

HIST 1302: US after 1877

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Lumen Learning

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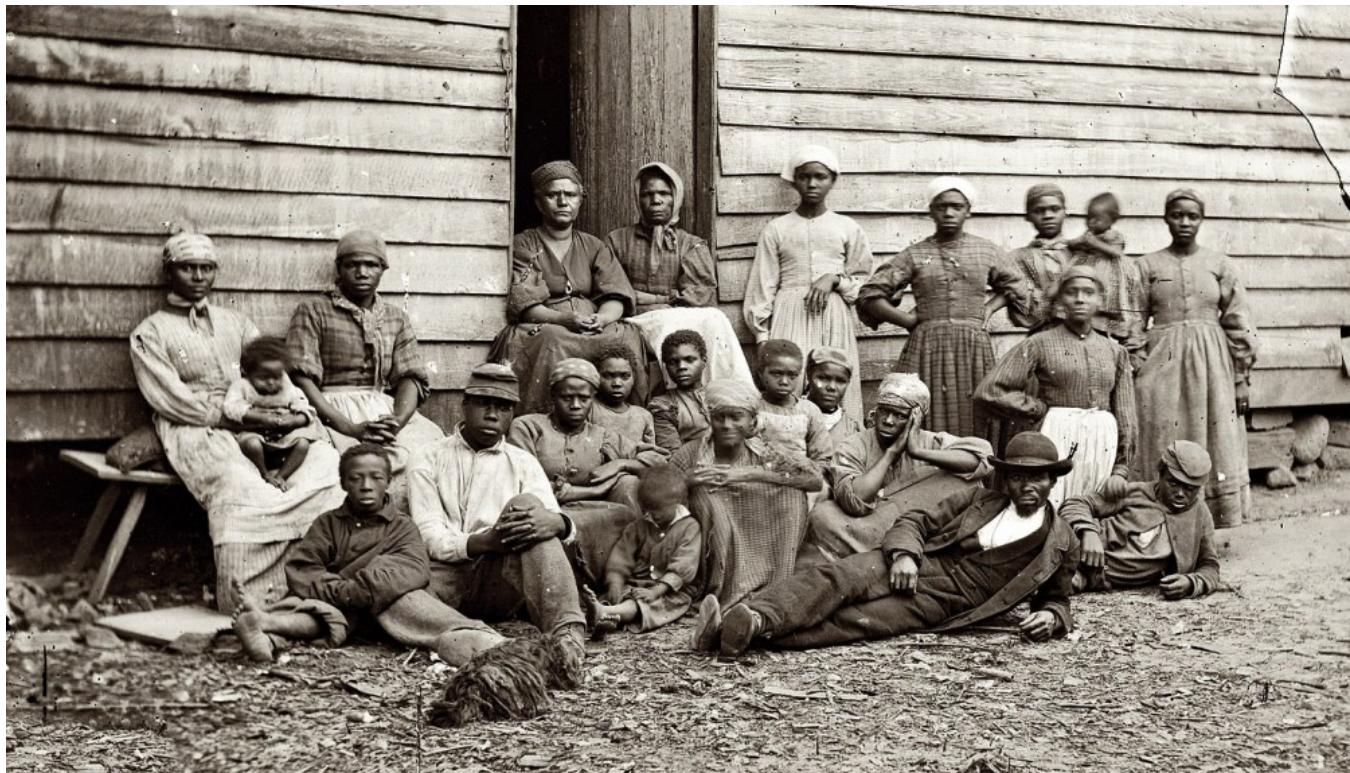
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RECONSTRUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO RECONSTRUCTION



"Contrabands," Cumberland Landing, Virginia, 1862, via [Library of Congress](#).

After the Civil War, much of the South lay in ruins. "It passes my comprehension to tell what became of our railroads," one South Carolinian told a Northern reporter. "We had passably good roads, on which we could reach almost any part of the State, and the next week they were all gone—not simply broken up, but gone. Some of the material was burned, I know, but miles and miles of iron have actually disappeared, gone out of existence." He might as well have been talking about the entire antebellum way of life. The future of the South was uncertain. How would these states be brought back into the Union? Would they be conquered territories or equal states? How would they rebuild their governments, economies, and social systems? What rights did freedom confer upon formerly enslaved people?

The answers to many of Reconstruction's questions hinged upon the concepts of citizenship and equality. The era witnessed perhaps the most open and widespread discussions of citizenship since the nation's founding. It was a moment of revolutionary possibility. African Americans and Radical Republicans pushed the nation to finally realize the Declaration of Independence's promises that "all men were created equal" and had "certain, unalienable rights." But conservative white Democrats granted African Americans legal freedom but little more. White Southerners argued that citizenship was something less than equality. As time passed, southern resistance

mounted, and Reconstruction collapsed, their vision triumphed. In the South they imposed limits on human freedom that would stand for nearly a century more.

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POLITICS OF RECONSTRUCTION



With the war coming to an end, the question of how to reunite the former Confederate states with the Union was a divisive one. Lincoln's Presidential Reconstruction plans were seen by many, including Radical Republicans in Congress, to be too tolerant towards what they considered to be traitors. This political cartoon reflects this viewpoint, showing Lincoln and Johnson happily stitching the Union back together with little anger towards the South. Joseph E. Baker, "The 'Rail Splitter' at Work Repairing the Union," 1865. [Library of Congress](#).

Reconstruction—the effort to restore southern states to the Union and to redefine African Americans' place in American society began before the Civil War ended. President Abraham Lincoln began planning for the reunification of the United States in the fall of 1863. With a sense that Union victory was imminent and that he could turn the tide of the war by stoking Unionist support in the Confederate states, Lincoln issued a proclamation allowing southerners to take an oath of allegiance. When just ten percent of a state's voting population had taken

such an oath, loyal Unionists could then establish governments. These so-called Lincoln governments sprang up in pockets where Union support existed like Louisiana, Tennessee, and Arkansas. Unsurprisingly, these were also the places that were exempted from the liberating effects of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Initially proposed as a war aim, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation committed the United States to the abolition of slavery. However, the Proclamation freed only slaves in areas of rebellion and left more than 700,000 in bondage in Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri as well as Union-occupied areas of Louisiana, Tennessee, and Virginia.

To cement the abolition of slavery, however, Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment on January 31, 1865 and legally abolished slavery "except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted." Section Two of the amendment granted Congress the "power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation." State ratification followed, and by the end of the year the requisite three-fourths states had approved the amendment, and four million blacks were forever free.

Though Lincoln's policy was lenient and conservative, the process of reconstruction was recast when Lincoln was shot on April 14, 1865 by John Wilkes Booth, while attending a performance of "Our American Cousin" at the Ford Theater. Treated rapidly and with all possible care, Lincoln succumbed to his wounds the following morning, leaving a somber pall over the North and among blacks that mourned the loss.

The assassination of Abraham Lincoln propelled Vice President Andrew Johnson into the executive office in April 1865. Johnson, a states' rights, strict-constructionist and unapologetic racist from Tennessee, offered southern states a quick restoration into the Union. His Reconstruction plan required provisional southern governments to void their ordinances of secession, repudiate their confederate debts, and ratify the Thirteenth Amendment. On all other matters, the conventions could do what they wanted with no federal interference. In order to give the white yeoman population a chance to seize power, he pardoned all southerners engaged in the rebellion with the exception of wealthy planters who possessed more than \$20,000 in property. The southern aristocracy would have to appeal to Johnson for individual pardons. To keep African Americans from stepping into the power vacuum, Johnson refused to grant them any rights beyond legal freedom.

Many of these southern governments enacted legislation that reestablished antebellum power relationships. South Carolina and Mississippi passed laws known as Black Codes to regulate black behavior and impose social and economic control. While they granted some rights to African Americans—like the right to own property, to marry or to make contracts—they also denied them fundamental rights. White lawmakers forbade black men from serving on juries or in state militias, refused to recognize black testimony against white people, apprenticed orphan children to their former masters, and established severe vagrancy laws. Mississippi's vagrant law required all freedmen to carry papers proving they had means of employment. If they had no proof, they could be arrested and fined. If they could not pay the fine, the sheriff had the right to hire out his prisoner to "anyone who will paid the said tax." Similar ambiguous vagrancy laws throughout the South reassured control over black labor in what one scholar has called "slavery by another name." Black codes effectively criminalized black leisure, limited their mobility, and locked many into exploitative farming contracts.

These legal proscriptions coupled with outrageous mob violence against southern blacks led Republicans to call for a more punitive process for southern states to be reinstated to the Union. So when Johnson announced that the southern states had been restored to the Union, Republicans in Congress refused to seat southern delegates from the newly reconstructed states.

Republicans in Congress responded with a spate of legislation aimed at protecting freedmen and restructuring political relations in the South. Many Republicans were willing to tolerate racial equality in order to keep Johnson and his Reconstruction governments from re-establishing old patterns of exploitation and power. Some Republicans, like United States Congressman Thaddeus Stevens, did so because they truly believed in racial equality. But the majority understood that the only way to protect Republican interests in the South was to give the vote to the hundreds of thousands of black men, and most never supported anything more than legal equality. Republicans in Congress responded to the codes with the Civil Rights Act of 1866—the first federal attempt to constitutionally define all American-born residents (except Native peoples) as citizens and which prohibited any curtailment of citizens' "fundamental rights." Johnson vetoed the act, arguing that black people did not deserve the rights of citizenship.



While no one could agree on what the best plan for reconstructing the nation would be, Americans understood the moment as critical and perhaps revolutionary. In this magnificent visual metaphor for the reconciliation of the North and South, John Lawrence postulates what might result from reunion. Reconstruction, the print seems to argue, will form a more perfect Union that upholds the ideals of the American Revolution, most importantly (as seen on a streaming banner near the top) that "All men are born free and equal." John Giles Lawrence, "Reconstruction," 1867. [Library of Congress](#).

The Fourteenth Amendment developed concurrently with the Civil Rights Act to ensure its constitutionality. The House of Representatives approved the Fourteenth Amendment on June 13, 1866. Section One granted citizenship and repealed the Taney Court's infamous *Dred Scott* (1857) decision. Moreover, it ensured that state laws could not deny due process or discriminate against particular groups of people. The Fourteenth Amendment signaled the federal government's willingness to enforce the Bill of Rights over the authority of the states.

Based on his belief that African Americans did not deserve rights, President Johnson opposed the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment. With a two-thirds majority gained in the 1866 midterm elections, Republicans overrode the veto, and in 1867, they passed the first of two Reconstruction Acts, which dissolved state governments, divided the South into five military districts, and required states to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment, to write new constitutions enfranchising African Americans, and to abolish black codes before re-joining the Union. The Fourteenth Amendment was finally ratified on July 9, 1867.

By the eve of the 1868 Presidential Election, African Americans in most Southern states had been constitutionally enfranchised and had registered to vote. Former Union General Ulysses S. Grant ran on a platform of "Let Us Have Peace" in which he promised to protect the new status quo. On the other hand, the Democratic candidate, Horatio Seymour, promised to repeal Reconstruction. Not only would the revolutionary moment be over, but also he would actively undo anything the Radicals had accomplished. Black Southern voters ensured Grant's victory and helped him win most of the former Confederacy.



With the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, droves of African American men went to the polls to exercise their newly recognized right to vote. In this Harper's Weekly print, black men of various occupations wait patiently for their turn as the first voter submits his ballot. Unlike other contemporary images that depicted African Americans as ignorant, unkempt, and lazy, this print shows these black men as active citizens. Alfred R. Waud, "The First Vote," November 1867. [Library of Congress](#).

Black Americans began to participate in local, state and federal governance for the first time. In 1860, only five states in the North allowed African Americans to vote on equal terms with whites. Yet after 1867 when Congress ordered Southern states to eliminate racial discrimination in voting, African Americans began to win elections across the South. In a short time, the South was transformed from an all-white, pro-slavery, Democratic stronghold to a collection of Republican led states with African American's in positions of power for the first time in American history.

Through the provisions of the Congressional Reconstruction Acts, black men voted in large numbers and also served as delegates to the state constitutional conventions in 1868. Black delegates actively participated in revising state constitutions. One of the most significant accomplishments of these conventions was the establishment of a public school system. While public schools were virtually nonexistent in the antebellum period, by the end of Reconstruction, every Southern state had established a public school system. Republican officials opened state institutions like mental asylums, hospitals, orphanages, and prisons to white and black residents, though often on a segregated basis. They actively sought industrial development, northern investment, and internal improvements.

African Americans served at every level of government during Reconstruction. At the federal level, Hiram Revels and Blanche K. Bruce were chosen as United States Senators from Mississippi. Fourteen men served in the House of Representatives. At least two hundred seventy other African American men served in patronage positions as postmasters, customs officials, assessors, and ambassadors. At the state level, more than 1,000 African American men held offices in the South. P. B. S. Pinchback served as Louisiana's Governor for thirty-four days after the previous governor was suspended during impeachment proceedings and was the only African American state governor until Virginia elected L. Douglass Wilder in 1989. Almost 800 African American men served as state legislators around the South with African Americans at one time making up a majority in the South Carolina House of Representatives.



The era of Reconstruction witnessed a few moments of true progress. One of those was the election of African Americans to local, state, and national offices, including both houses of Congress. Pictured here are Hiram Revels (the first African American Senator) alongside six black representatives, all from the former Confederate states. Currier & Ives, "First Colored Senator and Representatives in the 41st and 42nd Congress of the United States," 1872. [Library of Congress](#).

The African American office holders during Reconstruction came from diverse backgrounds. Many had been born free or had gained their freedom before the Civil War. Many free African Americans, particularly those in South Carolina, Virginia, and Louisiana, were wealthy and well educated, two facts that distinguished them from much of the white population both before and after the Civil War. Some like Antoine Dubuclet of Louisiana and William Breedlove from Virginia owned slaves before the Civil War. Others had helped slaves escape or taught them to read like Georgia's James D. Porter.

The majority of African American office holders, however, were slaves until sometime during the Civil War. Among them were skilled craftsman like Emanuel Fortune, a shoemaker from Florida, ministers such as James D. Lynch from Mississippi, and teachers like William V. Turner from Alabama served as public officials across the South. Moving into political office was a natural continuation of the leadership roles they had held in their former slave communities.

By the end of Reconstruction in 1877, more than 2,000 African American men had served in offices ranging from mundane positions such as local levee commissioner to United States Senator. When the end of Reconstruction returned white Democrats to power in the South, all but a few African American office holders lost their positions. After Reconstruction African Americans did not enter the political arena again in large numbers until well into the twentieth century.

THE MEANING OF BLACK FREEDOM

In addition to political equality, African Americans actively sought out ways to shed the vestiges of slavery. Many discarded the names their former masters had chosen for them and adopted new names like “Freeman” and “Lincoln” that affirmed their new identities as free citizens. Others resettled far from the plantations they had labored on as slaves, hoping to eventually farm their own land or run their own businesses. By the end of Reconstruction, the desire for self-definition, economic independence, and racial pride coalesced in the founding of dozens of black towns across the South. Perhaps the most well-known of these towns was Mound Bayou, Mississippi, a Delta town established in 1887 by Isaiah Montgomery and Ben Green, former slaves of Joseph and Jefferson Davis. Residents of the town took pride in the fact that African Americans owned all of the property in town, including banks, insurance companies, shops, and the surrounding farms, and they celebrated African American cultural and economic achievements during their annual festival, Mound Bayou Days. These tight-knit communities provided African Americans with spaces where they could live free from the indignities segregation and the exploitation of sharecropping on white-owned plantations.

Land was one of the major desires of the freed people. Frustrated by responsibility for the growing numbers of freed people following his troops, General William T. Sherman issued Special Field Order No. 15 in which land in Georgia and South Carolina was to be set aside as a homestead for the freedpeople. Lacking the authority to confiscate and distribute land—both powers of Congress—the appropriation and distribution of land was not fully realized. One of the main purposes of the Freedmen’s Bureau, however, was to redistribute to former slaves lands that had been abandoned and confiscated by the federal government. But in 1866, land that ex-Confederates had left behind was reinstated to them.

Freedpeople’s hopes of land reform were unceremoniously dashed as Freedmen Bureau agents held meetings with the freedmen throughout the South telling them the promise of land was not going to be honored and that instead they should plan to go back to work for their former owners, but as wage laborers. The policy reversal came as quite a shock. In one instance, Freedmen’s Bureau Commissioner General Oliver O. Howard went to Edisto Island to inform the black population there of the policy change. The black commission’s response was that “we were promised Homesteads by the government . . . You ask us to forgive the land owners of our island . . . The man who tied me to a tree and gave me 39 lashes and who stripped and flogged my mother and my sister . . . that man I cannot well forgive. Does it look as if he has forgiven me, seeing how he tries to keep me in a condition of helplessness?”

In working to ensure that crops would be harvested, agents sometimes coerced former slaves into signing contracts with their former masters. However, the Bureau also instituted courts where African Americans could seek redress if their employers were abusing them or not paying them. The last ember of hope for land redistribution was extinguished when Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner’s proposed land reform bills were tabled in Congress.

Another aspect of the pursuit of freedom was the reconstitution of families. Many freedpeople immediately left plantations in search of family members who had been sold away. Newspaper ads sought information about long lost relatives. People placed these ads until the turn of the 20th century, demonstrating the enduring pursuit of family reunification. When not reconstituted, families were rebuilt as freedpeople sought to gain control over their own children or other children who had been apprenticed to white masters either during the war or as a result of the Black Codes. Above all, freedpeople wanted freedom to control their families.

Many freedpeople rushed to solemnize unions with formal wedding ceremonies. Black people’s desires to marry fit the government’s goal to make free black men responsible for their own households and to prevent black women and children from becoming dependent on the government.

Freedpeople placed a great emphasis on education for their children and themselves. For many the ability to finally read the Bible for themselves induced work-weary men and women to spend all evening or Sunday attending night school or Sunday school classes. It was not uncommon to find a one-room school with more than 50 students ranging in age from 3 to 80. As Booker T. Washington famously described the situation, “it was a whole race trying to go to school. Few were too young, and none too old, to make the attempt to learn.”

Many churches served as schoolhouses and as a result became central to the freedom struggle as both the site of liberation and the support for liberation efforts. Free and freed blacks carried well-formed political and organizational skills into freedom. They developed anti-racist politics and organizational skills through anti-slavery organizations turned church associations. Liberated from white-controlled churches, black Americans remade their religious worlds according to their own social and spiritual desires.

One of the more marked transformations that took place after emancipation was the proliferation of independent black churches and church associations. In the 1930s, nearly 40% of 663 black churches surveyed had their organizational roots in the post-emancipation era. Many independent black churches emerged in the rural areas and most of them had never been affiliated with white churches.

Many of these independent churches were quickly organized into regional, state, and even national associations, often times by brigades of northern and midwestern free blacks who went to the South to help the freedmen. Through associations like the Virginia Baptist State Convention and the Consolidated American Baptist Missionary Convention, Baptists became the fastest growing post-emancipation denomination, building on their anti-slavery associational roots and carrying on the struggle for black political participation.

Tensions between northerners and southerners over styles of worship and educational requirements strained these associations. Southern, rural black churches preferred worship services with more emphasis on inspired preaching, while northern urban blacks favored more orderly worship and an educated ministry.

Perhaps the most significant internal transformation in churches had to do with the role of women—a situation that eventually would lead to the development of independent women’s conventions in the Baptist Church, Methodist and Pentecostal churches. Women like Nannie Helen Burroughs and Virginia Broughton, leaders of the Baptist Woman’s Convention, worked to protect black women from sexual violence from white men, a concern that black representatives articulated in state constitutional conventions early in the Reconstruction era. In churches, women continued to have to fight for equal treatment and access to the pulpit as preachers, even though they were able to vote in church meetings.

Black churches provided centralized leadership and organization in post-emancipation communities. Many political leaders and officeholders were ministers. Churches were often the largest building in town and served as community centers. Access to pulpits and growing congregations, provided a foundation for ministers’ political leadership. Groups like the Union League, militias and fraternal organizations all used the regalia, ritual and even hymns of churches to inform and shape their practice.

Black churches provided space for conflict over gender roles, cultural values, practices, norms, and political engagement. With the rise of Jim Crow, black churches would enter a new phase of negotiating relationships within the community and the wider world.

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RECONSTRUCTION AND WOMEN

Reconstruction involved more than the meaning of emancipation. Women also sought to redefine their roles within the nation and in their local communities. The abolitionist and women's rights movements simultaneously converged and began to clash. In the South, both black and white women struggled to make sense of a world of death and change. In Reconstruction, leading women's rights advocate Elizabeth Cady Stanton saw an unprecedented opportunity for disenfranchised groups—women as well as African Americans, northern and southern—to seize political rights. Stanton formed the Women's Loyal National League in 1863, which petitioned Congress for a constitutional amendment abolishing slavery. The Thirteenth Amendment marked a victory not only for the antislavery cause, but also for the Loyal League, proving women's political efficacy and the possibility for radical change. Now, as Congress debated the meanings of freedom, equality, and citizenship for former slaves, women's rights leaders saw an opening to advance transformations in women's status, too. On the tenth of May 1866, just one year after the war, the Eleventh National Women's Rights Convention met in New York City to discuss what many agreed was an extraordinary moment, full of promise for fundamental social change. Elizabeth Cady Stanton presided over the meeting. Also in attendance were prominent abolitionists, with whom Stanton and other women's rights leaders had joined forces in the years leading up to the war. Addressing this crowd of social reformers, Stanton captured the radical spirit of the hour: "now in the reconstruction," she declared, "is the opportunity, perhaps for the century, to base our government on the broad principle of equal rights for all." Stanton chose her universal language—"equal rights *for all*"—with intention, setting an agenda of universal suffrage for the activists. Thus, in 1866, the National Women's Rights Convention officially merged with the American Antislavery Society to form the American Equal Rights Association (AERA). This union marked the culmination of the longstanding partnership between abolitionist and women's rights advocates.



Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton maintained a strong and productive relationship for nearly half a century as they sought to secure political rights for women. While the fight for women's rights stalled during the war, it sprung back to life as Anthony, Stanton, and others formed the American Equal Rights Association. "[Elizabeth Cady Stanton, seated, and Susan B. Anthony, standing, three-quarter length portrait]," between 1880 and 1902. Library of Congress.

A PETITION
FOR
UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

The undersigned, Women of the United States, respectfully ask an amendment of the Constitution that shall prohibit the several States from disfranchising any of their citizens on the ground of sex.

In making our demand for Suffrage, we would call your attention to the fact that we represent fifteen million people—one half the entire population of the country—intelligent, virtuous, native-born American citizens; and yet stand outside the pale of political recognition.

The Constitution classes us as “free people,” and counts us whole persons in the basis of representation; and yet are we governed without our consent, compelled to pay taxes without appeal, and punished for violations of law without choice of judge or jury.

The experience of all ages, the Declarations of the Fathers, the Statute Laws of our own day, and the fearful revolution through which we have just passed, all prove the uncertain tenure of life, liberty and property so long as the ballot—the only weapon of self-protection—is not in the hand of every citizen.

Therefore, as you are now amending the Constitution, and, in harmony with advancing civilization, placing new safeguards round the individual rights of four millions of emancipated slaves, we ask that you extend the right of Suffrage to Woman—the only remaining class of disfranchised citizens—and thus fulfil your Constitutional obligation “to Guarantee to every State in the Union a Republican form of Government.”

As all partial application of Republican principles must ever breed a complicated legislation as well as a discontented people, we would pray your Honorable Body, in order to simplify the machinery of government and ensure domestic tranquillity, that you legislate hereafter for persons, citizens, tax-payers, and not for class or caste.

For justice and equality your petitioners will ever pray.

NAMES.	RESIDENCE.
Elizabeth Stanton,	New York
Susan B. Anthony	Rochester - N.Y.
Antoinette Brown Blackwell	New York
Lucy Stone	Newark N. Jersey
Joanna S. Morse	48 Livingston St Brooklyn
Emmeline Rose	New York
Harriet E. Eaton	6 West 14 th Street NY
Catherine C. Wilkeson	83 Clinton Place New York
Elizabeth C. Tilton	48 Livingston St Brooklyn
Mary Twicken Gilbert	293 W. 19 th St New York
May S. Eliot	New York
W. Griffitt	New York.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the great women's rights and abolition activist, was one of the strongest forces in the universal suffrage movement. Her name can be seen at the top of this petition to extend suffrage to all regardless of sex, which was present to Congress on January 29, 1866. It did not pass, and women would not gain the vote for more than half a decade after Stanton and others signed this petition. "Petition of E. Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Stone, Antoinette

Brown Blackwell, and Others Asking for an Amendment of the Constitution that Shall Prohibit the Several States from Disfranchising Any of Their Citizens on the Ground of Sex," 1865. [National Archives and Records Administration](#).

The AERA was split over whether black (male) suffrage should take precedence over universal suffrage given the political climate of the South. Some worried that political support for freedmen would be undermined by the pursuit of women's suffrage. For example, AERA member Frederick Douglass insisted that the ballot was literally a "question of life and death" for southern black men, but not for women. Some African-American women challenged white suffragists in other ways; Frances Harper, for example, a free-born black woman living in Ohio, urged them to consider their own privilege as white and middle class. Universal suffrage, she argued, would not so clearly address the complex difficulties posed by racial, economic, and gender inequality.

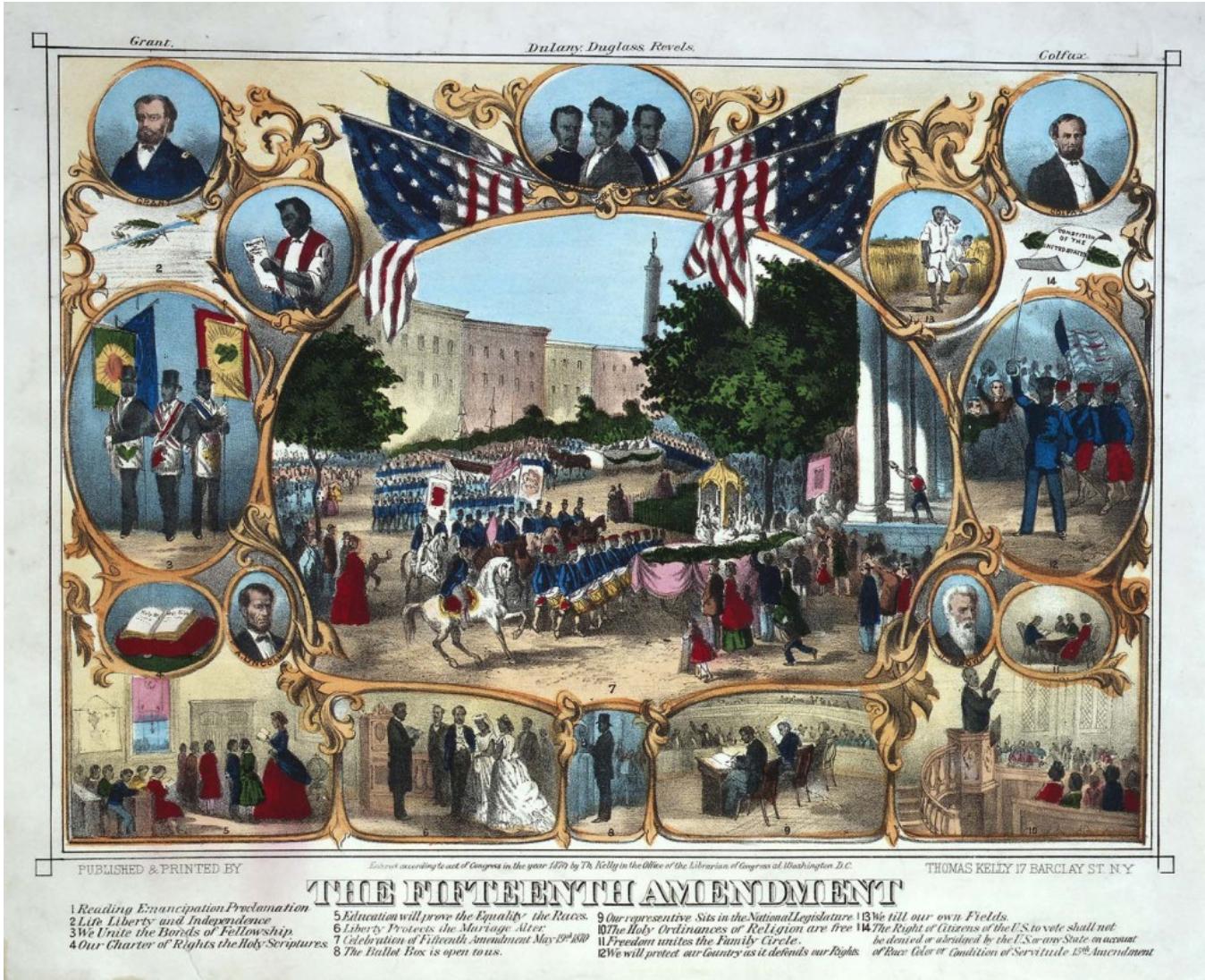
These divisions came to a head early in 1867, as the AERA organized a campaign in Kansas to determine the fate of black and woman suffrage. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her partner in the movement, Susan B. Anthony, made the journey to advocate universal suffrage. Yet they soon realized that their allies were distancing themselves from women's suffrage in order to advance black enfranchisement. Disheartened, Stanton and Anthony allied instead with white supremacists that supported women's equality. Many fellow activists were dismayed by Stanton and Anthony's willingness to appeal to racism to advance their cause.

These tensions finally erupted over conflicting views of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Women's rights leaders vigorously protested the Fourteenth Amendment. Although it established national citizenship for all persons born or naturalized in the United States, the amendment also introduced the word "male" into the Constitution for the first time. After the Fifteenth Amendment ignored "sex" as an unlawful barrier to suffrage, an omission that appalled Stanton, the AERA officially dissolved. Stanton and Anthony formed the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA), while those suffragists who supported the Fifteenth Amendment, regardless of its limitations, founded the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA).

The NWSA soon rallied around a new strategy: the 'New Departure'. This new approach interpreted the Constitution as *already* guaranteeing women the right to vote. They argued that by nationalizing citizenship for all persons, and protecting all rights of citizens—including the right to vote—the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments guaranteed women's suffrage. Broadcasting the New Departure, the NWSA encouraged women to register to vote, which roughly seven hundred did between 1868 and 1872. Susan B. Anthony was one of them and was arrested but then acquitted in trial. In 1875, the Supreme Court addressed this constitutional argument: acknowledging women's citizenship, but arguing that suffrage was not a right guaranteed to all citizens. This ruling not only defeated the New Departure, but also coincided with the Court's generally reactionary interpretation of the Reconstruction Amendments, which significantly limited freedmen's rights. Following this defeat, many suffragists like Stanton increasingly replaced the ideal of 'universal suffrage' with arguments about the virtue that white women would bring to the polls. These new arguments often hinged on racism and declared the necessity of white women voters to keep black men in check.

By the close of the decade, the promise of Reconstruction—of creating a more democratic society—was followed by a conservative backlash against equal rights.

Southern women also grappled with the effects of the war. The lines between refined white womanhood and degraded enslaved black femaleness were no longer so clearly defined. Moreover, during the war, southern white women had been called upon to do traditional man's work—chopping wood and managing businesses. While white southern women decided whether and how to return to their prior status, African American women embraced new freedoms and a redefinition of womanhood.



The Fifteenth Amendment gave male citizens, regardless of race, color, or previous status (i.e. slavery), the right to vote. While the amendment was not all encompassing in that women were not included, it was an extremely significant ruling in establishing the liberties of African American men. This print depicts a huge parade held in Baltimore, Maryland, on May 19, 1870, surrounded by portraits of abolitionists and scenes of African Americans exercising their rights. Thomas Kelly after James C. Beard, "The 15th Amendment. Celebrated May 19th 1870," 1870. [Library of Congress](#).

The Civil War showed white women, especially upper-class women, life without their husbands' protection. Many did not like what they saw, especially in an uncertain future with the possibility of racial equality. Formerly wealthy women hoped to maintain their social status by rebuilding the prewar social hierarchy. Through the Ladies Memorial Association and other civic groups, southern women led the efforts to bury and memorialize the dead, praising and bolstering their men's masculinity through nationalist speeches and memorials. The Ladies Memorial Association grew out of the Soldiers' Aid Society and became the precursor and custodian of the Lost Cause narrative. LMAs and their ceremonies "adopted a fairly uniform look," but celebrated locally important dates. For instance, some LMAs celebrated on May 10th, the anniversary of Stonewall Jackson's death. Through these activities, southern women took on a more political role in the South.

Southern black women also sought to redefine their public and private lives. Their efforts to control their labor met the immediate opposition of southern white women. Gertrude Clanton, a plantation mistress before the war, disliked cooking and washing dishes, so she hired an African American woman to do the washing. A misunderstanding quickly developed. The laundress, nameless in Gertrude's records, performed her job and returned home. Gertrude believed that her money had purchased a day's labor, not just the load of washing, and she became quite frustrated. Meanwhile, this washerwoman and others like her set wages and hours for

themselves, and in many cases began to take washing into their own homes in order to avoid the surveillance of white women.

Similar conflicts raged across the South. White Southerners demanded African American women to work in the plantation home and instituted apprenticeship systems to place African American children in unpaid labor positions. African American women combated these attempts by refusing to work at jobs without fair pay or conditions, and by clinging tightly to their children.

Like white LMA members, African American women formed clubs to bury their dead, to celebrate African American masculinity, and to provide aid to their communities. On May 1, 1865, African Americans in Charleston created the precursor to the modern Memorial Day by mourning the Union dead buried hastily on a race track-turned prison. Like their white counterparts, the 300 African American women who participated had been members of the local Patriotic Association, which aided freedpeople during the war. African American women continued participating in Federal Decoration Day ceremonies and, later, formed their own club organizations. Racial violence, whether city riots or rural vigilantes, continued to threaten these vulnerable households. Nevertheless, the formation and preservation of the African American households became a paramount goal for African American women.

For all of their differences, white and black Southern women faced a similar challenge during Reconstruction. Southern women celebrated the return of their brothers, husbands, and sons, but couples separated for many years struggled to adjust. To make matters worse, many of these former soldiers returned with physical or mental wounds. For white families, suicide and divorce became more acceptable, while the opposite occurred for black families. Since the entire South suffered from economic devastation, many families were impoverished and sank into debt. Southern women struggled to rebuild stability on unstable ground. All Southern women faced economic devastation, lasting wartime trauma, and enduring racial tensions.

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RACIAL VIOLENCE IN RECONSTRUCTION

Violence shattered the dream of biracial democracy. Still steeped in the violence of slavery, white southerners could scarcely imagine black free labor. Congressional investigator, Carl Schurz, reported that in the summer of 1865, southerners shared a near unanimous sentiment that “You cannot make the negro work, without physical compulsion.” Violence had been used in the antebellum period to enforce slave labor and to define racial difference. In the post-emancipation period it was used to stifle black advancement and return to the old order.

Much of life in the antebellum South had been premised on slavery; the social order rested upon a subjugated underclass and the labor system required unfree laborers. A notion of white supremacy and black inferiority undergirded it all: whites were understood as fit for freedom and citizenship; blacks for chattel slave labor. The Confederate surrender at Appomattox Court House and the subsequent adoption by the U.S. Congress of the Thirteenth Amendment destroyed the institution of American slavery and threw the southern society into disarray. The foundation of southern society had been decimated. While southern legislators tried to use black codes to restore the old order, while white citizens turned to terrorism to try to control the former slaves.



The Ku Klux Klan was just one of a number of vigilante groups that arose after the war to terrorize African Americans and Republicans throughout the South. The KKK brought violence into the voting polls, the workplace, and — as seen in this Harper's Weekly print — the homes of black Americans. Frank Bellew, "Visit of the Ku-Klux," 1872. [Wikimedia](#).

Racial violence in the Reconstruction period took three major forms: urban riots, interpersonal fights, and organized vigilante groups. There were riots in southern cities several times during Reconstruction. The most notable were the riots in Memphis and New Orleans in 1866, but other large-scale urban conflicts erupted in places including Laurens, South Carolina in 1870; Colfax, Louisiana in 1873; another in New Orleans in 1874; Yazoo City, Mississippi in 1875; and Hamburg, South Carolina in 1876. Southern cities grew rapidly after the war as migrants from the countryside—particularly freed slaves—flocked to urban centers. Cities became centers of Republican control. But white conservatives chafed at the influx of black residents and the establishment of biracial politics. In nearly every conflict, white conservatives initiated violence in reaction to Republican rallies or conventions or elections in which black men were to vote. The death tolls of these conflicts remain incalculable—and victims were overwhelmingly black.

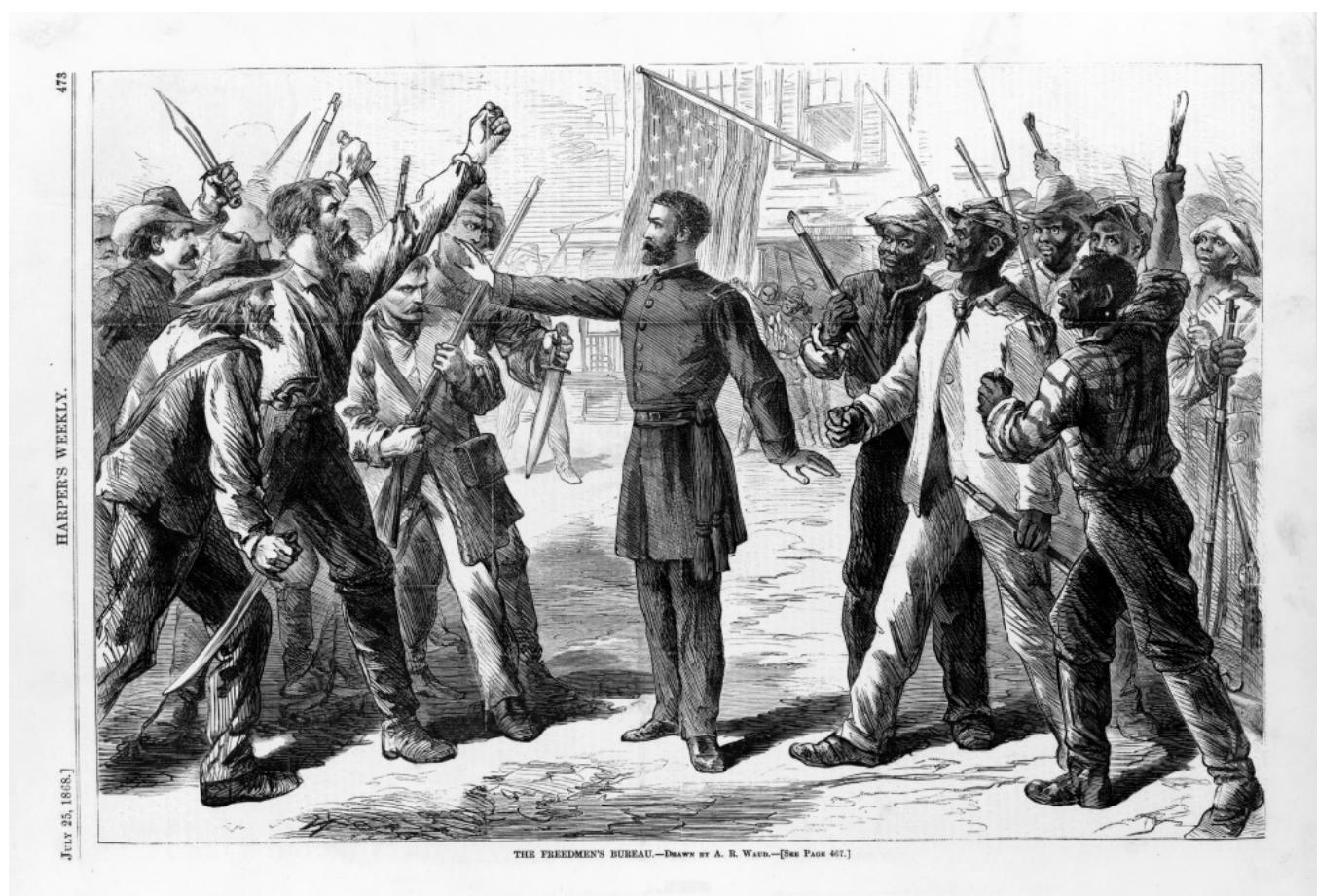
Even everyday violence between individuals disproportionately targeted African Americans during Reconstruction. Though African Americans gained citizenship rights like the ability to serve on juries as a result of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 and the Fourteenth Amendment to the federal constitution, southern white men were rarely successfully prosecuted for violence against black victims. White men beat or shot black men with relative impunity, and did so over minor squabbles, labor disputes, longstanding grudges, and crimes of passion. These incidents sometimes were reported to local federal authorities like the army or the Freedmen's Bureau, but more often than not such violence was underreported and unprosecuted.

More premeditated was the violence committed by organized vigilante groups, sometimes called nightriders or bushwhackers. Groups of nightriders—called so because they often operated at night, under cover of darkness and wearing disguises—sought to curtail African American political involvement by harassing and killing black

candidates and office holders and frightening voters away from the polls. They also aimed to limit black economic mobility by terrorizing freedpeople who tried to purchase land or otherwise become too independent from the white masters they used to rely on. They were terrorists and vigilantes, determined to stop the erosion of the antebellum South, and they were widespread and numerous, operating throughout the South. The Ku Klux Klan emerged in the late 1860s as the most infamous of these groups.

The Ku Klux Klan was organized in 1866 in Pulaski, Tennessee and had spread to nearly every state of the former Confederacy by 1868. The Klan drew heavily from the antebellum southern elite, but Klan groups sometimes overlapped with criminal gangs or former Confederate guerilla groups. The Klan's imagery of white hoods and robes became so potent, and its violence so widespread, that many groups not formally associated with it were called Ku Kluxers, and to "Ku Klux" was used to mean to commit vigilante violence. While it is difficult to differentiate Klan actions from those of similar groups, such as the White Line, Knights of the White Camellia, and the White Brotherhood, the distinctions hardly matter. All such groups were part of a web of terror that spread throughout the South during Reconstruction. In Panola County, Mississippi, between August 1870 and December 1872, twenty-four Klan-style murders occurred. And nearby, in Lafayette County, Klansmen drowned thirty blacks in a single mass murder. Sometimes the violence was aimed at "uppity" blacks who had tried to buy land or dared to be insolent toward a white. Other times, as with the beating of Republican sheriff and tax collector Allen Huggins, the Klan targeted white politicians who supported freedpeople's civil rights. Numerous, perhaps dozens, of Republican politicians were killed, either while in office or while campaigning. Thousands of individual citizens, men and women, white and black, had their homes raided and were whipped, raped, or murdered.

The federal government responded to southern paramilitary tactics by passing the Enforcement Acts between 1870 and 1871. The acts made it criminal to deprive African Americans of their civil rights. The acts also deemed violent Klan behavior as acts of rebellion against the United States and allowed for the use of U.S. troops to protect freedpeople. For a time, the federal government, its courts, and its troops, sought to put an end to the KKK and related groups. But the violence continued. By 1876, as southern Democrats reestablished "home rule" and "redeemed" the South from Republican rule, federal opposition to the KKK weakened. National attention shifted away from the South and the activities of the Klan, but African Americans remained trapped in a world of white supremacy that restricted their economic, social, and political rights.



The national government, initiated by President Lincoln, created the Freedmen's Bureau to assist freed people in securing their rights and their livelihoods. In this Harper's Weekly print, The Freedmen's Bureau official protecting the black men and women from the angry and riotous mob of white Americans stood as a representation of the entire Bureau. Soon the Bureau and the federal government would recognize that they could not accomplish a fraction of what they set out to do, including keeping African Americans safe and free in the South. Alfred R. Waud, "The Freedmen's Bureau," 1868. Library of Congress.

White conservatives would assert that Republicans, in denouncing violence, were “waving a bloody shirt” for political opportunity. The violence, according to many white conservatives, was fabricated, or not as bad as it was claimed, or an unavoidable consequence of the enfranchisement of African Americans. On December 22, 1871, R. Latham of Yorkville, South Carolina wrote to the *New York Tribune*, voicing the beliefs of many white southerners as he declared that “the same principle that prompted the white men at Boston, disguised as Indians, to board, during the darkness of night, a vessel with tea, and throw her cargo into the Bay, clothed some of our people in Ku Klux gowns, and sent them out on missions technically illegal. Did the Ku Klux do wrong? You are ready to say they did and we will not argue the point with you... Under the peculiar circumstances what could the people of South Carolina do but resort to Ku Kluxing?”

Victims and witnesses to the violence told a different story. Sallie Adkins of Warren County, Georgia, was traveling with her husband, Joseph, a Georgia state senator, when he was assassinated by Klansmen on May 10, 1869. She wrote President Ulysses S. Grant, asking for both physical protection and justice. “I am no Statesman,” she disclaimed, “I am only a poor woman whose husband has been murdered for his devotion to his country. I may have very foolish ideas of Government, States & Constitutions. But I feel that I have claims upon my country. The Rebels imprisoned my Husband. Pardoned Rebels murdered him. There is no law for the punishment of them who do deeds of this sort... I demand that you, President Grant, keep the pledge you made the nation—make it safe for any man to utter boldly and openly his devotion to the United States.”

Thousands of Americans murdered and thousands more were raped, whipped, and wounded during the violence of Reconstruction. The political and social consequences of the violence were as lasting as the physical and mental trauma suffered by victims and witnesses. Terrorism worked to end federal involvement in Reconstruction and helped to usher in a new era of racial repression.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DURING THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION



The United States, on the verge of civil war, contained two distinct economies. While the majority of Americans in every part of the country lived and worked on farms, their economic lives differed fundamentally from each other. In the South, life revolved around unfree labor and staple crops. The North contained a greater diversity of industry, finance, and commerce resting on the “free labor” of wage earners and small proprietors. The war years would alter this picture, leaving the South in shambles and clearing the way for the continued growth of the northern economy. In 1859 and 1860, southern planters were flush with prosperity after producing record cotton crops—America’s most valuable export at the time. Southern prosperity relied on over 4 million African American slaves to grow cotton, along with a number of other staple crops across the region. Cotton fed the textile mills of America and Europe and brought great wealth to the region. On the eve of war, the American South enjoyed more per capita wealth than any other slave economy in the New World. To their masters, slaves constituted their most valuable assets, worth roughly three billion dollars. Yet this wealth obscured the gains in infrastructure, industrial production, and financial markets occurring north of the Mason-Dixon line, a fact that the war would unmask for all to see.

In contrast to the slave South, northerners praised their region as a land of free labor, populated by farmers, merchants, and wage-laborers. It was also home to a robust market economy. By 1860, northerners could buy clothing made in a New-England factory, or light their homes with kerosene oil from Pennsylvania. The Midwest produced seas of grain that fed the country, with enough left over for export to Europe. Farther west, mining and

agriculture were the mainstays of life. Along with the textile mills, shoe factories and iron foundries, firms like the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company, or the Colt Company displayed the technical advances of northern manufacturers. These goods crisscrossed the country on the North's growing railroad network. Underlying production was an extensive network of banks and financial markets that helped aggregate capital that could be reinvested into further growth.

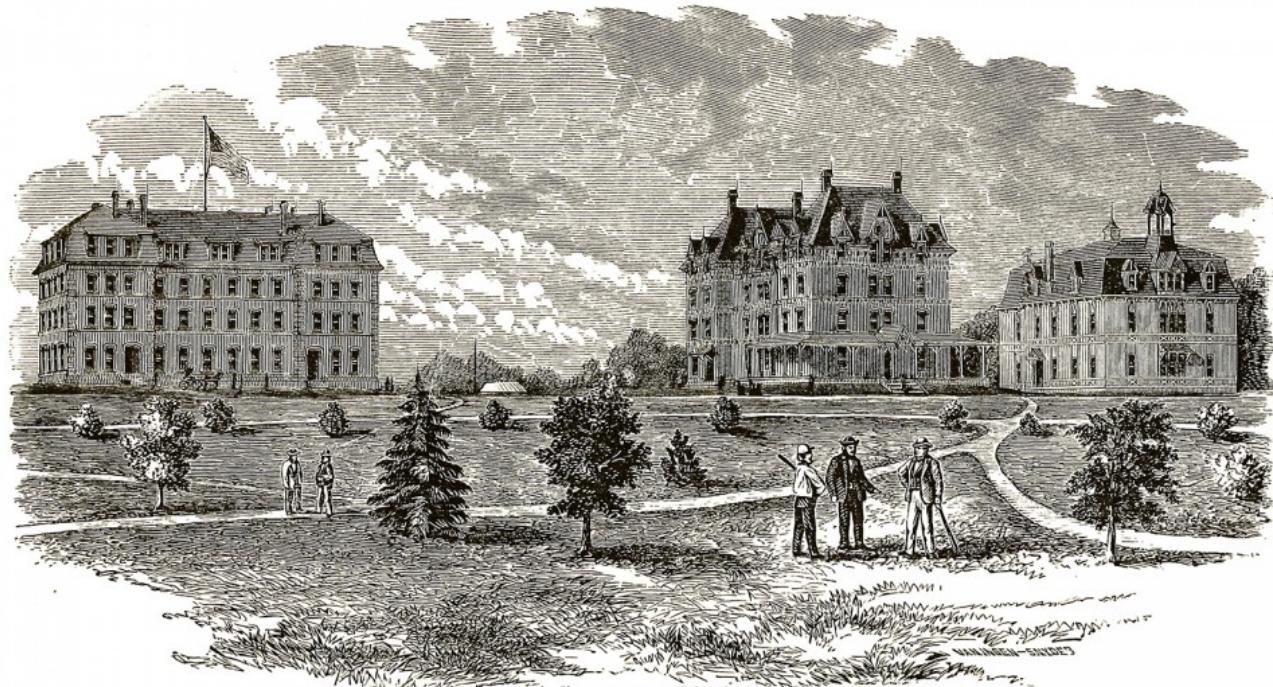
The Civil War, like all wars, interrupted the rhythms of commercial life by destroying lives and property. This was especially true in the Confederacy. From 1861 onwards, the Confederate government struggled to find the guns, food, and supplies needed to field an army. Southerners did make astonishing gains in industrial production during this time, but it was never enough. The Union's blockade of the Atlantic prevented the Confederacy from financing the war with cotton sales to Europe. To pay their troops and keep the economy alive, the Confederate Congress turned to printing paper money—which quickly sank in value and lead to rapid inflation. In many cases, Confederate officials dispensed with taxes paid in cash and simply impressed the food and materials needed from their citizens. Perhaps most striking of all, in the vast agricultural wealth of the South, many southerners struggled to find enough to eat.

The war also pushed the US government to take unprecedented steps. Congress raised tariffs, and passed the first national income tax in 1862. After the suspension of specie payments in late 1861, Congress created the US's first fiat currency called "greenbacks." At first, the expansion of the currency and the rapid rise in government spending translated into an uptick in business in 1862-1863. As the war dragged on, inflation also hit the North. Workers demanded higher wages to pay rents and buy necessities, while the business community groaned under their growing tax burden. The United States, however, never embarked on a policy of impressment for food and supplies. The factories and farms of the North successfully supplied Union troops, while the federal government, with some adjustments, found the means to pay for war. None of this is to suggest that the North's superior ability to supply its war machine made the outcome of the war inevitable. Any account of how the war progressed must take account of the tangled web of politics, battles, and economics that occurred between 1861 and 1865. The aftermath of the war left portions of the Confederacy in ruins, and with little or no money to rebuild. State governments were mired in debt, and white planters, who had most of their capital tied up in slaves, lost most of their wealth. Cotton remained the most significant crop, but the war changed how it was grown and sold. Planters broke up large farms into smaller plots tended to by single families in exchange for a portion of the crop, called sharecropping. Once cotton production resumed, Americans found that their cotton now competed with new cotton plantations around the world.



War brought destruction across the South. Governmental and private buildings, communication systems, the economy, and transportation infrastructure were all debilitated. [Richmond, Va. Crippled locomotive, Richmond & Petersburg Railroad depot], c. 1865. Library of Congress.

Emancipation was the single most important economic, social and political outcome of the war. Freedom empowered African Americans in the South to rebuild families, make contracts, hold property and move freely for the first time. During Reconstruction, Republican policy in the South attempted to transform the region into a free-labor economy like the North. Yet the transition from slave labor to free labor was never so clear. Well into the 20th century, white southerners used a combination of legal force and extra-legal violence to keep a degree of control of over African American labor. Peonage and vagrancy laws attempted to keep African Americans bound to their white employers. In the later nineteenth-century, poor whites would form mobs and go "white-capping" to scare away blacks from jobs. Lacking the means to buy their own farms, black farmers often turned to sharecropping. Sharecropping often led to cycles of debt that kept families bound to the land. For the South as a whole, the war and Reconstruction marked the start of a period of deep poverty that would last until at least the New Deal of the 1930s. Victory did not translate into a quick economic boom for the United States. The North would not regain its prewar pace of industrial and commodity output until the 1870s. The war did prove beneficial to northern farmers, who responded to wartime labor shortages with greater use of mechanical reapers, which boosted yields. The most significant change for the North was the increased presence of the federal government in the economy. Republican Congresses during the Civil War passed a series of laws that restructured the relationship between the government and the market and set the stage for the Gilded Age. New tariff laws sheltered northern industry from European competition. The Morrill Land Grant helped create colleges such as the University of California, Illinois, and Wisconsin. With the creation of the National Banking System and the greenbacks, Congress replaced hundreds of state bank notes with a system of federal currency that accelerated trade and exchange between regions of the country. This was not to say that Republican policy worked perfectly. The Homestead Act, meant to open the West to small farmers was often frustrated by the actions of Railroad corporations and speculators. The Transcontinental Railroad, also created during the war, failed to produce any economic gains until decades after its creation. The war years also forged a close relationship between government and the business elite, a relationship that sometimes resulted in corruption and catastrophe as it did when markets crashed on Black Friday September 24, 1869. This new relationship created a political backlash, especially in the West and South against Washington's perceived eastern and industrial bias. In other words, the end of the slavery issue during the Civil War gave way to long political conflict over the direction of American economic development that would mark politics for the rest of the century.



MASSACHUSETTS AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE, AMHERST, MASS.

Massachusetts Agricultural College (now known as University of Massachusetts Amherst) was one of many colleges founded through the Federal Morrill-Land Grant Colleges Act. "Massachusetts Agricultural College, Amherst, Mass. 1879," 1880.
Wikimedia.

