sectional strife? To what extent were the terms of the compromise realized? What impact would the compromise have on the legacy of Reconstruction?

Discuss the differences and similarities between the disputed election of 1876 and the disputed election of 2000. Why were these two elections disputed? How did the South and race issues figure into these disputes? How was each election resolved? Do students feel that each resolution was constitutional?

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

Reconstruction was lived most intensely by southern whites and blacks. African Americans learned of their freedom in many different ways. One African American woman remembered encountering Union troops when she was a little girl and being told, “Nigger! You is as free as us.” Another remembered that the plantation mistress assembled all the slaves before the great house, where she informed them that they were free, and then ordered them off her property. After emancipation, African Americans struggled through the Reconstruction period, not without some victories. One former slave, Henry Banner of Little Rock, Arkansas, summed it up this way: “In slavery I owns nothing and never owns nothing. In freedom I’s own my home and raise the family. All that cause me worriment, and in slavery I has no worriment, but I takes the freedom.” The best single collection of former slave narratives is that edited by George P. Rawick, The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 1972), 19 volumes. A good sample of the narratives collected by the Federal Writers’ Project in the 1930s is B. A. Botkin, editor, Lay My Burden Down (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945).
It should be remembered that Reconstruction failed to break the spirit of white Southerners, who began
to shape a society much like the one that existed before the war. There is an excellent collection of
letters sent to one another by members of a large and well-off Georgian family in *The Children of
Pride*, edited by Robert Manson Myers (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972). Among the
more notable examples of the South’s defiant, “unreconstructed” attitude are the letters sent by
Caroline Jones to her mother, thanking God for the assassination of Lincoln, and the letter dated
December 9, 1865, from Mary Jones to her daughter, telling her about the troubles she was having with
the Freedmen’s Bureau.

**POINTS OF MASTERY**

Explain how the Ten Percent Plan and the Wade-Davis Bill intended to overcome obstacles to
reconstruction.

Outline the major provisions of Andrew Johnson’s reconstruction plan. Comment on the
Democratic, Republican, and conservative southern responses to Johnson’s plan.

Explain the Reconstruction policy of the radical Republicans and identify their leaders.

Define the significance of Black Codes.

Outline the provisions of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Identify and explain the role of the Freedmen’s Bureau.

Explain the provisions of the Tenure of Office Act and its connection to the impeachment of
Andrew Johnson.

Explain the operation of the sharecropping system of labor and how it assisted southern whites
in reasserting control over African American labor.

Discuss the role of African American churches in the political, social, and educational
development of African Americans after the Civil War.

Explain the provisions of the Fifteenth Amendment and its impact on the women’s suffrage
movement.

Describe the activities of southern paramilitary groups in attempting to counter Reconstruction.
Identify how congressional law was designed to protect citizens from racial violence.

Identify the Liberal Republican branch of the Republican Party and explain its role in the
presidential election of 1872.

Describe the dispute in the presidential election of 1876. Outline the components of the
Compromise of 1877 and comment on how the compromise resolved the disputed election.
Name and explain three important acts and three constitutional amendments that were part of the Republican Reconstruction program.

What role did such institutions as the family, church, schools, and political parties play in the African American transition to freedom?

How did white Southerners attempt to limit the freedom of former slaves? How did these efforts succeed, and how did they fail?

How was the Freedmen’s Bureau both a positive and a negative influence for the newly freed blacks? Why did the Freedmen’s Bureau seem to want blacks to stay in agricultural positions?

Describe the steps that stripped blacks of their political rights and the implementation of Jim Crow laws, and outline the various black responses.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. How do you think Reconstruction might have turned out differently if Lincoln had not been assassinated?

Like Johnson, Lincoln favored leniency toward the prodigal states and quarreled with Congress. Neither wanted to purge the state governments of secessionists. Lincoln would almost certainly not have been as “radical” in demanding civil rights for freed slaves as the Radical Republicans. Perhaps the force of Lincoln’s personality and his popularity would have reined in Radical Republicans’ demands, leading to a more gradual approach to black civil rights.

Considering how hard Southern racists fought Reconstruction requirements and the civil rights acts, it may seem as if a gradual approach would have achieved less than the radical approach that the Republicans were forced to demand. Unless Lincoln had been able to make several Supreme Court appointments, the course of the Fourteenth Amendment would have been the same as it was under Johnson. One factor that could have changed the course of Reconstruction was if Lincoln could have endorsed Hayes. If he had, the election would not have gone to Congress, and the South could not have forced the compromise of 1877.

2. Why was it difficult to enforce social and cultural changes using military force?

Force can only change people’s behavior when they are in the public eye. Distaste and disrespect for, and jealousy of, blacks was deeply engrained in Southern whites who had an economic or an emotional stake in slavery and the sense of superiority it supported. Additionally, most whites did not cared far more about peace and prosperity than about civil rights and justice for blacks. Corruption was common practice throughout the United States, so enforcement could not possibly have integrity even if the public supported it. In any case, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments added the force of law to the exercise of government force, but as long as the people refuse to accept the legitimacy of the authority directing the force, enforcement will fail eventually.
What role did local, grassroots efforts play in reserving federal government policy? How did people retain that much autonomy even under a strong federal government?

People retained autonomy because they were united in their opposition to the government. It was difficult to find Southern whites to enforce the laws. Because the people were united against the law, it was difficult to even find Southern whites who would wear a uniform and pretend to enforce the law. Southerners truly saw Reconstruction as an attempt to usurp their way of life. In an important sense, the Civil War and Reconstruction denied the principle of self-government for the South.

Do you think the “Redemption” of southern government was an inevitable backlash to Reconstruction? How could things have turned out differently?

Redemption was inevitable because losing the war did not convince Southern racists and slaveholders that slavery was wrong or that they owed anything to the people they had oppressed since the inception of southern society. The only way things could have turned out differently is if Americans had been more concerned about racial justice and if the politicians they elected had been more concerned about expressing the will of the majority rather than selling their votes to business and establishment interests. In the real world, everyone could be bought and sold, and the freedmen did not have much purchasing power.

AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

This documentary examines the turbulence in the political and social realms as the nation struggled to adjust to the end of slavery and the consequences of disunion.

*Cold Mountain* (154 mins.), Miramax, 2003. As the Civil War comes to an end, a wounded Confederate soldier makes his way home through the perils of a region that is suffering from defeat.

CLASS EXERCISES

1. Novels reflect history. Consider the style and point of view of the authors of the six novels listed below.

   Ask the class the following:

   Which do you think most accurately reflects the historical truth about Reconstruction? Is the most accurate novel-as-history necessarily the best as literature? Based on these excerpts, which novel do you think you would like to read in its entirety? Why?

   Thomas Dixon, Jr., *The Clansman*
   Albion Tourgée, *A Fool’s Errand*
   Howard Fast, *Freedom Road*
   W.E.B. DuBois, *Quest of the Silver Fleece*
John DeForest, Miss Ravenal’s Conversion from Secession to Loyalty
Earnest Gaines, The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman

2 Write a short story or a series of letters or diary entries describing the typical daily experiences of various persons during Reconstruction. For example, a southern woman like Adele Allston or her daughter Elizabeth presiding over a large cotton plantation in the absence of their husband and father who was killed in the war. Or a black family that had been given 40 acres of confiscated land by a northern general during the war and faced a title dispute with and dispossession by the original landowner afterwards. Or a poor white family putting its life together against the changing economic climate and race relationships of the postwar years. Or a Yankee schoolteacher’s experiences in a Freedmen’s Bureau school in Tennessee. Or a Freedmen’s Bureau agent’s hectic, overworked, under-appreciated daily duties in Mississippi. Read in class and discuss. Notice the clash of unresolved dreams.

3 A role-playing exercise can help students understand the efforts to impeach Andrew Johnson. Michael Les Benedict, The Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson (Norton, 1973), provides ample background. Assign students to portray individual members of Congress, Johnson, Stanton, and so on.

4 Ask the students to write a paper on white terrorism in the South during Reconstruction, concentrating on some of the more obscure local paramilitary groups such as the Mississippi Riflemen or the South Carolina Red Shirts.

5 Have students examine the role of black politicians during Reconstruction. Who were the black congressmen or senators during reconstruction? What roles did these individuals play in politics (specifically look at the life of Hiram Revels)? What were the goals of these individuals? What was their background and what was their idea of an effective leader? How were they different from or similar to their white counterparts? How successful were black politicians?

MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGMENTS

- Read the Document: Pearson Profiles, Robert Smalls
- Read the Document: Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendment (1865, 1868, 1870)
- Read the Document: The Mississippi Black Code (1865)
- View the Map: Reconstruction
- Read the Document: A Sharecrop Contract (1882)
- Watch the Video: The Schools that the Civil War and Reconstruction Created
- View the Closer Look: The First Vote,
- Read the Document: Hannah Irwin Describes Ku Klux Klan Ride
- Complete the Assignment: “Forty Acres and a Mule”
- Watch the Video: The Promise and Failure of Reconstruction
CHAPTER 17

THE WEST: EXPLOITING AN EMPIRE

CHAPTER OUTLINE

LEAN BEAR’S CHANGING WEST

BEYOND THE FRONTIER

CRUSHING THE NATIVE AMERICANS

- Life of the Plains Indians
- “As Long as the Waters Run”: Searching for an Indian Policy
- Final Battles on the Plains
- The End of Tribal Life

SETTLEMENT OF THE WEST

- Men and Women on the Overland Trail
- Land for the Taking
- Territorial Government
- The Spanish-Speaking Southwest

THE BONANZA WEST

- The Mining Bonanza
- Gold from the Roots Up: The Cattle Bonanza
- Sodbusters on the Plains: The Farming Bonanza
- New Farming Methods
- Discontent on the Farm
- The Final Fling

CONCLUSION: THE MEANING OF THE WEST

FEATURE ESSAY: BLACKS IN BLUE
OPENING THEME

THE FRONTIER THESIS

All college students, it seems, have heard of the “frontier thesis,” but few of them realize how severely challenged that interpretation of the American experience has been. It is an appropriate time, while covering this chapter, to include discussion of the topic.

Historians did not notice the frontier until after its disappearance. In 1890, the Census Bureau announced that the nation was so settled that “there can hardly be said to be a frontier line.” This announcement caught the attention of a young historian named Frederick Jackson Turner. Three years later, he delivered the address “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” to the World’s Congress of Historians, meeting in Chicago.

Turner defined the frontier as the empty land on the margin of a settled area having a population of two or more persons per square mile. According to Turner, life on the frontier evoked certain character traits, coarseness and strength, acuteness and inquisitiveness, a practical turn of mind, a grasp of material things, a restless energy, and, above all, an exuberant, dominant individualism. The person who entered the forest was a European; the person who emerged was an American. For the nation as a whole, this process was repeated for nearly three hundred years, with important results. The frontier made the United States a more self-sufficient nation and raised the major political questions of the first half of the nineteenth century. Most of all, the frontier gave Americans their sense of nationalism.

Turner’s 1893 address is the classic statement of the frontier thesis, but Turner eventually published thirteen separate pieces in which he elaborated, modified, and even contradicted his most famous paper. As his critics, especially George Pierson, have pointed out, Turner never consistently defined the term “frontier” and often confused it with physical mobility, a phenomenon not necessarily related to the frontier. One of the most discussed aspects of the Turner thesis, the “safety-valve” theory, which claims that economic hardship in the East drove people to the West, was not even hinted at in the 1893 address. Turner made this assertion in a later article, written for a general audience. Because the safety-valve theory could be tested empirically, historians have subjected it to intensive examination and have shown that Turner was totally wrong.

Even restricting discussion to the 1893 statement, one encounters problems with the Turner thesis. For one thing, Turner made too large a claim for the frontier. He stated, “The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward explain American development.” This key assertion is too broad to be accurate or useful. For another thing, Turner was like most other late-nineteenth-century historians in adopting an evolutionary scheme of social organization, with “savage” society at one extreme and “industrial” society at the other. The evolutionary aspect of the theory now seems jejune, and it has been pointed out that if the frontier had an inherent ability to create character, nations with large frontiers, like Brazil or Russia, would have evolved into societies similar to that of the United States.
Nevertheless, the frontier thesis continues to make sense. If it is conceded that Americans differ in important respects from Europeans, despite a common Christian religion, a common history of Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment, a common science, similar forms of government and law, and interrelated economies, how is that difference to be explained? The most persuasive answer so far has been Turner’s. Surely, a society must be profoundly affected when its citizens, year after year, leave established communities and begin anew in a strange environment; when its worst-paid workers can dream of escape to the West, even if they never go; when the casual slaughter of Indians becomes the stuff of folklore; when expanding settlements demand the most extensive transportation network in the world and when the task of internal development turns the nation’s attention away from the outside world. Americans have felt the impact of the frontier, even if their historians have not been able to weigh it.

LEAN BEAR’S CHANGING WEST

The author uses the visit of a Cheyenne chief, Lean Bear, to New York and Washington in 1863 to illustrate the lawless and brutal way in which the West was settled. Lincoln assured Lean Bear that the government wanted a peaceful and orderly migration into the West, but warned that many of the pioneers could not be restrained. A year later, U.S. soldiers killed Lean Bear in cold blood.

BEYOND THE FRONTIER

Beyond the Mississippi lay, according to contemporary maps, “The Great American Desert,” long thought to be uninhabitable by anyone but aborigines. By 1840 white settlement had paused at the edge of timber country in Missouri. Beyond lay the forbidding sea of grass that was the Great Plains. The eastern Prairie Plains had rich soil and good rainfall, but the rough High Plains were semiarid. The formidable Rockies and other mountain ranges held back rainfall, which rarely reached fifteen inches a year. The lack of water and timber and the ineffectiveness of traditional farming tools and methods led most early settlers to head directly for the more temperate Pacific Coast.

CRUSHING THE NATIVE AMERICANS

By 1867 nearly a quarter of a million Indians inhabited the western half of the United States. Some tribes were originally from the East, displaced by relentless waves of settlers. Others were native to the region, with cultures suited to their environments. By the 1880s, confrontations with still more white settlers had driven the Indians onto increasingly small reservations, and diseases introduced by whites had decimated the California Indians. By the 1890s the Indian cultures had crumbled.

. Life of the Plains Indians

By the 1700s their access to horses had led the Plains Indians to abandon farming almost completely for a nomadic lifestyle, following and living off the vast herds of
buffalo. The Plains Indians became skilled horse people, and tribes developed a warrior class, although their wars were usually limited to brief skirmishes and “counting coups,” touching the enemy’s body with the hand or a special stick. Tribes were divided into smaller, independent bands governed by a chief and council of elders. This loose organization within tribes confounded federal attempts to deal with the Indians. Tasks were divided between the sexes, but among tribes like the Sioux there was little difference in status between men and women.

“As Long as Waters Run”: Searching for an Indian Policy

Until the 1850s the lands west of the Mississippi were of no interest to whites. The United States government, therefore, regarded the trans-Mississippi West as one great Indian reservation, and as a final destination for the eastern Indians. When gold was discovered in California, however, the Great Plains became a thoroughfare to the Pacific, and the federal government began to attempt to confine the Indian tribes within specific areas. This attempt led to wars and massacres. As a result of the Sioux War of 1865–1867, Congress adopted a “small reservation” approach, designed to keep the Indians out of the path of white migration westward.

Final Battles on the Plains

The small reservation policy proved unsuccessful. Young warriors refused to be restrained, and white settlers encroached on Indian lands. The final series of wars featured a notable Sioux victory at Little Bighorn in 1876, but for the most part the Indians were defeated and often massacred. Such a massacre occurred at Wounded Knee in 1890, when the army became determined to stop the “Ghost Dances.”

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

The End of Tribal Life

The final step in the Indian policy was the assimilationists’ plan to use education, land policy, and federal law to eradicate tribal authority and culture. In 1887 Congress passed the Dawes Severalty Act, which destroyed communal ownership of land and gave small farms to each head of a family. Those Indians who left the tribe became United States citizens. A final, devastating blow to tribal life came when the buffalo, the very basis of the Plains Indians’ way of life, were exterminated by professional and amateur white hunters. Only about 250,000 Indians still inhabited the United States in 1900, and most lived in poverty.
SETTLEMENT OF THE WEST

Americans settled more land between 1870 and 1900 than at any other time in their history. Contrary to the safety-valve theory, most people moved west during periods of prosperity. Their timing was right, for as the nation’s population grew, so did the demand for the livestock, agricultural, mineral, and lumber products of the expanding West.

. Men and Women on the Overland Trail

The great migration over the Plains began with the 1849 California Gold Rush. Large groups of settlers, including many families, usually started out from the area of St. Louis, Missouri, in April so that they could get through the Rocky Mountains before snow closed the passes. The trek to the Pacific Coast took at least six months and left in its wake epic stories of heroism and trails of garbage.

. Land for the Taking

Between 1860 and 1900, the federal government distributed one-half billion acres of western land. Much was sold to states, private corporations, and individuals. About one hundred twenty-eight million acres were granted to railroad companies, and forty-eight million acres were given away through the Homestead Act of 1862. Although the act set off a mass migration of land-hungry Europeans and Americans, the size of the tracts granted was not suited to Plains conditions. The Timber Culture Act of 1873, which granted larger tracts to settlers who agreed to plant trees, was a success, but the Desert Land Act of 1877, which granted still larger tracts to settlers installing irrigation systems, invited fraud. Ultimately, most of the land in the West wound up in the hands of speculators, large ranchers, timber companies, and railroads. To boost their freight and passenger business, the railroads actively recruited immigrants and helped them buy, settle, and farm railroad property.

The most important limit on population growth in the West was the scarcity of water. In 1902, in the Newlands Act, Congress set aside federal money for irrigation projects, transforming the arid West into a “hydraulic” society.

. Territorial Government

Until statehood, the western territories functioned almost like colonies in which appointed governors and judges ruled without the consent of the settlers. These appointed officials became the center of patronage systems that continued even after statehood, and many Westerners made a living serving Congress. The territorial experience gave western politics a distinctly different character from the rest of the nation.
The Spanish-Speaking Southwest

The settlements of Spanish-speaking people concentrated in the Southwest and California made many cultural and institutional contributions, including irrigation, stock management, cloth weaving, and a set of laws for managing limited natural resources. Although the Californians began to lose their vast landholdings after the 1860s, the Spanish-Mexican heritage shaped politics, language, society, and law.

THE BONANZA WEST

The quest for mining, cattle, and land bonanzas led to uneven growth, boom-and-bust economic cycles, wasted resources, and “instant cities” like San Francisco. People came to get rich quickly and adopted institutions based on that mentality.

The Mining Bonanza

Mining first attracted settlers to the West, many to mine and as many to provide services to the miners. The mining frontier moved from West to East in a pattern first established by the California Gold Rush of 1849. First individual prospectors used simple placer mining to remove the surface gold. Then Eastern- and European-financed corporations moved in with the heavy, expensive mining equipment needed to remove metal from the deep lodes. The final fling came in the Black Hills rush of 1874–1876, in which miners overran the Sioux hunting grounds.

Mining camps and germinal cities sprouted with each first strike, and urbanization quickly followed. The camps were governed by simple democracy and, when that failed, vigilantes. Men outnumbered women two to one, and “respectable” women were a rarity. Some women worked claims, but most earned wages as cooks, housekeepers, and seamstresses.

Between one-quarter and one-half of camp citizens were foreign born, and hostility was often directed against the French, Latin Americans, and Chinese. California’s 1850 Foreign Miner’s Tax drove foreigners out, and the federal Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 suspended Chinese immigration for ten years.

The great mining boom ended in the 1890s. The western mines contributed millions to the economy, helped finance the Civil War and industrialization, and, through the new influx of silver, changed the relative value of silver and gold, the basis of American currency. Mining populated portions of the West and led to early statehood for Nevada, Idaho, and Montana. In its wake, however, it left invaded Indian reservations, pitted hills, and ghost towns.
Gold from the Roots Up: The Cattle Bonanza

The Far West offered an ideal region for cattle grazing. The buffalo grass of the Plains fattened the longhorn steers that provided meat for the cities of the East. Large herds grazed on the open range and then were driven to railheads: Abilene, or, most likely, Dodge City, Kansas, where they then were taken by train to Chicago. The profits were enormous for the large ranchers, but cowboys, many of whom were African American or Mexican, worked long, hard hours for little pay. The cowboys, like the miners, governed themselves, and there was, contrary to popular legends, remarkably little violence among them.

By 1880, the days of the cowboy were ending. Wheat farmers were beginning to fence off the open range, and mechanical improvements modernized the industry. As improved breeds proved profitable, more and more large ranches controlled by absentee owners opened on the northern ranges of the High Plains. Following the devastating winter of 1886 during which thousands of cattle died, ranchers reduced the size of their herds or switched to raising sheep.

Sodbusters on the Plains: The Farming Bonanza

In the decades after 1870, millions of farmers moved west to seek crop bonanzas and a new way of life. By 1900, the Far West was a settled area and held 30 percent of the nation’s population.

The farming frontier moved westward slowly, but steadily, and the population of the Plains tripled between 1870 and 1890. Of special interest was the migration of African Americans from the South, seeking to live free of discrimination and terror. All farmers on the Plains battled a harsh environment. Surface water was scarce, and digging deep wells and building windmills were both expensive operations. Lumber for fences and houses was scarce and expensive to import. Many started frontier life in dreary sod houses and endured extremes of heat and cold; an endless, enervating wind; and hordes of omnivorous grasshoppers.

New Farming Methods

Several important innovations allowed Americans to farm the Plains, such as barbed wire, which allowed fencing without wood; dry farming, which meant deeper farming and the use of mulch; and new strains of wheat that were resistant to harsh winters. Even so, the huge bonanza farms that cultivated thousands of acres were ruined by a period of drought between 1885 and 1890. It became apparent to most that small-scale, diversified farming was safer and more profitable.
. Discontent on the Farm

Discouraged by droughts, some settlers abandoned their farms, and the ones who remained were restless and angry. They complained about declining crop prices, rising rail rates, and heavy mortgages. The Grange, originally founded to provide social, cultural, and educational opportunities for Southern farmers, grew and often acted as a political lobby. Farmers beyond the Mississippi also became more commercial, scientific, and productive. By 1890, they were exporting large amounts of wheat and other crops.

. The Final Fling

Oklahoma, the last large area reserved for the Indians, was opened for white settlement in 1889. At noon on April 22, thousands of people rushed in to grab whatever they could, the epitome of Western history.

CONCLUSION: THE MEANING OF THE WEST

Historians have long interpreted the history of the Far West through the concept of the famous “frontier thesis.” More recently, however, the West is seen as a place where different ethnic and economic interests came into sharp conflict, and where rapid population growth eroded the environment, themes that continue to describe the West.

FEATURE ESSAY: BLACKS IN BLUE

More than two thousand African American cavalrymen served on the western frontier between 1867 and 1890. They faced racism from white soldiers but received important personal benefits for themselves and served with honor and distinction.

LECTURE TOPICS

Prepare a slide and lecture presentation exploring the theme of the West in American art. Focus on the depiction of Native Americans by American artists. What is negative about American artistic images of Native Americans? What is positive? If you discussed European images of Native Americans in earlier chapters, you may want to invite a comparison and contrast of seventeenth-century European depictions of Native Americans and nineteenth-century American depictions of Native Americans. Also, have students comment on American artists’ treatment of the western landscape. How did the West stimulate American imagination? Ask students to share their own images and impressions of the American West even if they have never actually visited the region. From where have many twentieth-century Americans derived their images of the West?
A lecture devoted to the conflict with the Plains Indians could show both Anglo-American attitudes and policies toward Native Americans and the ways in which the post–Civil War clash was related to the modernization of American life.

Topics that could be expanded into lectures or parts of lectures include an analysis of the Homestead Act and its impact on the settlement of the frontier and a detailed analysis of the evolution of policy toward Native Americans.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)**

A class discussion based on photographic evidence of life on the Plains frontier and a comparison of this frontier (as portrayed by photographers) to earlier frontiers in the Far West can bring out the importance of the environment in shaping life. Letters and diaries offer further insights into frontier conditions and illuminate the importance of ethnic groups in settling the West. You can build a lecture around these sources as well, using handouts as a way for students in large classes to follow the analysis of various primary visual and written sources.

Explore the relationship between Native Americans who remained traditional versus those who assimilated into the mainstream society of the United States. Trace these groups back to previous eras such as King Philip’s War or individuals like Tecumseh. Historically, who attempted to “Americanize” the Native Americans and what were their motives?

The West Through Film—use a variety of films, from classics like *Stagecoach* and *High Noon*, satire such as *Blazing Saddles*, and more recent films like *Unforgiven* and *Dances with Wolves* to discuss the myth of the American West and how that myth has changed over time.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)**

Research one of the Native American religions, such as the Ghost Dance religion, that was targeted by the federal government for annihilation. Describe the components of the religion and the means missionaries and federal agencies used to destroy the practice of the religion.

Discuss the role of blacks in the military during the late nineteenth century. Why did blacks not object to fighting and subjugating other dark-skinned races at this time? What does this tell you about them and about idea of “colored” people?

How did the incorporation of western territories into the United States affect Indian nations such as the Sioux or the Nez Percé? What were the causes and consequences of the Indian Wars, the significance of reservation policy, and the impact of the Dawes Severalty Act on tribal life? What were some of the major technological advances in mining and agriculture that promoted the development of the western economy?
CONNECTING TO THE PAST

It will be some time before the history of the West becomes as interesting as its legends. Cowboy life, for example, was characterized by long, dull hours, punctuated by frenzied activity, but the myth of the cowboy as gunman persists. Relatively little violence occurred along the cattle trails, but the great shoot-outs have captured our imagination. The most famous of these duels occurred in Tombstone, in the Arizona Territory, on October 26, 1881, at the O.K. Corral. Arising from a complex series of incidents that pitted the Earps against the Clantons, the shoot-out resembled nothing out of High Noon. Wyatt, Morgan, and Virgil Earp, accompanied by “Doc” Holliday, an alcoholic, wife-beating dentist, armed with revolvers and a shotgun, cornered Ike and Billy Clanton with their allies, Tom and Frank McLowery. The Earps fired at point-blank range and killed all of their enemies, except for Ike Clanton, who ran away. The Earps were arrested, but a grand jury failed to indict them. The incident is well narrated by Frank Waters, The Earp Brothers of Tombstone (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960). Waters includes long excerpts from eyewitness accounts.

When the full history of the West is written, it will be different, but no less interesting. One great step forward has been taken by Lillian Schlissel, who has excerpted diaries of women pioneers in Women’s Diaries of the Westward Journey (New York: Shocken Books, 1982). Schlissel’s analysis of the diaries makes several interesting points, such as the general reluctance of women to make the journey in the first place. The volume also contains remarkable photographs and the diaries themselves capture the hardship and terror of the westward trek. Consider the poignancy of a small entry recorded on Sunday, July 20, 1862, by Jane Gould Tortillott: “The men had a ball-play towards night. Seemed to enjoy themselves very much, it seemed like old times.”

POINTS OF MASTERY

Describe the dilemma that faced Native American farming peoples of the Plains, such as the Pawnees, during the nineteenth century.

Discuss the United States’ policies toward the Plains Indians, placing those events in the context of Indian-white relations until the early 1850s. Specifically, recount Black Kettle’s demise.

Identify the factors that contributed to the development of the Sioux Indians into one of the most formidable Native American tribes of the nineteenth century.

Why were Native Americans drawn to the teachings of Wovoka? Explain the reaction of the U.S. Calvary to the Ghost Dance religion.

Identify the Carlisle Schools and evaluate how successful the numerous Indian schools were in achieving their goals.

Define the impact of western gold mining on the national economy.
Explain the significance of the Comstock Lode.

Describe the ethnic diversity of the West.

Comment on the adversities faced by western settlers as they established homes. Discuss the unique challenges faced by women settlers in the West.

Discuss the limitations of the Homestead Act of 1862 as a means of helping Americans establish their own farms in the West. How did act differ from the National Reclamation Act (Newlands Act)?

Describe the unique features of Mexicano communities in the Southwest before and after the mass immigration of Anglos. How did changes in the economy affect the patterns of labor and the status of women in these communities?

Identify the term Gorras Blancas and discuss their role in the West. How was ethnicity especially important?

Describe the characteristics and functions of the western cow town that emerged in the late nineteenth century.

Explain the role of African Americans in the West and define the term Exodusters.

Identify Oliver H. Kelley and explain his political importance.

Describe the political, economic, and natural challenges faced by farmers in the West, and describe how they used invention, technology, and innovation to meet these challenges.

Discuss the impact of failed crops and declining crop prices on the livelihoods of western farmers.

Describe three ways in which the development of the Plains frontier was linked to technological advances.

Compare the myth of the West with its reality.

**SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

1. What kinds of conditions did settlers find as they moved into lands west of the Mississippi River, and how had the peoples who already lived there dealt with these conditions?

   The Great Plains were treeless and the High Plains were treeless and semiarid; both areas were covered with thick turf. Native Americans of these regions were migratory and survived by hunting bison. Since the arrival of Spanish explorers, Native Americans on the plains depended heavily on horses. The Rocky Mountains were nearly impenetrable and completely unsuited to agriculture. Native Americans did not live here and neither did white settlers. Native Americans in the Western Plateau lived by digging roots and gathering seeds and
berries. White settlers bypassed these places and continued past the Coastal Ranges to the wet, temperate Pacific Coast. Native Americans in the Southwest desert cultivated maize and lived in adobe dwellings.

2 What was the nature of Indian culture on the Plains, and how did it deal with the hordes of settlers moving into the area?

Plains Indians were migratory. Women cared for children and prepared food, while men hunted and prepared for hunting. They lived in bands of several hundred but were affiliated with tribes of several thousand people. Comanche and Apache warriors were active, but tribes did not engage in prolonged wars and remained in communication. As settlers came, Indians tried to avoid them, made deals to share and divide land, and fought to keep settlers away.

3 By what methods did settlers move west and adjust to the “bonanzas” they found in the West and Southwest?

Before the railroads, people travelled in wagon trains, bringing their possessions with them. They moved initially to large, established outposts and fanned out from these locations. On the Plains they often built sod houses because there was little timber. They learned to use dry farming and imported different varieties of grains that would better survive the dryness and the cold winters. They employed new types of soil fertilizers. They began to purchase farm machinery to increase the individual farmer’s productivity.

4 What were the three bonanzas that drew settlers into the West, and in what ways did they lead to the destruction of Native American culture and shape the growth of the area?

The three bonanzas were minerals, cattle, and farmland. As white settlers claimed land to exploit these bonanzas, Plains Indians became more and more limited in where they could live. Whites decided they did not want the Indians to interfere with them, so they killed them and killed the buffalo on which they depended. Native Americans were prevented from migrating to follow the buffalo and were also prevented from settling in areas that were desirable for partaking of any of the bonanzas, which meant they were isolated in small areas of marginal agricultural value and with little water and wildlife, where they were barely able to survive.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

This video examines the life of the Native American who successfully resisted the American government for 25 years before finally being defeated.

*Last Stand at Little Big Horn: The American Experience*, Paul Stekler, 1992, 60 minutes.
This video takes a new look at Custer’s Last Stand.
This episode of The American Experience looks at the Carlisle School, which was established by the government in the 1870s for the purpose of “civilizing” American Indians.

This reality series documents the efforts of three modern families to survive on the American Frontier in 1883.

The West (537 minutes), PBS Video (1996).
Ken Burns’ documentary history of the West from the viewpoints of both Native Americans and Europeans.

Dances with Wolves (180 minutes), Tig Productions (1990).
A U.S. Army Lieutenant is sent to the frontier in the 1860s. He gradually sheds the ways of the white man as white settlers and the Army arrive to settle the area.

Unforgiven (131 minutes), Malpaso Productions (1992).
The Oscar-winning “new” Western, which depicts life in the West in the 1860s and the thin line between heroism and villainy in a frontier society.

Blazing Saddles (93 minutes), Crossbow Productions (1974).
A new, black sheriff rides into a town in the Wild West in this satire of Westerns that pokes fun at every ethnic and racial stereotype.

CLASS EXERCISES

1 Write a paper on the unique role of the Sioux Indians in American history. Why were they so distinctive from other Native American peoples? Why were they so successful in surviving and even capitalizing on the European and American presence in North America?

2 Many novels and books of general interest deal with some of the topics of this chapter—in particular, life on the Plains frontier and the struggle between the Plains Indians and whites.

   Ask the class the following:

   Which do you think most accurately reflects the historical truth about life in the West? Is the most accurate novel-as-history necessarily the best as literature? Based on these excerpts, which novel do you think you would like to read in its entirety? Why?
   Examples of vivid novels are Hamlin Garland, Main-Travelled Roads (1891); Frank Norris, The Octopus (1901); Willa Cather, O Pioneers! (1913); and Ole Rolvaag, Giants in the Earth (1927).

3 Letters and diaries written by immigrants on the Plains frontier can be found in published form and in local historical societies. They offer an interesting perspective on the frontier experience. Older residents of communities in this region of the country still remember
information on frontier life from relatives and family. Propose that your students interview some of these residents.

4 Have students write a paper focusing on the role of women in the westward movement during the nineteenth century. Excellent sources that would expose students to some primary material in this area are the edited journals left by pioneer women that describe the impact the movement west had on their lives and on the lives of their families.

**MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS**

- View the Map: Native Americans, 1850–1896
- Read the Document: Chief Red Cloud’s Speech
- Watch the Video: Sioux Ghost Dance
- Read the Document: Accounts of the Wounded Knee Massacre
- Complete the Assignment: Blacks in Blue: The Buffalo Soldiers in the West
- View the Closer Look: Railroad and Buffalo
- Read the Document: Homestead Act of 1862
- Read the Document: John Lester, “Hydraulic Mining”
- View the Closer Look: Railroad Routes, Cattle Trails, Gold and Silver Rushes
- Read the Document: Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History”
CHAPTER 18

THE INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

CHAPTER OUTLINE

A MACHINE CULTURE

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

AN EMPIRE ON RAILS

- “Emblem of Motion and Power”
- Building the Empire
- Linking the Nation via Trunk Lines
- Rails Across the Continent
- Problems of Growth

AN INDUSTRIAL EMPIRE

- Carnegie and Steel
- Rockefeller and Oil
- The Business of Invention

THE SELLERS

THE WAGE EARNERS

- Working Men, Working Women, Working Children
- Culture of Work
- Labor Unions
- Labor Unrest

CONCLUSION: INDUSTRIALIZATION’S BENEFITS AND COSTS

FEATURE ESSAY: SHOPPING IN A NEW SOCIETY
OPENING THEME

THE HOUSE OF MORGAN

The “robber barons,” like any other rich scoundrels, perpetually interest students and the general public, and their careers offer a good opportunity to discuss business ethics. Nearly always, even the most criminal of the robber barons contributed to the prosperity of the nation, but did the end justify the means? Most businessmen, of course, were perfectly honest, but even some of the most respected had done things that should not be admired. A good case to discuss is the career of J. P. Morgan.

J. Pierpont Morgan was born in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1837, the son of a wealthy international banker. He received an excellent education in the United States and abroad, including two years at the University of Gottingen in West Germany. When the Civil War broke out, Morgan hired a substitute and went into the business of buying condemned carbines from the War Department at $3.50 each and selling them to one of the Union armies for $22 each. After the war, he helped found the firm of Drexel, Morgan and Co., which came to dominate American banking for the rest of the nineteenth century.

Morgan’s importance rested on his access to foreign credit. Like his father, Morgan was always active in selling corporate and government securities to European and English customers. Like all bankers, Morgan worried about the economic viability of his creditors and demanded a voice in their business operations. But Morgan had another great source of influence. His foreign clients signed over their proxies to Morgan, thus giving him actual voting rights in corporate decisions.

Morgan began to exert power over industry in 1885 when the New York Central Railroad and the Pennsylvania Railroad engaged in competition likely to ruin both. Morgan had already helped float a sale of New York Central stock and had a vested interest in its survival. He successfully mediated the conflict and later aided in the reorganization of the Reading, the Baltimore and Ohio, the Chesapeake and Ohio, and other railroads. His influence spread to other areas, including the telephone industry, the merchant marine, electricity, and the steel industry. His greatest feat of consolidation was the creation of the United States Steel Company in 1901.

“I like a little competition,” he once remarked, “but I like combination better.” Morgan, responding to his foreign clients’ demand for stability and honesty, attempted to bring order and planning to American industry. On March 27, 1886, for example, the Commercial and Financial Chronicle reported that “Representatives of the various coal companies met at the house of Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan this week, and informally decided to limit coal production and maintain prices.” In fact, it was agreed that coal production would go up from 31.6 million tons to 33.5 million and that the price would be allowed to go up by twenty-five cents.

Morgan’s ability to control prices outraged the average citizen, and in 1912 a congressional committee investigated his financial activities. The provision in the Clayton Antitrust Act outlawing interlocking directorates was aimed at what was thought to be the source of his power. But Morgan certainly
contributed to the general well-being of the American people. Aside from eliminating wasteful competition and some of the outright fraud that characterized American business in the nineteenth century, Morgan encouraged American industry to reinvest its revenues. The remarkable fact about the period between 1865 and 1900, a time of general prosperity, is that business profits as a percentage of national income actually declined. In other words, American industry added to its productive base rather than increase dividends. This remarkable restraint was imposed by people like Morgan who saw themselves as managers of investment portfolios, content with modest, long-range profits. In a sense, bankers rescued industry from people like Cornelius Vanderbilt who behaved as if the businesses they created belonged to them.

When Morgan died in 1913, he had already left his soul to “my Savior, in full confidence that having redeemed it and washed it in His most precious Blood, He will present it faultless before my Heavenly Father . . . .” Morgan’s life had not been faultless, but he had rendered considerable service to the American economy.

A MACHINE CULTURE

The author uses the Grand Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876 to make the point that while the American people could look back on a century of national history of which they were proud, they were more interested in looking toward a future in which they would be a powerful industrial giant.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The United States offered ideal conditions for rapid industrial growth at the end of the nineteenth century. There was an abundance of cheap natural resources, large pools of labor, the largest domestic market in the world, and capital and government support without government regulation. Industrial development was not always smooth and the North and East tended to reap most of the rewards, but between 1865 and 1914 the rate of growth continued to be very rapid.

AN EMPIRE ON RAILS

The industrial economy of nineteenth-century America was based on the expansion of the railroads, which consumed great quantities of raw materials, employed thousands of people, and necessitated new forms of business organization.

A. “Emblem of Motion and Power”

The railroads did more than supplement other forms of transportation. They ended rural isolation, allowed regional economic specialization, made possible mass production and consumption, led to the organization of the modern business
corporation, and stimulated other industries. The railroads also captured the imagination of the American people.

B. Building the Empire

Between 1865 and 1916, the United States laid down over two hundred thousand miles of track at a cost in the billions of dollars. A great deal of the expense was met by local and state governments and, especially in the West, by the federal government. Even with all the fraud and waste connected with government grants, the railroads saved the federal government about one billion dollars between 1850 and 1945.

A. Linking the Nation via Trunk Lines

At first, railroads were built by and for local interests. At the time of the Civil War, the nation did not have an integrated rail system. During and after the war, construction and consolidation of trunk lines proceeded rapidly under the direction of men such as Cornelius Vanderbilt. The eastern seaboard was directly linked with the Great Lakes and the West. The southern railroad system grew at an exceptional rate in the 1880s and was integrated into the national network. At the same time, rail transportation was becoming safer, speedier, and more reliable.

B.Rails Across the Continent

Congress voted to build a transcontinental railroad in 1862 and allowed two companies to compete in its construction. The Union Pacific worked westward from Nebraska, using Irish laborers. The Central Pacific worked eastward, using Chinese immigrants. It became a race, each company vying for land, loans, and potential markets. On May 10, 1869, in Utah, the tracks met. By 1900, four more lines reached the Pacific.

C. Problems of Growth

If anything, too much track was put down in the United States. Competition between railroads became intense, and all efforts by railroadmen to share freight in an orderly way failed. After the Panic of 1893, bankers like J. P. Morgan gained control of the railroad corporations. Opposing “wasteful” competition while favoring efficiency and combination, the bankers imposed order. In 1900, nearly all freight was carried by seven giant railroad systems.

AN INDUSTRIAL EMPIRE

The Bessemer process of refining steel made mass production possible. The use of steel caused great changes in manufacturing, agriculture, transportation, and architecture.
A. Carnegie and Steel

Large-scale steel production required access to iron ore deposits in Minnesota and extensive transportation networks. Because of the massive amounts of capital required to enter steel production, there were never very many major steel companies. Nevertheless, competition was keen for a while and led to vertical integration of the industry.

In 1872, Andrew Carnegie entered the steel business and became its master. His company produced the steel for the Brooklyn Bridge and the Washington Monument, and for the growing cities. By 1901, Carnegie employed more than twenty thousand people and produced more steel than Great Britain. In that year he sold out to J. P. Morgan, who headed a group that incorporated the United States Steel Company, the nation’s first billion-dollar corporation.

B. Rockefeller and Oil

Long before Americans drove cars, oil became a big business; the most profitable use of petroleum was in the form of kerosene for lighting. The first oil well was drilled in Pennsylvania in 1859, and its success led to intense competition. In 1863, John D. Rockefeller began to consolidate the oil business when he organized the Standard Oil Company of Ohio. By meticulous attention to the smallest detail, Rockefeller lowered costs and improved quality. Standard Oil was also remarkably successful in establishing an efficient marketing operation.

As his business spread beyond Ohio, Rockefeller maintained centralized control by creating a holding company, called the Standard Oil Trust, which owned and managed member companies. This managerial innovation was copied by other large companies, and the word “trust” became synonymous with “monopoly.”

C. The Business of Invention

American technology is the child of the latter part of the nineteenth century. Gifted individuals Thomas Edison for example, or teams working in research laboratories turned out a succession of inventions, the telegraph, the camera, processed foods, the telephone, the phonograph, the incandescent lamp, that made life easier. Electricity lit homes and factories and powered urban transportation systems.

THE SELLERS

Marketing became a science in the late nineteenth century. Advertising became common, and new ways of selling products, such as the department store, chain store, use of a brand name, and mail-order
catalogs, became popular. Americans became a community of consumers, a community that to some
degree overcame ethnic and economic differences.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

**THE WAGE EARNERS**

The American labor force, in general, benefitted from a rise in real wages in the last quarter of the
century.

A. Working Men, Working Women, Working Children

The labor force was composed of many different groups of people: skilled and
unskilled, men and women, adults and children, native-born and immigrants,
Protestants and Catholics, whites and blacks. Nearly always it was the skilled, white
males who received a greater share of America’s increasing prosperity. For all
workers, the work week was a long one.

B. Culture of Work

It was difficult for immigrants and rural folk to adjust to the new work habits imposed
by the factory, but most adjusted to the new conditions and many even advanced in
their positions or saw their children go on to better jobs.

C. Labor Unions

Early labor unions, such as the Knights of Labor, were more like fraternal orders than
unions as we know them. The Knights, for example, opposed strikes and refused to
accept the fact that many workers would never become their own bosses. The first
modern union, the American Federation of Labor (AFL), was founded in 1881 by
Samuel Gompers. The AFL recognized that the industrial system was permanent and
concentrated on practical steps to improve wages and working conditions. However,
the AFL organized only skilled workers and ignored women and African Americans.

D. Labor Unrest

Employers and employees responded to different imperatives and often came into
violent conflict. Employees tried to humanize the factory by working according to
habitual, natural rhythms, while employers tried to apply the strict laws of the market.
The result was an era of strikes. In 1877 the rail system was practically shut down, and
from 1880 to 1900 there were 23,000 strikes. Many of them turned violent. The worst
incident took place in Chicago in 1886. In this Haymarket “incident” some policemen
were killed, and fears of an anarchist uprising spread.
CONCLUSION: INDUSTRIALIZATION’S BENEFITS AND COSTS

Despite the unquestionable benefits of rapid industrialization, in terms of national power and wealth and even in terms of an improving standard of living, many Americans questioned whether these benefits were worth the exploitation, the social unrest, the growing disparity between rich and poor, and the increasing power of the giant corporations.

FEATURE ESSAY: SHOPPING IN A NEW SOCIETY

Of all the innovations that changed the way people lived between the 1870s and 1920s, one of the most important was the department store. Department stores helped teach Americans to want and to buy.

LECTURE TOPICS

Material culture can provide insights in recovering the social and political life of the past. The study of material artifacts generated by the campaign of 1896 reveals much about the values and issues of American political life. Mail-order catalogs, which show dress styles and the goods purchased by Americans in a given age, can also reveal much about a culture. Today’s households are usually inundated with catalogs. Compare a catalog from the Gilded Age with some of the catalogs you receive. What similarities and differences in middle-class life and consumption patterns do they suggest? What can you conclude about leisure and gender roles? What do the buttons, bumper stickers, and material artifacts of a recent political campaign show about contemporary political behavior?

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

Explore the issue of social mobility in nineteenth-century America. American historical myth often cites the “rags to riches” phenomenon as typical of the American social condition. Was social mobility a reality in nineteenth-century America? What has typically been the nature of American social improvement over time?

Why did the political parties fail to confront the major social and economic issues of the late nineteenth century? Consider that both parties were large coalitions with conflicting interests. Consider also that many of the problems were new (industrialization, urbanization, etc.). Is it surprising that answers to these problems were not readily available?

The chapter shows the economic changes of the post–Civil War period: machinery became increasingly necessary, farm operations facilitated land reclamation, and regional diversification and crop specialization came to characterize American agriculture. The chapter shows the impact of these changes on American farmers and stresses the significance of falling prices and overproduction.
Have students discuss the impact of late-nineteenth-century business consolidation on traditional American values regarding work and the economy. Consider the following issues for discussion:

a. Ask students to define capitalism as an eighteenth-century economic philosophy emphasizing free enterprise, competition, individualism, and a laissez-faire approach.

b. Ask students to consider how late-nineteenth-century entrepreneurship signaled the ultimate realization of these characteristics of capitalism. Then, have them consider how late nineteenth-century entrepreneurship undermined the promise of capitalism. In other words, did the success of men like Carnegie and Rockefeller demonstrate the power of free enterprise, individualism, and competition as the means to attain success? Or, did their success ultimately destroy the promise of free enterprise, competition, and individualism for others?

c. Would Americans have to forfeit part of capitalism in order to save it? Of free enterprise, competition, individualism, and laissez-faire, which tenet of capitalism would prove to be most important to Americans? Which one would be sacrificed by Americans in the belief that it would preserve the other three?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Look at middle-class residences from the eighteenth century through the twentieth century and demonstrate to students how the architectural styles of the residences reflect the evolution of American middle-class values and priorities. How does the eighteenth-century farmhouse differ from the nineteenth-century Victorian suburban dwelling? How do these differences reflect the American movement from an agrarian to an industrial society and from a rural to an urban society? How do the differences reflect technological innovations and an improvement in the standard of living? Do the differences reflect changes in middle-class family life and the level of importance attached to family life? How does the nineteenth-century Victorian dwelling differ from the 1960s ranch house? What room tends to become the center or core of the 1960s home? Why? Again, look at how the differences in these two houses reflect economic and technological as well as social and psychological distinctions between nineteenth-century and twentieth-century middle-class suburban life.

Discuss the development of early American labor organizations. Compare and contrast the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor as two efforts to organize labor nationally during the late nineteenth century. The major distinction between the two organizations is that one failed and one succeeded. Outline the reasons for this by examining the membership, policy, agenda, and recruitment practices of each organization. What do the failure and success of these two unions say about nineteenth-century skilled and unskilled labor? Describe to students the tremendous challenges faced by any organization trying to unionize the large unskilled labor force of the nineteenth century.

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

In the late nineteenth century, successful businesspeople invariably wrote autobiographies, usually to show how they had raised themselves from humble beginnings. John D. Rockefeller, for example,
described how he got his first bank loan for $2,000 from Truman Handy, president of the Commercial Branch Bank of Cleveland. Rockefeller does not mention the close ties he shared with Handy through the Presbyterian Church, but the episode as related does convey the sense of respectability and excitement of a young man getting his start in business. You can read about this in Rockefeller’s *Random Reminiscences of Men and Events* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1933).

The best autobiography by a businessman of this era is unquestionably that of Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie was filled with opinions, which he expressed at the drop of a hat, and he includes verbatim accounts of conversations with the various famous people he met and with his workers. One episode demonstrates how personal business still was. Around 1867, Carnegie and George Pullman were competing to supply sleeping cars to the Union Pacific Railroad. Carnegie contrived to meet Pullman on the staircase of the St. Nicholas Hotel in New York. “Good evening, Mr. Pullman!” Carnegie said. “Here we are together, and are we not making a nice couple of fools of ourselves?” Pullman agreed, and the deal that led to formation of the Pullman Palace Car Company was set in motion. Carnegie’s autobiography was published in 1920 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

**POINTS OF MASTERY**

Contrast the “builders” (those who contributed more than they took) with the “spoilers” (those who sought only self-aggrandizement) of American industry.

Who were the “robber barons” and why are they called this?

Define the term “Trunk Lines” and discuss the growth of the Railroad and how it transformed the nation. How did the federal government assist the Railroad?

Identify Promontory Point.

Identify Thomas A. Edison and describe his contribution to nineteenth-century technology through the development of electrical power.

Define the terms “vertical integration” and “horizontal integration” and explain the distinction between the two.

Define the term “trust” and explain its advantages as a nineteenth-century form of business organization.

Compare and contrast the lives and contributions of Andrew Carnegie, John Pierpont Morgan, and John Rockefeller. How and what did each of these men contribute to American culture? How did they rationalize their extreme wealth?

Explain the importance of technological developments in the railroad, steel, petroleum, telephone, and electric light industries.

Discuss the unique qualities of the city of Chicago.
List the major department stores and discuss their social significance for the community and for economics.

Describe the changing nature of American labor during the nineteenth century, focusing on skill levels, working conditions, work hours, and family life.

Describe the conditions of child labor during the nineteenth century.

Discuss nativism and describe the intent and effects of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

Discuss the extent and importance of occupational mobility for the American working class.

