Instructor's Resource Manual
to accompany
DIVINE · BREEN · FREDRICKSON · WILLIAMS · GROSS · BRANDS
AMERICA: PAST AND PRESENT
Seventh Edition

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Preface

This Instructor's Resource Manual is designed to make your teaching life easier, although it is neither possible nor desirable to make that life too easy. Teaching, especially in the liberal arts, is a unique challenge that demands a highly individual response. Whether you respond by challenging your students' intellects or by evoking certain emotions, students will probably always remember those aspects of American history that you, in some way, made exciting. The rich narrative of AMERICA: PAST AND PRESENT, Seventh Edition, will help you create this sort of memorable excitement in the classroom, and we hope this Instructor's Resource Manual will suggest some other ways you can make history memorable for your students.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The scholars who wrote America: Past and Present are among the most active and interesting historians now working in American history. Each author has provided a short personal statement of his approach to history and historiography. We think these statements will prove especially useful to you should you wish to add an historiographical dimension to your use of the text. We believe, too, that these statements testify to the collegiality that exists between you and the authors. Physical distance and the impersonality of the printed page may obscure the truth, but you and the authors are bound together in an important enterprise: the education of the citizens of a free republic.

TOWARD DISCUSSION

Since textbooks must be inclusive, each chapter covers a great amount of material. You may wish at some times to go into greater depth, especially on key concepts and topics. We have attempted to give you a start in that direction by adding an interpretive essay for each chapter. It is not the purpose of these essays to add to the factual data contained in the text. Rather, these essays are meant to form a solid foundation for your own lecture or discussion.

RELIVING THE PAST

Too many students think of history as "just dates." They never come to realize that people in the past actually lived, loved, laughed, hoped, slept, ate, and suffered toothaches. We have therefore included for each chapter a pair of anecdotes and references to either biographical or primary sources that will help students see beyond the haze of dates and facts. From the vast repertoire on the past, we have selected those scenes that are dramatic, colorful, and illustrative, in order to impress upon your students the reality of the men and women they read about in the text. If such a technique interests you, the references we cite can act as a handy bibliography of the most accessible printed first-hand accounts of the American past.

Starting with this edition, the bibliography for each chapter will list relevant websites where you will find an abundance of primary sources useful to you in your lesson preparations, and to your students in doing term papers.
SUMMARY

The heart of this Instructor's Resource Manual is its summary of the text. The summary contains the major and minor headings within each chapter so that you may refresh your memory by merely scanning the Instructor's Resource Manual. The summary, of necessity, omits much that is important in the text. We hope that we have touched on all of the most important points, but much of the illustrative material and all of the anecdotes and quotations that enforce these points and give life to the material have had to be excluded from the summary. We suggest that you first read the text, noting its main points according to your own system, and then read the Instructor's Resource Manual summary. In a sense, it would be as if you and a colleague had both read the same material and were comparing notes. You will probably prefer your own reading of the chapter, but now and then the Instructor's Resource Manual summary may lead you to give greater stress to a particular point.
Professor Breen received his Ph.D. from Yale University in 1968, where he taught for several years before taking a position at Northwestern University, where he is now the William Smith Mason Professor of American History. Colonial history has always attracted an abundance of excellent scholars, but Breen has distinguished himself by the breadth of his scholarly interests, his willingness to span disciplines and his imaginative use of sources. He has taken on the most fundamental questions in early American history and has produced some of the most provocative and interesting interpretations of the nation's origins. In *The Character of the Good Ruler*, an examination of Puritan political philosophy, he addressed the problem of how Europeans became Americans. In *Myne Own Ground*, coauthored with Stephen Innes, he examined the relationship between racism and slavery and in *Tobacco Culture* he uncovered the moral meaning that indebtedness had for the Virginian gentry. Last year, he culminated his study of the cultural and psychological aspect of the consumer revolution of the late eighteenth century with the publication of *Common Goods*. Most recently, he has become interested in the case of a young African American executed in Massachusetts for murder in 1763, an incident he has developed into an opera.

Below is Professor Breen's statement of his aims as an historian and as the author of the first section of *America: Past and Present*:

In my section, I felt it particularly important to avoid interpreting events as foreshadowing things to come: The Native Americans and blacks did not know in 1650 what the nineteenth century or Warren Court would bring; the seventeenth–century settlers were not planning the Revolution; and the farmers of early America were not simple folk waiting for the advance of industrialization, modernization, or professionalization. I attempted to reconstruct the experiences of men and women within an historical context that they themselves would have comprehended and appreciated. It is only through this richly textured human perspective that the student can begin to understand the meaning of Puritanism, the dynamics of race relations or of the early American family. I wanted the readers of *America: Past and Present* to realize that people in historical situations made choices about their lives. They were not unthinking victims of economic forces beyond their control. To be sure, some individuals were more vulnerable than were others, but even the lowliest slave participated in a complex cultural dialogue, a conversation, with those around him. Traditions were preserved, dignity maintained, little personal victories achieved; I tried to present the student not with a social history of statistics or abstractions,
but with rather humble men and women who were not too different from themselves. For out of this approach, I believe, comes toleration, an understanding that people in the past have not been evil, simple, stupid, racist, sexist, or elitist. They merely attempted to interpret their existences out of the pieces of shared learning and experience that were available at a particular time. As you can see, I do not greatly concern myself with “turning points.” Such historical makers often make more sense to modern historians than they would have to Puritans or Revolutionaries. Nor, for that matter, do I maintain that some vast impersonal, Hegelian force drove the engine of history. There is no meaningful past separated from the consciousness of the historical actors themselves. People chose to migrate to America; they decided to enslave other human beings; they sparked a revolution. Nothing about these great events was inevitable. Even after Lexington and Concord, men and women were free to remain part of the British Empire. Indeed, many did so. The excitement of studying history comes from a deeper sensitivity to the choices that different men and women actually made.

I do not think I have been “influenced” by any particular school of history. I have learned a great deal from men like Edmund S. Morgan, C. Vann Woodward, and J. H. Hexter. They urged me to ask fresh questions, to get the story right, and to appreciate the beauty of clear English prose.
CHAPTER 1

NEW WORLD ENCOUNTERS

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 Indians, 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. Indians 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 Indians 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 may 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, not Asia, but islands like the Canaries and Azores. He may 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 may make the Spanish seem more bloodthirsty in intention than they really were.

The second interesting aspect of contact literature is how the Europeans, Indians, 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,” “male and female.” One of the most potent of these couples is “self and other.” It is argued 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. Since we usually impart values to the distinctions we make, the “Other” is never an equal. The “Other” is either vastly superior or grossly inferior, a god or a devil.
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 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 their mental universe, 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 author of Chapter 1 uses modern literary theory throughout the text, most notably when he explains that the English who came to America felt a need to fit the Indians into a proper mental category. For the English, the most relevant “Other” was the “savage Irish” who resisted English colonization. The consequence of this mental operation was tragedy. By anticipating Indian hostility, the English provoked it.

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 upon 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 Indians of 1492 have already met our “Other.”

RELIVING 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, but for 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, Maine: International Marine Publishing Company, 1987). The log itself is fascinating, and Fuson goes into the controversy over which island in the Bahamas was the one the Indians called Guanahani and Columbus called San Salvador.

One of the most dramatic encounters in American history was the meeting between Hernan 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 Cortes by the arm and stopped him, explaining that an embrace would greatly insult the emperor. That small episode epitomizes the difficulties Europeans and Indians had in cross-cultural

**CLASH OF CULTURES: THE MEANING OF 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 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 American Indians 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. 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 Indians who hunted them turned increasingly to growing crops, bringing about an Agricultural Revolution.

B. Mysterious Disappearances

Agriculture allowed Indians 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.

C. 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.

B. 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.

A. 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 Indians failed.

A. Threats to Survival: Trade and Disease

Wherever Indians and Europeans came into contact, they exchanged ideas, goods, crops, technologies, etc. Part of this “Columbian Exchange” included the transmission of diseases, like smallpox and measles. As a result, the Indian population declined rapidly. The rate of depopulation along the Atlantic coast may have been as high as 95 percent. An entire way of life disappeared.

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. As elsewhere, West Africa had seen the rise and fall of empires, such as Ghana or 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 came first, pioneering the sea lanes from Europe to sub-Saharan Africa in the fifteenth century. They found profit in gold and slaves, 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 five and one-half million were taken away. Altogether, Africa lost almost eleven 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 the 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 in order to establish outposts across the Atlantic.

Just as necessary to colonization was the advance 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 reexamined and the printing press disseminated the 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 of fighting Moorish rule, she had become a unified nation-state under Ferdinand and Isabella. In 1492, the year made famous by Columbus' discovery of America, Spain expelled her Jews and Muslims in a crusade to obliterate all non-Christian elements in Spanish life. Spain had also experienced the difficulties of colonization in her conquest of the Canary Islands before turning her attention to America.

A. Myths and Realities

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.
B. 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 decimated the major Caribbean islands, where most of the Indians died from exploitation and disease. The Spaniards then moved onto the mainland and continued the work of conquest. Hernan Cortes destroyed the Aztec Empire in 1521 and the conquest of South America followed in the next two decades.

C. 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 Indians (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 Indian rights and by performing mass conversions. By 1650, about half a million Spaniards immigrated to the New World. Since 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 a 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 the Crown. 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.

A. 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.

**B. 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.

**C. A 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.

**D. 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.

**IRISH REHEARSAL FOR AMERICAN SETTLEMENT**

Each nation took along its own peculiar traditions and perceptions for the task of colonizing America. For the English, Ireland was used as a laboratory in which the techniques of conquest were tested.

**A. English Conquest of Ireland**

The English went into Ireland convinced that theirs was a superior way of life. The Irish, of course, disagreed and refused to change their own ways.
B. English Brutality

When the English seized Irish land by force, the Irish resisted. The English resorted to massacres of women and children. In Ireland, men like Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Richard Grenville learned the techniques of colonization that they would later apply in America.

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 North Carolina. The effort failed, despite Raleigh's continued attempts to reinforce it, and by 1600 there were no English settlements in the Western Hemisphere.

CONCLUSION: MARKETING DREAMS

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.
CHAPTER 2

CONFLICTING VISIONS: ENGLAND’S SEVENTEENTH CENTURY COLONIES

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 four million people in 1600, yet they 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, lay the foundation for today'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 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.

**RELIVING 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 Indians and rescued from imminent death by the Indian 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 Holland 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).

**PROFIT AND PIETY: COMPETING BLUEPRINTS 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 left behind the colony of Virginia, England's first successful effort in America.
A. 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.

B. 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 by 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.

C. “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,” a grant 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.

D. 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 Indian 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 one of the mortality statistics.

E. 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 grabbing of Indian lands so that more and more tobacco could be grown were the themes of early Virginia history.
F. 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. He 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 rise up in 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 Indian 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.

A. “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 should 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.

B. “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.

C. Limits of Religious Dissent

In order 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 too was expelled and went to Rhode Island.
D. Mobility and Division

Massachusetts Bay spawned four other colonies: New Hampshire, New Haven, Connecticut and Rhode Island. Of them, 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' 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.

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.

A. 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 Indies 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 Indies 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.

B. 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.

A. 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.

B. 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 their 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.

C. 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. Penn at one time 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.
A. 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.