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THE END OF RECONSTRUCTION

Reconstruction ended when national attention turned away from the integration of former slaves as equal citizens enabling white Democrats to recapture southern politics. Between 1868 and 1877, and accelerating after the Depression of 1873, national interest in Reconstruction dwindled as economic issues moved to the foreground. The biggest threat to Republican power in the South was violence and intimidation by white conservatives, staved off by the presence of federal troops in key southern cities. Reconstruction ended with the contested Presidential election of 1876, which put Republican Rutherford B. Hayes in office in exchange for the withdrawal of federal troops from the South.

Republicans and Democrats responded to the economic declines by shifting attention from Reconstruction to economic recovery. War weary from nearly a decade of bloody military and political strife, so-called Stalwart Republicans turned from idealism, focusing their efforts on economics and party politics. They grew to particular influence during Ulysses S. Grant's first term (1868-1872). After the death of Thaddeus Stevens in 1868 and the political alienation of Charles Sumner by 1870, Stalwart Republicans assumed primacy in Republican Party politics, putting Reconstruction on the defensive within the very party leading it.

Meanwhile, New Departure Democrats gained strength by distancing themselves from pro-slavery Democrats and Copperheads. They focused on business, economics, political corruption, and trade, instead of Reconstruction. In the South, New Departure Democrats were called Redeemers, and were initially opposed by southerners who clung tightly to white supremacy and the Confederacy. But between 1869 and 1871, their home rule platform, asserting that good government was run by locals—meaning white Democrats, rather than black or white Republicans—helped end Reconstruction in three important states: Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia.

In September 1873, Jay Cooke and Company declared bankruptcy, resulting in a bank run that spiraled into a six-year depression. The Depression of 1873 destroyed the nation's fledgling labor movement, and helped quell northerners remaining idealism about Reconstruction. In the South, many farms were capitalized entirely through loans. After 1873, most sources of credit vanished, forcing many landowners to default, driving them into an over-saturated labor market. Wages plummeted, contributing to the growing system of debt peonage in the South that trapped workers in endless cycles of poverty. Democrats responded nationally in 1874, running on sound economics and fiscal policy, which allowed them to take control of the House of Representatives.



During the Panic of 1873, workers began demanding that the federal government help alleviate the strain on Americans. In January 1874, over 7,000 protesters congregated in New York City's Tompkins Square to insist the government make job creation a priority. They were met with brutality as police dispersed the crowd, and consequently the unemployment movement lost much of its steam. Matt Morgen, Print of a crowd driven from Tompkins Square by the mounted police, in the Tompkins Square Riot of 1874, January 1874. [Wikimedia](#).

On the eve of the 1876 Presidential election, the nation still reeling from depression, the Grant administration found itself no longer able to intervene in the South due to growing national hostility to interference in southern affairs. Scandalous corruption in the Grant Administration had sapped the national trust. By 1875, when armed conflict broke out in Mississippi and the state's Republican governor urged federal involvement, national Republicans felt they had no choice but to ignore the plea. Meanwhile, the Republican candidate for governor of Ohio, Rutherford B. Hayes, won big without mentioning Reconstruction, focusing instead on honest government, economic recovery, and temperance. His success entered him into the running as a potential Presidential candidate. The stage was set for an election that would end Reconstruction as a national issue.

Republicans chose Rutherford B. Hayes as their nominee while Democrats chose Samuel J. Tilden, who ran on honest politics and home rule in the South. Allegations of voter fraud and intimidation emerged in the three states in which Reconstruction held strong and whose outcome would decide the result: Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina. Indeed, those elections were fraught with violence and fraud because of the impunity with which white conservatives felt they could operate in their efforts to deter Republican voters. A special electoral commission voted along party lines—eight Republicans for, seven Democrats against—in favor of Hayes.

Democrats threatened to boycott Hayes' inauguration. Rival governments arose claiming to recognize Tilden as the rightfully elected President. Republicans, fearing another sectional crisis, reached out to Democrats. In the Compromise of 1877 Democrats conceded the presidency to Hayes on the promise that all remaining troops would be removed from the South. In March 1877, Hayes was inaugurated; in April, the remaining troops were ordered out of the South. The Compromise allowed southern Democrats to return to power, no longer fearing reprisal from federal troops or northern politicians for their flagrant violence and intimidation of black voters.

After 1877, Republicans no longer had the political capital to intervene in the South in cases of violence and electoral fraud, resulting in fewer chances for freedpeople to hold state office. In certain locations with large

populations of African Americans like South Carolina, freedpeople continued to hold some local offices for several years. Yet, with its most revolutionary aims thwarted by 1868, and economic depression and political turmoil taking even its most modest promises off the table by the early 1870s, most of the promises of Reconstruction were unmet.

Military District	State	Readmission	Conservative Takeover
District 1	Virginia	1870	1870
District 2	North Carolina	1868	1870
	South Carolina	1868	1877
District 3	Alabama	1868	1874
	Florida	1868	1877
	Georgia	1870	1871
District 4	Arkansas	1868	1874
	Mississippi	1870	1876
District 5	Texas	1870	1873
	Louisiana	1868	1877
None	Tennessee	1866	1869

Table. This table shows the military districts of the seceded states of the South, the date the state was readmitted into the Union, and the date when conservatives recaptured the state house.

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VIDEO: RECONSTRUCTION AND 1876

In this video, John Green teaches you about Reconstruction. After the divisive, destructive Civil War, Abraham Lincoln had a plan to reconcile the country and make it whole again. Then he got shot, Andrew Johnson took over, and the disagreements between Johnson and Congress ensured that Reconstruction would fail. The election of 1876 made the whole thing even more of a mess, and the country called it off, leaving the nation still very divided. John talks about the gains made by African-Americans in the years after the Civil War, and how they lost those gains almost immediately when Reconstruction stopped. You'll learn about the Freedman's Bureau, the 14th and 15th amendments, and the disastrous election of 1876. John will explore the goals of Reconstruction and the successes and ultimate failure.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/nowsS7pMApi>

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CONCLUSION

Reconstruction in the United States achieved Abraham Lincoln's paramount concern: the restoration of the Union. The war and its aftermath forever ended legal slavery in the United States, but African Americans remained second-class citizens and women still struggled for full participation in the public life of the United States. The closing of Reconstruction saw North and South reunited behind the imperatives economic growth and territorial expansion, if not the full rights of its citizens. From the ashes of civil war, a new nation was born, a nation rich with fresh possibilities but beset by old problems.

This chapter was edited by Nicole Turner, with content contributions by Christopher Abernathy, Jeremiah Bauer, Michael T. Caires, Mari Crabtree, Chris Hayadisha-Knight, Krista Kinslow, Ashley Mays, Keith McCall, Ryan Poe, Bradley Proctor, Emma Teitelman, Nicole Turner, and Caitlin Verboon.

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PRIMARY SOURCE READING: ATLANTA COMPROMISE SPEECH

Booker T. Washington Delivers the 1895 Atlanta Compromise Speech

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Board of Directors and Citizens:

One-third of the population of the South is of the Negro race. No enterprise seeking the material, civil, or moral welfare of this section can disregard this element of our population and reach the highest success. I but convey to you, Mr. President and Directors, the sentiment of the masses of my race when I say that in no way have the value and manhood of the American Negro been more fittingly and generously recognized than by the managers of this magnificent Exposition at every stage of its progress. It is a recognition that will do more to cement the friendship of the two races than any occurrence since the dawn of our freedom.

Not only this, but the opportunity here afforded will awaken among us a new era of industrial progress. Ignorant and inexperienced, it is not strange that in the first years of our new life we began at the top instead of at the bottom; that a seat in Congress or the state legislature was more sought than real estate or industrial skill; that the political convention or stump speaking had more attractions than starting a dairy farm or truck garden.

A ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal, "Water, water; we die of thirst!" The answer from the friendly vessel at once came back, "Cast down your bucket where you are." A second time the signal, "Water, water; send us water!" ran up from the distressed vessel, and was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are." And a third and fourth signal for water was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are." The captain of the distressed vessel, at last heeding the injunction, cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon River. To those of my race who depend on bettering their condition in a foreign land or who underestimate the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the Southern white man, who is their next-door neighbor, I would say: "Cast down your bucket where you are"— cast it down in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded.

Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions. And in this connection it is well to bear in mind that whatever other sins the South may be called to bear, when it comes to business, pure and simple, it is in the South that the Negro is given a man's chance in the commercial world, and in nothing is this Exposition more eloquent than in emphasizing this chance. Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labour, and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life; shall prosper in proportion as we learn to draw the line between the superficial and the substantial, the ornamental gewgaws of life and the useful. No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top. Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities.

To those of the white race who look to the incoming of those of foreign birth and strange tongue and habits for the prosperity of the South, were I permitted I would repeat what I say to my own race, "Cast down your bucket where you are." Cast it down among the eight millions of Negroes whose habits you know, whose fidelity and love you have tested in days when to have proved treacherous meant the ruin of your firesides. Cast down your bucket among these people who have, without strikes and labour wars, tilled your fields, cleared your forests, builded your railroads and cities, and brought forth treasures from the bowels of the earth, and helped make possible this magnificent representation of the progress of the South. Casting down your bucket among my people, helping and encouraging them as you are doing on these grounds, and to education of head, hand, and heart, you will find that they will buy your surplus land, make blossom the waste places in your fields, and run your factories. While doing this, you can be sure in the future, as in the past, that you and your families will be surrounded by the most patient, faithful, law-abiding, and unresentful people that the world has seen. As we have proved our loyalty to you in the past, in nursing your children, watching by the sick-bed of your mothers and fathers, and often following them with tear-dimmed eyes to their graves, so in the future, in our humble way, we shall stand by you with a devotion that no foreigner can approach, ready to lay down our lives, if need be, in defense of yours, interlacing our industrial, commercial, civil, and religious life with yours in a way that shall make the interests of both races one. In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.

There is no defense or security for any of us except in the highest intelligence and development of all. If anywhere there are efforts tending to curtail the fullest growth of the Negro, let these efforts be turned into stimulating, encouraging, and making him the most useful and intelligent citizen. Effort or means so invested will pay a thousand per cent interest. These efforts will be twice blessed—blessing him that gives and him that takes. There is no escape through law of man or God from the inevitable:

The laws of changeless justice bind Oppressor with oppressed;

And close as sin and suffering joined We march to fate abreast...

Nearly sixteen millions of hands will aid you in pulling the load upward, or they will pull against you the load downward. We shall constitute one-third and more of the ignorance and crime of the South, or one-third [of] its intelligence and progress; we shall contribute one-third to the business and industrial prosperity of the South, or we shall prove a veritable body of death, stagnating, depressing, retarding every effort to advance the body politic.

Gentlemen of the Exposition, as we present to you our humble effort at an exhibition of our progress, you must not expect overmuch. Starting thirty years ago with ownership here and there in a few quilts and pumpkins and chickens (gathered from miscellaneous sources), remember the path that has led from these to the inventions and production of agricultural implements, buggies, steam-engines, newspapers, books, statuary, carving, paintings, the management of drug stores and banks, has not been trodden without contact with thorns and thistles. While we take pride in what we exhibit as a result of our independent efforts, we do not for a moment forget that our part in this exhibition would fall far short of your expectations but for the constant help that has come to our educational life, not only from the Southern states, but especially from Northern philanthropists, who have made their gifts a constant stream of blessing and encouragement.

The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing. No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized. It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more

important that we be prepared for the exercise of these privileges. The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in an opera-house.

In conclusion, may I repeat that nothing in thirty years has given us more hope and encouragement, and drawn us so near to you of the white race, as this opportunity offered by the Exposition; and here bending, as it were, over the altar that represents the results of the struggles of your race and mine, both starting practically empty-handed three decades ago, I pledge that in your effort to work out the great and intricate problem which God has laid at the doors of the South, you shall have at all times the patient, sympathetic help of my race; only let this be constantly in mind, that, while from representations in these buildings of the product of field, of forest, of mine, of factory, letters, and art, much good will come, yet far above and beyond material benefits will be that higher good, that, let us pray God, will come, in a blotting out of sectional differences and racial animosities and suspicions, in a determination to administer absolute justice, in a willing obedience among all classes to the mandates of law. This, coupled with our material prosperity, will bring into our beloved South a new heaven and a new earth.

Source: Louis R. Harlan, ed., *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, Vol. 3, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 583–587.

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PRIMARY SOURCE READING: SOULS OF BLACK FOLK

W.E.B. Du Bois (1868–1963): *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)

Chapter III.
Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others

From birth till death enslaved; in word, in deed, unmanned!

.
*Hereditary bondsmen! Know ye not
Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?*
BYRON.

EASILY the most striking thing in the history of the American Negro since 1876 is the ascendancy of Mr. Booker T. Washington. It began at the time when war memories and ideals were rapidly passing; a day of astonishing commercial development was dawning; a sense of doubt and hesitation overtook the freedmen's sons,—then it was that his leading began. Mr. Washington came, with a simple definite programme, at the psychological moment when the nation was a little ashamed of having bestowed so much sentiment on Negroes, and was concentrating its energies on Dollars. His programme of industrial education, conciliation of the South, and submission and silence as to civil and political rights, was not wholly original; the Free Negroes from 1830 up to wartime had striven to build industrial schools, and the American Missionary Association had from the first taught various trades; and Price and others had sought a way of honorable alliance with the best of the Southerners. But Mr. Washington first indissolubly linked these things; he put enthusiasm, unlimited energy, and perfect faith into this programme, and changed it from a by-path into a veritable Way of Life. And the tale of the methods by which he did this is a fascinating study of human life.

It startled the nation to hear a Negro advocating such a programme after many decades of bitter complaint; it startled and won the applause of the South, it interested and won the admiration of the North; and after a confused murmur of protest, it silenced if it did not convert the Negroes themselves.

To gain the sympathy and coöperation of the various elements comprising the white South was Mr. Washington's first task; and this, at the time Tuskegee was founded, seemed, for a black man, well-nigh impossible. And yet ten years later it was done in the word spoken at Atlanta: "In all things purely social we can be as separate as the five fingers, and yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." This "Atlanta Compromise" is by all odds the most notable thing in Mr. Washington's career. The South interpreted it in different ways: the radicals received it as a complete surrender of the demand for civil and political equality; the conservatives, as a generously conceived working basis for mutual understanding. So both approved it, and to-day its author is certainly the most distinguished Southerner since Jefferson Davis, and the one with the largest personal following.

Next to this achievement comes Mr. Washington's work in gaining place and consideration in the North. Others less shrewd and tactful had formerly essayed to sit on these two stools and had fallen between them; but as Mr. Washington knew the heart of the South from birth and training, so by singular insight he intuitively grasped the spirit of the age which was dominating the North. And so thoroughly did he learn the speech and thought of triumphant commercialism, and the ideals of material prosperity, that the picture of a lone black boy poring over a French grammar amid the weeds and dirt of a neglected home soon seemed to him the acme of absurdities. One wonders what Socrates and St. Francis of Assisi would say to this.

And yet this very singleness of vision and thorough oneness with his age is a mark of the successful man. It is as though Nature must needs make men narrow in order to give them force. So Mr. Washington's cult has gained unquestioning followers, his work has wonderfully prospered, his friends are legion, and his enemies are confounded. To-day he stands as the one recognized spokesman of his ten million fellows, and one of the most notable figures in a nation of seventy millions. One hesitates, therefore, to criticise a life which, beginning with so little, has done so much. And yet the time is come when one may speak in all sincerity and utter courtesy of the mistakes and shortcomings of Mr. Washington's career, as well as of his triumphs, without being thought captious or envious, and without forgetting that it is easier to do ill than well in the world.

The criticism that has hitherto met Mr. Washington has not always been of this broad character. In the South especially has he had to walk warily to avoid the harshest judgments,—and naturally so, for he is dealing with the one subject of deepest sensitiveness to that section. Twice—once when at the Chicago celebration of the Spanish-American War he alluded to the color-prejudice that is "eating away the vitals of the South," and once when he dined with President Roosevelt—has the resulting Southern criticism been violent enough to threaten seriously his popularity. In the North the feeling has several times forced itself into words, that Mr. Washington's counsels of submission overlooked certain elements of true manhood, and that his educational programme was unnecessarily narrow. Usually, however, such criticism has not found open expression, although, too, the spiritual sons of the Abolitionists have not been prepared to acknowledge that the schools founded before Tuskegee, by men of broad ideals and self-sacrificing spirit, were wholly failures or worthy of ridicule. While, then, criticism has not failed to follow Mr. Washington, yet the prevailing public opinion of the land has been but too willing to deliver the solution of a wearisome problem into his hands, and say, "If that is all you and your race ask, take it."

Among his own people, however, Mr. Washington has encountered the strongest and most lasting opposition, amounting at times to bitterness, and even to-day continuing strong and insistent even though largely silenced in outward expression by the public opinion of the nation. Some of this opposition is, of course, mere envy; the disappointment of displaced demagogues and the spite of narrow minds. But aside from this, there is among educated and thoughtful colored men in all parts of the land a feeling of deep regret, sorrow, and apprehension at the wide currency and ascendancy which some of Mr. Washington's theories have gained. These same men admire his sincerity of purpose, and are willing to forgive much to honest endeavor which is doing something worth the doing. They coöperate with Mr. Washington as far as they conscientiously can; and, indeed, it is no ordinary tribute to this man's tact and power that, steering as he must between so many diverse interests and opinions, he so largely retains the respect of all.

But the hushing of the criticism of honest opponents is a dangerous thing. It leads some of the best of the critics to unfortunate silence and paralysis of effort, and others to burst into speech so passionately and intemperately as to lose listeners. Honest and earnest criticism from those whose interests are most nearly touched,—criticism of writers by readers, of government by those governed, of leaders by those led,—this is the soul of democracy and the safeguard of modern society. If the best of the American Negroes receive by outer pressure a leader whom they had not recognized before, manifestly there is here a certain palpable gain. Yet there is also irreparable loss,—a loss of that peculiarly valuable education which a group receives when by search and criticism it finds and commissions its own leaders. The way in which this is done is at once the most elementary and the nicest problem of social growth. History is but the record of such group-leadership; and yet how infinitely changeful is its type and character! And of all types and kinds, what can be more instructive than the leadership of

a group within a group?—that curious double movement where real progress may be negative and actual advance be relative retrogression. All this is the social student's inspiration and despair.

Now in the past the American Negro has had instructive experience in the choosing of group leaders, founding thus a peculiar dynasty which in the light of present conditions is worth while studying. When sticks and stones and beasts form the sole environment of a people, their attitude is largely one of determined opposition to and conquest of natural forces. But when to earth and brute is added an environment of men and ideas, then the attitude of the imprisoned group may take three main forms,—a feeling of revolt and revenge; an attempt to adjust all thought and action to the will of the greater group; or, finally, a determined effort at self-realization and self-development despite environing opinion. The influence of all of these attitudes at various times can be traced in the history of the American Negro, and in the evolution of his successive leaders.

Before 1750, while the fire of African freedom still burned in the veins of the slaves, there was in all leadership or attempted leadership but the one motive of revolt and revenge,—typified in the terrible Maroons, the Danish blacks, and Cato of Stono, and veiling all the Americas in fear of insurrection. The liberalizing tendencies of the latter half of the eighteenth century brought, along with kindlier relations between black and white, thoughts of ultimate adjustment and assimilation. Such aspiration was especially voiced in the earnest songs of Phyllis, in the martyrdom of Attucks, the fighting of Salem and Poor, the intellectual accomplishments of Banneker and Derham, and the political demands of the Cuffes.

Stern financial and social stress after the war cooled much of the previous humanitarian ardor. The disappointment and impatience of the Negroes at the persistence of slavery and serfdom voiced itself in two movements. The slaves in the South, aroused undoubtedly by vague rumors of the Haytian revolt, made three fierce attempts at insurrection,—in 1800 under Gabriel in Virginia, in 1822 under Vesey in Carolina, and in 1831 again in Virginia under the terrible Nat Turner. In the Free States, on the other hand, a new and curious attempt at self-development was made. In Philadelphia and New York color-prescription led to a withdrawal of Negro communicants from white churches and the formation of a peculiar socio-religious institution among the Negroes known as the African Church,—an organization still living and controlling in its various branches over a million of men.

Walker's wild appeal against the trend of the times showed how the world was changing after the coming of the cotton-gin. By 1830 slavery seemed hopelessly fastened on the South, and the slaves thoroughly cowed into submission. The free Negroes of the North, inspired by the mulatto immigrants from the West Indies, began to change the basis of their demands; they recognized the slavery of slaves, but insisted that they themselves were freemen, and sought assimilation and amalgamation with the nation on the same terms with other men. Thus, Forten and Purvis of Philadelphia, Shad of Wilmington, Du Bois of New Haven, Barbadoes of Boston, and others, strove singly and together as men, they said, not as slaves; as "people of color," not as "Negroes." The trend of the times, however, refused them recognition save in individual and exceptional cases, considered them as one with all the despised blacks, and they soon found themselves striving to keep even the rights they formerly had of voting and working and moving as freemen. Schemes of migration and colonization arose among them; but these they refused to entertain, and they eventually turned to the Abolition movement as a final refuge.

Here, led by Remond, Nell, Wells-Brown, and Douglass, a new period of self-assertion and self-development dawned. To be sure, ultimate freedom and assimilation was the ideal before the leaders, but the assertion of the manhood rights of the Negro by himself was the main reliance, and John Brown's raid was the extreme of its logic. After the war and emancipation, the great form of Frederick Douglass, the greatest of American Negro leaders, still led the host. Self-assertion, especially in political lines, was the main programme, and behind Douglass came Elliot, Bruce, and Langston, and the Reconstruction politicians, and, less conspicuous but of greater social significance Alexander Crummell and Bishop Daniel Payne.

Then came the Revolution of 1876, the suppression of the Negro votes, the changing and shifting of ideals, and the seeking of new lights in the great night. Douglass, in his old age, still bravely stood for the ideals of his early manhood,—ultimate assimilation through self-assertion, and on no other terms. For a time Price arose as a new leader, destined, it seemed, not to give up, but to re-state the old ideals in a form less repugnant to the white South. But he passed away in his prime. Then came the new leader. Nearly all the former ones had become leaders by the silent suffrage of their fellows, had sought to lead their own people alone, and were usually, save Douglass, little known outside their race. But Booker T. Washington arose as essentially the leader not of one race but of two,—a compromiser between the South, the North, and the Negro. Naturally the Negroes resented, at first bitterly, signs of compromise which surrendered their civil and political rights, even though this was to be exchanged for larger chances of economic development. The rich and dominating North, however, was not only weary of the race problem, but was investing largely in Southern enterprises, and welcomed any method of

peaceful coöperation. Thus, by national opinion, the Negroes began to recognize Mr. Washington's leadership; and the voice of criticism was hushed.

Mr. Washington represents in Negro thought the old attitude of adjustment and submission; but adjustment at such a peculiar time as to make his programme unique. This is an age of unusual economic development, and Mr. Washington's programme naturally takes an economic cast, becoming a gospel of Work and Money to such an extent as apparently almost completely to overshadow the higher aims of life. Moreover, this is an age when the more advanced races are coming in closer contact with the less developed races, and the race-feeling is therefore intensified; and Mr. Washington's programme practically accepts the alleged inferiority of the Negro races. Again, in our own land, the reaction from the sentiment of war time has given impetus to race-prejudice against Negroes, and Mr. Washington withdraws many of the high demands of Negroes as men and American citizens. In other periods of intensified prejudice all the Negro's tendency to self-assertion has been called forth; at this period a policy of submission is advocated. In the history of nearly all other races and peoples the doctrine preached at such crises has been that manly self-respect is worth more than lands and houses, and that a people who voluntarily surrender such respect, or cease striving for it, are not worth civilizing.

In answer to this, it has been claimed that the Negro can survive only through submission. Mr. Washington distinctly asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things,—

First, political power,

Second, insistence on civil rights,

Third, higher education of Negro youth,—

and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, the accumulation of wealth, and the conciliation of the South. This policy has been courageously and insistently advocated for over fifteen years, and has been triumphant for perhaps ten years. As a result of this tender of the palm-branch, what has been the return? In these years there have occurred:

1. The disfranchisement of the Negro.
2. The legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority for the Negro.
3. The steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of the Negro.

These movements are not, to be sure, direct results of Mr. Washington's teachings; but his propaganda has, without a shadow of doubt, helped their speedier accomplishment. The question then comes: Is it possible, and probable, that nine millions of men can make effective progress in economic lines if they are deprived of political rights, made a servile caste, and allowed only the most meagre chance for developing their exceptional men? If history and reason give any distinct answer to these questions, it is an emphatic *No*. And Mr. Washington thus faces the triple paradox of his career:

1. He is striving nobly to make Negro artisans business men and property-owners; but it is utterly impossible, under modern competitive methods, for workingmen and property-owners to defend their rights and exist without the right of suffrage.
2. He insists on thrift and self-respect, but at the same time counsels a silent submission to civic inferiority such as is bound to sap the manhood of any race in the long run.
3. He advocates common-school and industrial training, and deprecates institutions of higher learning; but neither the Negro common-schools, nor Tuskegee itself, could remain open a day were it not for teachers trained in Negro colleges, or trained by their graduates.

This triple paradox in Mr. Washington's position is the object of criticism by two classes of colored Americans. One class is spiritually descended from Toussaint the Savior, through Gabriel, Vesey, and Turner, and they represent the attitude of revolt and revenge; they hate the white South blindly and distrust the white race generally, and so far as they agree on definite action, think that the Negro's only hope lies in emigration beyond the borders of the United States. And yet, by the irony of fate, nothing has more effectually made this programme seem hopeless than the recent course of the United States toward weaker and darker peoples in the West Indies, Hawaii, and the Philippines,—for where in the world may we go and be safe from lying and brute force?

The other class of Negroes who cannot agree with Mr. Washington has hitherto said little aloud. They deprecate the sight of scattered counsels, of internal disagreement; and especially they dislike making their just criticism of a useful and earnest man an excuse for a general discharge of venom from small-minded opponents. Nevertheless, the questions involved are so fundamental and serious that it is difficult to see how men like the Grimkes, Kelly Miller, J. W. E. Bowen, and other representatives of this group, can much longer be silent. Such men feel in conscience bound to ask of this nation three things:

1. The right to vote.

2. Civic equality.
3. The education of youth according to ability.

They acknowledge Mr. Washington's invaluable service in counselling patience and courtesy in such demands; they do not ask that ignorant black men vote when ignorant whites are debarred, or that any reasonable restrictions in the suffrage should not be applied; they know that the low social level of the mass of the race is responsible for much discrimination against it, but they also know, and the nation knows, that relentless color-prejudice is more often a cause than a result of the Negro's degradation; they seek the abatement of this relic of barbarism, and not its systematic encouragement and pampering by all agencies of social power from the Associated Press to the Church of Christ. They advocate, with Mr. Washington, a broad system of Negro common schools supplemented by thorough industrial training; but they are surprised that a man of Mr. Washington's insight cannot see that no such educational system ever has rested or can rest on any other basis than that of the well-equipped college and university, and they insist that there is a demand for a few such institutions throughout the South to train the best of the Negro youth as teachers, professional men, and leaders.

This group of men honor Mr. Washington for his attitude of conciliation toward the white South; they accept the "Atlanta Compromise" in its broadest interpretation; they recognize, with him, many signs of promise, many men of high purpose and fair judgment, in this section; they know that no easy task has been laid upon a region already tottering under heavy burdens. But, nevertheless, they insist that the way to truth and right lies in straightforward honesty, not in indiscriminate flattery; in praising those of the South who do well and criticising uncompromisingly those who do ill; in taking advantage of the opportunities at hand and urging their fellows to do the same, but at the same time in remembering that only a firm adherence to their higher ideals and aspirations will ever keep those ideals within the realm of possibility. They do not expect that the free right to vote, to enjoy civic rights, and to be educated, will come in a moment; they do not expect to see the bias and prejudices of years disappear at the blast of a trumpet; but they are absolutely certain that the way for a people to gain their reasonable rights is not by voluntarily throwing them away and insisting that they do not want them; that the way for a people to gain respect is not by continually belittling and ridiculing themselves; that, on the contrary, Negroes must insist continually, in season and out of season, that voting is necessary to modern manhood, that color discrimination is barbarism, and that black boys need education as well as white boys.

In failing thus to state plainly and unequivocally the legitimate demands of their people, even at the cost of opposing an honored leader, the thinking classes of American Negroes would shirk a heavy responsibility,—a responsibility to themselves, a responsibility to the struggling masses, a responsibility to the darker races of men whose future depends so largely on this American experiment, but especially a responsibility to this nation,—this common Fatherland. It is wrong to encourage a man or a people in evil-doing; it is wrong to aid and abet a national crime simply because it is unpopular not to do so. The growing spirit of kindness and reconciliation between the North and South after the frightful differences of a generation ago ought to be a source of deep congratulation to all, and especially to those whose mistreatment caused the war; but if that reconciliation is to be marked by the industrial slavery and civic death of those same black men, with permanent legislation into a position of inferiority, then those black men, if they are really men, are called upon by every consideration of patriotism and loyalty to oppose such a course by all civilized methods, even though such opposition involves disagreement with Mr. Booker T. Washington. We have no right to sit silently by while the inevitable seeds are sown for a harvest of disaster to our children, black and white.

First, it is the duty of black men to judge the South discriminatingly. The present generation of Southerners are not responsible for the past, and they should not be blindly hated or blamed for it. Furthermore, to no class is the indiscriminate endorsement of the recent course of the South toward Negroes more nauseating than to the best thought of the South. The South is not "solid"; it is a land in the ferment of social change, wherein forces of all kinds are fighting for supremacy; and to praise the ill the South is to-day perpetrating is just as wrong as to condemn the good. Discriminating and broad-minded criticism is what the South needs,—needs it for the sake of her own white sons and daughters, and for the insurance of robust, healthy mental and moral development.

To-day even the attitude of the Southern whites toward the blacks is not, as so many assume, in all cases the same; the ignorant Southerner hates the Negro, the workingmen fear his competition, the money-makers wish to use him as a laborer, some of the educated see a menace in his upward development, while others—usually the sons of the masters—wish to help him to rise. National opinion has enabled this last class to maintain the Negro common schools, and to protect the Negro partially in property, life, and limb. Through the pressure of the money-makers, the Negro is in danger of being reduced to semi-slavery, especially in the country districts; the workingmen, and those of the educated who fear the Negro, have united to disfranchise him, and some have urged his deportation; while the passions of the ignorant are easily aroused to lynch and abuse any black man. To praise this intricate whirl of thought and prejudice is nonsense; to inveigh indiscriminately against "the South" is

unjust; but to use the same breath in praising Governor Aycock, exposing Senator Morgan, arguing with Mr. Thomas Nelson Page, and denouncing Senator Ben Tillman, is not only sane, but the imperative duty of thinking black men.

In his failure to realize and impress this last point, Mr. Washington is especially to be criticised. His doctrine has tended to make the whites, North and South, shift the burden of the Negro problem to the Negro's shoulders and stand aside as critical and rather pessimistic spectators; when in fact the burden belongs to the nation, and the hands of none of us are clean if we bend not our energies to righting these great wrongs.

The South ought to be led, by candid and honest criticism, to assert her better self and do her full duty to the race she has cruelly wronged and is still wronging. The North—her co-partner in guilt—cannot salve her conscience by plastering it with gold. We cannot settle this problem by diplomacy and suaveness, by “policy” alone. If worse come to worst, can the moral fibre of this country survive the slow throttling and murder of nine millions of men?

The black men of America have a duty to perform, a duty stern and delicate,—a forward movement to oppose a part of the work of their greatest leader. So far as Mr. Washington preaches Thrift, Patience, and Industrial Training for the masses, we must hold up his hands and strive with him, rejoicing in his honors and glorying in the strength of this Joshua called of God and of man to lead the headless host. But so far as Mr. Washington apologizes for injustice, North or South, does not rightly value the privilege and duty of voting, belittles the emasculating effects of caste distinctions, and opposes the higher training and ambition of our brighter minds,—so far as he, the South, or the Nation, does this,—we must unceasingly and firmly oppose them. By every civilized and peaceful method we must strive for the rights which the world accords to men, clinging unwaveringly to those great words which the sons of the Fathers would fain forget: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

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ASSIGNMENT: REACTIONS TO JIM CROW

How did/should black Americans respond to Jim Crow?

Read the articles from the previous readings ([Booker T. Washington’s “Atlanta Exposition”](#) and [W.E.B. DuBois’s “Souls of Black Folk.”](#))

Write two paragraphs (one for each man/document). Each paragraph should address the following:

1. What is the author’s argument? What should black Americans do in response to the onset of Jim Crow laws?
2. Briefly summarize *why* each man feels that way. What are his reasons for suggesting what he does?

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PRIMARY SOURCE READING: BLACK CODES

Click on the link to read excerpts from the [Mississippi Black Code](#).

Be prepared to discuss the following:

- What rights did the Black Codes extend?
- What rights did the Codes prohibit?
- What seemed to be the overall intention of the Codes?

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INDUSTRIAL AMERICA

INTRODUCTION



"Mulberry Street, New York City," ca. 1900, [Library of Congress](#)

When British author Rudyard Kipling visited Chicago in 1889 he described a city blinded by greed and consumed by a hunger for technology. He described a rushed and crowded city, "that huge wilderness" and its "scores of miles of these terrible streets" and their "hundred thousand of these terrible people." "The show impressed me with a great horror," he wrote. "There was no color in the street and no beauty—only a maze of wire ropes overhead and dirty stone flagging under foot." He took a cab through the city "and the cabman said that these things were the proof of progress." Kipling visited a "gilded and mirrored" hotel "crammed with people talking about money, and spitting about everywhere." He visited extravagant churches and spoke with their congregants. "I listened to people who said that the mere fact of spiking down strips of iron to wood, and getting a steam and iron thing to run along them was progress, that the telephone was progress, and the net-work of wires overhead was progress. They repeated their statements again and again." Kipling said American newspapers report "that the snarling together of telegraph-wires, the heaving up of houses, and the making of money is progress."



Wabash Avenue, Chicago, c. 1907. [Library of Congress](#).

Chicago embodied the triumph of American industrialization. Its meatpacking industry was a microcosm of sweeping changes occurring in American life. The last decades of the nineteenth century, a new era of big business, saw the formation of large corporations run by salaried managers doing national and international business. Chicago, for instance, became America's butcher. The Chicago meat processing industry was a cartel of five firms that produced four-fifths of the meat bought by American consumers. Kipling described in intimate detail the Union Stock Yards, the nation's largest meat processing zone, a square-mile just southwest of the city whose pens and slaughterhouses linked the city's vast agricultural hinterland to the nation's dinner tables. "Once having seen them," he concluded, "you will never forget the sight." Like other industries Chicago was noted for—agricultural machinery and steel production—the meatpacking industry was closely tied to urbanization and immigration. In 1850, Chicago had a population of about 30,000. Twenty years later, its population had increased by a factor of ten to nearly 300,000. A fire in 1871 leveled 3.5 square miles and left a third of Chicago's residents homeless, but the city recovered and resumed its spectacular growth. By the turn of the twentieth century, the city was home to 1.7 million people. Chicago's explosive growth mirrored national trends. In 1870, a quarter of the nation's population lived in towns or cities with populations greater than 2,500. By 1920, a majority did. But if many who flocked to Chicago and other American cities came from rural America, many others emigrated from overseas. Mirroring national immigration trends, Chicago's newcomers had at first come mostly from Germany, the British Isles, and Scandinavia. However, by 1890, Poles, Italians, Czechs, Hungarians, Lithuanians, and others from Southern and Eastern Europe made up the majority of new immigrants. Like many American industrial cities, in 1900 nearly 80% of Chicago's population was foreign-born or the children of foreign-born immigrants.

Industrialization remade the United States. Kipling visited Chicago just as new modes of production revolutionized the country. The rise of cities, the evolution of American immigration, the transformation of American labor, the further making of a mass culture, the creation of vast wealth, the shock of vast slums, the conquest of the West, the growth of a middle class, the problem of poverty, the triumph of big business, widening inequalities, battles between capital and labor, the final destruction of independent farming, breakthrough technologies, environmental destruction: industrialization created a new America.



Stereoscopic view of the Great Union Stockyards in turn-of-the-century Chicago. The stockyards were the epicenter of the American meat-packing industry for much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The yards were made possible through the joint purchase of over three acres of unusable swamp land by railroad companies, who then turned it into a hugely profitable centralized meatpacking district. In the Great Union Stock Yards [stockyards], Chicago, U.S.A., c. 1890. [Wikimedia](#).

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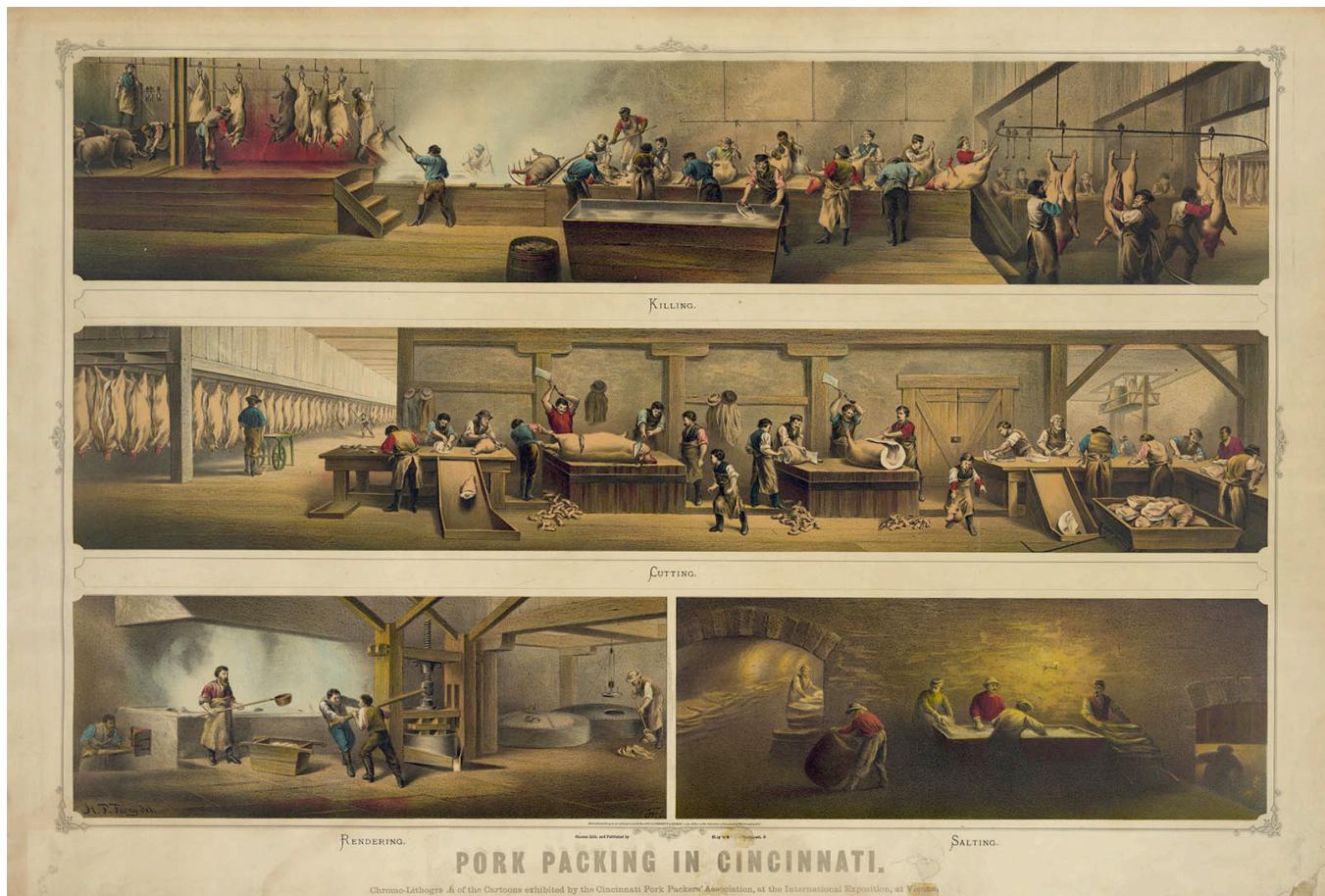
INDUSTRIALIZATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

Republican dominance over national policy and subsidization of business development during the Civil War and Reconstruction accelerated American industrialization. It was the railroads that signaled the new American order.

The railroads created the first great concentrations of capital, spawned the first massive corporations, made the first of the vast fortunes that would define the “Gilded Age,” unleashed labor demands that united thousands of farmers and immigrants, and linked many towns and cities. National railroad mileage tripled in the twenty years after the outbreak of the Civil War, and tripled again over the four decades that followed. Railroads impelled the creation of uniform time zones across the country, gave industrialists access to remote markets, and opened the American west. Railroad companies were the nation’s largest businesses. Their vast national operations demanded the creation of innovative new corporate organization, advanced management techniques, and vast sums of capital. Their huge expenditures spurred countless industries and attracted droves of laborers. And as they crisscrossed the nation, they created a national market, a truly national economy, and, seemingly, a new national culture.

The railroads were not natural creations. Their vast capital requirements required the use of incorporation, a legal innovation that protected shareholders from losses. Enormous amounts of government support followed. Federal, state, and local governments offered unrivaled handouts to create the national rail networks. Lincoln’s Republican Party passed legislation granting vast subsidies. Hundreds of millions of acres of land and millions of dollars’

worth of government bonds were freely given to build the great transcontinental railroads and the innumerable trunk lines that quickly annihilated the vast geographic barriers that had sheltered American cities from one another.



This print shows the four stages of pork packing in nineteenth-century Cincinnati. This centralization of production made meatpacking an innovative industry, one of great interest to industrialists of all kinds. In fact, this chromo-lithograph was exhibited by the Cincinnati Pork Packers' Association at the International Exposition in Vienna, Austria. "Pork Packing in Cincinnati," 1873.

[Wikimedia](#).

As railroad construction drove growth, new means of production spawned new systems of labor. Many wage earners had traditionally seen factory work as a temporary stepping-stone to their own small businesses or farms. After the war, however, new technology and greater mechanization meant fewer and fewer workers could legitimately aspire to economic independence and stronger and more organized labor unions formed to defend the rights of a growing permanent working class. At the same time, the growing scale of business operations meant owners became increasingly disconnected from employees and day-to-day operations. To handle vast new operations, they hired managers. Educated employees swelled the ranks of an emerging commercial middle class.

Industrialization remade much of American life. Rapidly growing industrialized cities knit together urban consumers and rural producers into a single, integrated national market. Food production and consumption, for instance, was utterly nationalized. Chicago's Stock Yards seemingly tied it all together. Between 1866 and 1886 ranchers drove a million head of cattle annually overland from Texas ranches to railroad depots in Kansas for shipment by rail to Chicago. After travelling through modern "disassembly lines," the animals left the adjoining slaughterhouses as slabs of meat to be packed into refrigerated rail cars and sent out to butcher shops across North America. By 1885 a handful of large-scale industrial meatpackers in Chicago produced nearly 500 million pounds of "dressed" beef annually. This scale of industrialized meat production fueled massive environmental transformations across the Midwest and Great Plains. Landscapes of buffalo herds, grasslands, and old-growth forests became landscapes of cattle, corn, and wheat as new settlers produced goods for the ever-expanding market. Chicago became the Gateway City, a crossroads connecting American agricultural goods, capital markets in New York and Europe, and consumers from all corners of the United States.

Technological innovation accompanied economic development. In 1878 the New York *Daily Graphic* ran an April Fool's Day article, a fictitious interview with the celebrated inventor Thomas A. Edison. The accompanying article described the "biggest invention of the age"—a new Edison machine that could create forty different kinds of food and drink out of just air, water, and dirt. Edison promised that "meat will no longer be killed and vegetables no longer grown, except by savages." The machine, he said, would end "famine and pauperism." And all for \$5 or \$6 per machine! The story was a joke, but Edison still received inquiries about the food machine from readers wondering when it would be ready for the mass market. Americans of the era had already witnessed startling technological advances that would have seemed fictitious mere years earlier. In the midst of onrushing technological advances, the food machine seemed entirely plausible.

In September 1878, Edison announced a new and ambitious line of research and development—electric power and lighting. Thanks to the pioneering experiments of British physicist Michael Faraday, electricians had been familiar with the principles of the electric dynamo and motor since the 1830s. In the most basic terms, a dynamo is a device that converts mechanical work to electrical power by rotating copper conductors at high speed inside a magnetic field. A motor does the opposite—it converts electrical power into useful mechanical work. Between Faraday's research and Edison's announcement, many electricians had introduced various designs for dynamos and rudimentary forms of electric lighting.

Two general characteristics set Edison apart from other inventors and engineers working on electric generation and lighting. Unlike the commonly held image of the genius lone inventor gripped by inspiration (Samuel F.B. Morse or Alexander Graham Bell, for example), Edison believed that tough problems could be best tackled through collaboration. Edison was the forerunner of the research-and-development managers who guided innovation for most of the twentieth century. And just as importantly, Edison was as much entrepreneur as inventor. He regarded his inventions as successes only to the extent that they engendered successful businesses. He regarded his Menlo Park laboratory as an "invention factory," famously declaring that it would turn out "a minor invention every ten days and a big thing every six months or so." The facility boasted a fully equipped machine shop and a laboratory stocked with every conceivable electrical device and chemical substance, and employed many skilled machinists and experimenters. Edison's work on electric light and power over the next several years exemplified these two characteristics. He brought the full power of his Menlo Park laboratory and staff to bear on the many problems associated with building an electric power system and commercializing it. Edison set to work on electric power and light almost immediately, and put aside other lines of research to devote himself fully to the massive undertaking.



This photograph, taken in Mathew Brady's Washington, DC, studio in April 1878, shows inventor Thomas Edison with his phonograph (2nd model). Edison was one of the most important and influential American inventors, giving us technology like the phonograph and motion picture camera. Thomas Handy, "Edison, Thomas," 1877. [Library of Congress](#).



Along with a host of inventions central to American life, Edison also came up with the principles of mass production and the first industrial research laboratory. A recreation of his Menlo Park Laboratory, the site of the invention of the light bulb, exists in Greenfield Village at The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan, shown in the photograph on the right. His work was vital in the development of the modern industrialized world, including the development of a system of electric-power production and distribution to households, businesses, and factories. Menlo Park Laboratory Photograph, 2010. [Wikimedia](#).

By late fall 1879, Edison was satisfied that he had a system of electrical power and light ready for public exhibition. At the end of December and beginning of January, he festooned his Menlo Park laboratory with several hundred incandescent lamps and invited reporters, potential investors, and the merely curious to see his system in operation. For the remainder of 1880 and into 1881, Edison continued to refine his dynamo design and to scale up lamp production. From the business perspective, he conceived of two markets for his electrical power system, "isolated" installations for factories and mills and central stations that transmitted power to homes and businesses in cities. Since these isolated plants were of varying sizes, he and his staff developed several dynamo models capable of powering installations as small as 15 lamps or as large as 250. By the middle of 1883, he had constructed about 330 isolated plants powering over 60,000 lamps in factories, offices, printing houses, hotels, and theaters around the world.

As successful as these isolated plants were, Edison's main goal was to build central stations that sent power to large geographic areas. To achieve this goal, he harnessed the power of publicity. In order to get permission to lay cables under the streets of Manhattan, he invited the New York city council to his Menlo Park laboratory in late December 1880. There they witnessed an impressive display of the Edison electric lighting system and were treated to a lavish banquet catered by the famous New York restaurant Delmonico's. At around the same time, he decided to set up a demonstration of his central station concept at an international electrical exhibition held at Paris in late 1881. This display showcased his largest dynamo yet built, capable of powering over 1,000 lamps and nicknamed the "Jumbo."

By the end of 1881, Edison saw his goal in sight. He had begun construction of his first commercial central station in the heart of New York's financial district, and had set crews to work laying electrical cable. He officially opened the Pearl Street central station on September 4, 1882. The installation sent power to about 1,000 buildings in an area covering about a square mile of downtown Manhattan. Finally, after four years spent perfecting his system of electric power and light, a relieved Edison exclaimed to a reporter, "I have accomplished all I promised."

Economic advances, technological changes, social and cultural evolution, and demographic transformations remade the nation. The United States was a nation transformed. Industry boosted productivity, railroads connected the nation, more and more Americans labored for wages, new bureaucratic occupations created a vast "white collar" middle class, and unprecedented fortunes rewarded the owners of capital. These changes were not confined to economics. They transformed the lives of everyday Americans and reshaped American culture.

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VIDEO: THE INDUSTRIAL ECONOMY

In this video, John Green teaches you about the Industrial Economy that arose in the United States after the Civil War. You know how when you're studying history, and you're reading along and everything seems safely in the past, and then BOOM you think, "Man, this suddenly seems very modern." For me, that moment in U.S. History is the post-Reconstruction expansion of industrialism in America. After the Civil War, many of the changes in technology and ideas gave rise to this new industrialism.

You'll learn about the rise of Captains of Industry (or Robber Barons) like Cornelius Vanderbilt, Andrew Carnegie, John D Rockefeller, and JP Morgan. You'll learn about trusts, combinations, and how the government responded to these new business practices. All this, plus John will cover how workers reacted to the changes in society and the early days of the labor movement. You'll learn about the Knights of Labor and Terence Powderly, and Samuel Gompers and the AFL.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/r6tRp-zRUJs>

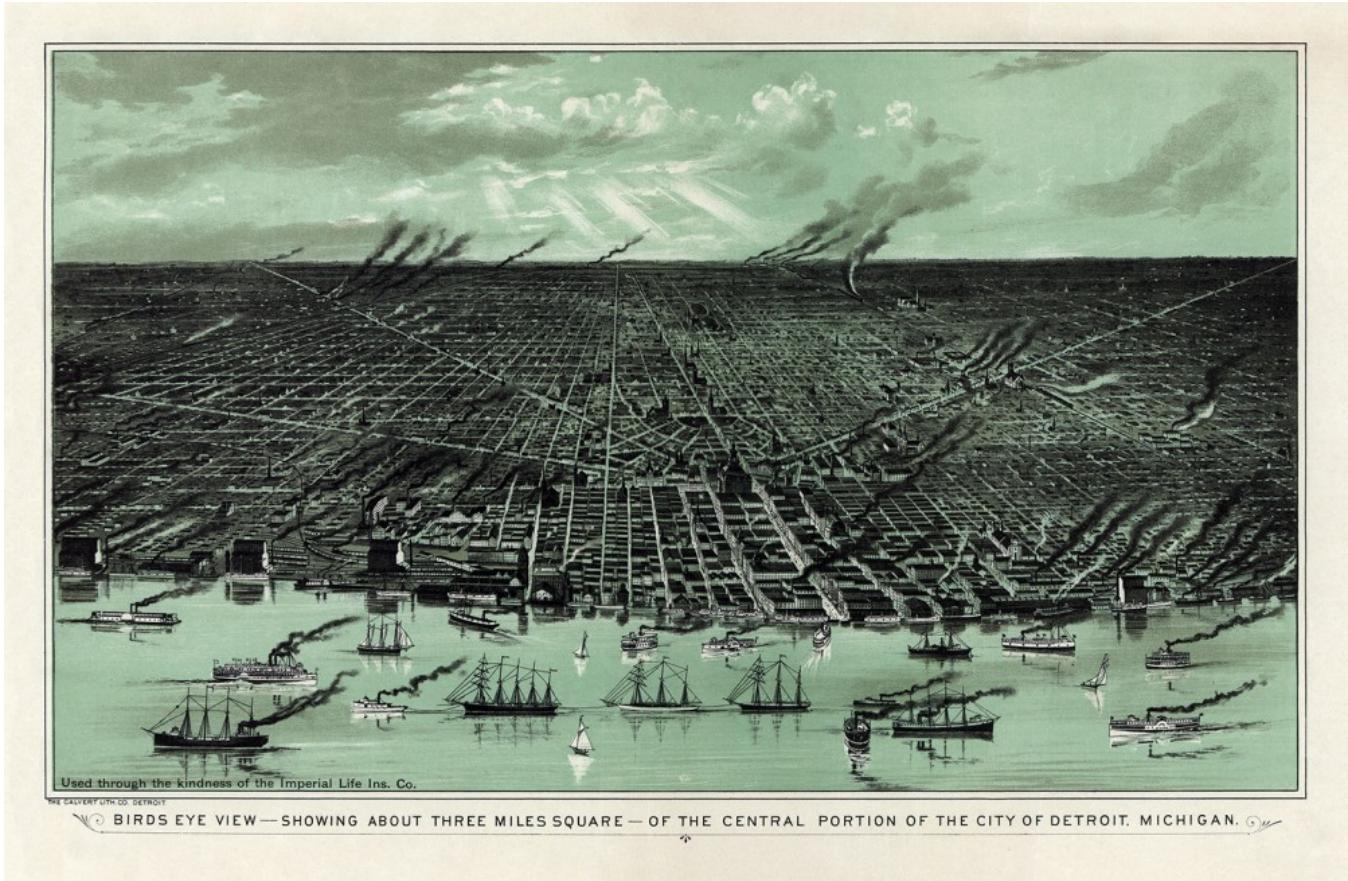
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IMMIGRATION AND URBANIZATION

Economic transformations and technological advances moved ever more Americans into cities. Industry advanced onward and drew millions of workers into the new cities. Manufacturing needed large pools of labor and advanced infrastructure only available in the cities, where electricity kept the lights on and transported ever growing numbers of people along electric trolley lines and upward in elevators inside the towering skyscrapers made possible by new mass produced steel and advanced engineering. America's urban population increased seven fold in the half-century after the Civil War. Soon the United States had more large cities than any country in the world. The 1920 U.S. census revealed that, for the first time, a majority of Americans lived in urban areas.



Detroit, Michigan, began to prosper as an industrial city and major transportation hub by the mid to late nineteenth century. It would continue to grow throughout the early to mid-twentieth century as Henry Ford and others pioneered the automobile industry and made Detroit the automobile capital of the world—hence its nickname “Motor City.” Calvert Lith. Co., “Birds eye view—showing about three miles square—of the central portion of the city of Detroit, Michigan,” 1889. [Wikimedia](#).