Consider the impact of the working-class attitudes described in the text on the potential for organizing workers.

Describe the unique problems faced by women in the workplace during the late nineteenth century. Explain why women’s work remained segregated from men’s work until well into the twentieth century.

Identify the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor. Compare and contrast these unions in terms of policy, membership, and level of success.

Describe the events surrounding the Homestead Strike and the Pullman Strike. Explain how these events reflect the challenges faced by labor unions at the turn of the century.

Identify the Haymarket Riot as emblematic of labor’s unrest and discontent during the era.

List the significant ways in which big business contributed to economic growth and explain reasons why big business contributed to economic instability.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. What were eight advantages the United States possessed that helped spur industrial development, and in what ways did these advantages lead to the growth of specific industries?

   The eight advantages are: (1) Abundant natural resources; (2) Abundant labor; (3) Expanded markets; (4) Investor confidence; (5) Technological innovations; (6) Government handouts; (7) Stability; and (8) Few legal or social barriers. As a result of these advantages, railroads were given government land and cash, hired cheap immigrant labor, used tremendous amounts of capital to purchase tremendous amounts of steel and coal and oil, bribed politicians, maintained monopolies where they could and charged excessive rates, but were also required to provide reduced-fee services to government. Competition and lack of regulation led to corruption and chaos in the industry until bankers took over.
2 In what ways did the revolution in transportation and communications also spur industrial development?

Growth of railroads required growth of steel and oil industries and availability of electricity. The telegraph and telephone depended on increased copper production. Railroads delivered goods, people, and technology to rural parts of the country, and the telegraph delivered ideas and enabled coordination within companies, among different companies so they could partner and use each other’s goods and services, and among government entities.

3 Drawing on the conditions leading to the growth of industry, how did the huge steel and oil industries grow?

Just as the railroads depended on steel, the steel industry initially relied on water transport and later relied on the railroads to transport natural resources and finished products. Steel involved huge investments in high-tech factories. Steel plants clustered in areas of ample coal and good waterways. Without government protection of union activity, steel crushed the labor movement and kept wages low, and without government oversight of monopolistic practices, steel consolidated and was able to artificially raise prices.

The oil industry was similar to the steel industry, but it relied more on continuous technological advances. Standard Oil was more innovative and determined in developing schemes to skirt, subvert, or debilitate government regulation, maintain monopolistic control, and thus enable price gouging.

4 What role did the culture of work and advances in areas like advertising play in shaping economic growth?

The culture of work led people to accept 60-hour-a-week jobs, which sped industrial growth and helped enable the United States to outperform other countries. The fact that most industrial work was unskilled meant high competition for jobs, which bred compliance with management. Advances in advertising increased demand through planned obsolescence and also by creating conspicuous consumption as a motive and the idea of shopping as an activity.

5 In what ways did the hard work of men, women, and children contribute to the growth of industry?

Men, women, and children did hard work for long hours in dangerous jobs. Women moved into business as secretaries, telephone operators and salesclerks; into medicine as nurses; into education as teachers; and also and other professions. In all cases, women were subject to male managers. Additionally, women drove men out of these positions because Americans classified jobs and occupations as “male” or “female.” Women became factory workers in occupations that seemed to be extensions of traditional women’s housework, such as sewing (garment industry), cooking (food processing industry), and childcare (schooling). Children as young as eleven worked for extremely low wages to help support their families.

6 How did American workers respond to the demands of industrial growth, and what did their various responses indicate about the dangerous effects of industrialization?
American workers formed groups such as the Knights of Labor and the AFL. They pushed for safer working conditions and shorter hours. Between 1880 and 1900, there were more than 23,000 strikes. Strikes were put down with violence by both employers and the government. The growing separation between capitalists and labor—in wealth, power, security, working conditions, and living conditions—drove many to radicalism and threatened national unity as much as slavery had.

AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

*Edison’s Miracle of Light*, from PBS’ *American Experience* series.
Shows how Edison developed the components needed for an electrical system, yet lost control of the industry in a mess of personal, patent, and corporate battles

*Empires of Industry: The Story of Oil*, The History Channel, 50 minutes.
This video explores the history of the oil industry in America from its origins in the nineteenth century.

This video is a biography of Andrew Carnegie narrated by David Ogden Stiers.

*The Rockefellers: Biography*, A&E Video, 50 minutes.
This video examines the lives of the nineteenth-century oil barons

*Empires of Industry: The Story of Oil*, The History Channel, 50 minutes.
This video explores the history of the oil industry in America from its origins in the nineteenth century.

CLASS EXERCISES

1. Divide the class into groups of three to five students. Have the leader of each group draw an entrepreneur’s name from a hat. Ask each group to research the life of their entrepreneur, online and offline. Each group will then present the life of their subject to the class, with special attention given to the contributions (or lack thereof) made by their subject.

2. Assign the class to write a journalist’s expose of a current labor dispute. What might a union organizer say to persuade the steelworkers that it is in their best interest to join the union? What might the responses be from each of the various ethnic groups in that community? From the native-born Americans? How might the managers respond?

3. Have two students role-play a conversation between John D. Rockefeller and one of his workers about the benefits of working for Standard Oil and the contribution Standard Oil makes to economic growth. Rockefeller’s comment that “the day of individual competition . . . is past and gone” can be a starting point for either a lecture or a discussion of consolidation and the results for American life.
MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

- Watch the Video: Railroads and Expansion
- Read the Document: Andrew Carnegie, “Wealth” (1889)
- Read the Document: Thomas Edison, The Success of the Electric Light
- Complete the Assignment: Shopping in a New Society
- Read the Document: Mother Jones, “The March of the Mill Children”
- Read the Document: Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor (1884)
- Read the Document: Leonora M. Barry, Report to the Knights of Labor (1887)
- View the Map: Organizing American Labor in the Late Nineteenth Century
- Read the Document: George Engel, Address by a Haymarket Anarchist
- Watch the Video: The Gilded Age: The Rise of Capitalism, Industrialism, and Poverty
CHAPTER 19
TOWARD AN URBAN SOCIETY, 1877–1900

CHAPTER OUTLINE

THE OVERCROWDED CITY

THE LURE OF THE CITY

• Skyscrapers and Suburbs
• Tenements and the Problems of Overcrowding
• Strangers in a New Land
• Immigrants and the City
• The House That Tweed Build

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE, 1877–1900

• Manners and Mores
• Leisure and Entertainment
• Changes in Family Life
• Changing Views: A Growing Assertiveness among Women
• Educating the Masses
• Higher Education

THE SPREAD OF JIM CROW

THE STIRRINGS OF REFORM

• Progress and Poverty
• New Currents in Social Thought
• The Settlement Houses
• Crisis in Social Welfare

CONCLUSION: THE PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

FEATURE ESSAY: ELLIS ISLAND

LAW AND SOCIETY: PLESSY V. FERGUSON
As the United States moves deeper into a “post-urban” society, we can see that the urban experience in America was an historical phenomenon that lasted a discernible period of time. It can be argued that Americans never developed an urban culture and have never felt comfortable with their cities. William Jennings Bryan, in his famous Cross of Gold speech, made the remarkable claim that all the nation’s cities could burn down without fundamentally hurting American society. Bryan spoke in 1898, when the modern city was just evolving in the United States, but students today may look at cities as the fossils of a dead past.

Cities did not grow at an even rate, nor did their growth keep pace with the population increase in the nation as a whole. The Census Bureau in earlier days defined as “urban” any incorporated area with a population of more than twenty-five hundred. It is not a definition that most of us today would accept, but even so, the urban population actually decreased as a percentage of total population after 1890. In that year, 56.7 percent of the nation lived in urban areas; in 1910 only 39.3 percent did so. It is further worth noting that city dwellers did not reproduce themselves. Their birth-rate was below zero population growth. Without immigrants from Europe and from rural America, the cities would have shrunk in actual numbers, but the immigrants did come, and they came in hordes.

As immigrants poured into the cities, city populations increased and population densities became massive. The seven largest cities in America around the turn of the century (with their approximate populations in the year 1900 in parentheses) were New York (nearly 5 million), Chicago (1.7 million), Philadelphia (1.3 million), St. Louis (600,000), Boston (560,000), and Cleveland and Baltimore (about a quarter of a million each). By 1910, fifty cities in the United States had more than one hundred thousand persons. Everyone was astounded at the crowding that city people endured. The tenth ward on New York’s Lower East Side, with a population density of 747 persons per acre, was probably the most crowded spot in the world in 1900. Some of its blocks housed nearly three thousand persons. Traffic jams were common, and civic leaders appealed to the populace to behave more politely on the subways.

Although New York consolidated its position as America’s first city, it was Chicago that captured the nation’s imagination at the beginning of the twentieth century. Starting as a small trading post and having a mere 350 persons as late as 1833, Chicago lifted itself above the plains to become America’s eighth largest city by 1860. Then, in 1871 the city burned to the ground and had to begin anew. The effort called forth the creative enterprise of architects and engineers.

Louis Sullivan, the most noted architect of the “Chicago School,” greeted the opportunity to devise an architecture that owed nothing to the past. He well expressed the city’s spirit in urging that a building “must be tall, every inch of it tall. The force and power of altitude must be in it, the glory and pride of exaltation must be in it.”
In 1893, Chicago hosted the World’s Columbian Exposition and demonstrated in the “Great White City” what an ideal urban environment would be. Chicago, however, never did become a quiet place of classical temples; its citizens took pride instead in the city’s sweat-soaked image as “Hog Butcher” and “Freight Handler” of the world.

To house its teeming masses, the city grew vertically as well as horizontally; the skyscraper became the symbol of the new city. Once architects realized that they could use an internal skeleton of steel and iron beams instead of masonry walls to support upper floors, there was no limit to how high a building could go. If we accept the Guaranty (now the Prudential) Building in Buffalo (completed in 1895) as the first skyscraper, the pace of progress seems astonishing. That building was only thirteen stories high. In 1913 the Woolworth Building in New York was completed; it was fifty-eight stories high. People, however, did not live in skyscrapers. It is in the rise of drab five-story tenements and barbell apartment buildings that the history of urban housing is written. These prosaic buildings, which seemed to become slums the moment they were inhabited, quartered the armies of people needed to work the commercial and industrial wheels that kept the cities moving.

Urban slums became notorious in the late nineteenth century, and anyone who could escape, did so. Even when the only convenient form of transportation was a pair of shoes, there had been a flight of the wealthier to the outskirts of urban settlement. That process was speeded somewhat by the horsecar, but it accelerated rapidly when the electric trolley came into use. In 1850 the suburbs of Boston lay only three miles from city hall. In 1900 streetcars pushed the suburban radius to ten miles, bringing more than thirty cities and towns within Boston’s sphere.

Americans reacted to their cities so strongly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries because they were something new to the American experience. Their power and their attraction could not be denied. What would ever pull a young man or woman back to the farm once he or she had seen St. Louis? There was danger and there was sin, but there was life and excitement. Already in the late nineteenth century, people were speaking of the cities as America’s new frontier. They still are.

THE OVERCROWDED CITY

The author begins this chapter with an account of the tragic death of a young woman in an awful slum as a prelude to his description of the overcrowding and horrible conditions that characterized America’s largest cities around 1900. Reformers felt almost hopeless in face of such monstrous problems.

THE LURE OF THE CITY

Between 1870 and 1900, the city became a symbol of a new America.
Skyscrapers and Suburbs

The use of steel beams allowed architects to raise buildings to previously impossible heights, and the streetcar allowed those with sufficient wealth to move from the crowded city centers. Skyscrapers and suburbs became the defining characteristics of the American city.

Tenements and the Problems of Overcrowding

To house the enormous numbers of people crowding into the central cities, a new form of structure, the tenement, was created. Inadequate sanitation, air and water pollution, the stench of factories and human wastes, made the cities dangerously unhealthy. In addition, cities suffered high rates of juvenile crime, suicides, and alcoholism.

Strangers in a New Land

The cities were populated by the millions of immigrants who came to the United States in the late nineteenth century. By 1900 the vast majority of people who lived in New York, Boston, and Chicago were foreign-born or were the children of immigrants. Nativism again became a strong force, especially in the 1880s, when a new wave of immigration from southern and eastern Europe brought millions of Italians, Slavs, Greeks, and Jews into the country. Organizations such as the American Protective Association tried to limit immigration, but without success.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

Immigrants and the City

European peasants faced the difficult task of becoming American factory workers, but while doing so, they retained much of their traditional way of life and shaped the city as much as the city shaped them. Immigrants tended to marry within their own ethnic group, to marry at earlier ages, and to have more children than did native-born Americans. Immigrant associations helped preserve the language and customs of the old country, while aiding the process of adjustment to a new country. All immigrant groups started their own newspapers, their own churches or synagogues, and their own schools, all of which institutions helped preserve traditions.

The House That Tweed Built

Political power in the cities was shared by various institutions, including party machines headed by “bosses.” Some of these men, like William Tweed of New York City, were notoriously corrupt, but most merely traded services for votes and improved conditions in their cities.
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGES, 1877–1900

American life seemed much the same in 1877 as it had been a century earlier. Most Americans were white Anglo-Saxon Protestants who owned their own homes and led quiet, generally healthy lives. But urbanization and industrialization were changing all aspects of American life.

. Manners and Mores

The late nineteenth century was Victorian in its morals. Middle-class men and women dressed and behaved “properly.” Religious values were still strong and underlay many of the reform movements aimed against alcohol, pornography, and political corruption.

. Leisure and Entertainment

In general, Americans spent their free time at home playing cards or other parlor games. The general taste in music favored sentimental ballads, but ragtime was becoming popular. Outside the home, the circus was immensely popular, and organized baseball, football, and basketball began to attract fans. Street lights and streetcars changed Americans’ leisure habits. Evenings became time for entertainment and pleasure.

. Changes in Family Life

Family relationships changed dramatically under the impact of urbanization and industrialization. Among the poorly paid segments of society, where everyone had to work, family life virtually disappeared. In middle-class families, the move to suburbia meant that the father commuted to work in the morning and was gone all day. Many middle-class women, who no longer earned an income, concentrated upon making their homes a domestic refuge from the outside world, but domesticity was never fully honored and it became almost shameful to be “just a housewife.”


“New women,” those who established themselves in successful careers and who could support themselves, increasingly demanded the elimination of laws that discriminated against them, and spoke openly about topics, such as menstruation, that had long been considered forbidden subjects.

. Educating the Masses

Even though the states required young people to attend school, few students reached the sixth grade. Until the view of reformers like John Dewey became accepted, most teaching was unimaginative and routine, and students were not usually encouraged to be active in the classroom.
The educational problems of the South were compounded by segregation and rural poverty. In 1896 the Supreme Court allowed “separate but equal” school systems, thus condoning racial discrimination.

Higher Education

Colleges and universities flourished, thanks to aid from private sources and the federal government. There was greater emphasis on practical subjects such as medicine and nursing, and great research institutes such as Johns Hopkins were opened.

Women found it easier to get a college education, but African Americans and other racial minorities were usually confined to institutions like Tuskegee, only for blacks. African American leaders debated the future of higher education in a segregated society. Booker T. Washington argued that African Americans had to accommodate to racism and concentrate on practical, vocational education. W. E. B. Du Bois insisted that African Americans receive quality, integrated education.

THE SPREAD OF JIM CROW

Laws enforcing segregation and disenfranchisement of blacks in the South, which were informal after the Civil War, became more numerous and more stringent from the late nineteenth century to 1940. These laws, called Jim Crow laws, regulated everything from voting and education to public transportation and cemeteries. Lynching also became more widespread at the end of the nineteenth century. Prevailing attitudes in the North, including widespread racism and weariness after the Civil War, allowed these laws to continue unchecked in the South.

This topic is discussed in Law and Society; see below.

THE STIRRINGS OF REFORM

The dominant idea among many intellectuals in the period was Social Darwinism, which held that attempts at reform in society were useless and harmful. Nevertheless, some thoughtful people began to argue that conditions in the United States had to be changed.

Progress and Poverty

One of the most influential books of the era was Henry George’s *Progress and Poverty*. George convinced many Americans that the rich were getting richer and the poor were getting poorer. His solution was to tax land, which he believed was the source of all wealth.
. New Currents in Social Thought

George was not the only reformer. The “Social Gospel,” preached by liberal Protestant ministers, was an attempt to reform industrial society by introducing Christian standards into the economic sphere.

. The Settlement Houses

Stanton Coit introduced London’s settlement-house idea to New York in 1886. The idea caught on and settlement houses, mostly staffed by women, spread around the nation. The best known, Jane Addams’ Hull House in Chicago, offered classical and practical education to those who lived in the slums. The settlement-house movement inspired further reform and was influential in having a law passed in Illinois, in 1893, which limited the number of hours that children under the age of fourteen could work.

. Crisis in Social Welfare

The depression of 1893 taught reformers that private charity was not enough. A new professionalism came into social work; attempts were made to study the conditions that created poverty; and reformers increasingly called for government intervention.

CONCLUSION: THE PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

The United States was a society in crisis between 1870 and 1900. Great disparities in wealth were developing, racial tension and labor unrest reached frightening dimensions, and an economic depression raised doubts about the continued existence of the nation.

FEATURE ESSAY: ELLIS ISLAND

This essay provides background on and details of the immigrant experience, from arrival in New York Harbor through processing at Ellis Island.

LAW AND SOCIETY: PLESSY V. FERGUSON

Homer Plessy and the U.S. Supreme Court changed the lives of millions of black and white Americans. Plessy v. Ferguson was one of a series of court decisions that overturned Reconstruction and kept blacks socially inferior. Although Plessy was in essence overturned in 1954, the decision has a legacy that cannot be easily overcome.

LECTURE TOPICS
Create a lecture that studies how national culture emerged in the 1880s and 1890s, characterized by mass leisure activities, standardized products, and mass advertising.

The chapter outlines the changing physical and social arrangements of the late nineteenth century and the varied living and working conditions for its different groups. In most cities, people were separated by class, ethnicity, and occupation, which often led to social distance, ignorance, prejudice, and sometimes even violence.

Compare and contrast the new immigrants with previous waves of immigration; specifically, address the themes of geography, economics, and culture. Additionally, identify which groups arrived as families versus single males and/or females. What problems did these groups face when they arrived in the United States? What was the nativist response to each wave of immigrants; how and why did it differ based on ethnicity? Identify the rate at which each group assimilated into American society.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)**

Have students discuss the impact of urban poverty on nineteenth-century American social philosophy. Why has urban poverty been such a difficult issue for Americans to address?

a. Have students recall the Protestant work ethic as one of the earliest and yet one of the most lasting American philosophies regarding work, wealth, and social status. How did the new urban industrial society challenge this seventeenth-century philosophy that emphasized individual responsibility for wealth and that created a strong connection among work, wealth, and salvation (morality)? Did nineteenth-century urban middle-class Americans see in their urban industrial society examples of people who worked hard but reaped little reward, either financially or morally? How would that impact the strength of the Protestant work ethic as a social and moral philosophy?

b. How did the Gospel of Wealth and Social Darwinism address urban poverty? Do these social philosophies borrow anything from the Protestant work ethic? In what sense are they different from the Protestant work ethic?

c. Have students consider the debate regarding individual responsibility for wealth or poverty versus social responsibility for wealth or poverty. Have Americans resolved this issue yet? Invite students to share their opinions regarding the propriety or impropriety and the success or failure of modern-day entitlement, welfare, and social reform programs.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)**

Discuss the issue of racial segregation in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. Was racial segregation unique to the American South? Had it been a characteristic of antebellum southern culture? Why did southerners embrace segregation after the Civil War? What institution of racial order did it replace? How did segregation guarantee the preservation of white supremacy?
Discuss the impact of urbanization on American life. How did the development of cities impact the growth of slums, rising crime statistics, and sanitation and health? How did the growth of cities change local politics? Give examples.

Why did native-born Americans and older immigrants consider the new immigrants so difficult to assimilate? Were they correct in their beliefs? Discuss the impact of immigration on American public education. Identify the challenges that faced the public school system at the end of the nineteenth century. How did native-born Americans expect public education to support the assimilation of the immigrant population into American society?

Discuss the development of Booker T. Washington’s views on blacks and education. Would you consider his philosophy realistic, taking into account what was going on in the South at the time? How did other blacks criticize him?

Choose one of the ethnic and/or racial groups identified with nineteenth-century urban migration and explore the role of family in that culture.

**CONNECTING TO THE PAST**

Urban life and work in a factory or office made it difficult for increasing numbers of Americans to enjoy nature and outdoor exercise. Organized sports became an important way of overcoming the baleful effects of a sedentary way of life. In 1891, Dr. James Naismith, a teacher at the International YMCA Training School in Springfield, Massachusetts, invented basketball, an ideal urban game in that it did not require a large field. Naismith deliberately set out to invent a game in which there would be no physical contact. As he conceived it, there would be no dribbling, no dunking, no goaltending, and apparently, no rebounding. Nevertheless, because the game became popular among girls, it was attacked for its speed. Lucille Eaton Hill of the Boston Physical Education Society called for its abolition because “such excitement upon the emotional and nervous feminine nature” had a tendency to “unsex the player. . . .” For Naismith’s account of how he came to invent the game, see Frank G. Menke, editor, *The Encyclopedia of Sports* (New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1975).

Despite efforts to get urban Americans to participate in sports, most of them preferred to be spectators. Games of all sorts became organized and professional. By 1900 baseball had emerged as the national pastime, at least for males. Attendance for both leagues reached three and a half million in 1900, and almost six million by 1905. What is now recognized as the first World Series was played in 1903 between Boston in the American League and Pittsburgh in the National League. Fans could open to the sports page of the *New York Times* for October 14, 1903, and read about Bill Dinnen’s shutout of Pittsburgh in the concluding eighth game, and his strikeout of Honus Wagner in the ninth inning, “to the almost frenzied delight of 7,000 enthusiasts.”
POINTS OF MASTERY

Differentiate between the downtown district of metropolitan cities and the suburbs on the edge of these cities.

Describe the tenement and list the problems associated with the growth of large urban centers.

Describe the physical and social arrangements of the industrial city and neighborhood life.

Describe housing conditions in urban slums in the late nineteenth century, and compare these conditions to global norms in the early twenty-first century.

Describe the economic, religious, political, and technological factors that contributed to European migration at the turn of the century.

What was new about the “new” immigrants?

Identify Ellis Island and explain its social significance.

Explain the operation of urban political machines.

Discuss political factors of the era and describe a Mugwump.

Examine how technological changes improved urban life.

Describe the growth of popular amusements such as vaudeville and spectator sports.

Distinguish among the leisure activities associated with the wealthy, middle, and working classes of the late nineteenth century.

Explain the distinctions between downtown centers and residential suburbs at the turn of the century.

Describe the role of gender and the consumer-oriented lifestyle of the new urban middle class.

Explain the impact of social changes on education and the impact of education on social mobility.

How did the American educational system change to prepare children for their adult roles in the new industrial economy?

Define the term “segregation” and explain how this system of racial separation was implemented in the postwar South. Explain the Supreme Court ruling in the case Plessy v. Ferguson.

Define the terms “The Gospel of Wealth” and “Social Darwinism” and explain how these ideologies served to discourage efforts to alleviate urban poverty.

Did “laissez-faire” really mean that the government did not intervene in the economy?

What was the Social Gospel?

Discuss the settlement house movement.

Discuss the roots and impact of institutionalized racism.

Describe the steps that stripped blacks of their political rights and the implementation of “Jim Crow” laws, and outline the various black responses.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. What were the main economic, social, and political characteristics of the new urban society?

Economic characteristics included long working hours, a growing labor movement, crime, poverty, and homelessness. This society was also characterized by women and children in the workforce, particularly in industrial production jobs.

One of the main social characteristics of this society was overcrowding. Tenements were large buildings in which large families occupied small apartments with poor sanitation and unsanitary drinking water. Most often these tenements were filled with non-English-speaking immigrants who clustered in ethnic neighborhoods. At the same time, the middle class moved out to the suburbs as a result of improved transportation that gave them the ability to commute to work. Additional social changes during this period included free and compulsory public schools that increased literacy and worsening Jim Crow laws in the South.

Political characteristics of the time were urban politics run by political “machines” such as that run by “Boss Tweed.” These political machines were characterized by graft and bribery of law and code enforcement officers.

2. In what ways did the social and cultural changes of urban society affect fundamental outlooks on the family, the role of women, and education, and lead to demands for reform?

During this period, urban women were increasingly entering the workforce, which took their focus away from their families. Children also entered the workforce at ages as young as eleven. As a result, family life was nonexistent for those who lived in tenements and worked in factories.

Such conditions led to reforms such as increased public schooling and social welfare agencies like settlement houses, which offered services such as English language lessons to those who otherwise would not have had a chance to learn. Additionally, the growing prohibition movement sought to curtail the alcoholism that plagued the working class of the time.
How did reform-minded critics try to meet the challenges of urban growth?

Sociologists developed data and insights to social problems. Utopianism, anarchism, and socialism grew in popularity. However, actual reforms focused on volunteerism rather than government. Settlement houses cared for children and supplemented public education, particularly by teaching English to immigrants.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

*Destination America*, Discovery Channel, 30 minutes.
This program examines the history of American sentiment regarding immigration and asks whether Americans have historically regarded it as a right or a privilege.

*Ellis Island*, A&E Video, 150 minutes.
This video is a four-part chronicle of the gateway for immigration at the turn of the century, drawing heavily from interviews from the Ellis Island Oral History Project.

Irish immigrants caught in Boston and the Oklahoma Land Rush

This film records the life of Du Bois, an advocate of civil and political rights and one of the founders of the NAACP.

**CLASS EXERCISES**

1. Have the students read the entire essay, the “Gospel of Wealth” at the website below and be prepared to compare and contrast Carnegie’s philosophies with the attitude toward wealth held by current entrepreneurs such as Donald Trump or Sam Walton’s heirs. [www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1889carnegie.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1889carnegie.html)

2. Have the students create a dialogue between Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois (see also Chapter 21). Compare and contrast their family background and upbringing. How did they differ on the best way for African Americans to achieve prosperity and pride? Compare and contrast the writing and speeches of each; specifically Washington’s Atlanta Exposition Speech of 1895 and later writings by Du Bois in the NAACP’s publication *The Crisis*.

3. Propose the following assignment:

Imagine yourself to be an immigrant from Eastern Europe who has come to the United States for work. If you were to write a letter to relatives at home, would you tell them to join you or not? What would some of your comments be about housing, work, and opportunity?
Photographs of urban life by Jacob Riis and others can provide the basis for a slide lecture and in-class analysis of urban conditions, as well as for a paper. They offer an excellent opportunity for students to consider the photographer’s point of view.

**MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS**

- Read the Document: Charles Loring Brace, “The Life of the Street Rats”
- View the Closer Look: Group of Emigrants (Women and Children) from Eastern Europe on the Deck of the *S.S. Amsterdam*
- Watch the Video: Ellis Island Immigrants
- View the Map: Immigration, 1880–1920
- Complete the Assignment: Ellis Island: Isle of Hope, Isle of Tears
- Watch the Video: Democracy and Corruption: The Rise of Political Machines
- Read the Document: The Morrill Act (1862)
- Hear the Audio: Address at the Atlanta Exposition by Booker T. Washington
- Read the Document: Edward Bellamy, from *Looking Backward*
- Read the Document: Jane Addams, from *Twenty Years at Hull House*
CHAPTER 20

POLITICAL REALIGNMENTS IN THE 1890s

CHAPTER OUTLINE

HARDSHIP AND HEARTACHE

POLITICS OF STALEMATE

• The Party Deadlock  
• Experiments in the States  
• Reestablishing Presidential Power

REPUBLICANS IN POWER: THE BILLION-DOLLAR CONGRESS

• Tariffs, Trusts, and Silver  
• The 1890 Elections

THE RISE OF THE POPULIST MOVEMENT

• The Farm Problem  
• The Fast-Growing Farmers’ Alliance  
• The People’s Party

THE CRISIS OF THE DEPRESSION

• The Panic of 1893  
• Coxey’s Army and the Pullman Strike  
• The Miners of the Midwest  
• A Beleaguered President  
• Breaking the Party Deadlock

CHANGING ATTITUDES

• “Everybody Works But Father”  
• Changing Themes in Literature
Most of your students will understand the major political controversies in American history, from Federalists versus Antifederalists, to Clinton versus Gingrich, but none will understand the central issue of the 1896 election, free silver at 16 to 1, nor will they easily believe that Americans were once deeply divided between “silverites” and “goldbugs.” You will have to explain the mysteries of a bimetallic money standard.

In 1789, when Congress first received the authority to make money by minting coins or printing paper, the United States adopted a bimetallic system. That is, the Treasury would buy gold or silver from private persons and mint the metal into coins, or would back up whatever paper notes it issued with gold and silver. The difficulty of a bimetallic system is establishing an exchange rate between gold and silver that matches the world market price of those commodities. The United States never managed to do so. From 1789 to 1834, the Treasury gave 15 ounces of silver for one ounce of gold while the world market gave 15.5 ounces. Anyone with silver sold it to the Treasury for gold, sold the gold on the world market for silver, sold the silver to the Treasury for gold, and so on. In a short time, all the silver in the Treasury was gone and the United States was in effect on a gold standard. Nearly fifty years later, in 1873, Congress recognized reality by dropping the silver dollar from the list of coins the Treasury was obliged to mint. The Treasury therefore stopped purchasing silver since it had no use for it. Silver mine operators and currency speculators were unhappy and brought pressure upon Congress to make the Treasury buy unlimited amounts of silver, a demand they christened “free silver,” at a price higher than
the world market, or 16 to 1. The slogan “free silver at 16 to 1” therefore meant that the Treasury
should be obliged by law to purchase unlimited amounts of silver at a rate of 16 ounces of silver for
one ounce of gold. Congress bowed somewhat to the pressure and ordered the Treasury to purchase
limited amounts of silver, but would not accept the demand for “free” or unlimited purchases of silver.

It is easy to see why silver mine owners wanted “free silver,” but why did a large number of Americans
take up the cause? Generally speaking, after the great inflation of the Civil War period, Congress began
to squeeze the money supply at a time of rapid expansion in the economy. The result was periodic
“panics” followed by serious depressions in which farmers could not sell their crops, businessmen
closed their stores, and laborers lost their jobs. Many government officials and economists attributed
these downturns to a “natural” business cycle and argued that the only remedy was time and patience.
Any attempt by the government to restore prosperity would only make things worse. Many others,
however, disagreed. They believed that a sudden infusion of money into the economy would stimulate
recovery. The quickest way to increase the money supply was to resume the coinage of silver,
especially if silver was overvalued. The immediate effect of cheap money would be to raise prices,
thereby encouraging businessmen to increase production by hiring back their workers. Silver seemed a
quick cure for economic misery, and the demand for free silver increased after each panic.

In 1893, during yet another depression, President Grover Cleveland, a Democrat, made matters worse
by pushing through Congress an act to stop the purchase of silver altogether. His action touched off a
great national debate between “silverites” and “goldbugs,” and, by 1896, the major political parties had
take a stand on the issue. The Republicans waffled by nominating William McKinley on a platform
that tried to appeal to both sides, but the Democrats staked all on a single roll of the dice by dumping
Cleveland and nominating William Jennings Bryan on a free silver platform. Bryan then received the
support of a rapidly growing third party, the Populists, and seemed likely to win the election. The
Republicans had no choice but to defend the gold standard and to condemn silver as snake oil, and they
did that intelligently and effectively. The Democrats and Populists presented just as intelligent a
defense of government-regulated inflation of the money supply as a temporary remedy for hard times.
In the end, the voters chose “sound money” over silver. McKinley was elected president and the
Republicans won both houses of Congress. The Democrats, portrayed as the party of crazy economic
ideas, went into a long decline. In 1900, Congress adopted the gold standard, and the great issue of free
silver and a bimetallic standard faded to the point that it is today incomprehensible without the help of
a college professor.

HARDSHIP AND HEARTACHE

The author begins with a pathetic letter from a woman in Kansas, who was starving, in order to sharpen
our understanding of the Panic of 1893, and the four-year depression that followed it. One of the
results of that painful period was a realignment of American politics.
POLITICS OF STALEMATE

Politics was still restricted to white males, who seemed to enjoy it enormously and who turned out at the polls in great numbers.

. The Party Deadlock

The Democratic party revived quickly after the Civil War and divided the electorate almost evenly with the Republicans. Usually, neither party controlled both Congress and the White House. The government in Washington became less important, and local and state governments became more important.

. Experiments in the States

State governments set up commissions to investigate and regulate railroads and factories. Illinois was especially active in this regard, and its activities were declared constitutional in the case of *Munn v. Illinois* in 1877. When the Supreme Court retreated later in the *Wabash* case (1886), Congress established the Interstate Commerce Commission.

. Reestablishing Presidential Power

The office of the president reached its lowest point under Andrew Johnson, but the presidents who followed him in office reasserted the powers of the executive branch. Hayes ended military Reconstruction; Garfield, in the short time before his assassination, began to assert his leadership of the party; Chester Arthur pushed for a strong navy and for civil service reform; Grover Cleveland used the veto to return the federal government to the Democratic principle of *laissez-faire*. In the election of 1888, Cleveland won the popular vote, but lost the presidency to Benjamin Harrison, who won the electoral college.

REPUBLICANS IN POWER: THE BILLION-DOLLAR CONGRESS

The election of 1888 gave the Republicans control of the White House and Capitol Hill and enabled them to enact their party’s program.

. Tariffs, Trusts, and Silver

The Republicans, traditionally a high-tariff party, passed the McKinley Tariff in 1890, raising duties to their highest point up to that time. As the party of the Union and the Union army, the Republicans granted pensions to veterans or their survivors. By 1893, nearly one million pensions had been granted. The Republicans also passed the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1890. The act attempted to regulate big business without hurting it.
In order to head off demands for the free coinage of silver, which would have led to inflation, the Republicans passed the Sherman Silver Purchase Act in 1890. The federal government bought a certain amount of silver each month and issued paper money backed by the silver, or by gold if the holder preferred.

. The 1890 Elections

On the state level, the Republicans also asserted strong government policies, such as Sunday closing laws, prohibition, and the mandatory use of English in public schools. Although the Republicans were remarkably successful in enacting their programs into law, various blocs of voters were so alienated that the party suffered massive losses in the Congressional elections of 1890.

THE RISE OF THE POPULIST MOVEMENT

Even before the elections of 1890 made the Populists prominent, this new party (the National Farmers’ Alliance and Industrial Union) had been attracting unhappy farmers of the South and West.

. The Farm Problem

In the second half of the nineteenth century, a worldwide agricultural economy emerged, but since there were great fluctuations in supply and demand, American farmers enjoyed prosperity one year and suffered depression the next. In general, farmers complained about lower prices for their crops, rising railroad rates, and onerous mortgages. In reality, farmers’ purchasing power generally increased, railroad rates declined, and mortgages allowed farmers to mechanize and thus improve their incomes. The economic conditions of farmers varied from region to region and from individual to individual, but there was a general feeling of depression among farmers, who resented the snobbery of city folk and who saw their children leave the farm for life in the metropolis.

. The Fast-Growing Farmers’ Alliance

The National Farmers’ Alliance and Industrial Union succeeded the Grange and various other farmers’ associations. It began as the Southern Alliance in 1875, headed by Charles Macune, and spread rapidly. After 1889 it absorbed the Northwestern Alliance.

In the South, the Alliance had great success in capturing the local Democratic parties, but in the North and West, the Alliance ran its own candidates successfully. At a meeting in Ocala, Florida, in 1890, the Alliance announced its “Ocala Demands,” which called for a system of government warehouses that would enable farmers to store their harvests while awaiting higher prices. The Alliance also demanded the free
coining of silver, low tariffs, a federal income tax, direct election of senators, and the regulation of railroads.

The People’s Party

The Southern Alliance gave up on the Democrats and agreed to the formation of the Populist party. In the South, the Populists recruited African Americans and gave them influential positions. In the election of 1892, Populist nominee James Weaver drew over one million votes, although he failed to attract voters in the urban areas, the South, and even the Midwest. The Alliance itself began to lose members.

THE CRISIS OF THE DEPRESSION

The Democrats swept the elections of 1890 and 1892 and controlled both the White House and Congress when the Panic of 1893, a result of overexpansion and excessive borrowing in the previous two decades, devastated the nation.

The Panic of 1893

In February 1893, the failure of a major railroad company set off a panic on the New York Stock Exchange. As investors sold stock to purchase gold, the United States Treasury was depleted of its reserves, and fears of government bankruptcy further shook confidence in the economy. In May 1893, the market hit a record low, and a wave of business failures put two million people out of work. Conditions worsened in 1894, when drought destroyed the corn crop.

Coxey’s Army and the Pullman Strike

The depression gave rise to “armies” of jobless persons who marched on Washington to demand relief. The most famous was “Coxey’s Army,” led by Jacob Coxey in 1894. The depression also heightened tensions between capital and labor, as exemplified in the Pullman strike. The American Railway Union, led by Eugene Debs, protested wage cuts and layoffs by closing down railroads in the West. President Cleveland used federal troops to bring the strike to a violent end in 1894.

The Miners of the Midwest

The Panic of 1893 was felt also in midwestern coal mines. This industry, composed of small, family mines worked by English and Irish miners, received a flood of new immigrants in the 1880s who worked for lower wages and had little understanding of or sympathy for their employers. When the United Mine Workers called a strike in 1894, it quickly turned violent, and “old” miners turned against “new” miners.
A Beleaguered President

President Cleveland believed that the Sherman Silver Purchase Act had created the depression by causing gold to flow out of the public treasury. In a bitter fight that divided his own party, Cleveland managed to get the act repealed in 1893, but neither the depression nor the drain on the treasury ceased. In fact, Cleveland made silver a political issue. Cleveland and his party also failed to lower tariff rates as they had promised.

Breaking the Party Deadlock

Cleveland’s failure to end the depression reduced the Democratic party to a sectional southern organization. In the rest of the nation, the Republicans became the overwhelming majority, and they swept the 1894 congressional elections. The party deadlock that had existed since the 1870s was broken, and the American people endorsed the Republican doctrine of government.

CHANGING ATTITUDES

The depression of 1893 involved so many millions in suffering that it became impossible to consider unemployment as the result of a purely personal failure. Americans now accepted the need for government intervention to help the poor and jobless.

“Everybody Works But Father”

The depression accelerated the movement of women and children into the workforce. Because they were paid less, they replaced adult males. Even after the depression, many employers preferred to retain women and children rather than rehire adult males.

Changing Themes in Literature

The depression encouraged an already growing trend toward “realism” in American literature. The greatest example is the work of Mark Twain, whose characters speak as people at the time actually did. The depression gave added purpose to the realist school, and writers like William Dean Howells and Stephen Crane portrayed the grim life of the poor, while Frank Norris attacked the power of big business. Theodore Dreiser, the foremost naturalist writer, presented human beings as being helpless in the face of vast social and economic forces.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.
THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1896

The presidential election continued the realignment begun in the congressional elections of 1894.

. The Mystique of Silver

Many Americans, especially in the South and West, believed that the free coinage of silver, by boosting the money supply, would end the depression. Beyond that reasoning, silver was a symbol of America and of the common people.

. The Republicans and Gold

The Republicans nominated William McKinley, a senator from Ohio, in 1896 and adopted a platform promising to go back to the gold standard, which would bring prosperity.

. The Democrats and Silver

The Democrats split over the silver issue, but the majority of the delegates at the national convention favored free silver and nominated William Jennings Bryan, who electrified the audience with his “Cross of Gold” speech.

. Campaign and Election

The Populist party also endorsed Bryan, who actively campaigned for president. Bryan offered a return to an older, rural, religious America. McKinley defended the advancing urban, industrial society. The election was a clear victory for McKinley and an utter rout of the Populist party, which vanished after 1896.

THE McKINLEY ADMINISTRATION

McKinley had the good fortune to take office as the depression gave way to prosperity, and the association of the Republican party with progress and good times made it dominant for the next three decades.

McKinley had Congress pass the Dingley Tariff, which raised rates to record-high levels, but even Republicans began to wonder if their traditional high-tariff stance was still desirable. In 1900, Congress put the United States on the gold standard, thus ending the silver agitation. McKinley ran on this record against Bryan in 1900, and again beat him by an even greater landslide. A few months later, McKinley was killed by an assassin, and Theodore Roosevelt became president.
CONCLUSION: A DECADE’S DRAMATIC CHANGES

The 1890s saw significant political and social changes: The presidency gained more power, the Republicans became the majority party, the U.S. acquired colonies, and an economic depression ruined countless lives but opened the way for reform. The 1890s were the first decade of the twentieth century.

FEATURE ESSAY: THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ

In the allegorical story *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy (representing every person) is carried from drab, depressed Kansas to a marvelous land of riches and witches. The cyclone that changes Dorothy’s life represents what would happen if the United States were to adopt a free silver policy. The land of Oz itself reflected L. Frank Baum’s belief in the American values of freedom and independence, love of family, self-reliance, individualism, and sympathy for the underdog.

LECTURE TOPICS

Present a comparison and contrast of the Democratic and Republican parties at the turn of the century. Include some of the following issues:

a. Who composed the membership of each party? Look at the regional, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and religious characteristics of each party’s membership.

b. Consider perspectives on fiscal policy, social reform, sympathy toward business and agriculture, immigration, prohibition, civil service reform, and tariffs.

c. Allow students to compare and contrast the characteristics of the Democratic and Republican parties at the turn of the century to the modern-day parties. Would modern-day Republicans feel comfortable in the nineteenth-century party? Would modern-day Democrats feel comfortable in the nineteenth-century party? Where have the major changes occurred in each party’s membership and policies? Can students predict when in the twenty-first century these changes will occur?

Research the children’s author L. Frank Baum and prepare a paper or presentation on his Oz series. Baum was a zealous Populist who used children’s literature as a medium for communicating his political agenda. Look at the characters, symbols, and themes of the *Wizard of Oz* and explain how they are representative of components of the Populist agenda. Also, some attention can be given to the idea of using children’s literature as a means of education or even indoctrination. Can students think of other children’s books that do more than entertain?

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

Discuss the impact of populism on southern politics. Why did white southerners find the Populist movement threatening? Explain the potential danger southerners saw in the political union of lower-class whites and blacks. How could that union have impacted the existing white elite political
structure? How were members of the Populist party treated by southern Democrats? Explain the concept of fusion and how it figured into the 1892 and 1896 presidential elections. Is there a connection between the Populist movement and the southern disfranchisement movement of the 1890s? Did southern disfranchisement impact only the black community?

Discuss the Populist movement as the first major modern American reform movement. Some issues to consider include the following:

a. Have students define the word “reform.” What does it mean and how does it apply to the Populist movement?

b. Analyze the Omaha Platform. Does it reflect a conservative or a liberal agenda? What components of the agenda eventually became American law?

c. Was the Populist movement successful or was it a failure? Help students anticipate the Progressive movement by predicting who will be successful in realizing much of the Populist agenda. Why will Progressives be successful when Populists were not?

d. Was the Populist movement conservative or liberal? In what ways did Populists seek change? Was there a conservative element in the movement? Were the Populists in any way motivated by a desire to prevent change or to conserve some aspects of American cultural, social, and economic tradition?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

The excitement of the Democratic party convention in 1896 and Bryan’s “Cross of Gold” speech is worth special research and attention. So is the election itself. Whose side would you have been on? Why?

Discuss the causes and consequences of the financial crisis of the 1890s. How did various reformers and politicians respond to the event? What kinds of programs did they offer to restore the economy or reduce poverty?

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

The last decade of the nineteenth century was filled with protests. A number of magazines were published during that decade, and they usually can be obtained in today’s college library. They are an excellent source to browse through, because the cartoons, the special features, and even the advertisements give one a feel for the times. The May 17, 1894, issue of the Independent carries an account by A. Cleveland Hall of his travels with Coxey’s Army, which is one of the most famous protests of the 1890s. Jacob Coxey was part businessman, part showman, and part nut. He led a march on Washington to demand government jobs to repair the nation’s roads. Starting from Massillon, Ohio, on Easter Sunday, 1894, Coxey arrived in Washington on May Day, as planned. Among the participants in the march were Coxey’s son, Legal Tender Coxey, and a man of many aliases, usually known as The Great Unknown. One of the banners carried in the march proclaimed “Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men, But Death to Interest on Bonds.”
Populism was a more serious and more sustained protest. On the surface, it was a farmer’s movement, but it offered hope for a better life and a more just society to all those who felt aggrieved. Blacks joined in large numbers, and so did women, who held prominent positions within the People’s party. The most famous female Populist was Mary Elizabeth Lease of Kansas, and her most famous speech was one in which she told farmers to raise less corn and more hell. Whether she actually uttered such a line is doubtful, but it has become enshrined in American history. There is a good article about Lease by Annie L. Diggs called “The Women in the Alliance Movement” in The Arena, XXXII (July 1892), 161–179.

POINTS OF MASTERY

Discuss the importance of populism in terms of rural protest and political debate.

Discuss the role of women in both the Grange and the People’s Party. What were their specific goals?

Explain the significance of the silver issue.

Identify the Pendleton Civil Service Act and explain its impact on the quality of federal employees.

Explain the protective tariff as an issue reflecting regional as well as agrarian-industrial divisions at the turn of the century.

Define the term laissez-faire and explain how the Interstate Commerce Act and the Sherman Antitrust Act signaled the beginning of federal movement away from this policy.

Distinguish between the sound money policy and the inflationary monetary policy being debated at the turn of the century. Explain why bankers and businessmen supported the sound money policy and why farmers and miners supported the inflationary monetary policy.

Outline the provisions of the Bland-Allison Act and the Sherman Silver Purchase Act and explain their impact on the money and credit issues of the late nineteenth century.

Discuss efforts made by the Farmers’ Alliance to remedy the ills facing farmers. Comment on the success of these efforts.

Discuss the political success of the Populist party on the state and local level during the early 1890s. Comment on the regional variations of support for the Populists.

List the major planks of the Ocala Platform in 1890.

Discuss the ways in which the Southern Farmers’ Alliance represented a more comprehensive approach to the problems of the American farmer than that developed by the Grange.

Discuss the historical significance of the Omaha Platform.
Discuss the impact of the 1893 depression on American reform movements and on traditional American ideas regarding laissez-faire.

What was the role of blacks in the Populist party? What were the links between the development of the Populist party and the increase in lynching in the South?

Identify Jacob Coxey and comment on the impact of the march on Washington, D.C. that he led.

Discuss the lack of strong presidential leadership during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Describe the importance of Mark Twain, his contribution to American literature, and how it symbolized changing American society.

Identify the reasons for McKinley’s decisive triumph in the election of 1896.

Discuss the importance of the gold and silver standards as issues in the presidential election of 1896.

Identify Marcus Hanna and explain his role in the presidential election of 1896.

Identify Frank Baum and describe how *The Wizard of Oz* may parallel the goals and initiatives of the Populist era.

Discuss William Jennings Bryan’s dilemma in the election of 1896. Define the Populist strategy of “fusing” with the Democrats, and comment on its success.

Which factors seemed to produce support for Populist candidates?

Discuss the style of political campaigning popular in the United States during the late nineteenth century; describe election practices common in the United States during the late nineteenth century.

**SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

1. What effect did the rise of the People’s party have on American politics?

   At first it drew Farmers’ Alliance supporters away from the Democrats and blacks away from the Republicans, but it did not affect election results outside the Plains states. By 1892 it had little effect anywhere, and it was so unpopular in 1896 that by supporting the Democratic candidate, the Populist party actually helped elect Republicans.

2. How did the depression give rise to conditions that made the election of 1896 important?
The election of 1896 was important because it presented a choice between a no-holds-barred capitalism and a more moderate system that would use government to help the less fortunate. McKinley and the Republicans presented entrepreneurialism, imperialism, industrialization, and progress as the keys to national prosperity. Bryan and the Democrats saw free silver as the key to prosperity. Free silver meant leaning government economic policy toward helping farmers rather than helping bankers and giant corporations. The depression forced the nation to put its entire focus on economics and to essentially ignore international politics and social policy.

3 How would events have been different if William Jennings Bryan and the Democrats won the election of 1896?

Events may have been very similar. Bryan would have allowed free silver coinage, but nobody seems to know what effects that might have had. Bryan would have sped commercial and industrial regulation, but McKinley was moving toward those things anyway, and it’s unlikely that Bryan would have been as successful at regulation as Theodore Roosevelt, McKinley’s successor, was.

4 What did McKinley and the Republican party demonstrate about the changes in popular attitudes since 1890?

In the election of 1896, McKinley easily defeated his Democratic opponent, William J. Bryan. The results of this election also signaled the end of the Populist party. McKinley’s policies and popularity kept his party in power for the next thirty years. Encouraging enterprise, but with government regulation, working closely with Congress, and making himself an accessible figure all contributed to McKinley’s, and his party’s, success. The United States had reached a point in its development where the people were ready for less isolation, and government regulation of, but not restrictions on, enterprise. People felt secure and optimistic. The Republican party offered this style of government at the right time in American history.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

This series examines American political, social, and cultural history at the turn of the century.

This is the film adaptation of L. Frank Baum’s Populist-inspired children’s novel.

**CLASS EXERCISES**

1 Divide students into groups that represent poor white farmers in the Midwest, poor white farmers in the South, black sharecroppers in the South, and any other group you think appropriate. Ask the groups to list five of their dreams or goals—they should be as specific as
possible. Then have them describe the reality of their situation. Finally, have them determine, given the probable gap between dreams and reality, what they should do. Report and discuss.

2 Research the early corporate cases that were decided by the Supreme Court. How did these cases reflect American concerns about the future of capitalism? How did corporations defend themselves against these fears?

MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

- Read the Document: The Interstate Commerce Act (1887)
- Read the Document: Workingman’s Amalgamated Sherman Anti-Trust (1893)
- Read the Document: Proceedings of the Grange Session, 1879
- Read the Document: Mary E. Lease, *The Populist Crusader* (1879)
- Read the Document: Ocala Platform, 1890
- Read the Document: Jacob S. Coxey, “Address of Protest” (1894)
- Read the Document: “Everybody Works But Father” (1905)
- Complete the Assignment: The Wonderful Wizard of Oz
- View the Closer Look: Republican Campaign Poster of 1896, William McKinley
CHAPTER 21

TOWARD EMPIRE

CHAPTER OUTLINE

ROOSEVELT AND THE ROUGH RIDERS

AMERICA LOOKS OUTWARD

• Catching the Spirit of Empire
• Reasons for Expansion
• Foreign Policy Approaches, 1867–1900
• The Lure of Hawaii and Samoa
• The New Navy

WAR WITH SPAIN

• A War for Principle
• “A Splendid Little War”
• “Smoked Yankees”
• The Course of the War

ACQUISITION OF EMPIRE

• The Treaty of Paris Debate
• Guerrilla Warfare in the Philippines
• Governing the Empire
• The Open Door

CONCLUSION: OUTCOME OF THE WAR WITH SPAIN

FEATURE ESSAY: THE 400 MILLION CUSTOMERS OF CHINA
OPENING THEME

IMPERIAL AMERICA

Most college students today favor a “little America.” They detest colonization. This attitude would be strengthened if they knew more about the methods of “pacification” employed by the United States when it first acquired an overseas empire, but American imperialism is not a simple matter to discuss. For one thing, some of those colonized by the United States have made it clear that they do not want to become independent.

The sudden acquisition of an overseas empire astonished Americans at the time, and has been a matter of considerable curiosity to historians ever since. Some historians describe the event as “the great aberration,” because imperialism violated the ideals that Americans had come to hold sacred as a result of their own struggle for independence. Americans around 1900 found in their conquest of the West a more recent and more relevant history with which to guide them in their imperial adventure. The lessons they drew from that history proved extremely useful in the task of subduing those of their new subjects who resisted American rule, but gave the wrong answers to the problem of governing those who did not resist.

“Pacification” was of major concern in the Philippines. When President McKinley decided to take the Philippines, American forces occupied only the capital, Manila, but in the rest of the archipelago, which consists of more than seven thousand islands stretching over one thousand miles from north to south, the only effective government was that of Emilio Aguinaldo. Aquinaldo wanted independence and expected the Americans to withdraw their troops. Instead, American troops moved out of Manila and attacked Aguinaldo’s forces. The resulting war, or “insurrection” as it was officially termed in the United States, resembled the kind of warfare that Americans learned in their conquest of the West. Indeed, many of the officers and men who fought in the Philippines had seen combat on the Plains.

Indian warfare had been genocidal, and so was war in the Philippines. In the campaign to suppress the guerrillas in Samar, Brigadier General Jacob Smith issued an order, which he later confirmed, that all males above the age of ten were to be killed. In another instance, approximately thirteen hundred Filipino prisoners were methodically executed over a period of weeks. William Howard Taft, the top civilian authority in the islands, testifying before a congressional committee, admitted that he would not defend what the American army was doing in the Philippines if the victims were whites.

There was one crucial difference between the Philippines and the Plains. The United States always intended to settle the West with white, small farmers who would eventually form states. Americans knew what was happening to the Indians and even protested the more outrageous slaughters, such as the one at Wounded Knee, but the extermination of the Indians seemed to most Americans the regrettable, but unavoidable price of progress. The Red Man would die so that the Union would grow.

The Philippines were different. Nobody expected large numbers of Americans to move there, nor was it popular to think of the Philippines as becoming a state someday. What, then, justified the massacre
of hundreds of thousands of persons whom America was supposed to be protecting? The United States
could not hold the area as a “colony,” a word with such negative connotations that it was never
officially used to describe any American dependency. Public opinion forced the government to clarify
its ultimate aim in the Philippines, and the only politically popular position was to announce that the
United States would grant independence to the Philippines. Business interests and the military opposed
that policy, and the politicians appeased all sides by promising independence in a future that receded
year after year. Every president from McKinley to Franklin Roosevelt promised the Philippines
independence, but it was 1946 before the United States finally kept the promise.

The Philippines resisted American rule, but other areas did not, and the United States had to work out a
new sort of relationship to them. Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, Midway, and the
Virgin Islands all accepted government by the United States, but Congress was reluctant to treat them
as territories that would eventually become states. Congress therefore invented a new status,
somewhere between colony and territory. All land under the jurisdiction of the United States was either
a state or a territory, but territories could be incorporated or unincorporated. An incorporated territory,
such as Alaska, was exactly like the Arizona or Kansas territories before statehood. All provisions of
the Constitution applied, and the territory was destined to become a state. In unincorporated territories,
such as Puerto Rico, certain “fundamental” aspects of the Constitution applied, but other “formal”
aspects did not. What was fundamental and what was formal had to be decided in particular cases, but
among the merely formal rights that residents of unincorporated territories did not enjoy, unless
Congress specifically granted them, were the right to bear arms and the right to be indicted by a grand
jury.

In distinguishing between types of territories, Congress attempted to go beyond the American
experience, but the attempt has been unsuccessful. Unincorporated territories had a way of becoming
incorporated territories, which puts them on the way to statehood. Congress has attempted to invent
another category, the commonwealth, to do away with the problem, but the commonwealth status
probably works only because the American people remain ignorant about the extent of their holdings
around the world. All students know that Puerto Rico is a commonwealth, and most know that Puerto
Rico is destined for statehood in the near future. But how many know that Congress in 1976 made the
northern Mariana a commonwealth, thereby extending United States citizenship to any person born on
the island of Guguan?

ROOSEVELT AND THE ROUGH RIDERS

The author begins with the band of volunteers raised by Teddy Roosevelt for service in the war with
Spain because they typified the kind of American who won an empire and held it by force. They were
tough, undisciplined, courageous, racist, and above all, eager to assert themselves upon the world
stage.
AMERICA LOOKS OUTWARD

America had always been expanding, but expansion during the 1890s had several novel aspects. The United States now took strategically placed islands that were never intended to become more than colonies.

. Catching the Spirit of Empire

For generations, Americans had looked inward, but by the 1870s, there was a stirring of interest in areas beyond the boundaries of the United States.

. Reasons for Expansion

As the frontier receded, some Americans felt it would be necessary to expand abroad, especially in order to gain markets in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. The popularity of evolutionary ideas also encouraged expansion, because these ideas taught Americans to view native people elsewhere as children in need of guidance. The missionary spirit was also still strong, as illustrated by the popularity of Josiah Strong’s book, *Our Country* (1885).

. Foreign Policy Approaches: 1867–1900

After the Civil War, the United States pursued an expansionist foreign policy. Under the leadership of various secretaries of state such as William Seward and James Blaine, the United States acquired Alaska and the Midway Islands and made unsuccessful attempts to gain Hawaii and Santo Domingo. American foreign policy was especially successful at eroding European influence in Latin America. The United States intervened on the side of Venezuela against Great Britain in a debt dispute, and diverted Latin American trade from Europe through a series of reciprocity treaties.

. The Lure of Hawaii and Samoa

Hawaii was a natural way station between the United States and Asia, and therefore attracted American attention. A large colony of Americans was already in Hawaii when, in 1875, the United States bound the islands more closely by granting Hawaiian sugar free entry into the United States. This arrangement ended, however, with the McKinley Tariff of 1890. Hawaii suffered an economic slump, and its queen, Liliuokalani, proclaimed measures to lessen the influence of the Americans in Hawaii. American settlers pulled off a coup and asked for annexation to the United States. In Congress, anticolonial sentiment was strong enough to block annexation until 1898, when Hawaii was made an American possession in the midst of the excitement over the Spanish-American War.
The United States began its acquisition of Samoa in 1872, when it was granted port facilities at Pago Pago. In 1899, the U.S. agreed to share control of the island with Germany.

The New Navy

The United States had to rebuild its navy from scratch in the 1880s. Alfred Mahan, in a series of influential books, argued that industrialism produced vast surpluses of agricultural and manufactured goods, for which markets must be found. Markets involved distant ports requiring a large merchant marine and a strong navy. He warned that America was in competition with strong European states. Benjamin Tracy, who became secretary of the navy in 1889, supervised a program of naval construction that began to give the United States an offensive capability at sea.

WAR WITH SPAIN

The easy victory over Spain in 1898 reaffirmed American belief in the special destiny of their nation, but the results of the war, colonies and imperial responsibilities, disturbed many citizens.

A War for Principle

In February 1895, another in a recurring series of rebellions broke out in Cuba. As Spanish tactics to suppress the rebellion became more brutal, American public opinion, stimulated by the “yellow press,” increasingly favored Cuban independence. President McKinley, while sympathetic to the insurgents, hoped to keep the United States out of a war with Spain. The Spanish government made some concessions to McKinley, but resisted movement toward Cuban independence. The crisis intensified in February 1898, when the Maine blew up in Havana harbor. The explosion was most likely an accident, but most Americans blamed the Spanish. To pressure Spain and to prepare for war, McKinley asked for and received a $50 million military appropriation. Spain, however, remained steadfastly opposed to Cuban independence, so Congress took it upon itself to declare Cuba free in April 1898. Congress promised at the same time not to annex Cuba (the Teller Amendment). On April 25, when diplomatic channels had obviously failed, the United States declared war.

“A Splendid Little War”

Americans responded enthusiastically to the call to arms, but the small regular army was ill prepared for rapid mobilization. Most soldiers fought in National Guard units, which often retained the flavor of the small-town communities from which they were raised.
African Americans served both in the regular army and as volunteers. Their presence in the camps and staging areas in the South led to a number of incidents in which the black troops refused to accept segregation.

. The Course of the War

The war lasted only ten weeks. Almost as soon as it was declared, Commodore George Dewey crushed the Spanish fleet at Manila Bay. The United States suddenly realized that the Philippines were now open for occupation, and hurriedly sent an expeditionary force. In June 1898, the United States invaded Cuba, and after tough fighting, laid siege to Santiago. After a Spanish attempt to escape by sea was defeated, the Spanish forces surrendered. American troops also occupied Puerto Rico.

ACQUISITION OF EMPIRE

The war ended formally in December 1898 when representatives of the United States and Spain met at Paris to negotiate a peace treaty. The United States insisted on independence for Cuba, but was determined to take Puerto Rico and Guam for itself. The larger problem was the Philippine Islands, where an independence movement had already begun. After much soul searching, President McKinley decided the United States should take the Philippines.

. The Treaty of Paris Debate

The annexation of the Philippines aroused a storm of protest by labor unions, which feared a flood of cheap labor; by racists, who objected to the inclusion of people of color into the county; and by many others, who did not want the United States to become a colonial power.

. Guerrilla Warfare in the Philippines

Occupation of the Philippines involved the United States in a three-year struggle against insurgents, led by Emilio Aguinaldo, who wanted independence. The guerrilla war eased when, in 1901, the United States replaced military rule with a civil administration. Local self-government was allowed, and the United States established a schedule for full independence, which finally came to the Philippines on July 4, 1946.

. Governing the Empire

The Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution did not automatically apply to America’s new possessions. Congress was allowed to extend whatever provisions of the Constitution it considered useful. Congress organized Hawaii, Alaska, and Puerto
Rico as territories and granted citizenship to their inhabitants. Guam was placed under the control of the navy. The United States occupied Cuba until the Cubans adopted a constitution, which included the Platt Amendment, giving the United States the right to intervene in Cuban affairs.

. The Open Door

In March 1900, the United States announced that the “Open Door” policy would regulate relations with China. This meant that no European nation should carve out a sphere of influence in China and exclude others from trading in the area. Once again, the United States had meddled in the affairs of a foreign nation without considering the consequences.

CONCLUSION: OUTCOME OF THE WAR WITH SPAIN

The Spanish-American War had various results: It paved the road to the White House for Teddy Roosevelt, it reunited North and South to the detriment of American blacks, and it confirmed the Republicans as the majority party. It also made it necessary to station American soldiers outside the country.

FEATURE ESSAY: THE 400 MILLION CUSTOMERS OF CHINA

For more than 200 years, the United States has been trying to sell to the Chinese. For the most part, these attempts have failed. American Tobacco and Standard Oil had success after 1890. Since China joined the WTO, U.S. exports to China now exceed $35 billion annually. However, imports from China are about six times greater.

LECTURE TOPICS

Contrast the imperialist and anti-imperialist arguments that were popular in the United States at the turn of the century. In presenting the imperialist argument, stress the pragmatic motivations connected to economic, political, and military empowerment as well as the “moral” justification offered by social Darwinists under the guise of Manifest Destiny. In looking at the anti-imperialist position, consider questions some Americans had regarding the distinctions between early nineteenth-century westward expansion and late nineteenth-century colonial acquisition. Also, consider American concerns about the foreign lands and populations targeted by American imperialism at the turn of the century. Note that many anti-imperialists pointed out the historical and political inconsistencies of a nation that resisted its own colonial status and then grew to colonize other territories itself.
DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

*Who Invited Us?* is a documentary that criticizes American involvement (particularly in Central America) since the Spanish-American War. It can stimulate discussion on American foreign policy as well as encourage an evaluation of the filmmaker’s assumptions and point of view. See also *The United States and the Philippines: In Our Image* for an excellent insight into American imperialism and the way it worked in one country.

Examine nationalist responses to American imperialism at the turn of the century. Have students research and present reports on examples of native resistance to American expansion. Topics to consider include Queen Liliuokalani and the Hawaiian nationalist movement, Emiliano Aguinaldo and the Filipino-American War, and Augusto Sandino and the Nicaraguan resistance.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Understand black efforts in the military in the late nineteenth century, including their roles as buffalo soldiers in the West and as soldiers in the Spanish-American War and Philippine Insurrection. Understand the discrimination blacks faced and gains they made in each of those conflicts. Why did blacks not object to fighting and subjugating other dark-skinned races at this time? What does this tell you about them and about idea of “colored” people?

Ask students to read the account of Aguinaldo’s life at www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/aguinaldo.html. They should be prepared to discuss Aguinaldo’s life and his part in the Filipino revolt. Students should also read and be prepared to discuss the purpose of the Congressional Committee on the Philippines, as well as U.S. military actions in the Philippines.

In a class discussion, students should be prepared to address the following:

- Describe Aguinaldo’s background and his part in the Spanish-American War.
- How did Aguinaldo react when the United States refused to recognize his authority as president of the Republic of the Philippines?
- Discuss Aguinaldo’s leadership of the Philippine revolt.
- How was Aguinaldo captured in 1901?
- Describe Aguinaldo’s political activities following the suppression of the Philippine revolt.
- Discuss the difficulties facing U.S. troops in fighting guerrilla warfare.
- What was the “water cure”?
- Did the U.S. face similar challenges while fighting in Vietnam sixty years later?

Ask students to have a debate on the following questions: Were Americans imperialistic in 1898? Are they now? Or use these questions as the dramatic focus for a lecture analyzing the motivations for and manifestations of expansionism as they still apply today.
CONNECTING TO THE PAST

The most famous episode of the Spanish-American War was Teddy Roosevelt’s racing around the battlefield at San Juan Hill, watching men get shot to the right and left, waving his hat and, on horseback, leading his men up Kettle Hill. Roosevelt was an excellent writer, and he described his adventures in “The Rough Riders,” which can be most easily found today in *The Collected Works of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1924), volume 13.

The way in which the United States acquired the Philippines is rather curious. According to President McKinley, he did not want the islands, and he prayed night after night for guidance. “And one night late it came to me this way,” he told a group of Methodists. “I don’t know how it was, but it came. . . .” The next day, McKinley called in the War Department’s cartographer and told him to put the Philippines on the map of the United States. McKinley’s account first appeared in *The Christian Advocate*, January 22, 1903, and is reprinted in full in Charles S. Olcott, *William McKinley* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916), II, 109–111.

POINTS OF MASTERY

- Explain American interests in Latin America.
- Outline the arguments of the imperialists and the anti-imperialists. Identify the sources of increased American interest in foreign affairs and expansion.
- Discuss the connection between America’s emergence as a major industrial power and its expansionist foreign policy.
- How did American expansionism differ from European imperialism?
- Outline the justifications that Americans used for their late nineteenth-century imperialism.
- Identify William H. Seward and list highlights of American foreign policy during his tenure as secretary of state.
- Identify James G. Blaine and list highlights of American foreign policy during his tenure as secretary of state.
- Cite examples of United States intervention in the political affairs of Venezuela during the 1890s. Explain how these incidents reflected American ideas about the role of the United States in the Western Hemisphere.
- Summarize why Americans had an interest in annexing Hawaii. Describe the Cleveland administration’s handling of the annexation issue.
- Identify Queen Liliuokalani and explain the significance of her role in the Hawaiian annexation issue.
Explain the major motivations for American expansionism in the 1890s.

Describe the circumstances surrounding the annexation of Hawaii.

Identify Alfred Thayer Mahan and describe his contribution to the promotion of American imperialism.

Explain why the United States went to war with Spain in 1898 and the results of this war.

Identify the factors that promoted American support for Cuban independence during the 1890s. Identify the events that served as catalysts in pushing the United States toward war with Spain.

Discuss American relations with Cuba in the years after Cuban independence.

Identify the Teller Amendment and explain why it was added to the bill declaring war on Spain.

Outline the American arguments for and against ratification of the Treaty of Paris. Identify the Anti-Imperialist League and explain its role in the public debate over acquisition of the Philippines.

Identify Emilio Aguinaldo and explain his role in the Filipino-American War.

Describe the series of events that led to the Spanish-American War and those that led to the annexation of and war with the Philippines.

State several arguments for and against the annexation of the Philippines.

Describe the American treatment of the Filipino people during the Filipino-American War. Comment on domestic American reactions to this treatment.

Define the Foraker Act and its effect on Puerto Rico.

Define the term “sphere of influence” and explain its relevance to the political status of China at the turn of the century.

Identify Secretary of State John Hay and outline the principles of his Open Door policy. Describe the circumstances surrounding the Boxer Rebellion and the U.S. reaction.

Is it accurate to describe Hay’s Open Door policy as an imperial policy for a country without the navy to back up such a policy?

Explain the provisions of the Platt Amendment and how they defined the role of the United States in Cuba following the Spanish-American War.
SAMPLE ANSWERS TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. What were the key developments in leading the United States to look abroad between the 1870s and the 1890s, and how did these developments ultimately lead to the war with Spain in 1898?

   International communications increased interest in and awareness of overseas cultures. The end of the frontier left Americans with expansionist tendencies but no place to exercise them. Industrialism had rapidly increased productivity, resulting in surplus production. As a result, there was a strong need to expand markets, and by 1898 the U.S. was a net exporter. Anglo-Saxon Protestants viewed themselves as naturally, culturally, and biologically superior to other races; They perceived a duty to Christianize “inferior” races.

2. Why did the important causes and events of the Spanish-American War lead to the crucial decision to acquire an overseas empire?

   Victory over Spain allowed the United States to claim formerly Spanish territories. Some Americans, including President McKinley, felt that not taking these territories would give an impression of weakness. Other Americans felt that an empire proved United States and Anglo superiority.

3. What were the most important effects of the end of the war and the acquisition of empire?

   The Spanish-American war established the United States as a world power. It also strengthened the office of the presidency and the popularity of both President McKinley and the Republican party. With these developments, however, came increased accountability. The country was saddled with responsibility for the Philippines and Puerto Rico. The way in which the United States chose to manage these new territories set a pattern for the management of future acquisitions; this was a tricky situation, because the United States did not want “colonies,” but did not necessarily want to admit these new territories into the Union. Additionally, relations with former Spanish territories spurred talk about “inferior” races and increased racism against non-whites.

AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

  Part of *The American Experience* series, this video examines the life of Queen Liliuokalani of Hawaii.
- *The United States and the Philippines: In Our Image,* PBS Video, 60 minutes.
  Based on Stanley Karnow’s book, this superb three-part series begins with *Colonial Days.*
CLASS EXERCISES

1. Have the class prepare a paper on the Spanish governor Valeriano “Butcher” Weyler. Examine his style of rule, the threat he presented to Cubans and to foreign interests in Cuba, and his reputation as the originator of the concentration camp.

2. Have students describe one of the events discussed in this chapter from the perspective of the Cubans, Filipinos, or Chinese involved. Then ask students to think about how these groups see Americans today.

3. Ask students to develop a reasoned argument and prepare a speech either for or against the annexation of the Philippines. Bring the speeches to class, which should meet as the U.S. Senate in January 1899. Have the students debate and vote. Then discuss the role-playing exercise, its dynamics, and its results. This can be done in a large lecture class or a smaller class by the not-unhistorical act of stretching the Constitution in order to have the matter decided by a joint resolution of the full Congress.

MYHISTORY LAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

- Watch the Video: Roosevelt’s Rough Riders
- Read the Document: Josiah Strong, from Our Country (1885)
- Read the Document: Liliuokalani, Hawaii’s Story
- Read the Document: Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Interest of America in Sea Power
- View the Map: Activities of the United States in the Caribbean (1898 – 1930s)
- Watch the Video: Burial of the Main Victims
- View the Map: The Spanish-American War
- View the Closer Look: American Empire
- Read the Document: Carl Schurz, Platform of the American Anti-Imperialist League
- View the Image: Emilio Aguinaldo
- Complete the Assignment: The 400 Million Customers of China
CHAPTER 22

THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

CHAPTER OUTLINE

MUCKRAKERS CALL FOR REFORM

THE CHANGING FACE OF INDUSTRIALISM
  • The Innovative Model T
  • The Burgeoning Trusts
  • Managing the Machines

SOCIETY’S MASSES
  • Better Times on the Farm
  • Women and Children at Work
  • The Niagara Movement and the NAACP
  • “I Hear the Whistle”: Immigrants in the Labor Force

CONFLICT IN THE WORKPLACE
  • Organizing Labor
  • Working with Workers
  • Amoskeag

A NEW URBAN CULTURE
  • Production and Consumption
  • Living and Dying in an Urban Nation
  • Popular Pastimes
  • Experimentation in the Arts

CONCLUSION: A FERMENT OF DISCOVERY AND REFORM

FEATURE ESSAY: THE TRIANGLE FIRE
OPENING THEME

MUCKRAKING

One of the lost souls who made his appearance in the classic Pilgrim’s Progress was a man so concerned with digging in the muck of his fields that he did not notice a crown offered him from Heaven. Teddy Roosevelt used the image to attack those who seemed obsessed with exposing corruption in American life. The popularity of television programs that do the same thing today indicates that the American public, including students, still have a healthy appetite for muckraking. They may be interested in learning about the origins of that practice, and they should be asked why a culture so geared to boosterism is also eager to bare its sins to public view.

Muckraking benefitted from a new phenomenon in American literature. There was a “magazine revolution” in the late nineteenth century. Instead of depending on individual subscribers to cover costs of production, which meant an expensive journal and a small, intellectual audience, magazines began to be financed through advertising, which aimed at a mass audience. Samuel McClure, publisher of the leading muckraking journal, realized that he could almost give away his magazine and still make a profit just from the advertising. In 1893 he began publication of McClure’s Magazine at fifteen cents a copy, touching off an immediate price war. Muckraking, therefore, appeared just when magazines started to enter the average home, and almost everything about the new medium excited readers, including the advertisements. That may sound hard to believe, but in the early days of television, people used to enjoy watching the test patterns. Part of the popularity of muckraking, then, may be explained by the accident of fortunate timing.

Muckraking gained public approval also because it continued the tradition of self-education that had been so strong in nineteenth-century America. Today, muckraking articles no longer seem like popular literature, as they did when they first appeared, because we no longer tolerate the didactic tone that was popular with Americans at that time. Writers like Lincoln Steffens, Ida Tarbell, or Ray Stannard Baker conceded nothing to the reader’s impatience or taste for the sensational. An article like “Pittsburgh: A City Ashamed” ran as long as 8,600 words and guided its audience through the labyrinth of municipal government, with neither sex nor violence to relieve the narrative.

Muckraking also endorsed traditional American values and ideas such as original sin and the virtuous yeoman. The articles were not, of course, explicitly theological, but their message was an old one. After relating case after case of individual bribery, perjury, and theft, the muckrakers invariably raised the question of who was really guilty, and always answered that the reader was. Americans were collectively guilty because they did not demand honest government. There was no excuse for apathy, no justification for cynicism. Reading a muckraking article was like listening to a sermon, except that the sinner was threatened with municipal corruption rather than Hell.

Finally, the muckrakers appealed to the traditional, yeoman values still strong in America. Although the muckrakers claimed that corruption was ubiquitous, they generally exposed urban graft. The cities, of course, had always been suspect from a virtuous point of view, but the muckrakers maintained that...
something new had been added to intensify the problem of the cities. Business had grown dominant and supported crooked government. The muckrakers argued that the commercial spirit itself inculcated traits that were dangerous. “The commercial spirit,” Steffens declared, “is the spirit of profit, not patriotism; of credit, not honor; of individual gain, not national prosperity; of trade and dickering, not principle.”

The muckraking era usually described by historians was relatively short, lasting perhaps for only the first quarter of the twentieth century, but muckraking has always been and will always be a popular activity.

MUCKRAKERS CALL FOR REFORM

The author begins by describing how magazines, with their insatiable appetite for sensational material, gave rise, almost accidentally, to the muckraking movement in the early twentieth century. It was a time of general prosperity, but also a time when Americans devoured articles exposing their own corruption.

THE CHANGING FACE OF INDUSTRIALISM

As industry grew larger, it provided more goods at lower prices. Despite a residue of social problems left by the old century, the new century began on a note of optimism.

. The Innovative Model T

Henry Ford began mass producing autos, thereby transforming the industry. He made a small profit on each unit, but sold cars in such numbers that his gross profits were enormous. He introduced the Model T, his greatest success, in 1908, at a time when the federal government began to subsidize highways.

. The Burgeoning Trusts

The trend toward bigness in industry accelerated after 1900 in such fields as oil, rubber, and railroads. Bankers, especially J.P. Morgan, provided integrated control through interlocking directorates. The trusts were never very popular and were denounced as threats to equal opportunity, but some defended them on the grounds that they led to greater efficiency.

. Managing the Machines

In the larger industries, managers became more interested in the manufacturing process than the welfare or morale of the workers. Efficiency became the ultimate goal; Frederick Taylor was its philosopher and the assembly line was its symbol.
Workers benefited from better paychecks, but mass production increased the danger and tedium of long work days. The 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire demonstrated the increased risks of factory work.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

SOCIETY’S MASSES

In order to increase production, employment had to expand rapidly. As a result, women, immigrants, blacks, and Mexican Americans entered the labor force in large numbers. Though they did more of the work, they enjoyed a smaller share of the rewards.

. Better Times on the Farm

Farmers generally prospered in this period. Eastern farmers gained greater access to international markets and western farmers benefitted from vast irrigation projects. The increasing prosperity, however, was unequally shared. Tenant farmers, many of them African Americans, still endured poverty and ill health.

. Women and Children at Work

Women continued to enter the work force in increasing numbers despite complaints that they should stay at home. Women formed their own unions and lobbied for their own interests and those of the children who held jobs. In 1921, Congress finally passed laws protecting the health of pregnant workers and their infants.

C. The Niagara Movement and the NAACP

During this period, most African Americans still lived in rural areas and worked under terrible conditions in sawmills, on plantations, in mines, and in railroad camps. Very few were unionized, and they generally earned substantially less than whites who did the same work. In response to this situation, W. E. B. DuBois organized a conference near Niagara Falls, New York, which established the Niagara Movement. The movement’s goal was to attain equal rights for black people in every area of American government and society, and, to accomplish this, focused on education.

In response to race riots in the first decade of the twentieth century, several prominent proponents of equal rights organized the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which quickly became the most powerful civil rights group in the country. Interestingly, W. E. B DuBois was the only black officer in the organization when it began.

D. “I Hear the Whistle”: Immigrants in the Labor Force
Between 1901 and 1920, 14.5 million immigrants came to the United States. Many of these immigrants came from southern and eastern Europe. Immigrants also arrived from Mexico in large numbers. These immigrants were often looked down upon by “older” groups of immigrants, primarily from northern and western Europe.

Corporations like International Harvester and Ford Motor Company taught these immigrants English, but also immersed them in programs intended to erase their regional and cultural differences and “Americanize” them, making them complacent workers. Organizations like the Women’s Trade Union League attempted to counter these measures.

CONFLICT IN THE WORKPLACE

Production increased dramatically in the early twentieth century, and with it came strikes and labor unrest as workers fought against long hours, dangerous working conditions, and low pay.

A. Organizing Labor

The largest labor organization in the early twentieth century was the American Federation of Labor (AFL). However, its membership was limited to skill craftspeople and excluded the female workers who composed a growing portion of the workforce. Other unions, such as the Women’s Trade Union League (WTUL) and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)—the first union to accept all workers, regardless of race, gender, or occupation—organized the workers the AFL excluded.

B. Working with Workers

To avoid problems, many employers began to improve working conditions. Henry Ford, for example, doubled wages and reduced the length of the workday, thereby increasing production and ending union activity in his plants.

. Amoskeag

The Amoskeag mills in Manchester, New Hampshire, are a good example of the benevolent, paternalistic approach many employers took to managing their workforce. The company operated efficiently and profitably by hiring entire families, to whom it provided playgrounds, health care, and other benefits.

A NEW URBAN CULTURE

Mass production meant mass consumption and a more abundant life for most Americans. For the first time in their history, ordinary people had free time on their hands and used it to enjoy themselves.
Spectator sports, especially baseball, became immensely popular, as did movies, phonograph records, and light reading.

. Production and Consumption

Between 1900 and 1920, American manufacturers, especially in textiles, became more efficient about creating a demand for their products through advertising and more efficient about supplying the demand they created by mass production. The American people enjoyed a flood of goods that raised their standard of living dramatically. At the same time, wealth was being increasingly concentrated in the hands of the wealthy.

. Living and Dying in an Urban Nation

By 1920, less than one-third of the American people still lived in rural areas. Cities were growing at a colossal rate and began to take on modern form. They were still dangerous, unhealthy places to live, but they were beginning to improve. Los Angeles, for example, adopted zoning regulations to separate industrial, commercial, and residential areas.

. Popular Pastimes

Americans flocked to baseball and football games, movies and concerts, and made heroes of athletes and band leaders like John Philip Sousa. Ragtime and the fox-trot caught on, the blues and jazz became the music of all Americans, and vaudeville reached its peak. Science fiction novels, such as the Tom Swift series, familiarized Americans with spaceships and ray-guns.

. Experimentation in the Arts

Serious artists began to change traditional art forms. Isadora Duncan experimented with new forms of dance while writers like T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound introduced new forms of poetry. In painting, the Ashcan School and post-Impressionism challenged older ideas of what art could be.

CONCLUSION: A FERMENT OF DISCOVERY AND REFORM

The Progressive era did not eradicate racism nor did it end labor conflict, but there were solid social and economic gains, and there was a sense of excitement that social experiments could work.
FEATURE ESSAY: THE TRIANGLE FIRE

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire occurred two years after the largest women’s labor strike in history. The strikers had asked for fire escapes and unblocked exits, but were denied. In the 1911 fire, one hundred forty-six people died, many of them by leaping from the eighth floor to escape the flames. Over 250,000 people attended the funeral procession. According to Frances Perkins, the tragedy was the spur that enabled industrial safety regulations and the New Deal.

LECTURE TOPICS

Trace the early development of the American motion picture industry. Many early films are available on DVD for use in the classroom. By showing brief clips from a few significant films, students can see the rapid technological development in film production from the turn of the century until the Depression. Some films to examine might include The Great Train Robbery, Birth of a Nation, and The Jazz Singer. The inclusion of some films from the 1930s such as The Wizard of Oz or Gone with the Wind would illustrate how far film technique had come by that time. Another issue connected to this topic is racial and gender stereotyping in early twentieth-century film. This issue could be examined in both Birth of a Nation and The Jazz Singer.

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

Have students imagine themselves as a blue-ribbon study commission of typical young progressive experts meeting to discuss the ills of American society in, say, 1910. Ask them to put together a list of concerns and decide upon a specific program of recommendations. Half the group, however, should be instructed to be primarily interested in relieving the social misery of suffering Americans by providing social justice and equal opportunity, while the other half should be primarily interested in order, efficiency, and making these Americans into good citizens with middle-class values. This is an exercise not only in identifying the main progressive issues but also in experiencing the tension and ambiguity in the progressive approach to reform. A large lecture class could be divided in half to represent these two sides of progressivism as a dramatic way of underlining the ambiguity during your lecture on the subject.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Discuss the views of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois. How were their ideas a product of their background, education, and times? What limitations do you see in each man’s view of how to advance black people? Whose view ultimately prevailed?

Read portions of Upton Sinclair’s The Jungle online in preparation for a class discussion of the book. Sinclair once said that he aimed the book at the nation’s heart but hit its stomach. What did he mean by this statement?

www.online-literature.com/upton_sinclair.jungle/
The idea of “muckraking” continues to be popular with students. Many Americans like to watch television shows that purport to expose injustices and corruption. Students could present a comparison of Progressive Era muckraking with today’s equivalent. Many libraries have microfilm copies of McClure’s or other early twentieth-century muckraking journals. Students could compare these with magazines like Mother Jones or TV programs like 60 Minutes.

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

Philosophers often use parables or problems to illustrate abstract points. William James, whose theory of pragmatism had a great influence in the early part of the twentieth century, used the problem of a man trying to catch sight of a squirrel clinging to the trunk of a tree. The man moves around the tree, but the squirrel moves just as rapidly, so that the trunk of the tree is always between the man and the squirrel. The question is, does the man go around the squirrel or not? The man certainly goes around the tree, but does he go around the squirrel? For the solution, see his lecture, “What Pragmatism Means,” first delivered in Boston in 1906 and now available in the definitive, critical edition, William James, Pragmatism (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

Among those who tried to apply pragmatism was John Dewey, whose fame now seems to be restricted to his work as an educational reformer. His book, School and Society, first published in 1899, was the credo of progressive education. In it he relates one episode that tells much about traditional education and why Dewey felt it had to be reformed. While shopping for school desks, Dewey looked at model after model without finding what he wanted. Finally the salesman said, “I am afraid we have not what you want. You want something at which the children may work; these are all for listening.” See Jo Ann Boydston, editor, John Dewey: The Middle Works, 1899–1924 (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1976).

POINTS OF MASTERY

Define the term “muckraker” and explain the importance of this form of journalism to the progressive movement. Identify some of the major writers associated with this genre of journalism.

Identify the Model T and discuss Henry Ford’s entrepreneurial spirit.

Define the term “oligopoly” and explain its significance to American corporate development during the 1920s.

Name several technological inventions and influential ideas of the Progressive Era and their impact on social and economic life.

Explain the impact of the progressive movement on life in rural America.

Discuss the role of children and women in the workplace.
Describe the major changes in the role and status of women during the Progressive Era. Identify the clubs and organizations that helped to politically organize women during the Progressive Era.

Discuss African American interest in progressive urban reform. Identify W. E. B. DuBois and discuss his contributions to civil rights reform during the early twentieth century.

Discuss the early role of the NAACP. What was the organization working for? Would you consider its members “radical”? Discuss the meaning of the word “radical” and how it might apply differently in different time periods.

Understand the origins and tactics of early civil rights groups, including the Niagara Movement, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Urban League, the women’s club movement, as well as the development of the black elite.

Analyze the Progressive Era from the perspective of African Americans. What political and social developments were most crucial, and what legacies did they leave?

Discuss the role of immigrants in America’s labor force. Describe how racial prejudice hurt some ethnicities more than others.

Define the term “barrio” and briefly describe the living conditions among immigrants from Mexico in urban areas during the 1920s.

Identify the major national labor unions of the Progressive Era.

How did workers use their own values and communities to restrain the power of large corporations during the Progressive Era?

Describe the union movement of the first decade of the twentieth century. How did events like the Triangle Factory fire impact unionization?

Describe how the urban landscape changed as business boomed.

How did Americans entertain themselves during this era? Discuss vaudeville, jazz, and experimentation in the arts.

Identify the Ashcan School and explore why it was unique.

Identify the film *The Birth of a Nation*. Discuss the elements of the film and how it portrays blacks as well as the process of reconstruction. How does it fit into the spirit of the 1920s?

**SAMPLE ANSWERS TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

1. How did the changing nature of industrialism after the 1890s influence the beginnings of a Progressive Era?
The changing nature of industrialism created trends that aroused sympathy, fear, and horror, which Progressive legislation would aim to control. Industries became mammoth, employing thousands of workers. Assembly lines enabled mass production, deskilling, and Taylorism (scientific management), and exacerbated worker alienation. Monotonous industrial work with powerful machines became very dangerous. Trusts developed oligopolistic control over crucial industries. Inevitably, the growth of giant businesses gave rise to a widespread fear of “trusts” and a desire among many progressive reformers to break them up or regulate them.

2 In what specific ways did workers, African Americans, and immigrants respond to the changing nature of industrial society and in the process help bring about the Progressive Era?

Workers increasingly unionized and struck for better pay and working conditions. The most radical union, the IWW, called for revolution. The WTUL was founded to extend the benefits of unionization to women. W. E. B. DuBois helped found the Niagara Movement to pursue equal rights and took a leadership role in the mostly white-run NAACP. The NAACP and National Urban League pursued equal rights in the courts. These organizations brought the plight of those whose voices were often not heard to the attention of politicians and average Americans, inspiring the larger reforms of the Progressive Era.

3 How did workers organize to try to improve their lot in the cities and factories of the advancing industrial society?

Workers organized by industry (AFL), by political persuasion (IWW), and by gender (WTUL). They conducted strikes, petitioned company owners and government for increased regulation and rights, and sought to educate workers and the general population about their rights.

4 How did changes in popular culture mold attitudes in the new Progressive Era?

Popular culture became more consumer-oriented—people watched and listened more and acted less. The arts—painting, dance, poetry—became more avant-garde. Across society, people experienced a sense of excitement and discovery. There was talk of hope, progress, and change. People believed for a time that they could make a difference.

AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES

Suggested Documentaries and Films:


This episode of *The American Experience* examines the rift between Du Bois and Washington.

*Triangle Factory Fire:* www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/ provides original documents, secondary essays, and images of the tragic fire that killed scores of workers.
CLASS EXERCISES

1. Ask students to write a 2- to 3-page paper comparing and contrasting the lives and philosophies of W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington from online sources. Information on Du Bois can be found at the following websites:
   http://members.tripod.com/~DuBois/biography.html

   Information about Booker T. Washington can be found at the following websites:
   www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/aaohtml/exhibit/aopart6.html
   www.ushistory.net/toc/washington.html
   http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAbooker.htm

2. In a class or group discussion and/or written paper, ask students to compare and contrast modern genetics research with the eugenics movement at the turn of the twentieth century. Students should familiarize themselves with the Buck v. Bell trial and some of the state laws that provided for the sterilization of “feebleminded” individuals.

   Students can locate and research the Eugenics Archives at http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/.

   Students should address the following questions:
   a. Describe the scientific and social origins of the eugenics movement.
   b. Why did eugenicists lobby for social legislation to keep racial and ethnic groups separate and to restrict immigration?
   c. How was the scientific research of eugenicists flawed?
   d. Why did eugenicists seek to sterilize people who were “genetically unfit”?  
   e. What effectively ended the eugenics movement in America?
   f. Compare and contrast the research methods used by eugenicists in the Progressive Era to those used by gene researchers today.
   g. Are groups or individuals lobbying today for sterilization of certain groups or individuals?

3. Send students out with their cameras to take pictures of contemporary issues of social concern and arrange the developed photographs into a show. Discuss the point of view and purposes of the photographers and the extent to which they heighten or distort reality. From this exercise in contemporary uses of the camera, return to the early part of the century and evaluate the effectiveness of progressive photographic reformers.

4. Have students participate in a class project focusing on muckraking. Assign students the task of writing an exposé of wrongdoing in their own community. You may want to provide students with a list of topics from which to choose or let them choose their own. This is a good
option for group projects that can be presented in class. It is also a good way to help students link the past and present.

**MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS**

- Watch the Video: The Rise and Fall of the Automobile Economy
- Read the Document: Frederick Winslow Taylor, *Scientific Management* (1911)
- Watch the Video: Rural Free Delivery Mail
- Read the Document: John Spargo, *The Bitter Cry of the Children* (1906)
- Read the Document: Samuel Gompers: The American Labor Movement (1914)
- Complete the Assignment: The Triangle Fire
- View the Closer Look: Triangle Fire, March 25, 1911
- Watch the Video: A Vaudeville Act
CHAPTER 23

FROM ROOSEVELT TO WILSON IN THE AGE OF PROGRESSIVISM

CHAPTER OUTLINE

THE REPUBLICANS SPLIT

THE SPIRIT OF PROGRESSIVISM

• The Rise of the Professions
• The Social-Justice Movement
• The Purity Crusade
• Woman Suffrage, Women’s Rights
• A Ferment of Ideas: Challenging the Status Quo

REFORM IN THE CITIES AND STATES

• Interest Groups and the Decline of Popular Politics
• Reform in the Cities
• Action in the States

THE REPUBLICAN ROOSEVELT

• Busting the Trusts
• “Square Deal” in the Coalfields

ROOSEVELT PROGRESSIVISM AT ITS HEIGHT

• Regulating the Railroads
• Cleaning up Food and Drugs
• Conserving the Land

THE ORDEAL OF WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT

• Party Insurgency
• The Ballinger-Pinchot Affair
• Taft Alienates the Progressives
• Differing Philosophies in the Election of 1912
WOODROW WILSON’S NEW FREEDOM

• The New Freedom in Action
• Wilson Moves Toward the New Nationalism

CONCLUSION: THE FRUITS OF PROGRESSIVISM

FEATURE ESSAY: MADAME C. J. WALKER

OPENING THEME

KNIGHTS, WOBBLIES, AND TRADE UNIONS

Around the turn of the century, American Labor was split into three different approaches. The first led back to the past; the second led to a Socialist future; the third led to “bread-and-butter” trade unionism.

Americans did not easily accept the emergence of a permanent wage-earning class. Traditionally, artisans began as apprentices and worked their way up until they became masters. Even journeymen, who worked for wages, often owned their own tools and, in today’s language, could be described as subcontractors. It was this sort of labor system, in which every white male eventually became his own boss, that formed the basis for American democracy. The first unions to be organized were attempts to preserve that way of life, which was fast disappearing. The Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor grew rapidly in the 1880s, reaching a membership of about one million by 1886. The Knights would hardly qualify as a labor union today because so many of its members were not what we think of as laborers. Farmers were the largest single occupation represented, and the Knights’ constitution included a demand that the government give out free land. Terence Powderly, the Grand Master Workman, believed that “the main, all absorbing question of the hour is the land question . . . .” The Knights became increasingly irrelevant to the hundreds of thousands working in factories, and died out before 1900.

In direct contradiction to the dream of going back to an ideal past, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), or Wobblies, wanted to take American workers into a new future. The Wobblies made no bones about their belief that it would take a social revolution to achieve their ends, which were the total transformation of employer-employee relationships and the destruction of the class system in America. Unlike all other unions of the time, the IWW did not bar women, African Americans, or any other nationalities from its ranks. During the early twentieth century, the IWW organized hundreds of thousands of migratory farm workers, was successful in securing an 8-hour day and improved working conditions for lumberjacks in the Pacific Northwest, and was a driving force in organizing longshoremen. However, the goals of the IWW were so broad—the creation of a global union that included all workers—and persecution so great that membership declined over the course of the twentieth century. The IWW continues to organize today, but would not shape the future of labor unions in America.
The third path open to Labor, and the most successful, was pioneered by the American Federation of Labor. Unlike the Knights and Wobblies, the AFL never attempted to unite all workers in a common cause. It began when leaders of different craft unions within the Knights broke away to pursue their own interests. Instead of trying to organize whole industries, which would have required a massive effort among unspecialized workers, the AFL unionized crafts, like the Cigar Makers or the Journeymen Tailors, most of whom were highly skilled artisans. Instead of trying to create a new political party, the AFL supported Democrats or Republicans who promised favorable legislation. Instead of striving to bring about a glorious future or to restore a golden past, the AFL worked for today and tomorrow, in the form of higher wages, shorter work weeks, and better working conditions.

All three of these approaches helped bring about fundamental changes in twentieth-century labor in the United States. The average work week was shortened and the average pay greatly increased. The threat of union activity and strikes led many business owners, such as Henry Ford, to improve wages, hours, and working conditions in an attempt to avert the need for workers to organize. Although the Labor Movement did not achieve a revolution or even, at its peak, unionize half the working population of the United States, the pressure created by the movement led to the working conditions to which we are accustomed: a 40-hour week, days off, overtime pay, and workplace safety regulations.

However, in the end the pragmatic approach of the AFL proved the most enduring. Offshoots of the AFL include the United Auto Workers (UAW) as well as unions for electricians, firefighters, plumbers, carpenters, mine workers, postal employees, and teachers. Today, many unions are under attack from right-wing politicians promoting privatization, cost-cutting, and looser regulation for business. The future of Labor in the United States is uncertain; however, it is crucial to remember that the working conditions we enjoy today, whether or not we belong to a union, are the result of Labor’s struggles and achievements. What has been achieved can be undone.

THE REPUBLICANS SPLIT

The author begins with the growing personal split between Teddy Roosevelt and his hand-picked successor, William Howard Taft. The split allowed the Progressive wing of the Democratic party to win the White House.

THE SPIRIT OF PROGRESSIVISM

Progressives never organized into a coherent movement, but they shared a general set of values. They tended to combine a sense of evangelical Protestant duty with faith in the benefits of science. The result was a tremendous confidence in their ability to improve every aspect of American life, by law if necessary.
The Rise of the Professions

Progressive attitudes were especially strong among the young men and women who entered law, medicine, business, education, and social work. Proud of their skills, they made these occupations into professions by creating tough entrance requirements and by forming national associations.

The Social-Justice Movement

Reformers realized that helping single individuals was not enough and turned their attention to larger social problems, such as poverty, substandard housing, and low wages, which they attacked with scientific precision.

The Purity Crusade

Progressives fought successfully against such vices as prostitution and alcohol. The Women’s Christian Temperance Union pressured nineteen states to adopt prohibition laws and played a pivotal role in pushing through the Eighteenth Amendment.

Woman Suffrage, Woman’s Rights

Many of the reform-minded Progressives were women who joined agencies like the National Conference of Social Work and the General Federation of Women’s Clubs. While these organizations successfully lobbied on the state level, women realized that they could influence Congress more directly if they had the vote, and they organized a strong movement for female suffrage, based on the idea that women would use political power to benefit the disadvantaged. In 1890 the National American Woman Suffrage Association was formed and worked effectively to have the Nineteenth Amendment passed in 1920.

A Ferment of Ideas: Challenging the Status Quo

The Progressives were pragmatists, as defined by the philosopher William James. For them, the value of an idea was measured by the action it inspired. Pragmatism rejected the belief that there were immutable laws governing society. John Dewey, a Progressive educator, developed educational techniques that stressed personal growth, free inquiry, and individual creativity. Thorstein Veblen and Richard Ely attacked classical economic theory from a Pragmatic viewpoint.

Another major intellectual movement, Socialism, also gained increased support during the era. A Socialist party was formed in 1901 and won a number of local elections. It ran Eugene Debs for president in 1912, and polled over a million votes.
REFORM IN THE CITIES AND STATES

Progressives were strongest in urban areas, where they took control of local levels of government in order to solve social problems. During the Progressive Era, government power increased, even on the federal level, and the bureaucracy grew, because Progressives believed that government by experts was the solution to most problems.

. Interest Groups and the Decline of Popular Politics

The percentage of people who voted declined rapidly in the Progressive Era, partly because interest groups, such as labor unions and professional associations, were so effective in getting favorable legislation through their lobbying efforts.

. Reform in the Cities

The urban reform leagues, which existed as little more than debating clubs in the 1880s, became more active after 1900. Copying business methods, they gave greater efficiency to urban government by forming a professional, nonpolitical civil service. In many cities, starting in 1900 with Galveston, Texas, appointed commissioners took the place of elected officials. The city manager idea also spread. In many cities such as Cleveland, where the mayor was elected, this era was famous for characters such as reform mayors Tom Johnson, who made Cleveland the best-governed city in the nation, and “Golden Rule” Jones of Toledo.

. Action in the States

Reformers realized that certain problems had to be solved on the state level, and state after state created regulatory commissions to investigate most aspects of economic life. As in the case of the railroads, the commissions sometimes damaged the industry they were supposed to regulate. On the political level, Progressives added three new features to American government: the initiative, the referendum, and the recall. In 1917, Progressives celebrated passage of the Seventeenth Amendment, which provides for the direct election of U.S. senators. Just as there were famous reform mayors, so were there reform governors. The most notable was Robert La Follette, whose “Wisconsin Idea” was a comprehensive program of reform that allied government with the academic community.

THE REPUBLICAN ROOSEVELT

Theodore Roosevelt, often defying convention, as when he invited Booker T. Washington to the White House, brought an exuberance to the presidency and surrounded himself with able associates.
Busting the Trusts

Roosevelt believed that trusts could sometimes be good, but he intended to attack those he considered bad. In 1902 the government brought antitrust cases against the Northern Securities Company, a railroad holding company owned by Morgan and Rockefeller, and other companies. In 1904 Northern Securities was dissolved. The case established Roosevelt as a “trust-buster,” but the title is undeserved. Compared with Taft, Roosevelt started relatively few antitrust suits.

“Square Deal” in the Coalfields

In 1902 a prolonged strike called by the United Mine Workers against the coal mine operators in Pennsylvania threatened the entire economy. Roosevelt summoned both sides to the White House, and when the companies balked at a settlement, Roosevelt threatened to use the army to seize the mines. The companies gave in. In this case, as in others, Roosevelt saw his role as that of a broker between contending interests.

ROOSEVELT PROGRESSIVISM AT ITS HEIGHT

Roosevelt easily won the election of 1904 and immediately embarked on a progressive reform program.

Regulating the Railroads

Roosevelt addressed the complaints of farmers passing the Hepburn Act, which strengthened the authority of the Interstate Commerce Commission to set rates.