B. 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 an hereditary elite while at the same time 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, a phenomenon that historians have to explain.
CHAPTER 3

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS: OPPORTUNITY AND OPPRESSION IN COLONIAL SOCIETY

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 be in turn 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 ten 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 importantly, 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 to morality, fastened slavery upon 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.

RELIVING THE PAST

The most interesting event 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
document is: Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, editors, *Salem-Village Witchcraft: A
Documentary Record of Local Conflict in Colonial New England* (Belmont, California:

The most dramatic moment in the rebellions of the late seventeenth century came when
Nathaniel Bacon marched with an army into Jamestown, Virginia, and confronted Governor
William Berkeley. Thomas Mathew, an eyewitness, described in vivid detail Bacon's
gesticulations and Berkeley's grand gesture when he opened his coat and dared Bacon to shoot
him. Mathew's account, “The Beginning, Progress, and Conclusion of Bacon's Rebellion,
1675-1676,” is in Charles M. Andrews (ed.), *Narratives of the Insurrections, 1675-1690*
(New York: Barnes and Noble, 1915 reprint). This volume is one in a series well worth browsing
through: J. Franklin Jameson (ed.), *Original Narratives of Early American History.*

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 were all
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 comprised 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.

A. 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 may have “invented” grandparents, who gave
an additional measure of stability to society.
B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

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.

A. 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 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, may 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. 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 in order to fill the places of the Indians who had been decimated and the European indentured servants who did not come in sufficient numbers.

**A. Roots of Slavery**

The English colonies in America received only a small percentage of the eight to eleven 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.
B. Constructing African American Identities

The slave experience differed from place to place. Some Africans lived in societies where they never saw a white, while 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 upon them and occasionally rose up in arms, as in 1739, when blacks killed several whites at Stono, South Carolina. Such rebellions, though 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.

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.

A. 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.

B. An Empire of 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.

**FACTION SPARKS 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.

**A. 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.

**B. The Glorious Revolution in the Bay Colony**

The Puritans found it hard to adjust to English regulations. A series of setbacks, including a devastating Indian 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.

**C. 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.

D. 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.
CHAPTER 4

EXPERIENCE OF EMPIRE: EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 the television set or shopping mall is, 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 defined as 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 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 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 like 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, 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.
RELIVING 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 described above is in the Colonial Series, volume 1.

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

The author uses the journal kept by the wealthy Virginian, William Byrd, during his tour of the “back country” to illustrate several key developments discussed in this chapter: 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 “back country,” an 800 mile fringe of territory west of the seaboard, populated by Native Americans.

A. 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.
B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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 Indians moved into the trans-Appalachian region, a “middle ground” where no colonial power was yet established, and where Indians could play Europeans against one another. In this middle ground, remnants of different Indian peoples regrouped and formed new nations that successfully interacted with each other and with Europeans. In time, however, the lure of European goods encouraged Indians to deal individually with traders, thus weakening collective resistance to European aggression.

SPANISH BORDERLANDS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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

A. Conquering the Northern Frontier

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

B. 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 Indians 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.

A. 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 to 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.

B. American Enlightenment

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.

B. Benjamin Franklin

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.

C. 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 of 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. Inter-colonial 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.

**A. 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.

**B. The Voice of Popular 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, discovered how different they were from the English people.

**A. 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.
B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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 inter-colonial association and cooperation.
A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

E. 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.
CHAPTER 5

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: FROM GENTRY PROTEST TO POPULAR REVOLT, 1763-1783

TOWARD DISCUSSION

TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

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 raise 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 is a tax, or a fine for littering the highway, or an entrance fee to a national park. 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 non-electors were so bound together that the men in Parliament could not pass a law that hurt the non-electors 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 the all subjects of the British Crown, but British rights did not extend to Poles or Germans or Africans, nor 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 Virginian 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**.

**RELIVING 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), pp. 83--86.

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).

**RETHINKING THE MEANING OF EQUALITY**

The author begins with an episode in which militiamen of the “common sort” behaved disrespectfully in the elegant home of their officer, a Virginian aristocrat. The incident introduces the theme of this chapter: 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.

A. 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.

B. No Taxation Without Representation: The American Perspective

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

C. 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 upon 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.

A. 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 American ignored it.

B. Popular Protest

The Stamp Act united the gentry and the mass of the population. The protest spilled into the streets, and groups of workingmen, 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.

C. Failed Attempts to Save the Empire

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 upon English officials in America as alien representatives of a foreign government.

D. Fueling the Crisis

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 in order 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.

E. Fatal Show of Force

In the midst of the controversy over the Townshend taxes, the English government, in order 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.

E. Last Days of the Old Order, 1770-1773

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, while 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.

F. 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, from the seating of the First Continental Congress in September 1774 to the decision for independence in July 1776.

A. 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.

B. Beginning “The World Over Again”

The Second Continental Congress took charge of the little army that had emerged around Boston by appointing George Washington 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 upon 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 not only of occupying terrain, but also that of crushing the spirit of a whole people. Washington, on the other hand, realized that America would eventually win independence if only he could keep his army intact.

A. 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.

B. “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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

E. 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.
CHAPTER 6

THE REPUBLICAN EXPERIMENT

TOWARD DISCUSSION

“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.

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

**RELIVING THE PAST**

The men who wrote the Constitution seem to us today almost like demigods, 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? Now, it seems natural to have one person serve for four years, but reading through the debates helps to remind us that while 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: 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). Eliot 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.

**A NEW MORAL ORDER**

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 A REPUBLICAN CULTURE**

Americans 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 may seem tame in comparison with others, changed American society in unexpected ways.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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 daily practiced. Women became more assertive in divorcing undesirable mates and in opening their own businesses. Nevertheless, they were still denied their political and legal rights.

D. Postponing Full Liberty

Although the Revolution did not entirely abolish slavery or give equal rights to women, it did introduce into American life an ideology of freedom and equality that inspired future generations.

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.

A. 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.
B. 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.

C. Power to the People

Massachusetts developed a procedure for constitution making 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 in order to fight the war for independence, an effort that required a highly coordinated effort.

A. Articles of Confederacy

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.

B. Western Lands: 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.

C. 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.
In order to capitalize quickly on its treasure in land, Congress sold over six 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 was to 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.

A. The Nationalist Critique

The new government inherited an empty treasury and had to cope with massive economic problems, like runaway inflation and massive debts. Without the power to tax, the Articles Congress could not cope with the situation. A group of “nationalists,” like 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.

B. 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 benefitting 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.

A. The Genius of James Madison

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.

B. Constitutional Reform

During a convention held at Annapolis, Maryland, in 1786, the nationalists agreed to meet again in Philadelphia in order to scrap the Articles of Confederation and write a new constitution. Before the Philadelphia convention met, a tax protest in Massachusetts turned violent (Shays' 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.
E. 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 persons in the Senate, a victory for the small states.

F. Compromising with 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 of 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 had the problem of having it adopted in the state conventions.

A. 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.
CHAPTER 7

DEMOCRACY IN DISTRESS: THE VIOLENCE OF PARTY POLITICS, 1788-1800

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 asked to supply 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 in 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 may 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 almost certainly was intimate for years with Sally Hemings, with whom he probably 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 that Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence. He was one of Fortune's favorites.

RELIVING THE PAST

Final passage of Hamilton's financial program resulted from a political deal. Hamilton got assumption, and Virginia got the U.S. capital moved to the Potomac. 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 the better known. It may 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: 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).

**PARTISAN PASSIONS AND 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 upon ends, but differed about means.

**PRINCIPLES AND PRAGMATISM: ESTABLISHING GOVERNMENT**

George Washington was unanimously elected president in 1789 and gave the new government all the weight of his great reputation. It was assumed that everyone would work together for the common good and that the average voter would trust his “betters” to manage political affairs.

**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. 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, while 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 in order 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 U.S. capital on the Potomac River.

B. Interpreting the Constitution: The Bank Controversy

Hamilton also proposed that Congress charter a national bank. The bank, though 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 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.

C. Setback for Hamilton

Hamilton next asked Congress to enact a program favorable to manufacturing, but opposition had now grown 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.
A. 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 to America diplomat Edmond Genet, who 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.

B. 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.

C. 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 Indian raids on American settlements. The U.S. Army failed to defeat the Indians until the battle of Fallen Timbers (1794), which led to the Treaty of Greenville and Indian removal from what is now Ohio. While the Indians were in this desperate condition, the English deserted them and pulled back into Canada.

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 Indians. These offers resulted in the Treaty of San Lorenzo (Pinckney's Treaty).
POPULAR POLITICAL CULTURE

This section explains the vehemence of early political conflict, especially when newspapers brought politics into everyday conversation.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

E. 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. In 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.
CHAPTER 8

REPUBLICAN ASCENDANCY: THE JEFFERSONIAN VISION

TOWARD DISCUSSION

“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?

RELIVING 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).
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—ideally. 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.

A. 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.

B. Native American Resistance

The Indians stood in the way of westward movement and suffered the consequences. Defrauded and terrorized, some Indians 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 Indians.

C. 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.
A. 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, like John Quincy Adams, became Republicans.

B. The Louisiana Purchase

Americans had assumed that they would some day 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.
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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

EMBARRASSMENTS 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.

A. 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.

B. 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.
C. 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.

A. 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.
B. 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.
About the Author of Chapters 9-16

GEORGE M. FREDRICKSON

George Fredrickson received his Ph.D. degree in 1964 from Harvard University, where he taught before going to Northwestern University in 1966. In 1984 he was appointed Edgar E. Robinson Professor of United States History at Stanford University. Among the many honors he has been awarded, he has been the Harmsworth Professor of American History at Oxford University and President of the Organization of American Historians. His interests have always centered around the issues of slavery and racism. His dissertation, *The Inner Civil War*, published in 1965, examined the reaction of Northern intellectuals to the tragedy of the Civil War, and established him in the first rank of intellectual historians. He followed that book with works that described the differing perceptions of the character and destiny of African Americans between 1812 and the First World War. In 1981, he began publishing important works in comparative history, beginning with *White Supremacy*, a comparison of racism in the United States and South Africa. He has continued his twin interests in comparative history and racist ideology in such works as *The Arrogance of Race* (1988) and *The Comparative Imagination* (1997). His most recent publication is *Racism: A Short History* (2002), a fascinating work in which he attempts to find a working definition of *racism*, a much abused term. As he argues, no history of *racism* can be written until historians know what exactly they are examining. His statement below explains how he approached his section of the textbook.

I do not consider myself to be a member of any well-defined school of historians. But I like to think that there is an underlying consistency in the assumptions that I make. Major developments, in my opinion, do not have single causes, but result from the interaction of several factors or preconditions. However, it is not enough simply to list them and say that each played a role; historians should also attempt to show which factors were paramount and which were secondary. On a certain level of analysis, however, this weighting process becomes difficult if not impossible.

In my own work, I keep encountering problems in which neither an “idealist” interpretation (stressing ideas or cultural values as determinants) nor a “materialist” one (emphasizing economic or class interests) does justice to the evidence at hand. The best strategy, I have concluded, is to acknowledge an inescapable duality of “mind and matter” and concentrate on the ways they interact or reinforce each other. I draw inspiration from
the fact that the man often regarded as the greatest of twentieth-century social theorists, Max Weber, characteristically proceeded from just such a dualistic perspective.