Much of America's urban growth came from the millions of immigrants pouring into the nation. Between 1870 and 1920, over 25 million immigrants arrived in the United States. At first streams of migration continued patterns set before the Civil War but, by the turn of the twentieth century, new groups such as Italians, Poles, and Eastern European Jews made up larger percentages of arrivals while Irish and German immigration dissipated. This massive movement of people to the United States was influenced by a number of causes, what historians typically call “push” and “pull” factors. In other words, certain conditions in home countries encouraged people to leave and other factors encouraged them to choose the United States (instead of say, Canada, Australia, or Argentina) as their destination. For example, a young husband and wife living in Sweden in the 1880s and unable to purchase farmland might read an advertisement for inexpensive land in the American Midwest and choose to sail to the United States. A young Italian might hope to labor in a steel factory for several years and save up enough money to return home and purchase land for a family. Or a Russian Jewish family, eager to escape European pogroms, might look to the United States as a sanctuary. Or perhaps a Japanese migrant might hear of fertile farming land on the West Coast and choose to sail for California. There were numerous factors that pushed people out of their homelands, but by far the most important factor drawing immigrants to the United States between 1880 and 1920 was the maturation of American capitalism. Immigrants poured into the cities looking for work.

Cities such as New York, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Milwaukee, and St. Louis attracted large number of immigrants eager to work in their factories. By 1890, in most large northern cities, immigrants and their children amounted to roughly 60 percent of the population, and reached as high as 80 or 90 percent. Some immigrants, often from Italy or the Balkans, hoped to return home with enough money to purchase land. But for those who stayed, historians have long debated how these immigrants adjusted to their new home. Did the new arrivals mix together in the American “melting pot” and assimilate—becoming just like those people already in the United States—or did they retain—and sometimes even strengthen—their traditional ethnic identities? The answer lies somewhere in the middle. Immigrant groups formed vibrant societies and organizations to ease the transition to their new home. Examples included Italian workmen's clubs, Eastern European Jewish mutual-aid societies, and Polish Catholic

Churches. Newspapers published in dozens of languages. Ethnic communities provided cultural space for immigrants to maintain their arts, languages, and traditions while also facilitating even more immigrants. Historians label this process chain migration. Recently arrived immigrants wrote home and welcomed more immigrants that arrived in American cities knowing they could find friendly communities and live near other immigrants from their home country and, often, even from their home regions.



As the country's busiest immigrant inspection station from the late nineteenth through mid-twentieth century, Ellis Island operated a massive medical service through the Ellis Island Immigrant Hospital (seen in the photograph). Symbols of various diseases (physical and mental) were placed on immigrants' clothing using chalk, and many were able to enter the country only through wiping off or concealing the chalk marks. Photograph of the Immigrant Hospital at Ellis Island, 1913. [Wikimedia](#).

Cities and the people that populated them became the targets of critics. Many reformers criticized American municipal governments as corrupt institutions that did little to improve city life and much to enrich party bosses. New York City's Democratic Party machine, popularly known as Tammany Hall, seemed to embody all of the worst of city machines. In 1903, journalist William Riordon published a book, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*, which chronicled the activities of ward heeler George Washington Plunkitt. Plunkitt elaborately explained to Riordon the difference between "honest graft" and "dishonest graft:" "I made my pile in politics, but, at the same time, I served the organization and got more big improvements for New York City than any other livin' man." While exposing the corruption of New York City government, Riordon also revealed the hard work Plunkitt undertook on behalf of his largely immigrant constituency. On a typical day, Riordon wrote, Plunkitt was awakened at 2:00 AM to bail out a saloon-keeper who stayed open too late, was awakened again at 6:00 AM because of a fire in the neighborhood and spent time finding lodgings for the families displaced by the fire, because, as Riordon noted, fires like this were "considered great vote-getters." After spending the rest of the morning in court to secure the release of several of his constituents who had run afoul of the law, Plunkitt found jobs for four unemployed men, attended an Italian funeral, visited a church social, and dropped in on a Jewish wedding. He finally returned home to bed at midnight.

As Riordon's account makes clear, Plunkitt and other Tammany officials had direct and daily connections to the needs of their largely immigrant constituents. Although corrupt urban officials like Plunkitt did little to solve the root causes of urban vice and poverty, they did what they could to relieve its effects. Plunkitt and his ilk thus left a mixed legacy—on the one hand responsive to their constituents' needs, on the other doing little to solve the underlying issues that created these needs.

Tammany Hall arose in the eighteenth century as a working-class alternative to elite fraternal organizations such as the Society of the Cincinnati that formed after the American Revolution. The "Society of Tammany or the Columbian Order in the City of New York" was established in 1786 by a group of artisans and mechanics for social and philanthropic purposes. Like fraternal orders of any age, Tammany was born with peculiar rituals: members were "braves" who elected a board of thirteen "sachems" who picked a Grand Sachem who led the whole "wigwam." Members donned Indian regalia for national holiday parades, which ended with ample dining and drink. But then politics intruded. Tammany support for the French Revolution alienated Federalist members, tilting the society toward the emerging Democratic Republican Party by the mid-1790s. Soon Tammany affiliated with such leading Democratic politicians as Aaron Burr and promoted immigrant (especially Irish) rights, universal male suffrage, abolition of imprisonment for debt, public education, and other rising populist causes.



Tammany Hall was at its political height in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, around the time this photograph of the building at Tammany Hall and 14th St. West was taken. It practically controlled Democratic Party nominations and political patronage in New York City from the 1850s through the 1930s. Irving Underhill (photographer),"c. 1914. Tammany Hall & 14th St. West," Library of Congress.

By the time Tammany opened its first hall (after meeting in a succession of taverns and rented spaces) on Nassau Street in 1812, it was a full-fledged political organization, dominant in city politics, influential in state

politics, and a player in national politics. In 1868, it moved uptown to an ornate new hall near Union Square where it hosted that year's Democratic National Convention. Tammany Hall entered into the peak of its powers.

But politics led to power and corruption followed. The most notorious of Tammany's corruptions became the reign of William "Boss" Tweed, who became Grand Sachem in 1863. In the decades leading to Tweed's ascension, Tammany had gradually gained control of the Common Council, the city's legislative body, whose compliant members awarded government jobs, contracts, licenses, and franchises to the Tammany faithful, mainly tens of thousands of immigrant Irish. The first Tammany mayor was elected in 1854; the last left office nearly a century later. Tweed, as state senator and holder of various appointive city offices, made patronage and graft common practice. Entire branches of municipal, county, and state government—judicial, legislative, fiscal, and executive—became organs of Tammany power. By the time crusading journalists and politicians dispatched Tweed in 1871, his "Tammany Ring" had defrauded city government, through bribery, kickbacks, padded and fictitious expenses, bogus contracts, and other means, of upwards of \$200 million (\$8 billion today).

On the other hand, the copious public works projects that were the source of Tammany's bounty also provided essential infrastructure and public services for the city's rapidly expanding population. Water, sewer, and gas lines; schools, hospitals, civic buildings, and museums; police and fire departments; roads, parks (notably Central Park), and bridges (notably the Brooklyn Bridge): all in whole or part can be credited to Tammany's reign. An honest government arguably could not have built as much.

Tweed's fall (after civil and criminal trials and international flight, he died of pneumonia in a city jail in 1878) hardly spelled the demise of Tammany. While Tammany "reformers" cut back on the most outright and obvious crookedness, they also refined Tammany's political machinery and managed another half century of less scandalous but more rigorous control of city and state government. An 1894 state corruption investigation dented Tammany's power but at the turn of the twentieth century Tammany still controlled an estimated 60,000 government jobs. In the early 1900s, Tammany aligned itself with the Progressive and good government reform movements, later boosting the national profiles of four-term governor and 1928 Democratic presidential candidate Al Smith and other Tammany politicians.

Beyond New York, Tammany Hall was a catch phrase for political corruption, and, although its corruption was legendary, it was also creature of its time, a cause of New York's rise. Tammany Hall was a model of urban political organization and was useful in many ways for exercising power and building necessary improvements for a rapidly expanding city where weaker authority may have failed. Egregious in its excesses but effective in its purposes, it was perhaps much like nineteenth-century New York itself. All the while, conflicts over urban problems and city government dominate local politics, and pitting good-government reformers (typically affluent, educated Protestant Republicans) against the masses of urban residents (typically immigrant Catholics and Jews who voted Democratic).

Americans would become consumed by the "urban crisis," and progressive reformers would begin in the exploration of urban problems and the promotion of municipal reform. But Americans also expressed increasing concern over the declining quality of life in rural areas. While the cities boomed, however, rural worlds languished. Many, such as Jack London in books like *The Valley of the Moon*, romanticized the countryside and celebrated rural life while wondering what had been lost in urban life, many American social scientists increasingly displayed a fascination with communal decay and immorality in rural places, indicative of a developing distaste towards rural culture as well as the cultural allure of city life among many urban elites. Sociologist Kenyon Butterfield, concerned by the sprawling nature of industrial cities and suburbs, expressed concern about the eroding position of rural citizens and farmers, noting that "agriculture does not hold the same relative rank among our industries that it did in former years." Butterfield saw "the farm problem" as connected "with the whole question of democratic civilization" with rural depopulation and urban expansion threatening traditional American values. Others saw rural places and industrial cities as linked through shared economic interest which necessitated their preservation in the face of residential sprawl. Liberty Hyde Bailey, a botanist and rural scholar selected by Theodore Roosevelt to chair a federal Commission on Country Life in 1907, concluded that "every agricultural question is a city question, and every producers problem is a consumers problem," noting the link between economic exchange and community development in rural places as they became less agrarian and more residential.

Many began to long for a middle path between the cities and the country. At the start of the twentieth century, newer suburban communities in the rural hinterlands of American cities such as Los Angeles defined themselves in opposition to urban crowding. Americans contemplated the complicated relationships between rural places, suburban living, and urban spaces. Certainly, Los Angeles was a model for the suburban development of rural places. Dana Barlett, a social reformer in Los Angeles, noted that Los Angeles, stretching across dozens of small

towns even at the start of the twentieth century, was “a better city” because of its residential identity as a “city of homes.” This language was seized upon in many rural suburbs. In one of these small towns on the outskirts of Los Angeles, Glendora, local leaders were concerned about the reordering of rural spaces and the agricultural production of the surrounding countryside. Members of Glendora’s Chamber of Commerce reported their desire to keep “Glendora as it is” and were “loath as anyone to see it become cosmopolitan” or racially and ethnically heterogeneous like much of the surrounding countryside. Instead, town leaders argued that in order to have Glendora “grow along the lines necessary to have it remain an enjoyable city of homes,” the town’s leaders needed to “bestir ourselves to direct its growth” by encouraging further residential development at expense of agriculture. The citrus *colonias* that surrounded Glendora at this time, populated mostly by immigrant farm workers and their families from Japan, the Philippines, and Mexico would ultimately be destroyed as Glendora grew as a residential town in the following decades.

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VIDEO: GROWTH, CITIES, AND IMMIGRATION

In this video, John Green teaches you about the massive immigration to the United States during the late 19th and early 20th century. Immigrants flocked to the U.S. from all over the world in this time period. Millions of Europeans moved to the U.S. where they drove the growth of cities and manned the rapid industrialization that was taking place.

In the western United States many, many Chinese immigrants arrived to work on the railroad and in mines. As is often the case in the United States, the people who already lived in the U.S. reacted kind of badly to this flood of immigrants. Some legislators tried to stem the flow of new arrivals, with mixed success. Grover Cleveland vetoed a general ban on immigration, but the leadership at the time did manage to get together to pass an anti-Chinese immigration law. Immigrants did win some important Supreme Court decisions upholding their rights, but in many ways, immigrants were treated as second class citizens.

At the same time, the country was rapidly urbanizing. Cities were growing rapidly and industrial technology was developing new wonders all the time. John will cover all this upheaval and change, and hearken back to a time when racial profiling did in fact boil down to analyzing the side of someone’s face.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/RRhjqqe750A>

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THE NEW SOUTH AND THE PROBLEM OF RACE

“There was a South of slavery and secession,” *Atlanta Constitution* editor Henry Grady proclaimed in an 1886 speech to businessmen in New York. “That South is dead,” he said. Grady captured the sentiment of many white southern business and political leaders who imagined a New South that would embrace industrialization and diversified agriculture in order to bring the region back from the economic ruin that resulted from the Civil War. He highlighted the strengths of the people and the region as he promoted the possibilities for future prosperity for all through an alliance between northern capital and southern labor. Grady and other New South boosters hoped to shape the region’s economy to resemble that of the North, focusing not only on industry but on infrastructure as well. New South boosters were white, and they ensured that the innovations they sought conformed to the region’s racial status quo.



The ambitions of Atlanta, seen in the construction of grand buildings like the Kimball House Hotel, reflect the larger regional aspirations to thrive in this so-called era of the “New South.” Photograph of the second Kimball House scanned from an 1890 book. [Wikimedia](#).

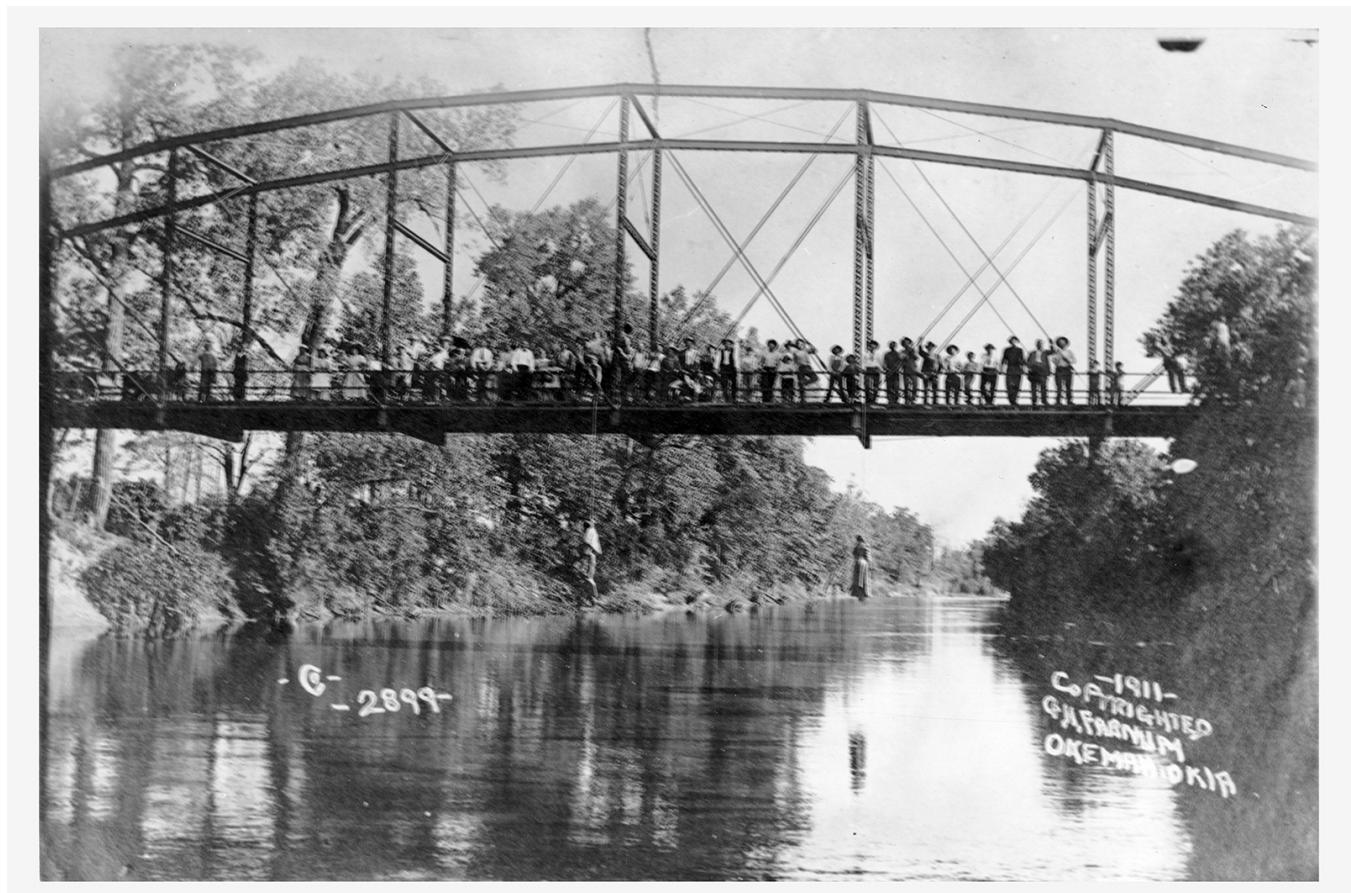
The need for a New South after Reconstruction was obvious. Southern states had lost prestige, property, and wealth during their failed insurrection. Before the war, the South had held the presidency for all but thirteen years and had consistently held a majority in Congress and on the Supreme Court. The cotton South was home to the twelve wealthiest counties in the country before the war. But defeat left the region in a state of despair. Thousands had died and the scars of loss were everywhere. Moreover, four million enslaved Americans had thrown off their chains. Slaves had represented the wealth and power of the South, and now they were free. Emancipation unsettled the southern social order. When Reconstruction governments attempted to grant freedpeople full citizenship rights, anxious whites struck back. From their fear, anger, and resentment they lashed out, not only in organized terrorist organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, but in political corruption, economic control, and violent intimidation.

But just how new was the supposed New South? The reestablishment of white supremacy, and the “redemption” of the South from Reconstruction, paved the way for the construction of the New South. White Southerners took back control of state and local governments and used their reclaimed power to disfranchise African Americans and pass “Jim Crow” laws segregating schools, transportation, employment, and various public and private facilities. White Southerners also acted outside the law to terrorize black communities: the number of lynchings—the murder of individuals accused of a crime or of otherwise violating community standards by groups of people acting together without legal authority—exploded in the 1880s and 1890s, as whites used extreme violence to secure their hold over the region. Lynchings had occurred throughout American history, but after the Civil War southern blacks became the target of a new and long-lasting wave of violence. Whether for actual crimes or fabricated crimes or for no crimes at all, white mobs murdered roughly five thousand African Americans between the 1880s and the 1950s. Lynching not only killed its victims, it served as a symbolic act, an intimidation of some and a ritual for others.

Victims were not simply hanged, they were tortured. They were mutilated, burned alive, and shot. Lynchings could become carnivals, public spectacles attended by thousands of eager spectators. Rail lines ran special cars to accommodate the rush of participants. Vendors sold goods and keepsakes. Perpetrators posed for photos and collected mementos. And it was increasingly common. One notorious example occurred in Georgia in 1899. Accused of killing his white employer and raping the man's wife, Sam Hose was captured by a mob and taken to the town of Newnan. Word of the impending lynching quickly spread, and specially chartered passenger trains brought some 4,000 visitors from Atlanta to witness the gruesome affair. Members of the mob tortured Hose for about an hour. They sliced off pieces of his body as he screamed in agony. Then they poured a can of kerosene over his body and burned him alive.

At the barbaric height of southern lynching, in the last years of the nineteenth century, southerners lynched two to three African Americans every week. In general, lynchings were most frequent in the Cotton Belt of the Lower South, where southern blacks were congregated and the majority worked as tenant farmers and field hands on the cotton farms of white land owners. The states of Mississippi and Georgia had the greatest number of recorded lynchings. From 1880 to 1930, over five hundred African Americans were killed by Mississippi lynch mobs; Georgia mobs murdered more than four hundred.

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a number of prominent southerners openly supported lynching, arguing that it was a necessary evil to punish black rapists and deter others. In the late 1890s, Georgia newspaper columnist and noted women's rights activist Rebecca Latimer Felton—who would later become the first woman to serve in the U.S. Senate—endorsed such extrajudicial killings. She said, "If it takes lynching to protect women's dearest possession from drunken, ravening beasts, then I say lynch a thousand a week." When opponents argued that lynching violated victims' constitutional right, South Carolina Governor Coleman Blease angrily responded, "Whenever the Constitution comes between me and the virtue of the white women of South Carolina, I say to hell with the Constitution."



This photograph shows the lynching of Laura and Lawrence Nelson on May 25, 1911 in Okemah, Oklahoma. One of thousands of lynchings throughout the South in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this particular case of the lynching of a mother and son garnered national attention. In response, the local white newspaper in Okemah simply wrote, "while the general

sentiment is adverse to the method, it is generally thought that the negroes got what would have been due them under due process of law." (*The Okemah Ledger*, May 4, 1911) George H. Farnum (photographer), Photograph, May 25, 1911. [Wikimedia](#).

Black activists and white allies worked to outlaw lynching. A pioneer in the fight was Ida B. Wells, an African American woman born in the last years of slavery who in 1892 lost three friends to a lynch mob in Memphis, Tennessee. Later that year, Wells published *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases*, a groundbreaking work that documented the South's lynching culture and notably exposed the myth of the black rapist. The Tuskegee Institute and the NAACP both compiled and publicized lists of every reported lynching in the United States, and the American Society of Women for the Prevention of Lynching encouraged white southern women to speak up against the violence so often perpetrated in their name. In 1918, Representative Leonidas Dyer of Missouri introduced federal anti-lynching legislation that would have made local counties where lynchings took place legally liable for such killings. Throughout the early 1920s, the Dyer Bill was the subject of heated political debate but, fiercely opposed by southern congressmen and unable to win enough northern champions, the proposed bill was never enacted.

Lynching was only the violent worst of the South's racial world. Discrimination in employment and housing and the legal segregation of public and private life reflected the rise of a new Jim Crow South. So-called Jim Crow laws legalized what custom had long dictated. Southern states and municipalities began proscribing racial segregation in public places and private lives. Separate coach laws were some of the first such laws to appear, beginning in Tennessee in the 1880s. Soon, schools, stores, theaters, restaurants, bathrooms, and nearly every other part of public life were segregated. So too were social lives. The sin of racial mixing, critics said, had to be heavily guarded against. Marriage laws regulated against interracial couples and white men, ever anxious of relationships between black men and white women, passed miscegenation laws and justified lynching as an appropriate extra-legal tool to police the racial divide.

In politics, de facto limitations of black voting had suppressed black voters since Reconstruction. Whites stuffed ballot boxes, intimidated black voters with physical and economic threats, or bribed them with money and alcohol. And then, from roughly 1890-1908, southern states implemented de jure disfranchisement. States began passing laws that required voters to pass literacy tests (which were often judged arbitrarily) and pay poll taxes (which hit poor whites as well as poor blacks), effectively denying black men the franchise that was supposed to have been guaranteed by the fifteenth amendment. Those responsible for such laws posed as reformers and justified voting restrictions as for the public good, a way to clean up politics by purging corrupt African Americans from the voting rolls.

With white supremacy ever more secure, New South boosters looked outward. Many prominent white Southerners hoped to rebuild the South's economy and psychology, to confront post-Reconstruction uncertainties, and to convince the nation that the South could be more than an economically backward, race-obsessed backwater. As they did, however, they began to retell the history of the recent past. A kind of civic religion known as the "Lost Cause" glorified the Confederacy and romanticized the Old South. White southerners looked forward while hearkening back to an imagined past inhabited by contented and loyal slaves, benevolent and generous masters, chivalric and honorable men, and pure and faithful southern belles. Secession, they said, had little to do with the institution of slavery, and soldiers fought only for home and honor, not the continued ownership of human beings. The New South, then, would be built physically with new technologies, new investments, and new industries, but undergirded by political and social custom. Grady might have declared the Confederate South dead, but its memory pervaded the thoughts and actions of white southerners.

Lost Cause champions overtook the South. Women's groups such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy along with war veterans played an important role in preserving Confederate memory through Memorial Day celebrations and the construction of monuments. Across the South towns erected statues of General Robert E. Lee and other Confederate generals. By the turn of the twentieth century, the idealized Lost Cause past was entrenched not only in the South but throughout the country. In 1905, for instance, North Carolinian Thomas F. Dixon published a novel, *The Clansman*, which depicted the Ku Klux Klan as heroic defenders of the South against the corruption of black and carpetbagger rule during Reconstruction. In 1915 acclaimed film director David W. Griffith adapted Dixon's novel into the blockbuster, groundbreaking feature film, *Birth of a Nation*. The film almost singlehandedly rejuvenated the Ku Klux Klan. This romanticized vision of the antebellum South and the corrupt era of Reconstruction held sway in the popular imagination until a new generation of historians successfully challenged it after about 1950.

While Lost Cause defenders mythologized their past, New South boosters struggled to wrench the South into the modern world. The railroads became their focus. The region had lagged behind the North in the railroad building boom of the mid-nineteenth century and postwar expansion facilitated connections between the most rural

segments of the population with the region's rising urban areas. Boosters campaigned for the construction new hard-surfaced roads as well, arguing that improved roads would further increase the flow of goods and people and entice northern businesses to relocate to the region. The rising popularity of the automobile after the turn of the century only increased pressure for the construction of reliable roads between cities, towns, county seats, and the vast farmlands of the South.

Along with new transportation networks, New South boosters continued to promote industrial growth. The region witnessed the rise of various manufacturing industries, predominately textiles, tobacco, furniture, and steel. While agriculture—cotton in particular—remained the mainstay of the region's economy, these new industries provided new wealth for owners, new investments for the region, and new opportunities for the exploding number of landless farmers to finally flee the land. Industries offered low-paying jobs but also opportunity for those rural poor who could no longer sustain themselves through subsistence farming. Men, women, and children all moved into wage work. At the turn of the twentieth century, nearly one-fourth of southern mill workers were children aged six to sixteen.

In most cases, as in most aspects of life in the New South, new factory jobs were racially segregated. Better-paying jobs were reserved for whites, while the most dangerous, labor-intensive, dirtiest, and lowest-paying positions were relegated to African Americans. African American women, shut out of most industries, found employment most often as domestic help for white families. As poor as white southern mill workers were, southern blacks were poorer, and many mill workers could afford to pay for domestic help in caring for young children, cleaning houses, doing laundry, cooking meals, and then leaving. Mill villages that grew up alongside factories were whites-only, and African American families were pushed to the outer perimeter of the settlements.

That a New South emerged in the decades between Reconstruction and World War I is debatable. If measured by industrial output and railroad construction, the New South was certainly a reality, if, relative the rest of the nation, a limited one. If measured in terms of racial discrimination, however, the New South looked much like the Old. Boosters like Henry Grady argued the South was done with racial questions, but lynching and segregation and the institutionalization of Jim Crow exposed the South's lingering racial obsessions. Moreover, most southerners still toiled in agriculture and still lived in poverty. Industrial development and expanding infrastructure therefore coexisted easily with white supremacy and an impoverished agricultural economy. The trains came, factories were built, capital was invested, but the region was still mired in poverty and racial apartheid. Much of the New South, then, was anything but.

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GENDER, RELIGION, CULTURE

In 1905, Standard Oil tycoon John D. Rockefeller donated \$100,000 (about \$2.5 million today) to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Rockefeller was the richest man in America, but also one of the most hated and mistrusted. Even admirers conceded that he achieved his wealth through often illegal and usually immoral business practices. Journalist Ida Tarbell had made waves by describing his company's (Standard Oil) long-standing ruthlessness and predilections for political corruption. Clergymen, led by the reformer Washington Gladden, fiercely protested the donation. A decade earlier, Gladden had asked of such donations, "Is this clean money? Can any man, can any institution, knowing its origin, touch it without being defiled?" Gladden said, "In the cool brutality with which properties are wrecked, securities destroyed, and people by the hundreds robbed of their little all to build up the fortunes of the multi-millionaires, we have an appalling revelation of the kind of monster that a human being may become."

Despite widespread criticism, the American Board accepted Rockefeller's donation. Board President Samuel Capen did not defend Rockefeller, arguing the gift was charitable and the Board could not assess the origin of every donation, but the dispute shook Capen. Was a corporate background incompatible with a religious organization? The "tainted money debate" reflected questions about the proper relationship between religion and capitalism. With rising income inequality, would religious groups be forced to support either the elite or the disempowered? What was moral in the new industrial United States? And what obligations did wealth bring? Steel

magnate Andrew Carnegie wrote in an 1889 article, “The Gospel of Wealth,” that “the true antidote for the temporary unequal distribution of wealth” was the moral obligation of the rich to give to charity. Farmer and labor organizers, meanwhile, argued that God had blessed the weak and that new Gilded Age fortunes and corporate management were inherently immoral. As time passed, American churches increasingly adapted themselves to the new industrial order. Even Gladden came to accept Rockefeller’s donation and businessmen, such as the Baptist John D. Rockefeller, increasingly touted the morality of business. At the same time that many churches wondered about the compatibility of large fortunes with Christian values, others were concerned for the fate of traditional American masculinity.

The economic and social changes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—including increased urbanization, immigration, advancements in science and technology, patterns of consumption and the new availability of goods, and growing protestations against economic, gender, and racial inequalities—challenged traditional gender norms. At the same time urban spaces and shifting cultural and social values presented unprecedented opportunities to challenge traditional gender and sexual norms. Many women vied for equal rights. They became activists, and launched labor rights campaigns and a renewed suffrage movement.

Urbanization and immigration fueled anxieties that old social mores were being subverted and that old forms of social and moral policing were increasingly inadequate. The anonymity of urban spaces presented an opportunity in particular for female sexuality and for male sexual experimentation along a spectrum of sexual orientation and gendered identities. Anxiety over female sexuality reflected generational tensions and differences, in addition to racial and class ones. As young women pushed back against social mores through pre-marital sexual exploration and expression, social welfare experts and moral reformers even labeled these girls feeble-minded, believing that such unfeminine behavior was symptomatic of clinical insanity rather than free-willed expression. Generational differences exacerbated the social, and even familial, tensions provoked by shifting gender norms. Youths challenged the gender norms of their parents’ generations by dawning new fashions and engaging in the delights of the city. Women’s fashion loosed its physical constraints: corsets relaxed and hemlines rose. The newfound physical freedom enabled by looser dress was mimicked in the pursuit of other freedoms.

While many women worked to liberate themselves, many, sometimes simultaneously, worked to uplift others. Women’s work against alcohol propelled temperance into one of the foremost moral reforms of the period. Middle-class, typically Protestant women based their assault on alcohol on the basis of their feminine virtue, Christian sentiment, and their protective role in the family and home. Others, like Jane Addams and settlement house workers, sought to impart a middle-class education on immigrant and working class women through the establishment of settlement homes. Other reformers touted a “scientific motherhood” and the science of hygiene was deployed as a method of both social uplift and moralizing, particularly of working class and immigrant women.

Women vocalized new discontents through literature. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story, "The Yellow Wallpaper," attacked the "naturalness" of feminine domesticity and critiqued Victorian psychological remedies administered to women, such as the "rest cure." Kate Chopin's *The Great Awakening*, set in the American South, likewise criticized the domestic and familial role ascribed to women by society, and gave expression to feelings of malaise, desperation, and desire. Such literature directly challenged the status quo of the Victorian era's constructions of femininity and feminine virtue, as well as established feminine roles.

While many men worried about female activism, they worried too about their own masculinity. To anxious observers, industrial capitalism was withering American manhood. Rather than working on farms and in factories, where young men formed physical muscle and spiritual grit, new generations of workers labored behind desks, wore white collars, and, in the words of Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, appeared "black-coated, stiff-jointed, soft-muscled, [and] paste-complexioned." Neurologist George Beard even coined a medical term, "neurasthenia," for a new emasculated condition that marked by depression, indigestion, hypochondria, and extreme nervousness. The philosopher William James called it "Americanitis." Academics increasingly warned that America had become a nation of emasculated men.

Churches too worried about feminization. Women had always comprised a clear majority of church memberships in the United States, but now the theologian Washington Gladden said, "A preponderance of female influence in the Church or anywhere else in society is unnatural and injurious." Many feared that the feminized church had feminized Christ Himself. Rather than a rough-hewn carpenter, the Christ had been turned into someone "mushy" and "sweetly effeminate," in the words of Walter Rauschenbusch. Advocates of a so-called "muscular Christianity" sought to stiffen young mens' backbones by putting them back in touch with their primal manliness. Pulling from then-scientific developmental theory, they believed that young men ought to progress through stages similar that mirrored the evolution of civilizations, from primitive nature-dwellers to industrial enlightenment. To facilitate "primitive" encounters with nature, muscular Christians founded summer camps and outdoor boys clubs like the Woodcraft Indians, the Sons of Daniel Boone, and the Boy Brigades—all precursors of the Boy Scouts. Other champions of muscular Christianity, such as the newly formed Young Men's Christian Association, built gymnasiums, often attached to churches, where youths could strengthen their bodies as well as their spirits. It was a YMCA leader that coined the term "body-building," and others that invented the sports of basketball and volleyball. Muscular Christianity, though, was about even more than building strong bodies and minds. Many advocates also ardently championed Western imperialism, cheering on attempts to civilize non-Western peoples.

Gilded Age men were encouraged to embrace a particular vision of masculinity connected intimately with the rising tides of nationalism, militarism, and imperialism. Contemporary ideals of American masculinity at the turn of the century developed in concert with the United States' imperial and militaristic endeavors in the West and abroad. During the Spanish American War in 1898, Teddy Roosevelt and his Rough Riders would embody the idealized image of the tall, strong, virile, and fit American man that simultaneously epitomized the ideals of power that informed the United States' imperial agenda. Roosevelt and others like him believed a reinvigorated masculinity would preserve the American race's superiority against foreign foes and the effeminating effects of over-civilization.



Taken a few years after the publication of "The Yellow Wallpaper," this portrait photograph shows activist Charlotte Perkins Gilman's feminine poise and respectability even as she sought massive change for women's place in society. An outspoken supporter of women's rights, Gilman's works challenged the supposedly "natural" inferiority of women. Her short stories, novels, and poetry have been an inspiration to feminists for over a century. Photograph, 1895.

Wikimedia.

But while many fretted over traditional American life, others lost themselves in new forms of mass culture. Vaudeville signaled new cultural worlds. A unique variety of popular entertainments, these travelling circuit shows first appeared during the Civil War but peaked between 1880 and 1920. Vaudeville shows featured comedians, musicians, actors, jugglers and other talents that could captivate an audience. Unlike earlier rowdy acts meant for a male audience that included alcohol, vaudeville was considered family friendly, “polite” entertainment, though the acts involved offensive ethnic and racial caricatures of African Americans and recent immigrants. Vaudeville performances were often small and quirky, though venues such as the renowned Palace Theatre in New York City signaled true stardom for many performers. Silent film actor Charlie Chaplin, comedian Bob Hope, and illusionist Harry Houdini all made a name for themselves early on in vaudeville circuits. But if live entertainment still captivated audiences, others looked to new technologies.



These posters for Wm. H. West's Big Minstrel Jubilee advertised a vaudeville show of comedy and acrobatics performed by white actors in blackface. Minstrelsy had been a popular form of entertainment for white audiences since the 1840s, but blackface took on a new life in the early twentieth century as racism intensified in both the North and South. Embodying characteristics that by that time had become associated with blackness, including joyful ignorance, laziness, and over-pronounced facial features, blackface minstrelsy circulated racist images and attitudes around the world. The Strobridge Lithographing Company, "Wm. H. West's Big Minstrel Jubilee," 1900. [Wikimedia](#).

By the turn of the century, two technologies pioneered by Edison—the phonograph and motion pictures—would revolutionize leisure and help to create the mass entertainment culture of the twentieth century. The phonograph was the first reliable device to record and reproduce sound. But it was more than that. The phonograph could create multiple copies of recordings, and soon led to a great expansion of the market for popular music. Although the phonograph was a technical success, Edison at first had trouble developing commercial applications for it. This was partly due to the unique origin of the phonograph. The phonograph had neither an existing market nor an incumbent technology that it could replace—it was a device that did entirely new things. At the time, he suggested possible future uses of the phonograph, like audio letters, preserving speeches and dying words of

great men, talking clocks, teaching elocution, and so forth. He did not anticipate that its greatest use would be in the field of mass entertainment.

Edison continued his work refining and marketing the phonograph during 1878, but by the end of that year he began to devote nearly all his attention to electric power and lighting. He largely abandoned the phonograph until the mid-1880s, leaving it to others (especially Alexander Graham Bell) to improve it. He returned to it fully in 1887 and developed a dictating machine that met with limited commercial success. Soon Edison's agents reported that many phonographs found use as entertainment devices, especially in so-called phonograph parlors where customers paid a nickel to hear a piece of music. By the turn of the century, Americans began to buy phonographs for home use, and entertainment had become the phonograph's major market.

Inspired by the success of the phonograph as an entertainment device, Edison decided in 1888 to develop "an instrument which does for the Eye what the phonograph does for the Ear." After taking out a patent in 1888 on the overall concept of motion pictures, Edison set out to make it a reality. He made a conceptual breakthrough in 1889, when he decided to shift to a design that used rolled film. By early 1891 he had a motion-picture camera, which he called a kinetograph, and a viewing device, which he called a kinetoscope, ready for public demonstration. In 1893 the kinetoscope was ready for commercial development. By 1894 the Edison Company had produced about 75 films suitable for sale and viewing.

In these early years, viewers watched films through a small eyepiece in an arcade or parlor. These films were short, typically about three minutes long. Many can strike modern audiences as trite or dull, but for Americans in the 1890s much of their appeal lay in their novelty. Many of the early films depicted athletic competitions like boxing matches. One 1894 title, for example, was a six-round boxing match that Edison's company sold to arcades for \$22.50 per round. The catalog description gives a sense of the appeal it had for male viewers: "Full of hard fighting, clever hits, punches, leads, dodges, body blows and some slugging." Other early kinetoscope subjects included Indian dances, nature and outdoor scenes, recreations of historical events, and humorous skits.

In 1896 Edison and two rivals pooled their projection patents and marketed a projection system that they called the "Edison Vitascope." After the development of a reliable projection system, film audiences began to shift away from kinetoscope arcades to theaters seating many people. At the same time, Edison's film catalog grew in sophistication. He sent filmmakers to distant and exotic locales like Japan and China. Meanwhile, the shift to longer fictional films would soon have an important cultural consequence: it created a demand for film actors. The first "movie stars," such as the glamorous Mary Pickford, swashbuckling Douglas Fairbanks, and acrobatic comedian Buster Keaton, appeared around 1910. These stars had enormous appeal to audiences of the day. Alongside professional boxing and baseball, the film industry helped to create the modern culture of celebrity that would characterize mass entertainment in the twentieth century.

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CONCLUSION



Designers of the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago used a Neoclassical architectural style to build what was known as *The White City*. The integrated design of buildings, walkways, and landscapes was extremely influential in the burgeoning City Beautiful movement. The Fair itself was a huge success, bringing more than 27 million people to Chicago and helping to establish the ideology of American exceptionalism. Photograph of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, 1893. [Wikimedia](#).

In 1914, automobile manufacturer Henry Ford inaugurated the “five dollar day,” effectively doubling the pay of many of his assembly-line employees, and cut the working day from nine to eight hours. Ford’s primary goal was to reduce worker attrition, which had become a problem since he began assembling cars with a moving assembly line. Ford hoped that workers would tolerate repetitive, tiring work in exchange for better pay. And, too, blue-collar workers making five dollars a day might be able to afford Ford’s product, the basic Model T automobile, boosting his own business.

Attracted by high wages, thousands of immigrants flocked to Detroit to work in Ford’s plants. Ford’s innovations—affordable automobiles and better-paying jobs—bolstered the small but growing American middle class. Ford also coupled his five-dollar day with a sweeping and often intrusive supervision program. In 1914, Ford created a Sociological Department to provide immigrant workers with English tutoring and citizenship classes, and to visit to workers’ homes to ensure that wives kept clean homes, children attended school regularly,

and families deposited money into savings accounts. Ford's five dollar day and his Sociological Department epitomized new both positive and negative trends of the new America. On the one hand, principles of scientific management and rational factory design allowed the Ford Motor Company to produce cars cheaply in high volume, while paying workers high wages. Ford's production process was a triumph of engineering and management skill. On the other hand, Ford's desire to mold his unskilled, immigrant workers into ideal employees and citizens represented a well-intentioned but also coercive side of business management. In exchange for high wages, Ford's workers were supposed to accept his vision of what it meant to be a good American and a productive member of society.

This chapter was edited by David Hochfelder, with content contributions by Jacob Betz, David Hochfelder, Gerard Koeppel, Scott Libson, Kyle Livie, Paul Matzko, Isabella Morales, Andrew Robichaud, Kate Sohasky, Joseph Super, Susan Thomas, Kaylynn Washnock, and Kevin Young.

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PRIMARY SOURCE READING: THE GOSPEL OF WEALTH

Andrew Carnegie "The Gospel of Wealth" (1889)

I. THE PROBLEM OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF WEALTH

[1] The problem of our age is the proper administration of wealth, that the ties of brotherhood may still bind together the rich and poor in harmonious relationship. The conditions of human life have not only been changed, but revolutionized, within the past few hundred years. In former days there was little difference between the dwelling, dress, food, and environment of the chief and those of his retainers. . . . The contrast between the palace of the millionaire and the cottage of the laborer with us to-day measures the change which has come with civilization. This change, however, is not to be deplored, but welcomed as highly beneficial. It is well, say, essential, for the progress of the race that the houses of some should be homes for all that is highest and best in literature and the arts, and for all the refinements of civilization, rather than that none should be so. Much better this great irregularity than universal squalor. Without wealth there can be no Meccenas.

[2] [T]o-day the world obtains commodities of excellent quality at prices which even the preceding generation would have deemed incredible. In the commercial world similar causes have produced similar results, and the race is benefited thereby. The poor enjoy what the rich could not before afford. What were the luxuries have become the necessities of life. . . .

[3] Objections to the foundations upon which society is based are not in order, because the condition of the race is better with these than it has been with any other which has been tried. . . . No evil, but good, has come to the race from the accumulation of wealth by those who have had the ability and energy to produce it. . . .

[4] We start, then, with a condition of affairs under which the best interests of the race are promoted, but which inevitably gives wealth to the few. . . . What is the proper mode of administering wealth after the laws upon which civilization is founded have thrown it into the hands of the few? . . .

[5] There are but three modes in which surplus wealth can be disposed of. It can be left to the families of the decedents; or it can be bequeathed for public purposes; or, finally, it can be administered by its possessors during their lives. Under the first and second modes most of the wealth of the world that has reached the few has hitherto been applied. . . .

[6] There remains, then, only one mode of using great fortunes; but in this we have the true antidote for the temporary unequal distribution of wealth, the reconciliation of the rich and the poor-a reign of harmony, another ideal, differing, indeed, from that of the Communist in requiring only the further evolution of existing conditions, not the total overthrow of our civilization. It is founded upon the most intense Individualism. . . . Under its sway we shall have an ideal State, in which the surplus wealth of the few will become, in the best sense, property of the many, because administering for the common good; and this wealth, passes through the hands of the few, can be made much more potent force for the elevation of our race than if distributed in small sums to the people themselves. Even the poorest can be made to see this, and to agree that great sums gathered by some of their fellow-citizens-spent for public purposes, from which masses reap the principal benefit, are more valuable to them than if scattered among themselves in trifling amounts through the course of many years.

[7] If we consider the results which flow from the Cooper Institute, for instance. . . . , and compare these with those who would have ensured for the good of the man form an equal sum distributed by Mr. Cooper in his lifetime in the form of wages, which the highest form of distributing, being work done and not for charity, we can estimate of the possibilities for the improvement of the race which lie embedded in the present law of the accumulation of wealth. . . .

[8] This, then, is held to be the duty of the man of wealth: To set an example of modest, unostentatious living, shunning display or extravagance; to provide moderately for the legitimate wants of those dependent upon him; and, after doing so, to consider all surplus revenues which come to him simply as trust funds, which he is called upon to administer, and strictly bound as a matter of duty to administer in the manner which, in his judgment, is best calculated to produce the most beneficial results for the community-the man of wealth thus becoming the mere trustee and agent for his poorer brethren, bringing to their service his superior wisdom, experience, and ability to administer, doing for them better than they would or could do for them selves. . . .

[9] In bestowing charity, the main consideration should be to help those who will help themselves; to provide part of the means by which those who desire to improve may do so; to give those who desire to rise the aids by which they may rise; to assist, but rarely or never to do all. Neither the individual nor the race is improved by alms giving. Those worthy of assistance, except in rare cases, seldom require assistance. . . .

[10] The rich man is thus almost restricted to following the examples of Peter Cooper, Enoch Pratt of Baltimore, Mr. Pratt of Brooklyn, Senator Stanford, and others, who know that the best means of benefiting the community is to place within its reach the ladders upon which the aspiring can rise-free libraries, parks, and means of recreation, by which men are helped in body and mind; works of art, certain to give pleasure and improve the general condition of the people; in this manner returning their surplus wealth to the mass of their fellows in the forms best calculated to do them lasting good.

[11] Thus is the problem of rich and poor to be solved. The laws of accumulation will be left free, the laws of distribution free. Individualism will continue, but the millionaire will be but a trustee for the poor, intrusted for a season with a great part of the increased wealth of the community, but administering it for the community far better than it could or would have done for itself. The best minds will thus have reached a stage in the development of the race in which it is clearly seen that there is no mode of disposing of surplus wealth creditable to thoughtful and earnest men into whose hands it flows, save by using it year by year for the general good. . . .

[12] Such, in my opinion, is the true gospel concerning wealth, obedience to which is destined some day to solve the problem of the rich and the poor, and to bring "Peace on earth, among men good will."

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ASSIGNMENT: THE GOSPEL OF WEALTH

You just read the excerpt from Andrew Carnegie's *Gospel of Wealth*. Now let's put it to use and see if you truly understand his basic principle. Read the following news [article about the recent minimum wage hike in Seattle](#). Then answer the following question:

- Based on Carnegie's writing (I don't want your opinion on the matter), would Carnegie support or oppose the wage hike in Seattle? Why/why not?

Be sure to use specific quotes and passages from *Gospel of Wealth* in your explanation.

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CONQUERING THE WEST

INTRODUCTION



Edward S. Curtis, *Navajo Riders in Canyon de Chelly*, c. 1904, via [Library of Congress](#).

Deep into the nineteenth century, Native Americans still dominated the vastness of the American West. Linked culturally and geographically by trade, travel, and warfare, various indigenous groups controlled most of the continent west of the Mississippi River. Spanish, French, British, and later American traders had integrated themselves into many regional economies, and American emigrants pushed ever westward, but no imperial power had yet achieved anything approximating political or military control over the great bulk of the continent. But then the Civil War came and went and decoupled the West from the question of slavery just as the United States industrialized and laid down rails and pushed its ever-expanding population ever-farther west.

Indigenous Americans had claimed North America for over ten millennia and, into the late-nineteenth century, perhaps as many as 250,000 natives still claimed the American West. But then unending waves of American settlers, the American military, and the unstoppable onrush of American capital conquered all. The United States removed native groups to ever-shrinking reservations, incorporated the West first as territories and then as states, and, for the first time in its history, controlled the enormity of land between the two oceans.

The history of the late-nineteenth-century West is many-sided. Tragedy for some, triumph for others, the many intertwined histories of the American West marked a pivotal transformation in the history of the United States.

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POST-CIVIL WAR WESTWARD MIGRATION

In the decades after the Civil War, Americans poured across the Mississippi River in record numbers. No longer simply crossing over the continent for new imagined Edens in California or Oregon, they settled now in the vast heart of the continent.

Many of the first American migrants had come to the West in search of quick profits during the mid-century gold and silver rushes. As in the California rush of 1848–49, droves of prospectors poured in after precious-metal strikes in Colorado in 1858, Nevada in 1859, Idaho in 1860, Montana in 1863, and the Black Hills in 1874. While women often performed housework that allowed mining families to subsist in often difficult conditions, a significant portion of the mining workforce were single men without families dependent on service industries in nearby towns and cities. There, working-class women worked in shops, saloons, boarding houses, and brothels. It was often these ancillary operations that profited from the mining boom: as failed prospectors often found, the rush itself often generated more wealth than the mines. The gold that left Colorado in the first seven years after the Pike's Peak gold strike—estimated at \$25.5 million—was, for instance, less than half of what outside parties had invested in the fever and the 100,000-plus migrants who settled in the Rocky Mountains were ultimately more valuable to the region's development than the gold they came to find.

Others came to the Plains to extract the hides of the great bison herds. Millions of animals had roamed the Plains, but their tough leather supplied industrial belting in eastern factories and raw material for the booming clothing industry. Specialized teams took down and skinned the herds. The infamous American bison slaughter peaked in the early 1870s. The number of American bison plummeted from over 10 million at mid-century to only a few hundred by the early 1880s. The expansion of the railroads would allow ranching to replace the bison with cattle on the American grasslands.



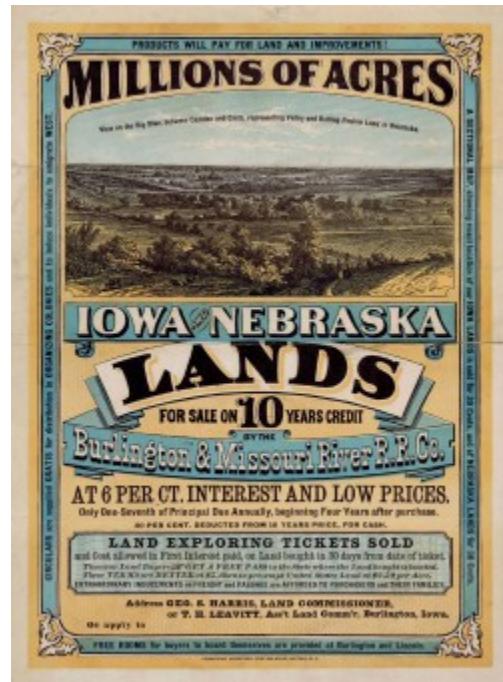
While bison supplied leather for America's booming clothing industry, the skulls of the animals also provided a key ingredient in fertilizer. This 1870s photograph illustrates the massive number of bison killed for these and other reasons (including sport) in the second half of the nineteenth century. Photograph of a pile of American bison skulls waiting to be ground for fertilizer, 1870s.

[Wikimedia](#).

It was land, ultimately, that drew the most migrants to the West. Family farms were the backbone of the agricultural economy that expanded in the West after the Civil War. In 1862, northerners in Congress passed the Homestead Act, allowed male citizens (or those who declared their intent to become citizens) to claim federally-owned lands in the West. Settlers could head west, choose a 160 acre surveyed section of land, file a claim, and begin "improving" the land by plowing fields, building houses and barns, or digging wells, and, after five years of living on the land, could apply for the official title deed to the land. Hundreds of thousands of Americans used the Homestead Act to acquire land. The treeless plains that had been considered unfit for settlement became the new agricultural mecca for land-hungry Americans.

The Homestead Act excluded married women from filing claims because they were considered the legal dependents of their husbands. Some unmarried women filed claims on their own, but single farmers (male or female) were hard-pressed to run a farm and they were a small minority. Most farm households adopted traditional divisions of labor: men worked in the fields and women managed the home and kept the family fed. Both were essential.

Migrants sometimes found in homesteads a self-sufficiency denied at home. Second or third sons who did not inherit land in Scandinavia, for instance, founded farm communities in Minnesota, Dakota, and other Midwestern territories in the 1860s. Boosters encouraged emigration by advertising the semiarid Plains as, for instance, "a flowery meadow of great fertility clothed in nutritious grasses, and watered by numerous streams." Western populations exploded. The Plains were transformed. In 1860, for example, Kansas had about 10,000 farms; in 1880 it had 239,000. Texas, for instance, saw enormous population growth. The federal government counted 200,000 persons in Texas in 1850, 1,600,000 in 1880, and 3,000,000 in 1900, becoming the sixth most populous state in the nation.



This 1872 land advertisement for Iowa and Nebraska underscores what was the most important driving force for western migrants: land. "Millions of acres. Iowa and Nebraska. Land for sale on 10 years credit by the Burlington & Missouri River R. R. Co. at 6 per ct interest and low prices..." 1872. [Library of Congress](#).

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VIDEO: WESTWARD EXPANSION

In this video, John Green teaches you about the Wild, Wild, West, which as it turns out, wasn't as wild as it seemed in the movies. When we think of the western expansion of the United States in the 19th century, we're conditioned to imagine the loner—the self-reliant, unattached cowpoke roaming the prairie in search of wandering calves, or the half-addled prospector who has broken from reality thanks to the solitude of his single-minded quest for gold dust. While there may be a grain of truth to these classic Hollywood stereotypes, it isn't a very big grain of truth. Many of the pioneers who settled the west were family groups. Many were immigrants. Many were major corporations. The big losers in the westward migration were Native Americans, who were killed or moved onto reservations. Not cool, American pioneers.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/Q16OZkgSXfM>

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THE INDIAN WARS AND FEDERAL PEACE POLICIES

The “Indian wars,” so mythologized in western folklore, were a series of sporadic, localized, and often brief engagements between U.S. military forces and various Native American groups. The more sustained and more impactful conflict, meanwhile, was economic and cultural. The vast and cyclical movement across the Great Plains to hunt buffalo, raid enemies, and trade goods was incompatible with new patterns of American settlement and railroad construction. Thomas Jefferson’s old dream that Indian groups might live isolated in the West was, in the face of American expansion, no longer a viable reality. Political, economic, and even humanitarian concerns intensified American efforts to isolate Indians on reservations. Although Indian removal had long been a part of federal Indian policy, following the Civil War the U.S. government redoubled its efforts. If treaties and other forms of persistent coercion would not work, more drastic measures were deemed necessary. Against the threat of confinement and the extinction of traditional ways of life, Native Americans battled the American army and the encroaching lines of American settlement.

In one of the earliest western engagements, in 1862, while the Civil War still consumed the nation, tensions erupted between Dakota Sioux and white settlers in Minnesota and the Dakota Territory. The 1850 U.S. census recorded a white population of about 6,000 in Minnesota; eight years later, when it became a state, it was more than 150,000. The influx of American farmers pushed the Sioux to the breaking point. Hunting became unsustainable and those Sioux who had taken up farming found only poverty. Starvation wracked many. Then, on August 17, 1862, four young men of the Santee band of Sioux killed five white settlers near the Redwood Agency, an American administrative office. In the face of an inevitable American retaliation, and over the protests of many members, the tribe chose war. On the following day, Sioux warriors attacked settlements near the Agency. They killed 31 men, women and children. They then ambushed a U.S. military detachment at Redwood Ferry, killing 23. The governor of Minnesota called up militia and several thousand Americans waged war against the Sioux insurgents. Fighting broke out at New Ulm, Fort Ridgely, and Birch Coulee, but the Americans broke the Indian resistance at the Battle of Wood Lake on September 23, ending the so-called Dakota War, also known as the Sioux Uprising.



Buffalo Soldiers, the nickname given to African-American cavalrymen by the native Americans they fought, were the first peacetime all-black regiments in the regular United States army. These soldiers regularly confronted racial prejudice from other Army members and civilians, but were an essential part of American victories during the Indian Wars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. “[Buffalo soldiers of the 25th Infantry, some wearing buffalo robes, Ft. Keogh, Montana] / Chr. Barthelmess, photographer, Fort Keogh, Montana,” 1890. [Library of Congress](#).