Cleaning up Food and Drugs

The publication of The Jungle by Upton Sinclair in 1906 shocked the nation with its depiction of the unsanitary conditions of the meat-packing industry. After reading the book, Roosevelt pushed Congress to pass the Meat Inspection Act and other legislation to regulate patent medicines.

Conserving the Land

Roosevelt, always interested in conservation, almost quadrupled the number of acres protected by the federal government. He agitated for even more pro-labor legislation as his term came to an end. He had promised not to run again in 1908 and tapped William Taft as his successor.
Taft was too lazy and too much an introvert to be a successful president. He had been an able administrator and was used to settling problems quietly. In addition, during his presidency, the conservative wing of the Republican party, cowed by Roosevelt, began to reassert itself.

. Party Insurgency

The issue that most divided the progressive and conservative wings of the Republican party was the tariff. It was generally agreed that the rates set by the Dingley Tariff had to be lowered, but Progressives wanted deep cuts, especially in those products produced by the large trusts. Taft eventually sided with the conservatives, who passed the Payne-Aldrich Act of 1909. The Progressives broke with Taft and began to look forward to electing Roosevelt in 1912.

. The Ballinger-Pinchot Affair

Taft further antagonized Progressives and Roosevelt when he fired Gifford Pinchot, a leading conservationist, because of his insubordination toward Secretary of the Interior Richard Ballinger, whom Pinchot accused of selling public lands to friends.

. Taft Alienates the Progressives

Even when Taft attempted to support progressive measures, such as his successful effort to strengthen the ICC by the Mann-Elkins Act of 1910, he found himself deserted by the Progressives whenever he had to make even minor concessions for conservative votes. In the 1910 congressional elections, Taft attacked the Progressives, weakening the entire Republican party and allowing the Democrats to gain control of Congress.

Taft worked well with the Democratic Congress; together, they passed legislation protecting laborers and creating an income tax (the Sixteenth Amendment). Taft also pushed ahead with antitrust suits, including one against a merger that Roosevelt had approved. Roosevelt and Taft began to attack one another publicly, and in 1912 Roosevelt announced his candidacy for president.

. Differing Philosophies in the Election of 1912

Although Taft was nominated by the Republican party, he had no chance of victory. Roosevelt ran as the candidate of the Progressive (or “Bull Moose”) party, and Woodrow Wilson was nominated by the Democrats. Roosevelt campaigned on the promise of a “New Nationalism,” in which the federal government would actively regulate and stimulate the economy and in which wasteful competition would be replaced by efficiency. Wilson promised a “New Freedom,” in which big business and the government would be restrained so that the individual could forge ahead on his
own. Because the Republican vote was divided, the Democrats won both the White House and Capitol Hill.

WOODROW WILSON’S NEW FREEDOM

Woodrow Wilson reached the White House through an academic rather than a political career. He had been a history professor and the president of Princeton University before being elected governor of New Jersey. A progressive, an intellectual, stubborn and self-righteous, and an inspiring orator, Wilson was one of America’s most effective presidents.

. The New Freedom in Action

Wilson led Congress in the passage of several important measures. The Underwood Tariff of 1913 cut duties substantially; the Federal Reserve Act of 1913 reformed the banking system and gave the United States a stable but flexible currency, and the Clayton Antitrust Act of 1914 outlawed unfair trade practices and limited the use of court injunctions against labor unions. In 1914, the Federal Trade Commission was established to supervise business. With this much accomplished, Wilson abruptly announced that the “New Freedom” had been achieved in November 1914.

. Wilson Moves Toward the New Nationalism

Wilson retreated from reform because he was distracted by the outbreak of war in Europe, because he needed conservative southern support, and because the Republicans seemed to make gains by attacking Wilson’s programs. In 1916, Wilson, who wished to be reelected, again pushed progressive reforms. He succeeded in helping farmers with the Federal Farm Loan Act. He intervened in strikes on the side of the workers. He tried to ban child labor. He increased income taxes on the rich. He gave his support to female suffrage. In blending elements of the New Freedom with elements of the New Nationalism, Wilson adopted a pragmatic approach to reform and won a close election in 1916.

CONCLUSION: THE FRUITS OF PROGRESSIVISM

The Progressive era lasted little more than the decade between 1906 and 1916, but it had a permanent influence on American life. The Progressives energized government at all levels to correct glaring inequities and brought intelligent planning to the work of reform. It was confidently expected that a benevolent bureaucracy would continue to manage American life in an enlightened way, but the slaughter and madness of World War I ended the optimism upon which Progressivism had been based.
FEATURE ESSAY: MADAME C. J. WALKER

Madam C. J. Walker started her business in her attic, filling jars with her hair care product and selling it door to door. Eleven years later she owned a large factory in Indianapolis and employed 20,000 sales agents. She used her money and fame to promote African American causes. She did not settle the continuing debate over whether hair straightening perpetuates racist oppression.

LECTURE TOPICS

Compare and contrast the populist and progressive movements. Have students recall the Omaha Platform from the populist movement and determine which of these goals were achieved by the populists themselves and which by the progressives. Look at the participants in each movement. How do they differ from each other? Are there any groups that were drawn to both movements? Did the nature of the membership in each movement impact the level of success attained by each? Also, use this opportunity to predict the next link in the evolution of twentieth-century American reform between the progressive movement and the New Deal. What has been achieved in the progressive movement that will be used, resurrected, or extended during the New Deal?

Examine Prohibition from the perspective of a distillery. Look at the growth of the distillery business at the turn of the century, perhaps focusing on one company, such as Anheuser-Busch. Connect the growth in the distillery business to turn-of-the-century immigration. How did distilleries like Anheuser-Busch fight prohibition? How did these companies survive the years of prohibition?

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

Discuss American socialism during the Progressive Era. After providing some historical background on socialist leaders, organizations, and parties at the turn of the century, ask students to assess the appeal (or lack thereof) socialism has held for Americans historically. What factors have contributed to socialism’s limited appeal in the United States? Have students consider traditional American political values, the structure and function of the American political system, and traditional American ideas regarding wealth and poverty. How have these issues defined the American response to socialism?

Have students discuss the tie between progressivism and imperialism. Theodore Roosevelt is an excellent example of a person who embodied both of these causes. Consider the following questions:

a. How does imperialism represent an extension of the Social Gospel? What motivations and philosophical justifications behind the progressive movement could also be used to justify imperialism?

b. How is social Darwinism reflected in both progressivism and imperialism?

c. How are paternalism and the desire to exert control and authority reflected in both progressivism and imperialism?

d. Did all progressives support imperialism? Why not?
Was the progressive movement liberal or conservative? The progressive movement is included in the string of American reform movements dating from the populist movement through the reform era of the 1960s. Yet, historian Gabriel Kolko has characterized the Progressive Era as “a triumph of conservatism.” Have students discuss this issue by focusing on the following questions:

a. How were the progressives motivated? What did they want and why did they want it?

b. How did middle-class progressives feel about the communities they assisted? Have students consider the impact of nativism and social Darwinism on progressive motivation. How did these ideas connect to the Social Gospel and the Gospel of Efficiency?

c. Consider issues connected to paternalism, control, and authority. Why were progressives willing to take responsibility for reform? If they did not assume responsibility for change, who did they fear would take that responsibility? Was the progressive movement in any way a contest between mainstream Americans and radicals for the right to control reform?

Discuss the issue of laissez faire during the Progressive Era. Describe how progressives continued to change traditional American ideas about the role of government. Cite specific laws passed during the Progressive Era giving more power to the federal government. Discuss the issue of police power and the laws that expanded that area of authority for the federal government. Examine the office of the presidency during the Progressive Era. How did it change under Theodore Roosevelt? How did it change under Woodrow Wilson? How did Wilson’s love of order and organization impact the size of the federal government? Why did Americans endorse these changes in the size and power of the federal government?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)**

Compare and contrast the political philosophy of Roosevelt’s New Nationalism and Wilson’s New Freedom. Give examples of legislative successes for each program.

Discuss the importance of the issue of prohibition at the turn of the century. Consider some of the following issues:

a. If you have not addressed it in earlier chapters, provide a moral and political context for this reform issue. How does prohibition connect to evangelical Protestantism, to nativism, to modern industrialism, and to feminism?

b. Provide an overview of turn-of-the-century parties and organizations dedicated to prohibition. Focus particularly on the Prohibition Party and the WCTU.

c. Make a connection between prohibition and the politicization of the modern American woman. Have students comment on the fact that this movement will not only achieve federal prohibition of the production and distribution of alcohol, but it will achieve that prohibition through a constitutional amendment.
CONNECTING TO THE PAST

In a revealing debate between Morris Hilquit, of the Socialist party, and Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, before a congressional committee in 1916, the choices open to Labor were discussed. Hilquit tried to get Gompers to say that the eventual result of the AFL’s demands for better hours and wages would be a Socialist society. Gompers refused to admit any such thing. “We go further than you,” Gompers said. “You have an end; we have not.” The original source is United States Senate, Industrial Relations Commission, *Final Report and Testimony . . .*, 64th Congress, First Session, 1916, pp. 1528-1530. If your library does not have a government-documents section, much of the debate has been printed in Loren Baritz, editor, *The American Left: Radical Political Thought in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1971).

One of the most paternalistic factories in American history was the Amoskeag mill in Manchester, New Hampshire. It has been the subject of an excellent study by Tamara Hareven and Randolph Langenbach: *Amoskeag* (New York: Random House, 1978). The authors have reprinted a number of interviews with those who worked at the mill, some of whom started working there in the late nineteenth century. Antonia Bergeron, for example, began to work at Amoskeag in 1895. The account of her move from a Canadian village and her relationship with Irish workers in the mill is especially interesting. Many of the accounts offer a useful correction to the usual litany of horrors that students associate with the early factories. Mary Cunion, for example, began her narrative with the flat assertion, “I spent my happiest times in the mills.”

POINTS OF MASTERY

Analyze the tenets of the Republican party and its transformation during the Progressive Era.

Define the Social-Justice movement and identify key figures and motives within the movement.

Define the term settlement house and connect the settlement movement to the role of women in the progressive movement. Explain the impact of the settlement movement on traditional American ideas regarding poverty.

 Explain the provisions of the Eighteenth Amendment and discuss the reasons for progressive support of prohibition.

 Explain the provisions of the Nineteenth Amendment and discuss the moderation of the woman’s suffrage argument at the turn of the century.

Identify the challenges that faced those attempting to gain effective child labor legislation during the Progressive Era.
Discuss the philosophical dilemma facing feminists and lawmakers who were attempting to pass women’s labor reform legislation during the Progressive Era.

Identify some key legislative initiatives of the Progressive Era that can be identified with the origins of the welfare state.

Identify William James and define Pragmatism.

Identify the key improvements in public education during the Progressive Era. Explain how racial segregation impacted the quality of southern public education.

Identify Robert La Follette and describe his contributions to progressive political reform.

Explain Theodore Roosevelt’s theory regarding “trustbusting.” Identify three laws passed during his administration that effectively expanded the police power of the federal government.

Identify three ways in which Theodore Roosevelt modernized the role of the president.

Analyze Theodore Roosevelt’s role as mediator between labor and management in the coal industry.

Discuss how government and journalists regulated the Food and Drug Administration.

Discuss Theodore Roosevelt’s program for conservation of natural resources. Identify the sources of opposition to this program.

Identify the major political problems that confronted William Taft during his presidential administration. Explain the impact of these problems on the presidential election of 1912.

Compare and contrast the presidential administrations and political philosophies of Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft.

Discuss the political background of Woodrow Wilson. Explain the philosophical contest between New Nationalism and New Freedom in the 1912 presidential campaign.

List the major pieces of reform legislation coming out of the Wilson administration that addressed tariff, banking, business, farming, and labor reform.

Discuss Wilson’s first term and question his role in reform and economics. Specifically list three major acts that defined Wilson’s presidency.

Identify the black aesthetic and explain how Madame C.J. Walker profited from racial concepts.

Analyze the court case Muller v. Oregon and discuss its legal significance.
SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. How might American history have changed if the Progressive Era had not occurred?

   Progressivism brought about changes that addressed the excesses of industrialism and capitalism and improved people’s lives in many ways. Without a successful Progressive movement, change might never have come about, or it might have come about through actions outside the legal system. Perhaps there would have been a socialist revolution.

2. How did the major measures of Roosevelt’s second term continue the progressive approaches of his first term?

   After breaking up trusts using the Sherman Antitrust Act in his first term, he strengthened the ICC’s regulatory powers in his second term. His second term also produced health regulations for the food and drug industries. His first term saw a huge increase in the acreage of federal conservation land; he did not follow up with new conservation measures in his second term.

3. How did the differences of opinion during the Progressive Era affect the Taft administration?

   Taft was unable to weaken Joe Cannon’s power, which he used to block progressive measures. He urged a compromise on the tariff issue, which alienated both progressives and conservatives. He alienated Pinchot, a hero of conservationists, so that even though Taft was a strong conservationist he lost many progressives’ support.

4. How did the Wilson administration draw on the characteristics of the Progressive Era?

   The Federal Reserve Act to stabilize the financial industry; the Clayton Antitrust Act, which declared union activity legal; the FTC; intervened in labor disputes on behalf of labor unions.

AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

*Eugene Debs and the American Movement*. A biographical sketch of Debs. Shows strikes and government repression of worker attempts to organize. Helps students understand the difference between progressivism and socialism (Color, 44 minutes, 1978).

*Mother Jones: The Most Dangerous Woman in America* (37 mins), Mother Jones Foundation, 2007. The only documentary that focuses on the life of Mother Jones as she worked for the rights of American miners and the working class. The film includes the only known footage of Mother Jones ever recorded.

*Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, Ken Burns, PBS Video, 1999, 180 minutes. Ken Burns looks at the story of the historic friendship between Stanton and Anthony and how it figured into the quest for woman’s suffrage.


**CLASS EXERCISES**

1. Beginning in 1908, the United States began keeping records on immigrants who returned to their homeland. Have your section explore the following Web sites in order to prepare for a class discussion on reasons for immigration as well as reasons for the permanent return of some immigrants.

   - www.genealogy.com96_donna.html
   - www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/italian_immigration.cfm

2. Re-create the campaign and election of 1912 by dividing the class into four groups, each representing one of the four parties. Depending on the time you wish to devote to this exercise, you can have students write and present party platforms, give campaign speeches, debate issues, and eventually hold a mock election.

**MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS**

- Read the Document: Lincoln Steffens, from *The Shame of the Cities*
- Read the Document: Report of the Vice Commission (1915)
- Read the Document: National Woman Suffrage Association, Mother’s Day Letter
- Read the Document: Eugene V. Debs, from “The Outlook for Socialism in America”
- Read the Document: Theodore Roosevelt, from *The Strenuous Life* (1900)
- Read the Document: Upton Sinclair, from *The Jungle* (1906)
- Watch the Video: Bull Moose Campaign Speech
- Read the Document: Woodrow Wilson, from *The New Freedom* (1913)
- Complete the Assignment: Madam C. J. Walker: African American Business Pioneer
CHAPTER 24

THE NATION AT WAR

CHAPTER OUTLINE

THE SINKING OF THE LUSITANIA

A NEW WORLD POWER

• “I Took the Canal Zone”
• The Roosevelt Corollary
• Ventures in the Far East
• Taft and Dollar Diplomacy

FOREIGN POLICY UNDER WILSON

• Conducting Moral Diplomacy
• Troubles Across the Border

TOWARD WAR

• The Neutrality Policy
• Freedom of the Seas
• The U-Boat Threat
• “He Kept Us Out of War”
• The Final Months of Peace

OVER THERE

• Mobilization
• War in the Trenches

OVER HERE

• The Conquest of Convictions
• A Bureaucratic War
• Labor in the War
SELLING THE WAR

In recent years, the American people have responded very differently to their military efforts. The response to Vietnam became intensely bitter, but Desert Storm was unanimously acclaimed. More surprisingly, United States intervention in places like Grenada and Panama, or the routine bombing of antiaircraft sites in Iraq, are met with almost complete indifference. Students should be challenged to explain these differences. Certainly one factor is whether the government encourages emotional excess, as it did when the United States entered World War I.

Having lectured the nation for three years on its duty to remain neutral in thought and action, Woodrow Wilson believed that he would have to take extraordinary measures to carry the people with him once he decided to declare war on Germany. Wilson may have overestimated the opposition to the war, but certainly he was right to worry about it. The “hyphenates,” such as the Irish Americans and German Americans, would oppose a war that allied the United States with England against Germany and Austria. Socialists would oppose what they considered a war for capitalism, and socialist ideals were a political force in 1917. Reformers of all sorts—Progressives, Populists, and feminists—would oppose the war because they considered war to be inherently reactionary. Wilson even doubted the steadfastness of the average citizen when he or she learned what the war effort would require.

Above all, Wilson worried that the need to draft an army would set off the kind of riots that shook the nation during the Civil War. Most Americans, if they thought clearly about the subject at all, believed that the president would call for a volunteer army to go to France. But Wilson, having a Progressive’s obsession with efficiency, preferred a system of raising troops, rather than relying on spontaneous, emotional fits of patriotism.

In order to make the draft palatable, Wilson made it an agency staffed by civilians. About forty-five hundred draft boards were appointed throughout the country, staffed by neighbors of the boys who would be sent to war. The draft boards were instructed to set up offices in the nation’s polling places so that going to register would seem like going to vote. The government, aided by local chambers of commerce and other civic groups, made the day of registration, June 5, 1917, an occasion, in Wilson’s words, “of patriotic devotion and obligation.” When the government was ready to induct men into the
armed forces on July 20, the operation was carried out by lottery at the senate office building, with the fullest possible publicity. (The first number pulled was 258).

It was Wilson’s belief that he had to “sell” the war. That explains his creation of the Committee on Public Information, or Creel Committee, with its flood of posters (for instance, the famous poster of Uncle Sam pointing his index finger and saying “I Want YOU” comes from this period) and its innumerable slogans (“Tell It to the Marines”). The need to sell the war also explains Wilson’s increasingly idealistic articulation of the nation’s war aims (“a war to end all wars,” “a war to make the world safe for democracy”) and Wilson’s demand for legislation such as the Espionage Act, the Trading with the Enemy Act, and the Sedition Act, all of them aimed more at suppressing dissent than preventing sabotage. Wilson felt he had to stop those who would actively oppose the war from infecting the great mass of Americans, who were entirely too susceptible to the pacifist virus.

Wilson probably misjudged the American people. He erred in thinking that those who opposed war before April 6, 1917, would continue to oppose it after its declaration. More likely, Wilson represented the American people better than he realized. Fiercely attached to peace at almost any cost and convinced that Germany had given the United States no choice but to fight, the American people, like their president, never wanted war, but once in it, were in for the kill.

THE SINKING OF THE LUSITANIA

The author begins with an account of the episode that eventually led the United States into the First World War.

A NEW WORLD POWER

American foreign policy since the late nineteenth century had been aggressive and nationalistic. As a colonial power with increasingly valuable investments outside the country, the United States became more and more involved in international affairs.

. “I Took the Canal Zone”

America’s domination of the Caribbean was illustrated when the United States decided to build a canal across the Isthmus of Panama, which at that time belonged to Colombia. When the Colombian senate refused to allow the canal, in 1903, Roosevelt encouraged and abetted a revolution that separated Panama from Colombia. The new nation agreed to let the canal construction proceed, and it was opened in 1914.

. The Roosevelt Corollary

Except for the Virgin Islands, purchased in 1917, the United States did not acquire territory in the Caribbean, but the United States did treat Latin America as a
protectorate. After several nations defaulted on their international debts, thus
provoking European reprisals, Roosevelt announced that the United States would
intervene to ensure the stability and solvency of Latin American nations. In accordance
with this “Roosevelt Corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine, the United States intervened
in the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Cuba.

. Ventures in the Far East

Under Roosevelt, the United States and Japan worked out several agreements that put
Korea in the Japanese sphere of influence, but kept Japan from interfering with the
Philippines. Eventually, however, Japan resented the Open Door policy in China and
began to demand special rights for herself.

. Taft and Dollar Diplomacy

Taft tried to substitute economic force for military power in American diplomacy. In
the Caribbean, this generally worked, and American bankers replaced Europeans in
that area. In the Far East, Taft’s support for American economic influence in
Manchuria alienated China, Japan, and Russia.

FOREIGN POLICY UNDER WILSON

Wilson had little experience or knowledge of diplomacy, but felt that he could conduct a foreign policy
based on moral force.

. Conducting Moral Diplomacy

Wilson achieved some successes in moral diplomacy, but when faced with crises in
Latin America, he, too, sent in the marines.

. Troubles Across the Border

Wilson’s tendency toward moral self-righteousness showed itself when he refused to
recognize the government of Mexico in 1913 because it was headed by a man whom
Wilson considered a murderer. When Wilson tried to use the U.S. Navy to block arms
shipments to Mexico, several incidents ensued, resulting in the bombarding and
seizing of Vera Cruz by the United States. Although Wilson backed down after that, he
ordered the U.S. Army into Mexico in 1916 in pursuit of the guerrilla and bandit,
“Pancho” Villa.
TOWARD WAR

The European system of alliances marched two great blocs into World War I. The Central Powers, headed by Germany, faced the Allied Powers, headed by England and France. Although his sympathies lay with England, Wilson hoped the United States could remain at peace.

. The Neutrality Policy

There were several reasons for the strong force of neutrality in America. Progressives considered war wasteful and irrational, and suspected that big business instigated the conflict for profits. Immigrants generally preferred the United States to remain neutral, because, based on their backgrounds, their allegiance was split between the Central Powers and the Allied Powers. Americans also believed they had a long tradition of neutrality and saw no reason to intervene.

. Freedom of the Seas

The United States experienced immediate violations of its neutral right to trade with Germany, despite a blockade by the English navy. Wilson protested, but accepted England’s promise to reimburse American shippers when the war was over.

. The U-Boat Threat

Germany’s use of submarines in reprisal for England’s naval blockade caused the greatest difficulty for Wilson’s diplomacy. Since submarines had to shoot without warning, they violated international law. When Americans were killed or injured in these attacks, most notably the sinking of the Lusitania in 1915, Wilson protested and finally issued an ultimatum in April 1916. At that time, Germany backed down and pledged to honor America’s rights as a neutral country.

. “He Kept Us Out of War”

Wilson planned to run for reelection on the themes of Americanism and preparedness, but discovered that his claim to have kept the nation out of war created greater enthusiasm. Women, voting in twelve states, went heavily for Wilson. Nonetheless, the election results were close. Wilson won by only about half a million votes in a total of almost eighteen million cast.

. The Final Months of Peace

Wilson moved to mediate the European conflict, but, by the beginning of 1917, Germany was confident that she could win through a policy of unrestricted submarine warfare against England and all ships sailing to England. In reply, Wilson ordered American merchant vessels to arm themselves and ordered the U.S. Navy to fire on German submarines. In March, after U-boats sank five American ships, Wilson
decided on war. On April 2, 1917, he asked for a declaration of war, and Congress, applauding, gave its consent.

OVER THERE

The United States entered the war when Germany was on the verge of victory. This section describes America’s contribution to the Allied victory.

. Mobilization

The United States had prepared no contingency plans for a military effort in Europe. There were only two hundred thousand soldiers in the army, but Wilson promptly instituted a draft that eventually called over two million men into military service.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

. War in the Trenches

The American and English navies teamed up to cut Allied losses to submarines by half. By June 1917, American troops began arriving in France, and by the next spring and summer, American forces were strong enough to help halt the final German offensive. Americans performed outstandingly in both the battle of Château-Thierry and the battle of Belleau Wood. In September, the Americans pushed the Germans out of St. Mihiel and added tremendous punch to the Allied attack that led the Germans to ask for peace.

OVER HERE

President Wilson moved to enlist the hearts and minds of the entire population in the war effort.

. The Conquest of Convictions

The war began with an outpouring of rage against Germany, which Wilson encouraged and used to have Congress pass the Sedition Act. Any criticism of the war was penalized, and dissenters, like Eugene Debs, were imprisoned. Later, fears of a worldwide Communist revolution led Wilson to send American troops into Russia to prevent the Bolsheviks from consolidating power. The crusade against Communism gathered such momentum that “radicals” were rounded up and expelled from the country, even after the war ended.
A Bureaucratic War

The war led to efficient government control of the economy. Various agencies, usually headed by businesspeople, supervised all aspects of production and distribution to ensure a maximum war effort. In some cases, the government seized businesses to keep them running, but for the most part, government and business cooperated, and business profited.

Labor in the War

Labor also did well during the war. Union membership swelled, and Wilson did everything possible to avoid strikes. An acute labor shortage raised wages and drew Mexican Americans and women into war-related industries. Large numbers of African Americans left the South to find jobs in the northern factories. Coming from a rural background, blacks had to adjust to the pace of industrial work and found that they were as disliked in the North as they were in the South. In East St. Louis, forty African Americans were killed in a riot in 1917, and riots in other cities took the lives of more blacks. But blacks, many of whom had seen combat in France, fought back, and the white death toll in the racial riots was also significant.

Despite the tensions created by the war, the United States emerged from World War I as the world’s strongest economic power.

THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

Wilson hoped to bring a world order based on justice from the chaos of war. He wanted to give defeated Germany generous treatment, and he insisted on the establishment of a League of Nations to guarantee the peace. This section explains the failure of Wilson’s peace plans.

A Peace at Paris

Wilson foolishly made his peace efforts a partisan issue, and he alienated many Republicans who might have worked with him. He discovered that the Allies were determined to punish Germany and that they could not be deflected from this goal. Wilson did succeed in creating the League of Nations, including Article X of its charter, which required each member nation to protect the territorial integrity of all other members. Anticipating a fight over the treaty in the Senate, Wilson agreed to limit the League’s jurisdiction so that it could not interfere in a nation’s domestic affairs.
. Rejection in the Senate

Wilson could have had the treaty ratified if he was willing to accept minor changes in the League, but he refused. Republican Senator Henry Cabot Lodge organized opposition to the League and delayed a vote on the treaty. Wilson went directly to the people in a tour of the nation, but in October 1918, a stroke disabled him and doomed the League.

CONCLUSION: POSTWAR DISILLUSIONMENT

Wilson hoped that a Democratic victory in the presidential election of 1920 would demonstrate the people’s desire for the League, but Republican Warren Harding won a landslide victory. Wilson’s defeat in the struggle for a League of Nations coincided with a general feeling of disillusionment. Americans were convinced that they had been duped into war and that the war had changed nothing. The Progressive spirit was one of the war’s last casualties.

FEATURE ESSAY: MEASURING THE MIND

In an attempt to legitimize their new field of study, psychologists sold intelligence tests to the U.S. Army before World War I. When blacks and whites scored comparably on the early Beta Test, the examiners decided that something must be wrong with the test, so they changed the questions until the scores showed the expected racial differences. The tests thus reinforced nativist stereotypes of blacks and recent immigrants. The army abandoned the tests as soon as the war was over. However, colleges and businesses wanted tests for prospective students and employees, so they have remained in use.

LECTURE TOPICS

The Treaty of Versailles is often cited as one of the major causes of World War II. First, present an examination of the provisions of the treaty with an eye to World War II. Discuss the punitive clauses targeted at Germany. What psychological, social, and financial effects would the war guilt and reparations clauses have on postwar Germany? Second, look at the clauses that reorganized the European continent. What issues connected with the creation of new nations in Eastern Europe would aggravate future relations between Germany and the rest of the continent? Finally, consider the provision for the League of Nations. How effective would the League be in averting future wars?

Discuss the evolution of American foreign policy from 1865–1918. Look at Roosevelt and American imperialism. What was the goal of American foreign policy at this time? Review the ideals and philosophies that defined American imperial policy. Consider the role the United States hoped to play in world affairs. Then, examine Wilson and the philosophy of moral diplomacy. Examine the ways in which Wilson changed American foreign policy by the end of World War I. By this time, what ideals and philosophies defined American foreign policy? What role did the United States seek in foreign affairs? Henry Kissinger’s Diplomacy (1994) provides an interesting look at the importance of Wilsonian moral diplomacy in the development of American foreign policy through World War II and until the end of the Cold War. In light
of the war in Iraq, is the United States currently experiencing another shift in long-term foreign policy visions?

Conduct a class debate on American neutrality during the early years of World War I. Begin with a formal definition of the word “neutrality” and then have students consider the following issues:

a. Was the United States ever neutral during the years prior to its entry into World War I? Why or why not?

b. Should the United States have been strictly neutral through the entirety of the war? What issues justified its entry into the war? What issues might have prevented its involvement in the war?

c. Who determined American foreign policy between 1914 and 1917? Was there a gap between what the Wilson administration wanted and what the majority of the American people wanted?

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)**

Have students discuss the issue of civil rights during a state of war. This discussion can be a continuation of issues considered earlier in connection with the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 and Lincoln’s handling of civil rights during the Civil War. Provide students with copies of the Sedition Act of 1918, and then have them consider the following:

a. Do the provisions of the Sedition Act of 1918 violate the First Amendment freedoms of Americans?

b. When the United States is at war, do issues of national security justify altering the guarantee of civil liberties?

c. American entry into World War I was preceded by years of debate regarding American neutrality and the propriety of American involvement in the war. In 1916, Wilson was reelected to the presidency largely based on a promise to keep the United States out of the war. Did Wilson betray the American people by breaking his promise to keep them out of war, or did Wilson have the right to promote unity and suppress dissent when he felt public support for the war was wavering?

d. What should be done in the United States when the people oppose war and the government supports it? Should the government respect the democratic character of the American political system by only endorsing policies that reflect the people’s will, or should the people bend to the republican aspect of the American political system by trusting important decisions to their elected officials?

e. Compare and contrast the experience of the United States with loyalty and dissent during World War I and the Vietnam War. Remember to point out to students that the Vietnam War was never a formally declared war. Which was better for America: the suppression of dissent during World War I or the expression of dissent during the Vietnam War?

f. How are the American public and the American government dealing with issues of loyalty in the “war on terror”?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Discuss the links between the Progressive movement and World War I. Consider some of the following issues:

a. Did reform groups tend to support American involvement in World War I? Why or why not?

b. Once the United States entered World War I, what evidence of Progressivism was seen in the process of mobilization? Look into the federal government for examples of the Gospel of Efficiency, government bureaucracy, and the desire to control and dictate conformity.

c. Would Progressives support moral diplomacy? Why or why not?

Discuss the American relationship with Europe at the turn of the century. To what extent did Europe figure either directly or indirectly in the development of American foreign policy? Did America still fear European power at the turn of the century? How did the Open Door policy, the Roosevelt Corollary, and dollar diplomacy reflect American concerns regarding Europe? Would these lingering worries about Europe impact the American role in World War I?

Documents such as the Roosevelt Corollary, TR’s Naval War College speech in 1897, the full text of McKinley’s prayer about the Philippines, Hay’s Open Door notes, and the poems, speeches, and essays by anti-imperialists can be handed out and discussed in class or shown on an overhead projector and analyzed by the instructor.

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

Shortly before asking Congress for a declaration of war, President Wilson had a remarkable conversation with Frank Cobb, a newspaper reporter. After explaining to Cobb that he would avoid war if he could, Wilson predicted what a war would do to American society. He stated, “Once lead this people into war, and they’ll forget there ever was such a thing as tolerance.” He went on to discuss how America’s involvement would result in a harsh peace treaty, and foresaw the disillusionment of the 1920s. All in all, the conversation was so uncannily correct about the future that some historians believe Cobb invented Wilson’s words many years later; however, Wilson’s best biographer, Arthur Link, accepts the authenticity of the conversation. The original source is a biography of Cobb by John L. Heaton, but a more accessible source is Arthur S. Link, editor, Woodrow Wilson: A Profile (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968).

Wilson’s prophecy that the American people would become intolerant came true, in part because the government encouraged intolerance. The American people, however, played their part with considerable enthusiasm, and the violations of civil rights that followed makes a sad chapter in our history, even when some of the episodes, such as renaming sauerkraut “victory cabbage” or renaming German measles “liberty measles,” border on the comical. The best social history of the first quarter of the twentieth century is Mark Sullivan’s Our Times: The United States, 1900–1925 (New York:
Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1933). The fifth volume covers the war years and deals with the anti-German panic that seized the nation.

**POINTS OF MASTERY**

Describe Roosevelt’s role in Panama and the importance of the Panama Canal in international diplomacy.

Detail the events leading to the construction of the Panama Canal.

Compare and contrast the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.

Discuss the points of friction between Japan and the United States.

Define the term “dollar diplomacy” and explain its pertinence to United States relations with the nations of Latin America. Describe U.S. intervention in Nicaraguan affairs during the Taft administration.

Explain the structure of the European alliance system on the eve of World War I and identify the member nations of the Central Powers and the Allies.

Define the term “neutrality” and explain what it means within the context of diplomatic relations during wartime.

List the factors that impacted the quality of American neutrality between 1914 and 1917.

Describe the diplomatic problems that confronted the United States as a result of the German use of submarine warfare.

Identify the event that escalated the American debate over neutrality in 1915. Define “preparedness” and explain William Jennings Bryan’s stance in the debate. Outline the provisions of the Sussex Pledge.

Identify General John J. Pershing and summarize the role of U.S. troops on the ground in Europe.

Identify the issues and events occurring in fall 1916 and spring 1917 that finally culminated in the American entry into World War I.

Identify the Selective Service Act and describe life in United States military training camps.

Explain the role of the Committee on Public Information during the war.

Identify two Congressional laws designed to suppress dissent against American involvement in World War I. Discuss how federal efforts to suppress dissent impacted radical groups in America.
Discuss the connection between national concerns about loyalty and the treatment of labor unions during World War I.

Identify the Sixteenth Amendment and discuss its importance during World War I.

Define the term “Red Scare” and identify the factors that led to the emergence of American fear of communism after World War I.

Describe the Wilson administration’s organization of the wartime economy and list the major government boards responsible for the economy during World War I.

Explain the impact of World War I on the lives of women and African Americans.

Understand the role of black men in the military during World War I, as well as the backlash against blacks in the early twentieth century.

Discuss the race riots of the early twentieth century. What were the specific causes, and what came out of them? How did people explain them at the time?

Outline key provisions of the Fourteen Points and describe the diplomatic philosophy Wilson brought to the Paris Peace Conference.

Identify the major players at the Paris Peace Conference.

Discuss the political divisions within Congress regarding the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles. Distinguish between the Irreconcilables and the Reservationists. Briefly discuss the issues that led to the failure to ratify the treaty.

Describe Wilson’s fight for the League of Nations and those that resisted America’s involvement in the league.

**SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

1. What role did the United States’ becoming a world power play in shaping the foreign policy of Roosevelt and Wilson?

Roosevelt involved the United States in political affairs around the world. He decided to take the Canal Zone in Panama and build the canal; he increased the buildup of the Navy; he improved military planning and personnel policies; he laid out the Roosevelt Corollary, declaring the United States the security police for Latin America; and he helped Russia and Japan negotiate a peace.

Using the nation’s growing clout, Wilson also expanded the United States’ influence on foreign policy. Wilson sent troops to occupy Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Cuba; he interfered in various ways with Mexican internal politics; he protested infringements
of U.S. neutrality but tried to avoid entering the war; and he tried to lead Germany and the Allies in negotiating a settlement to the war.

2 What events and influences led the United States toward entry into World War I?

In addition to the growing popular sentiment in support of the war, the main external events were the parties’ refusal to negotiate peace and end the war and interference, particularly from German U-boats, with American shipping and sea travel. U-boats sank ships carrying American passengers through international waters. The Zimmermann telegram proved to many remaining neutralists that it would be impossible to avoid entering the war, but pacifists in the United States were against war under any circumstances. Wilson issued an ultimatum in 1916, calling on Germany to stop sinking U.S. ships, and Germany agreed. However, this situation was short lived. In 1917, when German U-boats again began attacking U.S. ships, Wilson ordered all U.S. ships armed. Despite this, five more U.S. ships were sunk in March. On April 2 Wilson called for a declaration of war.

3 What were the main events of America’s involvement in the war in Europe, and how did these events affect the treaty ending the war?

The first major event of American involvement was the mobilization of troops through a draft. At the same time, the country invested in shipbuilding and arms manufacturing, including the production of destroyers to escort merchant vessels and protect them from U-boat attacks.

When American troops arrived in Europe, they fought alongside the Allies in the trenches and helped defeat the Germans at Château-Thierry, Belleau Wood, and the Marne, successfully turning the tide of a war that Germany had been on the brink of winning. After these victories, the Allies counterattacked and broke through the German lines. Allied victory put the United States in a strong negotiating position. However, Wilson did not capitalize on this situation by demanding compensation for America’s decisive contribution.

4 How might Wilson have handled the Versailles treaty negotiations differently?

Wilson could have refused to give in on matters of principle; for example, he could have concluded a separate peace with Germany instead of giving in to Allied demands. Additionally, he weakened his support in the Senate by campaign errors during the off-year elections. Had he selected a different negotiating team, the negotiations could have ended differently.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

*The Great War: 1918: The American Experience*, Tom Weidlinger, 1989, 60 minutes. This video explores the role played by the United States in the final year of World War I.

*The Great War and the Shaping of the Twentieth Century*, KCET/BBC, 1996, 480 minutes.
This eight-part series chronicles World War I and offers students insights into how this war shaped events in World War II, the Cold War, and later conflicts in the Middle East and Bosnia.

CLASS EXERCISES

1. Propose the following assignment: Choose a figure associated with radical politics in the prewar and/or World War I era. Focus on the person’s background and the issues that drew him or her to the left. Determine whether the individual remained a devotee of radicalism throughout his or her life.

2. Have your class research the roles of African Americans in the military history of World War I. How were African Americans recruited? How were they treated in the armed forces? How were they treated in combat? What impact did the war have on the psychology of African Americans and their feelings about racism in America?

3. Have students research American policy in the Balkans in the late twentieth century. How were the events in Kosovo and Serbia in the 1990s connected to pre–World War I European affairs? Examine United States policy in the Balkans during the first Bush and Clinton administrations. Do students agree with those policies? How has the most recent war in Iraq changed the American role in European affairs? How does this role differ from the United States’ role in 1914?

MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

- Watch the Video: The Outbreak of World War I
- Read the Document: President Wilson’s War Message to Congress (1917)
- Watch the Video: American Entry into World War I
- Listen to the Audio File: “Over There”
- Complete the Assignment: Measuring the Mind
- Read the Document: Espionage Act (1917)
- View the Closer Look: Mobilizing the Home Front
- Watch the Video: The Great Migration
- Read the Document: President Wilson’s Fourteen Points
CHAPTER 25
TRANSITION TO MODERN AMERICA

CHAPTER OUTLINE

WHEELS FOR THE MILLIONS

THE SECOND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
- The Automobile Industry
- Patterns of Economic Growth
- Economic Weaknesses

CITY LIFE IN THE JAZZ AGE
- Women and the Family
- The Roaring Twenties
- The Flowering of the Arts

THE RURAL COUNTERATTACK
- The Fear of Radicalism
- Prohibition
- The Ku Klux Klan
- Immigration Restriction
- The Fundamentalist Challenge

POLITICS OF THE 1920s
- Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover
- Republican Policies
- The Divided Democrats
- The Election of 1928

CONCLUSION: THE OLD AND THE NEW

FEATURE ESSAY: MARCUS GARVEY

LAW AND SOCIETY: THE SCOPES “MONKEY” TRIAL
OPENING THEME

THE DEFECTION OF THE INTELLECTUALS

Higher education is, and should be, disturbing to students because they are being challenged to defend or discard many of their most deeply held ideas and values. The danger, of course, is that students may come to believe that cynicism is the ultimate form of wisdom. The danger of such an attitude can be demonstrated by the remarkable defection of American intellectuals in the 1920s. They became so turned off by American society and values that they regarded even reform efforts as fraudulent.

The best example of the disaffected intellectual was Henry L. Mencken, resident “Sage of Baltimore,” who became the dominant literary and social critic of the decade. Mencken has not yet been surpassed in his ability to sustain a tirade for so long and at such a high level of humor. Some of his definitions illustrate his biting wit: “A Puritan is anyone with an awful fear that somewhere, someone is enjoying himself” or “Love is the delusion that one woman differs from another.”

In 1923, Mencken and George Jean Nathan began editing the American Mercury, which became for the rest of the decade the chief weapon of the intellectuals against the “booboisie.” In a typical issue, the journal carried essays like “Musings of an Inebriated Historian,” in which Clarence Alvord confessed that he had spent most of his life “in the repressive and artificial atmosphere of an American University . . .” or “What the French Think of Us,” where the reader discovered that the French defined America as the “the land where it is a crime to drink, make love, or be a Negro.” In its “Americana” section, the Mercury reprinted items from newspapers around the nation with appropriate commentary. For example:

TENNESSEE

Intellectual Recreation of the 100% White Protestant Nordic Blondes of Memphis, as Revealed by the Eminent Commercial Appeal:

An oldest collar-button contest is causing much interest here.

Mencken, like many other intellectuals in the 1920s, applied a kind of half-baked psychoanalysis to “explain” the American character. Anglo-Saxons, Mencken explained, were for some reason unable to cope with their sexual instincts as infants and repressed them. As a result, in adulthood, these people became perverts, drunkards, and small-town bankers. Prohibition was considered to be the best example of this phenomenon. Since pleasure was sinful, Americans made it a crime to drink. But since most Americans were hypocrites who relished pleasure if it were secret and sinful, they drank like fish. The main character in Sinclair Lewis’ 1922 novel Babbit personified the small-souled middle-class American.

Unlike the Anglo-Saxons, depicted in all their grim ferocity by Grant Wood in his masterpiece, American Gothic, Mencken’s followers felt that “natural” people could enjoy life. The French, for example, could be tutors to Americans in the ways of amour. The Italians could not help but sing.
Most significantly, the intellectuals patronized African Americans. Blacks, they thought, had never been infected by the “Puritan virus” and therefore expressed themselves openly and naturally. To some degree, the intellectuals during this period began to take African Americans seriously. The “Harlem Renaissance,” which occurred during this period, did not so much represent a sudden upsurge of creativity among blacks as it did the willingness of some whites to consider black music, verse, and prose as serious art. For the most part, however, intellectuals merely used African Americans as a kind of club with which to beat the Wasps. Implicit in their analysis of the African character was the same sort of racism that denied serious intelligence or profound emotion to blacks. Marc Connelly’s *Green Pastures* (1930) presented an affectionate view of a Black Heaven that was quaint, primitive, and childish.

Why American intellectuals should have so completely and abruptly given up on American society is difficult to explain, but whatever the reasons, its result was tragic. America in the 1920s was afflicted with major problems: its national income was distributed extremely unequally, African Americans and immigrants had not yet been fully integrated into American life, and the rural areas were already depressed. The intellectuals, who might have provided leadership for reform in the United States, abdicated this responsibility in the 1920s. When Mencken announced that he was going to run for president, he promised that, if elected, he would abolish the public school system, dump the Statue of Liberty into the Atlantic Ocean, and support legislation making it legal to assassinate public officials.

**WHEELS FOR THE MILLIONS**

The author uses the assembly line at Henry Ford’s auto factory as an example of the tremendous abundance of consumer goods being created for the American people after World War I. The new emphasis on consumption, however, eroded traditional values of thrift and savings, and provoked a cultural war.

**THE SECOND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION**

The first Industrial Revolution took place when steam was harnessed to run heavy machinery. The second took place in the 1920s when electricity replaced steam and the modern assembly line was introduced for the production of consumer goods. At this time, the United States developed the highest standard of living in the world.

. The Automobile Industry

The automobile industry epitomized the changes taking place in the economy. The car was an expensive item and, once purchased, was not quickly replaced. Automakers, therefore, relied on model changes and advertising to stimulate sales. The auto industry itself fostered the growth of other businesses, like service stations, and encouraged the spread of the suburbs farther from the inner cities.
. Patterns of Economic Growth

Other industries also flourished in the 1920s, including electricity, light metals, and the chemicals. Professional managers who believed that making profits was compatible with social responsibility replaced individual entrepreneurs, and corporations became the dominant business form. To a large degree, the success of large business brought standardization and uniformity to America at the cost of regional flavor. Every town had the same A&P, the same “five and ten.”

. Economic Weaknesses

Although there was real prosperity in the United States in the 1920s, there were also economic problems that were not always obvious. Traditional industries, such as railroads and coal, were in deep trouble, and farmers suffered from a decline in both exports and prices. Laborers saw their real wages rise, but not nearly as rapidly as the income of the middle-class manager, who benefited the most from the new Industrial Revolution. The increasing income of the middle class created its own peculiar problem. Because the middle class had so much idle money, much of it went into speculation. It is not surprising that the 1920s ended in a stock market crash.

CITY LIFE IN THE JAZZ AGE

As Americans poured into the cities, a new urban culture divorced from traditional rural values became dominant.

. Women and the Family

Although women continued to crusade for equal rights, and even lobbied for an Equal Rights Amendment, some younger women deserted these causes in favor of exercising individual freedom. The “flapper” drank, smoked, and demanded sex with the same gusto traditionally reserved for men. For the most part, however, women played the same role in society in the 1920s as they had in the 1790s; the greatest change in family life was the discovery of adolescence. Teenage sons and daughters of the smaller, middle-class families no longer had to work and could indulge their craving for excitement.

. The Roaring Twenties

The decade was notable for its obsessive interest in crime figures, athletes, and heroes of any kind, no matter how frivolous their achievements. Young men and women openly discussed sex, which became an all-consuming topic of interest in movies, tabloids, and popular music.
. The Flowering of the Arts

Serious artists unanimously attacked American civilization in the 1920s for its materialism and conformity. Many writers went into “exile” to escape the sterility of America. Ironically, these artists produced works that put the United States in the forefront of world literature. Eliot, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and others captured an international audience. African Americans were especially prominent in music and poetry, and Harlem became an exciting, stimulating cultural capital.

THE RURAL COUNTERATTACK

Rural Americans resented urban culture, which they identified with Communism, crime, and sexual immorality. The Progressives attempted to force reform on the American people, which resulted in an upsurge of bigotry and an era of repression.

. The Fear of Radicalism

Alarmed by the violent acts of a handful of anarchists and Communists, the government resorted, in 1919, to illegal roundups of innocent people and the forcible deportation of aliens. The government’s actions encouraged lynchings and other acts of terror against “radicals” and immigrants. The Red Scare quickly subsided, but bigotry and fear of foreign influence played a part in the arrest, conviction, and execution of Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

. Prohibition

Congress adopted the Prohibition Amendment in 1917, and in 1920 the production, sale, or transport of alcoholic beverages became illegal. Prohibition actually did cut down the consumption of alcohol in the general population, but the law was bitterly resented in urban areas and easily evaded by the upper classes. Bootlegging became a big business, and gangsters became socially respectable. By 1933, the Prohibition experiment had failed, and the law was repealed.

. The Ku Klux Klan

The Klan revived in the 1920s. It was no longer merely an anti-black movement. The Klan attacked Catholics, Jews, immigrants, liberated women, and almost anything that seemed “citified.” The Klan used violence on occasion, but sought to win the general public’s approval by persuasion, and members even went into politics. It offered a sanctuary of traditional values for those frightened or disgusted by the modern world. By the mid-1920s, the Klan counted nearly five million members, but its violence and
internal corruption led to its decline and virtual disappearance by the end of the decade.

. Immigration Restriction

Nativist forces had scored their first success in restricting immigration in 1917, but complete victory came in 1924, when Congress severely restricted all immigration and gave preferential quotas to northern Europeans. Exempt from the quota, the number of Mexican immigrants increased, filling the need for unskilled labor.

E. The Fundamentalist Challenge

The 1920s witnessed a rebirth of fundamentalist Christianity. Intellectuals believed that fundamentalism had been dealt a death blow in the Scopes trial of 1925, but rural Americans continued to believe in a literal reading of the Bible, and they took their religion with them when they migrated to the cities.

This topic is discussed in Law and Society; see below.

POLITICS OF THE 1920s

On the surface, the era seemed to be dominated by the Republican party. Beneath the surface, the urban wing of the Democratic party was emerging as the single most powerful political force in the nation.

. Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover

These three Republicans enjoyed wide popularity because they appealed to traditional American values. The scandals connected with Harding became news only after his death. Coolidge represented America in his austerity and rectitude, while Hoover represented the self-made man.

. Republican Policies

The Republicans attempted to return the nation to “normalcy.” They raised tariffs and cut corporate and income taxes. Nevertheless, the government ran a surplus in its budget because spending was also cut. Congress voted to help farmers, who suffered from low prices, but President Coolidge refused support this policy because he believed the federal government should not intervene in the economy. More and more, Republican policies resulted in close cooperation between government and business and expansion of the government bureaucracy.
. The Divided Democrats

Urban and rural Democrats split dramatically at their 1924 convention. Neither side could nominate a presidential candidate, and only mutual exhaustion led to the choice of a compromise candidate, John Davis, who was easily defeated by the Republican, Calvin Coolidge. The Democratic defeat, however, disguised a major shift in political loyalties. In congressional elections after 1922, Democrats were gaining more seats than Republicans were.

. The Election of 1928

The urban Democrats nominated Al Smith, governor of New York and a Roman Catholic, to run against Herbert Hoover, a midwestern Protestant. Religion was the decisive issue in the campaign, and Hoover won easily. However, Smith carried the nation’s twelve largest cities, a portent of the emerging Democratic majority.

CONCLUSION: THE OLD AND THE NEW

Americans were struggling to enter the modern age during the 1920s, but there were conflicts between urban and rural values, between the frivolity of the jazz generation and the sobriety of their elders, and between the American-born and recent immigrants. If the new age had delivered on its promise of increasing abundance, the forces of traditional values would have been routed, but the new economy was surprisingly fragile.