In my chapters I attempt to describe the independent role of ideas and ideologies: nationalism, affirmations of democracy, religiously inspired humanitarianism, racism, and beliefs about the morality or immorality of slavery. But I also try to place these ideas and ideologies in a social and economic context, so that students will understand the group interests and environmental pressures that helped to make some views of the world more popular and potent than others. If I try to find a middle ground between “idealistic” and “materialist” explanations of such events as the sectional conflict and the Civil War, I likewise seek to avoid the extremes of “history from the bottom up” or “history from the top down.” Powerful, privileged, and dominant groups, like southern planters, northern entrepreneurs, and the professional politicians from both sections, greatly influenced the fate of ordinary people by making decisions that affected their lives in crucial ways. But the “plain folk”—urban working people adjusting to the new factory system, small farmers in the south and west and even the mass of enslaved African Americans—had sufficient resources or resourcefulness to retain some measure of control over their own lives. I have thus tried to do justice, not only to the power that flows from the top, but also to the resistance and creative “survivalism” that came from the bottom and sometimes forced concessions or adjustments from dominant elites. In doing so, I have sought to synthesize the insights of the “new social history” about the everyday lives and aspirations of common people with the traditionalist emphasis on the exercise of power in the public arena. Only by seeing history from different vantage points and then asking how these varying perspectives relate to each other can we develop a mature understanding of what happened to nineteenth-century Americans.
CHAPTER 9

NATION BUILDING AND NATIONALISM

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 30,000 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 faster 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 may 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. In order to dress properly, a respectable woman in the early nineteenth century wore about one hundred yards of material, usually woolen 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 for commission merchants, scriveners, auditors, brokers, and bankers. In 1816, Philadelphia had been 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 that 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 was early nineteenth-century America. 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.

**RELIVING 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 upon picking the flesh on his fingers. This can be found in Dickens' *American Notes*. The 1968 Peter Smith reprint (Gloucester, Massachusetts) 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' art in creating 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 Frances Trollope's *Domestic Manners of the Americans*. The most recent edition was published by Penguin Books in 1997.

**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, still held in part by the English, Spanish and Indians.

A. 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-Onís 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.

B. Settlement to the Mississippi

In order to make the land beyond the Appalachians available to white settlers, the United States government initiated a policy of moving the Indians to the west side of the Mississippi. When they resisted, they were forcibly removed. Even so, some southern states felt that the federal government did not push the removal of the Indians vigorously enough, and these states claimed their own jurisdiction over the Indians, whom they treated harshly.

The land from which the Indians were evicted was sold by the government 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.
C. 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. Since 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.

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.

A. A Revolution in Transportation: 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 whole web of turnpikes came into existence, built by private entrepreneurs. Usually, however, the roads did not return a profit, and though 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.

B. 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.
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. Agriculture in general 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.

A. The Beginning of Commercial Agriculture

Commercial farming and regional specialization demanded a new system of marketing. Farmers were less likely to sell their harvest directly to the consumer. Instead, they sold their crops to local merchants, who in turn sold it to regional merchants, who then sold it 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.

B. 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.

C. 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 business people 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.
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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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 over-representation 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.
D. 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.

E. 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.

F. The Troubled Presidency of John Quincy Adams

President Monroe supported John Quincy Adams to succeed him. It seemed a good choice. Adams was an intelligent person with a keen interest in scientific progress. His first loyalty was to the nation rather than any section. He was, however, a “gentleman” in an age of rising democracy and a nationalist in an age of growing sectionalism. He nearly lost the election of 1824, and his term office was bound to be a failure.

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.
CHAPTER 10

THE TRIUMPH OF WHITE MEN’S DEMOCRACY

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 only became the business of professionals at a certain time 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 servant 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 in order 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.

RELIVING 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 the above 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.

**DEMOCRATIC 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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

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.

A. 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 between 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.

B. 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.

C. Indian Removal

Jackson inherited the Indian removal policy from previous administrations and carried it to its harshest conclusion. He agreed with the southern states that the federal government had not pushed the Indians hard enough. When the Cherokee nation resisted removal, Jackson asked Congress to take stern action even though the Cherokee were “civilized,” according to white standards. In 1830 Congress voted to dispossess the Cherokee, and in 1838, the U.S. Army forced the Indians to move west in a march that killed many of them.

D. 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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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 a runaway inflation, followed by an abrupt depression.

E. 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 non-controversial 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, while the Whigs were the party of the community.

**CONCLUSION: TOCQUEVILLE’S VISION**

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 while males refused to extend the liberties they enjoyed to women, African Americans and Indians.
CHAPTER 11

SLAVES AND MASTERS

TOWARD DISCUSSION

THE MASTER CLASS

College students should be encouraged to think abstractly about social phenomena without forgetting that institutions depend upon humans for their functioning. Because humans are not always logical, they sometimes service institutions they despise. Slavery is a good case in point.

Slavery may 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 may 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-debasement, 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 upon 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, 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/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.” Whites southerners lived a paradox. They were a master class yearning to be free.

RELIVING 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.

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, while 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.

A. Slave’s 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.

B. 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.

C. 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, in this world, and in the world to come.

D. 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.

E. Free Blacks in the Old South

Free blacks in the South suffered so many legal restrictions that their condition amounted to a sort of semi-slavery. They felt a sense of solidarity with the slaves, but were generally unable to help them.

Free blacks in the North also suffered legal discrimination, including denial of the right to vote. Even so, it was possible for these African Americans to organize, and they often worked together to help slaves escape from the South. Unlike many white abolitionists, who wanted only to free the slaves, black abolitionists demanded racial equality. They eventually formed their own abolitionist societies and newspapers. It was the free blacks in the North who were most responsible for the “underground railroad.” In deeds as well as words, free blacks showed their unyielding hostility to slavery and racism.

WHITE SOCIETY IN THE ANTEBELLUM SOUTH

Great planters were a small minority but they were the dominant political and economic figures in the South.

A. 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 fewer than one 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.
B. Planters 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.

C. Small Slaveholders

Slave-owners 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.

D. 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.

E. A Closed Mind and a Closed Society

The dominant planter class feared not only slave rebellion, but that the white small farmers might join the abolitionist crusade. The planters, therefore, created a mood of impending disaster in order 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, and 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.

A. 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.

B. 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 since it 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.

C. 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.

D. The “Profitability” Issue

Large cotton planters usually benefitted 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.
CHAPTER 12

THE PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 21 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.” While 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 upon, to examine children and to imprison, on the basis of an examination, those who would turn out to be criminals.

**RELIVING 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).

**REDEEMING THE MIDDLE CLASS**

The author uses the revival organized in Rochester, New York in 1830 as one example of the way the middle class, especially in the urban North, attempted to reform themselves and the society around them.

**THE RISE OF EVANGELISM**

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.

**A. The Second Great Awakening: The Frontier Phase**

Camp meetings not only provided 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.

**B. 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.

**C. 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 a million members, mostly
women, who successfully persuaded Americans to cut their consumption of alcohol by more than 50 percent.

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.

A. Marriage and Sex Roles

By the nineteenth century, marriage had changed profoundly. Mutual love became the only acceptable reason for marriage, and couples were expected to remain in love after marriage. This development gave women much more social influence, despite their continual legal inequality.

B. 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.

C. The Discovery of Childhood

In the nineteenth century, the child was placed at the center of family life. Each child was looked upon as unique and irreplaceable. Ideal parents no longer “broke” a child's will; they formed his 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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

A. 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.

B. 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 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 in-fighting. 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 mails 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.

C. 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.

D. 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, like 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.”

E. 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.
CHAPTER 13

AN AGE OF EXPANSIONISM

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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, there 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 someday 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.

RELIVING 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.

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.

A. 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.

B. The Texas Revolution

Americans, including many slaveholders, immigrated into Texas, 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.

C. 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 it was the desire of most Texans to join the United States. President Andrew Jackson, however, fearing a war with Mexico and domestic political controversy, delayed annexation.

D. 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.
E. 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 they believed had 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.

A. 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.

B. 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.
C. 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.

D. 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 whole 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.

E. 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.

F. 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 benefitted only the slave-owners in the South.

INTERNAL EXPANSIONISM

Having pushed to the Pacific, Americans turned inward and developed their vast domain.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. The New Working Class

Traditionally, women and children were factory workers. Men began to enter the factory work-force 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 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 to the supervisors appeared as careless work habits.

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.
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, well 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, again, the slave-owners 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 slave-owners 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 take ages for those territories to become 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. Abe Lincoln and the Republican party stepped forth to fill that role.

**RELIVING 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 instance 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.

THE BROOKS-SUMNER BRAWL 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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

E. 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 got a strong fugitive slave law and a chance to settle the New Mexico territory, which was also enlarged.

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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

E. 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 they were so different in culture that they could no longer coexist in the same nation.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

E. 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.

F. 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.
CHAPTER 15

SECESSION AND THE CIVIL WAR

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 that, “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 phenomenon of thousands and thousands of their slaves fleeing to the safety of Sherman's army. The march eventually resembled a comet, with a small head of soldiers with 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.

**RELIVING 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.
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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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 now 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 it had been the issue of slavery that led to secession, people at the time defined the war in terms of whether or not the Union was indissoluble.

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.”

A. 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.

B. Mobilizing the Home Front

Both North and South put volunteers into the field in the first year of the war, but both sides finally 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.

C. 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.
D. 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.

E. 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.

A. 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 thousands of laborers from the Confederate war effort.

B. 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.
C. 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.

D. 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.

E. 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 like Ralph Waldo Emerson, who had once espoused the autonomy of the individual.
CHAPTER 16

THE AGONY OF RECONSTRUCTION

TOWARD DISCUSSION

IMPEACHMENT

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 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 well to be reminded 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.

RELIVING 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.

**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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

E. 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.

RECONSTRUCTION IN THE SOUTH

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.

A. 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 slave-owners 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.
B. 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.

C. Republican Rule

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.

D. 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.

RETREATING 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.

A. 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 businesspeople 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.
B. 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.

C. A Reign of Terror

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.

D. Spoilsmen Versus 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.

A. 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.
B. “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. Eventually, the small farmer organized his own political party in the 1890s.

C. 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.

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, Turner, a Methodist bishop, ended by preaching that the only hope for American Blacks was to emigrate to Africa.
Hal Williams earned his Ph. D. from Yale University in 1968 and taught there until 1975, when he became Chairman of the History Department and eventually Dean of Dedman College at Southern Methodist University. Williams is a specialist in the political history of the late nineteenth century and published a major work in that field in 1978, *Years of Decision: American Politics in the 1890s*. In his book *The Democratic Party and California Politics, 1880-1896*, Williams offered a detailed description of party politics in one state to explain why the Republican party became the dominant national party around the turn of the century. His most recent work in the field is a collection of essays, *The Politics of the Gilded Age*, that he edited in 1997. At present, he is working on a biography of James Blaine, one of the leading Republicans in the late-nineteenth century. Although his focus is sharp, his description of party politics is never narrow. Williams defines politics in the broad sense, and it is in the lives of “ordinary” men and women that he looks for the ultimate source of political behavior. Williams explains below his approach to history, his interest in the story it tells, and his aim as author of the third section of *America: Past and Present*.