More than two thousand Sioux had been taken prisoner during the fighting. Many were tried at federal forts for murder, rape, and other atrocities. 303 were found guilty and sentenced to hang, but at the last moment President Lincoln commuted all but 38 of the sentences. Terrified Minnesota settlers and government officials insisted not only that the Sioux lose much of their reservations lands and be removed further west, but that those who had fled be hunted down and placed on reservations as well. On September 3, 1863, after a year of attrition, American military units surrounded a large encampment of Dakota Sioux. American troops killed an estimated 300 men, women, and children. Dozens more were taken prisoner. Troops spent two days burning winter food and supply stores, all to pacify the Sioux resistance. Conflict still smoldered for decades. Further south, tensions flared in Colorado. In 1851, the Treaty of Fort Laramie had secured right-of-way access for Americans passing through on their way to California and Oregon. But a gold rush in 1858 drew approximately 100,000 white goldseekers and they demanded new treaties be made with local Indian groups to secure land rights in the newly created Colorado Territory. Cheyenne bands splintered over the possibility of signing a new treaty that would confine them to a reservation. Settlers, already wary of raids by powerful groups of Cheyennes, Arapahos, and Comanches, meanwhile read in their local newspapers sensationalist accounts of the Sioux uprising in Minnesota. Militia leader John M. Chivington warned settlers in the summer of 1864 that the Cheyenne were dangerous savages, urged war, and promised a swift military victory. Sporadic fighting broke out. Although Chivington warned of Cheyenne savagery, the aged Cheyenne chief Black Kettle, believing that a peace treaty would be best for his people, traveled to Denver to arrange for peace talks. He and his followers traveled toward Fort Lyon in accordance with government instructions but on November 29, 1864, Chivington ordered his seven hundred militiamen to move on the Cheyenne camp near Fort Lyon at Sand Creek. The Cheyenne tried to declare their peaceful intentions but Chivington’s militia cut them down. It was a slaughter. Black Kettle and about two hundred other men, women, and children were killed.

The Sand Creek Massacre was a national scandal, alternately condemned and applauded. News of the massacre reached other native groups and the American frontier erupted into conflict. Americans pushed for a new “peace policy.” Congress, confronted with these tragedies and further violence, authorized in 1868 the creation of an Indian Peace Commission. The commission’s study of American Indian decried prior American policy and galvanized support for reformers. After the inauguration of Ulysses S. Grant the following spring, Congress allied with prominent philanthropists to create the Board of Indian Commissioners, a permanent advisory body to oversee Indian affairs and prevent the further outbreak of violence. The Board effectively Christianized American Indian policy. Much of the reservation system was handed over to Protestant churches, which were tasked with finding agents and missionaries to manage reservation life. Congress hoped that religiously-minded men might fare better at creating just assimilation policies and persuading Indians to accept them. Historian Francis Paul Prucha believed that this attempt at a new “peace policy... might just have properly been labelled the religious policy.” Many female Christian missionaries played a central role in cultural re-education programs that attempted to not only instill Protestant religion but also impose traditional American gender roles and family structures. They endeavored to replace Indians’ tribal social units with small, patriarchal households. Women’s labor became a contentious issue, for very few tribes divided labor according to white middle-class gender norms. Fieldwork, the traditional domain of white males, was primarily performed by native women, who also usually controlled the products of their labor, if not the land that was worked, giving them status in society as laborers and food providers. For missionaries, the goal was to get Native women to leave the fields and engage in more proper “women’s” work—housework. Christian missionaries performed much as secular federal agents had. Few American agents could meet Native Americans on their own terms. Most viewed reservation Indians as lazy and thought of Native cultures as inferior to their own. The views of J. L. Broaddus, appointed to oversee several small Indian tribes on the Hoopa Valley reservation in California, are illustrative: in his annual report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1875, he wrote, “the great majority of them are idle, listless, careless, and improvident. They seem to take no thought about provision for the future, and many of them would not work at all if they were not compelled to do so. They would rather live upon the roots and acorns gathered by their women than to work for flour and beef.”



This photograph, taken only two years after the establishment of South Dakota, shows the dire situation of the Lakota people on what was formerly their own land. John C. Grabill, “[A young Oglala girl sitting in front of a tipi, with a puppy beside her, probably on or near Pine Ridge Reservation],” 1891. [Library of Congress](#).

If the Indians could not be forced through kindness to change their ways, most agreed that it was acceptable to use force, which native groups resisted. In Texas and the Southern Plains, the fierce Comanche, Kiowa, and their allies had wielded enormous influence. The Comanche in particular controlled huge swaths of territory and raided vast areas, inspiring terror from the Rocky Mountains to the interior of Northern Mexico to the Texas Gulf Coast. But after the Civil War, the U.S. military refocused its attention on the Southern Plains.

The American military first sent messengers to the Plains to find the elusive Comanche bands and ask them to come to peace negotiations at Medicine Lodge Creek in the fall of 1867. But terms were muddled: American officials believed that Comanche bands had accepted reservation life, while Comanche leaders believed they were guaranteed vast lands for buffalo hunting. Comanche bands used designated reservation lands as a base from which to collect supplies and federal annuity goods while continuing to hunt, trade, and raid American settlements in Texas.

Confronted with renewed Comanche raiding, particularly by the famed war leader Quanah Parker, the U.S. military finally proclaimed that all Indians who were not settled on the reservation by the fall of 1874 would be considered "hostile." The Red River War began when many Comanche bands refused to resettle and the American military launched expeditions into the Plains to subdue them, culminating in the defeat of the remaining roaming bands in the canyonlands of the Texas Panhandle. Cold and hungry, with their way of life already decimated by soldiers, settlers, cattlemen, and railroads, the last free Comanche bands were moved to the reservation at Fort Sill, in what is now southwestern Oklahoma.

On the northern Plains, the Sioux people had yet to fully surrender. Following the troubles of 1862, many bands had signed treaties with the United States and drifted into the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies to collect rations and annuities, but many continued to resist American encroachment and a large number of Sioux refused to sign and remained fiercely independent. These "non-treaty" Indians, such as those led by famous chiefs Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, saw no reason to sign treaties that they believed would not be fully honored.

Then, in 1874, an American expedition to the Black Hills of South Dakota discovered gold. White prospectors flooded the territory. Caring very little about Indian rights, and very much about getting rich, they brought the Sioux situation again to its breaking point. Aware that U.S. citizens were violating treaty provisions, but unwilling to prevent them from searching for gold, federal officials pressured the western Sioux to sign a new treaty that would transfer control of the Black Hills to the United States while General Philip Sheridan quietly moved U.S. troops into the region. Initial clashes between U.S. troops and Sioux warriors resulted in several Sioux victories that, combined with the visions of Sitting Bull, who had dreamed of an even more triumphant victory, attracted Sioux bands who had already signed treaties but now joined to fight.

In late June 1876, a division of the 7th Cavalry Regiment led by Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer was sent up a trail into the Black Hills as an advance guard for a larger force. Custer's men approached the village known to the Sioux as Greasy Grass, but marked on Custer's map as Little Bighorn, and found, given the influx of "treaty" Sioux, as well as aggrieved Cheyenne and other allies, had swelled the population of the village



In 1874, Quanah Parker (of Comanche and English-American ancestry) led a Comanche war party into northern Texas to avenge their slain relatives. This failed attempt led to the reversal of federal policy in Washington, and eventually depleted the food source and economic livelihood of the Comanches. Parker afterwards became chief over all Comanches on the newly settled Oklahoma reservation, and, through smart investing, soon was the single richest native American of the late nineteenth century. Photograph portrait of Quanah Parker, c. 1890. Wikimedia.

far beyond Custer's estimation. Custer's 7th Cavalry was vastly outnumbered and he and 268 of his men were killed.

Custer's fall shocked the nation. Cries for a swift American response reprisals filled the public sphere and military expeditions were sent out to crush native resistance. The Sioux splintered off into the wilderness and began a campaign of intermittent resistance but, outnumbered and suffering after a long, hungry winter, Crazy Horse led a band of Oglala Sioux to surrender in May of 1877. Other bands gradually followed until finally, in July 1881, Sitting Bull and his followers at last laid down their weapons and came to the reservation. Indigenous powers had been defeated. The Plains, it seemed, had been pacified.

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WESTERN ECONOMIC EXPANSION: RAILROADS AND CATTLE

As native peoples were pushed out, American settlers poured in. Aside from agriculture and the extraction of natural resources—such as timber and precious metals—two major industries fueled the new western economy: ranching and railroads. Both developed in connection with each other and both shaped the collective American memory of the post–Civil War “Wild West.”

As one booster put it, “the West is purely a railroad enterprise.” No economic enterprise rivalled the railroads in scale, scope, or sheer impact. No other businesses had attracted such enormous sums of capital, and no other ventures ever received such lavish government subsidies (business historian Alfred Chandler called the railroads the “first modern business enterprise”). By “annihilating time and space,” by connecting the vastness of the continent, the railroads transformed the United States and they made the American West.



Railroads made the settlement and growth of the West possible. By the late nineteenth century, maps of the mid-West like this one were filled with advertisements of how quickly a traveler could get nearly anywhere in the country. Map. [Environment and Society](#).

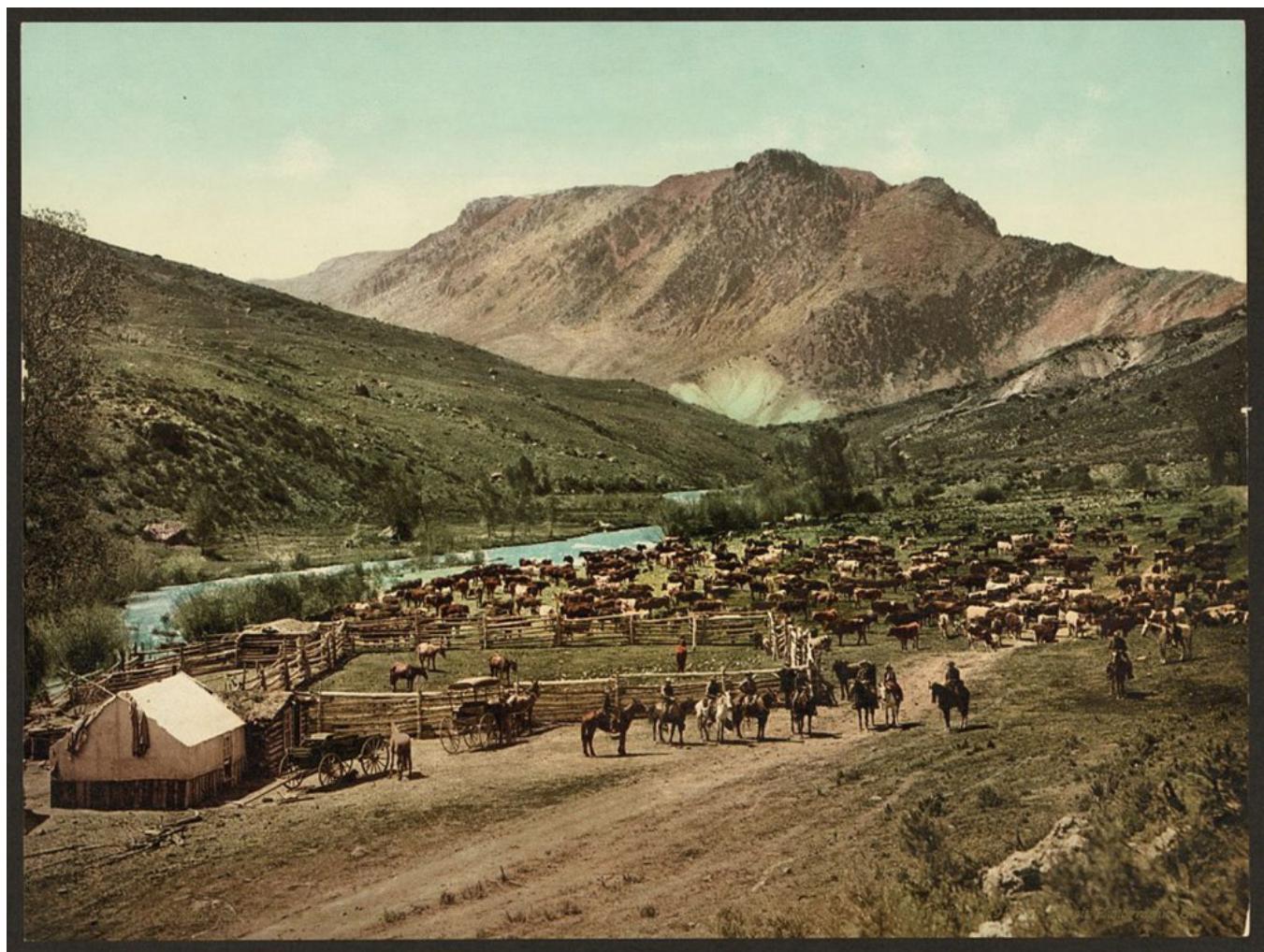
No railroad enterprise so captured the American imagination—or federal support—as the transcontinental railroad. The transcontinental railroad crossed western plains and mountains and linked the West Coast with the rail networks of the eastern United States. Constructed from the west by the Central Pacific and from the east by the Union Pacific, the two roads were linked in Utah in 1869 to great national fanfare. But such a herculean task was not easy, and national legislators threw enormous subsidies at railroad companies, a part of the Republican Party platform since 1856. The 1862 Pacific Railroad Act gave bonds of between \$16,000 and \$48,000 for each mile of construction and provided vast land grants to railroad companies. Between 1850 and 1871 alone, railroad companies received more than 175,000,000 acres of public land, an area larger than the state of Texas. Investors reaped enormous profits. As one congressional opponent put it in the 1870s, “If there be profit, the corporations may take it; if there be loss, the Government must bear it.”

If railroads attracted unparalleled subsidies and investments, they also created enormous labor demands. By 1880, approximately 400,000 men—or nearly 2.5% of the nation’s entire workforce—labored in the railroad industry. Much of the work was dangerous and low-paying and companies relied heavily on immigrant labor to build tracks. Companies employed Irish workers in the early-nineteenth century and Chinese workers in the late-nineteenth. By 1880, over 200,000 Chinese migrants lived in the United States. Once the rails were laid, companies still needed a large workforce to keep the trains running. Much railroad work was dangerous, but perhaps the most hazardous work was done by brakeman. Before the advent of automatic braking, an engineer would blow the “down brake” whistle and brakemen would scramble to the top of the moving train, regardless of the weather conditions, and run from car to car manually turning brakes. Speed was necessary, and any slip could be fatal. Brakemen were also responsible for “coupling” the cars, attaching them together with a large pin. It was easy to lose a hand or finger and even a slight mistake could cause cars to collide.

The railroads boomed. In 1850, there were 9,000 miles of railroads in the United States. In 1900 there were 190,000, including several transcontinental lines. To manage these vast networks of freight and passenger lines,

companies converged rails at hub cities. Of all the Midwestern and Western cities that blossomed from the bridging of western resources and eastern capital in the late nineteenth century, Chicago was the most spectacular. It grew from 200 inhabitants in 1833 to over a million by 1890. By 1893 it and the region from which it drew were completely transformed. The World's Columbian Exposition that year trumpeted the city's progress, and broader technological progress, with typical Gilded Age ostentation. A huge, gleaming (but temporary) "White City" was built in neoclassical style to house all the features of the fair and cater to the needs of the visitors who arrived from all over the world. Highlighted in the title of this world's fair were the changes that had overtaken North America since Columbus made landfall four centuries earlier. Chicago became the most important western hub, and served as the gateway between the farm and ranch country of the Great Plains and eastern markets. Railroads brought cattle from Texas to Chicago for slaughter, where they were then processed into packaged meats and shipped by refrigerated rail to New York City and other eastern cities. Such hubs became the central nodes in a rapid-transit economy that increasingly spread across the entire continent linking goods and people together in a new national network.

It was this national network that created the fabled cattle drives of the 1860s and 1870s. The first cattle drives across the central Plains began soon after the Civil War. Railroads created the market for ranching, and because for the few years after the war that railroads connected eastern markets with important market hubs such as Chicago, but had yet to reach Texas ranchlands, ranchers began driving cattle north, out of the Lone Star state, to major railroad terminuses in Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. Ranchers used well-worn trails, such as the Chisholm Trail, for drives, but conflicts arose with Native Americans in the Indian Territory and farmers in Kansas who disliked the intrusion of large and environmentally destructive herds onto their own hunting, ranching, and farming lands. Other trails, such as the Western Trail, the Goodnight-Loving Trail, and the Shawnee Trail, were therefore blazed.



This photochrom print (a new technology in the late nineteenth century that colorized images from a black-and-white negative) depicts a cattle round up in Cimarron, a crossroads of the late-nineteenth-century cattle drives. Detroit Photographic Co., "Colorado. 'Round up' on the Cimarron," c. 1898. Library of Congress.

Cattle drives were difficult tasks for the motley crews of men who managed the herds. Historians struggle to estimate the number of men who worked as cowboys in the late nineteenth century, but counts range from 12,000 to as many as 40,000. Most were young. Perhaps a fourth were African American, and more were likely Mexican or Mexican American. (The American cowboy was an evolution of the Spanish (and later Mexican) *vaquero*: cowboys adopted Mexican practices, gear, and terms, such as "rodeo," "bronco," and "lasso") There are at least sixteen verifiable accounts of women participating in the drives. Some, like Molly Dyer Goodnight, were known to have accompanied their husbands. Others, like Lizzie Johnson Williams, helped drive their own herds. Williams made at least three known trips with her herds up the Chisholm Trail. Most, though, were young men, many hoping one day to become ranch owners themselves. But it was tough work. Cowboys received low wages, long hours, and uneven work, they faced extremes of heat, cold, and sometimes bouts of intense blowing dust, and they subsisted on limited diets with irregular supplies. Fluctuations in the cattle market made employment insecure and wages were almost always abysmally low. Beginners could expect to earn around \$20-25 per month, and those with years of experience might earn \$40-45. Trail bosses could sometimes earn over \$50 per month.



Cowboys like the one pictured here worked the drives that supplied Chicago and other mid-western cities with the necessary cattle to supply and help grow the meat-packing industry. Their work was obsolete by the turn of the century, yet their image lived on through vaudeville shows and films that romanticized life in the West. John C.H. Grabill, "The Cow Boy," c. 1888. Library of Congress.

But if workers of cattle received low wages, owners and investors could receive riches. At the end of the Civil War, a \$4 steer in Texas could fetch \$40 in Kansas. Prices began equalizing, but large profits could still be made. And yet, by the 1880s, the great cattle drives were largely done. The railroads had created them, and the railroads had ended them: railroad lines pushed into Texas and made the great drives obsolete. But ranching still

brought profits and the Plains were better suited for grazing than for agriculture and western ranchers continued supplying beef for national markets.

Ranching was just one of many western industries that depended upon the railroads. By linking the Plains with national markets and moving millions, the railroads made the modern American West.

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THE ALLOTMENT ERA AND RESISTANCE IN THE NATIVE WEST

As the rails moved into the West, and more and more Americans followed, the situation for native groups deteriorated even further. Treaties negotiated between the United States and Native groups had typically promised that if tribes agreed to move to specific reservation lands, they would hold those lands collectively. But as American westward migration mounted, and open lands closed, white settlers began to argue that Indians had more than their fair share of land, that the reservations were too big and that Indians were using the land “inefficiently,” that they still preferred nomadic hunting instead of intensive farming and ranching.

By the 1880s, Americans increasingly championed legislation to allow the transfer of Indian lands to farmers and ranchers while many argued that allotting Indian lands to individual Native Americans, rather than to tribes, would encourage American-style agriculture and finally put Indians who had previously resisted the efforts of missionaries and federal officials on the path to “civilization.”

Passed by Congress on February 8, 1887, the Dawes General Allotment Act splintered Native American reservations into individual family homesteads. Each head of a Native family was to be allotted 160 acres, the typical size of a claim that any settler could establish on federal lands under the provisions of the Homestead Act. Single individuals over the age of 18 would receive an 80 acre allotment, and orphaned children received 40 acres. A four year timeline was established for Indian peoples to make their allotment selections. If at the end of that time no selection had been made, the Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to appoint an agent to make selections for the remaining tribal members. To protect Indians from being swindled by unscrupulous land speculators, all allotments were to be held in trust—they could not be sold by allottees—for 25 years. Lands that remained unclaimed by tribal members after allotment would revert to federal control and be sold to American settlers.

Americans touted the Dawes Act as an uplifting humanitarian reform, but it upended Indian lifestyles and left Indian groups without sovereignty over their lands. The act claimed that to protect Indian property rights, it was necessary to extend “the protection of the laws of the United States... over the Indians.” Tribal governments and legal principles could be superseded, or dissolved and replaced, by U.S. laws. Under the terms of the Dawes Act, native groups struggled to hold on to some measure of tribal sovereignty.

The stresses of conquest unsettled generations of Native Americans. Many took comfort from the words of prophets and holy men. In Nevada, on January 1, 1889, Northern Paiute prophet Wovoka experienced a great revelation. He had traveled, he said, from his earthly home in western Nevada to heaven and returned during a solar eclipse to prophesy to his people. “You must not hurt anybody or do harm to anyone. You must not fight. Do right always,” he exhorted. And they must, he said, participate in a religious ceremony that came to be known as the Ghost Dance. If the people lived justly and danced the Ghost Dance, Wovoka said, their ancestors would rise from the dead, droughts would dissipate, the whites in the West would vanish, and the buffalo would once again roam the Plains.

Native American prophets had often confronted American imperial power. Some prophets, including Wovoka, incorporated Christian elements like heaven and a Messiah figure into indigenous spiritual traditions. And so if it was far from unique, Wovoka’s prophecy nevertheless caught on quickly and spread beyond the Paiutes. From across the West, members of the Arapaho, Bannock, Cheyenne, and Shoshone nations, among others, adopted the Ghost Dance religion. Perhaps the most avid Ghost Dancers—and certainly the most famous—were the Lakota Sioux.

The Lakota Sioux were in dire straits. South Dakota, formed out of land that had once belonged by treaty to the Lakotas, became a state in 1889. White homesteaders had poured in, reservations were carved up and diminished, starvation set in, corrupt federal agents cut food rations, and drought hit the Plains. Many Lakotas feared a future as the landless subjects of a growing American empire when a delegation of eleven men, led by Kicking Bear, joined Ghost Dance pilgrims on the rails westward to Nevada and returned to spread the revival in the Dakotas.

The energy and message of the revivals frightened Indian agents, who began arresting Indian leaders. The Chief Sitting Bull, along with several other whites and Indians, were killed in December, 1890, during a botched arrest, convincing many bands to flee the reservations to join the fugitive bands further west, where Lakota adherents of the Ghost Dance were preaching that the Ghost Dancers would be immune to bullets.

Two weeks later, an American cavalry unit intercepted a band of 350 Lakotas, including over 100 women and children, under the chief Spotted Elk (later known as Bigfoot). They were escorted to the Wounded Knee Creek where they encamped for the night. The following morning, December 29, the American cavalrymen entered the camp to disarm Spotted Elk’s band. Tensions flared, a shot was fired, and a skirmish became a massacre. The Americans fired their heavy weaponry indiscriminately into the camp. Two dozen cavalrymen had been killed by the Lakotas’ concealed weapons or by friendly fire, but, when the guns went silent, between 150 and 300 native men, women, and children were dead.



Red Cloud and American Horse—two of the most renowned Ogala chiefs—are seen clasping hands in front of a tipi on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Both men served as delegates to Washington, D.C., after years of actively fighting the American government. John C. Grabil, “Red Cloud and American Horse.’ The two most noted chiefs now living,” 1891. [Library of Congress](#).

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Burial of the dead after the massacre of Wounded Knee. U.S. Soldiers putting Indians in common grave; some corpses are frozen in different positions. South Dakota. 1891. [Library of Congress](#).

Wounded Knee marked the end of sustained Native American resistance in the West. Individuals would continue to resist the pressures of assimilation and preserve traditional cultural practices, but sustained military defeats, the loss of sovereignty over land and resources, and the onset of crippling poverty on the reservations and marked the final decades of the nineteenth century as a particularly dark era for America's western tribes. But, for Americans, it became mythical.

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RODEOS, WILD WEST SHOWS, AND THE MYTHIC AMERICAN WEST

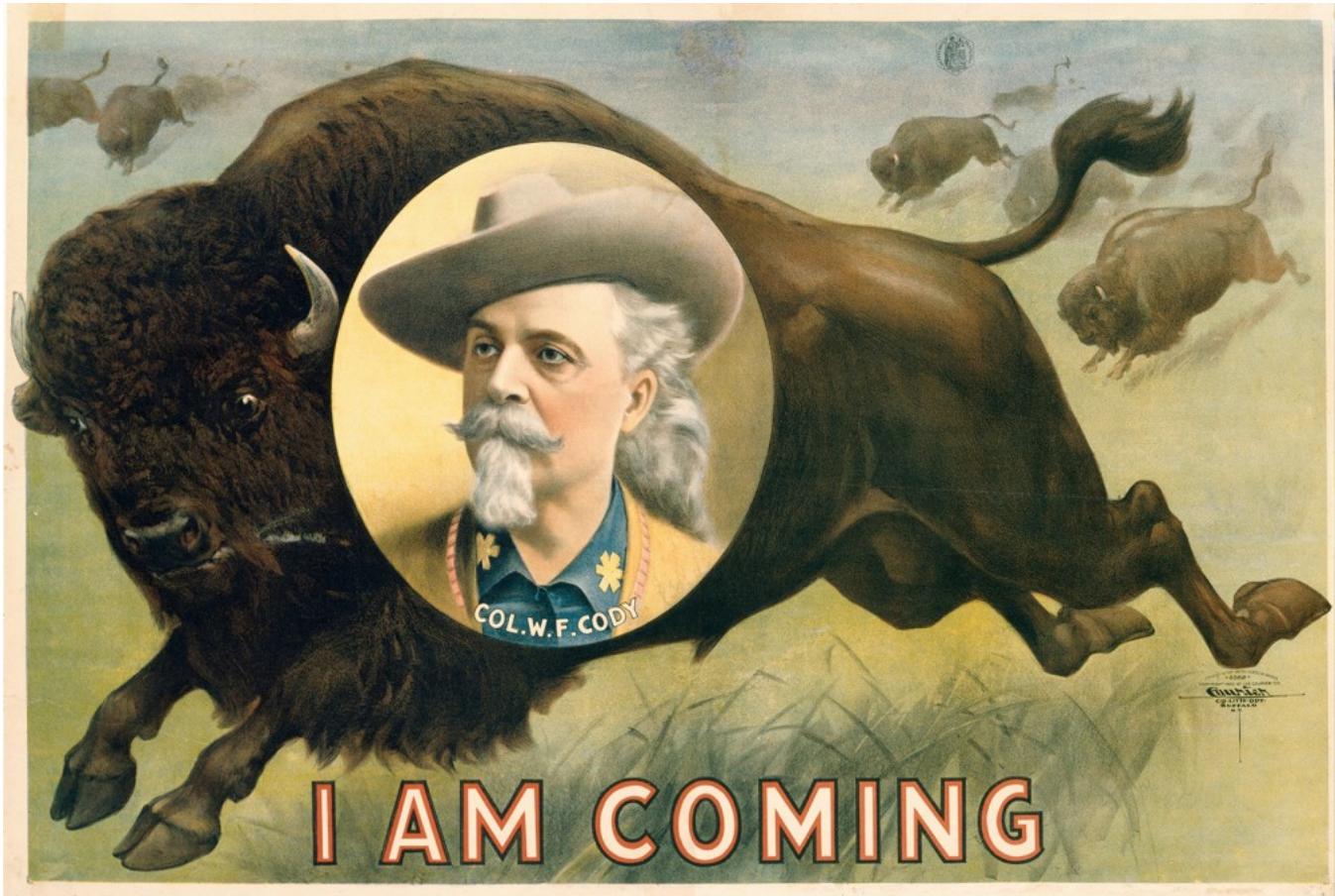
"The American West" conjures visions of tipis, cabins, cowboys, Indians, farm wives in sunbonnets, and outlaws with six-shooters. Such images pervade American culture, but they are as old as the West itself: novels, rodeos, and Wild West shows mythologized the American West throughout the post-Civil War era.

In the 1860s, Americans devoured dime novels that embellished the lives of real-life individuals such as Calamity Jane and Billy the Kid. Owen Wister's novels, especially *The Virginian*, would establish the character of the cowboy as the gritty stoics with a rough exterior but the courage and heroism needed to rescue people from train robbers, Indians, or cattle rustlers. Such images were further reinforced, particularly in the West, with the emergence of the rodeo added to popular conceptions of the American West. Rodeos began as small roping and riding contests among cowboys in towns near ranches or at camps at the end of the cattle trails. In Pecos, Texas, on July 4, 1883, cowboys from two ranches, the Hash Knife and the W Ranch, competed in roping and riding contests as a way to settle an argument and is recognized by historians of the West as the first real rodeo. Casual contests evolved into planned celebrations. Many were scheduled around national holidays, such as Independence Day, or during traditional roundup times in the spring and fall. Early rodeos took place in open grassy areas—not arenas—and included calf and steer roping and roughstock events such as bronc riding. They gained popularity and soon dedicated rodeo circuits developed. Although about 90% of rodeo contestants were men, women helped to popularize the rodeo and several popular women bronc riders, such as Bertha Kaepernick, entered men's events, until around 1916 when women's competitive participation was curtailed. Americans also experienced the "Wild West" imagined in so many dime novels by attending traveling Wild West shows, arguably the unofficial national entertainment of the United States from the 1880s to the 1910s. Widely popular across the country, the shows traveled throughout the eastern United States and even across Europe and showcased what was already a mythic frontier life. William Frederick "Buffalo Bill" Cody was the first to recognize the broad national appeal of the stock "characters" of the American West—cowboys, Indians, sharpshooters, cavalry, and rangers—but Cody shunned the word "show" when describing his travelling extravaganza, fearing that it implied exaggeration or misrepresentation of the West. Cody instead dubbed his production "Buffalo Bill's Wild West" and tried to import actual cowboys and Indians into his productions. But it was still, of course, a show. It was entertainment, little different in its broad outlines from contemporary theater. Operating out of Omaha, Nebraska. Buffalo Bill created his first show in 1883. Storylines, punctuated by "cowboy" moments of bucking broncos, roped cattle, and sharpshooting contests, depicted westward migration, life on the Plains, and Indian attacks.



American frontierswoman and professional scout Martha Jane Canary was better known to America as Calamity Jane. A figure in western folklore during her life and after, Calamity Jane was a central character in many of the increasingly popular novels and films that romanticized western life in the twentieth century. "[Martha Canary, 1852-1903, ("Calamity Jane"), full-length portrait, seated with rifle as General Crook's scout]," c. 1895. [Library of Congress](#).

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William Frederick "Buffalo Bill" Cody helped commercialize the cowboy lifestyle, building a mythology around life in the Old West that produced big bucks for men like Cody. Courier Lithography Company, "Buffalo Bill' Cody," 1900. [Wikimedia](#).

Buffalo Bill was not alone. Gordon William "Pawnee Bill" Lillie, another popular Wild West showman, got his start in the business in 1886 when Cody employed him as an interpreter for Pawnee members of the show. Lillie went on to create his own production in 1888, "Pawnee Bill's Historic Wild West." He was Cody's only real competitor in the business until 1908, when the two men combined their shows to create a new extravaganza, "Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Pawnee Bill's Great Far East" (most just called it the "Two Bills Show"). It was an unparalleled spectacle. The cast included Mexican cowboys, Indian riders and dancers, Russian Cossacks, Japanese acrobats, and aboriginal Australian performers.

Cody and Lillie knew that Native Americans fascinated audiences in the United States and Europe and both featured them prominently in their Wild West shows. Most Americans believed that Native cultures were disappearing or had already, and felt a sense of urgency to see their dances, hear their song, and be captivated by their bareback riding skills and their elaborate buckskin and feather attire. The shows certainly veiled the true cultural and historic value of so many Native demonstrations, and the Indian performers were curiosities to white Americans, but the shows were one of the few ways for many Native Americans to make a living in the late nineteenth century.

In an attempt to appeal to women, Cody recruited Annie Oakley, a female sharpshooter who thrilled onlookers with her many stunts. Her stage name was "Little Sure Shot." She shot apples off her poodle's head and the ash off her husband's cigar, clenched trustingly between his teeth. Gordon Lillie's wife, May Manning Lillie, also became a skilled shot and performed under the tagline, "World's Greatest Lady Horseback Shot." Both women challenged expected Victorian gender roles, but were careful to maintain their feminine identity and dress.

The western "cowboys and Indians" mystique, perpetuated in novels, rodeos, and Wild West shows, was rooted in romantic nostalgia and, perhaps, in the anxieties that many felt in the new "soft" industrial world of factory and office work. The cowboy, who possessed a supposedly ideal blend "of aggressive masculinity and civility," was the perfect hero for middle class Americans who feared that they "had become over-civilized" and looked longingly to the West.

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THE WEST AS HISTORY: THE TURNER THESIS

In 1893, the American Historical Association met during that year's World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The young Wisconsin historian Frederick Jackson Turner presented his "frontier thesis," one of the most influential theories of American history, in his essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History."

Turner looked back at the historical changes in the West and saw, instead of a tsunami of war and plunder and industry, waves of "civilization" that washed across the continent. A frontier line "between savagery and civilization" had moved west from the earliest English settlements in Massachusetts and Virginia across the Appalachians to the Mississippi and finally across the Plains to California and Oregon. Turner invited his audience to "stand at Cumberland Gap [the famous pass through the Appalachian Mountains], and watch the procession of civilization, marching single file—the buffalo following the trail to the salt springs, the Indian, the fur trader and hunter, the cattle-raiser, the pioneer farmer—and the frontier has passed by."

Americans, Turner said, had been forced by necessity to build a rough-hewn civilization out of the frontier, giving the nation its exceptional hustle and its democratic spirit and distinguishing North America from the stale monarchies of Europe. Moreover, the style of history Turner called for was democratic as well, arguing that the work of ordinary people (in this case, pioneers) deserved the same study as that of great statesmen. Such was a novel approach in 1893.

But Turner looked ominously to the future. The Census Bureau in 1890 had declared the frontier closed. There was no longer a discernible line running north to south that, Turner said, any longer divided civilization from savagery. Turner worried for the United States' future: what would become of the nation without the safety valve of the frontier? It was a common sentiment. Theodore Roosevelt wrote to Turner that his essay "put into shape a good deal of thought that has been floating around rather loosely."

The history of the West was many-sided and it was made by many persons and peoples. Turner's thesis was rife with faults, not only its bald Anglo Saxon chauvinism—in which non-whites fell before the march of "civilization" and Chinese and Mexican immigrants were invisible—but in its utter inability to appreciate the impact of technology and government subsidies and large-scale economic enterprises alongside the work of hardy pioneers. Still, Turner's thesis held an almost canonical position among historians for much of the twentieth century and, more importantly, captured Americans' enduring romanticization of the West and the simplification of a long and complicated story into a march of progress.

This chapter was edited by Lauren Brand, with content contributions by Lauren Brand, Carole Butcher, Josh Garrett-Davis, Tracey Hanshew, Nick Roland, David Schley, Emma Teitelman, and Alyce Vigil.

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ASSIGNMENT: THE TURNER THESIS

Frederick Jackson Turner was a famous American historian in the 1890s. He wrote a very influential article called “The Significance of the Frontier in American History.” It quickly became known as the “[Turner Thesis](#).” Read the Turner Thesis and in a paragraph or two (250-300 words) answer the following:

1. What is the Turner Thesis? (What is the frontier and why is it significant to the development of American history?)
2. What specific quotes, passages, and lines from the document led you to that conclusion?

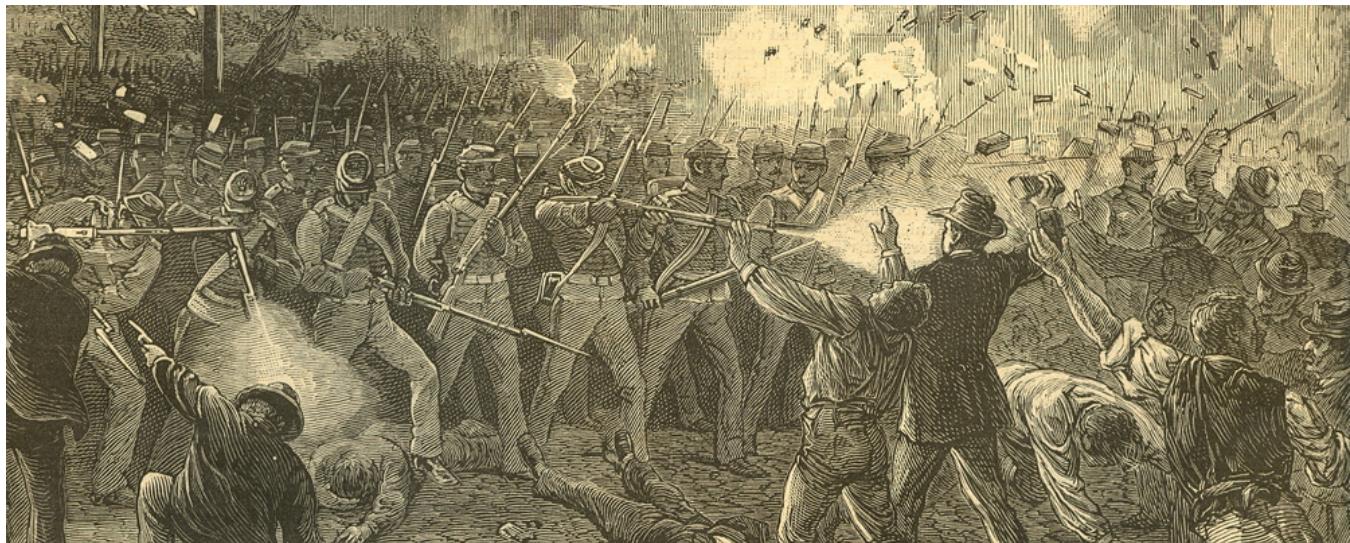
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CAPITAL AND LABOR

INTRODUCTION



A Maryland National Guard unit fires upon strikers during the Great Railroad Strike of 1877. Harper's Weekly, via [Wikimedia](#).

The Great Railroad Strike of 1877 heralded a new era of labor conflict in the United States. That year, mired in the stagnant economy that followed the bursting of the railroads' financial bubble in 1873, rail lines slashed workers' wages (even, workers complained, as they reaped enormous government subsidies and paid shareholders lucrative stock dividends). Workers struck from Baltimore to St. Louis, shutting down railroad traffic—the nation's economic lifeblood—across the country.

Panicked business leaders and friendly political officials reacted quickly. When local police forces were unwilling or incapable of suppressing the strikes, governors called out state militias to break the strikes and restore rail service. Many strikers destroyed rail property rather than allow militias to reopen the rails. The protests approached a class war. The governor of Maryland deployed the state's militia. In Baltimore the militia fired into a crowd of striking workers, killing eleven and wounding many more. Strikes convulsed towns and cities across Pennsylvania. The head of the Pennsylvania Railroad, Thomas Andrew Scott, suggested that, if workers were unhappy with their wages, they should be given "a rifle diet for a few days and see how they like that kind of bread." Law enforcement in Pittsburgh refused to put down the protests, so the governor called out the state militia, who killed twenty strikers with bayonets and rifle fire. A month of chaos erupted in the city. Strikers set fire to the city, destroying dozens of buildings, over a hundred engines, and over a thousand cars. In Reading, strikers destroyed rail property and an angry crowd bombarded militiamen with rocks and bottles. The militia fired into the crowd, killing ten. Strikers in St. Louis seized rail depots and declared for the eight-hour day and the abolition of child labor. Troops and vigilantes fought their way into the depot, killing eighteen and breaking the strike. Rail lines were shut down all across neighboring Illinois, where coal miners struck in sympathy, tens of thousands gathered to protest under the aegis of the Workingmen's Party, and twenty protesters were killed in Chicago by special police and militiamen.

Courts, police, and state militias suppressed the strikes, but it was federal troops that finally defeated them. When Pennsylvania militiamen were unable to contain the strikes, federal troops stepped in. When militia in West Virginia refused to break the strike, federal troops broke it. On the orders of the President, American soldiers were deployed all across northern rail lines. Soldiers moved from town to town, suppressing protests and reopening rail lines. Six weeks after it had begun, the strike had been crushed.

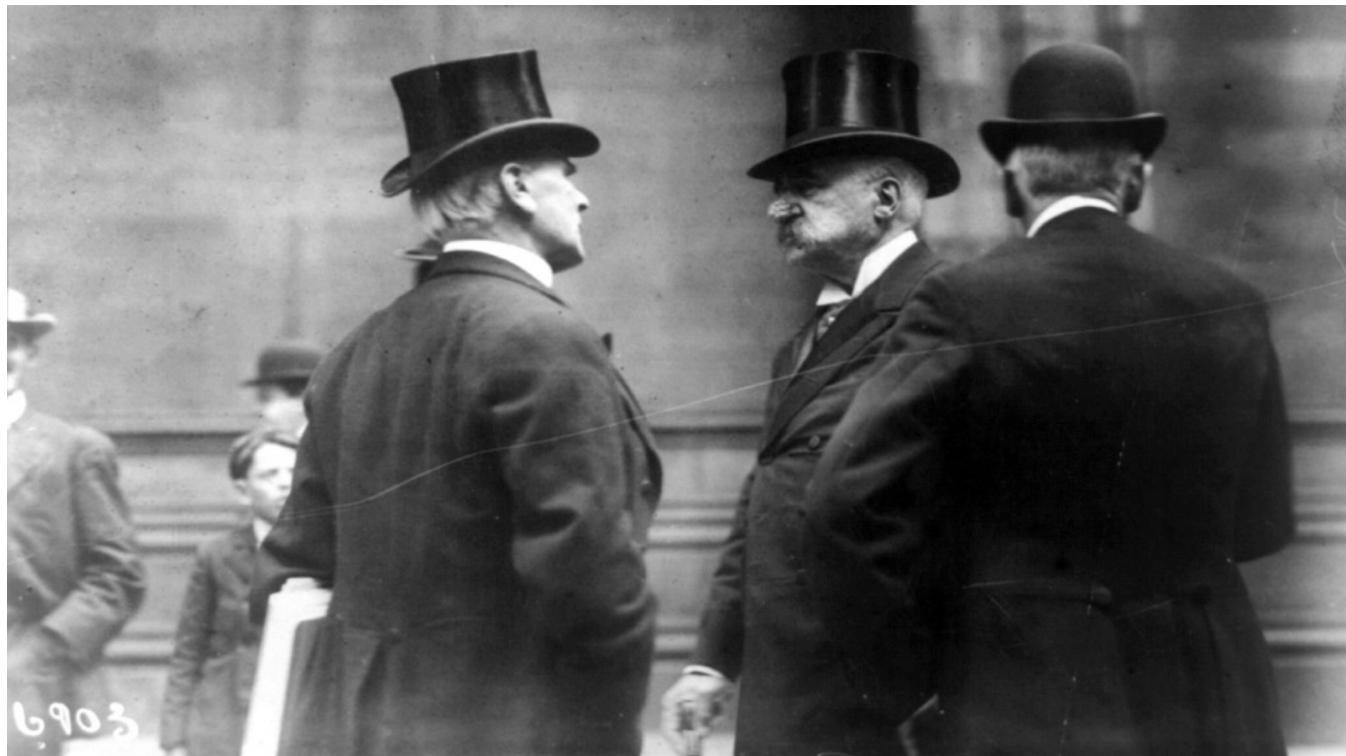
Nearly 100 Americans died in “The Great Upheaval.” Workers destroyed nearly \$40 million worth of property. The strike galvanized the country. It convinced laborers of the need for institutionalized unions, persuaded businesses of the need for further political influence and government aid, and foretold a half-century of labor conflict in the United States.

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THE MARCH OF CAPITAL



John Pierpont Morgan with two friends, ca. 1907. [Library of Congress](#).

Growing labor unrest accompanied industrialization. The greatest strikes first hit the railroads only because no other industry had so effectively marshaled together capital, government favors, and bureaucratic management. Many workers perceived a new powerlessness in the coming industrial order. Skills mattered less and less in an industrialized, mass-producing economy, and their power as individuals seemed ever smaller and more insignificant when companies grew in size and power and managers grew flush with wealth and influence. Long hours, dangerous working conditions, and the difficulty of supporting a family on meager and unpredictable wages compelled armies of labor to organize and battle against the power of capital.

The post-Civil War era saw revolutions in American industry. Technological innovations and national investments slashed the costs of production and distribution. New administrative frameworks sustained the weight of vast firms. National credit agencies eased the uncertainties surrounding rapid movement of capital between investors,

manufacturers, and retailers. Plummeting transportation and communication costs opened new national media, which advertising agencies used to nationalize various products.

By the turn of the century, corporate leaders and wealthy industrialists embraced the new principles of “scientific management,” or “Taylorism,” after its noted proponent, Frederick Taylor. The precision of steel parts, the harnessing of electricity, the innovations of machine tools, and the mass markets wrought by the railroads offered new avenues for efficiency. To match the demands of the machine age, Taylor said, firms needed a scientific organization of production. He urged all manufacturers to increase efficiency by subdividing tasks. Rather than having thirty mechanics individually making thirty machines, for instance, a manufacturer could assign thirty laborers to perform thirty distinct tasks. Such a shift would not only make workers as interchangeable as the parts they were using, it would also dramatically speed up the process of production. If managed by trained experts, specific tasks could be done quicker and more efficiently. Taylorism increased the scale and scope of manufacturing and allowed for the flowering of mass production. Building upon the use of interchangeable parts in Civil War Era weapons manufacturing, American firms advanced mass production techniques and technologies. Singer sewing machines, Chicago packers’ “disassembly” lines, McCormick grain reapers, Duke cigarette rollers: all realized unprecedented efficiencies and achieved unheard-of levels of production that propelled their companies into the forefront of American business. Henry Ford made the assembly line famous, allowing the production of automobiles to skyrocket as their cost plummeted, but various American firms had been paving the way for decades.



Glazier Stove Company, moulding room, Chelsea, Michigan, ca. 1900–1910. [Library of Congress](#).

Cyrus McCormick had overseen the construction of mechanical reapers (used for harvesting wheat) for decades. He had relied upon skilled blacksmiths, skilled machinists, and skilled woodworkers to handcraft horse-drawn machines. But production was slow and the machines were expensive. The reapers still enabled massive efficiency gains in grain farming, but their high cost and slow production times put them out of reach of most American wheat farmers. But then, in 1880, McCormick hired a production manager who had overseen the manufacturing of Colt firearms to transform his system of production. The Chicago plant introduced new jigs, steel gauges, and pattern machines that could make precise duplicates of new, interchangeable parts. The company had produced 21,000 machines in 1880. It made twice as many in 1885, and by 1889, less than a decade later, it was producing over 100,000 a year.

Industrialization and mass production pushed the United States into the forefront of the world. The American economy had lagged behind Britain, Germany, and France as recently as the 1860s, but by 1900 the United

States was the world's leading manufacturing nation. Thirteen years later, by 1913, the United States produced one-third of the world's industrial output—more than Britain, France, and Germany combined.

Firms such as McCormick's realized massive economies of scale: after accounting for their initial massive investments in machines and marketing, each additional product cost the company relatively little in production costs. The bigger the production, then, the bigger the profits. New industrial companies therefore hungered for markets to keep their high-volume production facilities operating. Retailers and advertisers sustained the massive markets needed for mass production and corporate bureaucracies meanwhile allowed for the management of giant new firms. A new class of managers—comprising what one prominent economic historian called the “visible hand”—operated between the worlds of workers and owners and ensured the efficient operation and administration of mass production and mass distribution. Even more important to the growth and maintenance of these new companies, however, were the legal creations used to protect investors and sustain the power of massed capital.

The costs of mass production were prohibitive for all but the very wealthiest individuals, and, even then, the risks would be too great to bear individually. The corporation itself was ages-old, but the actual right to incorporate had generally been reserved for public works projects or government-sponsored monopolies. After the Civil War, however, the corporation, using new state incorporation laws passed during the Market Revolution of the early-nineteenth century, became a legal mechanism for nearly any enterprise to marshal vast amounts of capital while limiting the liability of shareholders. By washing their hands of legal and financial obligations while still retaining the right to profit massively, investors flooded corporations with the capital needed to industrialize.

But a competitive marketplace threatened the promise of investments. Once the efficiency gains of mass production were realized, profit margins could be undone by cutthroat competition, which kept costs low as price-cutting sunk into profits. Companies rose and fell—and investors suffered losses—as manufacturing firms struggled to maintain supremacy in their particular industries. Economies of scale were a double-edged sword: while additional production provided immense profits, the high fixed costs of operating expensive factories dictated that even modest losses from selling under-priced goods were preferable to not selling profitably priced goods at all. And as market share was won and lost, profits proved unstable. American industrial firms tried everything to avoid competition: they formed informal pools and trusts, they entered price-fixing agreements, they divided markets, and, when blocked by anti-trust laws and renegade price-cutting, merged into consolidations. Rather than suffer from ruinous competition, firms combined and bypassed it altogether.

Between 1895 and 1904, and particularly in the four years between 1898 and 1902, a wave of mergers rocked the American economy. Competition melted away in what is known as “the great merger movement.” In nine years, 4000 companies—nearly 20% of the American economy—were folded into rival firms. In nearly every major industry, newly consolidated firms such as General Electric and DuPont utterly dominated their market. Forty-one separate consolidations each controlled over 70% of the market in their respective industries. In 1901, financier J.P. Morgan oversaw the formation of United States Steel, built from eight leading steel companies. Industrialization was built on steel, and one firm—the world's first billion-dollar company—controlled the market. Monopoly had arrived.

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THE RISE OF INEQUALITY



The Breakers, Vanderbilt residence, Newport, R.I., ca.1904. Library of Congress.

Industrial capitalism realized the greatest advances in efficiency and productivity that the world had ever seen. Massive new companies marshaled capital on an unprecedented scale and provided enormous profits that created unheard-of fortunes. But it also created millions of low-paid, unskilled, unreliable jobs with long hours and dangerous working conditions. Industrial capitalism confronted Gilded Age Americans with unprecedented inequalities. The sudden appearance of the extreme wealth of industrial and financial leaders alongside the crippling squalor of the urban and rural poor shocked Americans.

The great financial and industrial titans, the so-called “robber barons,” including railroad operators such as Cornelius Vanderbilt, oilmen such as J.D. Rockefeller, steel magnates such as Andrew Carnegie, and bankers such as J.P. Morgan, won fortunes that, adjusted for inflation are still among the largest the nation has ever seen. According to various measurements, in 1890 the wealthiest one-percent of Americans owned one-fourth of the nation’s assets; the top ten percent owned over seventy percent. And inequality only accelerated. By 1900, the richest ten percent controlled perhaps ninety percent of the nation’s wealth.

As these vast and unprecedented new fortunes accumulated among a small number of wealthy Americans, new ideas arose to bestow moral legitimacy upon them. In 1859, British naturalist Charles Darwin published his theory of evolution through natural selection in his *On the Origin of Species*. It was not until the 1870s, however, that those theories gained widespread traction among the majority of biologists, naturalists, and other scientists in the United States, and, in turn, challenged the social, political, and religious beliefs of many Americans. One of Darwin’s greatest popularizers, the British sociologist and biologist Herbert Spencer, applied Darwin’s theories to society and popularized the phrase “survival of the fittest.” The fittest, Spencer said, would demonstrate their superiority through economic success, while state welfare and private charity would lead to social degeneration—it would encourage the survival of the weak.



"Five Cents a Spot," unauthorized immigration lodgings in a Bayard Street tenement, New York City, ca. 1890. [Library of Congress](#).

"There must be complete surrender to the law of natural selection," the *Baltimore Sun* journalist H. L. Mencken wrote in 1907. "All growth must occur at the top. The strong must grow stronger, and that they may do so, they must waste no strength in the vain task of trying to uplift the weak." By the time Mencken wrote those words, the ideas of social Darwinism had spread among wealthy Americans and their defenders. Social Darwinism identified a natural order that extended from the laws of the cosmos to the workings of industrial society. All species and all societies, including modern humans, the theory went, were governed by a relentless competitive struggle for survival. The inequality of outcomes was to be not merely tolerated, but encouraged and celebrated. It signified the progress of species and societies. Spencer's major work, *Synthetic Philosophy*, sold nearly 400,000 copies in the United States by the time of his death in 1903. Gilded Age industrial elites, such as steel magnate Andrew Carnegie, inventor Thomas Edison, and Standard Oil's John D. Rockefeller, were among Spencer's prominent followers. Other American thinkers, such as Yale's William Graham Sumner, echoed his ideas. Sumner said, "before the tribunal of nature a man has no more right to life than a rattlesnake; he has no more right to liberty than any wild beast; his right to pursuit of happiness is nothing but a license to maintain the struggle for existence."

But not all so eagerly welcomed inequalities. The spectacular growth of the U.S. economy and the ensuing inequalities in living conditions and incomes confounded many Americans. But as industrial capitalism overtook the nation, it achieved political protections. Although both major political parties facilitated the rise of big business and used state power to support the interests of capital against labor, big business looked primarily to the Republican Party.

The Republican Party had risen as an antislavery faction committed to "free labor," but it was also an ardent supporter of American business. Abraham Lincoln had been a corporate lawyer who defended railroads, and during the Civil War the Republican national government took advantage of the war-time absence of southern Democrats to push through a pro-business agenda. The Republican congress gave millions of acres and dollars to railroad companies. Republicans became the party of business, and they dominated American politics throughout the Gilded Age and the first several decades of the twentieth century. Of the sixteen presidential elections between the Civil War and the Great Depression, Republican candidates won all but four. Republicans controlled the Senate in twenty-seven out of thirty-two sessions in the same period. Republican dominance maintained a high protective tariff, an import tax designed to shield American businesses from foreign competition, a policy Southern planters had vehemently opposed before the war but now could do nothing to prevent. It provided the protective foundation for a new American industrial order, while Spencer's social

Darwinism provided moral justification for national policies that minimized government interference in the economy for anything other than the protection and support of business.