FEATURE ESSAY: MARCUS GARVEY

Marcus Garvey believed that racial oppression and exploitation lay at the heart of most of the world’s societies. Black equality, he insisted, would come only by transforming black heritage from a mark of inferiority into a symbol of pride and liberation. He called other black leaders hypocrites; they called his nationalist and separatist views racist. Garvey’s movement inspired many blacks who were disgusted by the hypocrisy of American democracy and frustrated by the failure of legalistic gradualism.
LAW AND SOCIETY: THE SCOPES “MONKEY” TRIAL

In 1925, Tennessee’s Butler Act, as it became known, made it unlawful for teachers in state-supported schools “to teach any theory that denies the story of Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible.” The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) advertised for teachers willing to challenge the law in court. John Scopes was selected. The trial was held in Dayton, Tennessee. Both sides treated the trial as a publicity opportunity. Scopes was found guilty, and his conviction was upheld, but defense attorney Clarence Darrow made supporters of the law look ridiculous, especially William Jennings Bryan. State and federal courts have continued to debate this issue, using somewhat different language, into the twenty-first century.

LECTURE TOPICS

Prepare a lecture on the impact of the automobile industry on American life. Consider the economic impact on employment, wages, and profit; the impact of road construction on infrastructure and politics; the impact of improved transportation on national unity; and the social and moral impact on American youth who gained independence by escaping in the automobile.

Examine the Jazz Age within the larger context of the history of American music as well as African American history. Look at the regional aspects of the blues by focusing on its origins in rural America and its fruition in urban America. Examine the blues as an expression of African American despondency in the rural South. What happened to the blues and jazz emanating from cities? Supplement the lecture with recordings from blues and jazz artists.

Prepare a presentation on print advertising in the 1920s. Examine the images and text associated with advertising during the early twentieth century. What markets are being targeted? What kind of lifestyle is being promoted? Invite students to compare and contrast advertising of this era with modern-day print ads. What evidence do we see in the ads of the 1920s of “the New Morality”?

Present a comparison and contrast of W. E. B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey as philosophical and political leaders for African Americans in the twentieth century. Look at the differences between the Niagara movement and the United Negro Improvement Association as approaches to gaining social, economic, and political rights for African Americans. Discuss Marcus Garvey as a black separatist. Have students begin to think about American efforts to resolve racial problems in the twentieth century. What is the difference between racial integration and racial segregation? How is racial separatism distinct from both? What solution to racial problems will Americans embrace as a result of the Civil Rights Movement? Are there still divisions in the African American community over the merits of racial integration, racial segregation, and black separatism?

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

The twenties have been described as “Janus-faced,” after the Roman god with two faces: one that could see into the past and one that could see into the future. Discuss aspects of the twenties that clung to the past while other aspects looked to the future. Discuss the consumer culture that emerged in the
twenties, tracing its impact from the advertising empire of Madison Avenue to Hollywood, Harlem, and major sporting events. How did technological innovations affect mass consumption and the standardization of American culture?

How did an expanding mass culture change the contours of everyday life in the decade following World War I? What role did new technologies of mass communication play in shaping these changes? What connections can you draw between the “culture of consumption” then and today?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Discuss black migration during the late nineteenth century. Where did blacks go? What did they expect to find, and what did they find? Why didn’t more blacks leave the South, because conditions there seemed so poor?

Discuss the life and work of Margaret Sanger as an example of the political complexity of the Progressive Era. On one hand, she contributed to the liberation of American women by removing barriers to birth control and fighting for reproductive rights for women. On the other hand, she was a student of eugenics, a pseudo-scientific theory that advocated the promotion of reproduction within “superior” gene pools and the discouragement of reproduction within “inferior” gene pools. Have students consider whether Sanger was a liberal or a conservative.

Choose an author or a poet from the Harlem Renaissance and read a sample of his or her work. Then, place the author’s literature within its historical context. Point out universal themes in the work, but also look at it in terms of the times in which it was written, particularly within the context of the Great Migration. Does the author’s work make reference to southern rural African American poverty? Does it refer to African American urban poverty? Does it make statements about the status of African Americans during the early twentieth century? Does it offer hope or reflect hopelessness?

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

Two court trials dominated the 1920s. The first, the Scopes trial, was provoked in order to defend the issue of academic freedom, but it became a circus. This trial took place in Dayton, Tennessee, in the summer of 1925, and pitted the intellectuals against rural America. The most dramatic moment of the trial came when William Jennings Bryan took the stand as an expert on the Bible and was cross-examined by the famous lawyer Clarence Darrow. Mencken covered the trial for a Baltimore newspaper, and his reports are still very amusing. There is a good collection of documents relating to the trial in Jerry R. Tompkins, editor, D-Days at Dayton: Reflections on the Scopes Trial (Baton Rouge, LA: University Press, 1965).

The second trial did not have any comic overtones. It began with the murder of two men during a robbery in Boston on April 15, 1920, and ended with the execution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, two Italian immigrants who identified with the Anarchist cause, on August 22, 1927. The Sacco and Vanzetti case engaged the attention of the American public for the entire decade. In fact,
their guilt or innocence is still debated. By far the best book on the subject, because it is so complete, is still Louis Joughlin and Edmund M. Morgan, *The Legacy of Sacco and Vanzetti* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1948). Before he was executed, Vanzetti was interviewed by a newspaper reporter, Phil Strong. Strong reported Vanzetti’s “last words.” Although some historians believe that Strong himself embellished the record, those Americans who thought of themselves as liberals in the 1920s and 1930s firmly believed that the words had been spoken as Strong reported them. Speaking in broken English and protesting his innocence for the last time, Vanzetti said that his execution would not mean the victory of injustice. Had he and Sacco been left alone, they would have died some day in obscurity. Now they were immortal. “The moment that you think of belongs to us—that last agony is our triumph.” Strong’s interview is reprinted in *The Aspirin Age, 1919–1941*, edited by Isabel Leighton (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949). For a more recent work on this controversial subject, see William Young and David Kaiser, *Postmortem: New Evidence in the Case of Sacco and Vanzetti* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985).

**POINTS OF MASTERY**

Explain how the second Industrial Revolution transformed the American economy.

Analyze the impact of the automobile and other technological developments on American social and economic life in the 1920s.

Discuss the impact of the city on family life.

Explain the basis of economic prosperity in the 1920s.

Define the terms “open shop,” “yellow-dog contract,” and “welfare capitalism” and explain their relevance to corporate treatment of labor during the 1920s.

Discuss the changes in women’s role in society.

Explain the term “Jazz Age” and why it is often used to describe the 1920s.

Explain why the intellectuals of the 1920s considered themselves a “lost generation” and how this perception affected their work.

Understand the factors and motivations behind the rush of migration in the early twentieth century, as well as conditions for black families in urban areas like Chicago and Harlem.

Pick several of the works produced during the Harlem Renaissance, including literature, art, and music. Discuss how they fit into the period, the views they demonstrate, and how they would be received today.

Discuss the views of Marcus Garvey. Why was he so popular among working-class people? Why was he criticized by many other blacks? What does his controversy tell you about the nature of black leadership during the 1920s?
Describe the postwar mood in America and the strikes, race riots, and Palmer raids of 1919 and 1920.

Explain the impact of mechanization and the deteriorating status of labor unions on the conditions of industrial labor during the 1920s.

Examine how the Sacco and Vanzetti case reflected divisions in American society.

Discuss the impact of prejudice on the setting of immigration quotas.

Briefly identify the factors leading to poor enforcement of the Volstead Act. Explain why increasing numbers of Americans began to question prohibition during the 1920s.

Distinguish the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s from its Reconstruction predecessor.

Identify the sources of the fundamentalist reaction.

Define the term “fundamentalism” and explain its significance to the Scopes trial. Identify the prosecuting and defending attorneys in the Scopes trial and describe the outcome of the trial.

Name two of the more accomplished members of Warren Harding’s cabinet and describe the roles they played in his administration.

Explain the means the Coolidge administration used to establish prosperity.

Explain Harding’s approach to the presidency.

Explain Mellon’s economic policies.

List and analyze the various scandals that beset the Harding administration.

Identify the candidates and indicate the outcome of the presidential election of 1924.

Explain the significance of Hoover’s victory in 1928.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. How did the automobile increase the independence of young people during the 1920s?

   Automobiles made it easier for mothers to get to work. Teenagers had less supervision and less need to work, further encouraging youthful revolt. They could use automobiles to escape parental supervision.

2. Why did the new opportunities for women upset conservatives?
Conservatives worried that education about and access to birth control and opportunities for mothers to work outside the home would destroy families. Before the 1920s, it was generally assumed that women should remain in the home, caring for children and managing domestic affairs. The fact that women were demanding the vote, drinking alcohol, and, in many cases, claiming freedoms that had previously been reserved for men (such as smoking and having sex outside of marriage) threatened traditional ideas of the family, which was the foundation of conservative values.

3. What did the Red Scare and the desire for immigration reform have in common?

Both stemmed from conservative fear of outsiders and from racism and xenophobia. Both were spurred on by impending economic difficulties that made working-class people fear for their jobs and livelihoods, and turn that fear toward those who seemed less “American.” Both the Red Scare and immigration reform targeted and caused problems for racial and ethnic minorities and recent immigrants.

4. How did the presidential election of 1928 reflect the anxieties of the postwar era?

Hoover stood for individualism and free enterprise, which were behind the hope and expectation that any American could achieve economic success. Al Smith was an urbanite, a Catholic, an opponent of Prohibition, and was tied to a big-city political machine. Smith won a majority of the votes in America’s twelve largest cities, but Hoover won the election. Hoover’s victory demonstrated that most Americans, particularly white, native-born, rural Americans, were uncomfortable with the ways in which the country was changing.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

*Brewed in America*, The History Channel, 50 minutes.
This video examines the history of the brewing industry before and after Prohibition.

*In Search of History: The Monkey Trial*, The History Channel, 50 minutes.
This video examines the battle between Darwinism and Creationism that took place in 1920s Dayton, Tennessee.

*In Search of History: The True Story of Sacco and Vanzetti*, The History Channel, 50 minutes.
A new look at a trial that still inspires debate today.

*The Prohibition Era*, A&E Video, 150 minutes.
This series is an excellent treatment of the Prohibition era and contains illuminating footage from the times.
CLASS EXERCISES

1 The following short list pairs movies with books. Ask students to choose a movie and book, and write a 3- to 5-page paper comparing the movie with the book.

Movie: *Rosewood*

Movie: *Saving Sister Aimee*

Movie: *Inherit the Wind*

2 Ask students to locate the history of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s at:
www.assumption.edu/ahc/1920s/Eugenics/Klan.html/ or
www.geocities.com/crazyoglala/pahasapa_KKK1920s.html.
Students are to read at least two of the links from this site and then write a 2- to 3-page paper discussing the Klan’s activities in the 1920s (for example, the above site focuses on the Klan’s role in restricting immigration). Other informative sites are located at:
http://www.kkk Klan.com/, www.splecenter.org, and

3 Research the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s. Explore its organization under the leadership of William Simmons, Edward Clarke, and Elizabeth Tyler. How was the Klan modernized under their leadership? How does it still resemble the original Klan? What issues signaled its failure by the end of the 1920s?

4 Have the class examine the advertisements in some magazines of the 1920s to see how they reflect the currents of American culture. What do they suggest about attitudes toward blacks, women, and other groups? What do they reveal about American values and priorities? Now look at any contemporary magazine, watch television, and observe current advertisements. What do you learn about today’s attitudes, values, and priorities? What has changed? What has not?

5 It would be easy to read some newspapers from the 1920s, either the *New York Times* or a local newspaper (both of which your library probably has on microfilm). Each student might focus on the coverage of the Teapot Dome scandal, the Scopes trial, Lindbergh’s flight, or the election of 1928. Or they might look at advertising, editorials, and various feature articles to capture the mood of the 1920s.

6 One way to experience the currents of social life during the 1920s is through reading the literature of the time. Novels such as F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender Is the Night*; Ernest Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*; Sherwood Anderson’s *Winesburg, Ohio*; Sinclair Lewis’s *Main Street, Babbitt,* and *Elmer Gantry*; Claude McKay’s *Home to Harlem*;
Jean Toomer’s *Cane*; John Dos Passos’s *1919* and *The Big Money*; William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*; Theodore Dreiser’s *An American Tragedy*; and many others provide wonderful insights into manners and morals. Tell the class to select one of these, or another novel written in and about the 1920s, read it, and write an essay about how well it reflects the times. This is a good place to connect history and literature. Students could examine the major writers of the period—Hemingway, Dos Passos, Fitzgerald, Stein, Eliot, Hughes, and Hurston—and try to connect what they were saying to the trends in their society. Students could report to the class the extent to which the writers reflected the direction of social change and the extent to which they criticized their society.

**MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS**

- View the Closer Look: The Great White Way—Times Square
- Read the Document: Elanor Rowland Wembridge, “Petting and the Campus” (1925)
- Complete the Assignment: Marcus Garvey: Racial Redemption and Black Nationalism
- Read the Document: Pearson Profiles, Marcus Garvey
- Watch the Video: The Harlem Renaissance
- Read the Document: A. Mitchell Palmer on the Menace of Communism (1920)
- Read the Document: Court Statements from Sacco and Vanzetti
- Read the Document: Creed of Klanswomen (1924)
- Read the Document: Executive Orders and Senate Resolutions on Teapot Dome
- Watch the Video: Prosperity of the 1920s and the Great Depression
- Complete the Assignment: The Scopes “Monkey” Trial: Contesting Cultural Differences
CHAPTER 26

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT AND THE NEW DEAL

CHAPTER OUTLINE

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST DESPAIR

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

• The Great Crash
• Effect of the Depression

FIGHTING THE DEPRESSION

• Hoover and Voluntarism
• The Emergence of Roosevelt
• The Hundred Days
• Roosevelt and Recovery
• Roosevelt and Relief

ROOSEVELT AND REFORM

• Challenges to FDR
• Social Security
• Labor Legislation

IMPACT OF THE NEW DEAL

• Rise of Organized Labor
• The New Deal Record on Help to Minorities
• Women at Work

END OF THE NEW DEAL

• The Election of 1936
• The Supreme Court Fight
• The New Deal in Decline

CONCLUSION: THE NEW DEAL AND AMERICAN LIFE

FEATURE ESSAY: ELEANOR ROOSEVELT AND THE QUEST FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
OPENING THEME

**THE TRIPLE A**

Students can generally understand most New Deal programs, even if they disagree with them, but the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 will probably puzzle them. What sense did it make for the government to pay farmers to plow under crops or kill animals at a time when people were too poor to buy meat or clothing? Students will be tempted to agree with the joke that Roosevelt solved the problem of poverty in the midst of plenty by getting rid of the plenty. Ironically, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration was probably the most successful of all the New Deal agencies.

When Roosevelt took office, two segments of the economy were in a critical stage of collapse. The most severe problem existed in banking, but agriculture was in nearly as bad a condition and had been depressed for a longer period. After World War I, two developments made it impossible for American farmers to market all the food and fiber that they produced. First of all, America’s overseas markets closed down. Because the United States had become the world’s greatest creditor nation, foreign nations had to send dollars to the United States to keep up with interest and principle payments. Those dollars could no longer be used to buy American foodstuffs.

The second adverse development was the increasing mechanization of American agriculture at a time when demand was decreasing. Whenever a farmer gave up his horse or mule and bought a tractor, he not only could plow more acreage, he had more acreage to plow. In the 1920s, an estimated twenty-five to thirty-five million acres of land were put into cultivation simply because they were no longer needed to feed horses and mules. The result of increased production and decreased demand was lower prices. For the consumer, lower prices are always good news, but for the producer, lower prices can spell disaster, and disaster for farmers usually takes the form of a foreclosure on farm and home.

The depression in the cities brought the farmers’ difficulties to a climax because it curtailed their most important market. As foreclosures became common, so did mobs of farmers who turned out to prevent sheriffs from evicting friends and neighbors. Sporadic and sometimes violent attempts were made to limit production of farm goods in order to raise prices. Milk trucks, for example, were ambushed and their contents spilled on the highways. By 1933, a Farmers’ Holiday Association had formed, threatening to declare a strike that would bring starvation to the cities.

When, at Roosevelt’s urging, Congress created the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) in May 1933, an immediate and dangerous crisis was at hand. The AAA acted expeditiously to boost farm prices of seven major commodities: wheat, cotton, corn, hogs, tobacco, rice, and milk. The AAA had to adopt drastic measures for two of these commodities because it had been created so late in the growing season. Cotton, which was selling at a nickel a pound because of the previous year’s surplus, had already been planted, and if harvested, would certainly sink even lower in price. The AAA had no choice, but to pay farmers to plow under the plants. In an impressive feat of administrative energy, the AAA signed over 1,042,000 individual contracts to limit cotton production and took more than ten million acres out of cultivation. The result was a doubling of cotton prices by the beginning of 1934.
The AAA made a drastic cutback also in hog production, and this aspect of its work was the most criticized. It should be understood that most of the corn harvested in the United States is consumed by hogs, and that the price of pork determines the price of corn. When the AAA went into operation, the farrowing season for hogs was well advanced. In order to limit production, the AAA paid farmers to kill piglets and pregnant sows. Urban Americans protested this massacre of the innocents, prompting Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace to ask whether “farmers should run a sort of old-folks home for hogs and keep them around indefinitely as barnyard pets.” It is often overlooked also that the AAA gave one hundred million pounds of pork to the Federal Emergency Relief Administration to be distributed free of charge to poor people.

Altogether, crop prices rose about 55 percent in the first six months after the creation of the AAA. Discontent among farmers dissipated rapidly. By 1936, when the Supreme Court ruled that the act of Congress establishing the AAA had been unconstitutional, the farm emergency was over, and it is as an emergency measure that the AAA should be judged. As Rexford Tugwell, assistant secretary of agriculture, said of the crop reduction programs, “We certainly don’t think we are entering upon a period of general limitations. This is merely temporary.”

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST DESPAIR

The author recounts the different memories people had of the Great Depression: a farmer who saw wheat being burned because it was too cheap to sell, a college student who noticed how many of her classmates’ fathers had abandoned their families out of a sense of shame, a man who remembered hiding the truth of scarcity from his children. The memories were different, but the misery was shared.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

After the collapse of the economy in 1929, optimism turned to bleak despair.

. The Great Crash

It was apparent in 1927 that the market for consumer goods was being saturated, but Americans were too engaged in watching the stock market to notice. Stock prices began to soar in the spring of 1928, attracting investments from individuals and corporations. Although the crash in 1929 directly affected only the three million Americans who owned stock, the resulting credit crunch stifled business, leading to layoffs and further decline in the demand for consumer goods. It is obvious now that the economy would have been far healthier if the money that went into speculation had gone into wages, but Americans were pioneering a new industrial system and had no past experience to guide them.
Effect of the Depression

The Depression brought physical and psychological hardship to all classes of Americans. The middle class lost its belief in ever-increasing prosperity, and thousands of young people wandered, homeless and jobless, through the country.

FIGHTING THE DEPRESSION

When the Republicans failed to end the Depression, the Democrats became the majority party.

Hoover and Voluntarism

Hoover hoped that voluntary action and private charity would get the nation through the Depression, but as conditions worsened, the president approved aid to farmers and bankers. Despite Democratic pressure, Hoover resisted efforts to give direct aid to the unemployed, believing it would undermine the proud American character. His apparent indifference to human suffering and his seeming incompetence doomed his chances for reelection.

The Emergence of Roosevelt

Franklin Roosevelt, born to wealth and privilege, had a successful but minor political career before 1921, when he was crippled by polio. FDR overcame the handicap, was elected governor of New York, and took control of the Democratic party. A man of infinite charm, a magnificent speaker, and a politician to the bone, Roosevelt easily defeated Hoover in 1932 by putting together a coalition of southern and western farmers, industrial workers, immigrants, and Catholics.

The Hundred Days

In his first three months as president, Roosevelt saved the banking system from collapse and enacted fifteen major laws, some of which (like federal insurance of bank accounts) have become permanent. Roosevelt did not attempt to nationalize the economy; he wished only to reform and restore it.

Roosevelt and Recovery

Roosevelt attempted to spur industrial recovery through the National Recovery Administration (NRA). Under this program, different industries worked out codes that would eliminate cutthroat competition and ensure labor peace. The codes generally favored big business and were unenforceable. In 1935, the Supreme Court ruled the NRA unconstitutional.
Roosevelt’s solution to the Depression in agriculture was the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) of 1933, under which farmers were paid to take land out of cultivation. Smaller harvests resulted in higher farm prices and larger farm incomes, but much of the land taken out of cultivation had been worked by sharecroppers and tenant farmers. These people were now dispossessed and moved to the cities.

Roosevelt and Relief

FDR was quick to respond to the needs of the unemployed and the poor. In 1933 he assigned Harry Hopkins to establish various direct-aid programs. The final commitment to the idea of work relief came in 1935, with the establishment of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which Congress funded for $5 billion. FDR himself thought of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to give employment to young people. But Roosevelt’s programs were never sufficiently funded to make a major recovery possible, and more radical ideas began to emerge.

ROOSEVELT AND REFORM

In his first two years as president, Roosevelt responded to immediate problems. In 1935, he began to propose measures that would permanently reform the economic institutions of the nation.

Challenges to FDR

Roosevelt’s inability to bring about full recovery made it possible for more radical demagogues to attract support. Father Charles Coughlin wanted to nationalize the banks; Francis Townsend wanted to distribute wealth by taking it from the young and giving it to the elderly. Until his assassination, Huey Long was so popular that he seemed a real threat to run as an independent for president.

Social Security

In 1935, Roosevelt helped push the Social Security Act through Congress. Although critics complained that too few people would eventually collect pensions and that the law’s unemployment package was inadequate, Roosevelt believed that it was the best that he could hope for at the time.

Labor Legislation

Roosevelt threw his support behind the Wagner Act, passed in 1935, which allowed unions to organize and outlawed a variety of unfair labor practices. In 1938, the Fair Labor Standard Act gave workers maximum hour and minimum wage protection. Like Social Security, these acts were important because they established a pattern of government aid to the poor, aged, and handicapped.
Roosevelt proposed other reforms, but Congress usually weakened them. Still, Roosevelt had gone far enough to the left to erode support for Coughlin, Townsend, and Long, without leaving the mainstream of American traditions.

**IMPACT OF THE NEW DEAL**

The New Deal helped labor unions most; women and minorities least.

. Rise of Organized Labor

In 1932, unions were in decline. Passage of the National Recovery Act encouraged union organizers, and John L. Lewis formed the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), designed to organize unskilled workers. The CIO succeeded, often against violent resistance, in organizing unions in the steel and automobile industries. By the end of the 1930s, the CIO had five million members. Still, only 28 percent of urban workers belonged to a union in 1940.

. The New Deal Record on Help to Minorities

Some New Deal programs actually hurt racial minorities. The crop-reduction program allowed white employers to fire or evict African American and Hispanic workers and tenants. But other programs, like public works, helped, and prominent New Deal figures, Harry Hopkins or Eleanor Roosevelt for example, convinced minorities that the government was on their side. One minority, Native Americans, gained greater control over their own affairs through the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934.

. Women at Work

This decade saw the position of women deteriorate. They lost jobs at a faster rate than did men, and hardly any of the New Deal programs helped them. However, there was some progress in government. Roosevelt named a woman to the cabinet and appointed several women to other important positions. Eleanor Roosevelt served as a model for activist women.

**END OF THE NEW DEAL**

The New Deal reached its peak in 1936, when Roosevelt was reelected. After that, although Roosevelt continued to be personally popular, he had great trouble in getting Congress to pass his programs.
The Election of 1936

FDR campaigned against the rich in 1936 and promised even further reforms in his second term. He easily defeated the Republican candidate for president, and the Democrats won lopsided majorities in both houses of Congress. It was clear that a new political coalition had formed. FDR carried the traditionally Democratic South, the urban areas, the ethnic vote, the African American vote, the poor, and organized labor.

The Supreme Court Fight

Roosevelt had long harbored a grudge against the Court because it had ruled adversely on several New Deal measures. In 1937, he asked Congress to give him the right to “pack” the Court. The proposal stirred up a tempest of protest, and FDR had to retreat. His loss in this contest emboldened his opponents.

The New Deal in Decline

FDR could no longer dominate Congress, and his attempts in 1938 to unseat several conservative Democrats failed. Even worse, Roosevelt’s abrupt cutback of funds for relief agencies in 1936 caused a severe slump in 1937. Roosevelt was blamed, and he finally had to resort again to huge government spending. By the end of 1938, the Republican party had revived.

CONCLUSION: THE NEW DEAL AND AMERICAN LIFE

The New Deal did not end the Depression or fundamentally alter the nation’s economic system. Nevertheless, legislation like Social Security and the Wagner Act had enduring results and the political realignment of the 1930s lasted for decades. FDR did not solve the economic problems he inherited, but he helped the American people endure and survive the Great Depression.

FEATURE ESSAY: ELEANOR ROOSEVELT AND THE QUEST FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Eleanor Roosevelt was a reformer long before she became first lady. When her husband Franklin was stricken with polio, she worked tirelessly to speed his recovery and to keep the Roosevelt name before the public by making speeches, writing magazine articles, and chairing the Women’s Platform Committee at the Democratic National Convention in 1924. Throughout her life she fought against racial and gender injustice, even when that meant criticizing the New Deal for not having done enough.
LECTURE TOPICS

Present an examination of Franklin Roosevelt as a politician. Most historians agree the New Deal did little to significantly reduce the suffering associated with the Great Depression, yet Roosevelt was re-elected in 1936 and again in 1940. Why? What were Roosevelt's strengths as a politician? Did he have greater leeway and freedom in his role as president because of the times? How did the press treat Roosevelt? Would this be the case today?

Discuss the unique role of Eleanor Roosevelt during the era of the New Deal. How did Eleanor Roosevelt differ from the first ladies who preceded her? How did she impact the role of the first lady? How did she and FDR complement each other politically? To what extent did she contribute to defining the legacy of the era?

Discuss several facets of the New Deal. Explain why and how some of the programs, like the AAA and the CCC, were either explicitly or implicitly discriminatory. Discuss the origins of the Social Security Act, as well as its effect on blacks. How did Social Security reveal that many people still thought “welfare” was something to be avoided?

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

The New Deal years are often considered a defining era for the modern Democratic Party. There is no doubt that the Republican and Democratic parties of the 1930s were markedly different from those at the turn of the century. Have students compare and contrast the parties of the 1930s with the parties of the 1890s. Address such issues as membership, attitude toward the strength of the federal and state governments, financial and business agenda, and the degree of support for social reform.

Compare and contrast the New Deal era with other reform movements such as the populist and progressive movements. What characteristics of these two earlier reform movements were inherited by the New Dealers? Also, does the New Deal predict future reform in the 1960s? What elements of 1960s reform have their roots in the New Deal era?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Discuss the long- and short-range effects of the New Deal on American political and economic life. What were its key successes and failures? What legacies of New Deal–era policies and political struggles can you find in contemporary America?

How did the New Deal reshape western communities and politics? What specific programs had the greatest impact in the region? How are these changes still visible today?

Evaluate the impact of the labor movement and radicalism on the 1930s. How did they influence American political and cultural life?
What were the underlying causes of the Great Depression? What consequences did it have for ordinary Americans, and how did the Hoover administration attempt to deal with the crisis?

Analyze the key elements of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s first New Deal program. To what degree did these succeed in getting the economy back on track and in providing relief to suffering Americans?

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

Even more than the first or second World War, the Great Depression blighted the lives of average Americans. Unlike warfare, of course, the damage done cannot be counted in deaths or in cities destroyed. It was rather the numbing shock of unemployment, the loss of a lifetime’s savings, the nagging fear of being thrown out of work, and the loss of confidence in self and in the nation that made the Depression such an ordeal. One result of the loss of security was the refusal of Americans to start families; the population grew more slowly in the decade of the 1930s than at any other time in American history. One small example of the kind of tragedies endured comes from a woman who remembered, “I was going with someone when the Depression hit. We probably would have gotten married. He was a commercial artist and had been doing very well. I remember the night he said, ‘They just laid off quite a few of the boys.’ It never occurred to him that he would be next. He was older than most of the others and very sure of himself. This was not the sort of thing that was going to happen to him. Suddenly he was laid off. It hit him like a ton of bricks. And he just disappeared.” Studs Terkel, editor, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* (New York: Avon Books, 1970).

Franklin Delano Roosevelt became president at a time when it seemed the nation was bereft of leadership and without a future. He used his inaugural address to immediately take command and to inspire the country with confidence. The most memorable line from this speech was his assurance to the people that “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself . . . .” Another part of the speech had far greater significance: Roosevelt said he would ask Congress for appropriate legislation to deal with the crisis. If Congress faltered, Roosevelt said, “I shall not evade the clear course of duty that will then confront me. I shall ask Congress for the one remaining instrument to meet the crisis—broad executive power to wage a war against the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe.” The inaugural address is reprinted in *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: Random House, 1938), Volume 2. These volumes are especially interesting because Roosevelt wrote prefaces for them and annotated them.

POINTS OF MASTERY

Give three reasons for the deepening economic depression and three measures Hoover took to stem the Depression.

Describe the responses of Hoover and Congress to the Great Depression.

Identify the ideological roots of the New Deal.
Characterize the first New Deal from 1933 to 1935 and name several measures of relief, recovery, and reform passed in the first hundred days.

Show how the Social Security Act and the Works Progress Administration exemplified the move of the second New Deal toward goals of social reform and social justice.

Explain the significance of the Wagner Act (National Labor Relations Act) and its impact on organized labor, and also identify the causes and consequences of the Great Depression.

How did the New Deal expand the scope of the federal government?

What was the Great Depression’s impact on American cultural life during the 1930s?

Describe the limits and legacy of the New Deal’s reforms and outline the legislation of Roosevelt’s “Hundred Days.”

Describe the impact of the New Deal on organized labor.

Discuss the politics of the extreme left and extreme right in the 1930s.

Explain the reasons for Roosevelt’s lopsided victory in 1936.

Give reasons why Roosevelt’s plan to pack the Supreme Court failed.

Discuss the legacy of the New Deal.

Explain the role and significance of Roosevelt in the New Deal.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Could the Great Depression have been averted? What steps might the government have taken to prevent it?

   The Great Depression could have been averted if American investors had been less greedy and more rational. It could have been averted if the banking and securities regulations brought in by the New Deal had been in place twenty or thirty years earlier. A major cause of the depression was the destruction of wealth and buying power in Europe due to the war; perhaps there are ways governments around the world could have invested in rebuilding and retooling factories and improved employment in Germany and the Allied countries, which could have prevented the economic crisis in Europe from spreading to the United States.

2. Why did Americans respond so positively to Franklin Roosevelt?

   Many people voted for FDR in 1932 simply because he was not Herbert Hoover. In the public eye, Roosevelt spoke well and exuded a calm confidence. He knew what people needed and wanted to hear and believe. He told the truth, which was that he wanted to fix and reform the American economic system, not change it drastically.
3 How was the popularity of Francis Townsend and Huey Long like the popularity of Roosevelt? How was it different?

Long and Townsend were exceedingly popular with the desperate people whom their economic reforms were intended to help. In this regard, FDR could be said to be similar. All three of them responded to basic human needs. One way in which FDR’s popularity was different is that it was constantly tested by his actions. Without any public power or responsibility, Long and Townsend could promise anything, but FDR had to deliver on his promises.

4 Why did minorities not fully share the benefits of New Deal reforms?

Minorities were hardest hit by the Depression, so they had greater needs. Whites stuck together as a group, making it a priority to protect each other’s jobs and families and leaving others on their own. Because it was not intended to be radical in any way, the New Deal preserved racial inequalities: for instance, black wages were lower than white wages before the Depression, so unemployment payments were greater for whites than for blacks. Additionally, a greater proportion of blacks worked in jobs that were not protected by Social Security.

5 Why was Roosevelt’s “court-packing” scheme so unpopular?

The plan was unpopular with some because they hated Roosevelt and everything he stood for. For partisans of Roosevelt it was not because they liked the legal opinions of the justices or because they did not want the New Deal, but because the plan appeared to be an attempt to subvert the democratic process and the Constitutional system of checks and balances.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:


This three-part series examines the history of American photography. There are three episodes: one dealing with the period 1900–1934, the second focusing on 1934–1959, and the final episode looking at 1960–1999.


This two-part series offers a new look at one of America’s most intriguing first ladies.

*Franklin D. Roosevelt* (PBS production of the life of FDR, multi-volumed).

*The Great Depression*. (PBS documentary of the 1930s, with focus on the New Deal in New York City under Mayor LaGuardia, 120 minutes).

This seven-part series examines the causes and conditions of the Great Depression.

An early biographical piece produced by Ken Burns and narrated by David McCullough.

_Life in the Thirties._ (Produced by Henry Salamon—cultural and political essay of the decade of the thirties, including the rise of totalitarian governments in Europe and Asia, two volumes, 54 minutes total).

_The Radio Priest_, from PBS’ _American Experience_. (Color, 60 minutes, 1990).
Focuses on Father Charles Coughlin’s protest against the nation’s economic and social system. Shows how Coughlin used the airwaves to preach a fundamentally undemocratic message.

_Surviving the Dust Bowl_ (55 minutes), PBS Video (1999).
_American Experience_ film that captures the hardships faced by farmers on the Great Plains as an eight-year drought struck the region. Also deals with New Deal programs designed to aid farmers.

_Tennessee Valley Authority_, A&E Video.
This look at the Tennessee Valley Authority includes rare photographs, contemporary film, and first-hand accounts from those who were involved in the project.

**CLASS EXERCISES**

1. Have students examine the individuals who composed Roosevelt’s “brain trust.” Who were Roosevelt’s closest advisors? What were their educational backgrounds? What suited them for the job of creating the New Deal? Most importantly, what was the political background of these advisors? To what extent had they been exposed to socialism and radical political philosophy?

2. Assign a book or novel dealing with the Great Depression or New Deal. Show a corresponding movie, then ask students to discuss the historical content of the novel and movie. Then compare and contrast the content and impact of the novel and movie in both a class discussion and in a written paper. Suggested pairs of novels/movies for this project are as follows:

   A. **Movie: The Grapes of Wrath**

   B. **Movie: All the King’s Men**

   C. **Movie: Eleanor and Franklin**

   D. **Movie: The Scottsboro Boys**
Enjoy some 1930s movies as historical documents. What do they tell you about the myths, values, and spirit of that decade? Why did gangster films become popular during this time period? Compare and contrast films from the 1930s with films of today that explore the Depression?

It’s getting more difficult to find people who have first-hand memories of the Great Depression, but—especially if you consider the memories of people who were children when the depression struck—they’re still out there. Students can be assigned to interview relatives or members of the community about their Depression-era experiences. (You might contact a local senior center to line up prospective interviewees ahead of time.) The key question should be: How did people like you survive the depression? Ideally, students would have a couple of weeks of lead time to familiarize themselves with other Depression-era interviews. Studs Terkel’s *Hard Times* (Pantheon, 1970) and Anne Banks’ *First Person America* (Random House, 1980) contain good interviews from the period that should give students an idea of what to look for. Students may wish to meet as a group and collectively prepare a list of questions. The class could discuss the interviews or analyze them through essay writing exercises. Students will probably find a strong emphasis on community cooperation (which should be linked to the broader community themes of the text) and family sacrifice.

A. Think about the impact on the size and location of major national urban centers. How did the changing economy define the regions that would prosper and the regions that would decline?

B. Consider the impact of the change on personal values and beliefs. How did economic revolution revolutionize social philosophy and religious faith?

C. Think about the impact on the position of the United States in the global economy. Did the economic revolution strengthen the economic position of the United States, weaken it, or simply redefine it?

Have students assess the power of the media in politics today. Are the roles, responsibilities, and power of “traditional” media different than those of “new” media (websites, blogs, and other computer-based media)? To what extent has the media determined who has been elected as the United States president over the last 30 years? A number of different approaches may be taken. Students may look at selected presidential campaigns of the last 30 years and determine the extent to which media coverage impacted the results of each. They may also choose selected political personalities and demonstrate how these individuals used the media to build political support for their agendas. This would work well as a group project.

**MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS**

- View the Map: The Great Depression
- View the Closer Look: Homeless Shantytown, Seattle 1937
- Read the Document: Women on the Breadlines
- Watch the Video: Dorothea Lange and Migrant Mother
• Watch the Video: FDR’S Inauguration
• View the Map: The Tennessee Valley Authority
• Read the Document: Frances Perkins and the Social Security Act (1935, 1960)
• Watch the Video: Responding to the Great Depression: Whose New Deal?
• Complete the Assignment: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Quest for Social Justice
CHAPTER 27

AMERICA AND THE WORLD, 1921–1945

CHAPTER OUTLINE

A PACT WITHOUT POWER

RETREAT, REVERSAL, AND RIVALRY

• Retreat in Europe
• Cooperation in Latin America
• Rivalry in Asia

ISOLATIONISM

• The Lure of Pacifism and Neutrality
• War in Europe

THE ROAD TO WAR

• From Neutrality to Undeclared War
• Showdown in the Pacific

TURNING THE TIDE AGAINST THE AXIS

• Wartime Partnerships
• Halting the German Blitz
• Checking Japan in the Pacific

THE HOME FRONT

• The Arsenal of Democracy
• A Nation on the Move
• Win-the-War Politics

VICTORY

• War Aims and Wartime Diplomacy
• Triumph and Tragedy in the Pacific

CONCLUSION: THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF WAR
FEATURE ESSAY: THE FACE OF THE HOLOCAUST

OPENING THEME

ROSIE THE RIVETER

Rosie the Riveter stands for all the women who left home during World War II and went to work producing the weapons so crucial to America’s victory over Japan and Germany. Rosie became a heroine during the war, and she remains today a loved and relevant figure. The city of Richmond, California, recently dedicated a monument to her. Ironically, Rosie was never meant to outlive the war, and her survival may be used to illustrate to your students the mutability of symbols. What was created by the government for a patriotic purpose became, in time, subversive of the established social order.

Rosie was born from the government’s fear that women would not replace men in the heavy industrial plants that produced tanks, planes, ships, explosives, and the other matériel necessary for modern warfare. On the eve of Pearl Harbor, less than a third of all adult women worked for wages, and the rate was even lower for married women. Those statistics seemed to confirm the conventional wisdom that women did not like working outside the home and took wage work only until they married. In order to mount an effective industrial offensive, the United States would have to persuade millions of women to leave the kitchen and the nursery, where they held socially honored positions, and enter the grungy world of the factory, to work eight hours a day, six days a week. The factories paid well, thirty to fifty dollars a week, but government officials did not believe that high wages would attract women who had husbands to support them. It would be necessary to appeal to the patriotism of American women. That was Rosie’s mission.

Rosie was not the first or only symbol of the woman war worker. There was Wendy the Welder, Miss Victory, and a slew of posters without names, like the WE CAN DO IT! woman, going off to the factory in overalls, her sleeves rolled up, flexing her muscles. Rosie the Riveter did not become the eponym of the women factory workers until the song of that name, written by John Jacob Loeb and Redd Evans in 1942, began to catch on. As it did, government public relations agencies and the news media found and publicized real Rosies like Rose Monroe, who worked as a welder in a plane factory in Ypsilanti, Michigan. By war’s end, every woman working in a war plant was a Rosie, but the most famous of all was the Rosie drawn by Norman Rockwell for the May 29, 1943, cover of The Saturday Evening Post. This Rosie was a redhead with bulging biceps and prodigious thighs, who sat saucily, her goggles and face visor thrown back, eating a sandwich, her massive rivet gun slung easily across her ample lap.

As far as the government was concerned, Rosie was meant to recruit women into war work only for the duration of the war. She was not supposed to lead women into thinking that their factory jobs would last into the postwar period. With victory, the government hoped, women would happily return to the kitchen. Rosie was therefore depicted as inescapably feminine and a bit out of place in the factory. The Rosie of the WE CAN DO IT! poster wore mascara and nail polish to work. The Rosie of the song
longed for the life of nightclubs and cocktail parties that she patriotically denied herself while her boyfriend fought in the Marines. Even Rockwell’s muscular Rosie carried a compact and a dainty handkerchief into the factory. Rosie was supposed to rivet until the war was over and then happily return to changing diapers.

The women war workers did not buy the last part of the government’s message. A survey in 1944 found that 85 percent of women war workers wanted to remain in heavy industry after the war, mainly because they needed money for such family expenses as rent, food, and medical attention. Since few women were willing to give up jobs that the government, employers, and union leaders had reserved for the men returning from military service, women were simply fired in massive numbers at the end of the war. Almost all the women who made tanks during the war were dismissed within a year of V-J Day, as those factories converted to the production of cars. Altogether, nearly three million women who had jobs in 1945 were unemployed in 1946.

Had Rosie been no more than a tool of government propaganda, she would have been long forgotten, and if she were only the symbol of women betrayed by false promises, she would not be interesting. Rosie became much more than either of these. She became a symbol of women’s pride in doing a job well that they were not supposed to be able to do at all. Those women who entered the war plants confronted a hostile, macho culture in which dirt, discomfort, and danger were supposed to be scorned or ignored. One woman, assigned to a small platform sixty feet above a concrete floor, asked nervously how often people fell off. “Just once,” the foreman grimly replied. Toilets in the plants were usually so foul that only desperation made them endurable, and the constant noise of screeching and pounding, of metal against metal, of grinding and hammering, made it impossible to hear or think. Despite the odds, women were amazed to discover that they worked as well as men once they had the necessary training and experience. It was a two-woman team who set the record for most rivets shot during a ten-hour shift. Furthermore, in small ways and large, women made the workplace less hostile. Because of their demands, factories became cleaner and safer, employers set up child-care facilities, and the government mandated equal pay for equal work. Though Rosie riveted for only a few years, she performed so well that she now speaks to succeeding generations of women of their right to work to the limits of their abilities at whatever they wish.

A PACT WITHOUT POWER

The author begins with one of the most fatuous moments in American history. On August 27, 1928, the United States signed a treaty outlawing war. This chapter covers a period when Americans adopted wishful thinking as a foreign policy. As the United States retreated into isolationism, fascism and communism gained strength, and it took a world war to halt their spread.

RETREAT, REVERSAL, AND RIVALRY

American diplomacy in the 1920s was permeated by a sense of disillusionment. The United States refused to be bound by any agreement to preserve international peace.
. Retreat in Europe

The United States increased its economic dominance each year in the 1920s, but refused to enter into any European collective security arrangement. The sole exception was the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which outlawed war but bound none of its participants to do anything to preserve peace. The United States refused to recognize the Soviet Union and even quarreled with its old allies, England and France, over repayment of the loans they had received in World War I.

. Cooperation in Latin America

The United States continued to dominate Latin America politically and economically, but relied less often on direct military intervention. Roosevelt continued the policies of Coolidge and Hoover by substituting cooperation for coercion. The United States would be a “Good Neighbor,” but its domination of the area would remain unchallenged.

. Rivalry in Asia

Japan had long been interested in an Asian empire and already occupied Korea and key parts of Manchuria before the 1920s. When Japan sought to gain supremacy in China, the United States, committed to the Open Door policy, protested. In 1921 the tensions in the Pacific led to the Washington Conference, at which several treaties were signed. England agreed to American equality in naval strength, Japan was accepted as the third-largest naval power, and all nations agreed to limit naval construction. The Open Door policy was reaffirmed, and the status quo in the Pacific was frozen. In less than a decade, Japan violated these agreements by seizing Manchuria, but the United States took no punitive action.

ISOLATIONISM

Americans became even more determined to avoid foreign entanglements in the 1930s, when the Depression made domestic concerns seem more important and when the rise of militaristic regimes in Germany, Italy, and Japan made war seem likely.

. The Lure of Pacifism and Neutrality

Most Americans suspected that they had been duped by the munitions makers into going to war in 1917 and resolved never again to fight a meaningless war. Led by Senator Gerald Nye, Congress passed neutrality legislation in 1935 that prohibited U.S. trade with and loans to any nation at war. Roosevelt made no attempt to block this legislation, but refused to invoke the laws when Japan invaded China, thereby allowing China to buy arms from the United States.
. War in Europe

Roosevelt generally approved of English and French efforts to appease Hitler, but when Hitler seized Czechoslovakia, FDR attempted to revise the neutrality acts to give an advantage to England and France. Congress, however, refused. By July 1939, Roosevelt openly attacked the neutrality acts, but when World War II began in September 1939, Roosevelt reluctantly declared the acts in force.

THE ROAD TO WAR

From 1939 to 1941, the American people gave their moral support to England and France and moved slowly into active alliance with them.

. From Neutrality to Undeclared War

From 1939 on, Roosevelt led the nation gradually into a position of helping England without actually entering the war. In November 1939, he persuaded Congress to allow any belligerent to buy American goods on a “cash and carry” basis. When Germany knocked France out of the war in 1940, Roosevelt stepped up aid to England, especially after his election to a third term in 1940. America began to give or loan war supplies to England and even began to transport these goods across the Atlantic, thereby creating incidents with German submarines. The nation debated the neutrality question intensely, and a consensus began to develop that a Nazi victory in Europe would threaten Western civilization. FDR tried to mold public opinion, but feared getting too far in front of it.

. Showdown in the Pacific

Japan had added to her conquests while the war raged in Europe. When she invaded and occupied large areas of China, the United States responded by limiting exports to Japan of strategic materials such as oil. This action in no way restrained Japan, who promptly allied herself with Germany and Italy in 1940 and pushed into Indochina. In response, the United States ended all trade with Japan. Japan decided to negotiate with the United States, but to attack her if all Japanese demands were not granted. Japan wanted a free hand in China and the restoration of normal trade relations. The United States demanded that Japan remove her troops from China. When diplomacy failed, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, in a surprise attack that crippled the Pacific fleet. The next day Roosevelt asked for a declaration of war, and it was granted immediately. Germany and Italy then declared war on the United States. It had taken years for the American people to realize their stake in defeating the Axis powers, but after Pearl Harbor the American people were united in their determination to win the war.
TURNING THE TIDE AGAINST THE AXIS

When America came into the war, the Axis was on the offensive everywhere. It took two years before the United States, England, and Russia could seize the initiative, and another two years to crush their enemies.

. Wartime Partnerships

One of the greatest advantages the Allies had over the Axis powers was the complete partnership between the United States and England, cemented by the personal friendship between FDR and Churchill. The Soviet Union was less satisfied with the alliance. Despite receiving American supplies, the Soviet Union often felt it was fighting alone against the Germans in Europe. These wartime tensions persisted even after victory.

. Halting the German Blitz

The United States agreed to England’s strategy of chewing on the edges of German strength, and invaded North Africa in November 1942. By May 1943, German troops there had been defeated, and the United States and England invaded Italy. Mussolini fell from power, but the Allies advanced slowly up the peninsula, sustaining heavy casualties. In the meantime, Russia decisively defeated Germany at the battle of Stalingrad and began to push into eastern Europe.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

. Checking Japan in the Pacific

The conquest of Japan was given second priority, and a two-pronged drive was planned to defeat her. The army under Douglas MacArthur began a drive through New Guinea to the Philippines, while the navy under Chester Nimitz attacked westward from Pearl Harbor, island hopping to the Philippines. After the American victory at Midway in June 1942, U.S. forces moved into Japanese-held territories.

THE HOME FRONT

The war ended the Depression as American factories began to turn out tanks and aircraft at a tremendous rate. The economy was regulated for a maximum military effort, and scarce items, such as canned food, were rationed for civilians. The war introduced sweeping social changes, as women entered the workforce in large numbers, and the move from farm to factory accelerated.

The return of prosperity especially benefitted the lowest-paid wage-earners whose incomes actually rose faster than the incomes of the rich. Since much of the wealth being earned could not be easily
spent because of wartime restrictions, the nation’s savings increased rapidly, laying the foundation for postwar prosperity.

. The Arsenal of Democracy

The needs of the war effort, especially the need to expand manufacturing, led to profiteering, shortages, and rationing. Roosevelt wanted large tax increases, but Congress balked and the national debt soared. Nevertheless, most Americans saw their incomes rise substantially.

. A Nation on the Move

During the war, the American people began to move to the South and West. The war encouraged early marriages, and the birth rate began to climb. The result was a series of problems, such as housing shortages, more divorces, and neglected children.

Some groups improved their conditions during the war. Women took jobs formerly reserved for men and saw their incomes rise by 50 percent. African Americans, despite persistent prejudice, demanded and got equal opportunities in war-related industries, which encouraged even greater migration from the rural South. Mexican Americans also migrated to the cities and found factory jobs.

One large migration was a forced one. About 120,000 Japanese residents, many of them United States citizens, were moved from the West Coast and placed in detention camps. In 1944, the Supreme Court rejected their appeal for release, but in 1988 Congress finally acknowledged the injustice that had been done and voted compensation for the survivors of a horrible experience.

. Win-the-War Politics

Republicans did well in the 1942 elections and allied with the southern Democrats to control Congress. To regain his party’s moderates, Roosevelt chose Harry Truman as his running mate in 1944, and won a fourth term in office. By that time, however, his health was rapidly deteriorating. After attending the Yalta conference, he died suddenly on April 12, 1945. Harry Truman, totally unprepared, became president.

VICTORY

After 1943, the Allies began the task of conquering Germany. U.S. and British forces landed in France in June 1944 and in less than a year made a junction with Russian soldiers, who had overrun Germany and taken Berlin. On May 7, 1945, Germany surrendered unconditionally.
. War Aims and Wartime Diplomacy

The United States and Russia were divided over what they hoped the war would accomplish. Russia believed that eastern Europe should be her prize for having suffered the most to conquer Germany. The United States wanted a collective security arrangement that included the United Nations. In a series of conferences at Yalta and Potsdam, the differences between the United States and Russia became more evident.

. Triumph and Tragedy in the Pacific

In 1944, American forces cleared the Japanese from New Guinea and the Central Pacific, took the Philippines, and began intense air attacks on Japan. Japan’s defeat was inevitable, but would be costly if an invasion had to be launched. On August 6, 1945, the United States used the atomic bomb against Japan. This weapon had taken nearly seven years and billions of dollars to develop. After a second A-bomb attack, Japan surrendered on August 14, 1945.