Writing my portion of *America: Past and Present* was a challenging task. It was also, I am glad to report, a lot of fun. The years between 1877 and 1920 were important and fascinating, and we are learning more and more about them. Historians have made fresh discoveries about political cycles and voting behavior, folkways of the workplace, the everyday lives of women and children, birth and death rates, race relations, and a host of other issues. To weave these various threads into an interesting, interpretive overview of American life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was my assignment.

To meet this challenge, I drew on a certain personal outlook and belief about history. History, I believe, is not the dry dust of memorized fact. It is his-story and her-story, made up of the lives of “ordinary” men, women, and children. In what they ate and drank, how they worked, voted, suffered, and played, people shaped patterns, and it is in the telling of their individual stories that the freshness and fascination of history lies.

I have chosen to follow several themes through these years. One of the most important is technology, for in this period innovation after innovation flowed from inventive brains. An
individual who was thirty in 1877 and lived a normal life span witnessed the advent, for practical purposes, of steel, the use of oil, electricity, telephones, telegraphs, the phonograph, ironclad warships, the use of steam in ocean travel, the vast railroad network integrating the country, the automobile, and the airplane. All of these things changed the way people lived. Out of this, an organizational impulse arose to shape a changing society. There were new forms of factory organization, a growing number of fraternal and professional organizations, nationwide systems of advertising and marketing, and new sets of rules and regulations. As increasing numbers of Americans shared in the general prosperity, an expanding middle class assumed more power. This prosperity formed the mass market for which the burgeoning consumer industries produced a stream of items to make life more comfortable and enjoyable. Women, children, farmers, laborers in the workplace, and immigrants recently transplanted to a strange new society all reached their own accommodations with the world around them, and when adjusting to the society, also made it adjust to them.

Economic, political, and cultural rivalry intensified between cities and farms, East and West, and North and South. The McKinley-Bryan presidential contest of 1896 tapped some of the intense feeling that emerged. Southern Populists confronted violence, even death, in their efforts to reform the existing order; Westerners both copied and rejected the eastern institutions they had left behind; young people in great numbers left the family farm for city lights and new careers.

As mass production and consumption shaped a mass society, the United States shifted some of its attention outward; it took on distant interests and responsibilities. America's growing power in the world changed its outlook, as the nation fought two wars and took over new possessions in the Caribbean and Pacific. At the same time, another trend in American thought reflected growing confidence in human progress, exemplified in the Progressive Movement between 1890 and 1920. The compelling faith that problems of all sorts could be solved molded the country's history through most of the twentieth century.

When the period began, Rutherford B. Hayes, a Civil War general, occupied the White House; when it ended, Woodrow Wilson, who was five years old when Hayes was leading Civil War battle charges, was president. Much in the country had changed in between, and several events, such as the depression of the 1890s and the war with Spain, altered the nation's course. But most of the changes, which were not so clearly delineated, occurred in the daily lives of individuals and groups, a pattern that makes history so intriguing and enlightening.
CHAPTER 17

THE WEST: EXPLOITING AN EMPIRE

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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, 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.

**RELIVING 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.”

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 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.

A. Life of the Plains Indians

By the 1700s the availability of the horse 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.
B. “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.

C. 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.”

D. 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.
A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

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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.

A. 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.

B. 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, then were driven to railroads, like Abilene, or 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 day of the cowboy was 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 when thousands of cattle died, ranchers reduced the size of their herds or switched to raising sheep.

C. 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.

D. 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.

E. 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.
F. 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.
CHAPTER 18

THE INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 Anti-Trust 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.

**RELIVING THE PAST**

In the late nineteenth century, successful businessmen 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. One 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.

A MACHINE CULTURE

The author uses the Grand Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876 to make the point that the American people could look back on a century of national history of which they were proud, but that they looked more intensely at their future as an 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

E. 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 and 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 awhile 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, that 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 like Thomas Edison, 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.

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 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. Still, 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 themselves 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 was founded in 1881 by Samuel Gompers. The American Federation of Labor recognized that the industrial system was permanent and concentrated on practical steps to improve wages and working conditions. The American Federation of Labor, however, organized only skilled workers while ignoring 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.
CHAPTER 19

TOWARD AN URBAN SOCIETY, 1877-1900

TOWARD DISCUSSION

THE MODERN CITY

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 horse-car, 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 they 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.
RELIVING 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 7000 enthusiasts.”

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.

A. 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.
B. 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.

C. 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, or Chicago were foreign-born or were the children of immigrants. Nativism again became a strong force, especially in the 1880s, when a new 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.

D. 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, and they tended to marry later and 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.

E. 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.
A. 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.

B. Leisure and Entertainment

In general, Americans spent their free time at home playing cards, croquet and other popular 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.

C. 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.”

D. Changing Views: A Growing Assertiveness among Women

“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, like menstruation, that had long been considered forbidden subjects.

E. Educating the Masses

Even though the states required young people to attend school, few students reached the sixth grade. Until 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 approving racial discrimination.
F. 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.

III. 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.

A. 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, poorer. His solution was to tax land, which he believed was the source of all wealth.

B. 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.

C. 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, that limited the number of hours that could be worked by children under the age of fourteen.
D. A 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.
CHAPTER 20

POLITICAL REALIGNMENTS IN THE 1890s

TOWARD DISCUSSION

FREE SILVER AT 16 TO 1

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 problem with a bimetallic system is to establish 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, in an endless cycle, making a safe profit on each transaction. Before long, of course, the Treasury was emptied of gold and could mint only silver coins. The United States in effect was on a silver standard.

In 1834, Congress reversed the situation by overvaluing gold. Congress now gave 16 ounces of silver for one ounce of gold. Those with gold sold it to the Treasury for silver, sold the silver on the world market for gold, sold the gold to the Treasury for silver, 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, and this 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 to 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.

**RELIVING 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 of 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.

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.

THE POLITICS OF STAILEMATE

Politics was still restricted to white males who seemed to enjoy it enormously and who turned out at the polls in great numbers.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

A. 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 Anti-Trust 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.

B. 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.

A. The Farm Problem

In the last 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.

B. 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 coinage of silver, low tariffs, a federal income tax, direct election of senators and the regulation of railroads.

C. 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.

A. 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.
B. 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.

C. 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 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.

D. 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.

E. 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.

A. Everybody Works but Father

The depression accelerated the movement of women and children into the work force. 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.
B. Changing Themes in Literature

The depression encouraged an already growing trend toward “realism” in American literature. The greatest example is in the work of Mark Twain, whose characters speak as people 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.

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1896

The presidential election continued the realignment begun in the congressional elections of 1894.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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, an economic depression ruined countless lives, but opened the way for reform. The 1890s were the first decade of the twentieth century.
CHAPTER 21

TOWARD EMPIRE

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 only occupied 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 took until 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 public remains ignorant about the extent of their holdings around the world. All students know that Puerto Rico is a
commonwealth, and most will know that Puerto Rico is destined for statehood in the near future. But how many know that Congress in 1976 made the northern Marianas a commonwealth, thereby extending United States citizenship to any person born on the island of Guguan?

RELIVING THE PAST

The most famous episode of the Spanish-American War was Teddy Roosevelt 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.

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 expanded, 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.

A. 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. 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).
B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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. 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.

B. “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.

C. “Smoked Yankees”

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.

D. 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. According to the peace treaty, Cuba became independent, and the United States took Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines. The annexation of the Philippines created a storm of controversy among those who objected to the United States acting as a colonial power. The debate in the Senate lasted a month, and the peace treaty was ratified in a close vote.
A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.
CHAPTER 22

THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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.

**RELIVING 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).
MUCKRANKERS 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 as 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.

A. 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.

B. The Burgeoning Trusts

The trend toward bigness in industry accelerated after 1900 in such fields as oil, rubber and railroads. Bankers, like 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.

C. 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 its symbol. Workers benefitted by 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.
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.

A. Better Times on the Farm

Farmers generally prospered in the 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.

B. 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

Black workers, male and female, faced exceptional hardships. Forced to work for low wages, excluded from most labor unions and brutalized by aggressive racism, they had to rely upon themselves to improve conditions. In 1905, W.E.B. DuBois and others rejected the argument of Booker T. Washington that African Americans must work within a racist society. The “Niagara Movement” demanded immediate respect for the equal rights of all Americans. This demand was generally ignored, and despite efforts by organizations like the NAACP and the Urban League, African-American workers received the fewest benefits from the nation's growing prosperity.

D. “I Hear the Whistle”: Immigrants in the Labor Force

Europeans, Mexicans, and Asians immigrated to the United States in large numbers between 1901 and 1920, forming a distinct part of the working force. Since many of the immigrants could not speak English, they were considered a social problem. Various programs were introduced to “Americanize” them, but hostility to their mere presence led Congress to limit immigration from China, Japan, Mexico, and southern and central Europe.

CONFLICT IN THE WORKPLACE

Labor unrest became so bitter between 1915 and 1918 that industrial productivity actually fell and union membership soared.
A. Organizing Labor

The American Federation of Labor remained the largest union, but its failure to include unskilled laborers, women, and African Americans led to the formation of the Women's Trade Union League in 1903, and the Industrial Workers of the World in 1905. These more radical organizations lacked large numbers, but won a number of spectacular strikes. Fears of class warfare increased.

B. Working with Workers

To avoid problems, many employers began to improve working conditions to avoid trouble. Henry Ford, for example, doubled wages and reduced the workday, thereby increasing production and ending union activity in his plants.

C. Amoskeag

The Amoskeag mills in Manchester, New Hampshire, are a good example of the benevolent, paternalistic approach to managing the work force. The company operated efficiently and profitably by hiring whole 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.

A. 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.

B. 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 be improved. Los Angeles, for example, adopted zoning regulations to separate industrial, commercial, and residential areas.
C. 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, like the Tom Swift series, familiarized Americans with spaceships and ray-guns.

D. Experimentation in the Arts

Serious artists began to change old art forms. Isadora Duncan experimented with new forms of dance while writers like Eliot and Pound introduced new forms of poetry. In painting, the Ashcan School and post-Impressionism challenged older ideas of what art was.

CONCLUSION: A FERMENT OF DISCOVER 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.
CHAPTER 23

FROM ROOSEVELT TO WILSON IN THE AGE OF PROGRESSIVISM

TOWARD DISCUSSION

KNIGHTS AND WOBBLIES

Most historians today accept the idea that the labor union movement in America has failed. Labor never organized at any time more than about 35 percent of all workers, and that peak was reached in 1946. Since then, union membership has become less common, and few students expect to join a union. Considering the appalling conditions faced by workers in the early twentieth century, students may well wonder why Labor failed.

Around the turn of the century, American Labor had to choose one of three roads to travel. 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-working 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 were more like subcontractors than proletarians. Among the rural population, of course, the small family farm predominated, at least in ideal. 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, its very title an indication of how anachronistic it was, 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, or Wobblies, wanted to take American workers into a new, Socialist future. The Wobblies made no bones about their belief that it would take a violent class war to achieve their
ends, and they openly advocated industrial sabotage. The Wobblies, however, failed to attract workers in any large numbers. They were the victim of conservative attacks, government persecution, police harassment, and a lack of party discipline, but it seems, also, that the idea of class conflict itself turned away American workers.