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THE LABOR MOVEMENT



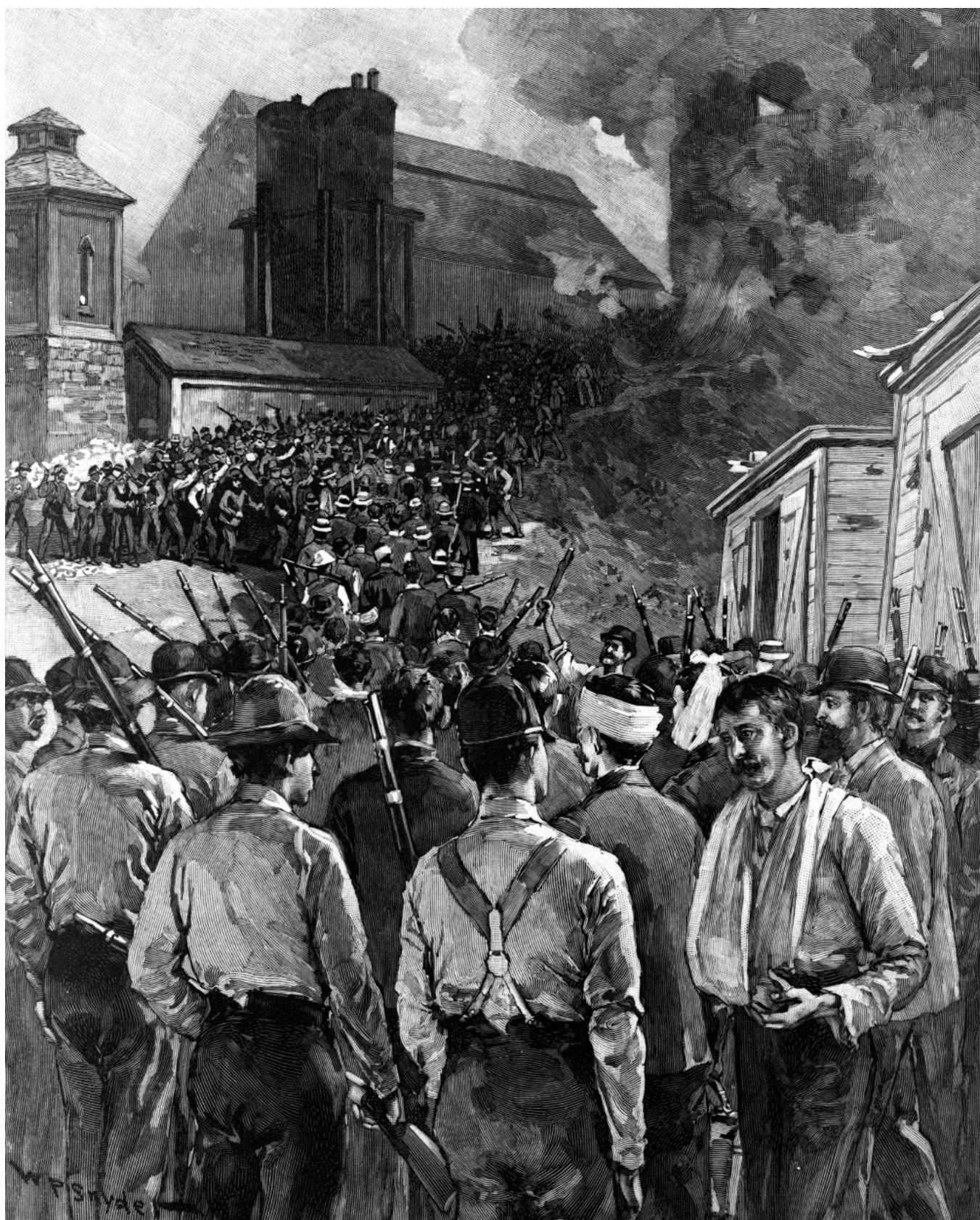
Lawrence Textile Strike, 1912. [Library of Congress](#).

The ideas of social Darwinism attracted little support among the mass of American industrial laborers. American workers toiled in difficult jobs for long hours and little pay. Mechanization and mass production threw skilled laborers into unskilled positions. Industrial work ebbed and flowed with the economy. The typical industrial laborer could expect to be unemployed one month out of the year. They labored sixty hours a week and could still expect their annual income to fall below the poverty line. Among the working poor, wives and children were forced into the labor market to compensate. Crowded cities, meanwhile, failed to accommodate growing urban populations and skyrocketing rents trapped families in crowded slums.

Strikes ruptured American industry throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Workers seeking higher wages, shorter hours, and safer working conditions had struck throughout the antebellum era, but organized unions were fleeting and transitory. The Civil War and Reconstruction seemed to briefly distract the nation from the plight of labor, but the end of the sectional crisis and the explosive growth of big business, unprecedented fortunes, and a vast industrial workforce in the last quarter of the nineteenth century sparked the rise of a vast American labor movement.

The failure of the Great Railroad Strike of 1877 convinced workers of the need to organize. Union memberships began to climb. The Knights of Labor enjoyed considerable success in the early 1880s, due in part to its efforts to unite skilled and unskilled workers. It welcomed all laborers, including women (the Knights only barred lawyers, bankers, and liquor dealers). By 1886, the Knights had over 700,000 members. The Knights envisioned a

cooperative producer-centered society that rewarded labor, not capital, but, despite their sweeping vision, the Knights focused on practical gains that could be won through the organization of workers into local unions.



An 1892 cover of Harper's Weekly depicting the Homestead Riot, showed Pinkerton men who had surrendered to the steel mill workers navigating a gauntlet of violent strikers. W.P. Synder (artist) after a photograph by Dabbs, "The Homestead Riot," 1892.
Library of Congress.

In Marshall, Texas, in the spring of 1886, one of Jay Gould's rail companies fired a Knights of Labor member for attending a union meeting. His local union walked off the job and soon others joined. From Texas and Arkansas into Missouri, Kansas, and Illinois, nearly 200,000 workers struck against Gould's rail lines. Gould hired strikebreakers and the Pinkerton Detective Agency, a kind of private security contractor, to suppress the strikes and get the rails moving again. Political leaders helped him and state militias were called in support of Gould's companies. The Texas governor called out the Texas Rangers. Workers countered by destroying property, only winning them negative headlines and for many justifying the use of strikebreakers and militiamen. The strike broke, briefly undermining the Knights of Labor, but the organization regrouped and set its eyes on a national campaign for the eight-hour day.

In the summer 1886 the campaign for an eight-hour day, long a rallying cry that united American laborers, culminated in a national strike on May 1, 1886. Somewhere between 300,000 and 500,000 workers struck across the country.

In Chicago, police forces killed several workers while breaking up protestors at the McCormick reaper works. Labor leaders and radicals called for a protest at Haymarket Square the following day, which police also proceeded to break up. But as they did, a bomb exploded and killed seven policemen. Police fired into the crowd, killing four. The deaths of the Chicago policemen sparked outrage across the nation and the sensationalization of the "Haymarket Riot" helped many Americans to associate unionism with radicalism. Eight Chicago anarchists were arrested and, despite direct evidence implicating them in the bombing, were charged and found guilty of conspiracy. Four were hanged (and one committed suicide before he could be). Membership in the Knights had peaked earlier that year, but fell rapidly after Haymarket: the group became associated with violence and radicalism. The national movement for an eight-hour day collapsed.

The American Federation of Labor (AFL) emerged as a conservative alternative to the vision of the Knights of Labor. An alliance of craft unions (unions composed of skilled workers), the AFL rejected the Knights' expansive vision of a "producerist" economy and advocated "pure and simple trade unionism," a program that aimed for practical gains (higher wages, fewer hours, and safer conditions) through a conservative approach that tried to avoid strikes. But workers continued to strike.

In 1892, the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers struck at one of Carnegie's steel mills in Homestead, Pennsylvania. After repeated wage cuts, workers shut the plant down and occupied the mill. The plant's operator, Henry Clay Frick, immediately called in hundreds of Pinkerton detectives but the steel workers fought back. The Pinkertons tried to land by river and were besieged by the striking steel workers. After several hours of pitched battle, the Pinkertons surrendered, ran a bloody gauntlet of workers, and were kicked out of the mill grounds. But the Pennsylvania governor called the state militia, broke the strike, and reopened the mill. The union was essentially destroyed in the aftermath.

Still, despite repeated failure, strikes continued to roll across the industrial landscape. In 1894, workers in George Pullman's "Pullman Car" factories struck when he cut wages by a quarter but kept rents and utilities in his company town constant. The American Railway Union (ARU), led by Eugene Debs, launched a sympathy strike: the ARU would refuse to handle any Pullman cars on any rail line anywhere in the country. Thousands of workers struck and national railroad traffic ground to a halt. Unlike nearly every other major strike, the governor of Illinois sympathized with workers and refused to dispatch the state militia. It didn't matter. In July, President Grover Cleveland dispatched thousands of American soldiers to break the strike and a federal court had issued a preemptive injunction against Debs and the union's leadership. The strike violated the injunction, and Debs was arrested and imprisoned. The strike evaporated without its leadership. Jail radicalized Debs, proving to him that political and judicial leaders were merely tools for capital in its struggle against labor.

The degrading conditions of industrial labor sparked strikes across the country. The final two decades of the nineteenth century saw over 20,000 strikes and lockouts in the United States. Industrial laborers struggled to carve for themselves a piece of the prosperity lifting investors and a rapidly expanding middle class into unprecedented standards of living. But workers were not the only ones struggling to stay afloat in industrial America. Americans farmers also lashed out against the inequalities of the Gilded Age and denounced political corruption for enabling economic theft.



Two women strikers on picket line during the “Uprising of the 20,000,” garment workers strike, New York City, 1910. [Library of Congress](#).

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THE POPULIST MOVEMENT

“Wall street owns the country,” the Populist leader Mary Elizabeth Lease told dispossessed farmers around 1890. “It is no longer a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, but a government of Wall Street, by Wall Street, and for Wall Street.” Farmers, who remained a majority of the American population through the first decade of the twentieth century, were hit especially hard by industrialization. The expanding markets and technological improvements that increased efficiency also decreased commodity prices. Commercialization of agriculture put farmers in the hands of bankers, railroads, and various middle men. As the decades passed, more and more farmers fell ever farther into debt, lost their land, and were forced to enter the industrial workforce or, especially in the South, became landless farmworkers.

The rise of industrial giants reshaped the American countryside and the Americans who called it home. Railroad spur lines, telegraph lines, and credit crept into farming communities and linked rural Americans, who still made up a majority of the country’s population, with towns, regional cities, American financial centers in Chicago and New York, and, eventually, London and the world’s financial markets. Meanwhile, improved farm machinery, easy credit, and the latest consumer goods flooded the countryside. But new connections and new conveniences came at a price.

Farmers had always been dependent on the whims of the weather and local markets. But now they staked their financial security on a national economic system subject to rapid price swings, rampant speculation, and limited regulation. Frustrated American farmers attempted to reshape the fundamental structures of the nation's political and economic systems, systems they believed enriched parasitic bankers and industrial monopolists at the expense of the many laboring farmers who fed the nation by producing its many crops and farm goods. Their dissatisfaction with an erratic and impersonal system put many of them at the forefront of what would become perhaps the most serious challenge to the established political economy of Gilded Age America. Farmers organized, and launched their challenge first through the cooperatives of the Farmers' Alliance and later through the politics of the People's (or Populist) Party.

Mass production and business consolidations spawned giant corporations that monopolized nearly every sector of the U.S. economy in the decades after the Civil War. In contrast, the economic power of the individual farmer sunk into oblivion. Threatened by ever-plummeting commodity prices and ever-rising indebtedness, Texas agrarians met in Lampasas in 1877 and organized the first Farmers' Alliance to restore some economic power to farmers as they dealt with railroads, merchants, and bankers. If big business would rely on their numerical strength to exert their economic will, why shouldn't farmers unite to counter that power? They could share machinery, bargain from wholesalers, and negotiate higher prices for their crops. Over the following years, organizers spread from town to town across the former Confederacy, Midwest, and the Great Plains, holding evangelical-style camp meetings, distributing pamphlets, and establishing over 1,000 Alliance newspapers. As the Alliance spread, so too did its near-religious vision of the nation's future as a "cooperative commonwealth" that would protect the interests of the many from the predatory greed of the few. At its peak, the Farmers' Alliance claimed 1,500,000 members meeting in 40,000 local sub-alliances.



The banner of the first Texas Farmers' Alliance.

The Alliance's most innovative programs were a series of farmer's cooperatives that enabled farmers to negotiate higher prices for their crops and lower prices for the goods they purchased. These cooperatives spread across the South between 1886 and 1892 and claimed more than a million members at its high point. While most failed financially, these "philanthropic monopolies," as one Alliance speaker termed them, inspired farmers to look to

large-scale organization to cope with their economic difficulties. But cooperation was only part of the Alliance message.

In the South, Alliance-backed Democratic candidates won 4 governorships and 48 congressional seats in 1890. But at a time when falling prices and rising debts conspired against the survival of family farmers, the two political parties seemed incapable of representing the needs of poor farmers. And so Alliance members organized a political party—the People's Party, or the Populists, as they came to be known. The Populists attracted supporters across the nation by appealing to those convinced that there were deep flaws in the political economy of Gilded Age America, flaws that both political parties refused to address. Veterans of earlier fights for currency reform, disaffected industrial laborers, proponents of the benevolent socialism of Edward Bellamy's popular *Looking Backward*, and the champions of Henry George's farmer-friendly "single-tax" proposal joined Alliance members in the new party. The Populists nominated former Civil War general James B. Weaver as their presidential candidate at the party's first national convention in Omaha, Nebraska, on July 4, 1892.

At that meeting the party adopted a platform that crystallized the Alliance's cooperative program into a coherent political vision. The platform's preamble, written by longtime political iconoclast and Minnesota populist Ignatius Donnelly, warned that "[t]he fruits of the toil of millions [had been] boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few." Taken as a whole, the Omaha Platform and the larger Populist movement sought to counter the scale and power of monopolistic capitalism with a strong, engaged, and modern federal government. The platform proposed an unprecedented expansion of federal power. It advocated nationalizing the country's railroad and telegraph systems to ensure that essential services would be run in the best interests of the people. In an attempt to deal with the lack of currency available to farmers, it advocated postal savings banks to protect depositors and extend credit. It called for the establishment of a network of federally-managed warehouses—called subtreasuries—which would extend government loans to farmers who stored crops in the warehouses as they awaited higher market prices. To save debtors it promoted an inflationary monetary policy by monetizing silver. Direct election of Senators and the secret ballot would ensure that this federal government would serve the interest of the people rather than entrenched partisan interests and a graduated income tax would protect Americans from the establishment of an American aristocracy. Combined, these efforts would, Populists believed, help to shift economic and political power back toward the nation's producing classes.

In the Populists first national election campaign in 1892, Weaver received over one million votes (and 22 electoral votes), a truly startling performance that signaled a bright future for the Populists. And when the Panic of 1893 sparked the worst economic depression the nation had ever yet seen, the Populist movement won further credibility and gained even more ground. Kansas Populist Mary Lease, one of the movement's most fervent speakers, famously, and perhaps apocryphally, called on farmers to "raise less corn and more Hell." Populist stump speakers crossed the country, speaking with righteous indignation, blaming the greed of business elites and corrupt party politicians for causing the crisis fueling America's widening inequality. Southern orators like Texas' James "Cyclone" Davis and Georgian firebrand Tom Watson stumped across the South decrying the abuses of northern capitalists and the Democratic Party. Pamphlets such as W.H. Harvey's *Coin's Financial School* and Henry D. Lloyd's *Wealth against Commonwealth* provided Populist answers to the age's many perceived problems. The faltering economy combined with the Populist's extensive organizing. In the 1894 elections, Populists elected six senators and seven representatives to Congress. The third party seemed destined to conquer American politics.

The movement, however, still faced substantial obstacles, especially in the South. The failure of Alliance-backed Democrats to live up to their campaign promises drove some southerners to break with the party of their forefathers and join the Populists. Many, however, were unwilling to take what was, for southerners, a radical step. Southern Democrats, for their part, responded to the Populist challenge with electoral fraud and racial demagoguery. Both severely limited Populist gains. The Alliance struggled to balance the pervasive white supremacy of the American South with their call for a grand union of the producing class. American racial attitudes—and its virulent southern strain—simply proved too formidable. Democrats race-baited Populists and Populists capitulated. The Colored Farmers Alliance, which had formed as a segregated sister organization to the Southern Alliance, and had as many as 250,000 members at its peak, fell prey to racial and class-based hostility. The group went into rapid decline in 1891 when faced with the violent white repression of a number of Colored Alliance-sponsored cotton-picker strikes. Racial mistrust and division remained the rule, even among Populists, and even in North Carolina, where a political marriage of convenience between Populists and Republicans resulted in the election of Populist Marion Butler to the Senate. Populists opposed Democratic corruption, but this did not necessarily make them champions of interracial democracy. As Butler explained to an audience in Edgecombe County, "[w]e are in favor of white supremacy, but we are not in favor of cheating and fraud to get it." In fact, across much of the South, Populists and Farmers Alliance members were often at the forefront of the movement for disfranchisement and segregation.

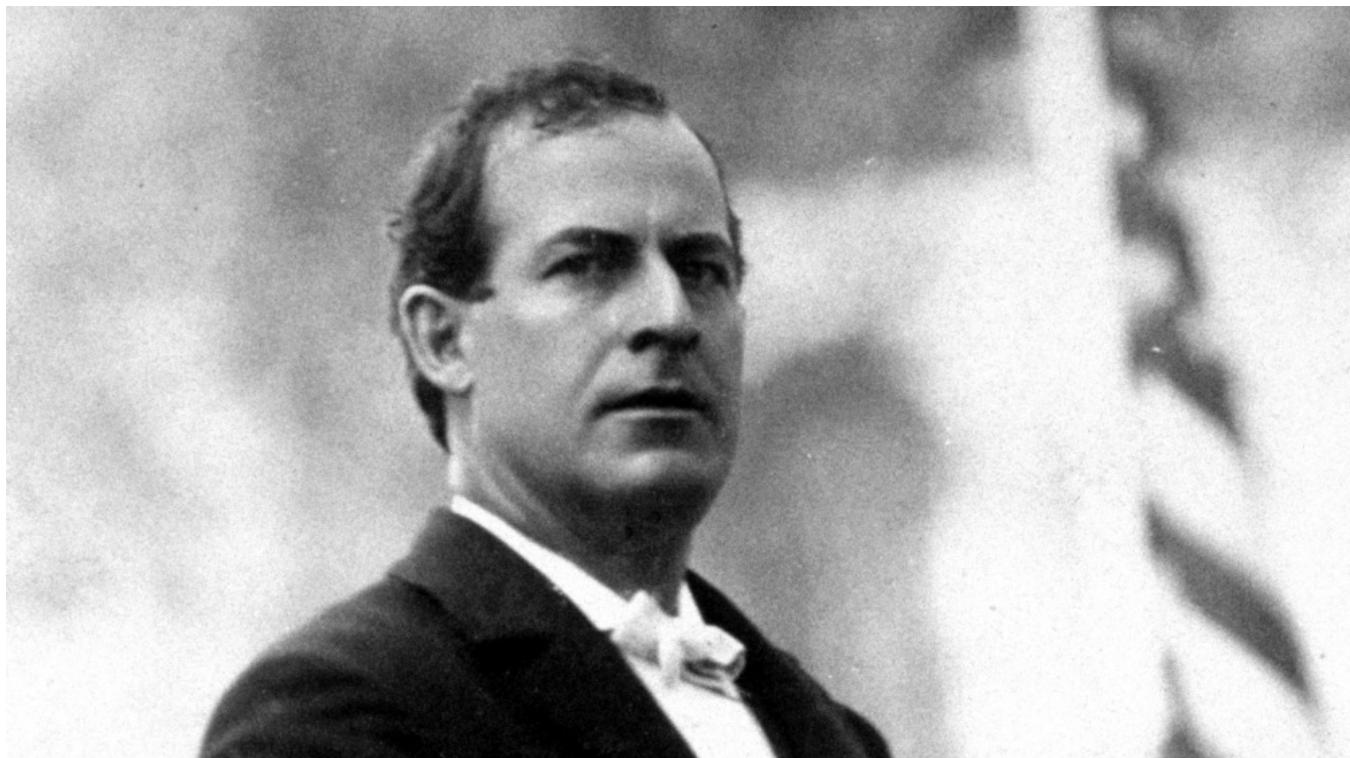
Populism exploded in popularity. The first major political force to tap into the vast discomfort of many Americans with the disruptions wrought by industrial capitalism, the Populist Party seemed poised to capture political victory. And yet, even as Populism gained national traction, the movement was stumbling. The party's often divided leadership found it difficult to shepherd what remained a diverse and loosely organized coalition of reformers towards unified political action. The Omaha platform was a radical document, and some state party leaders selectively embraced its reforms. More importantly, the institutionalized parties were still too strong, and the Democrats loomed, ready to swallow populist frustrations and inaugurate a new era of American politics.

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WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN AND THE POLITICS OF GOLD



William Jennings Bryan, 1896. [Library of Congress](#).

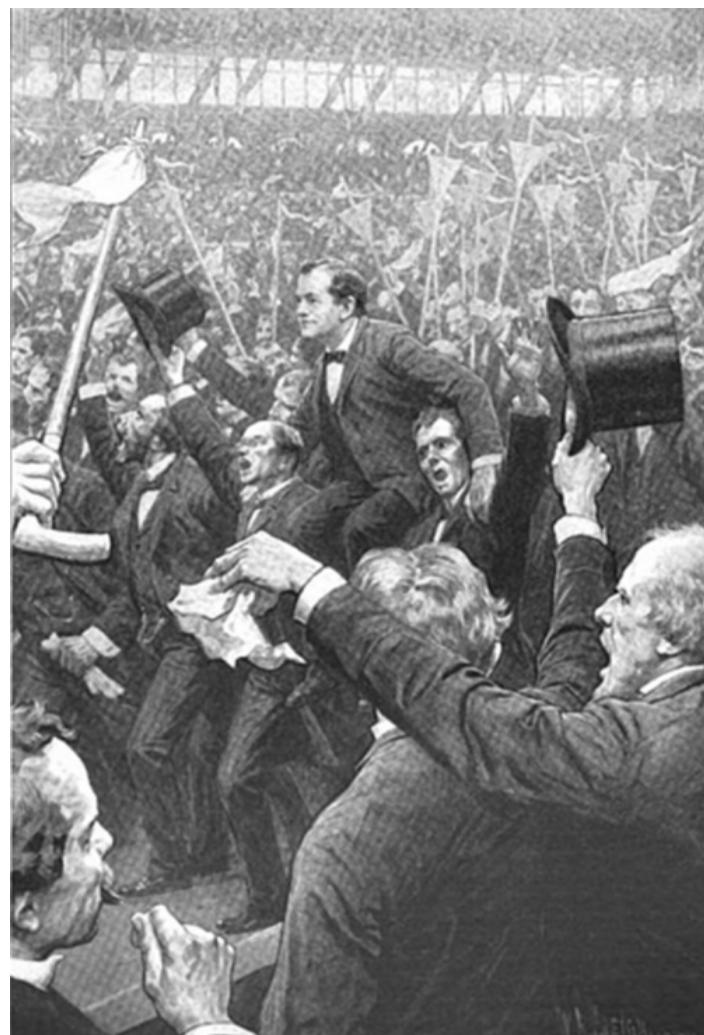
William Jennings Bryan (March 19, 1860 – July 26, 1925) accomplished many different things in his life: he was a skilled orator, a Nebraska Congressman, a three-time presidential candidate, the U.S. Secretary of the State under Woodrow Wilson, and a lawyer who supported prohibition and opposed Darwinism (most notably in the 1925 Scopes “Monkey” Trial). In terms of his political career, he won national renown for his attack on the gold standard and his tireless promotion of free silver and policies for the benefit of the average American. Although Bryan was unsuccessful in winning the presidency, he forever altered the course of American political history.

Bryan was born in Salem, Illinois, in 1860 to a devout family with a strong passion for law, politics, and public speaking. At twenty, he attended Union Law College in Chicago and passed the bar shortly thereafter. After his marriage to Mary Baird in Illinois, Bryan and his young family relocated to Nebraska, where he won a reputation among the state's Democratic Party leaders as an extraordinary orator. Bryan would later win recognition as one of the greatest speakers in American history.

When economic depressions struck the Midwest in the late 1880s, despairing farmers faced low crop prices and found few politicians on their side. While many rallied to the Populist cause, Bryan worked from within the Democratic Party, using the strength of his oratory. After delivering one speech, he told his wife, "Last night I found that I had a power over the audience. I could move them as I chose. I have more than usual power as a speaker... God grant that I may use it wisely." He soon won election to the Nebraska House of Representatives, where he served for two terms. Although he lost a bid to join the Nebraska Senate, Bryan refocused on a much higher political position: the presidency of the United States. There, he believed he could change the country by defending farmers and urban laborers against the corruptions of big business.

In 1895-1896, Bryan launched a national speaking tour in which he promoted the free coinage of silver. He believed that "bimetallism," by inflating American currency, could alleviate farmers' debts. In contrast, Republicans championed the gold standard and a flat money supply. American monetary standards became a leading campaign issue. Then, in July 1896, the Democratic Party's national convention met to settle upon a choice for their president nomination in the upcoming election. The party platform asserted that the gold standard was "not only un-American but anti-American." Bryan spoke last at the convention. He astounded his listeners. At the conclusion of his stirring speech, he declared, "Having behind us the commercial interests and the laboring interests and all the toiling masses, we shall answer their demands for a gold standard by saying to them, you shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold." After a few seconds of stunned silence, the convention went wild. Some wept, many shouted, and the band began to play "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow." Bryan received the 1896 Democratic presidential nomination.

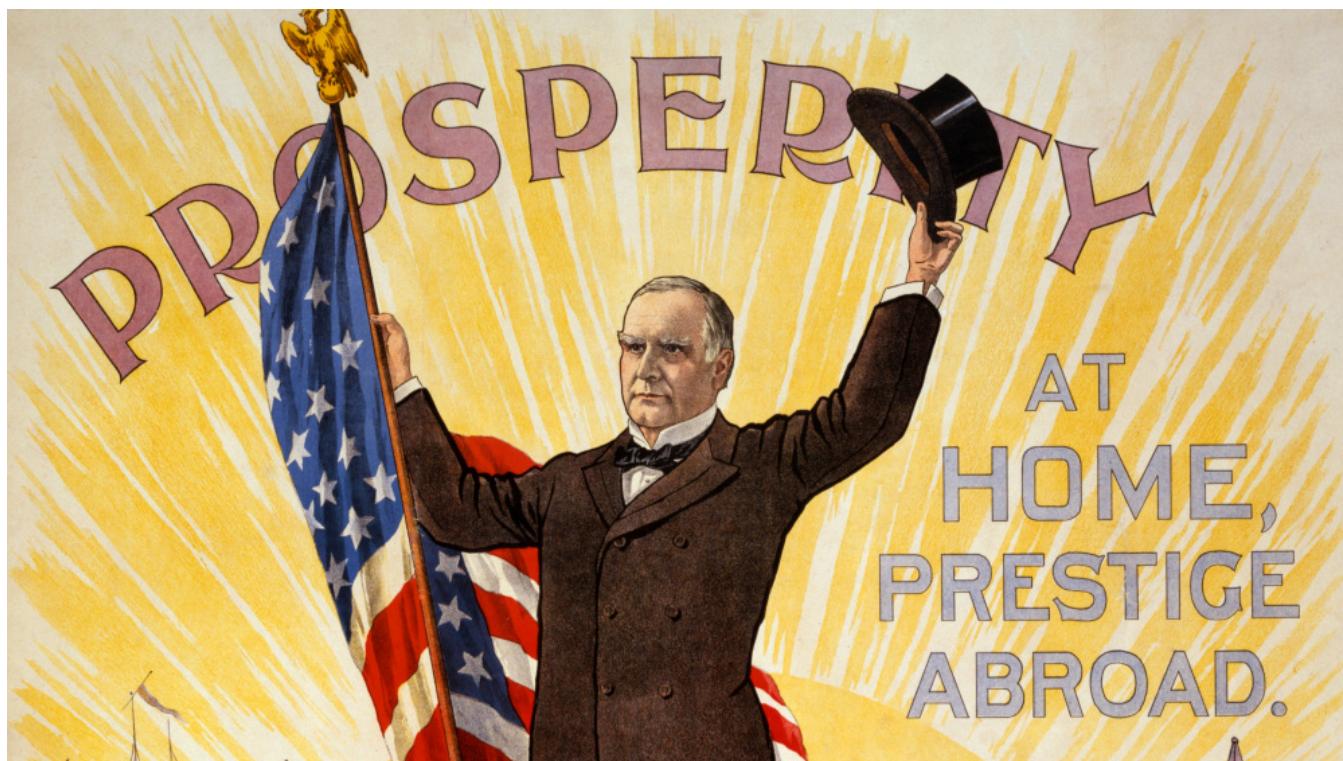
The Republicans ran William McKinley, an economic conservative that championed business interests and the gold standard. Bryan crisscrossed the country spreading the silver gospel. The election drew enormous attention and much emotion. According to Bryan's wife, he received two thousand letters of support every day that year, an enormous amount for any politician, let alone one not currently in office. Yet Bryan could not defeat the McKinley. The pro-business Republicans outspent Bryan's campaign fivefold. A notably high 79.3% of eligible American voters cast ballots and turnout averaged 90% in areas supportive of Bryan, but Republicans swayed the population-dense Northeast and Great Lakes region and stymied the Democrats. In early 1900, Congress passed the Gold Standard Act, which put the country on the gold standard, effectively ending the debate over the nation's



With the country in financial chaos after the Panic of 1893, William Jennings Bryan arose as a political star when he advocated bimetallism – the acceptance of both gold and silver as legal tender. Bryan's Cross of Gold speech at 1896 Democratic National Convention, which he concluded with the fiery statement that "you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold," secured him the Democratic nomination for President in 1896. Artist's conception of William Jennings Bryan after the Cross of Gold speech, 1900.

[Wikimedia](#).

monetary policy. Bryan sought the presidency again in 1900 but was again defeated, as he would be yet again in 1908.



Conservative William McKinley promised prosperity to ordinary Americans through his “sound money” initiative, a policy he ran on during his election campaigns in 1896 and again in 1900. This election poster touts McKinley’s gold standard policy as bringing “Prosperity at Home, Prestige abroad.” “Prosperity at home, prestige abroad,” [between 1895 and 1900]. [Library of Congress](#).

Bryan was among the most influential losers in American political history. When the agrarian wing of the Democratic Party nominated the Nebraska congressman in 1896, Bryan's fiery condemnation of northeastern financial interests and his impassioned calls for “free and unlimited coinage of silver” coopted popular Populist issues. The Democrats stood ready to siphon off a large proportion of the Populist's political support. When the People's Party held its own convention two weeks later, the party's moderate wing, in a fiercely-contested move, overrode the objections of more ideologically pure Populists and nominated Bryan as the Populist candidate as well. This strategy of temporary “fusion” movement fatally fractured the movement and the party. Populist energy moved from the radical-yet-still-weak People's Party to the more moderate-yet-powerful Democratic Party. And although at first glance the Populist movement appears to have been a failure—its minor electoral gains were short-lived, it did little to dislodge the entrenched two-party system, and the Populist dream of a cooperative commonwealth never took shape—yet, in terms of lasting impact, the Populist Party proved the most significant third-party movement in American history. The agrarian revolt would establish the roots of later reform and the majority of policies outlined within the Omaha Platform would eventually be put into law over the following two decades under the management of middle-class reformers. In large measure, the Populist vision laid the intellectual groundwork for the coming progressive movement.



William Jennings Bryan espoused Populists politics while working within the two-party system as a Democrat. Republicans characterized this as a kind hijacking by Bryan, arguing that the Democratic Party was now a party of a radical faction of Populists. The pro-Republican magazine Judge rendered this perspective in a political cartoon showing Bryan (representing Populism writ large) as huge serpent swallowing a bucking mule (representing the Democratic party). Political Cartoon, Judge, 1896. [Wikimedia](#).

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VIDEO: GILDED AGE POLITICS

In this video, John Green teaches you about the Gilded Age and its politics. What, you may ask, is the Gilded Age? The term comes from a book by Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner titled, "The Gilded Age." You may see a pattern emerging here. It started in the 1870s and continued on until the turn of the 20th century. The era is called Gilded because of the massive inequality that existed in the United States. Gilded Age politics were marked by a number of phenomena, most of them having to do with corruption. On the local and state level, political machines wielded enormous power. You'll learn about the most famous political machine, Tammany Hall. Tammany Hall ran New York City for a long, long time, notably under Boss Tweed. Graft, kickbacks, and voter fraud were rampant, but not just at the local level. Ulysses S. Grant ran one of the most scandalous presidential administrations in U.S. history, and John will tell you about two of the best known scandals, the Credit Mobilier scandal and the Whiskey Ring. There were a few attempts at reform during this time, notably the Civil Service Act of 1883 and the Sherman Anti-trust act of 1890. John will also get into the Grange Movement of the western

farmers, and the Populist Party that arose from that movement. The Populists, who threw in their lot with William Jennings Bryan, never managed to get it together and win a presidency, and they faded after 1896.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/SpgdY3HkcSs>

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EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY SOCIALISM

Others, however, refused to join the two parties and continued the Populists' radical political tradition, this time not among old stock American farmers but among urban laborers. The Socialist Party of America was founded in 1901, part of a larger socialist movement that, over the course of twenty years, made significant gains in its attempt to transform American economic life. Socialist mayors were elected in 33 cities and towns, ranging from Berkeley, California to Schenectady, New York, and two—Victor Berger from Wisconsin and Meyer London from New York—won congressional seats. All told, over 1000 American socialist candidates won various political offices. Julius A. Wayland, editor of the socialist newspaper *Appeal to Reason*, proclaimed that "socialism is coming. It's coming like a prairie fire and nothing can stop it...you can feel it in the air." By 1913 there were 150,000 members of the Socialist Party and in 1912 Eugene V. Debs, the Indiana-born Socialist Party candidate for president, received almost one million votes, or six percent of the total.



American socialist leader Eugene Victor Debs, 1912. [Library of Congress](#).

The Socialist Movement arose in response to America's new industrial economy. Socialists argued that wealth and power were consolidated in the hands of too few individuals, that monopolies and trusts controlled too much of the economy, that owners and investors grew rich at the expense of the very workers who produced their wealth, and that workers, despite massive productivity gains and rising national wealth, still suffered from low pay, long hours, and unsafe working conditions. Karl Marx had described the new industrial economy as a worldwide class struggle between the "bourgeoisie" who owned the means of production, such as factories and farms, and the "proletariat," factory workers and tenant farmers who worked only for the wealth of others. According to Eugene Debs, socialists sought "the overthrow of the capitalist system and the emancipation of the working class from wage slavery." Under an imagined socialist cooperative commonwealth, the means of production would be

owned collectively, ensuring that all men and women received a fair wage for their labor. According to socialist organizer and newspaper editor Oscar Ameringer, socialists wanted “ownership of the trust[s] by the government, and the ownership of the government by the people.”

The Socialist Movement drew from a diverse constituency. Party membership was open to all regardless of race, gender, class, ethnicity, or religion. Many prominent Americans, such as Helen Keller, Upton Sinclair, and Jack London, became socialists. They were joined by anonymous American workers, by lumberjacks from the Northwest, miners from the West, tenant farmers in the South and Southwest, small farmers from the Midwest, and factory workers from the Northeast. All united under the red flag of socialism. Ultimately, though, a combination of internal disagreements over ideology and tactics, government repression, the co-optation of socialist policies by progressive reformers, and perceived incompatibilities between socialism and American values sunk the party until it was largely dismantled by the early 1920s.

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CONCLUSION

The march of capital transformed patterns of American labor. While a select few enjoyed historically unparalleled levels of wealth, and an ever-growing slice of middle-class workers possessed an ever more comfortable standard of living, vast numbers of farmers lost their land while a growing working class struggled to earn wages sufficient to support families and justify their labor. Industrial capitalism brought wealth and it brought poverty, it created owners and investors and it created employees. Whether winners or losers in the new American economy, Americans of all stripes had to reckon with the new ways of life unleashed by industrialization.

This chapter was edited by Joseph Locke, with content contributions by Andrew C. Baker, Nicholas Blood, Justin Clark, Dan Du, Caroline Bunnell Harris, David Hochfelder Scott Libson, Joseph Locke, Leah Richier, Matthew Simmons, Kate Sohasky, Joseph Super, and Kaylynn Washnock.

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ASSIGNMENT: SOCIAL DARWINISM

Why is it that in every society some are successful and other are not? Some become fabulously rich, some do well, some do “ok,” and some just can’t get ahead? William Graham Sumner suggest one reason: Social Darwinism. Read this brief excerpt from “[William Graham Sumner on Social Darwinism](#).” After reading, answer the following in a short paragraph for each:

1. What exactly is Social Darwinism? Explain it by using or making up some kind of example of the concept.
2. How does Sumner explain the existence of poverty and social inequality (what is his answer to my question about some succeeding and others failing)?

Be sure to use specific evidence from the document in support of your answer.

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ASSIGNMENT: HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES

Journalist Jacob Riis wrote a famous book, *How the Other Half Lives*, to shed light on just how bad conditions were in the slums and poorest areas of America's rapidly growing cities.

After reading the [excerpt](#), be prepared to discuss the following:

- Riis identifies three major factors that led to the development of the New York Slums. What are they?
- For each factor underline two separate passages from the text in which Riis discusses that factor and its role in creating slums.

Note: Give me the *causes* of the slums, not the *consequences* of the slums.

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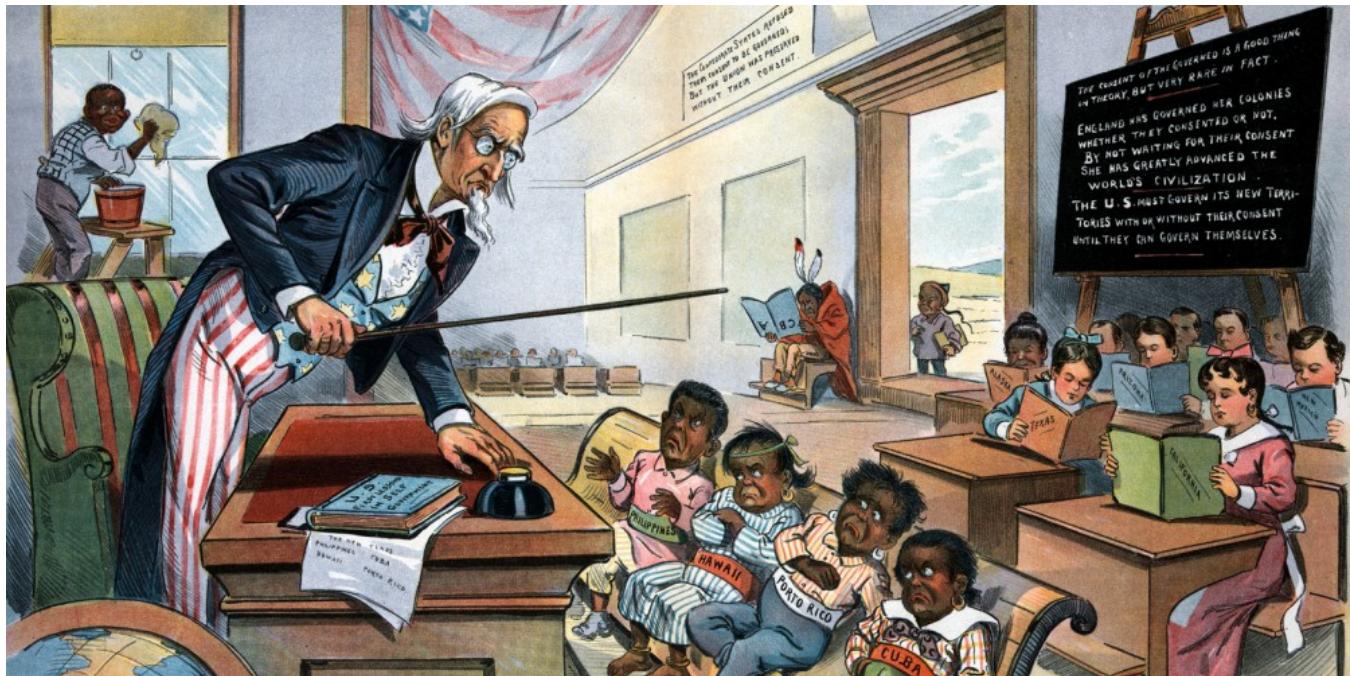
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SLIDESHOW: POPULISM AND THE WIZARD OF OZ

[Wizard of Oz \(populism allegory\)](#) from [Paul Kitchen](#)

AMERICAN EMPIRE

INTRODUCTION



"School Begins," Puck, January 25, 1899. [Library of Congress](#).

"Empire" might most readily recall ancient Rome, military conquests, the British Empire, the mercantile capitalism of the British East India Company, the partitioning of Africa or the Middle East into colonies, military and administrative occupations, resource exploitation, and generally a model in which some central power exploits peripheral colonies to advance its own interests. But empires can take many forms, and imperial processes can occur in many contexts. 100 years after the United States won its independence from the British Empire, had it become an empire of its own?

In the decades after the American Civil War, the United States exerted itself in the service of American interests around the world. In the Pacific, Latin America, and the Middle East, and most explicitly in the Spanish-American War and the foreign policy of Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, the United States expanded upon a long history of exploration, trade, and cultural exchange to practice something new, something that looked much like empire. The question of American imperialism, then, seeks to understand not only direct American interventions in such places as Cuba, the Philippines, Hawaii, Guam, and Puerto Rico, but also the deeper history of American engagement with the wider world, and the subsequent ways in which American economic, political, and cultural power has shaped the actions, choices, and possibilities of other groups and nations.

But as American exerted itself abroad, it received ever more numbers of foreign peoples at home. European and Asian immigrants poured into the United States. In a sense, imperialism and immigration raised similar questions about American identity: who was an "American," and who wasn't? What was the nation's obligations to foreign

powers and foreign peoples? And how accessible—and how fluid—should American identity be for newcomers? All such questions confronted late-nineteenth-century Americans with unprecedented urgency.

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VIDEO: AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

In this video, John Green teaches you about Imperialism. In the late 19th century, the great powers of Europe were running around the world obtaining colonial possessions, especially in Africa and Asia. The United States, which as a young country was especially susceptible to peer pressure, followed along and snapped up some colonies of its own. The U.S. saw that Spain's hold on its empire was weak, and like some kind of expansionist predator, it jumped into the Cuban War for Independence and turned it into the Spanish-Cuban-Phillipino-American War, which usually just gets called the Spanish-American War. John will tell you how America turned this war into colonial possessions like Puerto Rico, The Philippines, and almost even got to keep Cuba. The U.S. was busy in the Pacific as well, wresting control of Hawaii from the Hawaiians. You'll learn all this and more in a globe-trotting, oppressing episode of Crash Course US History.

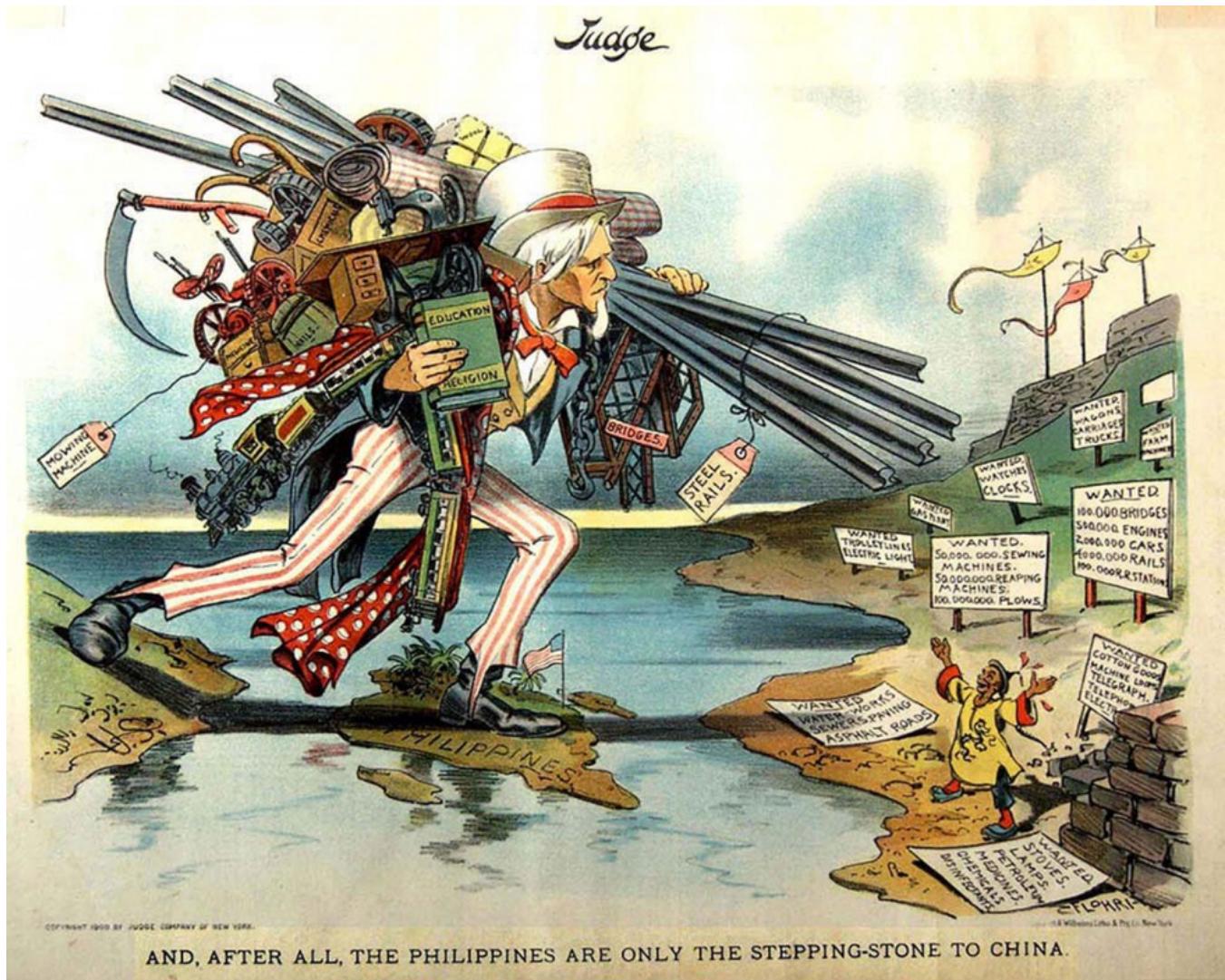
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1898



Uncle Sam, loaded with implements of modern civilization, uses the Philippines as a stepping-stone to get across the Pacific to China (represented by a small man with open arms), who excitedly awaits Sam's arrival. With the expansionist policy gaining greater traction, the possibility for more imperialistic missions (including to conflict-ridden China) seemed strong. The cartoon might be arguing that such endeavors are worthwhile, bringing education, technological, and other civilizing tools to a desperate people. On the other hand, it could be read as sarcastically commenting on America's new propensity to "step" on others. "AND, AFTER ALL, THE PHILIPPINES ARE ONLY THE STEPPING-STONE TO CHINA," in Judge Magazine, 1900 or 1902. [Wikimedia](#).

Although the United States had a long history of international economic, military, and cultural engagement that stretched back deep into the eighteenth century, the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars (1898-1902) marked a crucial turning point in American interventions abroad. In pursuing war with Spain, and then engaging in counterrevolutionary conflict in the Philippines, the United States expanded the scope and strength of its global reach. Over the next two decades, the U.S. would become increasingly involved in international politics, particularly in Latin America. These new conflicts and ensuing territorial problems forced Americans to confront the ideological elements of imperialism. Should the United States act as an empire? Or were foreign interventions and the taking of territory antithetical to its founding democratic ideals? What exactly would be the relationship between the US and its territories? And could colonial subjects be successfully and safely incorporated into the body politic as American citizens? The Spanish-American and Philippine-American

Wars brought these questions, which had always lurked behind discussions of American expansion, out into the open.

In 1898, Americans began in earnest to turn their attention southward to problems plaguing their neighbor Cuba. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, Cubans had tried unsuccessfully again and again to gain independence from Spain. The latest uprising, and the one that would prove fatal to Spain's colonial designs, began in 1895 and was still raging in the winter of 1898. By that time, in an attempt to crush the uprising, Spanish general Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau had been conducting a policy of reconcentration—forcing Cubans living in certain cities to relocate en masse to military camps—for about two years. Prominent newspaper publishers sensationalized Spanish atrocities. Cubans in the United States and their allies raised cries of *Cuba Libre!* And while the United States government proclaimed a wish to avoid armed conflict with Spain, President McKinley became increasingly concerned about the safety of American lives and property in Cuba. He ordered the battleship *Maine* to Havana harbor in January 1898.

The *Maine* sat undisturbed in the harbor for about two weeks. Then, on the evening of February 15, a titanic explosion tore open the ship and sent it to the bottom of the ocean. Three-quarters of the ship's 354 occupants died. A naval board of inquiry immediately began an investigation to ascertain the cause of the explosion, but the loudest Americans had already decided that Spanish treachery was to blame. Capitalizing on the outrage, "yellow journals"—newspapers that promoted sensational stories, notoriously at the cost of accuracy—such as William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* called for war with Spain. When urgent negotiations failed to produce a mutually agreeable settlement, Congress officially declared war on April 25.

Although America's war effort began haphazardly, Spain's decaying military crumbled. Military victories for the United States came quickly. In the Pacific, on May 1, Commodore George Dewey engaged the Spanish fleet outside of Manila, the capital of the Philippines (another Spanish colonial possession), destroyed it, and proceeded to blockade Manila harbor. Two months later, American troops took Cuba's San Juan Heights in what would become the most well-known battle of the war, winning fame not for regular soldiers but for the irregular, particularly Theodore Roosevelt and his Rough Riders. Roosevelt had been the Assistant Secretary of the Navy but had resigned his position in order to see action in the war. His actions in Cuba made him a national celebrity. As disease began to eat away at American troops, the Spanish suffered the loss of Santiago de Cuba on July 17, effectively ending the war. The two nations agreed to a cease-fire on August 12 and formally signed the Treaty of Paris in December. The terms of the treaty stipulated, among other things, that the United States would acquire Spain's former holdings of Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines.

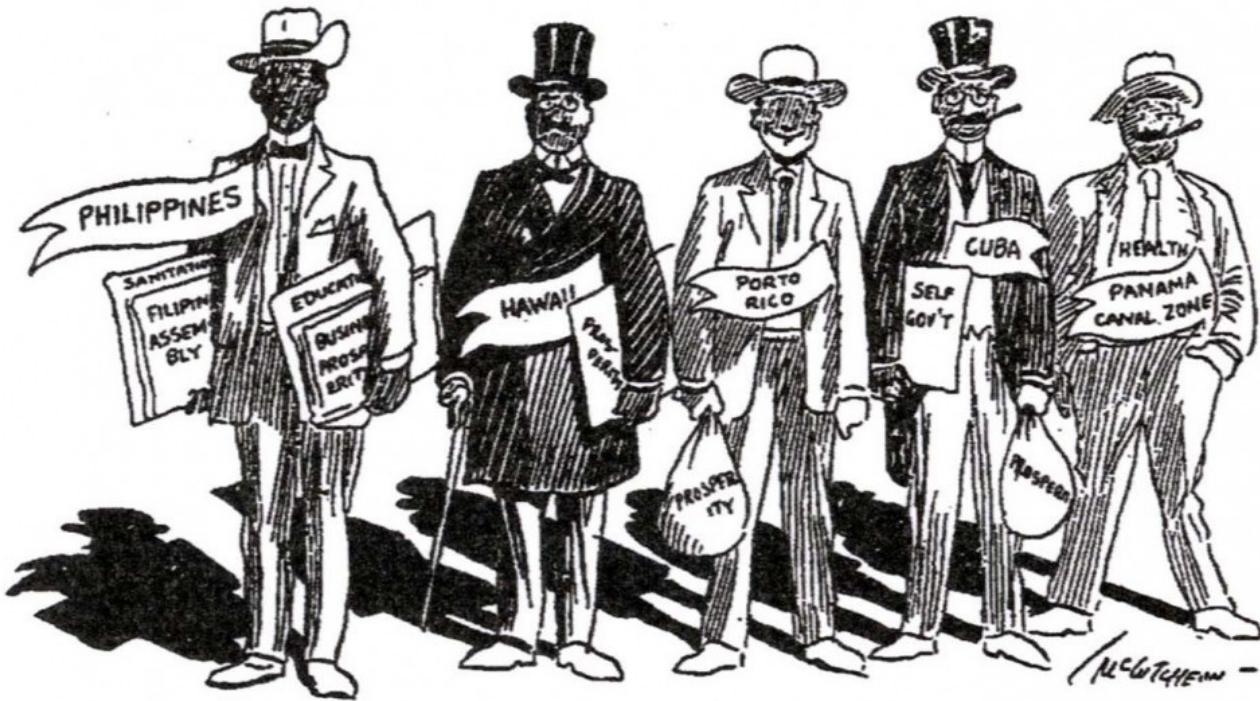
Secretary of State John Hay memorably referred to the conflict as a "splendid little war," and at the time it certainly appeared that way. Fewer than four hundred Americans died in battle in a war that lasted about fifteen weeks. Contemporaries celebrated American victories as the providential act of God. The influential Brooklyn minister Lyman Abbott, for instance, declared that Americans were "an elect people of God" and saw divine providence in Dewey's victory at Manila. Some, such as Senator Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana, took matters one step further, seeing in American victory an opportunity for imperialism. In his view, America had a "mission to perform" and a "duty to discharge" around the world. What Beveridge envisioned was nothing less than an American empire.

WHAT THE UNITED STATES HAS FOUGHT FOR

[Copyright: 1914: By John T. McCutcheon.]



Before the United States intervened in behalf of these oppressed people.



After the United States had rescued them from their oppression.

A propagandistic image, this political cartoon shows a before and after: the Spanish colonies before intervention by America and those same former colonies after. The differences are obvious and exaggerated, with the top figures described as "oppressed" by the weight of industrial slavery until America "rescued" them, thereby turning them into the respectable and successful businessmen seen on the bottom half. Those who claimed that American imperialism brought civilization and prosperity to destitute peoples used visuals like these, as well as photographic and textual evidence, to support their beliefs. "What the United States has Fought For," in Chicago Tribune, 1914. [Wikimedia](#).