CONCLUSION: THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF WAR

World War II made the United States the most powerful nation on earth with worldwide responsibilities abroad, and created a domestic legacy of government intervention to improve the lives of its citizens.

FEATURE ESSAY: THE FACE OF THE HOLOCAUST

The United States knew that the Nazis operated death camps as early as 1942, but the army didn’t actually see one until 1944. The first death camp the Americans encountered was Natzwiller-Struthof, which contained no living prisoners, only the gas chambers and ovens that testified to the mass exterminations that had taken place within. Soon after, American troops discovered Ohrdruf, where they found both dead and dying prisoners, Until this point, the Americans didn’t fully understand the Nazi regime against which they had been fighting. As liberators, these soldiers saw evidence of many atrocities of the Holocaust that most tried to forget after returning home.

LECTURE TOPICS

Prepare a lecture on the impact of World War II on American women. In considering the issue of women and the war, focus on the significant movement of females into the workplace during World War II and the impact that experience had on American women in terms of their own sense of independence and competence. Look at the impact of the end of the war in terms of forcing women out of these jobs. An interesting approach to use in examining this issue is to draw on material published in women’s magazines during the late 1940s and 1950s and compare it to material published in women’s magazines during the war. Examine how articles as well as advertising directed at women encouraged them in the early forties to support the war by joining the workforce and then after the war to support
home and hearth by leaving the workplace. How did the experience of American women during the early forties set the stage for the status of women during the 1950s?

Examine the impact of World War II on African Americans by focusing on the response of African Americans to the Holocaust. An excellent source for this issue is a videotape entitled *The Librators: Fighting on Two Fronts* (1992), a PBS documentary that was broadcast as part of *The American Experience* series. The film centers on the story of the 761st Tank Battalion, an African American regiment that was involved in liberating the German concentration camp at Dachau. The film provides a thorough examination of the treatment of African Americans in the United States Army as well as the conflicted feelings of these men who, while having lived with racism in their own lives, then witnessed the most horrific demonstration of racial hatred in modern history.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)**

Have students compare and contrast the American commitment to neutrality before World War I and before World II. In doing so, have them consider the following issues:


b. Have students consider the gap between the presidents and the public regarding the United States’ entry into both wars. What roles did Wilson and Roosevelt play in the decision to enter the world wars? Were their positions reflective of public opinion?

Compare and contrast the American internment of Japanese Americans with the Holocaust. To what extent are the two incidents similar? To what extent are they different? Consider some of the following issues in the comparison and contrast:

a. The ideological background of each incident. Have students consider the history of Social Darwinism, racism, nativism, and eugenics dating back to the late nineteenth century.

b. The national justification for each incident. Have students consider how each government rationalized the propriety of targeting these populations for unique treatment.

c. Living conditions within the camps. Have students look at the provisions made for food, shelter, and medical care.

d. The final resolution of the incident. Have students examine the extent to which each nation controlled the target population as well as the ways in which Japanese American internment and the Holocaust ended.

e. Finally, have students consider the lasting impact of these incidents on the populations targeted. How did the Japanese American internment impact the lives of those who were victimized, and what impact has the Holocaust had on western Judaism?

What were the Americans’ goals in WWII? Can you make a connection between those goals and the goals in WWI?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Most Americans believe that the United States won the war with a little help from the Soviets. Most Russians believe the opposite. Which side is closer to the truth? Can you anticipate that these differences of opinion could lead to problems after the war?

Harry Truman claimed that dropping the bomb saved half a million lives. Do you agree with his statement?

Examine the early responses of the Allied powers to the Holocaust. How early did the Allies learn of the Nazi policy against the Jews? How did the Allies formulate policy on the issue?

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

Combat in the Second World War blended century-old techniques of infantry action with the most awesome scientific advances in mass destruction. American soldiers fought on small Pacific atolls, through the North African desert, in jungles, and across the plains of Europe. No theater of operations was more difficult or more frustrating than the campaign to drive the Germans out of Italy. In their attacks on the Gothic line, American troops suffered the kind of attrition that had characterized trench warfare in World War I. Private First-Class Theodore J. Drozdowski, of the 363rd Regiment, 91st Division, remembered attacking a nameless German strong point. “Private James R. Wixon was firing at the machine gun, but he was killed. Sergeant McKelvey kept moving and when he got close enough he threw a Molotov cocktail, then ran and jumped into the pillbox. I heard him hollering at the Germans and the next thing I knew five Jerries came running out of the hole with Sergeant McKelvey behind them. He sent them back and we never had any more trouble from the pillbox after that.” This account comes from the regimental history of the 363rd, written by Ralph E. Strootman (Washington, D.C.: Infantry Journal Press, 1947). It is only one of innumerable regimental histories, most of which were based on after-action reports, and therefore gives an excellent picture of the war from the foot soldier’s point of view.

On August 6, 1945, the world entered the age of atomic warfare. The specially trained crew of the B-29 bomber, the Enola Gay, left Tinian early that morning and flew for seven hours until they were over Hiroshima. Everything about the flight was absolutely routine. As usual, in the final minute or so of the bombing run, the pilot handed over control of the plane to the bombardier. At 9:13:30 the pilot, Colonel Paul Tibbets, radioed the bombardier, Major Tom Ferebee, “It’s all yours.” Ferebee guided the plane over his aiming point and at 9:14:17 pushed a button. Exactly one minute later, the bomb fell from the plane, and its release was noted in the log: “Bomb away.” Forty-three seconds later there was a blinding flash, followed by a tremendous shock wave. Even those aboard the Enola Gay who understood the weapon were surprised by the force of the explosion. The commanding officer, Captain Bob Lewis, wrote in his own log book: “My God. What have we done?” On the way back, the crew noted the presence of eight ships in Mishima, the potential target for another day. The best account of the flight, incorporating the plane’s log and interviews with the crew, is Joseph L. Marx, Seven Hours to Zero (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1967).
POINTS OF MASTERY

Identify the Good Neighbor Policy and discuss relations with Latin America.

Briefly explain Adolf Hitler’s agenda on the European continent. List his early successes in realizing an expansionist foreign policy in Europe.

List the members of the Axis Powers.

Define the term *Blitzkrieg* and explain its relevance to German military tactics.

List the major factors that defined American neutrality between 1939 and 1941.

List the issues that motivated the initial steps toward American intervention in the war.

Identify and explain the historical significance of the Lend-Lease program. Briefly comment on the national debate regarding Lend-Lease.

Explain how the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere reflected Japanese ambitions in Asia.

Briefly describe political, economic, and military relations between Japan and the United States in 1941. Explain the historical significance of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Explain the importance of the Eastern Front to Allied military strategy in 1942.

Explain the historical significance of the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of Midway.

Define the term “island hopping” and explain its significance to Allied military tactics in the Pacific in 1944.

Identify the new opportunities created for women by the wartime economy.

Describe the impact of the war on African Americans.

Identify means used by the federal government to maintain American loyalty to the war cause.

Explain the justification for and the circumstances surrounding the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

Identify the candidates and indicate the outcome of the presidential election of 1944.

Identify Operation Overlord and explain the historical significance of D-Day.

Identify and explain the historical significance of the Holocaust.

Why was the military desegregated? Who was responsible for this action? Be sure to stress the role of both politics and black activism.
What does the Detroit race riot indicate about black and white relations in the 1940s? How did it start, and how did each group interpret the riot? What came out of it?

Outline the major provisions of the decisions made by the Allies at the Yalta Conference.

Identify the specific task of the Manhattan Project.

Define the term “concentration camp” and explain its significance to Hitler’s political agenda.

Outline the factors that influenced the American decision to use the atomic bomb against Japan.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1 How did the memory of World War I affect the American approach to World War II?

After World War I, the United States took an isolationist position, aside from its participation in international trade, to avoid involvement in another devastating military conflict. Pacifism swept across college campuses. The British, bankers, and United States arms dealers were labeled “merchants of death” and blamed for duping the United States into entering World War I. The 1935 and 1936 Neutrality Acts banned arms sales and loans to belligerents and prevented Americans from traveling on belligerent ships—activities that were blamed for leading the nation into World War I. Even Roosevelt shared the isolationist assumption that a European war would have no impact on America’s vital national interests—regardless of the fact that the experience of World War I proved this false.

2 How did Franklin Roosevelt aid Britain prior to American entry into World War II? Why did he have to be so careful in doing so?

Roosevelt’s first major aid to Britain was indirect. The Lend-Lease program gave him access to $7 billion dollars and the ability to dispense war supplies in the interest of the country. After a U-boat almost hit an American ship, he also ordered the navy to protect British supplies at least halfway across the ocean. German forces subsequently damaged one American destroyer and sank a second. Roosevelt then ordered U-boats to be shot on sight and asked Congress to allow the U.S. to deliver supplies to Britain.

Roosevelt faced public and congressional opposition to his attempts to support the Allies. Before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the populace was overwhelmingly supportive of neutrality and non-intervention. The Senate reflected these views. Gradually this opposition decreased, but FDR had to tread carefully as the situation developed. The president wanted to aid the Allies, particularly England, but he didn’t want to further divide the nation.

3 What were some causes of tension within the American alliance during the war?

China had been engaged in longstanding war with the Japanese and didn’t like the idea that the Allies would focus on defeating Germany before turning their attention to the Pacific. Free
France was upset by Roosevelt’s willingness to deal with the Vichy government. The United States and the Soviet Union had many conflicts, including unpaid debts, domestic politics, the short-lived Nazi-Soviet alliance, Roosevelt’s unkept promise of a second European front in 1942, and the extreme sacrifices made by the Soviet Union early in the war.

4 What happened to the civil rights movement during the war?

The civil rights movement saw some gains, especially economically, and some setbacks, such as Japanese American internment. African Americans faced segregation and prejudice in the armed forces and the military effort in general, despite fighting on the front lines. Mexican Americans also faced discrimination. Wartime migration to the North led to increased racial tension and even to race riots. The combination of military and economic sacrifice for the war and continued injustice fueled resentment for many. Strong collective power, however, forced President Roosevelt to create a committee to work against discrimination. This led to increased minority employment in government positions.

However, Japanese Americans were the victims of the most extreme discrimination during the war. Japanese Americans, many of whom were U.S. citizens, faced internment for two to five years, based solely on their ancestry. The army requested, and President Roosevelt approved, this “relocation.” These Japanese Americans were not compensated until 1988.

5 Was the atom bomb necessary to end the war? Why or why not?

The atom bomb presented the easiest and most likely the least-deadly means of ending the war. Japan’s continued refusal to negotiate even after the Hiroshima bomb demonstrated that peace could not be achieved through diplomacy. There is no question that a ground invasion would have cost many more American lives and far more American dollars than the atom bomb did. It is also probable that an invasion would have cost more Japanese lives. The Japanese people revered the emperor, who thought nothing of sacrificing millions of people, most armed with nothing more than pitchforks and broomsticks, for the sake of honor. Only an un-earthly event such as a nuclear bomb would have been able to weaken Japanese intransigence.

However, there were other options. Military strategists had made other plans, including an invasion and a negotiated peace. The war committee didn’t give any warnings about the devastating power of the bomb to the Japanese government or the Japanese people. If the Japanese had had the information needed to realistically assay their options it’s possible the emperor would have relented or, as happened to Hitler, senior advisors might have attempted a coup. In this case, the threat of the bomb could have accomplished the same results as the bomb itself did.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:
America and the Holocaust: Deciet and Indifference: The American Experience, Marty Ostrow, 1994, 90 minutes.
This video examines lingering questions about when Americans learned about the Holocaust and their response to it.

America Goes to War: The Home Front, 1989, 300 minutes.
This ten-part PBS series, narrated by Eric Sevareid, examines American domestic trends during the 1940s and 1950s.

An examination of the day in June 1944 that turned the tide of World War II.

Free a Man to Fight, The History Channel, 50 minutes.
This film examines the impact of World War II on working women in the United States.

The War (900 minutes), PBS Video (2007).
This epic documentary by Ken Burns shows the impact of the war on the entire nation by studying four American communities in great depth.

Saving Private Ryan (169 minutes), Dreamworks Video (1999).
Steven Spielberg’s account of the invasion of Normandy creates a visually overpowering portrayal of the horror of war.

Zoot Suit Riots (55 minutes), PBS Video (2002).
Account of the zoot suit riots of Los Angeles during World War II. The program highlights a variety of themes including teenage rebellion, tensions between immigrant groups, World War II, and the history of Mexicans in the United States.

CLASS EXERCISES

1. Have students debate the American decision to use the atomic bomb against Japan in August 1945. Have them consider the military, strategic, political, and moral issues that promoted use of the bomb as well as the military, strategic, political, and moral issues that opposed the use of the bomb. Use this opportunity to point out the significance of the American attack on Japan as both the end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War.

2. Have the students research the issues surrounding the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. A research project could focus on the ongoing historical debate regarding the nature of the attack and the extent to which the American federal government might have anticipated or even invited the attack as a means of gaining American support for the United States’ entry into the war.

3. Assign a paper that deals with internment. Have the students describe the internment process and the procedures in and conditions of the camps. Why were Japanese Americans singled out for special treatment? Why not German or Italian Americans? When did America begin to fear Japanese immigrants? Did racism play a role in the decision?
MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

- View the Map: World War II in Europe
- Read the Document: Charles Lindbergh, Radio Address (1941)
- View the Closer Look: The Japanese Raid on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941
- View the Map: World War II in the Pacific
- Watch the Video: Rosie the Riveter
- Read the Document: A. Philip Randolph, “Why Should We March” (1942)
- Read the Document: Japanese Relocation Order
- View the Closer Look: D-Day Landing, June 6, 1944
- Watch the Video: The Big Three—Yalta Conference
- Complete the Assignment: The Face of the Holocaust
CHAPTER 28

THE ONSET OF THE COLD WAR

CHAPTER OUTLINE

THE POTS DAM SUMMIT

THE COLD WAR BEGINS

• The Division of Europe
• Withholding Economic Aid
• The Atomic Dilemma

CONTAINMENT

• The Truman Doctrine
• The Marshall Plan
• The Western Military Alliance
• The Berlin Blockade

THE COLD WAR EXPANDS

• The Military Dimension
• The Cold War in Asia
• The Korean War

THE COLD WAR AT HOME

• Truman’s Troubles
• Truman Vindicated
• The Loyalty Issue
• McCarthyism in Action
• The Republicans in Power

EISENHOWER WAGES THE COLD WAR

• Entanglement in Indochina
• Containing China
• Turmoil in the Middle East
• Covert Action
• Waging Peace
OPENING THEME

THE PRESIDENT AND THE GENERAL

Students today may have become too accustomed to the idea that American military forces go into combat subject to political direction or interference. That indeed has been the nation’s most recent experience. During the Vietnam War, the Secretary of Defense became better known than the general in command of the troops, and during the invasion of Panama, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, acting from Washington, D.C., actually supervised a bombing run for one of the American aircraft. While civilian control of the military has long been an American tradition, this close involvement in battlefield tactics has not. Generals were usually left to fight the wars. There was, therefore, a potential conflict between the nation’s military and political leaders, the last spectacular example of which was President Truman’s dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur, commander of United States and United Nations forces in Korea, in April 1955.

Truman’s personal dislike for MacArthur does not explain why the general was fired. As Truman later said, “I didn’t fire him because he was a dumb son of a bitch, although he was, but that’s not against the law for generals.” MacArthur was fired because American political and military objectives in Korea diverged in the early months of 1951. MacArthur never saw much glory in the carnage of a battlefield. Decorated for valor in the field on several occasions during World War I, he still testified that the sight of corpses in Korea caused him to vomit. He had been conspicuously sparing of his troops’ lives in World War II, and it offended all of his instincts as a general to sacrifice men in a stalemate. MacArthur made the point time and again that “in war, there is no substitute for victory.”

Victory, however, is always defined politically as well as militarily, and MacArthur either could not or would not see that. One cannot help sympathize, however, because the political leaders of the nation did not follow a consistent policy. Before the North Korean invasion, South Korea seemed of little importance to the United States. Truman had no desire to commit the United States to the reunification of Korea, and even acted to prevent the South Koreans from trying to unite their country by force by denying them tanks and other offensive weapons. In January 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson announced that Korea would have to depend on itself and the United Nations for defense against a communist attack.

However, when North Korean forces crossed the thirty-eighth parallel, Truman believed that Moscow was testing the American will to fight. He ordered an immediate military response. The United Nations joined the American effort, but the United States would have fought in Korea alone if necessary. Originally, therefore, America became involved in Korea to prove its strength to the Russians, and the Truman administration believed that a strong American response would itself end the invasion. When
North Korea overran most of the peninsula, however, it became the American objective to defeat the invaders and to liberate South Korea. This was accomplished when MacArthur pulled off the Inchon invasion.

Ironically, the victory at Inchon was so complete that America’s political objectives again changed. It was now possible to unify Korea. Some of its allies in the United Nations asked the United States to hold its troops beneath the thirty-eighth parallel, and on October 2, the Soviet delegate to the U.N. Security Council asked for a cease-fire, indicating that Russia would be willing to settle for a return to the pre-invasion situation. While the Americans hesitated, South Korean forces raced across the border. American troops followed when no word came from Washington that they should stop.

The great risk in going north, as Truman and MacArthur realized, was that China or Russia might intervene, but this risk was discounted. At their Wake Island conference, for example, Truman and MacArthur mainly discussed how to rebuild Korea as one nation. When the Chinese did come into the war and pushed American forces well below the thirty-eighth parallel, it seemed at first to both Truman and MacArthur that the Chinese advance could not be stopped. At this point, it became American policy to fight the war solely to preserve the freedom of South Korea. From this position, Truman never again deviated.

In the first months of 1951, however, the Chinese drive stalled, and United Nations forces advanced once again to the thirty-eighth parallel. It seemed to MacArthur and others that the Chinese army was on the verge of collapse and he wished to finish it off by pushing north. Truman, however, refused to give permission and felt it was now time to end the war through diplomacy. Because MacArthur publicly opposed this policy, he was fired.

It is not easy even in retrospect to say who was right in this momentous quarrel, but the conflict clearly demonstrated the need to use the nation’s military power within the context of a clear political purpose, a lesson not easily learned.

THE POTSDAM SUMMIT

The author begins with the Potsdam Conference between Truman and Stalin just after the defeat of Germany. He contrasts Truman, good-hearted but stubborn, with Stalin, brutal but pragmatic. They quickly clashed over the fate of postwar Germany, a presage of the conflict to come between the United States and the Soviet Union.

THE COLD WAR BEGINS

The Cold War developed gradually when the United States and Russia failed to resolve three crucial issues: control of postwar Europe, economic aid, and, most important, nuclear disarmament.
. The Division of Europe

In 1945, Russian troops occupied eastern Europe and American troops occupied western Europe. The Soviet Union, concerned about national security, was determined to establish regimes in eastern Europe that would be friendly or subservient. The United States did not appreciate Russia’s concern and insisted on national self-determination through free elections throughout Europe. The result was that Stalin converted eastern Europe into a system of satellite nations through harsh and brutal means.

. Withholding Economic Aid

World War II devastated Russia, and some Americans saw that ruin as an advantage because the Soviet Union would need U.S. aid. As mutual suspicion grew, however, the United States refused to extend aid to Russia and abruptly ended Lend-Lease, thus losing leverage in shaping Soviet policy.

. The Atomic Dilemma

The most crucial postwar question concerned the atomic bomb. When the Russians discovered that the United States and England were working secretly on the bomb, Stalin ordered his scientists to start work on the same weapon. Thus, the nuclear arms race began in 1943, before the war ended.

After the war, the United States proposed a gradual elimination of all nuclear weapons, but the plan (the Baruch Plan) was so gradual that it would have preserved the U.S. atomic monopoly for years. The Soviet Union, with a larger conventional army than America, proposed the immediate abolition of all atomic weapons.

CONTAINMENT

The United States, hoping to take England’s place as the supreme arbiter of world affairs, decided to deal with the Soviet Union from a position of strength. The resulting policy was called “containment.”

. The Truman Doctrine

The first application of the containment doctrine came in 1947, when Truman asked Congress to supply funds to keep Greece and Turkey within the Western sphere of influence. The Truman Doctrine marked an informal declaration of cold war against the Soviet Union.
. The Marshall Plan

The United States also acted to prevent the spread of Communist influence in war-torn western Europe. In 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall proposed an economic aid package to enable Europe to reconstruct her industries. Russia refused this aid because it had political conditions, but the Marshall Plan, adopted by Congress in 1948, did foster prosperity in western Europe that in turn stimulated the American economy.

. The Western Military Alliance

The third and final step in the first phase of the containment policy was the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military alliance that included the United States, Canada, and most of western Europe. The Senate approved the treaty in 1949, and soon after, U.S. troops were stationed in Europe. NATO was an overreaction to the Soviet danger and simply intensified Russia’s fear of the Western powers.

. The Berlin Blockade

The Russians responded to containment by cutting off access to Berlin in June 1948. Truman refused to withdraw the American troops stationed there, and instead ordered an airlift to supply the city. After Truman’s unexpected reelection in 1948, the Russians retreated and ended their blockade in 1949. The crisis, which took the world to the edge of war, ended with an American political victory, but served to illustrate the division of Europe between the two superpowers. This division soon spread beyond the European scene.

THE COLD WAR EXPANDS

The United States and Russia began arming themselves to the teeth in the late 1940s, and they finally divided Asia as they had divided Europe.

. The Military Dimension

The United States improved its security after World War II. The 1947 National Security Act established the Department of Defense to unify the armed forces; the Central Intelligence Agency to coordinate intelligence-gathering activities; and the National Security Council to advise the president on security matters. The United States put most of its growing defense budget into building up the air force. After Russia developed an atomic bomb, the United States began work on a hydrogen bomb. The Truman administration was determined to win the Cold War regardless of cost.
The Cold War in Asia

In 1945 both Russia and America occupied large areas of Asia. The United States moved quickly to consolidate its hold over Japan and the Pacific Islands that were once ruled by Japan. China, however, lay between the American and Russian spheres of influence and was torn between pro-Western Chiang Kai-shek and Communist Mao Tse-tung. When Mao won and China entered the Soviet orbit, the Truman administration, attacked by Republicans for losing China, refused to recognize Communist China and began building up Japan.

The Korean War

The Cold War turned hot in June 1950, when Communist forces from North Korea, with Russian approval and Chinese support, invaded South Korea, part of the American sphere of influence. Whether Russia ordered the invasion is unknown, but Truman believed it had. He made the defense of South Korea a United Nations effort, but the brunt of the fighting was borne by Americans. When North Korean forces were routed, Truman decided to unify Korea by force, despite Chinese warnings. When China did enter the war, American troops were pushed back into South Korea, and the war became a stalemate.

The most significant result of the war was massive American rearmament. America was now ready to stop Soviet expansion, anywhere in the world, by force of arms.

THE COLD WAR AT HOME

The Cold War made it difficult for Truman to continue the economic policies of the New Deal and led to fears of Communist subversion. The Republicans used these fears to revive their party.

Truman’s Troubles

Surrounded by ineffective cronies and prone to stubborn self-righteousness, Truman faced an apathetic public, inflation, and labor unrest as he attempted to extend New Deal reforms. His increasing unpopularity allowed the Republicans to win a majority of Congress in the 1946 elections.

Truman Vindicated

By 1948, it seemed impossible that Truman could be reelected. The Republican candidate, Thomas Dewey, took victory for granted as southern Democrats and northern liberals deserted Truman. Nevertheless, the president was reelected by the old Roosevelt coalition, which still felt a sense of gratitude for New Deal programs, and which resented such Republican policies as the Taft-Hartley Act, perceived as anti-
union. The Republicans had not made foreign policy an issue in the election, but now looked for ways to challenge Truman’s handling of the Cold War.

. The Loyalty Issue

Not for the first time in their history, the American people feared that the nation was being attacked from within. A few sensational spy cases and Truman’s own overheated rhetoric gave some credence to irrational fears. The Truman administration itself tried to calm the public by violating civil rights in a campaign against “subversives,” but the Democrats were generally blamed for “losing” China to Communism and for Russia’s development of a hydrogen bomb.

. McCarthyism in Action

In 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy, a Republican senator from Wisconsin, exploited the fear of Communism within the government. Using the technique of the multiple lie, by making so many accusations that the innocent never had an opportunity to respond, McCarthy frightened the Senate, bedeviled the Administration, and even attacked the army. His rough treatment of privileged bureaucrats attracted wide support, most especially from midwest Republicans and Irish, Italian, and Polish workers.

. The Republicans in Power

The Republican party won the presidency in 1952 by nominating the enormously popular Dwight Eisenhower, who promised to end the Korean War. Once elected, Eisenhower settled for a stalemate in Korea. Rather than face McCarthy head-on, Eisenhower waited for the senator to make a fool of himself, which he did by trying to prove that the United States Army was a hotbed of treason.

EISENHOWER WAGES THE COLD WAR

Eisenhower, supremely self-confident and in firm control of his administration, decided to relax tensions with Russia as much as politically possible. He feared both the crushing debt imposed by defense spending and the real possibility of atomic warfare.

. Entanglement in Indochina

Eisenhower rejected proposals to give France active military aid in her struggle to retain Indochina as a colony, but when the forces under Ho Chi Minh, a Communist, defeated the French, Eisenhower prevented an election almost certain to result in the establishment of Ho’s government over the entire nation. Eisenhower preferred a
divided Vietnam, with the southern part under a puppet government dependent upon
the United States.

. Containing China

Eisenhower adopted a tough line against China, not to provoke her, but to prove to the
Chinese leaders that they could not rely on Russia in a pinch. The strategy worked, but
the benefits of the rift between China and Russia were not immediately realized.

C. Covert Actions

Eisenhower used the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to achieve objectives that he
did not want to make public. In Iran, the CIA restored the Shah to power; in
Guatemala, the CIA ousted a leftist government; and in Cuba, the CIA tried to kill
Castro.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

D. Waging Peace

Eisenhower worried about the destructive potential of hydrogen bombs and long-range
missiles. From 1953 to 1956 he made several offers to the Soviet Union to reduce
tensions. Both sides agreed to stop nuclear testing in the atmosphere, but the rise of
Nikita Khrushchev led to renewed confrontation. When Eisenhower handled
Khrushchev’s threat to Berlin with firm moderation, the two leaders agreed to a
summit in May 1960. Unfortunately, an American spy plane was shot down over
Russia just before the meeting, which was then cancelled.

CONCLUSION: THE CONTINUING COLD WAR

Eisenhower feared the effect of permanent war on American society. He warned that a “military-
industrial complex” was developing, with the potential of distorting a peaceful, prosperous way of life.
Although he left office convinced that he had failed to end the Cold War, he had actually begun the
process of coexistence.
FEATURE ESSAY: AMERICA ENTERS THE MIDDLE EAST

Despite Secretary of State George Marshall’s disapproval, President Truman officially recognized Israel immediately after its creation. Truman worried that the Soviet Union could gain an advantage in the Middle East if it supported Israel first. Truman also supported a Jewish state because of British promises and the atrocities of the Holocaust. President Eisenhower subsequently agreed to assist Britain in overthrowing the prime minister of Iran, Mohammad Mossadeq, and instating the Shah, leading to Iranian hatred of the United States. Eisenhower would not assist in overthrowing Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser, however, and threatened to withhold oil and collapse British finance if Nasser was not left in power.

LECTURE TOPICS

Present a lecture examining Franklin Roosevelt’s and Harry Truman’s contributions to the emergence of the Cold War. Compare and contrast the social, political, and intellectual backgrounds of the two men. Discuss with students Roosevelt’s role at the Yalta Conference, especially regarding the endorsement of the Declaration of a Liberated Europe. Did the endorsement of this agreement by the Allies set the stage for the Cold War? Could the Allies have avoided granting Stalin leverage in Eastern Europe? Discuss the extent to which Truman was prepared by Roosevelt to take over the presidency. Finally, have students comment on the early Soviet policy of the Truman administration.

Lecture on (and hand out generous excerpts from) Truman's speech introducing the Truman Doctrine. Students could be asked to concentrate on the language Truman used, his description of the crisis, or his candor with the American people. Explore some of the reasons for Truman's presentation, and assess the long-range diplomatic consequences of this doctrine. This can lead into a discussion of the origins and consequences of the Cold War.

Consider American Cold War foreign policy within the historical context of modern American foreign policy. Students have already considered the similarities and differences between the turn-of-the-century diplomacy of Theodore Roosevelt and the moral diplomacy of Woodrow Wilson. How does Cold War policy compare to each of these phases of American foreign policy development? Consider specifically the content of NSC-68 (National Security Council Paper 68). Are the guidelines proposed in this document reflective of the “big stick” diplomacy of Theodore Roosevelt or are they more reflective of the morally based approach of Woodrow Wilson? Or, is post-World War II foreign policy completely different from both?

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

Have students compare and contrast 1950s and 1960s Cold War foreign policy with late nineteenth-century imperialism. Consider specifically issues related to the need for expanding economic markets, the fear of powers that were considered threatening, the need to expand American global military presence, and the lingering social problems connected with racism. Is there an element of moral diplomacy as well? How important was it in determining policy?
Discuss the connection between Cold War policies and World War II. What parallels did the former Allies see between prewar Germany and postwar Soviet Union? What mistakes made prior to World War II did the former Allies fear making again? Use this opportunity to have students consider the issue of “learning from history.” Can people learn from history? Is it wise or useful to allow mistakes from the past to determine policy for the future?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Discuss the emergence of the States’ Rights party and the presidential campaign of J. Strom Thurmond in 1948. Focus on the party’s appearance as an indication of increased racial tension in the South after World War II and as an indication of the potential for the future Civil Rights movement. Address the significance of Thurmond’s political career, which involved an early switch to the Republican Party, an indication of southern political developments to come during the last half of the twentieth century.

What was the attraction of the New Look for the Eisenhower administration? How was it influenced by Korea? The text mentions that Europeans worried that Europe would become a nuclear battleground. Yet, at that time, many European leaders worried that the United States would not launch its missiles (and thereby risk retaliation on American cities) in order to save Europe from a Soviet invasion. If you were a West German leader in the 1950s, which would concern you more?

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

In a democracy, where public opinion counts for much, it is difficult to shift foreign policy abruptly. In 1945, the American people considered Germany and Japan their enemies, and even though these nations had been reduced to rubble, there was still a fear that they might rise again to threaten world peace. It is difficult now to recapture that mood, but because so many Americans feared and hated Germany and Japan, they believed that Russia was a necessary ally. It took some doing to convince the American public that Russia was instead the nation’s principle enemy. The most influential effort in that regard among the nation’s intellectual elite appeared in an article in the July 1947 issue of *Foreign Affairs*. “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” signed by “X,” had been written by George Kennan, at that time a State Department official. “It is clear,” Kennan wrote, “that the main element of any U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient, but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansion tendencies . . .” Kennan had used the key word that has described American policy toward Russia all through the Cold War.

For the general public, the word “containment” is probably too abstract. Winston Churchill used a far more telling phrase in describing the Soviet Union’s expansion into central Europe. In a speech delivered in Fulton, Missouri, on March 5, 1947, Churchill told the American people, “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent.” It is interesting that both Kennan and Churchill based the policies they recommended on a psychological
sketch of the Soviet character. Churchill’s speech, which is characteristically eloquent, was printed in full in the *New York Times*.

**POINTS OF MASTERY**

Identify the Potsdam Conference and describe the conflicting political and economic goals of the United States and the USSR for the postwar world, and how these clashing aims launched the Cold War.

Explain how relations between the United States and the Soviet Union deteriorated in the aftermath of World War II as Josef Stalin sought to build a protective buffer of nations in southern and eastern Europe.

Define the containment policy and identify its origins.

Describe the Truman Doctrine and American Foreign Policy.

Define “containment” and explain the development and meaning of the Marshall Plan and NATO.

Why was American policy a success in Japan but a failure in China?

Discuss the significance of the Korean War in terms of American military effectiveness, its prediction of future United States involvement in Asia, and its impact on American commitment to fighting the Cold War.

Outline the provisions of NSC-68 and explain its impact on the development of American foreign policy during the 1950s.

Contrast the role of the Central Intelligence Agency with that of the National Security Council.

Identify General Douglas MacArthur and describe his role in Japanese postwar recovery and in the Korean War.

Explain how postwar labor strikes affected American sentiment regarding the power of organized labor.

Identify the major candidates and issues in and discuss the outcome of the presidential election of 1948.

Outline the rise of McCarthyism and describe its eventual end.

Show the relationship between the Cold War and the emergence of internal loyalty programs and the second Red Scare in the United States.
Identify the House Committee on Un-American Activities and discuss its role in the Red Scare.

Identify the three major trials of the 1950s that targeted Americans accused of being Soviet spies.

Identify the candidates in and outcome of the presidential election of 1952.

Explain the contours of the Eisenhower-Dulles foreign policy.

Discuss Eisenhower’s “New Look” and explain Eisenhower’s “doctrine of massive retaliation” in terms of its impact on American foreign relations during the 1950s and how it increased Americans’ fear of nuclear war.

Identify the sources of troubled relations with countries in Latin America.

Assess the U.S. role in the Middle East.

Identify the significance of the Soviet launch of the Sputnik and indicate the American response to that event.

Discuss the misunderstandings typical of Soviet-American relations during the 1950s, focusing on the U-2 affair of 1960.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1 Why was the Soviet Union suspicious of the United States?

During World War II, Germany had betrayed and invaded the Soviet Union, so it was not easy for the Soviets to trust anyone. The Soviet Union also received what could be considered unfair treatment by the other Allied nations in the war: Roosevelt had never delivered on his promise to Stalin to support a two-front war, and combined Soviet troop and civilian losses were far greater than those of any other country. As a result, Soviets felt that they had borne the greatest burden during World War II, yet were not offered the Lend-Lease help that the U.S. gave to other European nations that needed financial help to rebuild in the wake of the war.

Additionally, Truman had lied to Stalin about U.S. atomic weapons research. The United States also blamed the Soviets for problems such as the Greek crisis when, in fact, the Soviets had not been involved. Feelings that the United States was ungrateful for its contributions to Allied victory in World War II and continued evidence of American dishonesty made the Soviet Union suspicious of the United States in the period following World War II.

2 In what ways did the Marshall Plan demonstrate American generosity? In what ways did it reflect American self-interest?
Because it offered substantial aid to war-ravaged European countries, the Marshall Plan was a demonstration of American generosity. Technically, the aid had no strings attached, and was therefore offered to the Soviet Union as well. However, the Soviet Union would have had to make serious political concessions to get aid through the plan.

In addition to assisting struggling European allies, the other main goal of the Marshall Plan was to advance U.S. interests by preventing Soviet penetration into western Europe. Food scarcity was leading to more Communist support in Europe. Providing aid and stimulating the economy would help turn Europeans towards U.S. political interests rather than toward Communist ideas. By increasing European purchasing power, money from the Marshall Plan also bolstered the U.S. economy.

3 How was the Cold War in Asia similar to the Cold War in Europe? How was it different?

The United States used the strategy of containment in both the Cold War in Asia and the Cold War in Europe. However, America had a policy of self-determination in Europe, where it operated the Marshall Plan to fight the Cold War through economic aid rather than direct political influence. In contrast, the U.S. intimately shaped the Japanese government along Western Democratic lines. The United States also explicitly controlled many islands in the Pacific. America refused to acknowledge Mao Tse-tung’s government as the Chinese government, which it did not do to any European governments.

4 To what extent was McCarthyism justified?

A major aspect of McCarthyism was its anti-communism. McCarthy’s expressed concern about Communism and Communist spies in the United States were not completely unjustified but were greatly overblown. He irrationally conflated sympathy for a goal or idea, advocacy for that goal, and advocacy of illegal activity to achieve that goal. McCarthy had no understanding of or respect for the First Amendment. Also, public hearings like the HUAC hearings and the Army-McCarthy hearings were completely ineffective in uncovering Soviet agents working in the United States: Congress did not uncover the Rosenbergs, Jonathan Pollard, or Robert Hansen. The HUAC did bring Hiss to the public, but the evidence it uncovered was unconvincing.

Another aspect was the senator’s personal style of investigation and grandstanding. McCarthy’s accusations were innuendo and insinuation; he did not offer (or perhaps even search for) concerete evidence. He built his power by manipulating others through their fears and through cultivating anti-elitist distaste based on jealousy. There was no justification for any of this.

AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

This video is a four-part series examining the life and presidency of Harry Truman.
The Twentieth Century with Mike Wallace: McCarthy Reconsidered, The History Channel, 50 minutes. Mike Wallace takes a fresh look at the man behind the second Red Scare.

CLASS EXERCISES

1. The movie Good Night and Good Luck credits the television journalist Edward R. Murrow with bringing down Senator Joseph R. McCarthy. In fact, McCarthy had begun to slip in the polls the year before, and, as the text points out, a combination of factors contributed to the demise of the demagogue from Wisconsin. Indeed, by the time Murrow’s program aired, opposition to McCarthy had begun to emerge in the Senate, and even some conservative Republican newspapers had begun to turn against the junior senator from Wisconsin. After Murrow’s program aired, an editorial in the New York Post, then a liberal paper and among the first to oppose McCarthy, derisively noted what they regarded as Murrow’s rather late decision to take on McCarthy: “‘This is no time for men who oppose Sen. McCarthy’s methods to keep silent,’ said Ed as he leaped gracefully aboard the crowded band-wagon.” Something else one will not find in the movie is the fact that Murrow pioneered what has come to be known as celebrity journalism. What does the glorification of Murrow say about the film’s intent? Should television journalists engage in partisan attacks, even if the target is someone as reckless and abusive as McCarthy? Consider also that in those days there were only four broadcast networks (the Dumont network would fail, leaving only three). The advent of cable news networks was decades away. What effect would that have had on the responsibility of journalists? Ask students to view one of three movies: Fail Safe, Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956 version), or Dr. Strangelove, Or How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Bomb. Ask students to discuss in class what these films reveal about American culture during the era of the Cold War.

2. A paper assignment, focusing on either a Cold War incident or the McCarthy hearings, that sends students back into the newspapers would help them to assess the mood of the country and encourage them to think about historical interpretation. In what ways is the presentation of this chapter different from or similar to what was written at the time?

3. Although ostensibly about the Salem Witch Trials, Arthur Miller's classic play The Crucible is really a commentary about the McCarthy hearings and other government investigations. Students could read the play and then compare it with the McCarthy hearings. Such a project could very likely lead to a discussion of larger themes such as the dangers of unchecked government power and the ability of those in power to intimidate a community through accusations and social outrage.

MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

- Read the Document: Churchill’s “Iron Curtain” Speech (March 5, 1946)
- Read the Document: George F. Kennan, “The Long Telegram” (1946)
- View the Closer Look: Berlin Airlift
• View the Map: The Korean War (1950–1953)
• Read the Document: Ronald Reagan, Testimony Before HUAC (1947)
• Watch the Video: McCarthyism and the Politics of Fear
• Watch the Video: Ike for President: Campaign Ad (1952)
• Read the Document: Dwight D. Eisenhower, Letters on Dien Bien Phu (1954)
• Complete the Assignment: America Enters the Middle East
CHAPTER 29

AFFLUENCE AND ANXIETY

CHAPTER OUTLINE

LEVITTOWN: THE FLIGHT TO THE SUBURBS

THE POSTWAR BOOM
  • Postwar Prosperity
  • Life in the Suburbs

THE GOOD LIFE?
  • Areas of Greatest Growth
  • Critics of the Consumer Society

FAREWELL TO REFORM
  • Truman and the Fair Deal
  • Eisenhower’s Modern Republicanism

THE STRUGGLE OVER CIVIL RIGHTS
  • Civil Rights as a Political Issue
  • Desegregating the Schools
  • The Beginnings of Black Activism

CONCLUSION: RESTORING NATIONAL CONFIDENCE

FEATURE ESSAY: THE REACTION TO SPUTNIK

OPENING THEME

THE WAR ON POVERTY

The tendency of Americans to use overblown rhetoric requires constant correction, and students cannot be reminded too often that words matter and that false analogies can frustrate good intentions. It has become common, for example, to describe anything requiring government exertion as a war.
Jimmy Carter carried the trend to absurdity when he described energy conservation as “the moral equivalent” of war, and we have had wars on drugs, on pollution, on illiteracy, on intolerance, and on various diseases. The “war on poverty” illustrates the danger of using a false rhetoric as the basis for public policy.

President Johnson declared “unconditional war” on poverty in 1964. Poverty was a timely issue because it had been recently rediscovered, especially with the publication of *The Other America* by Michael Harrington in 1962. Harrington awakened the nation to the fact that not everyone shared the general prosperity of the 1950s; indeed, Harrington argued that as many as 50 million Americans lived in poverty. In need of a more precise target, the Johnson administration calculated the famous “poverty line,” relating income to family size. For example, a non-farm family of four with an annual income below $3,130 was considered poor, while a farm family of the same size with an income less than $1,925 was in the same situation. Using those figures, the Johnson administration calculated that there were about 35 million poor Americans.

Having fixed the target, the government devised a proper strategy. Just as in Vietnam, the stated objective was to win hearts and minds. Those who rediscovered poverty in the 1960s redefined the poor. Throughout American history, the poor had been those with character defects, those with exceptional hard luck, or those too old or too ill to work. African Americans always constituted a disproportionate part of the poor, mainly because of racism. It was commonly assumed that almost anyone could become poor, and nearly all of the poor were regarded as “deserving,” or entitled to charity. In the 1960s, for the first time, the poor became “others.” Harrington, for example, described a “psychology of poverty,” characterized by “pessimism and fatalism.” The poor had a different family structure and deviant sexual mores. They had a unique culture that perpetuated their poverty from generation to generation. The war on poverty attacked this supposed culture of poverty in many ways. Programs like Head Start were intended to rescue children before they inculcated the hopelessness of their parents. The most remarkable aspect of the war effort was the community action grants, which required “maximum feasible participation” of the poor themselves in determining how the money was to be spent. It was expected that the gift of responsibility would awaken the poor, thus transforming despair into hope, passivity into activism.

The American people received a stream of communiques from the front lines, all designed to assure them that the war was being won. Poverty did decrease. By 1976, there were 10 million fewer persons living below the poverty line, which had been adjusted for inflation, than there had been in 1964, and some economists, like Martin Anderson, argued that poverty had been eliminated as a national problem. But the success of the government’s programs was hardly noticed because they were judged by a false criterion. Conservatives claimed that the war had been won and that the government could now demobilize. Liberals argued that the war was actually being lost and that the nation had to fight harder. Harrington, for example, claimed that there were still as many poor in 1984 as there had been in 1964. The public generally agreed with the liberals, but drew different conclusions. If massive amounts of money had been thrown into an unsuccessful war, it was time to concede defeat. Just as escalation in Vietnam seemed to produce only greater escalation by the enemy, it seemed that the government was paying people to remain poor. The feeling, most clearly expressed by Ronald Reagan, began to grow that government was not the solution; government was the problem. In an odd twist of
logic, welfare became the cause of poverty and the quickest way to end poverty was to end welfare. That sort of reasoning made it possible for the “centrist” Democrat, Bill Clinton, to cooperate with Congressional Republicans, like Newt Gingrich, to “end welfare as we know it” and to substitute a new system built around term limits, the idea being to remind welfare recipients that the nation will support them only as a temporary measure.

Amid all the rhetoric, the government continued to collect data and discovered what had always been true of poverty in the United States. People drift in and out of poverty; most poor people work and most of them are as opportunistic as every other good American. When jobs are available, the poor take them and poverty declines. There is, it is true, a class of people described by the government as “persistently poor.” In 1978, they were defined as those who had lived below the poverty line for eight straight years. A minority of them were those with character defects and those with exceptional hard luck. Most of them, about three-quarters, were those who were too old or too ill to work.

**LEVITTOWN: THE FLIGHT TO THE SUBURBS**

The author starts this chapter with William Levitt’s decision in 1947 to build cheap, comfortable houses on Long Island, within commuting distance of New York City. Before long, young couples purchased the homes and began raising families. Levittown’s success demonstrated one of the most important social developments in postwar America: the move from city to suburb. The chapter explains that movement, and discusses both the benefits and costs. The author includes a discussion of the pervasive fear of atomic warfare, and the beginning of the black protest against inequality.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

**THE POSTWAR BOOM**

For fifteen years after 1945, America enjoyed rapid economic growth, and, by the end of the 1950s, Americans finally overcame their fear of another depression.

. Postwar Prosperity

By 1950, pent-up consumer demand and production finally came into line, and the economy boomed. Defense spending added a further stimulus. The baby boom and the shift of the population to suburbia stimulated the consumer goods industry. Items such as cars, appliances, and television sets were in great demand. Businesspeople increased their capital investments, and employment expanded.

However, there were problems. Farming and the older industrial areas of the country suffered, and the rate of economic growth slowed in the late 1950s. Overall, however, the American people had gone from poverty and depression to unparalleled prosperity in one generation.
. Life in the Suburbs

The very rich and the very poor did not live in the suburbs, but there was considerable variety in the middle class who did make up suburbia. In all suburbs, however, two characteristics prevailed. Everyone depended on the automobile, and families did more things together. This latter phenomenon discouraged traditional feminism, but with more and more women entering the workplace, a new feminism was emerging.

THE GOOD LIFE?

Despite prosperity, Americans were generally anxious and unhappy during the 1950s.

A. Areas of Greatest Growth

Church membership, school attendance, and television watching grew at rapid rates, but in each area there was much to criticize. Progressive education seemed to teach nothing, religion seemed godless, and television seemed to be a dreary wasteland of sitcoms and quiz shows.

B. Critics of the Consumer Society

Social critics, like John Keats, William Whyte, and David Riesman, attacked the emerging suburban culture as dull and depersonalizing. C. Wright Mills charged that the modern corporation reduced workers to robots, while “Beat” poets and artists, like Jack Kerouac, extolled a counterculture of slovenly dress, drugs, and sexual promiscuity.

FAREWELL TO REFORM

The general affluence of the postwar period eroded the nation’s desire for reform.

A. Truman and the Fair Deal

President Truman attempted to expand the New Deal, but generally failed. At best, he consolidated Roosevelt’s reforms and set the agenda for future attempts.

B. Eisenhower’s Modern Republicanism

Moderation was the keynote of the Eisenhower presidency. He proposed no further reforms, but did not try to dismantle the New Deal. After 1954, when the Democrats regained control of Congress, neither party could enact a legislative program of its own.
Both parties, however, supported the Highway Act of 1956, which created the modern system of interstate highways, greatly stimulating the economy and shaping metropolitan growth.

THE STRUGGLE OVER CIVIL RIGHTS

In the struggle against Russia, Americans wished to believe that they enjoyed a moral superiority, but that belief was contradicted by the continuing legal discrimination suffered by African Americans.

A. Civil Rights as a Political Issue

Although President Truman failed to persuade Congress to pass civil rights legislation, he acted on his own authority to integrate the armed forces, and he made civil rights part of the liberal Democratic agenda. In appreciation, African Americans voted for him enthusiastically, and those votes gave him his victory in 1948.

B. Desegregating the Schools

Civil rights advocates concentrated on integrating the nation’s school systems. Their greatest success came in 1954 when the Supreme Court handed down its decision in the Brown case, ruling that segregated schools were unconstitutional and ordering desegregation “with all deliberate speed.” Whites in the Deep South responded with massive resistance and desegregation proceeded slowly. Eisenhower adopted a hands-off policy until the state of Arkansas violated a federal court order to integrate a high school in Little Rock. Eisenhower sent federal troops to protect the black children’s right to attend school and established the Commission on Civil Rights. Progress toward an integrated society remained fitful, but a turning point in racial policy had been reached in 1954.

C. The Beginnings of Black Activism

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the organization most responsible for the victory in the Brown case, continued to rely upon federal courts to attack discrimination, but in 1955 a new leader using new tactics pushed the civil rights movement in a more activist direction. Martin Luther King, Jr., led a mass boycott of segregated public transportation in Montgomery, Alabama. His doctrine of nonviolent protest was adopted by young blacks who scored dramatic victories by simply sitting in places where local laws prohibited blacks from sitting.
CONCLUSION: RESTORING NATIONAL CONFIDENCE

The American people were more optimistic at the end of the fifties than they had been when the decade began, but they still worried about major problems. They no longer feared another economic depression, but they knew that the Cold War continued, and they were beginning to realize that racial injustice sullied their principles of fair play and equal rights.

FEATURE ESSAY: REACTION TO SPUTNIK

Competition with the Soviet Union led to national changes in the United States after the Sputnik satellite was sent into orbit in 1957. This feat of technology made Americans feel upstaged and, more importantly, afraid of the Soviet technology flying over their heads. They were at risk of losing the race to create intercontinental ballistic missiles. Sputnik led to a larger defense budget, a new post in the White House of “science advisor” followed by a scientific advisory committee, educational reforms, and the creation of NASA.

LECTURE TOPICS

Examine the status of American women in the 1950s. How was the condition of middle-class American women in the 1950s significantly different from earlier decades in the twentieth century? To what extent was the status of women in the 1950s defined by World War II? How did television and journalism impact the American middle-class woman’s self-image? How does the status of women in the 1950s and 1960s lay the groundwork for a women’s liberation movement?

Prepare a lecture on the emergence of a youth culture during the 1950s. One option is to focus on trends in popular music, particularly rock and roll. Connect the origins of rock and roll to the southern musical traditions of rhythm and blues, country, and gospel. Examine why early rock and roll was referred to as “race music” and why the white community responded with “cover records” by white artists. Supplement the lecture with recordings of early rock and roll performers such as Little Richard and Chuck Berry as well as examples of cover records by performers like Pat Boone. How does Elvis Presley fit into the picture? Presley recorded cover records, but was he distinct from Pat Boone? How so?

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

In their book The Fifties: The Way We Really Were (1977), Douglas T. Miller and Marion Nowak assert that the 1950s was a decade of conservatism, consensus, and conformity. Have students review Chapter 27 and point out examples of these trends during the late 1940s and early 1950s. How did World War II moderate the liberal politics of the Depression era? Why were Americans eager to move to the middle, and why did they find security in conservatism, consensus, and conformity?