The third path open to Labor, the one actually taken, 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.

This pragmatic approach had several negative consequences for Labor. Most radical intellectuals in America in the twentieth century have felt little interest in the labor movement because it is so conservative and so interested in short-term solutions to immediate problems. When employers like Henry Ford realized that they could increase production by offering better working conditions, they undercut the entire rationale for joining a “bread and butter” union. In general, therefore, Labor has failed. This is not to say, however, that American laborers have therefore suffered. Compared with workers in “socialist” nations, Americans wage earners have done well for themselves and their nation.

RELIVING 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.”

THE REPUBLICAN 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 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.

A. 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 requiring tough entrance requirements and by forming national associations.

B. The Social-Justice Movement

Reformers realized that helping individuals here and there was not enough and turned their attention to larger social problems, like poverty, bad housing and low wages, which they attacked with scientific precision.

C. 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.

D. 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.

E. 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 the urban area, 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.

A. 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 by lobbying efforts.

B. 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.

C. 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.

A. 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.

B. “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.

A. Regulating the Railroads

Roosevelt addressed the complaints of farmers by passage of the Hepburn Act, which strengthened the authority of the Interstate Commerce Commission to set rates.
B. Cleaning Up Food and Drugs

The publication of *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair in 1906 shocked the nation into realizing how unsanitary the meat packing industry was. After reading the book, Roosevelt pushed Congress to pass the Meat Inspection Act and other legislation to regulate patent medicines.

C. 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.

THE ORDEAL OF WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT

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, the conservative wing of the Republican party, cowed by Roosevelt, began to reassert itself.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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 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.

A. 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 and the Federal Trade Commission was established in 1914 to supervise business. With this much accomplished, Wilson abruptly announced that the “New Freedom” had been achieved in November 1914.

B. 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.
CHAPTER 24

THE NATION AT WAR

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 more in vogue in 1917 than they are today. 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 could be viewed almost as if one were 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”); it explains 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.

RELIVING 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, but 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 very 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.
THE SINKING OF THE LUSITANIA

The author begins with an account of the episode that eventually lead 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.

A. “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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.

A. Conducting Moral Diplomacy

Wilson achieved some successes in moral diplomacy, but when faced with crises in Latin America, he, too, sent in the marines.

B. 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 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.

A. 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, lest it come in on the wrong side. Americans also believed they had a long tradition of neutrality and saw no reason to intervene.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. “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 was close. Wilson won by only about half a million votes in a total of almost eighteen million cast.

E. 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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

A. The Conquest of Convictions

The war began with an outpouring of rage against Germany that 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.

B. 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.

C. 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 now 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. 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.

B. Rejection in the Senate

Wilson could have had the treaty ratified if he were 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, a stroke disabled him and doomed the League.

CONCLUSION: POST-WAR 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.
Recent history poses a unique challenge for the textbook writer. My assignment was to cover the years since 1920, and I was allotted the same space for my seventy years as my colonial colleague, who had to span more than two centuries. Since I was born in 1929, I have the disadvantage of having lived through most of the period, and thus ran the risk of substituting my personal, and necessarily very slanted, version of events for a more comprehensive and balanced account. At the same time, I was aware that most of my student readers were probably born in the late 1960s or early 1970s, and thus have no firsthand knowledge of World War II, John F. Kennedy, or even the Vietnam tragedy.

In trying to overcome these problems, I dealt with several major themes that shaped the transition to modern America. One was the changing nature of the American economy, including the full-blown consumer-goods society of the twenties, the challenge of the Great Depression, and the impact of such recent developments as the decline of heavy industry, the growth of high technology, and the energy crisis of the 1970s. A second basic theme was the continuing reform impulse--the attempt to remedy injustice and unfairness in American society through governmental action. Thus I dealt with FDR's New Deal reforms, such as Social Security and collective bargaining; Truman's less successful attempt to expand the liberal agenda of his Fair Deal into areas of civil rights and health care; and Lyndon Johnson's harvest of legislation in the 1960s, which sought to create the Great Society but which also bred disillusionment with federal spending during the inflationary decade of the 1970s. Finally, I traced the changing role of the United States in the world, from the retreat after World War I and Versailles to the advance brought about...
by World War II. The Cold War inevitably dominated the second half of my section, as the
global contest for power and influence between the United States and the Soviet Union
moved foreign policy into the forefront and, with the Red Scare and the antiwar
movement, cast a long shadow over domestic life.

The past seventy years are an exciting period in American history. In many ways, there has
been genuine progress. The level of material well-being has increased remarkably, so that
today the average American enjoys a much more abundant and leisurely life style than did
earlier Americans. The goal of racial equality, while not yet achieved, has been advanced in
education, employment, voting rights, and social interaction, especially in the South, where
the days of Jim Crow are gone forever.

Yet in other ways, the nation seems less well-off today than in the past. Japan has
surpassed the United States in economic vitality and might soon replace us as the world's
most productive nation. Double-digit inflation, the oil shocks, and the decline of major
industries like auto and steel manufacturing eroded the traditional American confidence in
the future. Despite the Reagan administration's success in controlling inflation and
stimulating economic growth, the huge federal deficits of the 1980s created a new and
serious problem that threatens the nation's economic future. And median family income,
when adjusted for inflation, did not grow between 1973 and 1987; most younger Americans
could not look forward to enjoying as high a standard of living as their parents.

At the same time, however, America's place in the world was far better by the 1990s than it
had been in decades. The Cold War, with its threat of total destruction in a nuclear attack,
began to recede as the Berlin Wall crumbled and the former satellite countries of Eastern
Europe gained their freedom. Ronald Reagan had restored the sense of American pride
and national confidence that had been eclipsed in the Carter years, and left George Bush
with the opportunity to claim we had won the Cold War.

The course of events in the last decade of the twentieth century will help us determine
whether the Reagan legacy of peace and prosperity will be fulfilled. Whatever the outcome,
I have attempted to identify the underlying trends that have shaped our recent past and to
present a balanced portrait of a nation in transition.
CHAPTER 25

TRANSITION TO MODERN AMERICA

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 Freudianism 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 seriously maldistributed, 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.

**RELIVING 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 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

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 on August 22, 1927. The Sacco and Vanzetti case, therefore, 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).

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.

A. 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. Auto makers, 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 further from the inner cities.
B. Patterns of Economic Growth

Other industries also flourished in the 1920s, including electricity, light metals, and the chemical industry. Professional managers who believed profit-making 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.”

C. Economic Weaknesses

Although there was real prosperity in the United States in the 1920s, there were also disguised economic problems. Traditional industries, like 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 benefitted 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.

A. 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 to 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. Teenaged sons and daughters of the smaller, middle-class families no longer had to work and could indulge their craving for excitement.

B. 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 achievement. Young men and women openly discussed sex, which became an all-consuming topic of interest in movies, tabloids and popular music.
C. 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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. The Ku Klux Klan

The Klan revived in the 1920s. It was no longer merely an antiblack 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 America 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.
D. 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 deathblow 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.

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.

A. 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.

B. 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 to go along because he preferred the government to keep hands off the economy. More and more, Republican policies resulted in close cooperation between government and business and expansion of the government bureaucracy.

C. 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.

D. 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, but 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 was a conflict between urban and rural values, between the frivolity of the jazz generation and the sobriety of their elders, 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.
CHAPTER 26

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT AND THE NEW DEAL

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 ever 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."

RELIVING 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.

**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.

A. 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.
B. Effect of the Depression

The Depression brought physical and psychological hardship to all classes of Americans. The middle class lost their 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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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 cut-throat 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 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.

E. 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, which Congress funded for $5 billion. FDR himself thought of the Civilian Conservation Corps 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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

A. 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.

B. 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, like Harry Hopkins and Eleanor Roosevelt, convinced minorities that the government was on their side. One minority, American Indians, gained greater control over their own affairs through the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934.

C. 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.
A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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 IMPACT OF THE NEW DEAL

The New Deal did not end the Depression, it did little for those without political clout, and it did not 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.
Rosie the Riveter stands for all the women who left home in 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, fewer 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 a fully 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 of 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.

So far as the government was concerned, Rosie was meant to recruit women into war work only for the duration. 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 rediscover her true self in 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 of 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 be hardly interesting. Rosie became much more. 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, 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.

**RELIVING 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, DC: 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).

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.
A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

A. 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 or 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.
B. 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.

A. 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.

B. 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 take 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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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 work force in large numbers, and the move from farm to factory accelerated. The return of prosperity especially benefitted the lowest-paid wage earners. Their income actually rose faster than that of the rich, and since much of the population saved their newly increased incomes, the basis for postwar prosperity was laid.
A. 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.

B. 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 the Congress finally acknowledged the injustice that had been done and voted compensation for the survivors of a horrible experience.

C. 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.

A. War Aims and Wartime Diplomacy

The United States and Russia 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.

B. 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 left the United States as the most powerful nation on earth, with worldwide responsibilities abroad, and at home a legacy of government intervention to improve the lives of its citizens.
CHAPTER 28

THE ONSET OF THE COLD WAR

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 to avoid any chance that America might become involved in hostilities by the rash actions of the South Koreans, American occupation forces had been withdrawn and Congress refused to give offensive weapons such as tanks to the Republic of Korea (ROK) forces. 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 Korea 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 the United Nations allies 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.

RELIVING 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*.

**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 post-war 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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.”

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.
D. 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.

A. 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. For the most part, 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.

B. 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.

C. 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 the massive American rearmament it brought about. 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.

A. 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.

B. Truman Vindicated

By 1948, it seemed impossible that Truman could be reelected. The Republican candidate, Thomas Dewey, took victory for granted while southern Democrats and northern liberals deserted Truman. Nevertheless, the president was reelected by the old Roosevelt coalition, who resented Republican policies like the Taft-Hartley Act, perceived as anti-union, and who still felt grateful for the New Deal. 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.

C. 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.

D. McCarthyism in Action

In 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy, Republican of 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.

E. 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.

A. 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 dependant upon the United States.

B. 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. Turmoil in the Middle East

In 1956, the Egyptian leader Gamal Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. Despite Eisenhower's objections, France and England then invaded Egypt. Eisenhower applied pressure on both allies and forced them to withdraw their troops before the Russians could take advantage of the situation. America became a trusted nation in the region and was invited by Lebanon to send troops to maintain order there in 1958.

D. 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; in Cuba, the Agency tried to kill Castro.
E. 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 co-existence.
CHAPTER 29

AFFLUENCE AND ANXIETY

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 objective was not so much to kill people as 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 “centrist” Democrats, like President 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 the common sense of the matter. 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.

RELIVING THE PAST

In 1949, fewer than 3 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, 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 being 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.

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 was part of the most important social developments in post-war 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.

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.
A. Postwar Prosperity

By 1950, pent-up consumer demand and production finally came into line, and the economy boomed. Defense spending added 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.

B. 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.

C. The Reaction to Sputnik

When Russia's Sputnik orbited the Earth in 1957, the American people reacted with panic at the loss of their scientific supremacy. Americans saw in the Russian success a fundamental defect in their own culture. Congress created the National Aeronautics and
Space Administration (NASA) and passed the National Defense Education Act to upgrade the teaching of science.