But *should* the United States become an empire? That question was sharply debated across the nation in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War and the acquisition of Hawaii in July 1898. At the behest of American businessmen who had overthrown the Hawaiian monarchy, the United States annexed the Hawaiian Islands and their rich plantations. Between Hawaii and a number of former Spanish possessions, many Americans coveted the economic and political advantages that increased territory would bring. Those opposed to expansion, however, worried that imperial ambitions did not accord with the nation's founding ideals. American actions in the Philippines brought all of these discussions to a head.

The Philippines were an afterthought of the Spanish-American War, but, when the smoke cleared, the United States found itself in possession of a key foothold in the Pacific. After Dewey's victory over the Spanish fleet in the Battle of Manila Bay, conversations about how to proceed occupied the attentions of President McKinley, political leaders from both parties, and the popular press. American forces and Philippine forces (under the leadership of Emilio Aguinaldo) were in communication: would the Americans offer their support to the Filipinos and their ongoing efforts against the Spanish? Or would the Americans replace the Spanish as a colonial occupying force? American forces were instructed to secure Manila without allowing Philippine forces to enter the Walled City (the seat of the Spanish colonial government), hinting, perhaps, at things to come. Americans wondered what would happen next. Perhaps a good many ordinary Americans shared the bewildered sentiments of Mr. Dooley, the fictional Irish-American barkeeper whom humorist Finley Peter Dunne used to satirize American life: "I don't know what to do with th' Ph'lippeens anny more thin I did las' summer, befor I heerd tell iv them...We can't sell them, we can't ate them, an' we can't throw them into the th' alley whin no wan is lookin'."

As debates about American imperialism continued against the backdrop of an upcoming presidential election, tensions in the Philippines escalated. Emilio Aguinaldo was inaugurated as president of the First Philippine Republic (or Malolos Republic) in late January of 1899; fighting between American and Philippine forces began in early February; and in April 1899, Congress ratified the 1898 Treaty of Paris, which concluded the Spanish-American War and gave Spain twenty million dollars in exchange for the Philippine Islands.

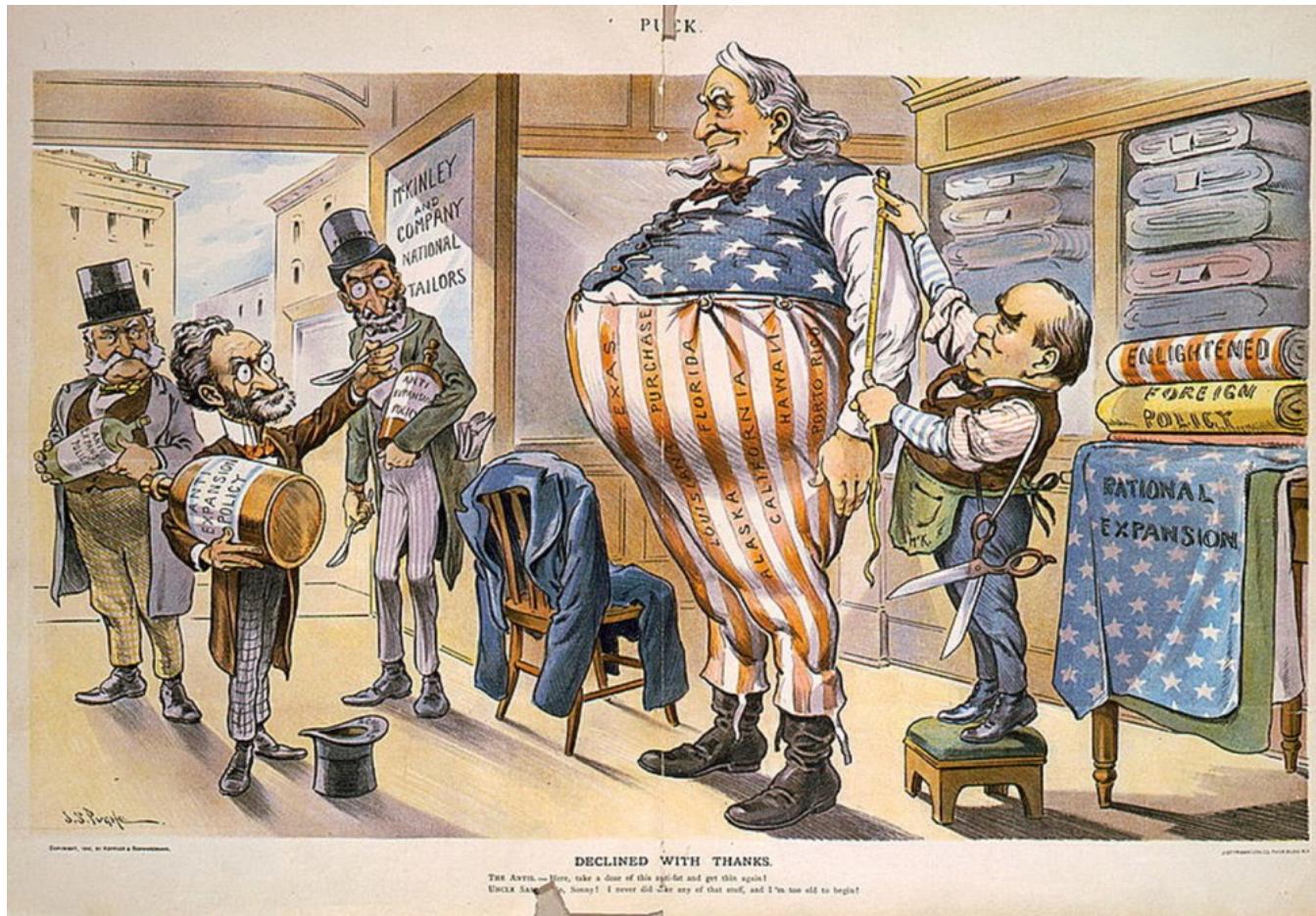
Like the Cubans, Filipinos had waged a long war against their Spanish colonizers. The United States could have given them the independence they had long fought for, but, instead, at the behest of President William McKinley, the United States occupied the islands and from 1899-1902 waged a bloody series of conflicts against Filipino insurrectionists that cost far more lives than the war with Spain. Under the leadership of Emilio Aguinaldo, Filipinos who had fought for freedom against the Spanish now fought for freedom against the very nation that had claimed to have liberated them from Spanish tyranny.

The Philippine Insurrection, or the Philippine-American War, was a brutal conflict of occupation and insurgency. Contemporaries compared the guerrilla-style warfare in challenging and unfamiliar terrain to the American experiences in the Indian Wars of the late-nineteenth-century. Many commented on its brutality and the uncertain mission of American troops. An April 1899 dispatch from a *Harper's Weekly* correspondent began, "A week has passed—a week of fighting and marching, of jungles and rivers, of incident and adventure so varied and of so rapid transition that to sit down to write about it makes one feel as if he were trying to describe a dream where time, space, and all the logical sequences of ordinary life are upset in the unrelenting brutality of war." John Bass described his experiences in detail, and his reportage, combined with accounts that came directly from soldiers, helped to shape public knowledge about the war. Reports of cruelty on both sides and a few high profile military investigations ensured continued public attention to events across the Pacific.

Amidst fighting to secure the Philippine Islands, the federal government sent two Philippine Commissions to assess the situation in the islands and make recommendations for a civilian colonial government. A civilian administration, with William H. Taft as the first Governor General (1901-1903), was established with military support. Although President Theodore Roosevelt declared the war to be over in 1902, resistance and occasional fighting continued into the second decade of the twentieth century.

Debates about American imperialism dominated headlines and tapped into core ideas about American identity and the proper role of the United States in the larger world. Should a former colony, established on the principles of freedom, liberty, and sovereignty, become a colonizer itself? What was imperialism, anyway? Many framed the Filipino conflict as a Protestant, civilizing mission. Others framed American imperialism in the Philippines as nothing new, as simply the extension of a never-ending westward American expansion. It was simply destiny. Some saw imperialism as a way to reenergize the nation by asserting national authority and power around the globe. Others baldly recognized the opportunities the Philippine Islands presented for access to Asian markets. But critics grew loud. The American Anti-Imperialist League, founded in 1899 and populated by such prominent Americans as Mark Twain, Andrew Carnegie, and Jane Addams, protested American imperial actions and articulated a platform that decried foreign subjugation and upheld the rights of all to self-governance. Still others

embraced anti-imperialist stances because of concerns about immigration and American racial identity, afraid that American purity stood imperiled by contact with strange and foreign peoples. For whatever reason, however, the onset or acceleration of imperialism was a controversial and landmark moment in American history. America had become a preeminent force in the world.



Tailor President McKinley measures an obese Uncle Sam for larger clothing, while Anti-Expansionists like Joseph Pulitzer unsuccessfully offer Sam a weight-loss elixir. As the nation increased its imperialistic presence and mission, many like Pulitzer worried that America would grow too big for its own good. John S. Pughe, "Declined With Thanks," in *Puck* (September 5, 1900). [Wikimedia](#).

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VIDEO: PROGRESSIVE PRESIDENTS

In this video, John Green teaches you about the Progressive Presidents, who are not a super-group of former presidents who create complicated, symphonic, rock soundscapes that transport you into a fantasy fugue state. Although that would be awesome. The presidents most associated with the Progressive Era are Theodore Roosevelt, William Taft, and Woodrow Wilson. During the times these guys held office, trusts were busted, national parks were founded, social programs were enacted, and tariffs were lowered. It wasn't all positive though, as their collective tenure also saw Latin America invaded A LOT, a split in the Republican party that resulted in a Bull Moose, all kinds of other international intervention, and the end of the Progressive Era saw the

United States involved in World War. If all this isn't enough to entice, I will point out that two people get shot in this video. Violence sells, they say.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/F7fISW1PGsA>

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THEODORE ROOSEVELT AND AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

Under the leadership of President Theodore Roosevelt, the United States emerged from the nineteenth century with ambitious designs on global power through military might, territorial expansion, and economic influence. Though the Spanish-American War had begun under the administration of William McKinley, Roosevelt, the hero of San Juan Hill, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Vice-President, and President, was arguably the most visible and influential proponent of American imperialism at the turn of the century. Roosevelt's emphasis on developing the American navy, and on Latin America as a key strategic area of U.S. foreign policy, would have long-term consequences.

In return for Roosevelt's support of the Republican nominee, William McKinley, in the 1896 presidential election, McKinley appointed Roosevelt as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. The head of the department, John Long, had a competent but lackadaisical managerial style that allowed Roosevelt a great deal of freedom that Roosevelt used to network with such luminaries as military theorists Alfred Thayer Mahan and naval officer George Dewey and politicians such as Henry Cabot Lodge and William Howard Taft. During his tenure he oversaw the construction of new battleships, the implementation of new technology, and laid the groundwork for new shipyards, all with the goal of projecting America's power across the oceans. Roosevelt wanted to expand American influence. For instance, he advocated for the annexation of Hawaii for several reasons: it was within the American sphere of influence, it would deny Japanese expansion and limit potential threats to the West Coast, it had an excellent port for battleships at Pearl Harbor, and it would act as a fueling station on the way to pivotal markets in Asia.



Teddy Roosevelt, a politician turned soldier, gained fame (and perhaps infamy) after he and his "Rough Riders" took San Juan Hill. Images like the poster praised Roosevelt and the battle as Americans celebrated this "splendid little war." "William H. West's Big Minstrel Jubilee," 1899. [Wikimedia](#).

Roosevelt, after winning headlines in the war, ran as Vice President under McKinley and rose to the presidency after McKinley's assassination by the anarchist Leon Czolgosz in 1901. Among his many interventions in American life, Roosevelt acted with vigor to expand the military, naval power especially, to protect and promote American interests abroad. This included the construction of eleven battleships between 1904 and 1907. Alfred Thayer Mahan's naval theories, described in his *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*, influenced Roosevelt a great deal. In contrast to theories that advocated for commerce raiding, coastal defense and small "brown water" ships, the imperative to control the sea required battleships and a "blue water" navy that could engage and win decisive battles with rival fleets. As president, Roosevelt continued the policies he established as Assistant Naval Secretary and expanded the U.S. fleet. The mission of the Great White Fleet, sixteen all-white battleships that sailed around the world between 1907 and 1909, exemplified America's new power.

Roosevelt insisted that the "big stick" and the persuasive power of the U.S. military could assure U.S. hegemony over strategically important regions in the Western Hemisphere. The United States used military intervention in various circumstances to further its objectives, but it did not have the ability nor the inclination to militarily impose its will on the entirety of South and Central America. The United States therefore more often used informal methods of empire, such as so-called "dollar diplomacy," to assert dominance over the hemisphere.

The United States actively intervened again and again in Latin America. Throughout his time in office, Roosevelt exerted U.S. control over Cuba (even after it gained formal independence in 1902) and Puerto Rico, and he deployed naval forces to ensure Panama's independence from Colombia in 1901 in order to acquire a U.S. Canal Zone. Furthermore, Roosevelt pronounced the "Roosevelt Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine in 1904, proclaiming U.S. police power in the Caribbean. As articulated by President James Monroe in his annual address to Congress

in 1823, the United States would treat any military intervention in Latin America by a European power as a threat to American security. Roosevelt reaffirmed the Monroe Doctrine and expanded it by declaring that the U.S. had the right to preemptive action through intervention in any Latin American nation in order to correct administrative and fiscal deficiencies.

Roosevelt's policy justified numerous and repeated police actions in "dysfunctional" Caribbean and Latin American countries by U.S. marines and naval forces and enabled the founding of the naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. This approach is sometimes referred to as "gunboat diplomacy," wherein naval forces and marines land in a national capital to protect American and Western personnel, temporarily seize control of the government, and dictate policies friendly to American business, such as the repayment of foreign loans. For example, in 1905 Roosevelt sent the marines to occupy the Dominican Republic and established financial supervision over the Dominican government. Imperialists often framed such actions as almost humanitarian. They celebrated white Anglo-Saxon societies such as found in the United States and the British Empire as advanced practitioners of nation-building and civilization, helping to uplift debtor nations in Latin America that lacked the manly qualities of discipline and self-control. Roosevelt, for instance, preached that it was the "manly duty" of the United States to exercise an international police power in the Caribbean and to spread the benefits of Anglo-Saxon civilization to inferior states populated by inferior peoples. The president's language, for instance, contrasted debtor nation's "impotence" with the United States' civilizing influence, belying new ideas that associated self-restraint and social stability with Anglo-Saxon manliness.

Dollar diplomacy offered a less costly method of empire and avoided the troubles of military occupation. Washington worked with bankers to provide loans to Latin American nations in exchange for some level of control over their national fiscal affairs. Roosevelt first implemented dollar diplomacy on a vast scale, while Presidents Taft and Wilson continued the practice in various forms during their own administrations. All confronted instability in Latin America. Rising debts to European and American bankers allowed for the inroads of modern life but destabilized much of the region. Bankers, beginning with financial houses in London and New York, saw Latin America as prime opportunities for investment. Lenders took advantage of the region's newly formed governments' need for cash and exacted punishing interest rates on massive loans, which were then sold off in pieces on the secondary bond market. American economic interests were now closely aligned with the region, but also further undermined by the chronic instability of the region's newly formed governments, which were often plagued by mismanagement, civil wars, and military coups in the decades following their independence. Turnover in regimes interfered with the repayment of loans, as new governments would often repudiate the national debt or force a renegotiation with suddenly powerless lenders.

Creditors could not force settlements of loans until they successfully lobbied their own governments to get involved and forcibly collect debts. The Roosevelt administration did not want to deny the Europeans' rightful demands of repayment of debt, but it also did not want to encourage European policies of conquest in the hemisphere as part of that debt collection. U.S. policy makers and military strategists within the Roosevelt administration determined that this European practice of military intervention posed a serious threat to American interests in the region. Roosevelt reasoned that the U.S. must create and maintain fiscal and political stability within strategically important nations in Latin America, particularly those affecting routes to and from the proposed Panama Canal. As a result, U.S. policy makers considered intervention in places like Cuba and the Dominican Republic a necessity to insure security around the region.

The Monroe Doctrine provided the Roosevelt administration with a diplomatic and international legal tradition through which it could assert a U.S. right and obligation to intervene in the hemisphere. The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine asserted that the United States wished to promote stable, prosperous states in Latin America that could live up to their political and financial obligations. Roosevelt declared that "wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may finally require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the United States cannot ignore this duty." President Monroe declared what Europeans could not do in the Western Hemisphere; Roosevelt inverted his doctrine to legitimize direct U.S. intervention in the region.

Though aggressive and bellicose, Roosevelt did not necessarily advocate expansion by military force. In fact, the president insisted that in dealings with the Latin American nations, he did not seek national glory or expansion of territory and believed that war or intervention should be a last resort when resolving conflicts with problematic governments. According to Roosevelt, such actions were necessary to maintain "order and civilization." Then again, Roosevelt certainly believed in using military power to protect national interests and spheres of influence when absolutely necessary. He also believed that American sphere included not only Hawaii and the Caribbean, but also much of the Pacific. When Japanese victories over Russia threatened the regional balance of power he sponsored peace talks between Russian and Japanese leaders, earning him a Nobel Peace Prize in 1906.

WOMEN AND IMPERIALISM

Debates over American imperialism revolved around more than just politics and economics and national self-interest. They also included notions of humanitarianism, morality, religion, and ideas of “civilization.” And they included significant participation by American women.

In the fall of 1903, Margaret McLeod, age twenty-one, originally of Boston, found herself in Australia on family business and in need of income.

Fortunately, she made the acquaintance of Alexander MacWillie, the top salesman for the H. J. Heinz Company, who happened to be looking for a young lady to serve as a “demonstrator” of Heinz products to potential consumers. McLeod proved to be such an attractive purveyor of India relish and baked beans that she accompanied MacWillie on the rest of his tour of Australia and continued on to South Africa, India, and Japan. Wherever she went, this “dainty young girl with golden hair in white cap and tucker” drew attention to Heinz’s products, but, in a much larger sense, she was also projecting an image of middle-class American domesticity, of pure womanhood. Heinz saw itself not only as purveying economical and healthful foodstuffs—it was bringing the blessings of civilization to the world.

When commentators, such as Theodore Roosevelt in his speech on “the strenuous life,” spoke about America’s overseas ventures, they generally gave the impression that this was a strictly masculine enterprise—the work of soldiers, sailors, government officials, explorers, businessmen, and scientists. But in fact, U.S. imperialism, focused as much on economic and cultural influence as military or political power, offered a range of opportunities for white, middle-class, Christian women. In addition to working as representatives of American business, women could serve as missionaries, teachers, and medical professionals, and as artists and writers they were inspired by, and helped to transmit, ideas about imperialism.

Moreover, the rhetoric of civilization that underlay imperialism was itself a highly gendered concept. According to the racial theory of the day, humans progressed through hierarchical stages of civilization in an orderly, linear fashion. Only Europeans and Americans had attained the highest level of civilization, which was superficially marked by whiteness but also included an industrial economy and a gender division in which men and women had diverging but complementary roles. Social and technological progress had freed women of the burdens of



With great self-assurance of how she looks in her new hat, Columbia puts on her “Easter Bonnet” shaped as a warship labelled “World Power.” By 1901, when this political cartoon was published, Americans were feeling rather confident in their position as a world leader. Ehrhart after sketch by Dalrymple, “Columbia’s Easter bonnet”, in Puck (April 6, 1901). [Wikimedia](#).

physical labor and elevated them to a position of moral and spiritual authority. White women thus potentially had important roles to play in U.S. imperialism, both as symbols of the benefits of American civilization and as vehicles for the transmission of American values.

It is also important to note that civilization, while often cloaked in the language of morality and Christianity, was very much an economic concept. The stages of civilization were primarily marked by their economic character (hunter-gatherer, agricultural, industrial), and the consumption of industrially produced commodities was seen as a key moment in “savages” progress toward civilized life. Over the course of the nineteenth century, women in the West, for instance, had become closely associated with consumption, particularly of those commodities used in the domestic sphere. Thus it must have seemed natural for Alexander MacWillie to hire Margaret McLeod to “demonstrate” catsup and chili sauce at the same time as she “demonstrated” white, middle-class domesticity. By adopting the use of such progressive products in their homes, consumers could potentially absorb even the virtues of American civilization.

In some ways, women’s work in support of imperialism can be seen as an extension of the kind of activities many of them were already engaged in among working-class, immigrant, and Native American communities in the United States. Many white women felt that they had a duty to spread the benefits of Christian civilization to those less fortunate than themselves. American overseas ventures, then, merely expanded the scope of these activities—literally, in that the geographical range of possibilities encompassed practically the entire globe, and figuratively, in that imperialism significantly raised the stakes of women’s work. No longer only responsible for shaping the next generation of American citizens, white women now had a crucial role to play in the maintenance of civilization itself. They too would help determine whether civilization would continue to progress.

Of course, not all women were active supporters of U.S. imperialism. Many actively opposed it. Although the most prominent public voices against imperialism were male, women made up a large proportion of the membership of organizations like the Anti-Imperialist League. For white women like Jane Addams and Josephine Shaw Lowell, anti-imperialist activism was an outgrowth of their work in opposition to violence and in support of democracy. Black female activists, meanwhile, generally viewed imperialism as a form of racial antagonism and drew parallels between the treatments of African-Americans at home and, for example, Filipinos abroad. Indeed, Ida B. Wells viewed her anti-lynching campaign as a kind of anti-imperialist activism.

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IMMIGRATION

For Americans at the turn of the century, imperialism and immigration were two sides of the same coin. The involvement of American women with imperialist and anti-imperialist activity demonstrates how foreign policy concerns were brought home and became, in a sense, domesticated. It is also no coincidence that many of the women involved in both imperialist and anti-imperialist politics organizations were also very much concerned with the plight of new arrivals to the United States. Industrialization, imperialism, and immigration were all linked. Imperialism had at its core a desire for markets for American goods, and those goods were increasingly manufactured by immigrant labor. This sense of growing dependence on “others” as producers and consumers, along with doubts about their capability of assimilation into the mainstream of white, Protestant American society, caused a great deal of anxiety among native-born Americans.

Between 1870 and 1920, over twenty-five million immigrants arrived in the United States. This migration was largely a continuation of a process begun before the Civil War, though, by the turn of the twentieth century, new groups such as Italians, Poles, and Eastern European Jews made up a larger percentage of the arrivals while Irish and German numbers began to dwindle. This massive movement of people to the United States was influenced by a number of causes, or “push” and “pull” factors. In other words, certain conditions in their home countries encouraged people to leave, while other factors encouraged them to choose the United States for their destination. For example, a young husband and wife living in Sweden in the 1880s and unable to purchase farmland might read an advertisement for inexpensive land in the American Midwest and choose to sail to the United States. Or a Russian Jewish family, eager to escape brutal attacks sanctioned by the Czar, looked to the

United States as a land of freedom. Or perhaps a Japanese migrant might hear of the fertile land and choose to sail for California. Thus, there were a number of factors (hunger, lack of land, military conscription, and religious persecution) that served to push people out of their home countries. Meanwhile, the United States offered a number of possibilities that made it an appealing destination for these migrants.

The most important factor drawing immigrants to the United States between 1880 and 1920 was the maturation of American capitalism into large industrial complexes producing goods such as steel, textiles, and food products, replacing smaller and more local workshops. The influx of immigrants, alongside a large movement of Americans from the countryside to the city, helped propel the rapid growth of cities like New York, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. By 1890, in most large northern cities, immigrants and their children amounted to 60 percent of the population, sometimes reaching as high as 80 or 90 percent. Many immigrants, particularly those from Italy or the Balkans, hoped to return home with enough money to purchase land. But those who stayed faced many challenges. How did American immigrants adjust to their new homes? Did the new arrivals join a “melting pot” and simply become just like those people already in the United States? Or did they retain – and even strengthen – their ethnic identities, creating a more pluralistic society? The answer lies somewhere in the middle.

New immigrant groups formed vibrant societies and organizations to ease the transition to their new home. Some examples include Italian workmen’s clubs, Eastern European Jewish mutual-aid societies, and Polish Catholic churches. These organizations provided cultural space for immigrants to maintain their arts, languages, and traditions. Moreover, these organizations attracted even more immigrants. Thus new arrivals came directly to American cities where they knew they would find someone from their home country and perhaps even from their home village or family.

Although the growing United States economy needed large numbers of immigrant workers for its factories and mills, many Americans reacted negatively to the arrival of so many immigrants. Nativists opposed mass immigration for various reasons. Some felt that the new arrivals were unfit for American democracy, and that Irish or Italian immigrants used violence or bribery to corrupt municipal governments. Others (often earlier immigrants themselves) worried that the arrival of even more immigrants would result in fewer jobs and lower wages. Such fears combined and resulted in anti-Chinese protests on the West Coast in the 1870s. Still others worried that immigrants brought with them radical ideas such as socialism and communism. These fears multiplied after the Chicago Haymarket affair in 1886, in which immigrants were accused of killing police officers in a bomb blast.



Nativist sentiment intensified in the late nineteenth century as immigrants streamed into American cities to fuel the factory boom. "Uncle Sam's Lodging House" conveys this anti-immigrant attitude, with caricatured representations of Europeans, Asians, and African Americans creating a chaotic scene. Joseph Ferdinand Keppler, "Uncle Sam's lodging-house," in *Puck* (June 7, 1882). [Wikimedia](#).

In September 1876, Franklin Benjamin Sanborn, a member of the Massachusetts Board of State Charities, gave an address in support of the introduction of regulatory federal immigration legislation at an interstate conference of charity officials in Saratoga, New York. Immigration might bring some benefits, but "it also introduces disease, ignorance, crime, pauperism and idleness." Sanborn thus advocated federal action to stop "indiscriminate and unregulated immigration."

Sanborn's address was aimed at restricting only the immigration of paupers from Europe to the East Coast, but the idea of immigration restrictions were common across the United States in the late nineteenth century, when many variously feared that the influx of foreigners would undermine the racial, economic, and moral integrity of American society. From the 1870s to the 1920s, the federal government passed a series of laws limiting or discontinuing the immigration of particular groups and the United States remained committed to regulating the kind of immigrants who would join American society. To critics, regulations legitimized racism, class bias, and ethnic prejudice as formal national policy.

The first move for federal immigration control came from California, where racial hostility toward Chinese immigrants had mounted since the mid-nineteenth century. In addition to accusing Chinese immigrants of racial inferiority and unfitness for American citizenship, opponents claimed that they were also economically and morally corrupting American society with cheap labor and immoral practices, such as prostitution. Immigration restriction was necessary for the "Caucasian race of California," as one anti-Chinese politician declared, and for European Americans to "preserve and maintain their homes, their business, and their high social and moral position." In 1875, the anti-Chinese crusade in California moved Congress to pass the Page Act, which banned the entry of convicted criminals, Asian laborers brought involuntarily, and women imported "for the purposes of prostitution," a stricture designed chiefly to exclude Chinese women. Then, in May 1882, Congress suspended the immigration of all Chinese laborers with the Chinese Exclusion Act, making the Chinese the first immigrant group subject to admission restrictions on the basis of race. They became the first illegal immigrants.

On the other side of the country, Atlantic seaboard states also facilitated the formation of federal immigration policy. Since the colonial period, East Coast states had regulated immigration through their own passenger laws, which prohibited the landing of destitute foreigners unless shipmasters prepaid certain amounts of money in the support of those passengers. The state-level control of pauper immigration developed into federal policy in the early 1880s. In August 1882, Congress passed the Immigration Act, denying admission to people who were not able to support themselves and those, such as paupers, people with mental illnesses, or convicted criminals, who might otherwise threaten the security of the nation.

The category of excludable people expanded continuously after 1882. In 1885, in response to American workers' complaints about cheap immigrant labor, Congress added foreign workers migrating under labor contracts with American employers to the list of excludable people. Six years later, the federal government included people who seemed likely to become wards of the state, people with contagious diseases, and polygamists, and made all groups of excludable people deportable. In 1903, those who would pose ideological threats to American republican democracy, such as anarchists and socialists, also became the subject of new immigration restrictions.

Many immigration critics were responding the shifting demographics of American immigration. The center of immigrant-sending regions shifted from northern and western Europe to Southern and Eastern Europe and Asia. These "new immigrants" were poorer, spoke languages other than English, and were likely Catholic or Jewish. White Protestant Americans typically regarded them as inferior, and American immigration policy began to reflect more explicit prejudice than ever before. One restrictionist declared that these immigrants were "races with which the English-speaking people have never hitherto assimilated, and who are most alien to the great body of the people of the United States." The increased immigration of people from Southern and Eastern Europe, such as Italians, Jews, Slavs, and Greeks, led directly to calls for tighter restrictive measures. In 1907, the immigration of Japanese laborers was practically suspended when the American and Japanese governments reached the so-called Gentlemen's Agreement, according to which Japan would stop issuing passports to working-class emigrants. In its 42-volume report of 1911, the United States Immigration Commission highlighted the impossibility of incorporating these new immigrants into American society. The report highlighted their supposed innate inferiority, asserting that they were the causes of rising social problems in America, such as poverty, crime, prostitution, and political radicalism.

The assault against immigrants' Catholicism provides an excellent example of the challenges immigrant groups faced in the United States. By 1900, Catholicism in the United States had growing dramatically in size and diversity, from one percent of the population a century earlier to the largest religious denomination in America (though still outnumbered by Protestants as a whole). As a result, Catholics in America faced two intertwined challenges, one external, related to Protestant anti-Catholicism, and the other internal, having to do with the challenges of assimilation.

Externally, the Church and its members remained an "outsider" religion in a nation that continued to see itself as culturally and religiously Protestant. Torrents of anti-Catholic literature and scandalous rumors maligned



The idea of America as a "melting pot," a metaphor common in today's parlance, was a way of arguing for the ethnic assimilation of all immigrants into a nebulous "American" identity at the turn of the 20th century. A play of the same name premiered in 1908 to great acclaim, causing even the former president Theodore Roosevelt to tell the playwright, "That's a great play, Mr. Zangwill, that's a great play." Cover of Theater Programme for Israel Zangwill's play "The Melting Pot", 1916. [Wikimedia](#).

Catholics. Many Protestants doubted whether Catholics could ever make loyal Americans because they supposedly owed primary allegiance to the Pope.

Internally, Catholics in America faced the question every immigrant group has had to answer: to what extent should they become more like native-born Americans? This question was particularly acute, as Catholics encompassed a variety of languages and customs. Beginning in the 1830s, Catholic immigration to the U.S. had exploded with the increasing arrival of Irish and German immigrants. Subsequent Catholic arrivals from Italy, Poland, and other Eastern European countries chafed at Irish dominance over the Church hierarchy. Mexican and Mexican American Catholics, whether recent immigrants or incorporated into the nation after the Mexican American War, expressed similar frustrations. Could all these different Catholics remain part of the same church?

Catholic clergy approached this situation from a variety of perspectives. Some bishops advocated rapid assimilation into the English-speaking mainstream. These “Americanists” advocated an end to “ethnic parishes”—the unofficial practice of permitting separate congregations for Poles, Italians, Germans, etc.—in the belief that such isolation only delayed immigrants’ entry into the American mainstream. They anticipated that the Catholic Church could thrive in a nation that espoused religious freedom, if only they assimilated. Meanwhile, however, more conservative clergy cautioned against assimilation. While they conceded that the U.S. had no official religion, they felt that Protestant notions of the separation of church and state and of licentious individual liberty posed a threat to the Catholic faith. They further saw ethnic parishes as an effective strategy protecting immigrant communities and worried that Protestants would use public schools to attack the Catholic faith. Eventually, the head of the Catholic Church, Pope Leo XIII, weighed in on the controversy. In 1899, he sent a special letter (an encyclical) to an archbishop in the United States. Leo reminded the Americanists that the Catholic Church was a unified global body and that American liberties did not give Catholics the freedom to alter church teachings. The Americanists denied any such intention, but the conservative clergy claimed that the Pope had sided with them. Tension between Catholicism and American life, however, would continue well into the twentieth century.

The American encounter with Catholicism—and Catholicism’s encounter with America—testified to the tense relationship between native-born and foreign-born Americans, and to the larger ideas Americans used to situate themselves in a larger world, a world of empire and immigrants.

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PATTERNS OF AMERICAN INTERVENTIONS

American interventions in the Mexico, China, and the Middle East reflected a new eagerness of the United States to intervene in foreign governments to protect American economic interests abroad.

The United States had long been involved in Pacific commerce. American ships had been travelling to China, for instance, since 1784. As a percentage of total American foreign trade, the Asian trade remained comparatively small, and yet the idea that Asian markets were vital to American commerce affected American policy and, when those markets were threatened, prompted interventions. In 1899, Secretary of State John Hay articulated the “Open Door Policy,” which called for all western powers to have equal access to Chinese markets. Hay feared that other imperial powers—Japan, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, and Russia—planned to carve China into spheres of influence. It was in the economic interest of American business to maintain China for free trade. The following year, in 1900, American troops intervened to prevent the closing of trade. American troops helped to put down the Boxer Rebellion, a movement opposed to foreign businesses and missionaries operating in China. President McKinley sent the U.S. Army into China without consulting Congress, setting a precedent for U.S. presidents to order American troops to action around the world under their executive powers.

The United States was not only ready to intervene in foreign affairs to preserve foreign markets, it was willing to take territory. The United States acquired its first Pacific territories with the Guano Islands Act of 1856. Guano—collected bird excrement—was a popular fertilizer integral to industrial farming. The Act authorized and encouraged Americans to venture into the seas and claim islands with guano deposits for the United States.

These acquisitions were the first insular, unincorporated territories of the United States: they were neither part of a state nor a federal district, and they were not on the path to ever attain such a status. The Act, though little known, offered a precedent for future American acquisitions.

Merchants, of course, weren't the only American travelers in the Pacific. Christian missionaries soon followed explorers and traders. The first American missionaries arrived in Hawai'i in 1820 and China in 1830, for instance. Missionaries, though, often worked alongside business interests, and American missionaries in Hawai'i, for instance, obtained large tracts of land and started lucrative sugar plantations. During the nineteenth century, Hawai'i was ruled by an oligarchy based on the sugar companies, together known as the "Big Five." This white American "haole" elite was extremely powerful, but they still operated outside for the formal expression of American state power.

As many Americans looked for empire across the Pacific, others looked to Latin America. The United States, long a participant in an increasingly complex network of economic, social, and cultural interactions in Latin America, entered the late-nineteenth century with a new aggressive and interventionist attitude toward its southern neighbors.

American capitalists invested enormous sums of money in Mexico during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, during the long reign of the corrupt yet stable regime of the modernization-hungry president Porfirio Díaz. But in 1910 the Mexican people revolted against Díaz, ending his authoritarian regime but also his friendliness toward the business interests of the United States. In the midst of the terrible destruction wrought by the fighting, Americans with investment interests plead for governmental help but the United States government tried to control events and politics that could not be controlled. More and more American businessmen called for military intervention. When the brutal strongman Victoriano Huerta executed the revolutionary, democratically elected president Francisco Madero in 1913, newly inaugurated American President Woodrow Wilson put pressure on Mexico's new regime. Wilson refused to recognize the new government and demanded Huerta step aside and allow free elections take place. Huerta refused.

When Mexican forces mistakenly arrested American sailors in the port city of Tampico in April 1914, Wilson saw the opportunity to apply additional pressure on Huerta. Huerta refused to make amends, and Wilson therefore asked Congress for authority to use force against Mexico. But even before Congress could respond, Wilson invaded and took the port city of Veracruz to prevent, he said, a German shipment of arms from reaching Huerta's forces. The Huerta government fell in July 1914, and the American occupation lasted until November, when Venustiano Carranza, a rival of Huerta, took power. When Wilson threw American support behind Carranza, and not his more radical and now-rival Pancho Villa, Villa and several hundred supporters attacked American interests and raided the town of Columbus, New Mexico, in March 1916, and killed over a dozen soldiers and civilians. Wilson ordered a punitive expedition of several thousand soldiers led by General John J. "Blackjack" Pershing to enter Northern Mexico and capture Villa. But Villa eluded Pershing for nearly a year and, in 1917, with war in Europe looming and great injury done to U.S.-Mexican relations, Pershing left Mexico.

The United States' actions during the Mexican Revolution reflected longstanding American policy that justified interventionist actions in Latin American politics because of their potential bearing on the United States: on citizens, on shared territorial borders, and perhaps most significantly, on economic investments. This particular example highlights the role of geography, or perhaps proximity, in the pursuit of imperial outcomes. But American interactions in more distant locations, in the Middle East, for instance, look quite different.

In 1867, Mark Twain traveled to the Middle East as part of a large tour group of Americans. In his satire *The Innocents Abroad*, he reflected on his experience, writing, "the people [of the Middle East] stared at us everywhere, and we [Americans] stared at them. We generally made them feel rather small, too, before we got done with them, because we bore down on them with America's greatness until we crushed them." American notions of superiority, then, were long-standing as Americans intervened in the Middle East.

The U.S. government had traditionally had little contact with the Middle East. Trade was limited, too limited for an economic relationship to be deemed vital to the national interest, but treaties were nevertheless signed between the U.S. and powers in the Middle East. Still, the majority of American involvement in the Middle East prior to World War I came not in the form of trade, but in education, science, and humanitarian aid. American missionaries led the way. The first Protestant missionaries had arrived in 1819. Soon the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the boards of missions of the Reformed Church of America became dominant in missionary enterprises. Missions were established in almost every country of the Middle East, and even though their efforts resulted in relatively few converts, missionaries helped to establish hospitals and schools and their work laid the foundation for the establishment of universities, such as Robert College in Istanbul, Turkey

(1863), the American University of Beirut (1866), and the American University of Cairo (1919). The American University of Beirut was long the most modern and Western university in the Middle East.

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CONCLUSION

While American imperialism flared most brightly for a relatively brief time at the turn of the century, new imperial patterns repeated old practices and lived on into the twentieth century. But suddenly the United States had embraced its cultural, economic, and religious influence in the world, along with a newfound military power, to exercise varying degrees of control over nations and peoples. Whether as formal subjects or unwilling partners on the receiving end of TR's "big stick," those who experienced U.S. expansionist policies found confronted by new American ambitions. At home, debates over immigration and imperialism drew attention to the interplay of international and domestic policy, and the ways in which imperial actions, practices, and ideas affected and were affected by domestic questions. How Americans thought about the conflict in the Philippines, for example, was affected by how they approached about immigration in their own cities. And at the turn of the century, those thoughts were very much on the minds of Americans.

This chapter was edited by Ellen Adams and Amy Kohout, with content contributions by Ellen Adams, Alvita Akiboh, Simon Balto, Jacob Betz, Tizoc Chavez, Morgan Deane, Dan Du, Hidetaka Hirota, Amy Kohout, Jose Juan Perez Melendez, and Erik Moore.

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PRIMARY SOURCE READING: WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

The White Man's Burden (1899)

By Rudyard Kipling

This famous poem, written by Britain's imperial poet, was a response to the American take over of the Philippines after the Spanish-American War.

Take up the White Man's burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child.

Take up the White Man's burden—
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain
To seek another's profit,
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden—
The savage wars of peace—
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
The end for others sought,
Watch sloth and heathen Folly
Bring all your hopes to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden—
No tawdry rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper—
The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
The roads ye shall not tread,
Go mark them with your living,
And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden—
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard—
The cry of hosts ye humour
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—
“Why brought he us from bondage,
Our loved Egyptian night?”

Take up the White Man's burden—
Ye dare not stoop to less—
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloke your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper,
By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples
Shall weigh your gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden—
Have done with childish days—
The lightly proffered laurel,
The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers!

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ASSIGNMENT: WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

After the United States acquired the Philippines in the wake of the Spanish-American War, the famous British poet Rudyard Kipling (the same man who wrote the *Jungle Book*), wrote *The White Man's Burden* to the American people. After reading [*The White Man's Burden*](#) write a paragraph or two that answers the following:

1. What exactly is the burden?
2. Why is it a burden (why does Kipling call it a burden instead of "duty," "privilege," or "right")?
3. What is the tone of the poem? Is it cheerful ("Hey America, welcome to the club, now let's go exploit some non-whites!")? Is it a somber warning ("America, do you have any idea what you've just got yourself into")? Is it disappointment ("Oh, great, another country trying to copy Britain and get in on the empire game")? Or is it something else?
4. Who seems to suffer more, the empire or the colony?

Remember to use specific passages and quotes from the poem in support of your answers. It's a short poem so be thorough in your reading, thinking, and writing.

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THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

INTRODUCTION



From an undated William Jennings Bryan campaign print, "Shall the People Rule?" Library of Congress.

"Never in the history of the world was society in so terrific flux as it is right now," Jack London wrote in *Iron Heel*, his 1908 dystopian novel in which a corporate oligarchy comes to rule the United States. He wrote, "The swift changes in our industrial system are causing equally swift changes in our religious, political, and social structures. An unseen and fearful revolution is taking place in the fiber and structure of society. One can only dimly feel these things, but they are in the air, now, today."

The many problems associated with the Gilded Age—the rise of unprecedented fortunes and unprecedented poverty, controversies over imperialism, urban squalor, a near-war between capital and labor, loosening social mores, unsanitary food production, the onrush of foreign immigration, environmental destruction, and the outbreak of political radicalism—confronted Americans. Terrible forces seemed out of control and the nation seemed imperiled. Farmers and workers had been waging political war against capitalists and political conservatives for decades, but then, slowly, toward the end of the nineteenth century a new generation of middle class Americans interjected themselves into public life and advocated new reforms to tame the runaway world of the Gilded Age.

Widespread dissatisfaction with new trends in American society spurred the Progressive Era, named for the various "progressive" movements that attracted various constituencies around various reforms. Americans had

many different ideas about how the country's development should be managed and whose interests required the greatest protection. Reformers sought to clean up politics, black Americans continued their long struggle for civil rights, women demanded the vote with greater intensity while also demanding a more equal role in society at large, and workers demanded higher wages, safer workplaces and the union recognition that would guarantee these rights. Whatever their goals, "reform" became the word of the age, and the sum of their efforts, whatever their ultimate impact or original intentions, gave the era its name.

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VIDEO: THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

In this video, John Green teaches you about the Progressive Era in the United States. In the late 19th and early 20th century in America, there was a sense that things could be improved upon. A sense that reforms should be enacted. A sense that progress should be made. As a result, we got the Progressive Era, which has very little to do with automobile insurance, but a little to do with automobiles. All this overlapped with the Gilded Age, and is a little confusing, but here we have it.

Basically, people were trying to solve some of the social problems that came with the benefits of industrial capitalism. To oversimplify, there was a competition between the corporations' desire to keep wages low and workers' desire to have a decent life. Improving food safety, reducing child labor, and unions were all on the agenda in the Progressive Era. While progress was being made, and people were becoming more free, these gains were not equally distributed. Jim Crow laws were put in place in the south, and immigrant rights were restricted as well.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/i0Q4zPR4G7M>

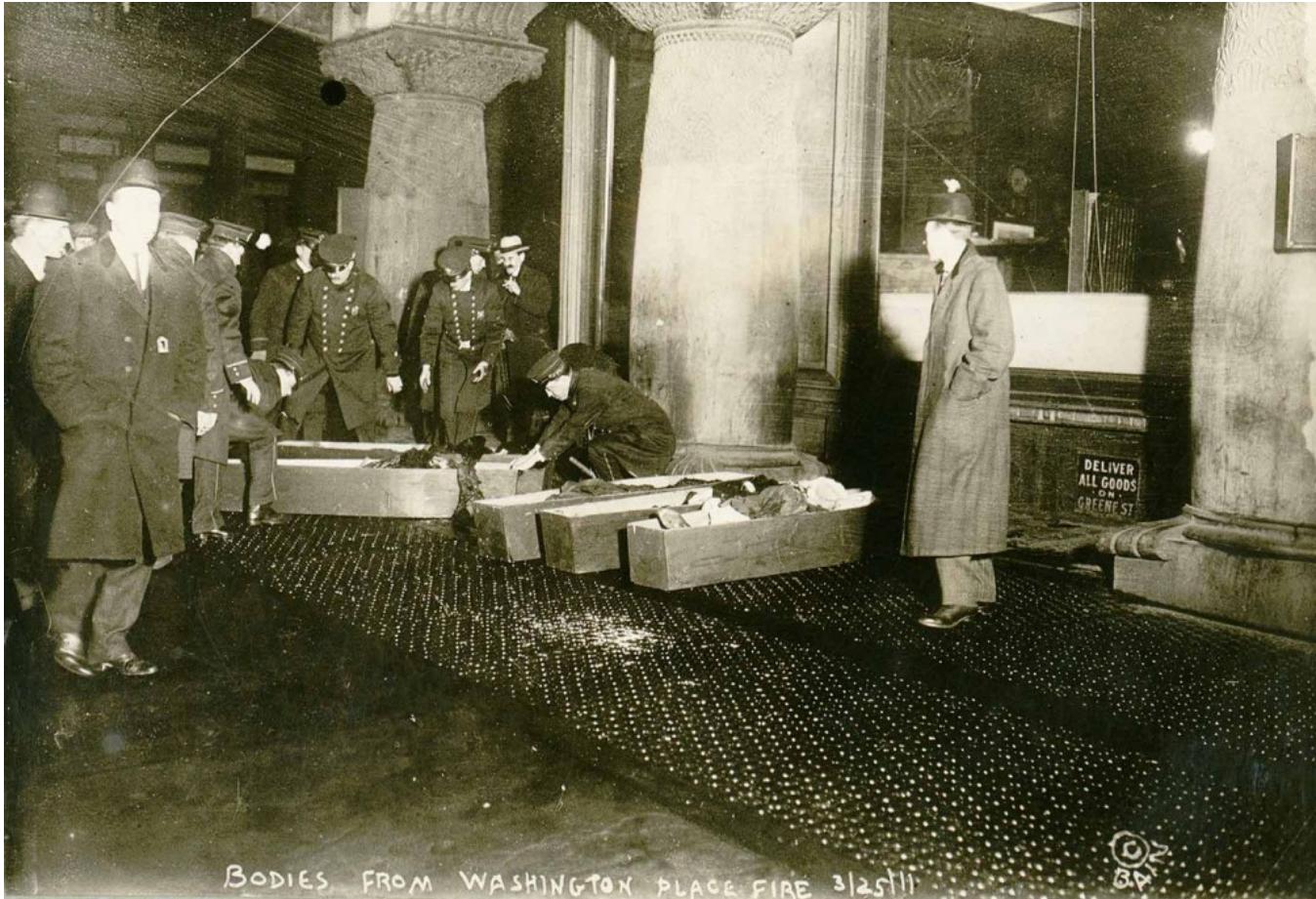
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MOBILIZING FOR REFORM

In 1911 the Triangle Shirtwaist factory in Manhattan caught fire. The doors of the factory had been chained shut to prevent employees from taking unauthorized breaks (the managers who held the keys saved themselves, but left over 200 women behind). A rickety fire ladder on the side of the building collapsed immediately. Women lined the rooftop and windows of the ten story building and jumped, landing in a "mangled, bloody pulp." Life nets held by firemen tore at the impact of the falling bodies. Among the onlookers, "women were hysterical, scores fainted; men wept as, in paroxysms of frenzy, they hurled themselves against the police lines." By the time the fire burned itself out 71 workers were injured and 146 had died.



Photographs like this one made real the potential atrocities resulting from unsafe working conditions, as policemen place the bodies of workers burnt alive in the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist fire into coffins. "Bodies from Washington Place fire, Mar 1911," March 25, 1911. [Library of Congress](#).

A year before, the Triangle workers had gone out on strike demanding union recognition, higher wages, and better safety conditions. Remembering their workers' "chief value," the owners of the factory decided that a viable fire escape and unlocked doors were too expensive and called in the city police to break up the strike. After the 1911 fire, reporter Bill Shepherd reflected, "I looked upon the heap of dead bodies and I remembered these girls were shirtwaist makers. I remembered their great strike last year in which the same girls had demanded more sanitary conditions and more safety precautions in the shops. These dead bodies were the answer." Former Triangle worker and labor organizer Rose Schneiderman said, "This is not the first time girls have been burned alive in this city. Every week I must learn of the untimely death of one of my sister workers... the life of men and women is so cheap and property is so sacred! There are so many of us for one job, it matters little if 140-odd are burned to death." After the fire Triangle owners Max Blanck and Isaac Harris were brought up on manslaughter charges. They were acquitted after less than two hours of deliberation. The outcome continued a trend in the industrializing economy that saw workers' deaths answered with little punishment of the business owners responsible for such dangerous conditions. But as such tragedies mounted and working and living conditions worsened and inequality grew, it became increasingly difficult to develop justifications for this new modern order.

Events such as the Triangle Shirtwaist fire convinced many Americans of the need for reform, but the energies of activists were needed to spread a new commitment to political activism and government interference in the economy. Politicians, journalists, novelists, religious leaders, and activists all raised their voices to push Americans toward reform.

Reformers turned to books and mass-circulation magazines to publicize the plight of the nation's poor and the many corruptions endemic to the new industrial order. Journalists who exposed business practices, poverty, and corruption—labeled by Theodore Roosevelt as "Muckrakers"—aroused public demands for reform. Magazines such as *McClure's* detailed political corruption and economic malfeasance. The Muckrakers confirmed Americans' suspicions about runaway wealth and political corruption. Ray Stannard Baker, a journalist whose reports on

United States Steel exposed the underbelly of the new corporate capitalism, wrote, "I think I can understand now why these exposure articles took such a hold upon the American people. It was because the country, for years, had been swept by the agitation of soap-box orators, prophets crying in the wilderness, and political campaigns based upon charges of corruption and privilege which everyone believed or suspected had some basis of truth, but which were largely unsubstantiated."

Journalists shaped popular perceptions of Gilded Age injustice. In 1890, New York City journalist Jacob Riis published *How the Other Half Lives*, a scathing indictment of living and working conditions in the city's slums. Riis not only vividly described the squalor he saw, he documented it with photography, giving readers an unflinching view of urban poverty. Riis's book led to housing reform in New York and other cities, and helped instill the idea that society bore at least some responsibility for alleviating poverty. In 1906, Upton Sinclair published *The Jungle*, a novel dramatizing the experiences of a Lithuanian immigrant family who moved to Chicago to work in the Stock Yards. Although Sinclair intended the novel to reveal the brutal exploitation of labor in the meatpacking industry, and thus to build support for the socialist movement, its major impact was to lay bare the entire process of industrialized food production. The growing invisibility of slaughterhouses and livestock production for urban consumers had enabled unsanitary and unsafe conditions. "The slaughtering machine ran on, visitors or no visitors," wrote Sinclair, "like some horrible crime committed in a dungeon, all unseen and unheeded, buried out of sight and of memory." Sinclair's exposé led to the passage of the Meat Inspection Act and Pure Food and Drug Act in 1906.



"Home of an Italian Ragpicker." Via [Preus Museum](#)

Of course, it was not only journalists who raised questions about American society. One of the most popular novels of the nineteenth century, Edward Bellamy's 1888 *Looking Backward*, was a national sensation. In it, a man falls asleep in Boston in 1887 and awakens in 2000 to find society radically altered. Poverty and disease and competition gave way as new industrial armies cooperated to build a utopia of social harmony and economic

prosperity. Bellamy's vision of a reformed society enthralled readers, inspired hundreds of Bellamy clubs, and pushed many young readers onto the road to reform.

"I am aware that you called yourselves free in the nineteenth century. The meaning of the word could not then, however, have been at all what it is at present, or you certainly would not have applied it to a society of which nearly every member was in a position of galling personal dependence upon others as to the very means of life, the poor upon the rich, or employed upon employer, women upon men, children upon parents."

—Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward*

But Americans were urged to action not only by books and magazines but by preachers and theologians, too. Confronted by both the benefits and the ravages of industrialization, many Americans asked themselves, "What Would Jesus Do?" In 1896 Charles Sheldon, a Congregational minister in Topeka, Kansas, published *In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?* The novel told the story of Henry Maxwell, a pastor in a small Midwestern town one day confronted by an unemployed migrant who criticized his congregation's lack of concern for the poor and downtrodden. Moved by the man's plight, Maxwell preached a series of sermons in which he asked his congregation: "Would it not be true, think you, that if every Christian in America did as Jesus would do, society itself, the business world, yes, the very political system under which our commercial and government activity is carried on, would be so changed that human suffering would be reduced to a minimum?" Sheldon's novel became a best seller, not only because of its story but because the book's plot connected with a new movement transforming American religion: the social gospel.

The social gospel emerged within Protestant Christianity at the end of the nineteenth century. It emphasized the need for Christians to be concerned for the salvation of society, and not simply individual souls. Instead of just caring for family or fellow church members, social gospel advocates encouraged Christians to engage society, challenge social, political, and economic structures, and help those less fortunate than themselves. Responding to the developments of the industrial revolution in America and the increasing concentration of people in urban spaces, with its attendant social and economic problems, some social gospelers went so far as to advocate a form of Christian socialism, but all urged Americans to confront the sins of their society.

One of the most notable advocates of the social gospel was Walter Rauschenbusch. After graduating from Rochester Theological Seminary, in 1886 Rauschenbusch accepted the pastorate of a German Baptist church in the Hell's Kitchen section of New York City, where he was confronted by rampant crime and stark poverty, problems not adequately addressed by the political leaders of the city. Rauschenbusch joined with fellow reformers to elect a new mayoral candidate, but he also realized that a new theological framework had to reflect his interest in society and its problems. He revived Jesus' phrase, "the Kingdom of God," claiming that it encompassed every aspect of life and made every part of society a purview of the proper Christian. Like Charles Sheldon's Rev. Maxwell, Rauschenbusch believed that every Christian, whether they were a businessperson, a politician, or stay-at-home parent, should ask themselves what they could to enact the kingdom of God on Earth.

"The social gospel is the old message of salvation, but enlarged and intensified. The individualistic gospel has taught us to see the sinfulness of every human heart and has inspired us with faith in the willingness and power of God to save every soul that comes to him. But it has not given us an adequate understanding of the sinfulness of the social order and its share in the sins of all individuals within it. It has not evoked faith in the will and power of God to redeem the permanent institutions of human society from their inherited guilt of oppression and extortion. Both our sense of sin and our faith in salvation have fallen short of the realities under its teaching. The social gospel seeks to bring men under repentance for their collective sins and to create a more sensitive and more modern conscience. It calls on us for the faith of the old prophets who believed in the salvation of nations."

—Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology For The Social Gospel*, 1917

Glaring blindspots persisted within the proposals of most social gospel advocates. As men, they often ignored the plight of women and thus most refused to support women's suffrage. Many were also silent on the plight of African Americans, Native Americans, and other oppressed minority groups. However, Rauschenbusch and other social gospel proponents' writings would have a profound influence upon twentieth-century American life, not only most immediately in progressive reform but later, too, inspiring Martin Luther King, Jr., for instance, to envision a "beloved community" that resembled Rauschenbusch's "Kingdom of God."

WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS



Suffragettes campaigned tirelessly for the vote in the first two decades of the twentieth century, taking to the streets in public displays like this 1915 pre-election parade in New York City. During this one event, 20,000 women defied the gender norms that tried to relegate them to the private sphere and deny them the vote. Photograph, 1915. [Wikimedia](#).

Reform opened new possibilities for women's activism in American public life and gave new impetus to the long campaign for women's suffrage. Much energy for women's work came from female "clubs," social organizations devoted to various purposes. Some focused on intellectual development, others emphasized philanthropic activities. Increasingly, these organizations looked outwards, to their communities, and to the place of women in the larger political sphere.

Women's clubs flourished in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In 1890s women formed national women's club federations. Particularly significant in campaigns for suffrage and women's rights were the General Federation of Women's Clubs (formed in New York City in 1890) and the National Association of Colored Women (organized in Washington, D.C., in 1896), both of which were dominated by upper-middle-class, educated, northern women. Few of these organizations were bi-racial, a legacy of the sometimes uneasy mid-nineteenth-century relationship between socially active African Americans and white women. Rising American prejudice led many white female activists to ban inclusion of their African American sisters. The segregation of black women

into distinct clubs nonetheless still produced vibrant organizations that could promise racial uplift and civil rights for all blacks, as well as equal rights for women.

Other women worked through churches and moral reform organizations to clean up American life. And still others worked as moral vigilantes. The fearsome Carrie A. Nation, an imposing woman who believed she worked God's will, won headlines for destroying saloons. In Wichita, Kansas, on December 27, 1900, Nation took a hatchet and broke bottles and bars at the luxurious Carey Hotel. Arrested and charged with \$3000 in damages, Nation spent a month in jail before the county dismissed the charges on account of "a delusion to such an extent as to be practically irresponsible." But Nation's "hatchetation" drew national attention. Describing herself as "a bulldog running along at the feet of Jesus, barking at what He doesn't like," she continued her assaults, and days later smashed two more Wichita bars.

Few women followed in Nation's footsteps, and many more worked within more reputable organizations. Nation, for instance, had founded a chapter of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, (WCTU) but the organizations' leaders described her as "unwomanly and unchristian." The WCTU was founded in 1874 as a modest temperance organization devoted to combatting the evils of drunkenness. But then, from 1879 to 1898, Frances Willard invigorated the organization by transforming it into a national political organization, embracing a "do everything" policy that adopted any and all reasonable reforms that would improve social welfare and advance women's rights. Temperance, and then the full prohibition of alcohol, however, always loomed large.

Many American reformers associated alcohol with nearly every social ill. Alcohol was blamed for domestic abuse, poverty, crime, and disease. The 1912 Anti-Saloon League *Yearbook*, for instance, presented charts indicating comparable increases in alcohol consumption alongside rising divorce rates. The WCTU called alcohol of being a "home wrecker." More insidiously, perhaps, reformers also associated alcohol with cities and immigrants, necessarily maligning America's immigrants, Catholics, and working classes in their crusade against liquor. Still, reformers believed that the abolition of "strong drink" would bring about social progress, would obviate the need for prisons and insane asylums, would save women and children from domestic abuse, and usher in a more just, progressive society.

From the club movement and temperance campaigns emerged powerful, active, female activists. Perhaps no American reformer matched Jane Addams' in fame, energy, and innovation. Born in Cedarville, Illinois, in 1860, Addams lost her mother by the age of two and lived under the attentive care of her father. At seventeen, she left home to attend Rockford Female Seminary. An idealist, Addams sought the means to make the world a better place. She believed that well-educated women of means, such as herself, lacked practical strategies for engaging everyday reform. After four years at Rockford, Addams embarked upon on a multi-year "grand tour" of Europe. Jane found herself drawn to English settlement houses, a kind of prototype for social work in which philanthropists embedded themselves within communities and offered services to disadvantaged populations. After visiting London's Toynbee Hall, the first settlement house, in 1887, Addams returned to the US and in 1889 founded Hull House in Chicago with her longtime confidant and companion Ellen Gates Starr.

The Settlement ... is an experimental effort to aid in the solution of the social and industrial problems which are engendered by the modern conditions of life in a great city. It insists that these problems are not confined to any one portion of the city. It is an attempt to relieve, at the same time, the overaccumulation at one end of society and the destitution at the other ... It must be grounded in a philosophy whose foundation is on the solidarity of the human race, a philosophy which will not waver when the race happens to be represented by a drunken woman or an idiot boy.

—Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*

Hull House workers provided for their neighbors by running a nursery and a kindergarten, administering classes for parents and clubs for children, and organizing social and cultural events for the community. Florence Kelley stayed at Hull House from 1891 to 1899, taking the settlement house model to New York and founding the Henry Street Settlement there. But Kelley also influenced Addams, convincing her to move into the realm of social reform. Hull House began exposing sweat shop conditions and advocating for worker organization. She called the conditions caused by urban poverty and industrialization a "social crime." Hull House workers surveyed their community and produced statistics of poverty, disease, and living conditions that proved essential for reformers. Addams began pressuring politicians. Together Kelley and Addams petitioned legislators to pass anti-sweatshop legislation passed that limited the hours of work for women and children to eight per day. Yet Addams was an upper class white Protestant women who had faced limits, like many reformers, in embracing what seemed to

them radical policies. While Addams called labor organizing a “social obligation,” she also warned the labor movement against the “constant temptation towards class warfare.” Addams, like many reformers, favored cooperation between rich and poor and bosses and workers, whether cooperation was a realistic possibility or not.

Addams became a kind of celebrity. In 1912, she became the first woman to give a nominating speech at a major party convention when she seconded the nomination of Theodore Roosevelt as the Progressive Party’s candidate for president. Her campaigns for social reform and women’s rights won headlines and her voice became ubiquitous in progressive politics.

Addams’ concerns grew beyond domestic concerns. Beginning with her work in the Anti-Imperialist League during the Spanish-American War Addams increasingly began to see militarism as a drain on resources better spent on social reform. In 1907 she wrote *Newer Ideals of Peace*, a book that would become for many a philosophical foundation of pacifism. Addams emerged as a prominent opponent of America’s entry into World War I. She received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931.

It would be suffrage, ultimately, that would mark the full emergence of women in American public life. Generations of women—and, occasionally, men—had pushed for women’s suffrage. Suffragists’ hard work resulted in slow but encouraging steps forward during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Notable victories were won in the West, where suffragists mobilized large numbers of women and male politicians were open to experimental forms of governance. By 1911, six western states had passed suffrage amendments to their constitutions.

Women’s suffrage was typically entwined with a wide range of reform efforts. Many suffragists argued that women’s votes were necessary to clean up politics and combat social evils. By the 1890s, for example, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, then the largest women’s organization in America, endorsed suffrage. Working-class women organized the Women’s Trade Union League (WTUL) in 1905 and campaigned for the vote alongside the National American Suffrage Association, a leading suffrage organization comprised largely of middle and upper-class women. WTUL members viewed the vote as a way to further their economic interests and to foster a new sense of respect for working-class women. “What the woman who labors wants is the right to live, not simply exist,” said Ruth Schneiderman, a WTUL leader, during a 1912 speech. “The worker must have bread, but she must have roses, too.”

Many suffragists adopted a much crueler message. Some, even outside of the South, argued that white women’s votes were necessary to maintain white supremacy. Many American women found it advantageous to base their arguments for the vote on the necessity of maintaining white supremacy by enfranchising white, upper- and middle-class women. These arguments even stretched into international politics. But whatever the message, the suffrage campaign was winning.

The final push for women’s suffrage came on the eve of World War I. Determined to win the vote; the National American Suffrage Association developed a dual strategy that focused on the passage of state voting rights laws and on the ratification of an amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Meanwhile, a new, more militant, suffrage organization emerged on the scene. Led by Alice Paul, the National Women’s Party took to the streets to demand voting rights, organizing marches and protests that mobilized thousands of women. Beginning in January 1917, National Women’s Party members also began to picket the White House, an action that led to the arrest and imprisonment of over 150 women.

In January 1918, President Woodrow Wilson declared his support for the women’s suffrage amendment and, two years later women’s suffrage became a reality. After the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, women from all walks of life mobilized to vote. They were driven by both the promise of change, but also in some cases by their anxieties about the future. Much had changed since their campaign began, the US was now more industrial than not, increasingly more urban than rural. The activism and activities of these new urban denizens also gave rise to a new American culture.

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VIDEO: WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

In this video, John Green teaches you about American women in the Progressive Era and, well, the progress they made. So the big deal is, of course, the right to vote women gained when the 19th amendment was passed and ratified. But women made a lot of other gains in the 30 years between 1890 and 1920. More women joined the workforce, they acquired lots of other legal rights related to property, and they also became key consumers in the industrial economy. Women also continued to play a vital role in reform movements. Sadly, they got Prohibition enacted in the U.S., but they did a lot of good stuff, too. The field of social work emerged as women like Jane Addams created settlement houses to assist immigrants in their integration into the United States. Women also began to work to make birth control widely available. You'll learn about famous reformers and activists like Alice Paul, Margaret Sanger, and Emma Goldman, among others.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/HGEMscZE5dY>

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TARGETING THE TRUSTS

In one of the defining books of the Progressive Era, *The Promise of American Life*, Herbert Croly argued that because “the corrupt politician has usurped too much of the power which should be exercised by the people,” the “millionaire and the trust have appropriated too many of the economic opportunities formerly enjoyed by the people.” Croly and other reformers believed that wealth inequality eroded democracy and reformers had to win back for the people the power usurped by the moneyed trusts. But what exactly were these “trusts,” and why did it suddenly seem so important to reform them?

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a “trust” was a monopoly or cartel associated with the large corporations of the Gilded and Progressive Eras who entered into agreements—legal or otherwise—or consolidations to exercise exclusive control over a specific product or industry under the control of a single entity. Certain types of monopolies, specifically for intellectual property like copyrights, patents, trademarks and trade-secrets, are protected under the Constitution for the “to promote the progress of science and useful arts,” but for power entities to control entire national markets was something wholly new, and, for many Americans, wholly unsettling.

The rapid industrialization, technological advancement, and urban growth of the 1870s and 1880s triggered major changes in the way businesses structured themselves. The “second industrial revolution,” made possible by the available natural resources, growth in the labor supply through immigration, increasing capital, new legal economic entities, novel production strategies, and a growing national market, was commonly asserted to be the natural product of the federal government’s *laissez faire*, or “hands off,” economic policy. An unregulated business climate, the argument went, allowed for the growth of major trusts, most notably Andrew Carnegie’s Carnegie Steel (later consolidated with other producers as U.S. Steel) and John D. Rockefeller’s Standard Oil Company. Each displayed the vertical and horizontal integration strategies common to the new trusts: Carnegie first utilized vertical integration by controlling every phase of business (raw materials, transportation, manufacturing, distribution), and Rockefeller adhered to horizontal integration by buying out competing refineries. Once dominant in a market, critics alleged, the trusts could artificially inflate prices, bully rivals, and bribe politicians.

Between 1897 and 1904 over 4,000 companies were consolidated down into 257 corporate firms. As one historian wrote, “By 1904 a total of 318 trusts held 40% of US manufacturing assets and boasted a capitalization of \$7 billion, seven times bigger than the US national debt.” With the 20th century came the age of monopoly. From such mergers and the aggressive business policies of wealthy men such as Carnegie and

Rockefeller—controversial figures often referred to as “robber barons,” so named for the cutthroat stifling of economic competition and their mistreatment of their workers—and the widely accepted political corruption that facilitated it, opposition formed and pushed for regulations to reign in the power of monopolies. The great corporations became a major target of reformers.

Big business, whether in meatpacking, railroads, telegraph lines, oil, or steel, posed new problems for the American legal system. Before the Civil War, most businesses operated in single state. They might ship goods across state lines or to other countries, but they typically had offices and factories in just one state. Individual states naturally regulated industry and commerce. But extensive railroad routes crossed several state lines and new mass-producing corporations operated across the nation, raising questions about where the authority to regulate such practices rested. During the 1870s, many states passed laws to check the growing power of vast new corporations. In the Midwest, so-called “Granger laws” (spurred by farmers who formed a network of organizations that were part political pressure group, part social club, and part mutual-aid society that became known as “the Grange”) regulated railroads and other new companies. Railroads and others opposed these regulations for restraining profits and, also, because of the difficulty of meeting the standards of 50 separate state regulatory laws. In 1877, the United States Supreme Court upheld these laws in a series of rulings, finding in cases such as *Munn v. Illinois* and *Stone v. Wisconsin* that railroads, and other companies of such size necessarily affected the public interest and could thus be regulated by individual states. In *Munn*, the court declared that “Property does become clothed with a public interest when used in a manner to make it of public consequence, and affect the community at large. When, therefore, one devotes his property to a use in which the public has an interest, he, in effect, grants to the public an interest in that use, and must submit to be controlled by the public for the common good, to the extent of the interest he has thus created.”

Later rulings, however, conceded that only the federal government could constitutionally regulate interstate commerce and the new national businesses operating it. And as more and more power and capital and market share flowed to the great corporations, the onus of regulation passed to the federal government. In 1887 Congress passed the Interstate Commerce Act, which established the Interstate Commerce Commission to stop discriminatory and predatory pricing practices. The Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890 aimed to limit anticompetitive practices, such as those institutionalized in cartels and monopolistic corporations. It declared a “trust ...or conspiracy, in restraint of trade or commerce... is declared to be illegal” and that those who “monopolize...any part of the trade or commerce...shall be deemed guilty.” The Sherman Anti-Trust Act declared that not all monopolies were illegal, only those that “unreasonably” stifled free trade. The courts seized on the law’s vague language, however, and the Act was turned against itself, manipulated and used, for instance, to limit the growing power of labor unions. Only in 1914, with the Clayton Anti-Trust Act, did Congress attempt to close loop holes in previous legislation.

Aggression against the trusts—and the progressive vogue for “trust busting”—took on new meaning under the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. A reform Republican who ascended to the presidency after the death of William McKinley in 1901, Roosevelt’s youthful energy and confrontational politics captivated the nation. The writer Henry Adams said that he “showed the singular primitive quality that belongs to ultimate matter—the quality that medieval theology assigned to God—he was pure act.” Roosevelt was by no means anti-business. Instead, he envisioned his presidency as a mediator between opposing forces, for example, between labor unions and corporate executives. Despite his own wealthy background, Roosevelt pushed for anti-trust legislation and regulations, arguing that the courts could not be relied upon to break up the trusts. Roosevelt also used his own moral judgment to determine which monopolies he would pursue. Roosevelt believed that there were good and bad trusts, necessary monopolies and corrupt ones. Although his reputation was wildly exaggerated, he was first major national politician to go after the trusts.

“The great corporations which we have grown to speak of rather loosely as trusts are the creatures of the State, and the State not only has the right to control them, but it is in duty bound to control them wherever the need of such control is shown.”

—Teddy Roosevelt

His first target was the Northern Securities Company, a “holding” trust in which several wealthy bankers, most famously J.P. Morgan, used to hold controlling shares in all the major railroad companies in the American Northwest. Holding trusts had emerged as a way to circumvent the Sherman Anti-Trust Act: by controlling the majority of shares, rather than the principal, Morgan and his collaborators tried to claim that it was not a monopoly. Roosevelt’s administration sued and won in court and in 1904 the Northern Securities Company was ordered to disband into separate competitive companies. Two years later, in 1906, Roosevelt signed the Hepburn

Act, allowing the Interstate Commerce Commission to regulate best practices and set reasonable rates for the railroads.

Roosevelt was more interested in regulating corporations than breaking them apart. Besides, the courts were slow and unpredictable. However, his successor after 1908, William Howard Taft, firmly believed in court-oriented trust-busting and during his four years in office more than doubled the quantity of monopoly break-ups that occurred during Roosevelt's seven years in office. Taft notably went after Carnegie's U.S. Steel, the world's first billion-dollar corporation formed from the consolidation of nearly every major American steel producer.

Trust-busting and the handling of monopolies dominated the election of 1912. When the Republican Party spurned Roosevelt's return to politics and renominated the incumbent Taft, Roosevelt left and formed his own coalition, the Progressive, or "Bull-Moose," Party. Whereas Taft took an all-encompassing view on the illegality of monopolies, Roosevelt adopted a "New Nationalism" program, which once again emphasized the regulation of already existing corporations, or, the expansion of federal power over the economy. In contrast, Woodrow Wilson, the Democratic Party nominee, emphasized in his "New Freedom" agenda neither trust-busting or federal regulation but rather small business incentives so that individual companies could increase their competitive chances. Yet once he won the election, Wilson edged near to Roosevelt's position, signing the Clayton Anti-Trust Act of 1914. The Clayton Anti-Trust Act substantially enhanced the Sherman Act, specifically regulating mergers, price discrimination, and protecting labor's access to collective bargaining and related strategies of picketing, boycotting, and protesting. Congress further created the Federal Trade Commission to enforce the Clayton Act, ensuring at least some measure of implementation/

While the three presidents—Roosevelt, Taft and Wilson—pushed the development and enforcement of anti-trust law, their commitments were uneven, and trust-busting itself manifested the political pressure put on politicians by the workers and farmers and progressive writers who so strongly drew attention to the ramifications of trusts and corporate capital on the lives of everyday Americans.

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PROGRESSIVE ENVIRONMENTALISM

The potential scope of environmental destruction wrought by industrial capitalism was unparalleled in human history. Professional bison hunting expeditions nearly eradicated an entire species, industrialized logging companies could denude whole forests, chemical plants could pollute an entire region's water supply. As Americans built up the West and industrialization marched ever onward, reformers embraced environmental protections.

Historians often cite preservation and conservation as the two competing strategies that dueled for supremacy among environmental reformers during the Progressive Era. The tensions between these two approaches crystalized in the debate over a proposed dam in the Hetch Hetchy Valley in California. The fight revolved around the provision of water for San Francisco. Engineers identified the location where the Tuolumne River ran through Hetch Hetchy as an ideal site for a reservoir. The project had been suggested in the 1880s but picked up momentum in the early twentieth century. But the valley was located inside Yosemite National Park. (Yosemite was designated a national park in 1890, though the land had been set aside earlier in a grant approved by President Lincoln in 1864.) The debate over Hetch Hetchy revealed two distinct positions on the value of the valley and on the purpose of public lands.

John Muir, a naturalist, writer, and founder of the Sierra Club, invoked the "God of the Mountains" in his defense of the valley in its supposedly pristine condition. On the other side, Gifford Pinchot, arguably the father of American forestry and a key player in the federal management of national forests, focused on what he understood to be the purpose of conservation: "to take every part of the land and its resources and put it to that use in which it will serve the most people." Muir took a wider view of what the people needed, writing that "everybody needs beauty as well as bread." These dueling arguments revealed the key differences in environmental thought: Muir, on the side of the preservationists, advocated setting aside pristine lands for their aesthetic and spiritual value, for

those who could take his advice to “[get] in touch with the nerves of Mother Earth.” Pinchot, on the other hand, led the charge for conservation, a kind of environmental utilitarianism. Conservation was about efficient use of available resources, about planning and control, and about “the prevention of waste.” In Hetch Hetchy, conservation won out. Congress approved the project in 1913. The dam was built and the valley flooded for the benefit of San Francisco residents.



The image on the top shows the Hetch Hetchy Valley before it was dammed. The bottom photograph, taken almost a century later, shows the obvious difference after damming, with the submergence of the valley floor under the reservoir waters. Photograph of the Hetch Hetchy Valley before damming, from the Sierra Club Bulletin, January 1908. [Wikimedia](#); Daniel Mayer (photographer), May 2002. [Wikimedia](#).

While preservation was often articulated as an escape from an increasingly urbanized and industrialized way of life and as a welcome respite from the challenges of modernity (at least, for those who had the means to escape), the conservationists were more closely aligned with broader trends in American society. Although the “greatest good for the greatest number” was very nearly the catch phrase of conservation, conservationist policies most often benefited the nation’s financial interests. For example, many states instituted game laws to regulate hunting and protect wildlife, but laws could be entirely unbalanced. In Pennsylvania, local game laws included requiring firearm permits for non-citizens, barred hunting on Sundays, and banned the shooting of songbirds. These laws disproportionately affected Italian immigrants, critics said, as Italians often hunted songbirds for subsistence, worked in mines for low wages every day but Sunday, and were too poor to purchase permits or to pay the fines levied against them when game wardens caught them breaking these new laws. Other laws, for example, offered up resources to businesses at costs prohibitive to all but the wealthiest companies and individuals, or with regulatory requirements that could be met only by companies with extensive resources.

But it Progressive Era environmentalism was about more than the management of American public lands. After all, reformers addressing issues facing the urban poor were doing environmental work. Settlement house workers like Jane Addams and Florence Kelley focused on questions of health and sanitation, while activists concerned with working conditions, most notably Dr. Alice Hamilton, investigated both worksite hazards and occupational and bodily harm. The Progressives' commitment to the provision of public services at the municipal level meant more coordination and oversight in matters of public health, waste management, even playgrounds and city parks. Their work focused on the intersection of communities and their material environments, highlighting the urgency of urban environmental concerns.

While reform movements focused their attention on the urban poor, other efforts targeted rural communities. The Country Life movement, spearheaded by Liberty Hyde Bailey, sought to support agrarian families and encourage young people to stay in their communities and run family farms. Early-twentieth-century educational reforms included a commitment to environmentalism at the elementary level. Led by Bailey and Anna Botsford Comstock, the nature study movement took students outside to experience natural processes and to help them develop observational skills and an appreciation for the natural world.

Other examples highlight the interconnectedness of urban and rural communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The extinction of the North American passenger pigeon reveals the complexity of Progressive Era relationships between people and nature. Passenger pigeons were actively hunted, prepared at New York's finest restaurants and in the humblest of farm kitchens. Some hunted them for pay; others shot them in competitions at sporting clubs. And then they were gone, their ubiquity giving way only to nostalgia. Many Americans took notice at the great extinction of a species that had perhaps numbered in the billions and then was eradicated. Women in Audubon Society chapters organized against the fashion of wearing feathers—even whole birds—on ladies' hats. Upper and middle-class women made up the lion's share of the membership of these societies. They used their social standing to fight for birds. Pressure created national wildlife refuges and key laws and regulations that included the Lacey Act of 1900, banning the shipment of species killed illegally across state lines. Following the feathers backward, from the hats to the hunters to the birds themselves, and examining the ways women mobilized contemporary notions of womanhood in the service of protecting avian beauty, reveals a tangle of cultural and economic processes. Such examples also reveal the range of ideas, policies, and practices wrapped up in figuring out what—and who—American nature should be for.

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JIM CROW AND AFRICAN AMERICAN LIFE

Just as reformers advocated for business regulations, anti-trust laws, environmental protections, women's rights, and urban health campaigns, so too did many push for racial legislation in the American South. America's tragic racial history was not erased by the Progressive Era. In fact, in all to many ways, reform removed African Americans ever farther from American public life.

In the South, electoral politics remained a parade of electoral fraud, voter intimidation, and race-baiting. Democratic Party candidates stirred southern whites into frenzies with warnings of "negro domination" and of black men violating white women. The region's culture of racial violence and the rise of lynching as a mass public spectacle accelerated. And as the remaining African American voters threatened to the dominance of Democratic leadership in the South, southern Democrats turned to what many white southerners understood as a series of progressive electoral and social reforms—disenfranchisement and segregation. Just as reformers would clean up politics by taming city political machines, white southerners would "purify" the ballot box by restricting black voting and they would prevent racial strife by legislating the social separation of the races. The strongest supporters of such measures in the South movement were progressive Democrats and former Populists, both of whom saw in these reforms a way to eliminate the racial demagoguery that conservative Democratic party leaders had so effectively wielded. Leaders in both the North and South embraced and proclaimed the reunion of the sections on the basis of a shared Anglo-Saxon, white supremacy. As the nation took up the "white man's burden" to uplift the world's racially inferior peoples, the North looked to the South as an example of how to manage non-white populations. The South had become the nation's racial vanguard.

The question was how to accomplish disfranchisement. The 15th Amendment clearly prohibited states from denying any citizen the right to vote on the basis of race. In 1890 the state of Mississippi took on this legal challenge. A state newspaper called on politicians to devise “some legal defensible substitute for the abhorrent and evil methods on which white supremacy lies.” The state’s Democratic Party responded with a new state constitution designed to purge corruption at the ballot box through disenfranchisement. Those hoping to vote in Mississippi would have to jump through a series of hurdles designed with the explicit purpose of excluding the state’s African American population from political power. The state first established a poll tax, which required voters to pay for the privilege of voting. Second, it stripped the suffrage from those convicted of petty crimes most common among the state’s African Americans. Next, the state required voters to pass a literacy test. Local voting officials, who were themselves part of the local party machine, were responsible for judging whether voters were able to read and understand a section of the Constitution. In order to protect illiterate whites from exclusion, the so called “understanding clause” allowed a voter to qualify if they could adequately explain the meaning of a section that was read to them. In practice these rules were systematically abused to the point where local election officials effectively wielded the power to permit and deny suffrage at will. The disenfranchisement laws effectively moved electoral conflict from the ballot box, where public attention was greatest, to the voting registrar, where supposedly color-blind laws allowed local party officials to deny the ballot without the appearance of fraud.

Between 1895 and 1908 the rest of the states in the South approved new constitutions including these disenfranchisement tools. Six southern states also added a grandfather clause, which bestowed the suffrage on anyone whose grandfather was eligible to vote in 1867. This ensured that whites who would have been otherwise excluded would still be eligible, at least until it was struck down by the Supreme Court in 1915. Finally, each southern state adopted an all-white primary, excluded blacks from the Democratic primary, the only political contests that mattered across much of the South.

For all the legal double-talk, the purpose of these laws was plain. James Kimble Vardaman, later Governor of Mississippi, boasted “there is no use to equivocate or lie about the matter. Mississippi’s constitutional convention was held for no other purpose than to eliminate the nigger from politics; not the ignorant—but the nigger.” These technically colorblind tools did their work well. In 1900 Alabama had 121,159 literate black men of voting age. Only 3,742 were registered to vote. Louisiana had 130,000 black voters in the contentious election of 1896. Only 5,320 voted in 1900. Blacks were clearly the target of these laws, but that did not prevent some whites from being disenfranchised as well. Louisiana dropped 80,000 white voters over the same period. Most politically engaged southern whites considered this a price worth paying in order to prevent the fraud that had plagued the region’s elections.

At the same time that the South’s Democratic leaders were adopting the tools to disenfranchise the region’s black voters, these same legislatures were constructing a system of racial segregation even more pernicious. While it built on earlier practice, segregation was primarily a modern and urban system of enforcing racial subordination and deference. In rural areas, white and black southerners negotiated the meaning of racial difference within the context of personal relationships of kinship and patronage. An African American who broke the local community’s racial norms could expect swift personal sanction that often included violence. The crop lien and convict lease systems were the most important legal tools of racial control in the rural South. Maintaining white supremacy there did not require segregation. Maintaining white supremacy within the city, however, was a different matter altogether. As the region’s railroad networks and cities expanded, so too did the anonymity and therefore freedom of southern blacks. Southern cities were becoming a center of black middle class life that was an implicit threat to racial hierarchies. White southerners created the system of segregation as a way to maintain white supremacy in restaurants, theaters, public restrooms, schools, water fountains, train cars, and hospitals. Segregation inscribed the superiority of whites and the deference of blacks into the very geography of public spaces.

As with disenfranchisement, segregation violated a plain reading of the constitution—in this case the Fourteenth Amendment. Here the Supreme Court intervened, ruling in the *Civil Rights Cases* (1883) that the Fourteenth Amendment only prevented discrimination directly by states. It did not prevent discrimination by individuals, businesses, or other entities. Southern states exploited this interpretation with the first legal segregation of railroad cars in 1888. In a case that reached the Supreme Court in 1896, New Orleans resident Homer Plessy challenged the constitutionality of Louisiana’s segregation of streetcars. The court ruled against Plessy and, in the process, established the legal principle of separate but equal. Racially segregated facilities were legal provided they were equivalent. In practice this was rarely the case. The court’s majority defended its position with logic that reflected the racial assumptions of the day. “If one race be inferior to the other socially,” the court explained, “the Constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane.” Justice John Harlan, the lone dissenter, countered, “our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law” Harlan went on to warn that the court’s decision would “permit the

seeds of race hatred to be planted under the sanction of law." In their rush to fulfill Harlan's prophecy, southern whites codified and enforced the segregation of public spaces.

Segregation was built on a fiction—that there could be a white South socially and culturally distinct from African Americans. Its legal basis rested on the constitutional fallacy of "separate but equal." Southern whites erected a bulwark of white supremacy that would last for nearly sixty years. Segregation and disenfranchisement in the South rejected black citizenship and relegated black social and cultural life to segregated spaces. African Americans lived divided lives, acting the part whites demanded of them in public, while maintaining their own world apart from whites. This segregated world provided a measure of independence for the region's growing black middle class, yet at the cost of poisoning the relationship between black and white. Segregation and disenfranchisement created entrenched structures of racism that completed the total rejection of the promises of Reconstruction.

And yet, many black Americans of the Progressive Era fought back. Just as activists such as Ida Wells worked against southern lynching, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois vied for leadership among African American activists, resulting in years of intense rivalry and debated strategies for the uplifting of black Americans.

Born into the world of bondage in Virginia in 1856, Booker Taliaferro Washington was subjected to the degradation and exploitation of slavery early in life. But Washington also developed an insatiable thirst to learn. Working against tremendous odds, Washington matriculated into Hampton University in Virginia and thereafter established a southern institution that would educate many black Americans, the Tuskegee Institute. Located in Alabama, Washington envisioned Tuskegee's contribution to black life to come through industrial education and vocational training. He believed that such skills would help African Americans too accomplish economic independence while developing a sense of self-worth and pride of accomplishment, even while living within the putrid confines of Jim Crow. Washington poured his life into Tuskegee, and thereby connected with leading white philanthropic interests. Individuals such as Andrew Carnegie, for instance, financially assisted Washington and his educational ventures.

As a leading spokesperson for black Americans at the turn of the twentieth century, particularly after Frederick Douglass's exit from the historical stage in early 1895, Washington's famous "Atlanta Compromise" speech from that same year encouraged black Americans to "cast your bucket down" to improve life's lot under segregation. In the same speech, delivered one year before the Supreme Court's *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision that legalized segregation under the "separate but equal" doctrine, Washington said to white Americans, "In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." Both praised as a race leader and pilloried as an accommodationist to America's unjust racial hierarchy, Washington's public advocacy of a conciliatory posture towards white supremacy concealed the efforts to which Washington went to assist African Americans in the legal and economic quest for racial justice. In addition to founding Tuskegee, Washington also published a handful of influential books, including the autobiography *Up from Slavery* (1901). Like Du Bois, Washington was also active in black journalism, working to fund and support black newspaper publications, most of which sought to counter Du Bois's growing influence. Washington died in 1915, during World War I, of ill health in Tuskegee, Alabama.

Speaking decades later, W.E.B. DuBois said Washington had, in his 1895 "Compromise"



The strategies of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois differed, but their desire remained the same: better lives for African Americans. Harris & Ewing, "WASHINGTON BOOKER T," between 1905 and 1915. Library of Congress.

speech, “implicitly abandoned all political and social rights. . . I never thought Washington was a bad man . . . I believed him to be sincere, though wrong.” Du Bois would directly attack Washington in his classic 1903 *The Souls of Black Folk*, but at the turn of the century he could never escape the shadow of his longtime rival. “I admired much about him,” Du Bois admitted, “Washington . . . died in 1915. A lot of people think I died at the same time.”

Du Bois’s criticism reveals the politicized context of the black freedom struggle and exposes the many positions available to black activists. Born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, in 1868, W. E. B. Du Bois entered the world as a free person of color three years after the Civil War ended. Raised by a hardworking and independent mother, Du Bois’s New England childhood alerted him to the reality of race even as it invested the emerging thinker with an abiding faith in the power of education. Du Bois graduated at the top of his high school class and attended Fisk University. Du Bois’s sojourn to the South in 1880s left a distinct impression that would guide his life’s work to study what he called the “Negro problem,” the systemic racial and economic discrimination that Du Bois prophetically pronounced would be *the* problem of the twentieth century. After Fisk, Du Bois’s educational path trended back North, and he attended Harvard, earned his second degree, crossed the Atlantic for graduate work in Germany, and circulated back to Harvard and in 1895—the same year as Washington’s famous Atlanta address—became the first black American to receive a Ph.D. there.

Du Bois became one of America’s foremost intellectual leaders on questions of social justice by producing scholarship that underscored the humanity of African Americans. Du Bois’s work as an intellectual, scholar, and college professor began during the Progressive Era, a time in American history marked by rapid social and cultural change as well as complex global political conflicts and developments. Du Bois addressed these domestic and international concerns not only his classrooms at Wilberforce University in Ohio and Atlanta University in Georgia, but also in a number of his early publications on the history of the transatlantic slave trade and black life in urban Philadelphia. The most well-known of these early works included *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) and *Darkwater* (1920). In these books, Du Bois combined incisive historical analysis with engaging literary drama to validate black personhood and attack the inhumanity of white supremacy, particularly in the lead up to and during World War I. In addition to publications and teaching, Du Bois set his sights on political organizing for civil rights, first with the Niagara Movement and later with its offspring the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Du Bois’s main work with the NAACP lasted from 1909 to 1934 as editor of *The Crisis*, one of America’s leading black publications. DuBois attacked Washington and urged black Americans to concede to nothing, to make no compromises and advocate for equal rights under the law. Throughout his early career, he pushed for civil rights legislation, launched legal challenges against discrimination, organized protests against injustice, and applied his capacity for clear research and sharp prose to expose the racial sins of Progressive Era America.



“W.E.B. (William Edward Burghardt) Du Bois,” 1919. Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2003681451/>.

“We refuse to allow the impression to remain that the Negro-American assents to inferiority, is submissive under oppression and apologetic before insults... Any discrimination based simply on race or color is barbarous, we care not how hallowed it be by custom, expediency or prejudice ... discriminations based simply and solely on physical peculiarities, place of birth, color of skin, are relics of that unreasoning human savagery of which the world is and ought to be thoroughly ashamed Persistent manly agitation is the way to liberty.”

—W.E.B. DuBois

W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington made a tremendous historical impact and left a notable historical legacy. Reared in different settings, early life experiences and even personal temperaments oriented both leader's lives and outlooks in decidedly different ways. Du Bois's confrontational voice boldly targeted white supremacy. He believed in the power of social science to arrest the reach of white supremacy. Washington advocated incremental change for longer-term gain. He contended that economic self-sufficiency would pay off at a future date. Although Du Bois directly spoke out against Washington in the chapter "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington" in *Souls of Black Folk*, four years later in 1907 they shared the same lectern at Philadelphia Divinity School to address matters of race, history, and culture in the American South. As much as the philosophies of Du Bois and Washington diverged when their lives overlapped, highlighting their respective quests for racial and economic justice demonstrates the importance of understanding the multiple strategies used to demand that America live up to its democratic creed.

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CONCLUSION

Industrial capitalism unleashed powerful forces in American life. Along with wealth, technological innovation, and rising standards of living, a host of social problems unsettled many who turned to reform politics to set the world right again. The Progressive Era signaled that a turning point had been reached for many Americans who were suddenly willing to confront the age's problems with national political solutions. Reformers sought to bring order to chaos, to bring efficiency to inefficiency, and to bring justice to injustice. Causes varied, constituencies shifted, and the tangible effects of so much energy was difficult to measure, but the Progressive Era signaled a bursting of long-simmering tensions and introduced new patterns in the relationship between American society, American culture, and American politics.

This chapter was edited by Mary Anne Henderson, with content contributions by Andrew C. Baker, Peter Catapano, Blaine Hamilton, Mary Anne Henderson, Amanda Huggett, Amy Kohout, Maria Montalvo, Brent Ruswick, Philip Luke Siniere, Nora Slonimsky, Whitney Stewart, and Brandy Thomas Wells.

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PRIMARY SOURCE READING: HOW THE OTHER HALF LIVES

Jacob A. Riis (1849–1914) *How the Other Half Lives* (1890)

I. Genesis of the Tenement



THE first tenement New York knew bore the mark of Cain from its birth, though a generation passed before the writing was deciphered. It was the "rear house," infamous ever after in our city's history. There had been tenant-houses before, but they were not built for the purpose. Nothing would probably have shocked their original owners more than the idea of their harboring a promiscuous crowd; for they were the decorous homes of the old Knickerbockers, the proud aristocracy of Manhattan in the early days.

It was the stir and bustle of trade, together with the tremendous immigration that followed upon the war of 1812 that dislodged them. In thirty-five years the city of less than a hundred thousand came to harbor half a million souls, for whom homes had to be found. Within the memory of men not yet in their prime, Washington had moved from his house on Cherry Hill as too far out of town to be easily reached. Now the old residents followed his example; but they moved in a different direction and for a different reason. Their comfortable dwellings in the once fashionable streets along the East River front fell into the hands of real-estate agents and boarding-house keepers; and here, says the report to the Legislature of 1857, when the evils engendered had excited just alarm, "in its beginning, the tenant-house became a real blessing to that class of industrious poor whose small earnings limited their expenses, and whose employment in workshops, stores, or about the warehouses and thoroughfares, render a near residence of much importance." Not for long, however. As business increased, and the city grew with rapid strides, the necessities of the poor became the opportunity of their wealthier neighbors, and the stamp was set upon the old houses, suddenly become valuable, which the best thought and effort of a later age have vainly struggled to efface. Their "*largerooms* were partitioned into *several smaller ones*, without regard to light or ventilation, the rate of rent being lower in proportion to space or height from the street; and they soon became filled from cellar to garret with a class of tenantry living from hand to mouth, loose in morals, improvident in habits, degraded, and squalid as beggary itself." It was thus the dark bedroom, prolific of untold depravities, came into the world. It was destined to survive the old houses. In their new rôle, says the old report, eloquent in its indignant denunciation of "evils more destructive than wars," "they were not intended to last. Rents were fixed high enough to cover damage and abuse from this class, from whom nothing was expected, and the most was made of them while they lasted. Neatness, order, clean-line, were never dreamed of in connection with the tenant-house system, as it spread its localities from year to year; while reckless slovenliness, discontent, privation, and ignorance were left to work out their invariable results, until the entire premises reached the level of tenant-house dilapidation, containing, but sheltering not, the miserable hordes that crowded beneath mouldering, water-rotted roofs or burrowed among the rats of clammy cellars." Yet so illogical is human greed that, at a later

day, when called to account, "the proprietors frequently urged the filthy habits of the tenants as an excuse for the condition of their property, utterly losing sight of the fact that it was the tolerance of those habits which was the real evil, and that for this they themselves were alone responsible."

Still the pressure of the crowds did not abate, and in the old garden where the stolid Dutch burgher grew his tulips or early cabbages a rear house was built, generally of wood, two stories high at first. Presently it was carried up another story, and another. Where two families had lived ten moved in. The front house followed suit, if the brick walls were strong enough. The question was not always asked, judging from complaints made by a contemporary witness, that the old buildings were "often carried up to a great height without regard to the strength of the foundation walls." It was rent the owner was after; nothing was said in the contract about either the safety or the comfort of the tenants. The garden gate no longer swung on its rusty hinges. The shell-paved walk had become an alley; what the rear house had left of the garden, a "court." Plenty such are yet to be found in the Fourth Ward, with here and there one of the original rear tenements.

Worse was to follow. It was "soon perceived by estate owners and agents of property that a greater percentage of profits could be realized by the conversion of houses and blocks into barracks, and dividing their space into smaller proportions capable of containing human life within four walls. ... Blocks were rented of real estate owners, or 'purchased on time,' or taken in charge at a percentage, and held for under-letting." With the appearance of the middleman, wholly irresponsible, and utterly reckless and unrestrained, began the era of tenement building which turned out such blocks as Gotham Court, where, in one cholera epidemic that scarcely touched the clean wards, the tenants died at the rate of one hundred and ninety-five to the thousand of population; which forced the general mortality of the city up from 1 in 41.83 in 1815, to 1 in 27.33 in 1855, a year of unusual freedom from epidemic disease, and which wrung from the early organizers of the Health Department this wail: "There are numerous examples of tenement-houses in which are lodged several hundred people that have a *prorata* allotment of ground area scarcely equal to two square yards upon the city lot, court-yards and all included." The tenement-house population had swelled to half a million souls by that time, and on the East Side, in what is still the most densely populated district in all the world, China not excluded, it was packed at the rate of 290,000 to the square mile, a state of affairs wholly unexampled. The utmost cupidity of other lands and other days had never contrived to herd much more than half that number within the same space. The greatest crowding of Old London was at the rate of 175,816. Swine roamed the streets and gutters as their principal scavengers.¹ The death of a child in a tenement was registered at the Bureau of Vital Statistics as "plainly due to suffocation in the foul air of an unventilated apartment," and the Senators, who had come down from Albany to find out what was the matter with New York, reported that "there are annually cut off from the population by disease and death enough human beings to people a city, and enough human labor to sustain it." And yet experts had testified that, as compared with updown, rents were from twenty-five to thirty per cent, higher in the worst slums of the lower wards, with such accommodations as were enjoyed, for instance, by a "family with boarders" in Cedar Street, who fed hogs in the cellar that contained eight or ten loads of manure; or a one room 12 x 12 with five families living in it, comprising twenty persons of both sexes and all ages, with only two beds, without partition, screen, chair, or table." The rate of rent has been successfully maintained to the present day, though the hog at least has been eliminated.

Lest anybody flatter himself with the notion that these were evils of a day that is happily past and may safely be forgotten, let me mention here three very recent instances of tenement-house life that came under my notice. One was the burning of a rear house in Mott Street, from appearances one of the original tenant-houses that made their owners rich. The fire made homeless ten families, who had paid an average of \$5 a month for their mean little cubby-holes. The owner himself told me that it was *fully* insured for \$800, though it brought him in \$600 a year rent. He evidently considered himself especially entitled to be pitied for losing such valuable property. Another was the case of a hard-working family of man and wife, young people from the old country, who took poison together in a Crosby Street tenement because they were "tired." There was no other explanation, and none was needed when I stood in the room in which they had lived. It was in the attic with sloping ceiling and a single window so far out on the roof that it seemed not to belong to the place at all. With scarcely room enough to turn around in they had been compelled to pay five dollars and a half a month in advance. There were four such rooms in that attic, and together they brought in as much as many a handsome little cottage in a pleasant part of Brooklyn. The third instance was that of a colored family of husband, wife, and baby in a wretched rear rookery in West Third Street. Their rent was eight dollars and a half for a single room on the top-story, so small that I was unable to get a photograph of it even by placing the camera outside the open door. Three short steps across either way would have measured its full extent.



TENEMENT OF 1863, FOR TWELVE FAMILIES ON EACH FLAT 2 D. dark L. light. H. halls.

There was just one excuse for the early tenement-house builders, and their successors may plead it with nearly as good right for what it is worth. "Such," says an official report, "is the lack of houseroom in the city that any kind of tenement can be immediately crowded with lodgers, if there is space offered." Thousands were living in cellars. There were three hundred underground lodging-houses in the city when the Health Department was organized. Some fifteen years before that the old Baptist Church in Mulberry Street, just off Chatham Street, had been sold, and the rear half of the frame structure had been converted into tenements that with their swarming population became the scandal even of that reckless age. The wretched pile harbored no less than forty families, and the annual rate of deaths to the population was officially stated to be 75 in 1,000. These tenements were an extreme type of very many, for the big barracks had by this time spread east and west and far up the island into the sparsely settled wards. Whether or not the title was clear to the land upon which they were built was of less account than that the rents were collected. If there were damages to pay, the tenant had to foot them. Cases were "very frequent when property was in litigation, and two or three different parties were collecting rents." Of course under such circumstances "no repairs were ever made."



The climax had been reached. The situation was summed up by the Society for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor in these words: "Crazy old buildings, crowded rear tenements in filthy yards, dark, damp basements, leaking garrets, shops, outhouses, and stables 3 converted into dwellings, though scarcely fit to shelter brutes, are habitations of thousands of our fellow-beings in this wealthy, Christian city." "The city," says its historian, Mrs. Martha Lamb, commenting on the era of aqueduct building between 1835 and 1845, "was a general asylum for vagrants." Young vagabonds, the natural offspring of such "home" conditions, overran the streets. Juvenile crime increased fearfully year by year. The Children's Aid Society and kindred philanthropic organizations were yet unborn, but in the city directory was to be found the address of the "American Society for the Promotion of Education in Africa."

Note 1. It was not until the winter of 1867 that owners of swine were prohibited by ordinance from letting them run at large in the built-up portions of the city.

Note 2. This "unventilated and fever-breeding structure" the year after it was built was picked out by the Council of

Hygiene, then just organized, and presented to the Citizens' Association of New York as a specimen "multiple domicile" in a desirable street, with the following comment: "Here are twelve living-rooms and twenty-one bedrooms, and only six of the latter have any provision or possibility for the admission of light and air, excepting through the family sitting-and living-room; being utterly dark, close, and unventilated. The living-rooms are but 10 x 12 feet; the bedrooms 6½ x 7 feet."

Note 3. "A lot 50x60, contained twenty stables, rented for dwellings at \$15 a year each; cost of the whole \$600."

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PRIMARY SOURCE READING: THE JUNGLE

The Jungle is a 1906 novel written by the American journalist and novelist Upton Sinclair (1878–1968). Sinclair wrote the novel to portray the harsh conditions and exploited lives of immigrants in the United States in Chicago and similar industrialized cities. However, most readers were more concerned with his exposure of health violations and unsanitary practices in the American meatpacking industry during the early 20th century, based on an investigation he did for a socialist newspaper.

The book depicts working class poverty, the lack of social supports, harsh and unpleasant living and working conditions, and a hopelessness among many workers. These elements are contrasted with the deeply rooted corruption of people in power.

Click on the link [HERE](#) to read an excerpt from the book.

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ASSIGNMENT: THE JUNGLE

One of the most famous books in American history was published during the Progressive Era and played a huge role in Progressive Ideology; Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. It's famous for its graphic description and exposure of what goes on in the Chicago meat-packing industry. After reading the [excerpt](#), answer the following:

- Sinclair once told an interviewer "I aimed at the public's heart and by accident hit it in the stomach." What exactly does he mean? What was he trying to accomplish with the book and how did he expect *The Jungle* to accomplish it?

Be sure to use specific examples and quotes from the document in support of your answer.

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WORLD WAR I & ITS AFTERMATH

WORLD WAR I AND ITS AFTERMATH



Striking steel mill workers holding bulletins, Chicago, Illinois, September 22, 1919. ExplorePAHistory.com.

World War I (“The Great War”) toppled empires, created new nations, and sparked tensions that would explode across future years. On the battlefield, its gruesome modern weaponry wrecked an entire generation of young men. The United States entered the conflict in 1917 and was never the same. The war heralded to the world the United States’ potential as a global military power, and domestically it advanced but then beat back American progressivism before unleashing vicious waves of repression. The war simultaneously stoked national pride and fueled disenchantments that burst Progressive Era hopes for the modern world. And it laid the groundwork for a global depression, a second world war, and an entire history of national, religious, and cultural conflict around the globe.

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VIDEO: AMERICA IN WORLD WAR I

In this video, John Green teaches you about American involvement in World War I, which at the time was called the Great War. They didn't know there was going to be a second one, though they probably should have guessed, 'cause this one didn't wrap up very neatly.

So, the United States stayed out of World War I at first, because Americans were in an isolationist mood in the early 20th century. That didn't last though, as the affronts piled up and drew the U.S. into the war. Spoiler alert: the Lusitania was sunk two years before we joined the war, so that wasn't the sole cause for our jumping in. It was part of it though, as was the Zimmerman telegram, unrestricted submarine warfare, and our affinity for the Brits. You'll learn the war's effects on the home front, some of Woodrow Wilson's XIV Points, and just how the war ended up expanding the power of the government in Americans' lives.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/y59wErqg4Xg>

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PRELUDE TO WAR

As the German empire rose in power and influence at the end of the nineteenth century, skilled diplomats maneuvered this disruption of traditional powers and influences into several decades of European peace. In Germany, however, a new ambitious monarch would overshadow years of tactful diplomacy. Wilhelm II rose to the German throne in 1888. He admired the British Empire of his grandmother, Queen Victoria, and envied the Royal Navy of Great Britain so much so that he attempted to build a rival German navy and plant colonies around the globe. The British viewed the prospect of a German navy as a strategic threat, but, jealous of what he perceived to be a lack of prestige in the world, Wilhelm II pressed Germany's case for access to colonies and symbols of status suitable for a world power. Wilhelm's maneuvers and Germany's rise spawned a new system of alliances as rival nations warily watched Germany's expansion.

In 1892, German posturing worried the leaders of Russia and France and prompted a defensive alliance to counter the existing triple threat between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy. Britain's Queen Victoria remained unassociated with the alliances until a series of diplomatic crises and an emerging German naval threat led to British agreements with Czar Nicholas II and French President Emile Loubet in the early twentieth century. (The alliance between Great Britain, France, and Russia became known as the Triple Entente.)

The other great threat to European peace was the Ottoman Empire, in Turkey. While the leaders of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire showed little interest in colonies elsewhere, Turkish lands on its southern border appealed to their strategic goals. However, Austrian-Hungarian expansion in Europe worried Czar Nicholas II who saw Russia as both the historic guarantor of the Slavic nations in the Balkans and as the competitor for territories governed by the Ottoman Empire.

By 1914, the Austrian-Hungarian Empire had control of Bosnia and Herzegovina and viewed Slavic Serbia, a nation protected by Russia, as its next challenge. On June 28, 1914, after Serbian Gavrilo Princip assassinated the Austrian-Hungarian heirs to the throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Grand Duchess Sophie, vengeful nationalist leaders believed the time had arrived to eliminate the rebellious ethnic Serbian threat.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the United States played an insignificant role in global diplomacy—it rarely forayed into internal European politics. The federal government did not participate in international diplomatic alliances but nevertheless championed and assisted with the expansion of the transatlantic economy. American

businesses and consumers benefited from the trade generated as the result of the extended period of European peace.

Stated American attitudes toward international affairs followed the advice given by President George Washington in his 1796 Farewell Address, one-hundred and twenty years before America's entry in World War I. He had recommended that his fellow countrymen avoid "foreign alliances, attachments, and intrigues" and "those overgrown military establishments which, under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty."

A national foreign policy of neutrality reflected America's inward-looking focus on the construction and management of its new powerful industrial economy (built in large part with foreign capital). The federal government possessed limited diplomatic tools with which to engage an international struggles for world power. America's small and increasingly antiquated military precluded forceful coercion and left American diplomats to persuade by reason, appeals to justice, or economic coercion. But in the 1880s, as Americans embarked upon empire, Congress authorized the construction of a modern Navy. The Army nevertheless remained small and underfunded compared to the armies of many industrializing nations.

After the turn of the century, the Army and Navy faced a great deal of organizational uncertainty. New technologies—airplanes, motor vehicles, submarines, modern artillery—stressed the capability of Army and Navy personnel to effectively procure and use them. The nation's Army could police Native Americans in the West and garrison recent overseas acquisitions, but it could not sustain a full-blown conflict of any size. The Davis Act of 1908 and the National Defense Act of 1916 represented the rise of the modern versions of the National Guard and military reserves. A system of state-administered units available for local emergencies that received conditional federal funding for training could be activated for use in international wars. The National Guard program encompassed individual units separated by state borders. The program supplied summer training for college students as a reserve officer corps. This largely resolved the myriad of conflicts between the demands of short term state problems such as natural disasters, the fear in the federal government of too few or substandard soldiers, and state leaders who thought their men would fill gaps in the national armed forces during international wars. Military leaders resisted similar efforts from allied nations to use American forces as fillers for depleted armies. The federal and state governments needed a long term strategic reserve full of trained soldiers and sailors. Meanwhile, for weapons and logistics, safe and reliable prototypes of new technologies capable of rapid deployment often ran into developmental and production delays.

Border troubles in Mexico served as an important field test for modern American military forces. Revolution and chaos threatened American business interests in Mexico. Mexican reformer Francisco Madero challenged Porfirio Diaz's corrupt and unpopular conservative regime, was jailed, and fled to San Antonio, where he penned the Plan of San Luis Potosí, paving the way for the Mexican Revolution and the rise of armed revolutionaries across the country.

In April 1914, President Woodrow Wilson ordered Marines to accompany a naval escort to Veracruz on the lower eastern coast of Mexico. After a brief battle, the Marines supervised the city government and prevented shipments of German arms to Mexican leader Victor Huerta until they departed in November 1914. The raid emphasized the continued reliance on naval forces and the difficulty in modernizing the military during a period of European imperial influence in the Caribbean and elsewhere. The threat of war in Europe enabled passage of the Naval Act of 1916. President Wilson declared that the national goal was to build the Navy as "incomparably, the greatest...in the world." And yet Mexico still beckoned. The Wilson administration had withdrawn its support of Diaz, but watched warily as the Revolution devolved into assassinations and deceit. In 1916, Pancho Villa, a popular revolutionary in Northern Mexico, spurned by American support for rival contenders, raided Columbus, New Mexico killed seventeen Americans and burned down the town center before sustaining severe casualties from American soldiers and retreating. In response, President Wilson commissioned Army General John "Black Jack" Pershing to capture Villa and disperse his rebels. Motorized vehicles, reconnaissance aircraft, and the wireless telegraph aided in the pursuit of Villa. Motorized vehicles in particular allowed General Pershing supplies without relying on railroads controlled by the Mexican government. The aircraft assigned to the campaign crashed or were grounded due to mechanical malfunctions, but they provided invaluable lessons in their worth and use in war. Wilson used the powers of the new National Defense Act to mobilize over 100,000 National Guard units across the country as a show of force in northern Mexico.