Have students compare and contrast the postwar decades of the 1920s and the 1950s. Guide discussion to address some of the following issues:
a. World War I has been characterized as the war that ended “American innocence.” How so? Did the American experience in World War II have a similar impact? Were Americans less naive and more experienced and mature as a nation because of the role they played in World War II?

b. Compare and contrast American foreign policy development during the decades following the two world wars. Specifically, focus on the issues of isolationism and active intervention as they apply to American foreign policy of the 1920s and the 1950s.

c. Examine the social and cultural aspects of postwar American society in the 1920s and the 1950s. How do the social and cultural values of Americans reflect their reaction to world war?

d. Explore developments in domestic politics in the postwar decades of the 1920s and the 1950s. Which party would come to dominate national politics after World War I? After World War II? What would come to be the American response to radicalism after World War I? After World War II?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Martin Luther King Jr. is often seen as the only face of the civil rights movement. Why is this? Why was he important? Who else was important? What challenges did he have to face? Who criticized him and why? Were they valid criticisms? How can he be seen as a “middle road” between the NAACP and the students? The civil rights movement is often called a “second Reconstruction.” How accurate do you think that statement is?

What have been the consequences of the bulge in the population created by the postwar baby boom? What future consequences can you envision?

Discuss the growth of the American economy during the 1950s and explain its impact on America’s national image and the way in which the nation identified and characterized itself.

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

In 1949, fewer than three percent of all American homes had television sets. By the end of the 1950s, television was as common in American homes as indoor plumbing. The effects of the rabbit-eared box with its quivering black-and-white images were many, immediate, and dramatic. Two incidents in the 1950s demonstrate one of the more remarkable results of television—its tendency to blur the distinction between real life and life on the screen.

On January 19, 1953, Lucille Ball gave birth to a boy on the same day that her alter ego, Lucy Ricardo, gave birth to a boy on the popular situation-comedy series, I Love Lucy. Lucy’s pregnancy had been followed by the nation with rapt attention, mostly because Lucy Ricardo had become “family” to most Americans, and in part because CBS carefully managed the publicity surrounding the pregnancy and birth. The network even hired a Catholic priest, a Protestant minister, and a Jewish rabbi as consultants
to make sure nothing was said to offend any of the three main religious groups. The script called for Lucy Ricardo to have a boy, and Lucille Ball did have a boy. There are probably millions of Americans who still do not clearly distinguish Desi Arnaz, Jr., from Ricky Ricardo.

The ability of television to create real-life, long-running soap operas was demonstrated in the pathetic case of Charles Van Doren. In 1956, the NBC quiz show *Twenty-One* was being dominated week after week by a contestant whom the producers of the show considered unattractive. Unfortunately, he was unbeatable in a contest of general, trivial knowledge. The producers finally induced Charles Van Doren, a young man whose television persona was considered positive, ratings-wise, to cooperate in a fix. Van Doren received questions and answers in advance, and became invincible. By late 1956, Van Doren had become a national hero as he went on week after week, answering questions from a bewildering variety of subjects. The public especially appreciated his hesitations, his audible stream of consciousness, and his sweating. Intellectuals were especially pleased, and learned articles were written about Van Doren’s thought processes. By February 1957, Van Doren had amassed $138,000 and was besieged with letters from fans and offers from Hollywood. But his fear of discovery had also grown, and he begged the producers to have him lose. The end was spectacular. On February 18, he was matched against Vivienne Nearing and could only tie with her. On February 25, Mrs. Nearing again tied Van Doren. The suspense built up unbearably. On March 11, Van Doren finally lost. His earnings fell to $129,000, but he was given a job at NBC. In 1958, charges of having fixed the quiz show began to surface. This led to Van Doren’s admission in November 1959 that he had indeed cooperated in a sham. In admitting his guilt, Van Doren exclaimed, “I’ve learned a lot about life.” He seemed not to realize that life and television were no longer mutually exclusive categories. In 1995, Robert Redford produced and directed an accurate, dramatic account of the episode in the film *Quiz Show*.

**POINTS OF MASTERY**

- Explain how men such as William Levitt addressed the housing shortage facing Americans after World War II.

- Comment on the connection between racism and suburbanization in postwar America.

- Comment on the increase in marriage and birth rates in postwar America and how the increases impacted national consumerism.

- Describe the postwar economic boom and its effects in the corporate world, workers’ world, and agricultural world, as well as on the environment.

- Give some examples of challenges to that culture of conformity.

- Describe the demographic growth patterns of the United States in the postwar years and state the appeal of suburban living and the automobile for the American people.
Describe the consumer culture of the 1950s, the ways the media promoted it, and some of the results.

Describe five economic developments of the 1950s and explain the importance of the auto industry and the pattern of business concentration.

Analyze the importance of Sputnik and the emphasis on the sciences in education.

Identify the major writers who challenged American affluence by revealing the limitations and dangers of national economic abundance.

Explain the differences between the “Fair Deal” and the “New Deal.”

Describe Eisenhower’s approach to the presidency.

Outline the provisions of the Federal Highway Act of 1956 and explain the impact of massive road construction on American society and culture.

Explain the historical significance of the Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka.

Understand the origins, participants, facts, and outcome of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, as well as how this protest was different from, or similar to, earlier civil rights activism.

List the crises occurring between 1954 and 1963 that indicated the difficulty of carrying out the Brown decision “with all deliberate speed.”

Discuss the role of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Discuss the creation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Sit-In movement.

**SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

1. What are some advantages of suburban life? What are some disadvantages?

   **Advantages** of suburban life included increased accessibility to affordable goods and services. Suburbs were quiet and separated from unhealthy heavy industry. People enjoyed more privacy in the suburbs. Suburban life also stimulated the economy and promoted an overall trend towards convenience and the consumer lifestyle.

   **Disadvantages** included increased conformity and an obsession with material goods. Reliance on private automobiles led to environmental damage and neglect of public transportation. In many ways, suburbanites’ lives became far less diverse. Suburbs also largely and deliberately excluded people of color and non-Christians. Suburbs were economically segregated, so as white-collar jobs increased, the social division between white-collar and blue-collar families.
also increased. Nuclear families tended to live in the suburbs, so extended family became largely estranged. Gender roles were rigidly enforced. Entertainment moved into the home with the wide availability of television, which further encouraged mindless conformity and discouraged face-to-face contact with others. Having moved out of the cities, the middle class lost interest in urban issues, leading to the horror of ghetto life in the 1960s and 1970s and perpetuating the racial divide.

2 Did television bring Americans together, or drive them apart?

Television both brought people together and drove them apart. It provided shared experiences and to some extent imposed shared values. However, television was marketed as an improvement for family life and its early creativity was quickly overtaken by the goals of advertisers. People were divided into market segments. As television became the main stage for consumer culture, it focused viewers on material acquisitions and in that respect placed consumers in competition with one another. By directing attention to consumerism, television diverted attention from the political and social issues and activism around which the lower and middle classes could have found common ground.

3 Were the civil rights marchers justified in breaking Jim Crow laws?

Yes. The Jim Crow laws perpetuated the racist narrative created to justify slavery and undermine the emotional and economic lives of African Americans. Civil disobedience has a long history of positive change through collective power, and is justifiable when government leaders refuse to uphold the basic principles of civil society. Activists forcefully brought the issue to public attention, giving it political traction and enabling cowardly legislators to finally act.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

*Fundi: The Story of Ella Baker* (45 minutes).
The story of an early leader of the civil rights movement, “mother” to both SCLC and SNCC.

*Life Goes to the Movies*; Parts 3, *The Post-War Era* (20 minutes), and 4, *The ’50s* (28 minutes).

*Martin Luther King, Jr.: Biography*, A&E Video, 50 minutes.
This Biography episode examines the life of the civil rights movement leader.

*The Road to Brown* (47 minutes).
The background of segregation leading to the historic Supreme Court case in 1954.

*Taken for a Ride* (PBS Point of View Series, 1996; 60 minutes).
An excellent documentary on the National Interstate Highway Act and the destruction of America’s urban trolley system.
Thurgood Marshall: Portrait of an American Hero, Columbia Video Productions, 1985, 30 minutes. This video presents a brief look at the life of America’s first African American Supreme Court justice.

Truman: The American Experience, David Grubin, 1997, 270 minutes. This video is a four-part series examining the life and presidency of Harry Truman.

CLASS EXERCISES

1. Have students assess the impact of 1950s television situation comedies on contemporary American society. Divide the class into several groups and have each group choose one television program to study. The members of the group should watch three to five episodes of the program and consider the following questions:
   a. What does the American family look like in this program? Have students consider such issues as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and level of education.
   b. How are women portrayed in the program? What is the message being sent to American women of the 1950s regarding their appropriate role in society?
   c. How are children portrayed in the program? What message does this send to American parents about child-rearing and the expectations placed on children?
   d. Place the program in its historical context. Is there any indication in the program of the real issues facing Americans during the 1950s?
   e. Do the images in these programs (many of which still draw large audiences in syndication or in DVD sales and rentals) impact the self-image of Americans today?

2. After working through the way in which clothing reflects the historical values of men and women in the decades from the 1920s to the 1960s, notice the kinds of clothes and adornments people are wearing now. What do contemporary clothing styles say about changing values in men and women? Workers? Youth and older people? Different racial and ethnic groups?

3. An interesting exercise that can lead to insights about the past and about your own family focuses on growing up in the 1950s. You can interview one of your parents or grandparents (even better, both separately) about what it was like to grow up in the decade of the 1950s. How did they spend their leisure time? What was family life like? What kind of music did they listen to? What do they now see as the most important facet of the decade for them? How well do the themes outlined in this chapter seem to fit their experiences? How was their growing up different from that of their parents? Do you see significant differences between the experiences of your mother and your father? How has your own upbringing been the same as or different from that of your parents?

4. Have students write a review of a book written by one of the 1950s authors mentioned in the chapter. In addition to providing a brief summary and assessment of the book, have students place the work within its historical context. How accurate was the author in assessing his or her own times? How well did he or she predict future developments in American society?
Ask students to locate the House Un-American Activities website at www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAhuac.htm. Students are to read the entire history of the HUAC and the Red Scare of the 1940s and 1950s and are to be prepared to discuss that history in class. In addition, students are to choose a link from this website and write a 1- to 2-page paper describing the link (person or organization) and demonstrating how that link related to the HUAC.

MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

- Statement Listen to the Audio: “Little Boxes”
- View the Closer Look: A 1950s Family Watching I Love Lucy
- Complete the Assignment: The Reaction to Sputnik
- Read the Document: Pearson Profiles: Jack Kerouac
- Watch the Video: Justice for All: Civil Protest and Civil Rights
- Read the Document: Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas
- Watch the Video: How did the Civil Rights Movement Change American Schools?
- View the Map: Civil Rights Movement
- Read the Document: Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
CHAPTER 30

THE TURBULENT SIXTIES

CHAPTER OUTLINE

KENNEDY VERSUS NIXON: THE FIRST TELEVISED PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DEBATE

KENNEDY INTENSIFIES THE COLD WAR

• Flexible Response
• Crisis over Berlin
• Containment in Southeast Asia
• Containing Castro: The Bay of Pigs Fiasco
• Containing Castro: The Cuban Missile Crisis

THE NEW FRONTIER AT HOME

• The Congressional Obstacle
• Economic Advance
• Moving Slowly on Civil Rights
• “I Have a Dream”
• The Supreme Court and Reform

“LET US CONTINUE”

• Johnson in Action
• The Election of 1964
• The Triumph of Reform

JOHNSON ESCALATES THE VIETNAM WAR

• The Vietnam Dilemma
• Escalation
• Stalemate
YEARS OF TURMOIL

• The Student Revolt
• Protesting the Vietnam War
• The Cultural Revolution
• “Black Power”
• Ethnic Nationalism
• Women’s Liberation

THE RETURN OF RICHARD NIXON

• Vietnam Undermines Lyndon Johnson
• The Democrats Divide
• The Republican Resurgence

CONCLUSION: THE END OF AN ERA

FEATURE ESSAY: UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

OPENING THEME

THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

Now that the Cold War is over, students should be reminded that it was real and that there was a time in recent memory when the entire planet came close to annihilation in an exchange of nuclear weapons.

The Cuban missile crisis grew out of John F. Kennedy’s belief that the United States had to adopt a more aggressive policy toward Russia, and Nikita Khrushchev’s reckless willingness to take chances. Khrushchev’s decision to place missiles in Cuba led to a six-day crisis in the fall of 1962 that could easily have led to armed conflict between the two nuclear superpowers. Russian sources now available reveal that there were Soviet warheads in Cuba and that an American invasion might have been met by nuclear force. In retrospect, what seems most important about the crisis is that both Kennedy and Khrushchev were determined to avoid atomic warfare even at the cost of backing down in defeat.

Both sides “learned” lessons from the crisis that plunged each nation into later disasters. Members of the Kennedy administration were proud of the way they handled the missile crisis for two reasons: they had given the impression that they were tough, and they had been flexible. Kennedy would not have gone to war with Russia, but the navy was prepared to fire on any ship that attempted to run the blockade, and an air strike on Cuba was probably only forty-eight hours away when Russia capitulated. Some of Kennedy’s advisors urged him to treat the issue as if it was merely a confrontation between the United States and Cuba, but Kennedy refused. He was not sure whether or not the Soviet Union initiated the placement of those weapons, but he was determined to hold Russia responsible for them,
and all American pressure during the crisis was aimed against the Kremlin. In his televised address on October 22, for example, Kennedy warned that any missile launched from Cuba would be regarded as having been launched from the Soviet Union and that the United States would respond in kind.

On the other hand, the Kennedy administration believed that it had handled the crisis with exemplary flexibility. Many of Kennedy’s advisors, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff, urged immediate military action when the missiles were detected, but people like Dean Rusk and Robert McNamara argued instead for a “quarantine” of Cuba. The great virtue of the blockade, it was felt, was that it offered the president the opportunity to pressure the Russians in gradual stages, so that they could back down without loss of face at any stage. The fact that the missiles were removed was, of course, a victory for the Americans, but it was a victory based on military superiority, not flexible diplomacy. When faced with its next foreign policy crisis, in Vietnam, the United States tried to settle the issue with a similar blend of toughness and flexibility, with horrendous results.

The Russians, too, learned the wrong lessons. For the Kremlin, the episode was a fiasco that led to Khrushchev’s deposition and a determination that the next time the two nations came into conflict, the Soviet Union would hold the balance of power. The Russians began a massive military buildup that increased their advantage in conventional forces and may even have given them parity with the United States in terms of strategic missiles, but the cost was stupendous. By 1980, it is estimated that the Russian defense budget consumed a quarter of the gross national product. Dragged down by that burden, Russian leaders had to find some way out of the Cold War, but Gorbachev’s attempt to restructure the Soviet economy encouraged dissident forces long suppressed and turned the Russian retreat into a rout. Students are always told that those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it, but they should also be made aware that it is just as dangerous to learn the wrong lessons from the past.

KENNEDY VERSUS NIXON: THE FIRST TELEVISED PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DEBATE

The author begins with the Kennedy-Nixon 1960 TV debate because it demonstrates several important themes of this chapter. Kennedy won a narrow victory because he had mastered the art of television and projected a fresh, exciting image. After his election, Kennedy and his successor, Lyndon Johnson, achieved many of their goals, but the war in Vietnam and violent protests at home made the 60s an especially stormy era in American history.

KENNEDY INTENSIFIES THE COLD WAR

John F. Kennedy, a long-time “Cold Warrior,” surrounded himself with bright young men who shared his belief that the United States should take a hard line against Russia.
Flexible Response

In order to get tough with the Soviets, Kennedy poured massive amounts of money into building up the conventional armed forces, the nuclear arsenal, and the Special Forces (Green Berets). The United States, militarily stronger than Russia, was now so strong that the new administration was tempted to challenge the Soviet Union without having to resort to all-out nuclear war.

Crisis over Berlin

When Khrushchev threatened again to give Berlin to East Germany in 1961, Kennedy went on television to announce a major crisis to the American people, and he called up the National Guard. The Soviets retreated. They built the Berlin Wall, but Western access to Berlin was not restricted.

Containment in Southeast Asia

Kennedy believed that the Third World, especially Southeast Asia, was the focus of U.S.-Soviet rivalry and continued Eisenhower’s support for the Diem regime in Saigon. Even the gradual introduction of 16,000 American military “advisors” could not stop the Communist advance, and Kennedy accepted a military coup against Diem in November 1963 in the hope that a stronger government would take his place. The coup, however, backfired. It resulted in even greater political instability, an even stronger Communist advance, and a deeper American involvement in Vietnam.

Containing Castro: The Bay of Pigs Fiasco

The Cold War peaked in Cuba. Kennedy inherited a plan to overthrow Fidel Castro from the Eisenhower Administration and pushed it ahead. The resulting fiasco at the Bay of Pigs in no way lessened Kennedy’s determination to topple the Castro regime.

Containing Castro: The Cuban Missile Crisis

The climax of Kennedy’s anti-Soviet crusade came in Cuba in October 1962. The Soviet Union, probably trying to neutralize America’s increasing military superiority, placed offensive missiles in Cuba. Kennedy and his advisors worked out a strategy to blockade Cuba, to be followed if necessary by an invasion. The president informed the nation of the crisis on October 22, and for six days the world was on the edge of catastrophe. Khrushchev finally backed down and agreed to remove the missiles.

Kennedy’s popularity soared, his party gained in the congressional elections, and the American people felt a sense of pride. The crisis had one good effect in that the United States and the Soviet Union began to moderate the Cold War, but the crisis had ill effects, too. The Russians began a crash program to build up their navy and their nuclear arsenal.
THE NEW FRONTIER AT HOME

Kennedy assembled a competent, activist staff, including his brother, Robert, to enact a legislative and economic reform program. The President himself, cool, intelligent, and articulate, was the administration’s greatest asset.

The Congressional Obstacle

Kennedy faced a Congress controlled by southern Democrats in league with Republicans, both of whom refused to consider far-reaching reform programs. Kennedy conceded defeat and did not challenge Congress.

Economic Advance

Kennedy stimulated the economy by increased spending on space and defense and kept inflation under control through informal guidelines on prices and wages. When the United States Steel Company violated these guidelines in 1962, Kennedy forced the company to rescind its price increases, thereby antagonizing the business community. In 1963, because the economy seemed stagnant, Kennedy pushed a tax cut through Congress that almost immediately spurred one of the longest sustained economic advances in American history. In general, Kennedy’s economic policies doubled the rate of growth and cut unemployment at the price of a very moderate inflation. At the same time, however, the poorest part of the population reaped no benefits, and public facilities were allowed to deteriorate.

Moving Slowly on Civil Rights

Kennedy campaigned on a strong civil rights platform, but did not want to alienate southern Democrats in Congress. He responded very slowly to incidents of racism in the South until a mob attacked a “freedom bus” in Birmingham, Alabama. Kennedy sent federal marshals to protect the freedom riders and acted promptly again when the states of Alabama and Mississippi attempted to prevent African Americans from attending state universities.

“I Have a Dream”

Kennedy was forced into a more active role in the struggle for racial justice by civil rights activists. In 1963 Martin Luther King organized a massive protest against segregation in Birmingham that was broken up by the local police using brutal tactics. Kennedy intervened on the side of the African Americans and finally asked Congress for civil rights laws.

In order to keep the pressure on Kennedy, civil rights leaders organized a march on Washington in August 1963, highlighted by King’s speech describing an integrated America. When Kennedy died in November 1963, his civil rights record was such that
he disappointed many who had supported him, but his use of the executive power to foster integration should be noted. Kennedy delayed asking Congress for laws on civil rights until the nation had come to a consensus that such legislation was needed.

. The Supreme Court and Reform

The most active impulse for reform in the 1960s came from the Supreme Court, headed by Earl Warren. During the 1950s, the Court had already banned segregation and protected dissent; during the 1960s, the Court became even more active. It protected the rights of defendants in criminal cases and, more significantly, forced legislative reapportionment on the states. In the 1962 case of Baker v. Carr, the Court ordered that all legislative bodies be elected on the basis of “one man, one vote.” The Court had many critics, but it helped achieve greater social justice by protecting the rights of the underprivileged and by permitting dissent and free expression to flourish.

“LET US CONTINUE”

Kennedy’s assassination by Lee Harvey Oswald left the nation stunned, but Lyndon Johnson moved quickly to restore confidence by promising to continue Kennedy’s programs. In fact, Johnson went beyond Kennedy in the struggle for economic and racial equality.

. Johnson in Action

Johnson was energetic and forceful, but appeared crude and insincere on television. He had spent thirty years in Congress, however, and knew how to manage it. He easily got Kennedy’s tax cut passed and, by putting pressure on northern Republicans, succeeded in gaining passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, banning all public segregation and protecting voting rights.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.

. The Election of 1964

Johnson chose to make America’s persistent poverty his own special issue. He had Congress pass a variety of programs in his “War on Poverty” in 1964. The programs generally encouraged self-help and reduced poverty by a significant degree. When the Republicans ran Barry Goldwater, an outspoken conservative, to oppose Johnson in 1964, the result was a Democratic landslide.

. The Triumph of Reform

Johnson acted quickly to get Congress to enact Medicare and Medicaid and to pump over $1 billion into education. After one of King’s demonstrations in Selma, Alabama, was attacked brutally by the police, Johnson sent help to the blacks and asked
Congress for the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This act led to a dramatic increase in the number of black voters.

In nine months, Lyndon Johnson had accomplished more than any president since Roosevelt and had moved the nation beyond the New Deal. Yet Johnson’s personal popularity was always low, and his foreign policy problems caused many to forget his great achievements.

JOHNSON ESCALATES THE VIETNAM WAR

Johnson, like Kennedy, was convinced that appeasement led to war and continued a hawkish foreign policy. To avoid another Cuba, he flexed American muscle in Latin America, even sending troops to the Dominican Republic in 1965. Above all, he feared the effect on his political career if he “lost” Vietnam to the Communists.

. The Vietnam Dilemma

Johnson inherited a mess in Vietnam. The United States had violated the Geneva Accords in order to install Ngo Dinh Diem, but he was unable to suppress the Vietcong guerrillas. In 1963, Kennedy accepted a military coup in which Diem was killed, but that led to further political instability, Communist gains, and a greater probability of more American involvement.

Vietnam plagued Johnson from the day he took office. Saigon was on the verge of collapse, but Johnson refused to send American combat forces. He relied instead on economic aid, military advisors, and covert actions. During one such operation, United States destroyers and North Vietnamese gunboats fired upon one another in the Gulf of Tonkin, an incident that gave Johnson the opportunity to ask Congress for the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in August 1964. Johnson wanted congressional support for domestic political purposes and to threaten North Vietnam, but it gradually began to seem that Johnson had tricked Congress into authorizing a military escalation. Johnson’s credibility began to erode.

. Escalation

As South Vietnam came closer to defeat, Johnson began a steady escalation of the war. He feared the political consequences of a military defeat, but he did not want to divert resources needed for the Great Society to fight in Southeast Asia. As a result, the United States’ effort in Vietnam was calculated to do just enough to bring Hanoi into peace negotiations, and the President adopted a policy of secrecy and deceit in order to assure the American people that Vietnam was a minor problem that required no great national sacrifice.
. Stalemate

Johnson’s policy of gradual escalation failed. Even after committing half a million troops by 1968, and after massive bombing raids, the United States was no closer to victory. General William Westmoreland, the American commander, adopted a policy of wanton destruction and attrition that increased American losses and enraged the people of South Vietnam. In January 1968, the Vietcong were able to launch attacks all over the country, the Tet offensive, which demonstrated how futile the American effort was. The next May, Johnson announced that he would not run for reelection and that he would reduce American forces while trying to negotiate peace.

YEARS OF TURMOIL

The period between 1965 and 1968 was one of exceptional unrest at home and continued escalation of the war in Vietnam.

. The Student Revolt

Beginning in 1964 at Berkeley, university students began to disrupt academic institutions in order to protest the impersonality of college life. More fundamentally, students resented being controlled by an older, materialistic generation. The student rebellion directed its attack primarily against the Vietnam War, but set the tone for a more widespread cultural uprising.

. Protesting the Vietnam War

Driven by a sense of guilt because they were exempt from the draft, college students vigorously protested the Vietnam War. Demonstrations grew bigger and bolder until in October 1967 over 100,000 protesters besieged the Pentagon. Public and university authorities finally suppressed the demonstrations by a combination of force and concessions.

. The Cultural Revolution

In such aspects of life as clothing, drugs, sex, and especially music, the new generation rejected older values. Some people, such as Jerry Rubin, carried the protest to extremes and provoked only outrage. The movement on the whole, however, posed a serious challenge to what was considered the hypocrisy of American society.

. “Black Power”

Civil rights activists realized that they had to do something about the increasing poverty of African Americans in northern cities that had caused a series of riots beginning in 1964 and reaching their climax in Newark and Detroit in 1967. In this
atmosphere, moderate leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr. lost influence to
militants, some of whom urged black separatism and armed struggle. King tried to
regain his position by leading a crusade against poverty. His assassination in 1968
sparked riots across America. One of the enduring achievements of this rise of a
militant black power movement was a great increase in African American pride.

. Ethnic Nationalism

Other minority groups such as the Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, Italians, and
Poles emulated African Americans by asserting their own cultural distinctions. One
group, the Chicanos, carried their ethnic nationalism into a labor protest when César
Chávez organized the National Farm Workers’ Association in 1965. Chávez struggled
for five years to force farm operators to pay decent wages in the California grape
fields. Chicanos also succeeded in having the federal government mandate and support
bilingual education.

. Women’s Liberation

In 1963, Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* inspired a new feminist crusade.
Women began to use the 1964 Civil Rights Act to attack inequality in employment,
and the movement took distinct positions on abortion and rape. As in every crusade,
extremists emerged, but most women were moderates who simply wanted equality.
Congress agreed and sent the Equal Rights Amendment to the states in 1972.

THE RETURN OF RICHARD NIXON

Three years of turmoil reached their peak in 1968 when the presidential election coincided with a
turning point in the Vietnam War and massive protests in the streets. The election of Richard Nixon
demonstrated the desire of the American people for national reconciliation.

. Vietnam Undermines Lyndon Johnson

In early 1968, the Vietcong surprised American forces by launching the Tet offensive.
Although the assault was eventually repulsed, the Communists had won a decisive
political victory. Influential Americans, including the CBS anchorman Walter
Cronkite, concluded that the war could not be won. In March, President Johnson,
defeated by Vietnam, announced that he would not seek another term as president.

. The Democrats Divide

Even before Johnson’s withdrawal, Senator Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota had begun
to make a serious bid for the Democratic nomination. With Johnson out of the race,
Robert Kennedy entered it and soon rallied most elements of the old Roosevelt
coalition for himself. Johnson and the party leaders, however, favored Hubert Humphrey, who won the nomination easily after Kennedy was shot and killed. Antiwar protestors besieged the ’68 Democratic convention, and when the Chicago police brutally attacked them, the Democrats were grievously wounded in public opinion.

. The Republican Resurgence

In contrast to the Democrats, Republicans harmoniously nominated Richard Nixon, who promised to end the Vietnam War. Humphrey’s campaign started to gain when he finally attacked the war, but Humphrey was hurt by the candidacy of George Wallace, whose populist campaign appealed to white ethnic groups in the North as well as to southern whites. Nixon narrowly won the 1968 election.

CONCLUSION: THE END OF AN ERA

The Republican victory in 1968 ended a thirty-year era of liberal reform and activist foreign policy. The American people wanted a less intrusive, less powerful central government.

LECTURE TOPICS

Examine the political ideology of Lyndon Johnson. Focus on the political paradox of a southern politician who eventually played a pivotal role in realizing a liberal reform agenda—including the most significant civil rights legislation since Reconstruction and one of the most ambitious programs addressing economic inequity in America since the New Deal. What factors in Johnson’s political background prepared him for this role? To what extent did interest in and loyalty to the Democratic Party define his role? Ask students to comment on Johnson’s significance to southern politics and to national politics.

FEATURE ESSAY: UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

The Immigration Act of 1965 eliminated the “national origins” system that favored western Europeans. The intention of the law was to attract people with desirable skills and to reunite families. In practice, it favored more recent immigrants because it allowed them to bring extended family into the country. This changed the racial and ethnic composition of the country, increasing the number of Latin American and Asian immigrants.

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

As mentioned in Chapter 27, some historians have characterized the 1950s as a decade of conservatism, consensus, and conformity. However, the 1950s preceded the 1960s, which is characterized as one of the most radical and turbulent decades in modern American history. Have
students discuss the 1950s as the breeding ground for the sixties. Consider some of the following issues:

a. *The 1960s counterculture.* Have students consider the baby boom and the emergence of the American teenager as predictors of this sixties phenomenon. Did the emergence of rock and roll, the Beat generation, and fifties affluence play a role in the emergence of a counterculture? Did the conservatism, consensus, and conformity of the fifties play a role?

b. *The Vietnam War.* Connect the American involvement in Vietnam to post–World War II foreign policy. Were there indications in the fifties that Americans might feel some ambivalence about military intervention in Vietnam? Why would the strongest protest come from youth?

c. *The civil rights movement.* Connect the civil rights movement to the roles of African Americans in World War II. Remind students that some of the major events of the movement, including the *Brown* decision and the Montgomery bus boycott, occurred as early as the mid-fifties.

The civil rights movement is often referred to as the Second Reconstruction. Hold a discussion in which students consider the following:

a. To what extent was the federal agenda in the civil rights movement similar to the federal agenda in the Civil War? To what extent was the southern agenda during the civil rights movement similar to the southern agenda in the Civil War? Consider the national attention to federal authority and racial justice in both cases and the southern commitment to states’ rights and racial control in both cases.

b. Connect the civil rights movement to other historical conflicts regarding states’ rights. Take students back not only to the Civil War but also to the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions and the Nullification Crisis. Review the meanings of nullification and interposition. What examples of these principles are seen in the events of the civil rights movement?

c. Have students consider the issue of civil disobedience. Review the recurring theme in American history of Americans’ willingness to break the law for a higher good. What similarities exist between the role of African Americans in the civil rights movement and the earlier roles of patriots in the American Revolution or abolitionists who defied the Fugitive Slave Law?

d. Compare and contrast the strides made in civil rights during Reconstruction and during the civil rights movement. Why was the civil rights movement needed when the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were in the Constitution? Were the civil rights laws passed during the 1960s as vulnerable to violation as the Reconstruction laws?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)**

The text suggests that Kennedy failed to gain his legislative objectives because of a coalition of Republicans and conservative Democrats. Yet the composition of Congress was virtually identical in the 1950s, and the Eisenhower administration obtained passage of two civil rights acts, the highway program, extensions of social security, an increase in the minimum wage, and other minor expansions of the New Deal. Is the text’s observation an adequate explanation of Kennedy’s legislative failures? If it is not, what alternative explanations would you
propose? How would you evaluate the Kennedy presidency? Was he a good, fair, or poor president? Why would you make that evaluation?

The Chicago police engaged in what a presidential commission called a “police riot” during the Democratic convention in 1968. They savagely beat demonstrators, bystanders, and reporters. The text notes that they were “provoked by the abusive language and violent behavior of radical demonstrators.” Granting the provocation, was the behavior of Chicago’s police force justified? If so, why? If not, why not?

Discuss the issue of women involved with the New Left movement during the 1960s. Many students assume that because the New Left was a liberal political movement, gender equity was part of its agenda. Discuss with students how women were treated within the counterculture, the New Left, and the civil rights movement. How did men involved with these movements feel about the status of women? How did women’s experiences in these leftist movements pave the way for the women’s liberation movement of the 1970s?

Why did Johnson get the United States so deeply into Vietnam? What could he have done to avoid going deeper into the quagmire?

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

The 1960s were an especially violent decade in American history. By far the most shocking event, the one that all those of age will remember until their dying day, was the assassination in Dallas of President Kennedy on November 22, 1963. The tragic event was investigated by a special presidential commission, the Warren Commission, which received testimony from scores of eyewitnesses. Whether the panel reached the correct conclusion about the episode has, of course, been the subject of intense argument. It is a profoundly moving experience to read some of the accounts of Kennedy’s last moments. His wife, Jacqueline, remembered shouting, “I love you, Jack” as she cradled his shattered head in her lap. The evidence and testimony considered by the Warren Commission is published in Hearings Before the President’s Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy, 26 volumes (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964, 26 volumes). Jacqueline Kennedy’s testimony appears in volume 5. An abridged version of the Hearings, entitled The Witnesses (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964) was compiled by The New York Times.

The Kennedy assassination was only the first of several that robbed the United States of some of its most talented leaders. The violence that struck them down had its counterpart in the urban riots that demonstrated racial divisions present in the United States. In Detroit, forty-three persons died in the rioting, but it was the explosion in the Watts section of Los Angeles in August 1965 that alerted the nation to a new and frightening phenomenon. In Watts, as much testimony showed, even middle-class blacks voiced support of the rioters, and there were few innocent bystanders. Even when they knew the fires they set endangered themselves, black teenagers raised the cry, “Burn, baby, burn!” And for the next few summers, city after city did burn. There is a somewhat academic account of the major riots in the Kerner Commission report, Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1968). For a livelier account of the Watts riot that incorporates a good deal of

**POINTS OF MASTERY**

Explain the role of television in shaping the American perception of the 1960 presidential election.

List the reasons for Kennedy’s victory in 1960.

Define the meaning of John Kennedy’s New Frontier and describe the tone, achievements, and failures of his administration.

Analyze the Kennedy Administration’s role in Berlin and in containing Communism in Southeast Asia.

Identify Quang Duc and discuss Kennedy’s backing of Diem.

Define the Bay of Pigs affair and describe the events that led to a crisis over missiles in Cuba and how it was settled. Explain why Khrushchev was willing to take a risk in Cuba.

Explain why the Limited Test Ban Treaty is considered one of Kennedy’s greatest achievements.

Compare the Freedom Rides to earlier protests of the Civil Rights movement.

Identify Bull Connor and explain his role in the civil rights movement in Alabama.

Explain the historical significance of the 1963 March on Washington.

Discuss why conspiracy theories surround John F. Kennedy’s assassination in 1963.

Assess the gains and losses of groups in “the other America” in the postwar years.

Outline the major components of Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty.

Identify Barry Goldwater and describe his political philosophy during the 1960s.

List the major pieces of legislation enacted by Congress in the early phase of Johnson’s Great Society.

Explain the reasons for the escalation of U.S. involvement in Vietnam and the growing protest against the war.

Explain the significance of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in escalating the American involvement in Vietnam.
Briefly explain the impact of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965 on the nature and extent of United States immigration.

Identify William Westmoreland. Define the term “search and destroy” and explain its significance to American military strategy during the Vietnam War.

Discuss the role of “radical” groups in the civil rights movement. How did groups like the Black Panthers make people like Martin Luther King, Jr., appear?

Understand the origins, ideas, personalities, and effects of the Black Power Movement, and the effects of inner-city riots in the late 1960s.

Identify and explain the historical significance of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and explain the political philosophy and approach presented by the SDS in the Port Huron Statement.

Identify Cesar Chavez and discuss his cause.

Discuss some of the ongoing controversies regarding gender roles in America that first gained widespread attention due to the feminist movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Identify and explain the impact of the Tet offensive.

Identify the factors that led to Lyndon Johnson’s withdrawal from the 1968 presidential election and discuss how this affected the Democrats.

Explain the events that gave Nixon a victory in 1968.

**SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS**

1. How did American foreign policy in the 1960s reflect the personalities of Kennedy and Johnson?

   For President Kennedy, foreign policy was a personal priority, as was winning the Cold War. He felt that the conflict required an aggressive and purposeful defense stance, and communicated his willingness to use force. This translated into increased military construction, overt political toughness, and pro-Western outreach from new organizations and programs like the Peace Corps. Kennedy’s refusal to negotiate with Soviet Premier Khrushchev led to the construction of the Berlin Wall. His commitment to containment led to unsuccessful American involvement in Vietnam and the Bay of Pigs, but his unwillingness to compromise helped bring about a successful outcome to the missile crisis.

   President Johnson was committed to the same “hawkish” strategies that Kennedy established, but he faced more opposition from the American people. Vietnam, a problem Johnson
inherited, became his obsession. The more Johnson tried to be a decisive and hard-hitting military leader, the slipperier Vietnam became as a battlefield. His escalations eventually ended in stalemate.

2 Why did Martin Luther King, Jr., command such respect?

King was personally committed to and active in his civil rights campaigns. An inspiring and eloquent speaker, he tirelessly advocated for and engaged in nonviolent civil disobedience. He articulated compelling moral principles and he adhered to them consistently. He treated even his enemies with respect.

3 How did the War on Poverty influence Johnson’s handling of the Vietnam War?

Actually, Vietnam influenced the War on Policy more that the War on Poverty influenced Vietnam. Johnson’s handling of the Vietnam War derailed his presidency and the War on Poverty. The Vietnam War drained the budget for Johnson’s social projects and drew the attention of Congress and the public away from domestic policy and concerns.

4 Why did Americans turn to Nixon in 1968?

President Nixon’s campaign emphasized peace and unifying the country. The Democratic candidate struggled with internal party divisions and lost votes to a third-party candidate. The 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago supported conservative fears that the peace movement, the hippie movement, and the youth movement shared a single voice, one which was bent on anarchy and anti-Americanism.

 AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

*America’s War on Poverty*, Blackside, Inc., 1995, 300 minutes.
Henry Hampton examines the American government’s role in addressing poverty in this five-part series from the same people who produced *Eyes on the Prize*.

*The Bay of Pigs*, Oregon Public Broadcasting, 1997, 60 minutes.
This is a look at Kennedy’s fiasco in Cuba.

*Civil Rights Documentation Project*: [www.congresslink.org/civilrights/index.htm](http://www.congresslink.org/civilrights/index.htm) focuses on the story of the legislative process that gave birth to such laws as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and provides a full accounting of law making based on the archival resources housed at The Dirksen Congressional Center.

*David Halberstam’s The Fifties*, A&E Video, 400 minutes.
This is the A&E documentary based on David Halberstam’s 1993 volume on the decade.

This video offers a two-part look at the life and presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower.

_Eyes on the Prize II_ (480 minutes.), PBS.
Both volumes of this video contain a history of the civil rights movement, complete with documentary footage and interviews with many of the participants.

This video tells the life story of the man who made a political career out of supporting segregation.

_The Missiles of October_ (150 minutes.), MPI Home Video (1973).
This movie presents multiple points of view on the Cuban Missile Crisis, successfully underscoring the high stakes and tension of the thirteen-day confrontation in October.

This video examines the origins of rock and roll with a look at rhythm and blues.

_The Twentieth Century with Mike Wallace: Pioneers in Space_, The History Channel, 50 minutes.
Mike Wallace examines the early years of the NASA space program.

Chronicles the seminal 1969 rock concert from preparations to cleanup, including looks at the performers and the concert goers, drug use, and nudity.

**CLASS EXERCISES**

1. Research the American experience in fighting wars in Asia during the twentieth century. This project could focus on the Pacific War during World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War. Among the topics that students might examine, consider the following:
   a. The cultural differences between the East and the West. What barriers existed that would complicate Asian and American understanding of each other’s cultures? How would these misunderstandings complicate diplomacy?
   b. The political and military goals of Asians and Americans in war. Especially in Korea and Vietnam, how did American global concerns complement or fail to complement the regional concerns of Koreans and the Vietnamese? How did regional civil wars turn into military manifestations of the Cold War?
   c. Racism and the American experience in Asia. Have students consider American stereotypes regarding Asians. How were these stereotypes manifested during the Pacific War, during the Korean War, and during the Vietnam War? Were Americans socially and culturally prepared to fight for the well-being of the Asian world?

2. Ask students to read _Eyes on the Prize_ (which may be made a recommended or required supplemental text for the course). After reading the book, have students view one or more of the videos that correspond to the written text. Students are to write a 4- to 5-page paper utilizing both these written and visual sources. Students will first write a 1- to 2-page overview of the book. Then, students will complete the paper by focusing on one aspect of the civil
rights movement and comparing and contrasting one of the videos with one of the chapters in the book.

3 Divide the class into five or six groups and assign one of the following films for each group to watch: Apocalypse Now, Platoon, Full Metal Jacket, Good Morning, Vietnam, Born on the Fourth of July, and Hamburger Hill. Once all the groups have had an opportunity to view their film, ask them to come to class prepared to discuss the particular aspect of the Vietnam War that was depicted. Ask them to explain why certain films seem more authentic than others.

**MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS**

- Watch the Video: Kennedy-Nixon Debate
- Watch the Video: President John F. Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis
- Watch the Video: Photographing the Civil Rights Movement
- Watch the Video: Civil Rights March on Washington
- Read the Document: The Civil Rights Act of 1964
- View the Map: Impact of the Voting Rights Act of 1965
- Complete the Assignment: Unintended Consequences: The Second Great Migration
- View the Map: Vietnam War
- Watch the Video: Protests Against the Vietnam War
CHAPTER 31

TOWARDS A NEW CONSERVATISM, 1969–1988

CHAPTER OUTLINE

REAGAN AND AMERICA’S SHIFT TO THE RIGHT

THE TEMPTING OF RICHARD NIXON

• Pragmatic Liberalism
• Détente
• Ending the Vietnam War
• The Watergate Scandal

THE ECONOMY OF STAGFLATION

• War and Oil
• The Great Inflation
• The Shifting American Economy
• A New Environmentalism

PRIVATE LIVES, PUBLIC ISSUES

• The Changing American Family
• Gains and Setbacks for Women
• The Gay Liberation Movement
• The AIDS Epidemic

POLITICS AND DIPLOMACY AFTER WATERGATE

• The Ford Administration
• Carter and American Malaise
• Troubles Abroad
• The Collapse of Détente

THE REAGAN REVOLUTION

• The Election of 1980
• Cutting Taxes and Spending
• Unleashing the Private Sector
REAGAN AND THE WORLD

• Challenging the “Evil Empire”
• Confrontation in Central America
• More Trouble in the Middle East
• Trading Arms for Hostages
• Reagan the Peacemaker

CONCLUSION: CHALLENGING THE NEW DEAL

FEATURE ESSAY: THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT

LAW AND SOCIETY: ROE V. WADE

OPENING THEME

STUDENTS IN REBELLION

During the decade of the sixties, it sometimes seemed as if everyone in America was protesting something. The protests most likely to interest college students today were those that disrupted colleges and universities across the nation.

American colleges have always endured a certain level of protest, but the student demonstrations that began at the University of California at Berkeley in 1964 introduced an era of increasingly violent protest that brought the integrity of the entire system of higher education into question. The explosion at Berkeley combined local and national issues, such as the right to conduct political rallies on campus, outrage at the university for calling in the police to break up demonstrations, support for the civil rights movement, and demands for a greater anti-poverty effort. The Berkeley scenario soon became all too familiar; a relatively small student protest would be forcibly repressed, leading to even greater protest and even more brutal repression until the university no longer functioned.

Over time, students engaged more quickly in illegal and violent acts while college administrators became notably more timid. At Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, the trustees were held captive by students; at Pomona College in California, at San Francisco State, at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and at the University of California at Santa Barbara, bombs placed by students killed or injured people. Because the university authorities could not secure order, they called in outside authorities. At Jackson State in Mississippi in 1966, the National Guard shot and killed a student to suppress a massive protest. In 1968, after protesters seized a number of buildings at Columbia University, the New York City police clubbed hundreds of students and faculty in a sweep of the campus. In May 1970, after students burned a building at Kent State University, the Ohio National Guard entered the campus and shot to death four students. The Kent State tragedy unleashed a crescendo of violent demonstrations across the nation. At Jackson State, two students were killed and a
dozen wounded, and by June 1, 1970, over eight hundred colleges and universities reported serious disturbances. The governor of California, Ronald Reagan, closed down the entire system of public education in his state to restore order.

It soon became apparent that the protests in the spring 1970 semester represented the climax of five terrible years. By 1973, radicals and conservatives agreed that students had lost the interest or the will to engage in violent confrontations with authority, and the new decade was already being described as “the quiet seventies.” Scholars, of course, immediately began to explain why the student demonstrations had begun and why they ended so abruptly. Of the many causes mentioned, some are especially interesting. Many students in the sixties feared that the increasing material abundance of American life was leading to spiritual decadence; they acted out of rage, therefore, to assert the superiority of emotion over intellect. Students also demonstrated because they saw themselves as agents of social change, a role that should have been, but was not, played by the American working class. Most obviously, the struggle against racial injustice and the Vietnam War formed the crucible in which the student protest was molded.

All those involved in the protests agreed that the civil rights movement was a basic source of inspiration. It was African American students who led the demonstrations against segregated restaurants and other facilities in the South, and African American students remained active throughout the decade. White students generally stood in awe of their black colleagues and attributed to them an overwhelming moral superiority and a greater degree of physical and mental toughness that entitled them to leadership. This role, however, the blacks generally rejected. As whites entered the civil rights movement, many blacks became suspicious of them and began to discourage their participation. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, for example, expelled whites, and the “Black Power” slogan emphasized the unique demands of the African American community. This racial split had various consequences. For one thing, African American students generally focused their protests more clearly and demanded concessions that universities could actually grant, such as Black Studies programs. As white students drifted away from the civil rights movement, they adopted other priorities, such as opposition to the war in Vietnam, an issue that the university could not solve.

The Vietnam War did not begin the campus rebellion, but by 1965 it had become the central issue among white student protesters. In that year, college students were deferred from military service, an act probably inspired by the government’s attempt to silence opposition. Student deferments, however, had the contrary effect. Some of the most violent opponents of the war found a refuge on campus and lent their considerable skills of organization and agitation to any and every perceived injustice in academic life. To be deferred, students had to remain in “good standing” at their schools, which meant maintaining a certain grade point average. Professors became painfully aware as they graded exams that they held the power of life and death over students, and college administrators suffered tremendous pressure because it was they who had to inform the Selective Service Administration if a student fell out of “good standing.” The student deferment actually served to underline the close connection that had long existed between American universities and the “immoral” American military machine. It was this real and intimate connection between the university and the government that students protested, and many of the protests were designed not to destroy the university, but to restore it to its ivory-towered innocence.
Can the events and emotions of the sixties come again? Student protests are a daily part of the academic routine, but the sixties will not be repeated unless a large number of local incidents coalesce into a movement with recognizable leaders and general grievances. The United States is no longer involved in an unpopular and unsuccessful war, and most whites today concede the moral legitimacy of the civil rights movement. The prospects for a sixties-style student uprising therefore seem impossibly remote. On the other hand, new issues and a new configuration of forces would result in another, different era of student rebellion.

REAGAN AND AMERICA’S SHIFT TO THE RIGHT

The author begins this chapter by tracing Ronald Reagan’s rise to political power. A New Deal Democrat whose long movie career was coming to an end in the 1960s, Reagan was becoming increasingly conservative, and in 1964 was invited to speak at the Republican national convention in support of Barry Goldwater. The speech electrified the audience, and made Reagan the darling of the conservative movement. He warned Americans that they had a stark choice to make between liberty and tyranny, but he did so in a relaxed, confident way, unlike the strident Goldwater. The success of the speech led to Reagan’s election as governor of California in 1966 and his reelection in 1970. As governor, Reagan was surprisingly pragmatic, even raising taxes, and worked well with a Democratic legislature, but he maintained his hold on the heart of conservatives, who were increasing in numbers every year, by opposing taxes, student protesters, abortion, the Supreme Court ruling against prayer in public schools, and other “liberal” policies. For a nation demoralized by the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, the failed administrations of Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, and the perception that American was growing weak and that its values were decaying, Reagan’s sunny assurance that America could recover her strength, and become again a great and good nation, was irresistible.

THE TEMPTING OF RICHARD NIXON

Richard Nixon won a contentious election in 1968, and began a tenure that began with promises of bipartisan cooperation and ended with resignation in disgrace.

Pragmatic Liberalism

Nixon surprisingly adopted many “liberal” policies. For example, he extended affirmative action to women, established a federal office to oversee workplace safety, and signed the Clean Air Act. At the same time, he shifted much of the federal responsibility for social programs and civil rights to the states or the courts. Basically, he wanted to avoid controversies over social issues because his main interest was in foreign affairs.
. Détente

Nixon and his closest foreign policy advisor, Henry Kissinger, based their approach to international issues on cold, logical assumptions. They saw the Cold War as a traditional superpower rivalry to be managed, not won. They felt that America must make a strategic retreat. They planned to use trade and improved relations with China to neutralize Russia, after which the United States would compete more vigorously with western Europe and Japan.

In 1971, Kissinger paved the way for Nixon’s visit to China in February 1972, a prelude to America’s recognition of Communist China. This visit persuaded the Russians to agree to the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) treaty in Moscow in 1972. There seemed to be a genuine desire on both sides to reduce Cold War tensions.

. Ending the Vietnam War

Nixon followed a three-part plan to get the United States out of Vietnam. He gradually reduced the number of American troops there, while at the same time he intensified American bombing and adopted a hard line at the peace talks. His increased military pressure resulted in the 1970 invasion of Cambodia, which set off renewed antiwar protests, most notably at Kent State University, where four students were killed by the National Guard. However, the peace talks did progress, and in January 1973 they concluded with a disguised American surrender that virtually guaranteed a Communist takeover in South Vietnam. Nixon had extricated the nation from a quagmire at the price of defeat.

. The Watergate Scandal

Nixon had to accept defeat in Vietnam because he was deeply involved in covering up the burglary of the Democratic Committee’s office during the presidential campaign of 1972. Although the Watergate burglary was kept out of that campaign, the scandal was becoming a major issue by 1972. When the Senate investigated, it discovered White House tapes that quickly revealed Nixon’s involvement in the scandal. Nixon tried in vain to suppress this evidence, but the Supreme Court ruled that he must hand over the tapes, and a House committee voted to recommend impeachment. On August 9, 1974, Nixon resigned. The crisis demonstrated how much the power of the executive branch had grown, but it also illustrated the vitality of American institutions. The press, the federal judiciary, and Congress had all behaved splendidly. Unfortunately, Watergate destroyed the trust the American people had in their government and began a mood of cynicism.
THE ECONOMY OF STAGFLATION

War in the Middle East set off a chain of events that lead to rapidly rising prices for everything, and plunged the nation into recession.