Few Americans realized the solid achievements of the 1950s. The economy, especially, had been placed on a sound, expanding base, but as the decade ended, most Americans were convinced that their nation was in decline, and it was this sense of failure that the Democrats exploited in the election of 1960.

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 patterns.

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, 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 justice.
CHAPTER 30

THE TURBULENT SIXTIES

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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 Krushchev 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. The Kennedy people 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 were 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, 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.

RELIVING 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, DC: 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,
Kennedy v. 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.

A. 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 anyway, was now so strong that the new administration was tempted to challenge the Soviet Union without having to resort to all-out nuclear war.

B. 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.

C. 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.
D. 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 resultant fiasco at the Bay of Pigs in no way lessened Kennedy's determination to topple the Castro regime.

E. 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.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. “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.

E. 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.
A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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 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.

A. 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 Viet-Cong 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.

B. 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.

C. 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 than ever. 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 Viet-Cong were able to launch attacks all over the country, the Tet Offensive, that 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.

A. 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.
B. 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.

C. 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.

D. “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 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.

E. Ethnic Nationalism

Other minority groups such as the American Indians, 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.

F. 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.

A. 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, like 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.

B. 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.

C. The Republican Resurgence

In contrast to 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.
CHAPTER 31

A CRISIS IN CONFIDENCE, 1969-1980

TOWARD DISCUSSION

STUDENTS IN REBELLION

During the decade of the sixties, it sometimes seemed as if everyone in America were 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 Non-Violent 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 ivy-towered innocence.

Can 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, nor do 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.

RELIVING THE PAST

During the Johnson and Nixon terms in office, 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 Viet-Cong. 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 U.S. 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).
THE WATERGATE BREAK-IN

The author starts the chapter with the background of the Watergate burglary in 1972. It was just one in a series of shocks that rattled the American people, such as the Arab oil boycott, the Iranian hostage crisis, runaway inflation, and left wing insurgencies in Latin America.

NIXON IN POWER

Richard Nixon's first term in office seemed highly successful, especially in foreign affairs, an area in which the president had a passionate interest. But Nixon, a shy, bitter man, cut himself off from Congress, his own cabinet, and the nation, thereby sowing the seeds of failure.

A. Reshaping the Great Society

Nixon did not try to undo Johnson's policies; rather, he tried to administer them more efficiently or to shift responsibility for them to the states. He also shrewdly shifted responsibility for school desegregation to the courts. Nixon tried to influence the Supreme Court in a more conservative direction through his appointments, but the Burger Court acted very much the same as had the Warren Court. As a result, though the pace of change slowed down, the government's commitment to social justice remained clear.

B. Nixonomics

The Vietnam War spurred inflation, which Nixon attempted to solve by cutting federal spending and by forcing interest rates up. By 1970, these policies added recession to inflation and put the administration on the defensive. When economic conditions got worse in 1971, Nixon imposed wage and price controls, and the economy revived.

C. Building a Republican Majority

Because he had won such a narrow victory in 1968, Nixon was obsessed about his chances for reelection in 1972. He hoped to win southern votes by being inactive regarding desegregation, and he sought the votes of “middle Americans” by attacking drugs, street crime, permissiveness, and other aspects of the cultural revolution. Encouraged, the “silent majority” began to demonstrate for law and order. The Democrats, however, joined the crusade against drugs and crime and maintained their position as the majority party.

D. In Search of 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.

E. 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.

THE CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY

Nixon's administration was characterized by deceit from the beginning. He attempted to use the FBI and CIA against those he considered his enemies, exhorted a special group of loyal operatives to use illegal wiretaps and burglaries in their operations, and condoned activities that went beyond the usual political dirty tricks in his reelection campaign in 1972. In June, however, some of his campaign committee agents were arrested when they tried to break into the Democratic headquarters in the Watergate complex.

A. The Election of 1972

Nixon faced an easy reelection in 1972. He gained George Wallace's followers when Wallace was shot and disabled, and he gained most of the middle class when the Democrats nominated George McGovern. Nixon won by a tremendous landslide, and a new political alignment seemed to be emerging. In general, only African Americans, Jews, and the poor remained strongly Democratic.

B. The Watergate Scandal

Nixon was already deeply involved in covering up the culprits behind the Watergate burglary. By 1973 the affair began to unravel, and when the Senate investigated, it discovered the existence of 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.

ENERGY AND THE ECONOMY

The Arab oil boycott of 1973 was the most vivid illustration that the United States, which based its way of life on abundant, cheap energy, would have to face the challenge of scarcity in the future.

A. The October War

In October 1973, the United States supplied Israel with weapons to repel a surprise attack by Egypt and Syria. In retaliation, the Arab oil nations boycotted the United States even though American policy was becoming more sympathetic to the interests of the Arab nations.

B. The Oil Shocks

Oil prices had been gradually increasing, but jumped abruptly at the time of the Yom Kippur War in 1973. Consumer spending, especially car sales, plunged; by 1974 the nation was in a recession. Congress helped bring about recovery by passing a tax cut, but inflation got worse and persisted into the Carter administration. In 1979, oil prices again soared because of the Iranian revolution, and again the American people panicked. Their faith in the future was shaken, and they blamed President Carter for their troubles.

C. The Search for an Energy Policy

The nation needed a long-range energy policy, but neither party could enact one. Ford tried to encourage production; Carter encouraged conservation. Congress passed a patchwork set of laws, including one regarding the development of the Alaskan pipeline, but did not solve the energy problem.

D. 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. The government failed to moderate inflation, but when it tried to do so, interest rates were sent to record-high levels.
E. 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.

PRIVATE LIVES–PUBLIC ISSUES

During the 1970s, the traditional, two-parent family continued to disappear in America; women increased their share of the work force, and an active gay rights campaign for civil rights began.

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. 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. Opposition continued, however, especially around the question of gay marriage.
POLITICS AFTER WATERGATE

The confrontation between President and Congress over the Watergate affair left the nation leaderless at a crucial time.

A. 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.

B. The 1976 Campaign

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.

C. Disenchantment with Carter

Carter 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.

FROM DETENTE TO RENEWED COLD WAR

As the international dominance of the United States receded, some statesmen, like Henry Kissinger, adopted a policy of moderating the Cold War by a series of arms control treaties with the Soviet Union. That policy was reversed under Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who wanted continued confrontation with Russia.

A. Retreat in Asia

The reluctance of the Congress and the American people to support interventionist policies was demonstrated when North Vietnam launched a massive offensive against the Republic of South Vietnam. The United States offered no aid to prevent the total defeat of her ally.
B. Accommodation in Latin America

American policy in Latin America was also less interventionist than it had been in the past. Carter did persuade Congress to assist El Salvador in its war against Marxist guerrillas, but he also negotiated a treaty, which the Senate ratified, to return the Panama Canal to Panama. When the Sandinistas seized power in Nicaragua, the United States made no effort at the time to oppose them.

C. The Quest for Peace in the Middle East

The United States moved to bring peace to the Middle East by offering to mediate between Arabs and Israelis after the inconclusive Yom Kippur War. In 1977, the president of Egypt, Anwar Sadat, agreed to talk with Israel, and Carter was able to bring off the Camp David agreement, paving the way for an Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty. Elsewhere, in Iran, the Carter administration supported the Shah long after he had lost the ability to rule his country. By the time Khomeini came to power, the United States was commonly regarded as the enemy, and in November, 1979, the United States embassy in Teheran was invaded and fifty-eight Americans taken hostage. Carter tried, but failed to secure their release, and his failure in the crisis became a running sore on his presidency.

D. The Cold War Resumes

Some members of the Carter administration urged him to continue the policy of détente and to build upon the SALT treaty that limited strategic weapons, but Carter and Brzezinski chose a course certain to anger the Russians. Carter's sermons on human rights abuses within the Soviet Union, the deployment of new missile systems, and the increased aid sent to China revived the Cold War. The Russians contributed to tensions by invading Afghanistan in December 1979.

CONCLUSION: A FAILED PRESIDENCY

Carter failed as a president, mainly because of events beyond his control, like the Iranian hostage crisis, but his failure, combined with Nixon’s, left the American people hungry for leadership by the time of the 1984 election.
CHAPTER 32

THE REPUBLICAN RESURGENCE

TOWARD DISCUSSION

THE AMERICAN CENTURY

At the end of World War II, Henry Luce, the publisher of *Time*, predicted that the next hundred years would be “the American century.” Although few Americans would agree, Luce may have been right. Americans, especially American college students, tend to be overly concerned with immediate problems and grossly exaggerate the difficulties the future is likely to bring. The end of the Cold War should have been greeted with a collective cheer and the United States could have been excused a few years of national celebration. Instead, Americans seemed ready to dismantle their political system, to shrink anew into isolationism, to barricade the doors against immigrants, and to despair about their economy. Many Americans still believe that the future belongs to Japan or China, mainly because they are ignorant of those nations' serious economic and political problems. It may be well to end the term by reminding students that they live in the world's richest and most powerful nation.

The collapse of the Soviet Union left the United States as a super military power without a significant rival. Russia, of course, retains an immense nuclear arsenal, but she continues to be distracted by domestic problems. China may become a formidable power in the near future, but at present she is greatly inferior to the United States in the ways in which economic and military might are measured. For the foreseeable future, no nation or combination of nations will pose a threat to America's national security. The threat of terrorist attacks will, of course, intensify as nuclear and chemical weapons proliferate, but that will be a danger that all nations will face. The more likely problem for the United States will be the frustration of becoming involved in low intensity conflicts that a superpower could win in a hour if it could deploy its full arsenal, but that go on forever because full-scale warfare is simply not worthwhile.

Military force can be sustained in the long run only if a nation maintains its economic growth. Economic trends are notoriously difficult to discern while they are still taking place, but it is certain that the United States is today the strongest economic power on the planet and will continue to be so for decades. The magnitude of difference between the American economy and its rivals, Japan for instance, is enormous. In terms of Gross Domestic Product, the United States produces over $2 trillion more goods and services per year than Japan, and the United States is still the largest producer of oil in the world, turning out each year about twice as much
as Saudi Arabia. The amazing productivity of its economy enriches the United States Treasury in an amount that most Americans cannot even imagine. Just a few years ago, most Americans were truly concerned about budget deficits and a national debt that was supposed to be driving the nation into bankruptcy. In truth, the national debt was never a serious problem, and it took just a modest tax increase and a slight reduction in the growth of government spending to turn the annual deficits into surpluses and to put the national debt on the road to extinction for the first time since the presidency of Andrew Jackson.

In modern times, nations have become great, and have only sustained their strength, by investing in science. Congress will never support basic research at the level that scientists want, but over the last twenty years, federal spending on scientific research has remained steady at about $60 billion per year. Congress contributed some $3 billion to the fantastically successful human genome project and is still spending the $30 billion set aside to build a space station. In addition, American private enterprise finances research and development at even higher levels than the government does. In the year 2000, private research amounted to nearly $200 billion, much more than any other nation in the world. The decoding of the human genetic sequence was done by both the government and a private corporation.

Considering the vast wealth and power of the American people, it seems odd that they are not more self-assured, or even arrogant. A few intellectuals have proclaimed the victory of “the American way,” but most Americans are more concerned with the ups and downs of the stock market or the problem of illegal drugs. When George Bush promised, during his campaign for the presidency, to adopt a “humble” foreign policy, he greatly appealed to the American people, who are not especially happy about telling the Israelis and Palistinians how they should solve their differences or about sending their young men and women to protect the peace in Bosnia. The great size and strength of the United States probably demands that it take a predominant role in leading the world, and that role has certainly been filled for decades by the American military, American diplomats, and American businessmen. But it is not yet a role that the American people seem to want or seem to believe they are capable of assuming.

RELIVING 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 bullet-proof 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
McCarthey leap into the line of fire and take a bullet in the chest; we see the gunman smothered and subdued; 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 camcorder 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, so that what we did once, we will do again and again in replay, in freeze-frame or slow motion, in living color. The task of RELIVING THE PAST, which once required an historian's labor and imagination, will be reduced to pushing a few buttons. In the future, the past will be always with us.

REAGAN AND THE RISE OF CONSERVATISM

The author begins by describing Ronald Reagan’s confident, relaxed manner, which put a comfortable face on his conservative message. Reagan combined an appeal to preserve traditional individual liberties with dire warnings of a totalitarian future if the government grew larger. It was a message that appealed to many Americans, disgusted as they were with high taxes. A supposedly liberal Supreme Court, and a perceived climate of moral decay. These feelings were especially strong in the Sunbelt region of the South and West, which was growing in population. Reagan’s election in 1980 was a solid triumph for a conservative agenda that promised less government, except in the area of national defense.

REAGAN IN POWER

The Republican party was able to pick up various pieces of the old Roosevelt coalition as it continued to splinter.

A. The Reagan Victory

Carter was generally blamed for the Iranian hostage crisis, high interest rates, inflation, and recession. Reagan, whose warmth and geniality came across on television, won the election easily, taking large chunks of the Jewish and working-class vote. The Republicans also won a majority in the Senate, indicating that a partial political alignment was taking place.

B. Cutting Spending and Taxes

Reagan believed that less government spending would encourage more private investment in the economy. He persuaded Congress to cut federal spending by more than $40 billion and to cut taxes by 25 percent over three years, even though many social services would be cut.
C. Limiting the Role of Government

The Reagan administration relaxed government regulations designed to protect the environment and tried, without success, to cut Social Security benefits. Reagan saw little need to deal generously with those who had not supported him. He hurt the labor movement by firing air traffic controllers who went on strike, he indicated no support for civil rights legislation, and he ignored women in making judicial appointments.

REAGONOMICS

Reagan and his advisors believed in “supply side economics.” They argued that reducing taxes would give people more money to spend, thus increasing economic activity and employment. There might be government deficits in the short run, but as more people found jobs, and spent more on consumer goods, even lowered taxes would generate large revenues that would eliminate the deficits.

A. Recession and Recovery

In the first two years of Reagan’s presidency, the economy faltered and unemployment hit 10 percent. In 1983, however, the economy boomed. Consumer spending soared, but prices remained level, mainly because of a worldwide decline in energy prices.

B. The Growing Deficit

The basis for the Reagan prosperity was massive deficit spending and massive inflows of foreign investment. When the federal budget deficit topped $200 billion in 1983, Congress and the President agreed to cap spending on defense and human services. The deficit, in relation to the Gross National Product, decreased. Nevertheless, the large sums of money being printed would have kicked up prices and interest rates if foreigners had not invested so much in government securities. In the meantime, American consumers purchased billions of dollars of imports, and the United States became a debtor nation in 1985.

C. The Rich Grow Richer

Reagan's economic policies helped the rich, left the poor impoverished, and hurt the middle class. The President, however, benefitted from a general feeling that America had recovered from a deep malaise and was on the brink of better times.

D. Reagan Affirmed

In the election of 1984, Reagan rode a tide of economic recovery and general optimism to a landslide victory over the Democratic candidate, Walter Mondale. There were signs,
however, that the triumph was more personal than political; the Republicans actually lost seats in Congress.

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.

A. 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.

B. Turmoil in the Middle East

In 1982, Israel invaded and occupied Lebanon. In order to persuade them to leave, the United States and France sent troops to maintain order while the Palestine Liberation Organization evacuated Beirut. The Americans, however, became the target of Moslem terrorists, and more than two hundred Marines were killed in one attack in 1984, after which they were withdrawn.

C. 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.

D. Trading Arms for Hostages

Reagan acquiesced in a short-sighted sale of advanced weapons to Iran in the hope that the Iranians would use their influence to free some Americans being held hostage in Lebanon. When the Iranians learned how profitable it was to sell hostages, more Americans were kidnaped. In the meantime, Oliver North, working out of the National Security Council, used profits from the arms sale to Iran to finance the Contra forces in Nicaragua, in direct violation of a congressional prohibition of such aid. When these covert actions became known in November, 1986, it seemed as if another president
would face impeachment, but nothing could be proven against Reagan himself. Only those lower in authority, like Admiral John Poindexter and Oliver North, faced criminal charges.

E. 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 arms reduction agreements and did agree in 1987 to destroy all of their intermediate range missiles. In addition, the Soviets pulled out of Angola and Afghanistan. Reagan's foreign policy triumphs erased the scandal of the Iran arms sales, and Reagan left office with his popularity restored.

SOCIAL DILEMMAS

Inaction by the federal government allowed the AIDS epidemic and the drug problem to grow out of control.

A. 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 and so did the rate of new infections. New drugs and safer sexual practices slowed the epidemic, but could not end it.

B. The War on Drugs

Until the mid-1980's, the casual use of cocaine by the middle class was generally tolerated, but one of its derivatives, crack, spread addiction through all economic classes and contributed to an exploding crime rate. The Reagan Administration tried to solve the problem by stopping supplies of cocaine from reaching the country, but the effort was doomed to failure. The Bush and Clinton administrations continued the same failed effort, and by 1995, the head of the FBI was close to conceding defeat in the war against cocaine and heroin.
PASSING THE TORCH TO BUSH

Reagan left office still popular despite the problems of his second term.

A. The Changing Palace Guard

Reagan gave shape and coherence to his administration, but left implementation of his policies to his staff. During the first term, he was ably served by the pragmatic James Baker, but when Baker was replaced by Donald Regan in 1985, the administration ran into trouble. There were still some victories, such as the tax reform package pushed through Congress and the appointment of conservatives to the Supreme Court, but there were also significant defeats. Reagan failed to get the Senate to confirm the appointment of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court, top officials were discovered to have used their offices for personal profit, and lower echelon staff members were found to have subverted the will of Congress.

B. The Election of 1988

The contest between George Bush, the Republican candidate, and Michael Dukakis, the Democrat, was close until Bush's campaign used television ads attacking Dukakis as soft on crime and somehow unpatriotic. Bush won rather easily, but the Republicans actually lost seats in Congress.

C. Bush’s Domestic Agenda

Except for the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Bush administration took very few legislative initiatives in domestic matters, unless faced with a crisis, such as the collapse of the Savings and Loans banks. More importantly, Bush shared the concern in Congress over the growing national debt, and finally agreed to a tax increase, thereby alienating many Republicans, who accused him of braking his promise of “no new taxes.” Unfortunately for Bush, the new taxes did nothing to solve the deficit problem because an economic recession depressed tax collections. The nation had higher taxes, and higher deficits.

D. The End of the Cold War

Although the Communist regime in China still brutally repressed its citizens, Communist governments in Europe fell like bowling pins. In 1989, the Berlin Wall, the most visible symbol of the Cold War, was torn down. By 1992 the Soviet Union had disappeared and the Communist Party was outlawed in the new Russian Republic. Bush responded to these events cautiously, reluctant to provoke the Chinese leaders or to make life more difficult for Gorbachev. By contrast, Bush acted aggressively in Panama and the Persian Gulf. The United States invaded Panama and seized her president, a reputed drug dealer. When Iraq occupied Kuwait in 1990, Bush organized an international effort in January
1991 that freed Kuwait and destroyed the Iraqi military. Bush's adroit combination of prudence and sudden, decisive action earned him greater public approval than any president since Kennedy, but Desert Storm stalled a feeble economic recovery and prolonged the recession.

E. Waging Peace

Bush was surprisingly aggressive in his foreign policy. He sent troops into Panama to arrest the President of that nation for drug trafficking, and he ordered an invasion of Iraq after that nation seized Kuwait in 1991. Bush became briefly popular because of the quick victory in Desert Storm, but the mood soon soured. The military effort contributed to an economic recession, and it became increasingly apparent that the victory was not complete, as Saddam continued to demonstrate his contempt for the United States.

CONCLUSION: REPUBLICAN ECONOMIC WOES

The Persian Gulf War, a military triumph, hurt an already ailing economy and destroyed Bush’s hope for reelection.
CHAPTER 33

AMERICA IN FLUX

TOWARD DISCUSSION

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. It is a bit premature to say that Hispanics have become the nation’s largest minority, but it is beyond doubt that 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 surmising 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. Looked at 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 Sun Belt 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.

**INVENTING THE PAST**

Thus far in the text and in this manual, it has been assumed that the past has an objective existence, somewhere “out there,” gone, but recoverable. Your students undoubtedly share that assumption, but it would be an interesting exercise to challenge them to think of the past in a new way.

Ask your students to tell you the history of the course. They will begin by trying to relate everything “as it really happened” and will quickly understand the impossibility of doing so. They will be inclined to believe that the exercise is possible in theory, if not in practice, but you can challenge them to think that History exists as much in the telling as it does in a past really inaccessible to human effort. If so, historians are justified in adopting the techniques used by storytellers, including the recreation of events through imaginative invention. One of the authors of the text, T.H. Breen, in his recently published *Imagining the Past*, brilliantly demonstrates how the people of East Hampton, New York, from colonial times to the present, have created and recreated a suitable past for their town, and how he as a professional historian imagined a version of his own. In *Dead Certainties*, Simon Schama, a professor at Harvard University, attempts to “dissolve the certainties of events into the multiple possibilities of alternative
narrations.” As part of that effort, Schama quotes extracts from a diary that Schama imagines might have been written by one of the British soldiers who witnessed the death of General Wolfe at the Battle of Quebec in 1759. In 1994, John Demos of Yale University published The Unredeemed Captive, the story of Eunice Williams, taken captive by Indians in 1704. Demos gives the reader a choice of five different beginnings and three different endings. At a crucial point, he imagines what Eunice Williams was thinking.

If you can convince your students that History is a narrative rather than a science, they will probably worry that if History becomes fiction, fiction will become History. If so, you may congratulate yourself on a job well done. The greatest service we teachers render our students is to send them on vacation wondering if they really know what they thought they knew.

THE BUCK STARTS HERE

The author begins with a meeting between Bill Clinton, shortly before his inauguration, and Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve. Greenspan convinced Clinton that deficit reduction should be his first priority because it would lower interest rates and stimulate economic recovery. Greenspan was right, and the nation entered an era of prosperity. The author also discusses the continued movement of the population to the Sunbelt and the increasing danger of international terrorism. He ends with a description of the first years of George Bush’s administration.

THE CHANGING AMERICAN POPULATION

The two most dramatic demographic changes in the last twenty years has been the movement of the population to the South and West and the arrival of immigrants from Third World nations.