. War and Oil

In October 1973, the United States came to the defense of Israel when it was attacked by Egypt and Syria, leading the oil-producing Arab nations to declare a boycott of the United States. The shortage of oil meant long lines at gas stations in America and wildly escalating prices for gas. Before long, the economy fell into recession. The immediate crisis ended with a settlement of the Mideast war in March 1974, but the economic damage had already been done.

. The Great Inflation

The rapid increase in oil prices, if not the only cause for inflation, was the primary cause. The prices of homes, cars, food, and other items skyrocketed. Real income declined. Nixon, Ford, and Carter were all unable to stop the price rise, and it was finally left to the Federal Reserve to do so by raising interest rates.

. The Shifting American Economy

The American economy underwent fundamental adjustments. America’s share of world markets declined, as did older industries such as steel and automobiles, but high technology prospered, and businesses tended to diversify, illustrating the continued spirit of enterprise that would lead to greater economic vitality in the future.

. A New Environmentalism

The oil shocks reinvigorated the environmental movement, but the search for alternate sources of energy was generally unsuccessful, and Americans continued to rely upon gas-powered automobiles, despite the danger posed by reliance on Mideast oil and the growing concern over “greenhouse” emissions.

PRIVATE LIVES, PUBLIC ISSUES

During the 1970s, the traditional, two-parent family continued to disappear in America; women entered the workforce in increasing numbers, and an active gay rights campaign for civil rights began.

This topic is discussed in the Feature Essay; see below.
. The Changing American Family

From 1970 to 1990, fewer and fewer American families had a father who was the sole breadwinner. Cohabitation without marriage became common and divorce rates doubled. At the same time, “family values” became a popular political slogan.

. Gains and Setbacks for Women

The greatest change in the position of married women was their entry into the workplace. Some of them achieved remarkable success, but most were relegated to low-paying jobs, or to such “female” jobs as nursing. Women’s wages were only about three-quarters those of men. Organized feminists, such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), pushed for an Equal Rights Amendment, but failed. They were more successful in protecting the right to abortion recognized in Roe v. Wade; but abortion was becoming a highly controversial subject.

This topic is discussed in Law and Society; see below.

. The Gay Liberation Movement

In 1969, homosexuals rioted against police brutality in New York City, sparking a more militant effort to end discrimination. The Gay Liberation Front and other organizations urged closet homosexuals to take pride in their sexual orientation and to demand equal rights. They were successful in having states decriminalize homosexual acts, and persuaded the Democratic party to adopt their cause.

The onset of AIDS in the 1980s hurt the cause of gay liberation. Some homosexuals responded with violence, but most continued to use accepted political practices to push their agenda, with some success. Congress voted money for AIDS, and the public became less hostile in some ways; for example, in protecting gays from being fired from their jobs just because of their sexual orientation. On other issues, the public was less sympathetic. When Bill Clinton tried to carry out his campaign pledge to prohibit discrimination against gays in the armed forces, he had to back down, and the public remained extremely hostile to the idea of gay marriage.

. The AIDS Epidemic

AIDS was first detected in 1981, but the government and the public paid little attention because it seemed to be confined to homosexual men. As the virus spread to drug users and recipients of blood transfusions, indifference gave way to panic. The Reagan Administration put money into research, but very little into education or prevention, and the death rate mounted. In 1987, Reagan finally appointed a commissioner to study the problem, but the epidemic continued. By 1993, there were at least a quarter of a million infected persons. Most were homosexuals and drug users, but about 15 percent were heterosexual, non-drug abusers. In 1996, the death rate from AIDS
finally began to drop as new drugs and safer sexual practices slowed the epidemic in the United States, but it never ended. Young people began to become complacent about it, and in the rest of the world, especially Africa, the rate of infection kept growing.

POLITICS AND DIPLOMACY AFTER WATERGATE

The confrontation between president and Congress over the Watergate affair left the nation leaderless at a crucial time.

. The Ford Administration

Gerald Ford doomed his presidency by pardoning Nixon for any and all crimes he might have committed. Ford also soured his relations with the Democratic majority in Congress by allowing disclosure of some of the illegal, covert operations of the Central Intelligence Agency during the Kennedy and Johnson years and by opposing Democratic bills protecting the environment and civil rights.

. Carter and American Malaise

Jimmy Carter, former governor of Georgia, won the presidency by campaigning as someone outside the political establishment who would restore decency and morality to government, but he failed as a president because he lacked political vision and was too much of an outsider to make the government work. In 1979 he publicly blamed the American people for a “national malaise” that very much reflected his own lack of substance.

. Troubles Abroad

After the defeat in Vietnam, the American people preferred an isolationist foreign policy, but Carter was inexorably pulled into intervention abroad. In Nicaragua, he supplied military aid to the established government in its struggle against a socialist insurgency; and in the Mideast, he brokered a peace pact between Israel and Egypt. However, Carter’s greatest problem was with Iran, where a radical Muslim revolution ousted the Shah in 1978, after which, in 1979, students seized the United States embassy and kept its personnel hostage for the rest of Carter’s term as president. A failed rescue effort reinforced the impression that the United States was becoming powerless.

. The Collapse of Détente

The most idealist part of Carter’s foreign policy was his emphasis on human rights, which he proclaimed would be supported absolutely all over the globe, but in practice
it was applied hypocritically and appeared to menace the USSR, as did the continued rapprochement between the U.S. and China. As a result, the Russians refused to engage in any further deals to limit the number of intercontinental missiles, and the cold war heated up when Russia invaded Afghanistan in 1979.

THE REAGAN REVOLUTION

It was apparent that the nation was becoming more conservative ever since the 1950s, and though this trend was interrupted by Watergate, the nomination of the genial Ronald Reagan in 1980 ensured victory for the Republican party.

. The Election of 1980

Carter’s failure to rescue the hostages in Iran, or to restore the economy, along with Reagan’s likability, made the election a landslide. Reagan did well in the Republican strongholds—the West and South—but he even took many traditional Democratic votes among Jews and union members. Only African Americans remained solidly within the old New Deal coalition.

. Cutting Taxes and Spending

Reagan promised to downsize the federal government and immediately began to carry out that promise. He persuaded Congress to cut the income tax by 25% over three years, and to cut spending on various social programs by over $40 billion.

. Unleashing the Private Sector

Reagan was less successful in deregulating the American economy, but won some impressive victories. His cabinet ministers got rid of, or laxly enforced, rules designed to protect federal parklands and to enhance auto safety, and when air controllers struck in 1981, Reagan acted decisively by firing them. He was less successful in overhauling Social Security, but even there he was able to cut benefits.

The Reagan administration was not especially open to African Americans, to whom the president owed nothing politically, or to women, even though he appointed the first female justice to the Supreme Court, Sandra Day O’Connor.

REAGAN AND THE WORLD

In order to restore America’s international position, Reagan began a steep increase in military spending and conducted an aggressive foreign policy.
. Challenging the “Evil Empire”

Reagan sincerely believed that the Soviet Union was the “focus of evil in the modern world” and had to be overcome. Bowing to pressure from peace groups in Europe and America, Reagan offered the Russians some very unfavorable deals on arms reductions, and when the Russians predictably refused them, the United States deployed cruise missiles in Europe and began development of a “star wars” anti-missile system. The Russians responded by building up their nuclear arsenal.

. Confrontation in Central America

Reagan adopted an interventionist policy in Latin America wherever leftist guerrillas attempted to overthrow governments characterized by corruption and military dictatorship. In Nicaragua, Reagan made enemies of the Sandinistas and tried to subvert them by covert action, even after Congress made such attempts illegal. In October 1983, American forces invaded Grenada to oust a government that had close ties to Cuba.

. More Troubles in the Middle East

Reagan approved Israel’s invasion of Lebanon because he thought it would mean the destruction of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, but instead, the United States unthinkingly joined a multinational force to restore peace, thereby getting enmeshed in the endless civil war racking that country. After an attack on American forces killed 239 marines, Reagan pulled out all American forces.

. Trading Arms for Hostages

Reagan acquiesced in the sale of advanced weapons to Iran in the hope that the Iranians would use their influence to free some Americans held hostage in Lebanon, but when the Iranians learned how profitable it was to sell hostages, more Americans were kidnapped. In the meantime, members of the National Security Council used the proceeds from the arms sale to finance guerrilla forces in Nicaragua, in direct violation of a congressional law prohibiting such aid. When these covert operations were exposed in 1986, it seemed as if another president would face impeachment. Eventually, lower-ranking officials took total responsibility for the actions, and Reagan was spared.

. Reagan the Peacemaker

The advent of Mikhail Gorbachev to power in Russia allowed Reagan to adopt a more conciliatory attitude. The two leaders came close to making tremendous cuts in all offensive missiles, and did in fact agreed to eliminate all intermediate-range missiles. In addition, the Soviets moved out of Angola and Afghanistan. The sudden friendship
of the U.S. and USSR erased doubts over Reagan’s handling of foreign policy, and
restored his immense popularity as he left office

CONCLUSION: CHALLENGING THE NEW DEAL

Despite the troubles of his last two years in office, Reagan successfully carried off a revolution in
American government. He made it clear that the American people should rely less on the federal
government and more on private enterprise to make their society work.

FEATURE ESSAY: THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT

The 1970s saw the emergence of the “Moral Majority” of the Christian right. Evangelists had a new
stage on television and developed a political agenda based on religious understanding of traditional
family values. Their primary positions included advocacy against abortion and homosexuality.
Politicians who received favor from this group, however, were quickly discarded when they could not
live up to the ideological purity the movement preached.

LAW AND SOCIETY: ROE V. WADE: THE STRUGGLE OVER WOMEN’S
REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In 1969, Sarah Weddington and Linda Coffee filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of all Texas women
against Henry Wade, the district attorney of Dallas County, demanding that he stop enforcing the
state’s abortion laws. Their primary argument was that abortion laws invaded a right to privacy
inferred from Constitutional amendments. This suit, called Roe v. Wade, eventually went to the
Supreme Court and established a woman’s right to choose whether or not to terminate her pregnancy.
Subsequent legislation has challenged and chipped away at this decision, and abortion remains one of
the nation’s most controversial political subjects.

LECTURE TOPICS

Briefly outline the events that culminated in the Watergate scandal. Explain the ways in which the
Watergate scandal gave Americans lessons in the workings of the Constitution and the value of
a political system that provides for separation of powers.

Present a lecture on Jimmy Carter as a southern president. How did his character, political style, and
political agenda reflect his southern background? One historian has characterized Carter as the
“Yankee from Georgia.” Why? How do Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter compare as southern
presidents? How do they differ?

Create a lecture on Wall Street in the 1980s. The Reagan administration was generally credited with
the nation’s successes and absolved of its failures. Some historians, on the other hand, blame the
Reagan administration for many of the nation’s economic problems and give it none of the credit for the economic boom of the 1980s. To what extent did Reagan deserve credit or blame for the nation’s economic performance? To what extent, generally, do presidents take too much credit for good economic times and receive too much blame for economic downturns?

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

Discuss the presidencies of Johnson, Nixon, and Carter. How did each of these men help or hurt blacks? Why did they take the actions they did? What were the results? How were blacks’ political powers changing during this period?

Discuss the connection between the sexual revolution of the 1970s and the broader women’s liberation movement. Although the sexual revolution is often considered part of the women’s liberation movement, sexuality has historically been a divisive issue even among the most progressive women, with some feminists arguing that sexual liberation demeans the status of women and others arguing that sexual liberation allows women to behave in ways that are acceptable for men but traditionally not acceptable for women. How did this conflict play out for men and women in the late twentieth century? How has sexuality and the changing status of women played out in the “culture wars” of recent years?

Have students write a paper researching the impact of one of the prominent evangelists of the modern era such as Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, Jim Bakker, or Jimmy Swaggart. In the paper, they can address the contribution of the evangelist to the popularization of evangelical and the extent to which each evangelist had a political agenda attached to his ministry.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

The savings and loan crisis had its origins in the 1970s. Some of the industry’s problems came about because of changes in the industry itself. The policies of Carter and Reagan, however, contributed significantly to the crisis. The high interest rates of the Carter years made it impossible for savings and loan institutions to attract money, since they were restricted to paying five percent interest on savings accounts. Moreover, the savings and loans held mortgages at four and five percent but had to pay much higher rates themselves. Then the Reagan administration lifted regulations on the savings and loans. What was the likely response of a weak institution to the lifting of regulations? What would be the likely long-term consequences? What would be the risks?

Discuss the relative status of the American Catholic Church, the mainline Protestant denominations, and evangelical Protestant denominations during the last thirty years.

Address the emergence of the Sunbelt as the region of economic growth during the late twentieth century. What factors contributed to this regional shift in economic power? Aside from economic and/or financial issues, are there political, social, or cultural factors involved in the shift? What impact did World War II have on the modern transformation of the South? What impact did the civil rights movement have on the modern transformation of the South?
Was Watergate an aberration, or do you see the episode as part of a larger pattern of abuse of power?

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

During the Johnson and Nixon administrations, two sets of records that were never intended for public release came into the public domain. The result in each case was to create grave suspicion in the minds of American citizens about the intelligence and integrity of their highest officials.

The first set of documents, usually called the Pentagon Papers, was an internal study of the decision-making process that had led to American involvement in the Vietnam War. What seems most remarkable about the way America drifted into war was the intention of public officials to hide so much from the public, apparently on the assumption that the American people were not tough enough to support the policy of threat and blackmail that was supposed to force North Vietnam to cease its aid to the Vietcong. Even when President Johnson decided in April 1965 to put American ground forces into combat, he tried to prevent public knowledge of the decision. His National Security Action Memorandum #328, issued April 6, 1965, approved an increase in the number of American troops in Vietnam and more aggressive use of United States Marines already stationed there. The president desired that these actions “be taken as rapidly as practicable, but in ways that should minimize any appearance of sudden changes in policy . . . .” The New York Times edition of the Pentagon Papers (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971) includes a helpful chronology of events and an introduction to the documents without which the reader is likely to get lost.

The second set of records is the series of conversations recorded by President Nixon, usually called the Watergate tapes. The tapes, of course, proved to be an unmitigated disaster for Nixon, but they provide a fascinating look at the workings of the presidency. It should be noted that there are several versions of the tapes. President Nixon released 1,254 pages of transcripts on April 30, 1974, and these were reprinted in installments by the New York Times. However, the House Judiciary Committee, to whom the tapes were sent, published transcripts of the tapes that often differ significantly from the President’s version. To confuse the matter a bit more, the most crucial of the tapes, the one with the “smoking gun” conversation between Nixon and Haldeman on June 23, 1972, was not part of the original package of tapes sent to the Judiciary Committee. In that conversation, which occurred only six days after the Watergate burglary, Nixon replied to Haldeman’s briefing on the subject, “All right, fine, I understand it all.” Nixon was forced by the Supreme Court to release this tape on August 5, 1974; five days later, he resigned. The most complete edition of the tapes so far was edited by Stanley I. Kutler, Abuse of Power (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997).

POINTS OF MASTERY

Define the term “neoconservatism” and identify the major authors and publications that articulated the philosophy.
Identify and explain the significance of the term “New Federalism.”

Explain the policy of détente.

Describe the environmental and consumer protection movements.

List the major accomplishments of the Nixon administration in foreign affairs outside the realm of the Vietnam War.

Outline the reasons for Nixon’s landslide victory in 1972.

Describe the sequence of events, beginning with the Watergate break-in, which led to Nixon’s resignation. In what ways did Nixon’s activities threaten the American system of government? Watergate forced Nixon’s resignation, but did the system work?

Discuss the role of Henry Kissinger in the foreign affairs of the Nixon administration. How did his European background define his approach to diplomacy? How did he respond to the American tradition of moral diplomacy? How significant was Kissinger’s role in defining American foreign policy during the 1970s?

List the factors that contributed to the economic inflation and “stagflation” of the 1970s.

Discuss the ways in which Carter attempted to handle the nation’s economic crisis and energy shortage.

Discuss the economic consequences of the 1973 Middle East War and the Arab oil embargo.

List the problems facing Ford as president.

Explain the ways in which Carter undermined his own presidency.

Examine the sources and results of the inflation of the late 1970s.

Define the term “wage gap.”

State the major goals of feminist leaders and show the similarities between the women’s and civil rights movements.

Identify the term HIV and analyze the AIDS crisis.

Explain the significance of the Camp David Accord.

Discuss United States-Iranian relations leading up to the hostage crisis and the impact of the hostage crisis in Iran on American domestic politics.

Define “supply-side economics” and discuss Reagan’s economic policies.

Define the “Moral Majority” and discuss the fundamental changes that altered the economy.
Identify and explain the historical significance of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).

Identify the limited military interventions undertaken by the Reagan administration during the 1980s.

Explain the circumstances surrounding the Iran-Contra affair and comment on how it impacted the Reagan administration.

Discuss the changing relations between the United States and the Soviet Union under Reagan and Gorbachev. Identify Mikhail Gorbachev and explain the meanings of the terms glasnost and perestroika.

Outline the provisions of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty.

Analyze the importance of Roe v. Wade and explain how the debate over abortion has become a wedge issue in U.S. politics since 1973.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. If Nixon hadn’t resigned, would he have been impeached? Would that have been a good thing or a bad thing?

Yes, Nixon would have been impeached. The House Judiciary Committee had already voted three articles of impeachment. If the Senate had held impeachment trials, Nixon most likely would have been found guilty. He did not have the support of his own party, let alone the opposition, and the evidence in testimony and on the tapes appeared sufficient.

This would have been a good thing because Congress, so long stifled by Johnson’s and Nixon’s executive styles, would have had a chance to exercise its power and reaffirm the importance of the rule of law and representative government. However, the impeachment process would have cost a lot of money and would have prevented both Congress and the Office of the President from accomplishing anything else during the process. A sympathetic understanding of Nixon sees this as the reason he resigned.

2. What did feminism and gay liberation have to do with each other?

Like the civil rights movement, the aim of both feminism and gay liberation was obtaining liberty and equality for people who have been discriminated against on account of a characteristic over which they have no control. Both were, and are, civil rights movements fighting to gain collective power, protective legislation, and national recognition. Both combatted deep-seated stereotypes and that raise emotional reactions. Both forced people to rethink the most fundamental relationship in our society, the family.

3. Should Ford have pardoned Nixon? Why or why not?

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Ford’s pardon met with widespread disapproval. It was considered unfair because it cut off all further investigation and the public never got to find out what really happened. It also gave the appearance of a corrupt quid pro quo. It destroyed public confidence in Ford and linked him with Watergate, limiting the possible effectiveness of his presidency. As an attempt to disperse bitterness over Watergate, it failed.

4 Which was more scandalous: Iran-Contra or Watergate? Why?

In public perception, Watergate was clearly more scandalous. Nixon was reviled, and the public was outraged when Ford pardoned him. Numerous Watergate conspirators served jail time. Reagan’s reputation was somewhat tarnished by the Iran-Contra affair, but his level of involvement remained unclear. After the scandal, he was still loved, and even the individuals who were more explicitly involved in the affair faced less disapproval than those linked to Watergate.

In reality, Iran-Contra was far more treacherous. Whereas the Watergate break-in was nothing more than a political stratagem, Iran-Contra went against the Constitution and the will of Congress, subverted democracy in Nicaragua, contributed to thousands of deaths, and extended and exploited the detention and sufferings of the hostages.

**AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES**

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

This three-part series examines the history of American women from the nineteenth century to the present. Episodes focus on sexuality, politics, economics, and popular culture.

*Citizen Carter*, The Discovery Channel, 60 minutes.
This video presents a look at Jimmy Carter’s life after the presidency.

This PBS video examines Nixon’s policy on China.

*The American Experience* examines the life and presidency of Ronald Reagan.

This video examines Reagan’s rise to the presidency as a reflection of the emerging New Right.

*The Twentieth Century with Mike Wallace: The Iran-Contra Scandal*, The History Channel, 50 minutes.
The History Channel examines the scandal that failed to derail Ronald Reagan.
CLASS EXERCISES

1. Interview a friend or family member about his or her recollections of and reactions to the civil rights or antiwar protest movement of the 1960s, the Nixon administration, and the change in social mood from the intense public activism of the 1960s to the inward-looking privatism of the 1970s. Would the student agree with that description? If not, how do they explain it?

2. Students could be asked to interview two or three people, not necessarily family members, about the Kennedy Camelot years, the ‘68 Protests, the Watergate hearings, and the gasoline crisis. After the interviews, students could be asked to contrast the views of the events gained from the interviews to the general interpretation provided by the chapter. What accounts for the similarities and differences between the two?

3. Have students compare and contrast the riots of 1992 with urban unrest in 1919 and during the 1960s. What regions were affected during these events and who particularly was targeted during the violence and chaos? What was the social climate of each era, and how did racism incite or defend these events? Did these events have a lasting impact on race relations and American politics?

MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

- View the Closer Look: Watergate Shipwreck
- Watch the Video: Jimmy Carter, The “Crisis of Confidence” Speech (1979)
- Read the Document: Ronald Reagan, First Inaugural Address (1981)
- Watch the Video: Ronald Reagan on the Wisdom of the Tax Cut
- Read the Document: Ronald Reagan, the Air Traffic Controllers Strike
- View the Map: Conflict in Central America (1970–1998)
- Complete the Assignment: The Christian Right
- View the Map: The Middle East in the 1980s and 1990s
- Complete the Assignment: *Roe v. Wade*: The Struggle over Women’s Reproductive Rights
- Watch the Video: Oliver North Hearing
CHAPTER 32


CHAPTER OUTLINE

“THIS WILL NOT STAND”: FOREIGN POLICY IN THE POST–COLD WAR ERA

THE FIRST PRESIDENT BUSH

• Republicans at Home
• Ending the Cold War
• The Gulf War

THE CHANGING FACES OF AMERICA

• A People on the Move
• The Revival of Immigration
• Emerging Hispanics
• Advance and Retreat for African Americans
• Americans from Asia and the Middle East
• Assimilation or Diversity?

THE NEW DEMOCRATS

• The Election of 1992
• Clinton and Congress
• Scandal in the White House

CLINTON AND THE WORLD

• Old Rivals in New Light
• To Intervene or Not
• The Balkan Wars

REPUBLICANS TRIUMPHANT

• The Disputed Election of 2000
• George W. Bush at Home
• The War on Terror
• Widening the Battlefield
• Bush Reelected
BARACK OBAMA’S TRIUMPH AND TRIALS

• The Great Recession
• New Challenges and Old
• Doubting the Future

CONCLUSION: THE END OF THE AMERICAN FUTURE—OR NOT?

FEATURE ESSAY: AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH?

OPENING THEME

AMERICA, YEAR 2000

According to the United States Census Bureau, the population of the United States was exactly 281,421,906 at the time the 2000 census was completed. Although it will take a few more years to fully tabulate and report the data, there are tantalizing hints in the 2000 census that the United States is going through another demographic transformation.

The demographic history of the United States has always been unpredictable. Just when it seems that the nation is about to settle into a certain form, it experiences changes so profound that one might speak of a new America. In its earliest, most formative stage, the United States was a nation of young male farmers of British and German descent with a large minority of enslaved African Americans. The first great demographic change took place in the ethnic composition of the white population when a massive immigration of eastern and southern Europeans arrived around 1900. That “new immigration” coincided with the industrialization and urbanization of the nation, and by 1950 it seemed as if the United States was becoming a typically “post-industrial” society. Women had become a majority by 1945, and the population was aging. The “baby boom” of the 1950s reversed those trends for at least two decades, and it was not until 1980 that the United States resumed its way toward a predictable population profile. The median age increased from 30 in 1980 to 33 in 1990, and women were becoming an increasing majority in the older age categories. The birth rate had dipped below zero population growth and the decennial increase in the population was under 10% in the 1980s, the lowest rate of increase since the decade of the Great Depression.

It now seems, based on preliminary data from the latest census, that the United States began a new demography history in the 1990s, triggered again by the newest “new immigration.” The United States still receives people from every country on the globe, but the most important sources of immigration by far are Asia and Latin America. The percentage gains being made by Asians are spectacular, but their absolute numbers are still too small to make future trends safely predictable. It is the Hispanic part of the population that deserves most attention because it is already huge and rapidly increasing. Hispanics have become the nation’s largest minority, and the “white” and “black” segments of the
population are shrinking as a proportion of the whole. “Whites” have already become less than half the total population of California.

Aside from the growing size of the Hispanic population, the 2000 census is notable because it shows a surprising reversal of longstanding trends. The American population grew by more than 13% in the 1990s, which translates into an additional 33 million people, the largest decennial increase in the nation’s entire history, an especially surprising development considering the sluggish growth of the previous decade. Immigration, of course, accounted for much of the increase, but natural increase seems also to be a factor. The country is certainly becoming younger and more male, and may even be entering another “baby boom.”

Looked at superficially, the 2000 census makes it appear that the age-old trend of Americans to move south and west continues. The mythical population center of the United States shifted about 40 miles southwestward between 1990 and 2000, and now rests at Edgar Springs, Missouri. Examined in more detail, the 2000 census suggests that a surprising reversal in migratory patterns is about to begin. The population decline of the nation’s largest cities has finally ceased, and places like New York and San Francisco are now regaining people. Just as the growth of the Sunbelt was initially spurred by retirees in search of an easy climate, it may be that the big cities, with their public transportation systems, their abundance of cultural attractions, and their growing sense of personal safety, are just beginning to draw older people from the suburban sprawl that has become an especially serious problem in the desert southwest. It is a trend worth watching.

The 2000 census is still a work in progress, but it already hints that the American people continue their unpredictable ways.

“THIS WILL NOT STAND”: FOREIGN POLICY IN THE POST–COLD WAR ERA

The author begins with Saddam Hussein’s surprise invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. The president, George H.W. Bush, was caught off guard but quickly made the decision to expel the Iraqis, based primarily on the sense that the end of the Cold War would encourage small nations to settle regional quarrels by force now that such wars would not involve the US or the Soviet Union. Bush was willing to show that the United States, as the world’s only superpower, was willing to keep the peace.

THE FIRST PRESIDENT BUSH

Bush was elected president in 1998 because he had served eight years as Reagan’s vice president. Although he did not win reelection, he did score some major victories in his foreign policy.

. Republicans at Home

Bush continued Reagan’s policy of reducing the role of the federal government, but he had to intervene to bail out the banking system, and had agreed to raise taxes to bring
down the massive national debt of the Reagan era. In breaking his pledge not to raise
taxes, he angered Republicans, and never recovered his popularity.

. Ending the Cold War

Shortly after Bush’s inauguration, there was a major uprising in China against the
government, and the Soviet Union began to implode. Bush approached both
developments cautiously. He did not want to interfere with America’s growing trade
with China, nor did he want to see Russia sink into turmoil.

. The Gulf War

Bush responded to Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait by organizing an
international coalition that attacked the Iraqi forces occupying Kuwait. After air power
immobilized Saddam’s troops, a land assault was mounted that cleared Kuwait in just
100 hours. Bush, however, did not push on to Baghdad, so Saddam remained in power
and was a constant nuisance for years to come.

THE CHANGING FACES OF AMERICA

The two most dramatic demographic changes over the last twenty years have been the movement of the
population to the South and West and the arrival of immigrants from developing countries.

. A People on the Move

By 1980, a majority of Americans lived in the South and West, and in 1990, Los
Angeles passed Chicago as the nation’s second-largest city. Elderly, usually retired
people were an especially important part of the migration because they carried
considerable political clout. The Sunbelt was becoming both older and more
urbanized, creating both problems and opportunities.

. The Revival of Immigration

Immigration increased rapidly after Congress changed the law to encourage more
people from developing nations in 1965, but the numbers arriving in the 1990s reached
record highs, and there were at least another 8 million between 2000 and 2005.
Immigrants from Latin America made up a majority of the new arrivals, and they
tended to settle in the urbanized areas of such states as California, New York, and
Florida. The flood of immigrants, as usual, provoked debate about the future of the
nation.
Emerging Hispanics

“Hispanics,” those who came from Central America, South America, or the Caribbean, or who were the children of prior immigrants from those areas, became the nation’s largest ethnic minority in 2002. In general, they were young, poor, relatively uneducated, and willing to work for cheap wages. Concerns about the large numbers of Mexicans coming into California and the Southwest prompted Congress to take action. An amnesty was offered to those already in America illegally, but Congress promised to enforce the immigration laws more strictly in the future. That effort, however, failed to stop illegal immigrants from continuing to seek work in the United States.

Advance and Retreat for African Americans

For African Americans, the years after 1990 saw both progress and disappointment. More blacks were finishing high school and going on to college, and more blacks owned their own businesses, but blacks were still much poorer than whites and still more likely to spend time in prison. In many ways, blacks were still treated like second-class citizens, which explained much of the resentment that led to a riot in Los Angeles in 1991, in which over 50 people were killed, and to the laggard response to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005, which devastated the black community.

Americans from Asia and the Middle East

Asian Americans are at present the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States. They are in general well-educated and affluent, but some groups, especially refugees from Vietnam and Laos, are among the nation’s poorest people. Another rapidly growing ethnic group comes from the Middle East, especially from Arab countries. After 9/11, prejudice against Arab Americans ran high, but in general, Americans of Mideast origin have done well in America.

Assimilation or Diversity?

Those who considered immigration from Europe a good thing used the image of the melting pot to assuage fears that the arrival of foreigners would change the character of America. The melting-pot metaphor was never very accurate, however, and is no longer convincing in the face of immigration from Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. At present, the more soothing image is that of a symphony orchestra. Each instrument makes a different sound, but together they create harmony.
THE NEW DEMOCRATS

The Democrats realized that the country’s economic woes would hurt Bush’s chances for reelection, so there was a stubborn contest for the democratic nomination, which Bill Clinton, former governor of Arkansas, won.

. The Election of 1992

In the middle of Bush’s administration, the economy went into a recession that lingered for almost two years, and was therefore open to attack by Clinton and by H. Ross Perot, who mounted an on-off campaign in which he soundly berated Bush and the Republicans for running up the national debt. Clinton was attacked by the Republicans for his personal flaws, such as evading the draft during the Vietnam War, but his intelligence and charm, and his concentration on the economy, gave him a solid victory, even though he did not carry 50% of those who voted.

. Clinton and Congress

True to his campaign, Clinton made the economy his top priority, and adopted fiscally conservative measures; for instance, cutting spending and raising taxes. To make the U.S. more competitive, he endorsed a Republic measure, the North American Free Trade Agreement, which eliminated tariffs on trade between the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Nevertheless, Clinton was despised by Republicans, who took advantage of his supposed involvement in a crooked real-estate venture, “Whitewater,” to slander him. Under the leadership of Newt Gingrich, the Republicans won the congressional elections in 1999, and tried to make Clinton a lame duck. They finally overreached when they actually shut down the federal government, and Clinton was able to win reelection in 1996.

. Scandal in the White House

The special prosecutor assigned to investigate Whitewater, Kenneth Starr, could not make a case that Clinton had done anything improper, but he did discover that Clinton had been carrying on a sexual affair with a young White House intern. When Starr revealed the sordid story, the Republican House of Representatives tried to impeach the president, but merely disgusted the American people. The impeachment effort failed, but Clinton’s reputation was torn to shreds.

CLINTON AND THE WORLD

Like it or not, the American people had no choice but to be actively engaged in the world.
Old Rivals in a New Light

Clinton, like Bush, decided that a stable Russia was in the best interest of the U.S. and gave aid and support to Boris Yeltsin, and his successor, Vladimir Putin. He also negotiated successfully to get former Soviet states, like Ukraine, to completely give up their nuclear weapons. He also continued Bush’s policy of maintaining good relations with China despite its violation of human rights and sale of weapons to Iran.

To Intervene or Not

Clinton inherited a U.S. mission in Somalia that was designed to bring peace among warring factions, but allowed the mission to evolve into an attempt at nation building. In an effort to take out one of the warlords, two American helicopters were shot down, and the convoy sent to rescue the crews was attacked. Clinton responded by pulling the troops out. In Haiti, Clinton’s effort to have an elected president installed succeeded, but the country remained painfully poor.

The Balkan Wars

As the former Yugoslavia broke up, ethnic feuds flared into full-scale wars, mainly between Serbs and Muslims, which usually degenerated into slaughters. To stop the Serbs from massacring Muslims, Clinton used air strikes in 1995 to force a cease fire, the Dayton Accords. In the meantime, the Serbs were fighting a brutal war against an independence movement in Kosovo. Clinton again used air power to force the Serbs into retreat in 1999, after which Kosovo became independent.

REPUBLICANS TRIUMPHANT

The Democrats were optimistic going into the presidential election of 2000 because the economy was in excellent shape, but the results shocked them.

The Disputed Election of 2000

The Democratic nominee, Al Gore, who had served as Clinton’s vice president for eight years, was tarred by that association. His opponent, George Bush, son of the 41st president and governor of Texas, appealed to the Republican base, especially to the Christian Right. The campaign was complicated by the decision of Ralph Nader, the consumer advocate, to run as the Green Party candidate. When the balloting was over on election night, Gore had a majority of the popular vote, but not enough votes in the electoral college to be elected. The decision would ultimately depend on Florida, where the vote was extremely close. When it was finally awarded to Bush, Gore asked for a partial recount, and the Republicans went to court to block him. The result was a series of rulings by the Florida Supreme Court to conduct a statewide recount, but that
decision was overturned by the United States Supreme Court in a 5-4 decision. The
election demonstrated how divided the American people were by geography, class,
gender, and race.

. George W. Bush at Home

Having inherited a shrinking national debt, and determined to cut taxes, Bush
successfully argued in 2001 that the money the government collected properly
belonged to the people and should be restored to them. Congress enacted a massive tax
reduction. When the economy suddenly went into recession in 2001 and the national
debt began to climb, Bush argued that taxes should be cut again to provide an
incentive to spend, and Congress agreed. Bush’s other main legislative achievement
was an education reform, No Child Left Behind, that mandated constant testing by the
nation’s schools to see which were performing and which were failing.

. The War on Terror

On September 11, 2001, terrorists crashed planes into the twin towers of the World
Trade Center in New York City and into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., killing
over 3,000 persons. It was quickly known that the operation had been organized by al-
Qaeda, a network headed by Osama bin Laden, who had already attacked American
interests around the world. He was being given refuge in Afghanistan by the
government there, so the Bush administration immediately decided that the America
would topple that government. With solid support from the world community, Bush
used air power and an alliance with local warlords to install a new government in
Kabul, but Osama bin Laden was not captured or killed. At home, Bush responded to
9/11 by creating a new Department of Homeland Security and by persuading Congress
to pass a “patriot act,” giving the federal government extensive powers to investigate
suspected terrorists. Passed easily, the legislation soon raised concerns about the
erosion of civil liberties.

. Widening the Battlefield

Even before 9/11, Bush adopted an activist, unilateral foreign policy, but after 9/11, he
adopted the role international arbiter and proclaimed that he had sufficient authority to
attack countries like Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, the “axis of evil.” To back up his
words, Bush asked Congress for more money for the armed forces, and began to
prepare the American people for an invasion of Iraq by claiming that Saddam Hussein
had a large arsenal of biological, chemical, and even nuclear weapons. Congress
authorized the use of force, but the UN, allowed to send inspectors back to Iraq, could
not find evidence that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. When France and
Russia threatened to veto UN authorization for the war, Bush proceeded anyway. In
March 2003 the invasion began with a sudden air strike, followed by a thrust by
American and British infantry and armor. Baghdad quickly fell, and, in December
2003 Saddam Hussein was captured, but no weapons of mass destruction were found, Iraq fell into anarchy, and insurgents began to attack the American occupation forces. Even worse were signs that the different religious and ethnic groups in Iraq were beginning to fight one another, raising fears of a civil war, with American troops caught in the middle.

Bush Reelected

In 2004 Bush ran as a resolute commander-in-chief who would keep the country safe against terrorist attacks. His opponent, John Kerry, a decorated veteran of the Vietnam War, ran close, but Bush won both the popular and electoral vote. The Republicans also strengthened their hold on Congress. Flushed with victory, Bush made “reform” of Social Security his top priority, but he was unable to persuade the people, or even the Republican Congress, to follow him. At the same time, the news from Iraq continued to be discouraging, and by 2006, a great majority of the American people wanted to see their troops brought home.

BARACK OBAMA’S TRIUMPH AND TRIALS

The American people faced a host of problems as the new century started. The real estate bubble of the early twenty-first century burst in 2007, causing panic and decline in the financial markets. The troubled economy was one of the reasons Americans elected Democrat Barack Obama, the first African American president, in 2008.

The Great Recession

As major lenders such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac approached bankruptcy, the Bush administration created a bailout package, consisting of billions of dollars, to save these institutions and others Wall Street firms that were on the brink of collapse. Americans felt insecure and looked for a change of leadership. With a message of hope and an optimistic outlook, Obama defeated Republican candidate John McCain in the 2008 presidential election.

However, Obama was not able to speedily reverse the recession. In spite of Obama’s economic stimulus package, unemployment grew to 10 percent in 2009. He was, however, able to pass a comprehensive health care reform bill that would insure nearly all Americans, and was also able to find and assassinate Osama bin Laden, the leader of al Qaeda and the mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks.

New Challenges and Old

Issues such as the federal deficit, abortion rights, gay rights, and affirmative action were constant topics during this period. The fight between science and religion also
resumed, with opponents of evolution pushing for public schools to teach “intelligent
design” (the new term for creationism) rather than evolution.

.Doubting the Future

The future seems no brighter than the present. It is becoming harder for the present
generation to believe that their children would have richer lives, or that such programs
as Social Security will exist in the future. Among other problems, the national debt is
becoming increasingly held by foreign nations, health care costs are rising, illegal
immigration shows no signs of slowing, the price of oil continues to increase, and
climate change seems more and more dangerous.

CONCLUSION: THE END OF THE AMERICAN FUTURE—OR NOT?

Americans live in the most powerful nation on earth, yet feel extraordinarily vulnerable. There is no
agreement on fundamental values, or on what the future of the country should be. It is likely that young
people today will not be better off than their parents. History teaches us that Americans have faced
tremendous problems in the past. Sometimes they have risen to the challenge of solving them, but
sometimes they have failed to do so. It is still too early to say how this generation of Americans will
respond to its challenges.

FEATURE ESSAY: AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH?

Al Gore, the Democratic candidate for president in 2000, made climate change a major political issue
with his film, An Inconvenient Truth (2007). The issue of climate change became a divisive political
force in the twenty-first century. Although scientists have produced an abundance of evidence that the
Earth’s climate is changing as a result of human activity, many Americans remain skeptical—a
situation that is reminiscent of the Scopes trial and controversies over evolution. Many Americans have
made changes in their lives to reduce their carbon footprint, but others continue to deny the problem or
to take steps to address it. The issue of climate change joins health care and Social Security as the most
important issues in the election of 2012.

LECTURE TOPICS

Compare and contrast recent trends in American immigration with the New Immigration of the late
nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Consider the following:

a. Compare the two statistically. How many immigrants came into the country during
these two periods, and what percentage of American population growth was accounted
for by immigrant population during the two periods?

b. Compare the impact of immigration on cities during these two periods. Which aspects
of the impact are similar? Which are different?

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c. Compare the native-born American response to the influx of foreign population during both periods. Again, to what extent was the response similar? To what extent was it different?

Continue the assessment of modern southern presidents with a look at Bill Clinton. How does his political style and agenda reflect his southern roots? How does he compare to Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter, earlier southern presidents of the post–World War II era? Considering issues discussed, is Clinton a reflection of the extent to which the South has been incorporated into the nation, or is he a reflection of the extent to which southern politics have taken on a national appeal? Finally, consider whether George W. Bush is a southern president: he came to the presidency after serving as governor of Texas, but his family and educational roots are firmly planted in New England. Whether Bush himself is or is not “southern,” what does his presidency say about the continuing political evolution of the South?

DISCUSSION TOPICS (Broad Based/Theory)

During the study of modern American history, students have regularly evaluated the debate regarding individual versus social responsibility for the welfare of American citizens. Review the progress of this debate from the Progressive era through the Depression era, the 1960s, the Reagan era, and finally today. Have Americans made progress toward resolving this issue? Have students voice their opinions about whether they think the source of social stability lies more in the strength of each individual or in the responsibility assumed by the community.

Have students discuss the impact of the end of the Cold War on the future of American diplomacy. Review the major trends in modern American diplomatic history, including the imperialism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the moral diplomacy of the world war eras, and the Cold War policy of the post-1945 era. What have been some of the challenges facing the United States as it attempts to develop a new foreign policy? Has the United States continued to organize its foreign policy around the idea of “good guys” and “bad guys”? Has it continued to define foreign policy morally, or has the United States embraced a more pragmatic approach to foreign policy? Has the war in Iraq shed new light on American foreign policy? Ask students what they see as the role of the United States in the global affairs of the twenty-first century.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (Specific)

Discuss the intricacies of generational politics in modern America. A number of current authors have set forth the potential for conflict among the three major adult generations represented in American society today: the World War II generation, the baby boomers, and Generation X. Point out the distinctive historical contexts into which each of these generations was born. Demonstrate how these different historical contexts define each generation’s political, economic, social, and cultural agenda. Have students identify the potential for conflict among the generations as America moves forward in the twenty-first century.
Have students discuss the impeachment of Bill Clinton. You can revisit issues discussed earlier in the course regarding the personal sphere versus the political sphere. Why was Clinton impeached? How did his personal life figure into the events? Compare this impeachment to the impeachment of Andrew Johnson. Are there differences? Similarities? Have students consider the importance of partisanship in both cases of impeachment.

This and previous chapters have discussed “culture wars” and value conflicts within the United States. Have students investigate such conflicts globally rather than as a national issue. Describe the global culture wars that exist in the world today. Why did the events of 9/11 happen? Why are there many nations in the world today that feel resentment and anger toward the United States? What are the most promising ways for the United States to respond to challenges to its global role and image?

CONNECTING TO THE PAST

The advent of portable television cameras means that every significant event is now videotaped. When John Kennedy was shot in 1963, the tragedy was filmed by only one person, an amateur using a home-movie camera. When Ronald Reagan was shot on March 30, 1981, the entire sequence happened on television. The fact that cameramen from the major news media were present at the scene is instructive. Reagan had driven from the White House to a downtown hotel to deliver a routine, inconsequential speech. After the speech, he left the hotel and had only to walk the width of a sidewalk to reach the safety of his bulletproof limousine. The chances that anything would happen were exceedingly slim, yet a pool of reporters, the “death watch,” was on hand just in case. It must have cost millions of feet of tape and thousands of wasted hours of watchful waiting, but the film of the attempted assassination is truly astonishing. We see Reagan’s look of puzzlement as he is struck by a bullet; we see Secret Service agent Timothy McCarthy leap into the line of fire and take a bullet in the chest; we see the gunman smothered and subdued; and we see three bodies bleeding on the pavement as the President’s car speeds away.

What the media does for the powerful and famous, the personal recording device does for the average person. In the future, no baby will be born, no child will be baptized or bar mitzvahed, no couple will be married, nobody will bowl 300 or make a hole-in-one, no person will be promoted or retired, and perhaps none of us will die, without the occasion being recorded. What we did once, we will do again and again in replay, in freeze-frame or slow motion, in living color. The task of CONNECTING TO THE PAST, which once required a historian’s labor and imagination, will be reduced to pushing a few buttons. In the future, the past will be always with us.

POINTS OF MASTERY

Identify the Sunbelt and explain the transformation of this region since the 1970s. Specifically discuss the importance of the defense economy to the region’s economic growth.

List the national urban areas that have been most impacted by modern-day immigration.
Identify the players and issues involved in the American “culture wars” between political and religious conservatism and liberalism.

Describe the impact of modern immigration on the racial and ethnic mix in the United States.

Comment on the roots and significance of the Rodney King riot in Los Angeles.

Discuss the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as a symbol of continuing inequalities in America.

Identify the major candidates and key issues involved in the presidential election of 1992.

Identify Newt Gingrich and discuss the effectiveness of the Republican challenge to the Clinton administration in 1995.

Identify NAFTA and explain the significance of its approval to American economic policy.

Explain the circumstances surrounding the Whitewater and Monica Lewinsky scandals during the Clinton administration, and explain the circumstances surrounding the impeachment of Bill Clinton.

Discuss Hillary Rodham Clinton’s roles—both official and symbolic—in Bill Clinton’s presidency.

Explain how NATO redefined itself during the 1990s.

Explain Slobodan Milosevic’s policies in Kosovo.

Explain the events and controversies of the election of 2000.

Offer several examples of ways in which the policies of the George W. Bush administration have swung domestic politics to the right.

Provide an overview of the Bush administration’s pre–September 11, 2001 approach to foreign affairs.

Explain why there were worldwide protests against the World Trade Organization.

Discuss the impact of September 11, 2001 on American domestic policy.

Explain the rationale for, and results of, U.S. military actions in Afghanistan.

Explain the rationale for, and results of, U.S. military actions in Iraq.

Understand the challenges that have been presented to affirmative action as well as the potential impact of abandoning this policy.

Explain how the Great Recession has impacted Barack Obama’s presidency.
Discuss Obama’s successes and failures in foreign and domestic affairs.

SAMPLE RESPONSES TO CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Was the first President Bush lucky or skillful in ending the Cold War so successfully?

President Bush was lucky that the Communist governments in eastern Europe collapsed. He had only been in office a few months before the collapses became apparent. The processes were not the result of U.S. actions or policy; they were internal to the separate countries. On the other hand, President Bush was skillful enough to avoid pushing any of the former Soviet Republics back under the Soviet umbrella.

2. What do the internal migration to the Sunbelt and the immigration to America from other countries have in common?

A flourishing defense industry attracted workers to the Sunbelt. The possibility of economic prosperity and greater quality of life similarly attracted immigrants from other countries.

3. Do you think President Clinton should have been convicted on his impeachment charges?

The initial investigation of the president was unwarranted and partisan, as was the continued investigation into the president’s sexual misconduct. In the course of this overzealous prosecution, the president did appear to lie under oath. However, the history of the investigation, in addition to the personal nature of the scandal, made many people deem it inappropriate for governmental redress. The charges against Clinton should not have proceeded as far as they did, certainly not to impeachment. The prosecution wasted time and money and crossed a boundary between public and private that did not win the favor of the American people.

4. Many people thought the outcome of the 2000 election was a violation of democracy. Do you?

The Florida election was undemocratic. Voters were strategically removed from the rolls by the state elections board and local election officials. The ballots received weren’t fully considered. The Supreme Court decision to halt the recount was partisan and fraudulent, and the court virtually admitted so when it said that its decision was not intended ever to be used as a precedent. Additionally, the Ohio election was undemocratic, and Ohio election officials have gone to jail; however, the election results remain.

5. Are you optimistic about America’s future, or pessimistic? Why?

Optimistic, because America has always had ups and downs and has survived and changed in response to new challenges.

Pessimistic, because our economy is in the doldrums, the world economy is worse, our military is overwhelmed in Afghanistan, and we face a future threatened by war, terror, and exploitative
globalization. Because of globalization, other countries are positioned to gain economically the same way that the United States gained economically following World War II. U.S. politics are controlled by massive international corporations, the interests of which shape U.S. policy. The middle class is declining, as is the quality of public education and the country’s infrastructure. To prosper and succeed in the coming years, America must adopt new policies to protect and support its workers, grow its domestic industries, and offer opportunities for all. America changed and grew under Lincoln, Wilson, and FDR; it can change and grow again in response to these challenges.

AUDIO/VISUAL RESOURCES

Suggested Documentaries and Films:

*First Lady on the Front Line*, A&E Video, 50 minutes.
A&E examines the life and future of Hillary Rodham Clinton—one of the most provocative first ladies in American history.

*NOVA: Why the Towers Fell*, PBS Video, 60 minutes.
This NOVA special, investigating why the World Trade Center towers fell, includes interviews with survivors of the attack as well as with rescue personnel who were on the scene.

*The Twentieth Century with Mike Wallace: The Persian Gulf War*, The History Channel, 50 minutes.
This video examines the first George Bush’s efforts against Saddam Hussein.

CLASS EXERCISES

1. Have students compare and contrast the two major economic revolutions of modern American history. How does the modern transition from an industrial economy to a service, a technology, and an information economy compare to the late nineteenth century transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy? Consider the following issues:
   a. The challenges presented to those working in the old economic sector. How have people who were trained and positioned for success in declining economies been brought into emerging economies?
   b. The impact on the size and location of major national urban centers. How did the changing economy define the regions that would prosper and the regions that would decline?
   c. The impact of the change on personal values and beliefs. How did economic revolution revolutionize social philosophy and religious faith?
   d. The impact on the position of the United States in the global economy. Did the economic revolution strengthen the economic position of the United States, weaken it, or simply redefine it?

2. Have students assess the power of the media in politics today. Are the roles, responsibilities, and power of “traditional” media different from those of “new” media (websites, blogs, and
other computer-based media)? To what extent has the media determined who was elected as the United States president over the last 30 years? A number of different approaches may be taken. Students may look at selected presidential campaigns of the last 30 years and determine the extent to which media coverage impacted the result. They may also choose selected political personalities and demonstrate how these individuals used the media to build political support for their agendas. This would work well as a group project.

MYHISTORYLAB MEDIA ASSIGNMENTS

• View the Closer Look: Opening the Wall, Berlin
• Read the Document: George Bush, Address to the nation on the Persian Gulf (1991)
• Read the Document: Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996
• Watch the Video: Bill Clinton Sells Himself to America
• Read the Document: Bill Clinton, Answers to the Articles of Impeachment
• View the Closer Look: World Trade Center, Sept. 11, 2001
• Complete the Assignment: The Battle of Seattle
• Read the Document: George W. Bush, Address to Congress (September 20, 2001)
• Watch the Video: The Historical Significance of the 2008 Election