A. A People on the Move

By 1980, a majority of Americans, especially the elderly, lived in the South and West, and by 1990, Los Angeles passed Chicago as the nation's second-largest city. The increasing urbanization of the Sunbelt brought both prosperity and urban problems.

B. The Revival of Immigration

Immigration increased rapidly after Congress passed the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965. From 1970 to 1990, about 14 million legal immigrants entered the country, usually from Latin America and Asia. There were, in addition, millions of illegal aliens in the United States, prompting calls for immigration restriction.

C. The Surging Hispanics

“Hispanics”, defined by the Census Department as people with Spanish surnames, are actually divided by country of origin. The largest group stems from Mexico, but Puerto
Ricans, Cubans and others form distinct segments of the Hispanic population. Generally younger, poorer, and less educated than the national average, Hispanics have used their increasing political clout to demand better educational opportunities, such as bilingual programs.

Aside from the legal immigrants, there were about four million “undocumented aliens,” mostly from Mexico, in the United States in 1986. They are easily exploited by employers and have become a controversial issue in states like California and Texas. In 1986, Congress attempted in vain to stop illegal immigration, and the flow continues at about 200,000 per year.

D. Advance and Retreat for African Americans

African Americans remained the largest non-white minority, and the Black middle class continued to make gains in business and education. When a Supreme Court ruling in 1991 threatened these gains by limiting affirmative action programs, Congress responded by passing a new civil rights act.

Although African Americans of all classes suffered discrimination, the unemployed and uneducated in the inner-cities suffered most. In 1992, as the result of the acquittal of policemen accused of brutalizing a Black man, Rodney King, a riot devastated Los Angeles and turned public attention once again to the grave problems of the urban slums.

E. Americans from Asia and the Middle East

The fastest growing minority at present are Asian Americans, most of whom are recent immigrants from China, the Philippines, Korea and India. There are also many Japanese Americans whose parents or grandparents were born in the United States. Compared with the national average, Asian Americans were generally well-educated and well-off.

Immigrants from the Middle East, especially from Israel, Iran and various Arab nations, also arrived in a steady stream. By 2000, there were over a million immigrants from the Middle East, concentrated in California, New York, and Michigan.

F. Melting Pot or Multiethnic Diversity?

As the United States receives more people from different parts of the world, the old ideal of a melting pot that would meld different cultures into an Anglo-Saxon form has been replaced by the image of a symphony orchestra where each instrument contributes a different sound to a single harmony.
DEMOCRATIC REVIVAL

Bill Clinton, a master politician, but a man of no personal integrity and little commitment to principle, won the presidency by promising to reinvigorate what was perceived by most to be an economy in recession.

A. The Election of 1992

President Bush's hope of reelection was destroyed by the constantly increasing budget deficits, a sluggish economy, Republican resentment of his violation of a promise not to raise taxes, the entrance of H. Ross Perot into the race, and the tremendous ability of Bill Clinton to connect with voters.

B. Economic Recovery

Despite his campaign promises to spend more on job-training programs and to push for a middle-class tax cut, Clinton was easily convinced that he should make deficit reduction his first priority, even if that meant raising taxes and cutting government services. He solved the deficit problem, but alienated many of his Democratic followers.

C. President versus Congress

Clinton also antagonized many Democrats by pushing for ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993. Clinton believed that free trade would create jobs, but union leaders feared that free trade would lower wages. Clinton then pushed for a major overhaul of the health care system, working through a task force headed by his wife, Hillary. Opposed by special interests and Republicans in Congress, the Clintons never mounted an effective campaign for their plan and were resoundingly defeated.

D. Contract with America

Clinton’s failure on health insurance was exploited by the Republicans, led by Newt Gingrich, who promised to enact a conservative agenda if his party gained control of Congress, and they won a majority of both houses. The victory was not clear cut, however, because voting turnout was low, especially among Democrats and more liberal independents.

E. The Clinton Rebound

Clinton seemed doomed in 1994, but the continued prosperity made him popular and the Republicans in the House acted ruinously by closing down the federal
government in a budget dispute with the president. In the election of 1996, Clinton faced a weak Republican nominee, Bob Dole, and was able to win handily by appealing especially to suburban women.

CLINTON AND THE WORLD

Clinton had never been as interested in foreign affairs as he was in domestic issues, and for much of his administration American foreign policy merely drifted.

A. Global Tensions in the Post-Cold War Era

Clinton fully supported Boris Yeltsin as the best hope for the survival of Russian democracy, despite Yeltsin's erratic behavior, and he courted the leaders of Communist China, despite their hostility to democracy. Clinton brought the Israelis and Palestinians together, but could not convince them to conclude a peace settlement.

B. Intervening in Somalia and Haiti

When Clinton became president, there were American troops in Somalia, originally sent to help distribute food during a famine, but already engaged in “nation building.” Clinton went along with this poorly conceived mission until a local militia killed eighteen American soldiers. He then pulled out the U.S. forces. In Haiti in 1994, Clinton sent American soldiers to ensure that the democratically elected president was allowed to take office, but the U.S. presence did nothing to lift Haiti from its terrible poverty.

C. Halting Civil War in Bosnia

Starting in 1992, a civil war in Bosnia resulted in widely reported atrocities that disturbed American public opinion. Clinton refused to become involved until 1995, when he ordered air strikes against the Serbian military. American intervention lead quickly to a cease fire and to the Dayton Accords which divided Bosnia among the major ethnic groups. Clinton approved the dispatch of 20,000 U.S. troops to keep the cease-fire, but the situation remained unresolved.

D. Saving Kosovo

After Serbia stripped the province of Kosovo of its autonomy, the ethnic Albanians began a guerrilla war, to which the Serbs responded with revolting savagery. Clinton preferred to ignore the problem, but public opinion finally forced him in 1999 to order air strikes, that were at first ineffectual and that even worsened the situation because the Serbs speeded up their “ethnic cleansing” of the area. Despite pressure to give in, Clinton stayed the course and ordered the
Air Force to destroy the Serbian infrastructure. The Serbs then withdrew from Kosovo and NATO troops, including Americans, were sent to ensure the peace.

United States intervention in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo demonstrated that American military force was still overwhelming when it could be deployed, but that even a superpower could be frustrated in fighting low-level battles.

THE END OF THE CENTURY

Although Americans enjoyed unparalleled prosperity in the 1990s, they also suffered unparalleled violence and one of the most disgusting episodes of moral failure on the part of the president.

A. From Deficit to Surplus

The American people only gradually came to realize that they were living in one of the greatest periods of prosperity that the nation had even achieved. There were many causes, such as increases in worker productivity, the interest rate policy of the Federal Reserve and the high level of consumer confidence which was manifested in continued spending. As the economy boomed, so did federal tax revenues, and the problem of deficits was eliminated. Instead, the president and Congress fought to a deadlock about how to eliminate the surplus.

B. Violence in the 1990s

The 1990s saw a horrific upsurge in violence. Some of it was the work of people who were at war with the American government or American society, such as the Branch Davidians who provoked the tragic Waco episode, or Timothy McVeigh, who bombed a federal office building in Oklahoma City, or anarchists who rioted in Seattle. Other episodes of violence seemed senseless, especially those that involved school children killing their teachers and fellow students. Americans had to wonder what there was about their family structure and their popular culture that produced such dreadful results.

C. Shadow on the White House

In 1998, it was reported that the president had had a sexual affair with a young White House intern. Clinton denied any involvement, even lying live on television to a national audience. He finally had to admit the truth, but the Republicans foolishly tarnished themselves during the scandal by making public the sordid details. Despite warnings that their obsession to get Clinton at any cost was unpopular with voters, who narrowed the Republican majority in the House elections of 1998, the Republican House leaders impeached Clinton. As everyone expected, the Senate refused to convict. Clinton was acquitted of the charges.
brought against him, but in the court of public opinion he would be remembered as a man who had gravely dishonored the highest office in land.

THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Despite doomsday fears as the Christian calendar approached the year 2000, the American people entered the twenty-first century without catastrophe, but not without controversy. The presidential election of 2000 was a mess, and stock market boom of the 90s collapsed. In 2001, terrorists struck a devastating blow against the American homeland. The new century would be filled with technological marvels, and with terrible new dangers.

A. The Disputed Election of 2000

The election of 2000 was shaped by two dominant trends, the desire to preserve and extend the nation's prosperity, and a desire to restore honor and dignity to the White House. The candidates, George W. Bush and Al Gore, offered voters a clear choice on many important issues. Bush favored less government and greater reliance on free market forces, while Gore wanted to use the government to expand health care and improve education. When the votes were finally cast, Gore won in the popular count, but the electoral vote was left undecided because the result in Florida was unclear. Florida's electoral votes finally went to Bush, but only after the United States Supreme Court intervened to stop a manual recount. On that uncertain note, the American people entered the future.

B. Bush’s Domestic Agenda

Bush surrounded himself with experienced political advisors, like Dick Cheney and Colin Powell, and proceeded immediately to push a conservative agenda, centered around tax cuts. He brought Congress along with him, and worked successfully with Democrats to pass an educational reform package, centered around regular testing to determine which schools were failing.

Early in Bush’s administration, the economy went into recession, in part because of the terrorist attack of 9/11 and in part because of the exposure of monumental fraud committed by such prominent companies as Enron.

C. Terrorism: Attack and Counterattack

On September 11, 2001, Arab terrorists destroyed the World Trade towers in New York and attacked the Pentagon, killing more than 3,000 victims. Bush responded as a man who had discovered his mission in life, and announced that the United States would invade Afghanistan, whose rulers, the Taliban, had given aid and comfort to the terrorist organization, al Queda, headed by Osama bin Laden. In coalition with various factions
within Afghanistan who were fighting the Taliban, the United States secured an early victory. Osmana bin Laden, however, escaped, and the Taliban had time to regroup.

In the war against terrorism, Congress created a new cabinet post, the Office of Homeland Security, and voted money to improve security around the nation, most especially on airlines. Some complained that the war on terrorism was eroding civil liberties, and some complained that the federal government was doing too little.

D. The New American Empire

Bush came to office suspicious of international commitments, and that suspicion hardened after 9/11. In his State of the Union address in January 2001, Bush singled out Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as an “axis of evil,” with the implied threat that the United States would feel free to change those regimes by force if necessary, even if American had to act alone. The Bush doctrine of preemptive war was codified in a National Security memorandum, which committed the United States to maintain a level of military force so powerful that no nation would dare attack it.

Bush implemented the new doctrine by invading Iraq. He and his officials argued that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction that posed an imminent threat to the United States and its allies. Even though most nations in the United Nations disagreed, most notably France, Germany and Russia, Bush ordered troops into Iraq in March 2003. The Iraqi army was quickly destroyed, but the occupation began badly and grew worse. The fall of the old regime unleashed massive looting and the collapse of law and order. A guerilla war against American forces began, and has grown more lethal over time.

Bush defended the war as the liberation of the Iraqi people from a brutal dictatorship, and as a step in the democratization of the Middle East, but without the apprehension of Saddam Hussein, with continued violence in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and with rising American casualties, the success of the war remains in doubt.

CONCLUSION: THE AMERICAN CENTURY?

The United States is unquestionably the strongest military and economic power in the world today, but other great empires have crumbled and America will suffer the same fate if even its own citizens and its friends around the world ever lose faith that America acts in the name of liberty, for the sake of democracy.