The conflict between the United States and Mexico might have escalated into full-scale war if the international crisis in Europe had not overwhelmed the public's attention. After the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914, President Wilson declared American neutrality. He insisted from the start that the United States be neutral "in fact as well as in name," a policy the majority of American people enthusiastically endorsed. What exactly "neutrality"

meant in a world of close economic connections, however, prompted immediate questions the United States was not yet adequately prepared to answer. Ties to the British and French proved strong, and those nations obtained far more loans and supplies than the Germans. In October 1914, President Wilson approved commercial credit loans to the combatants which made it increasingly difficult for the nation to claim impartiality as war spread through Europe. Trade and trade-related financial relations with combatant nations conflicted with previous agreements with the Allies that ultimately drew the nation further into the conflict. In spite of mutually declared blockades between Germany, Great Britain, and France, munitions and other war suppliers in the United States witnessed a brisk and booming increase in business. The British naval blockades that often stopped or seized ships proved annoying and costly, but the unrestricted and surprise torpedo attacks from German submarines were far more deadly. In May 1915, the sinking of the RMS Lusitania at the cost of over a hundred American lives and other German attacks on American and British shipping raised the ire of the public and stoked the desire for war.

If American diplomatic tradition avoided alliances and the Army seemed inadequate for sustained overseas fighting, the United States outdistanced the nations of Europe in one important measure of world power: by 1914, the nation held the top position in the global industrial economy. The United States producing slightly more than one-third of the world's manufactured goods, roughly equal to the outputs of France, Great Britain, and Germany combined.

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WAR SPREADS THROUGH EUROPE

After the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and Grand Duchess Sophie, Austria secured the promise of aid from its German ally and issued a list of ten ultimatums to Serbia. On July 28, 1914, Austria declared war on Serbia for failure to meet all of the demands. Russia, determined to protect Serbia, began to mobilize its armed forces. On August 1, 1914, Germany declared war on Russia to protect Austria after warnings directed at Czar Nicholas II failed to stop Russian preparations for war.

In spite of the central European focus of the initial crises, the first blow was struck against neutral Belgium in northwestern Europe. Germany made plans to deal with the French and Russian threats by taking advantage of the sluggish Russian mobilization to focus the mission of the Germany army on France. Similar to the military operations of 1871, to enter France quickly German military leaders activated the Schlieffen Plan that directed the placement shift of German armies by rapid rail transport. The clever strategy deterred and confused Russian forces and ultimately led to a victory march over Belgium and into France.

Belgium fell victim early to invading German forces. Germany wanted to avoid the obvious avenue of advance across the French-German border and encounter the French army units stationed there. German army commanders ordered a wide sweep around the French border forces that led straight to Belgium. However, this violation of Belgian neutrality also ensured that Great Britain entered the war against Germany. On August 4, 1914, Great Britain declared war on Germany for failure to respect Belgium as a neutral nation.



French assault on German positions. Champagne, France., 1917. [Wikimedia](#).

In 1915, the European war had developed into a series of bloody trench stalemates that continued through the following year. Offensives, largely carried out by British and French armies, achieved nothing but huge numbers of casualties. Peripheral campaigns against the Ottoman Empire in Turkey at Gallipoli, throughout the Middle East, and in various parts of Africa were either unsuccessful or had no real bearing on the European contest for victory. The third year of the war proposed promises of great German successes in eastern Europe after the regime of Czar Nicholas II collapsed in Russia in March 1917. At about the same time, the German general staff demanded the reimposition of unrestricted submarine warfare to deprive the Allies of replenishment supplies from the United States.

The Germans realized that submarine warfare would likely bring intervention on behalf of the United States. However, the Germans also believed the European war would be over before American soldiers could arrive in sufficient numbers to alter the balance of power. A German diplomat, Arthur Zimmermann, planned to complicate the potential American intervention. He offered support to the Mexican government via a desperate bid to regain Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. Mexican national leaders declined the offer, but the revelation of the Zimmermann Telegram helped to usher the United States into the war.

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AMERICA ENTERS THE WAR

By the fall of 1916 and spring of 1917, President Wilson believed an imminent German victory would drastically and dangerously alter the balance of power in Europe. With a good deal of public support inflamed by submarine

warfare and items like the Zimmermann telegram (which revealed a German menace in Mexico), Congress declared war on Germany on April 4th, 1917. Despite the National Defense Act of 1916 and Naval Act of 1916, America faced a war three thousand miles away with a small and unprepared military. The United States was unprepared in nearly every respect for modern war. Considerable time elapsed before an effective Army and Navy could be assembled, trained, equipped, and deployed to the Western Front in Europe. The process of building the Army and Navy for the war proved to be different from previous American conflicts and counter to the European military experience. Unlike the largest European military powers of Germany, France, and Austria-Hungary, no tradition existed in the United States to maintain large standing armed forces or trained military reserves during peacetime. Moreover, there was no American counterpart to the European practice of rapidly equipping, training, and mobilizing reservists and conscripts.

America relied solely on traditional volunteerism to fill the ranks of the armed forces. Notions of patriotic duty and adventure appealed to many young men who not only volunteered for wartime service, but sought and paid for their own training at Army camps before the war. American labor organizations favored voluntary service over conscription. Labor leader Samuel Gompers argued for volunteerism in letters to the Congressional committees considering the question. "The organized labor movement," he wrote, "has always been fundamentally opposed to compulsion." Referring to American values as a role model for others, he continued, "It is the hope of organized labor to demonstrate that under voluntary conditions and institutions the Republic of the United States can mobilize its greatest strength, resources and efficiency."



Moments like this—with the Boy Scouts of America charging up Fifth Avenue in New York City with flags in their hands—signaled to Americans that it was time to wake up to the reality of war and support the effort in any way possible. "Wake Up, America" parades like this one were throughout the country in support of recruitment. Nearly 60,000 people attended this single parade in New York City. Photograph from National Geographic Magazine, 1917. [Wikimedia](#).

Though some observers believed that opposition to conscription might lead to civil disturbances, Congress quickly instituted a reasonably equitable and locally administered system to draft men for the military. On May 18, 1917, Congress approved the Selective Service Act, and President Wilson signed it into action a week later. The new legislation avoided the unpopular system of bonuses and substitutes used during the Civil War and was generally received without serious objection by the American people.

The conscription act initially required men from ages 21 to 30 to register for compulsory military service. The basic requirement for the military was to demonstrate a competitive level of physical fitness. These tests offered the

emerging fields of social science a range of data collection tools and new screening methods. The Army Medical Department examined the general condition of young American men selected for service from the population. The Surgeon General compiled his findings from draft records in the 1919 report, "Defects Found in Drafted Men," a snapshot of the 2.5 million men examined for military service. Of that group, 1,533,937 physical defects were recorded (often more than one per individual). More than thirty-four percent of those examined were rejected for service or later discharged for neurological, psychiatric, or mental deficiencies.

To provide a basis for the neurological, psychiatric, or mental evaluations, the Army assessed eligibility for service and aptitude for advanced training through the use of cognitive skills tests to determine intelligence. About 1.9 million men were tested on intelligence. Soldiers who were literate took the Army Alpha test. Illiterates and non-English speaking immigrants took the non-verbal equivalent, the Army Beta test, which relied on visual testing procedures. Robert M. Yerkes, president of the American Psychological Association and chairman of the Committee on the Psychological Examination of Recruits, developed and analyzed the tests. His data suggested that the mental age of recruits, in particular immigrant recruits from southern and eastern Europe, averaged about thirteen years. As a eugenicist, he interpreted the results as roughly equivalent to a mild level of retardation and as an indication of racial deterioration. Many years later, experts agreed the results misrepresented the levels of education for the recruits and revealed defects in the design of the tests.

The experience of service in the Army expanded many individual social horizons as natives and immigrants joined the ranks. Immigrants had been welcomed into Union ranks during the Civil War with large numbers of Irish and Germans who had joined and fought alongside native born men. Some Germans in the Civil War fought in units where German was the main language. Between 1917 and 1918, the Army accepted immigrants with some hesitancy because of the widespread public agitation against "hyphenated Americans" that demanded they conform without delay or reservation. However, if the Army appeared concerned about the level of assimilation and loyalty of recent immigrants, some social mixtures simply could not be tolerated within the ranks.



Propagandistic images increased patriotism in a public relatively detached from events taking place overseas. This photograph, showing two United States soldiers sprinting past the bodies of two German soldiers toward a bunker, showed Americans the heroism evinced by their men in uniform. Likely a staged image taken after fighting ended, it nonetheless played on the public's patriotism, telling them to step up and support the troops. "At close grips with the Hun, we bomb the corkshaffer's, etc., c. 1922?

Library of Congress.

Prevailing racial attitudes mandated the assignment of white and black soldiers to different units. Despite racial discrimination and Jim Crow, many black American leaders, such as W. E. B. DuBois, supported the war effort and sought a place at the front for black soldiers. Black leaders viewed military service as an opportunity to demonstrate to white society the willingness and ability of black men to assume all duties and responsibilities of citizens, including the wartime sacrifice. If black soldiers were drafted and fought and died on equal footing with

white soldiers, then white Americans would see that they deserved to full citizenship. The War Department, however, barred black troops from combat specifically to avoid racial tensions. The military relegated black soldiers to segregated service units where they worked in logistics and supply and as general laborers.

In France, the experiences of black soldiers during training and periods of leave broadened their understanding of the Allies and life in Europe. The Army often restricted the privileges of black soldiers to ensure the conditions they encountered in Europe did not lead them to question their place in American society. However, black soldiers were not the only ones feared to be at risk by the temptations of European vice. To ensure that American "doughboys" did not compromise their special identity as men of the new world who arrived to save the old, several religious and progressive organizations created an extensive program designed to keep the men pure of heart, mind, and body. With assistance from the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and other temperance organizations, the War Department put together a program of schools, sightseeing tours, and recreational facilities to provide wholesome and educational outlets. The soldiers welcomed most of the activities from these groups, but many still managed to find and enjoy the traditional recreational venues of soldiers at war.

While the War and Navy Departments initiated recruitment and mobilization plans for millions of men, women reacted to the war preparations by joining several military and civilian organizations. Their enrollment and actions in these organizations proved to be a pioneering effort for American women in war. Military leaders authorized the permanent gender transition of several occupations that gave women opportunities to don uniforms where none had existed before in history. Civilian wartime organizations, although chaired by male members of the business elite, boasted all-female volunteer workforces. Women performed the bulk of volunteer charitable work during the war.

The military faced great upheaval with the admittance of women in the war. The War and Navy Departments authorized the enlistment of women to fill positions in several established administrative occupations. The gendered transition of these jobs freed more men to join combat units. Army women served as telephone operators (Hello Girls) for the Signal Corps, Navy women enlisted as Yeomen (clerical workers), and the first groups of women joined the Marine Corps in July 1918. For the military medical professions, approximately 25,000 nurses served in the Army and Navy Nurse Corps for duty stateside and overseas, and about a hundred female physicians were contracted by the Army. Neither the female nurses nor the doctors served as commissioned officers in the military. The Army and Navy chose to appoint them instead which left the status of professional medical women hovering somewhere between the enlisted and officer ranks. As a result, many female nurses and doctors suffered various physical and mental abuses at the hands of their male coworkers with no system of redress in place.

The experiences of women in civilian organizations proved to be less stressful than in the military. Millions of women volunteered with the American Red Cross, the Young Men's and Women's Christian Associations (YMCA/YWCA), and the Salvation Army. Most women performed their volunteer duties in communal spaces owned by the leaders of the municipal chapters of these organizations. Women met at designated times to roll bandages, prepare and serve meals and snacks, package and ship supplies, and organize community fundraisers. The variety of volunteer opportunities that existed gave women the ability to appear in public spaces and promote charitable activities for the war effort. Women volunteers encouraged entire communities, including children, to get involved in war work. While most of these efforts focused on support for the home front, a small percentage of women volunteers served with the American Expeditionary Force in France.

Jim Crow segregation in both the military and the civilian sector stood as a barrier for black women who wanted to give their time to the war effort. The military prohibited black women from serving as enlisted or appointed medical personnel. The only avenue for black women to wear a military uniform existed with the armies of the allied nations. A few black female doctors and nurses joined the French Foreign Legion to escape the racism in the American Army. Black women volunteers faced the same discrimination in civilian wartime organizations. White leaders of American Red Cross, YMCA/YWCA, and Salvation Army municipal chapters refused to admit them as equal participants. Black women were forced to charter auxiliary units as subsidiary divisions to the chapters and given little guidance in which to organize fellow volunteers. They turned instead to the community for support and recruited millions of women for auxiliaries that supported the nearly 200,000 black soldiers and sailors serving in the military. While the majority of women volunteers labored to care for black families on the homefront, three YMCA secretaries received the opportunity of a lifetime to work with the black troops in France.

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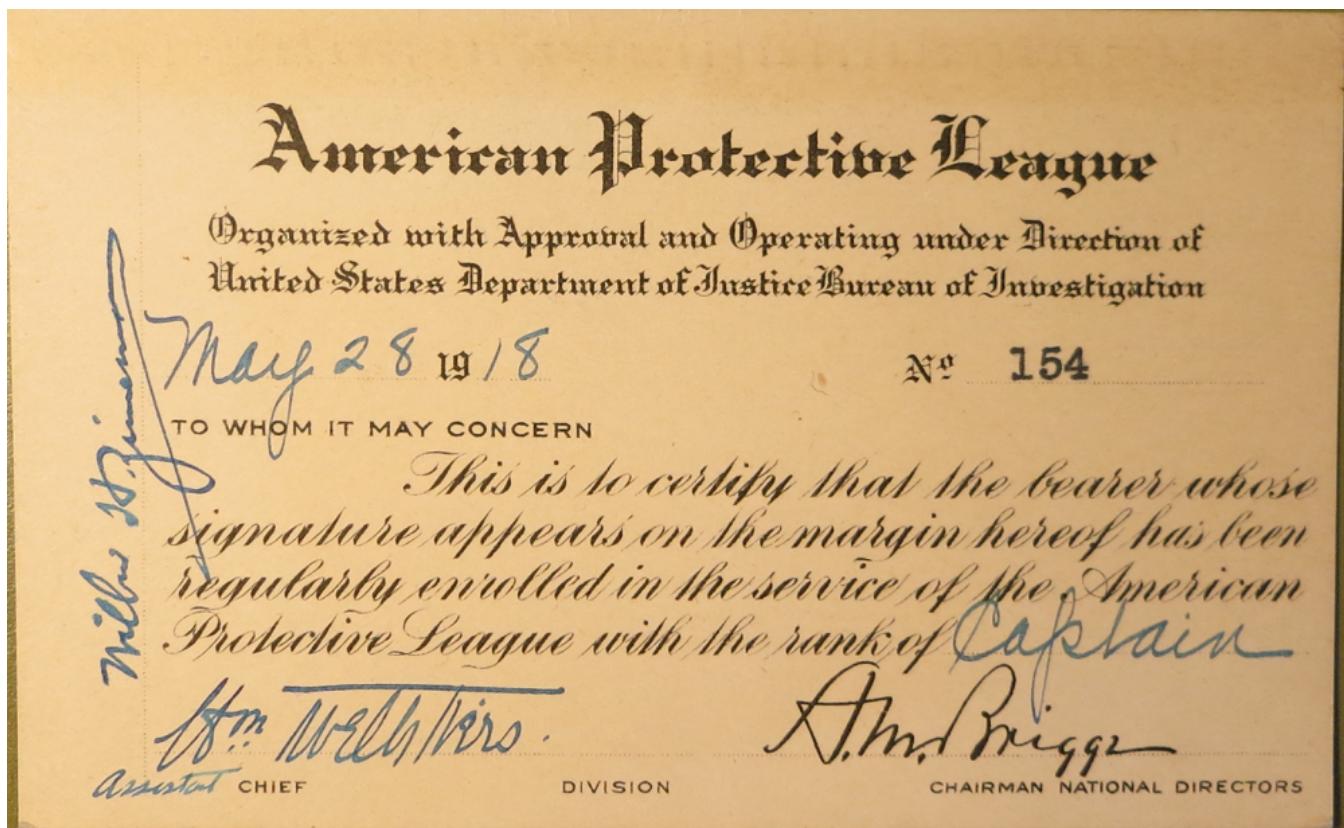
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ON THE HOMEFRONT

In the early years of the war, Americans were generally detached from the events in Europe. The population paired their horror of war accounts with gratitude for the economic opportunities provided by the war and pride in a national tradition of non-involvement with the kind of entangling alliances that had caused the current war. Progressive Era reform politics dominated the political landscape, and Americans remained most concerned with domestic issues and the shifting role of government at home. However, the facts of the war could not be ignored by the public. The destruction taking place on European battlefields and the ensuing casualty rates indicated the unprecedented brutality of modern warfare. Increasingly, a sense that the fate of the Western world lay in the victory or defeat of the Allies.

President Wilson, a committed progressive, had articulated a global vision of democracy even as he embraced neutrality. And as war continued to engulf Europe, it seemed apparent that the United States' economic power would shape the outcome of the conflict regardless of any American military intervention. By 1916, American trade with the Allies tripled while trade with the Central Powers shrunk astronomically, to less than one percent of previous levels.



The large numbers of German immigrants living throughout the United States created suspicion within the federal government. The American Protective League, a group of private citizens, worked directly with the U.S. government during WWI to identify suspected German sympathizers. Additionally, they sought to eradicate all radical, anarchical, left-wing, and anti-war activities through surveillance and raids. Even Herbert Hoover, the infamous head of the FBI, used the APL to gather intelligence. A membership card in the American Protective League, issued 28 May 1918. [Wikimedia](#).

The progression of the war in Europe generated fierce national debates about military preparedness. The Allies and the Central Powers had taken little time to raise and mobilize vast armies and navies. By comparison, the United States still fielded a minuscule army and had limited federal power to summon an adequate defense force before the enactment of conscription. When America entered the war, mobilization of military resources and the

cultivation of popular support for the war consumed the country. Because the federal government had lacked the coercive force to mobilize before the war, the American war effort was marked by enormous publicity and propaganda campaigns. President Wilson went to extreme measures to push public opinion towards the war. Most notably, he created the Committee on Public Information, known as the “Creel Committee,” headed by Progressive George Creel, to enflame the patriotic mood of the country and generate support for military adventures abroad. Creel enlisted the help of Hollywood studios and other budding media outlets to cultivate a view of the war that pit democracy against imperialism, that framed America as crusading nation endeavoring to rescue Western civilization from medievalism and militarism. As war passions flared, challenges to the onrushing patriotic sentiment that America was making the world “safe for democracy” were labeled disloyal. Wilson signed the Espionage Act in 1917 and the Sedition Act in 1918, stripping dissenters and protestors of their rights to publicly resist the war. Critics and protestors were imprisoned. Immigrants, labor unions, and political radicals became targets of government investigations and an ever more hostile public culture. Meanwhile, the government insisted that individual financial contributions made a discernible difference for the men on the Western Front. Americans lent their financial support to the war effort by purchasing war bonds or supporting Liberty Loan Drive. Many Americans, however, sacrificed much more than money.

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BEFORE THE ARMISTICE

The brutality of war persevered as European powers struggled to adapt to modern war. Until the spring of 1917, the Allies possessed few effective defensive measures against submarine attacks. German submarines sank more than a thousand ships by the time America entered the war. The rapid addition of American naval escorts to the British surface fleet and the establishment of a convoy system countered much of the effect of German submarines. Shipping and military losses declined rapidly, just as the American Army arrived in Europe in large numbers. Although much of the equipment still needed to make the transatlantic passage, the physical presence of the Army proved to a fatal blow to German war plans.

In July 1917, after one last disastrous offensive against the Germans, the Russian army disintegrated. The tsarist regime collapsed and in November 1917 Vladimir Lenin's Bolshevik party came to power. Russia soon surrendered to German demands and exited the war, freeing Germany to finally fight the one-front war it had desired since 1914. The German general staff quickly shifted hundreds of thousands of soldiers from the eastern theater in preparation for a new series of offensives planned for the following year in France.

In March 1918, Germany launched the Kaiserschlacht (Spring Offensive), a series of five major attacks. By the middle of July 1918, each and every one had failed to break through on the Western Front. A string of Allied offensives commenced on the Western Front On August 8, 1918. The two million men of the American Expeditionary Force joined British and French armies in a series of successful counter offensives that pushed the disintegrating German front lines back across France. German General Erich Ludendorff referred to launch of the counteroffensive as the “black day of the German army.” The German offensive gamble exhausted Germany’s faltering military effort. Defeat was inevitable. Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated at the request of the German general staff and the new German democratic government agreed to an armistice (cease fire) on November 11, 1918. German military forces withdrew from France and Belgium and returned to a Germany teetering on the brink of chaos.

By the end of the war, more than 4.7 million American men served in all branches of the military: four million in the Army, six hundred thousand in the Navy, and about eighty thousand in the Marine Corps. The United States lost over 100,000 men (Fifty-three thousand died in battle, and even more from disease). Their terrible sacrifice, however, paled before the Europeans’. After four years of brutal stalemate, France had suffered almost a million and a half military dead and Germany even more. Both nations lost about 4% of its population to the war. And death was not done.

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THE WAR AND THE INFLUENZA PANDEMIC

As the war still raged on the Western Front in the spring of 1918, a new threat appeared, one as deadly as the war itself. An influenza virus originated in the farm country of Haskell County, Kansas only a few miles from Camp Funston, one of the largest Army training camps in the nation. Labeled H1N1 by medical researchers working for the United States Public Health Service, the virus spread like a wildfire as disparate populations were brought together and then returned home, from the heartland to the coasts and then in consecutive waves around the world. The second wave was a mutated strain of the virus even deadlier than the first. The new virus struck down those in the prime of their lives: a disproportionate amount of the influenza victims were between the ages of 18 and 35 years old.

Between March and May 1918, fourteen of the largest American military training camps reported outbreaks of influenza. Some of the infected soldiers carried the virus on troop transports to France. By September 1918 influenza had spread to all training camps in the United States before mutating into its deadlier version. In Europe, influenza attacked both sides of soldiers on the Western Front. The “Spanish Influenza,” or the “Spanish Lady,” abruptly misnamed due to accounts of the disease that appeared in newspapers in neutral and uncensored Spain, resulted in the untimely deaths of an estimated fifty million people worldwide. Public health reports from the Surgeon General of the Army revealed that while 227,000 soldiers were hospitalized from wounds received in battle, almost half a million suffered from deadly influenza. The worst part of the epidemic struck during the height of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in the fall of 1918 and compromised the combat capabilities of the American and German armies. During the war more soldiers died from influenza than combat. The pandemic continued to spread after the Armistice before finally fading in the early 1920s. To date, no cure exists for the H1N1 influenza virus.

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THE FOURTEEN POINTS AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

As the flu virus wracked the world, Europe and America rejoiced at the end of hostilities. On December 4, 1918, President Wilson became the first American president to leave the country during his term. He intended to shape the peace. The war brought an abrupt end to four great European imperial powers. The German, Russian, Austrian-Hungarian and Ottoman empires evaporated and the map of Europe was redrawn to accommodate new independent nations. As part of the terms of the Armistice, Allied forces followed the retreating Germans and occupied territories in the Rhineland to prevent Germany from reigniting war. As Germany disarmed, Wilson and the other Allied leaders gathered in France at Versailles for the Paris Peace Conference to dictate the terms of a settlement to the war.

Earlier that year, on January 8, 1918, before a joint session of Congress, President Wilson offered an enlightened statement of war aims and peace terms known as the Fourteen Points. The plan not only dealt with territorial issues but offered principles upon which a long-term peace could be built, including the establishment of a League of Nations to guard against future wars. But in January 1918 Germany still anticipated a favorable verdict on the battlefield and did not seriously consider accepting the terms of the Fourteen Points. The initial reaction

from Germany seemed even more receptive than the Allies. French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau remarked, “The good Lord only had ten (points).”

President Wilson toiled for his vision of the post-war world. The United States had entered the fray, Wilson proclaimed, “to make the world safe for democracy.” At the center of the plan was a novel international organization—the League of Nations—charged with keeping a worldwide peace by preventing the kind of destruction that tore across Europe and “affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.” This promise of collective security, that an attack on one sovereign member would be viewed as an attack on all, was a key component of the Fourteen Points.

But the fight for peace was daunting. While President Wilson was celebrated in Europe and welcomed as the “God of Peace,” his fellow statesmen were less enthusiastic about his plans for post-war Europe. America’s closest allies had little interest in the League of Nations. Allied leaders sought to guarantee the future safety of their own nations. Unlike the United States, the Allies endured firsthand the horrors of the war. They refused to sacrifice further. The negotiations made clear that British Prime Minister David Lloyd-George was more interested in preserving Britain’s imperial domain, while French Prime Minister Clemenceau sought a peace that recognized the Allies’ victory and the Central Powers’ culpability: he wanted reparations—severe financial penalties—and limits on Germany’s future ability to wage war. The fight for the League of Nations was therefore largely on the shoulders of President Wilson. By June 1919, the final version of the treaty was signed and President Wilson was able to return home. The treaty was a compromise that included demands for German reparations, provisions for the League of Nations, and the promise of collective security. For President Wilson, it was an imperfect peace, but better than no peace at all.

The real fight for the League of Nations was on the American homefront. Republican Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts stood as the most prominent opponent of the League of Nations. As chair of the Senator Foreign Relations Committee and an influential Republican Party leader, he could block ratification of the treaty. Lodge attacked the treaty for potentially robbing the United States of its sovereignty. Never an isolationist, Lodge demanded instead that the country deal with its own problems in its own way, free from the collective security—and oversight—offered by the League of Nations. Unable to match Lodge’s influence in the Senate, President Wilson took his case to the American people in the hopes that ordinary voters might be convinced that the only guarantee of future world peace was the League of Nations. During his grueling cross-country trip, however, President Wilson suffered an incapacitating stroke. His opponents had the upper hand.

President Wilson’s dream for the League of Nations died on the floor of the Senate. Lodge’s opponents successfully blocked America’s entry into the League of Nations, an organization conceived and championed by the American president. The League of Nations operated with fifty-eight sovereign members, but the United States refused to join, refused to lend it American power, and refused to provide it with the power needed to fulfill its purpose.

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AFTERMATH OF WORLD WAR I

The war transformed the world. It drastically changed the face of the Middle East, for instance. For centuries the Ottoman Empire had shaped life in the region. Before the war, the Middle East had three main centers of power: Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, and Iran. President Wilson’s call for self-determination appealed to many under the Ottoman Empire’s rule. In the aftermath of the war, Wilson sent a commission to investigate the region to determine the conditions and aspirations of the populace. The King-Crane Commission found that most of the inhabitants favored an independent state free of European control. However, these wishes were largely ignored, and the lands of the former Ottoman Empire divided into mandates through the Treaty of Sevres at the San Remo Conference in 1920. The Ottoman Empire disintegrated into several nations, many created in part without regard to ethnic realities by European powers. These Arab provinces were ruled by Britain and France, and the new nation of Turkey emerged from the former heartland of Anatolia. According to the League of Nations, mandates “were inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern

world." Though allegedly for the benefit of the people of the Middle East, the mandate system was essentially a reimagined form of nineteenth-century imperialism. France received Syria; Britain took control of Iraq, Palestine, and Transjordan (Jordan). The United States was asked to become a mandate power, but declined. The geographical realignment of the Middle East also included the formation of two new nations: the Kingdom of Hejaz and Yemen. (The Kingdom of Hejaz was ruled by Sharif Hussein and only lasted until the 1920s when it became part of Saudi Arabia.)

The fates of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, two Italian-born anarchists who were convicted of robbery and murder in 1920, reflected the Red Scare in American society that followed the Russian Revolution in 1917. Their arrest, trial, and execution inspired many leftists and dissenting artists to express their sympathy with the accused, such as in Maxwell Anderson's *Gods of the Lightning* or Upton Sinclair's *Boston*. The Sacco-Vanzetti demonstrated a newly exacerbated American nervousness about immigrants' and the potential spread of radical ideas, especially those related to international communism after the Russian Revolution.

When in March 1918 the Bolsheviks signed a separate peace treaty with Germany, the Allies planned to send troops to northern Russia and Siberia prevent German influence and fight the Bolshevik revolution. Wilson agreed, and, in a little-known foreign intervention, American troops remained in Russia as late as 1920. Although the Bolshevik rhetoric of self-determination followed many of the ideals of Wilson's Fourteen Points—Vladimir Lenin supported revolutions against imperial rule across the world—imperialism and anti-communism could not be so easily undone by vague ideas of self-rule.



While still fighting in WWI, President Wilson sent American troops to Siberia during the Russian Civil War for reasons both diplomatic and military. This photograph shows American soldiers in Vladivostok parading before the building occupied by the staff of the Czechoslovaks (those opposing the Bolsheviks). To the left, Japanese marines stand to attention as the American troops march. Photograph, August 1, 1918. [Wikimedia](#).

At home, the United States grappled with harsh postwar realities. Racial tensions culminated in the Red Summer of 1919 when violence broke out in at least twenty-five cities, including Chicago and Washington, D.C. The riots originated from wartime racial tensions. Industrial war production and massive wartime service created vast labor shortages and thousands of southern blacks travelled to the North and Midwest to escape the traps of southern poverty. But the so-called Great Migration sparked significant racial conflict as local whites and returning veterans fought to reclaim their jobs and their neighborhoods from new black migrants.

But many American blacks, who had fled the Jim Crow South and traveled halfway around the world to fight for the United States, would not so easily accede to postwar racism. The overseas experience of black Americans and their return triggered a dramatic change in black communities. W.E.B. DuBois wrote boldly of returning soldiers: “We return. We return from fighting. We return fighting. Make way for Democracy!” But white Americans desired a return to the status quo, a world that did not include social, political, or economic equality for black people.

In 1919 America suffered through the “Red Summer.” Riots erupted across the country from April until October. The massive bloodshed during included thousands of injuries, hundreds of deaths, and a vast destruction of private and public property across the nation. The Chicago Riot, from July 27 to August 3, 1919, considered the summer’s worst, sparked a week of mob violence, murder, and arson. Race riots had rocked the nation, but the Red Summer was something new. Recently empowered blacks actively defended their families and homes, often with militant force. This behavior galvanized many in black communities, but it also shocked white Americans who alternatively interpreted black resistance as a desire for total revolution or as a new positive step in the path toward black civil rights. In the riots’ aftermath, James Weldon Johnson wrote, “Can’t they understand that the more Negroes they outrage, the more determined the whole race becomes to secure the full rights and privileges of freemen?” Those six hot months in 1919 forever altered American society and roused and terrified those that experienced the sudden and devastating outbreaks of violence.

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CONCLUSION

World War I decimated millions and profoundly altered the course of world history. Postwar instabilities led directly toward a global depression and a second world war. The war sparked the Bolshevik revolution that the United States later engaged in Cold War. It created Middle Eastern nations and aggravated ethnic tensions that the United States could never tackle. By fighting with and against European powers on the Western Front, America’s place in the world was never the same. By whipping up nationalist passions, American attitudes toward radicalism, dissent, and immigration were poisoned. Postwar disillusionment shattered Americans’ hopes for the progress of the modern world. The war came and went, and left in its place the bloody wreckage of an old world through which the world travelled to a new and uncertain future.

This chapter was edited by Paula Fortier, with content contributions by Tizoc Chavez, Zachary W. Dresser, Blake Earle, Morgan Deane, Paula Fortier, Larry A. Grant, Mariah Hepworth, Jun Suk Hyun, and Leah Richier.

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ASSIGNMENT: WWI PROPAGANDA

WWI was famous for its propaganda posters. In fact, WWI is the reason the word “propaganda” is now a dirty word. At the start of the war it wasn’t, but as governments lied, withheld information, and manipulated the public, propaganda gained the negative connotation that it has today. Here are two posters from WWI; one American, one British.

For each poster write a short paragraph that answers the following:

1. What message is the poster trying to get across? How does the poster express that message?

2. What emotions does the poster try to stimulate?



Destroy this mad brute- Enlist – U.S. Army. By Harry R. Hopps, (1869-1937).



Daddy, what did YOU do in the Great War? from the
Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, 1915.

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- WWI Propaganda Assignment. Authored by: Chris Thomas. Provided by: Reynolds Community College. License: CC BY: Attribution

THE TWENTIES

INTRODUCTION



Al Jolson in The Jazz Singer, 1927.

On a sunny day in early March of 1921, Warren G. Harding took the oath to become the twenty-ninth President of the United States. He had won a landslide election by promising a “return to normalcy.” “Our supreme task is the resumption of our onward, normal way,” he declared in his inaugural address. Two months later, he said, “America’s present need is not heroics, but healing; not nostrums, but normalcy; not revolution, but restoration.” The nation still reeled from the shock of World War I, the explosion of racial violence and political repression in 1919, and, bolstered by the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, a lingering “Red Scare.”

More than 115,000 American soldiers had lost their lives in barely a year of fighting in Europe. Between 1918 and 1920, nearly 700,000 Americans died in a flu epidemic that hit nearly twenty percent of the American population. Waves of strikes hit soon after the war. Radicals bellowed. Anarchists and others sent more than thirty bombs through the mail on May 1, 1919. After war controls fell, the economy tanked and national unemployment hit twenty percent. Farmers’ bankruptcy rates, already egregious, now skyrocketed. Harding could hardly deliver the peace that he promised, but his message nevertheless resonated among a populace wracked by instability.

The 1920s would be anything but “normal.” The decade so reshaped American life that it came to be called by many names: the New Era, the Jazz Age, the Age of the Flapper, the Prosperity Decade, and most commonly, the Roaring Twenties. The mass production and consumption of automobiles, household appliances, film, and radio fueled a new economy and new standards of living, new mass entertainment introduced talking films and

jazz while sexual and social mores loosened. Meanwhile, many Americans turned their back on reform, denounced America's shifting demographics, stifled immigration, retreated toward an "old time religion," and revived with millions of new members the Ku Klux Klan. Others, though, fought harder than ever for equal rights. Americans noted "the New Woman" and "the New Negro," and the old immigrant communities that had escaped the quotas clung to their cultures and their native faiths. The 1920s were a decade of conflict and tension. And whatever it was, it was not "normalcy."

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VIDEO: THE ROARING 20S

In this video, John Green teaches you about the United States in the 1920s. They were known as the roaring 20s, but not because there were lions running around everywhere. In the 1920s, America's economy was booming, and all kinds of social changes were in progress—Hollywood, flappers, jazz, and all kinds of stuff. But, things were about to take a turn for the worse. John will teach you about the Charleston, the many Republican presidents of the 1920s, laissez-faire capitalism, jazz, consumer credit, the resurgent Klan, and more.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/VfOR1XCMf7A>

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REPUBLICAN WHITE HOUSE, 1921-1933

To deliver on his promises of stability and prosperity, Harding signed legislation to restore a high protective tariff and dismantled the last wartime controls over industry. Meanwhile, the vestiges of America's involvement in the First World War and its propaganda and suspicions of anything less than "100 percent American," pushed Congress to address fears of immigration and foreign populations. A sour postwar economy led elites to raise the specter of the Russian Revolution and sideline not just the various American socialist and anarchist organizations, but nearly all union activism. During the 1920s, the labor movement suffered a sharp decline in memberships. Workers not only lost bargaining power, but also the support of courts, politicians, and, in large measure, the American public.

Harding's presidency, though, would go down in history as among the most corrupt. Many of Harding's cabinet appointees, for instance, were individuals of true stature that answered to various American constituencies. For instance, Henry C. Wallace, the very vocal editor of *Wallace's Farmer* and a well-known proponent of "scientific farming," was made Secretary of Agriculture. Herbert Hoover, the popular head and administrator of the wartime Food Administration and a self-made millionaire, was made Secretary of Commerce. To satisfy business interests, the conservative businessmen Andrew Mellon became Secretary of the Treasury. Mostly, however, it was the appointing of friends and close supporters, dubbed "the Ohio gang," that led to trouble.

Harding's administration suffered a tremendous setback when several officials conspired to lease government land in Wyoming to oil companies in exchange for cash. Known as the Teapot Dome scandal (named after the nearby rock formation that resembled a teapot), Interior Secretary Albert Fall and Navy Secretary Edwin Denby were eventually convicted and sent to jail. Harding took vacation in the summer of 1923 so that he could think deeply on how to deal "with my God-damned friends"—it was his friends, and not his enemies, that kept him up walking the halls at nights. But then, on August of 1923, Harding died suddenly of a heart attack and Vice President Calvin Coolidge ascended to the highest office in the land.

The son of a shopkeeper, Coolidge climbed the Republican ranks from city councilman to the Governor of Massachusetts. As president, Coolidge sought to remove the stain of scandal but he otherwise continued Harding's economic approach, refusing to take actions in defense of workers or consumers against American business. "The chief business of the American people," the new President stated, "is business." One observer called Coolidge's policy "active inactivity," but Coolidge was not afraid of supporting business interests and wealthy Americans by lowering taxes or maintaining high tariff rates. Congress, for instance, had already begun to reduce taxes on the wealthy from wartime levels of sixty-six percent to twenty percent, which Coolidge championed.

While Coolidge supported business, other Americans continued their activism. The 1920s, for instance, represented a time of great activism among American women, who had won the vote with the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920. Female voters, like their male counterparts, pursued many interests. Concerned about squalor, poverty, and domestic violence, women had already lent their efforts to prohibition, which went into effect under the Eighteenth Amendment in January 1920. After that point, alcohol could no longer be manufactured or sold. Other reformers urged government action to ameliorate high mortality rates among infants and children, to provide federal aid for education, and ensure peace and disarmament. Some activists advocated protective legislation for women and children, while Alice Paul and the National Women's Party called for the elimination of all legal distinctions "on account of sex" through the proposed Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which was introduced but defeated in Congress.



During the 1920s, the National Women's Party fought for the rights of women beyond that of suffrage, which they had secured through the 19th Amendment in 1920. They organized private events, like the tea party pictured here, and public campaigning, such as the introduction of the Equal Rights Amendment to Congress, as they continued the struggle for equality. "Reception tea

at the National Womens [i.e., Woman's] Party to Alice Brady, famous film star and one of the organizers of the party," April 5, 1923. [Library of Congress](#).

National politics in the 1920s were dominated by the Republican Party, which not held the presidency but both houses of Congress as well. In a note passed to American reporters, Coolidge announced his decision not to run in the presidential election of 1928. Republicans nominated Herbert Hoover. An orphan from Iowa who graduated from Stanford, became wealthy as a mining engineer, and won a deserved reputation as a humanitarian for his relief efforts in famine-struck, war-torn Europe. Running against Hoover was Democrat Alfred E. Smith, the four-time governor of New York and the son of Irish immigrants. Smith was a part of the New York machine and favored workers' protections while also opposing prohibition and immigration restrictions. Hoover focused on economic growth and prosperity. He had served as Secretary of Commerce under Harding and Coolidge and claimed credit for the sustained growth seen during the 1920s, Hoover claimed in 1928 that America had never been closer to eliminating poverty. Much of the election, however, centered around Smith's religion: he was a Catholic. And not only was he a Catholic, he opposed Protestant America's greatest political triumph, prohibition. Many Protestant ministers preached against Smith and warned that he be enthralled to the Pope. Hoover won in a landslide. While Smith won handily in the nation's largest cities, portending future political trends, he lost most of the rest of the country. Even several solidly Democratic southern states pulled the lever for a Republican for the first time since Reconstruction.

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CULTURE OF CONSUMPTION

"Change is in the very air Americans breathe, and consumer changes are the very bricks out of which we are building our new kind of civilization," announced marketing expert and home economist Christine Frederick in her influential 1929 monograph, *Selling Mrs. Consumer*. The book, which was based on one of the earliest surveys of American buying habits, advised manufacturers and advertisers how to capture the purchasing power of women, who, according to Frederick, accounted for 90% of household expenditures. Aside from granting advertisers insight into the psychology of the "average" consumer, Frederick's text captured the tremendous social and economic transformations that had been wrought over the course of her lifetime.

Indeed, the America of Frederick's birth looked very different from the one she confronted in 1929. The consumer change she studied had resulted from the industrial expansion of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. With the discovery of new energy sources and manufacturing technologies, industrial output flooded the market with a range of consumer products such as ready-to-wear clothing to convenience foods to home appliances. By the end of the nineteenth century, output had risen so dramatically that many contemporaries feared supply had outpaced demand and that the nation would soon face the devastating financial consequences of overproduction. American businessmen attempted to avoid this catastrophe by developing new merchandising and marketing strategies that transformed distribution and stimulated a new culture of consumer desire.

The department store stood at the center of this early consumer revolution. By the 1880s, several large dry goods houses blossomed into modern retail department stores. These emporiums concentrated a broad array of goods under a single roof, allowing customers to purchase shirtwaists and gloves alongside toy trains and washbasins. To attract customers, department stores relied on more than variety. They also employed innovations in service—such as access to restaurants, writing rooms, and babysitting—and spectacle—such as elaborately decorated store windows, fashion shows, and interior merchandise displays. Marshall Field & Co. was among the most successful of these ventures. Located on State Street in Chicago, the company pioneered many of these strategies, including establishing a tearoom that provided refreshment to the well-heeled women shoppers that comprised the store's clientele. Reflecting on the success of Field's marketing techniques, Thomas W. Goodspeed, an early trustee of the University of Chicago wrote, "Perhaps the most notable of Mr. Field's innovations was that he made a store in which it was a joy to buy."

The joy of buying infected a growing number of Americans in the early twentieth century as the rise of mail-order catalogs, mass-circulation magazines, and national branding further stoked consumer desire. The automobile

industry also fostered the new culture of consumption by promoting the use of credit. By 1927, more than sixty percent of American automobiles were sold on credit, and installment purchasing was made available for nearly every other large consumer purchase. Spurred by access to easy credit, consumer expenditures for household appliances, for example, grew by more than 120 percent between 1919 and 1929. Henry Ford's assembly line, which advanced production strategies practiced within countless industries, brought automobiles within the reach of middle-income Americans and further drove the spirit of consumerism. By 1925, Ford's factories were turning out a Model-T every 10 seconds. The number of registered cars ballooned from just over nine million in 1920 to nearly twenty-seven million by the decade's end. Americans owned more cars than Great Britain, Germany, France, and Italy combined. In the late 1920s, eighty percent of the world's cars drove on American roads.

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CULTURE OF ESCAPE

As transformative as steam and iron had been in the previous century, gasoline and electricity—embodied most dramatically for many Americans in automobiles, film, and radio—propelled not only consumption, but also the famed popular culture in the 1920s. “We wish to escape,” wrote Edgar Burroughs, author of the Tarzan series. “The restrictions of manmade laws, and the inhibitions that society has placed upon us.” Burroughs authored a new Tarzan story nearly every year from 1914 until 1939. “We would each like to be Tarzan,” he said. “At least I would; I admit it.” Like many Americans in the 1920s, Burroughs sought to challenge and escape the constraints of a society that seemed more industrialized with each passing day.

Just like Burroughs, Americans escaped with great speed. Whether through the automobile, Hollywood’s latest films, jazz records produced on Tin Pan Alley, or the hours spent listening to radio broadcasts of Jack Dempsey’s prizefights, the public wrapped itself in popular culture. One observer estimated that Americans belted out the silly musical hit “Yes, We Have No Bananas” more than “The Star Spangled Banner” and all the hymns in all the hymnals combined.

As the automobile became more popular and more reliable, more people traveled more frequently and attempted greater distances. Women increasingly drove themselves to their own activities as well as those of their children. Vacationing Americans sped to Florida to escape northern winters. Young men and women fled the supervision of courtship, exchanging the staid parlor couch for sexual exploration in the backseat of a sedan. In order to serve and capture the growing number of drivers, Americans erected gas stations, diners, motels, and billboards along the roadside. Automobiles themselves became objects of entertainment: nearly one hundred thousand people gathered to watch drivers compete for the \$50,000 prize of the Indianapolis 500.



*The automobile changed American life forever. Rampant consumerism, the desire to travel, and the affordability of cars allowed greater numbers of Americans to purchase automobiles. This was possible only through innovations in automobile design and manufacturing led by Henry Ford in Detroit, Michigan. Ford was a lifelong inventor, creating his very first automobile—the quadricycle—in his home garage. From *The Truth About Henry Ford* by Sarah T. Bushnell, 1922. [Wikimedia](#).*

Meanwhile, the United States dominated the global film industry. By 1930, as movie-making became more expensive, a handful of film companies took control of the industry. Immigrants, mostly of Jewish heritage from Central and Eastern Europe, originally “invented Hollywood” because most turn-of-the-century middle and upper class Americans viewed cinema as lower-class entertainment. After their parents emigrated from Poland in 1876, Harry, Albert, Sam, and Jack Warner (who were given the name when an Ellis Island official could not understand their surname) founded Warner Bros. in 1918. Universal, Paramount, Columbia, and MGM were all founded by or led by Jewish executives. Aware of their social status as outsiders, these immigrants (or sons of immigrants) purposefully produced films that portrayed American values of opportunity, democracy, and freedom.

Not content with distributing thirty-minute films in nickelodeons, film moguls produced longer, higher-quality films and showed them in palatial theaters that attracted those who had previously shunned the film industry. But as filmmakers captured the middle and upper classes, they maintained working-class moviegoers by blending traditional and modern values. Cecil B. DeMille’s 1923 epic *The Ten Commandments* depicted orgiastic revelry, for instance, while still managing to celebrate a biblical story. But what good was a silver screen in a dingy theater? Moguls and entrepreneurs soon constructed picture palaces. Samuel Rothafel’s Roxy Theater in New York held more than six thousand patrons who could be escorted by a uniformed usher past gardens and statues to their cushioned seat. In order to show *The Jazz Singer* (1927), the first movie with synchronized words and pictures, the Warners spent half a million to equip two theaters. “Sound is a passing fancy,” one MGM producer told his wife, but Warner Bros.’ assets, which increased from just \$5,000,000 in 1925 to \$230,000,000 in 1930, tell a different story.

Americans fell in love with the movies. Whether it was the surroundings, the sound, or the production budgets, weekly movie attendance skyrocketed from sixteen million in 1912 to forty million in the early 1920s. Hungarian immigrant William Fox, founder of Fox Film Corporation, declared that “the motion picture is a distinctly American institution” because “the rich rub elbows with the poor” in movie theaters. With no seating restriction, the one-price admission was accessible for nearly all Americans (African Americans, however, were either excluded or segregated). Women represented more than sixty percent of moviegoers, packing theaters to see Mary Pickford, nicknamed “America’s Sweetheart,” who was earning one million dollars a year by 1920 through a combination of film and endorsements contracts. Pickford and other female stars popularized the “flapper,” a woman who favored short skirts, makeup, and cigarettes.



Mary Pickford's film personas led the glamorous and lavish lifestyle that female movie-goers of the 1920s desired so much. Mary Pickford, 1920. [Library of Congress](#).

As Americans went to the movies more and more, at home they had the radio. Italian scientist Guglielmo Marconi transmitted the first transatlantic wireless (radio) message in 1901, but radios in the home did not become available until around 1920, when they boomed across the country. Around half of American homes contained a radio by 1930. Radio stations brought entertainment directly into the living room through the sale of advertisements and sponsorships, from *The Maxwell House Hour* to the *Lucky Strike Orchestra*. Soap companies sponsored daytime drams so frequently that an entire genre—"soap operas"—was born, providing housewives with audio adventures that stood in stark contrast to common chores. Though radio stations were often under the control of corporations like the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) or the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), radio programs were less constrained by traditional boundaries in order to capture as wide an audience as possible, spreading popular culture on a national level.

Radio exposed Americans to a broad array of music. Jazz, a uniquely American musical style popularized by the African-American community in New Orleans, spread primarily through radio stations and records. The *New York Times* had ridiculed jazz as "savage" because of its racial heritage, but the music represented cultural independence to others. As Harlem-based musician William Dixon put it, "It did seem, to a little boy, that . . . white people really owned everything. But that wasn't entirely true. They didn't own the music that I played." The fast-paced and spontaneity-laced tunes invited the listener to dance along. "When a good orchestra plays a 'rag,'" dance instructor Vernon Castle recalled, "One has simply got to move." Jazz became a national sensation, played and heard by whites and blacks both. Jewish Lithuanian-born singer Al Jolson—whose biography inspired *The Jazz Singer* and who played the film's titular character—became the most popular singer in America.



Babe Ruth's incredible talent attracted widespread attention to the sport of baseball, helping it become America's favorite pastime. Ruth's propensity to shatter records with the swing of his bat made him a national hero during a period when defying conventions was the popular thing to do. "[Babe Ruth, full-length portrait, standing,

The 1920s also witnessed the maturation of professional sports. Play-by-play radio broadcasts of major collegiate and professional sporting events marked a new era for sports, despite the institutionalization of racial segregation in most. Suddenly, Jack Dempsey's left crosses and right uppercuts could almost be felt in homes across the United States. Dempsey, who held the heavyweight championship for most of the decade, drew million-dollar gates and inaugurated "Dempseymania" in newspapers across the country. Red Grange, who carried the football with a similar recklessness, helped to popularize professional football, which was then in the shadow of the college game. Grange left the University of Illinois before graduating to join the Chicago Bears in 1925. "There had never been such evidence of public interest since our professional league began," recalled Bears owner George Halas of Grange's arrival. Perhaps no sports figure left a bigger mark than did Babe Ruth. Born George Herman Ruth, the "Sultan of Swat" grew up in an orphanage in Baltimore's slums. Ruth's emergence onto the national scene was much needed, as the baseball world had been rocked by the so-called black Sox scandal in which eight players allegedly agreed to throw the 1919 World Series. Ruth hit fifty-four home runs in 1920, which was more than any other team combined. Baseball writers called Ruth a superman, and more Americans could recognize Ruth than they could then-president Warren G. Harding. After an era of destruction and doubt brought about by the First World War, Americans craved heroes that seemed to defy convention and break boundaries. Dempsey, Grange, and Ruth dominated their respective sport, but only Charles Lindbergh conquered the sky. On May 21, 1927, Lindbergh concluded the first ever non-stop solo flight from New York to Paris. Armed with only a few sandwiches, some bottles of water, paper maps, and a flashlight, Lindbergh successfully navigated over the Atlantic Ocean in thirty-three hours. Some historians have dubbed Lindbergh the "hero of the decade," not only for his transatlantic journey, but because he helped to restore the faith of many Americans in individual effort and technological advancement. Devastated in war by machine guns, submarines, and chemical weapons, Lindbergh's flight demonstrated that technology could inspire and accomplish great things. *Outlook Magazine* called Lindbergh "the heir of all that we like to think is the best in America." The decade's popular culture seemed to revolve around escape. Coney Island in New York marked new amusements for young and old. Americans drove their sedans to massive theaters to enjoy major motion pictures. Radio towers broadcasted the bold new sound of jazz, the adventure of soap operas, and the feats of amazing athletes. Dempsey and Grange seemed bigger, stronger, and faster than any who dared to challenge them. Babe Ruth smashed home runs out of ball parks across the country. And Lindbergh escaped earth's gravity and crossed entire oceans. Neither Dempsey nor Ruth nor Lindbergh made Americans forget the horrors of the First World War and the chaos that followed, but they made it seem as if the future would be that much brighter.

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"THE NEW WOMAN"

The rising emphasis on spending and accumulation nurtured a national ethos of materialism and individual pleasure. These impulses were embodied in the figure of the flapper, whose bobbed hair, short skirts, makeup, cigarettes, and carefree spirit captured the attention of American novelists such as F. Scott Fitzgerald and Sinclair Lewis. Rejecting the old Victorian values of desexualized modesty and self-restraint, young "flappers" seized opportunities for the public coed pleasures offered by new commercial leisure institutions, such as dance halls, cabarets, and nickelodeons, not to mention the illicit blind tigers and speakeasies spawned by Prohibition. So doing, young American women had helped to usher in a new morality that permitted women greater independence, freedom of movement, and access to the delights of urban living. In the words of psychologist G. Stanley Hall, "She was out to see the world and, incidentally, be seen of it."

Such sentiments were repeated in an oft-cited advertisement in a 1930 edition of the *Chicago Tribune*: "Today's woman gets what she wants. The vote. Slim sheaths of silk to replace voluminous petticoats. Glassware in sapphire blue or glowing amber. The right to a career. Soap to match her bathroom's color scheme." As with so much else in 1920s, however, sex and gender were in many ways a study in contradictions. It was the decade of the "New Woman," and one in which only 10% of married women worked outside the home. It was a decade in which new technologies decreased time requirements for household chores, and one in which standards of cleanliness and order in the home rose to often impossible standards. It was a decade in which women would, finally, have the opportunity to fully exercise their right to vote, and one in which the often thinly-bound women's coalitions that had won that victory splintered into various causes. Finally, it was a decade in which images such as the "flapper" would give women new modes of representing femininity, and one in which such representations were often inaccessible to women of certain races, ages, and socio-economic classes.

Women undoubtedly gained much in the 1920s. There was a profound and keenly felt cultural shift which, for many women, meant increased opportunity to work outside the home. The number of professional women, for example, significantly rose in the decade. But limits still existed, even for professional women. Occupations such as law and medicine remained overwhelmingly "male": the majority of women professionals were in "feminized" professions such as teaching and nursing. And even within these fields, it was difficult for women to rise to leadership positions.

Further, it is crucial not to over-generalize the experience of all women based on the experiences of a much-commented upon subset of the population. A woman's race, class, ethnicity, and marital status all had an impact



This "new breed" of women—known as the flapper—went against the gender proscriptions of the era, bobbing their hair, wearing short dresses, listening to jazz, and flouting social and sexual norms. While liberating in many ways, these behaviors also reinforced stereotypes of female carelessness and obsessive consumerism that would continue throughout the twentieth century. Bain News Service, "Louise Brooks," undated. [Library of Congress](#).

on both the likelihood that she worked outside the home, as well as the types of opportunities that were available to her. While there were exceptions, for many minority women, work outside the home was not a cultural statement but rather a financial necessity (or both), and physically demanding, low-paying domestic service work continued to be the most common job type. Young, working class white women were joining the workforce more frequently, too, but often in order to help support their struggling mothers and fathers.

For young, middle-class, white women—those most likely to fit the image of the carefree flapper—the most common workplace was the office. These predominantly single women increasingly became clerks, jobs that had been primarily “male” earlier in the century. But here, too, there was a clear ceiling. While entry-level clerk jobs became increasingly feminized, jobs at a higher, more lucrative level remained dominated by men. Further, rather than changing the culture of the workplace, the entrance of women into the lower-level jobs primarily changed the coding of the jobs themselves. Such positions simply became “women’s work.”



The frivolity, decadence, and obliviousness of the 1920s was embodied in the image of the flapper, the stereotyped carefree and indulgent woman of the Roaring Twenties depicted by Russell Patterson's drawing. Russell Patterson, artist, "Where there's smoke there's fire," c. 1920s. [Library of Congress](#).

Finally, as these same women grew older and married, social changes became even subtler. Married women were, for the most part, expected to remain in the domestic sphere. And while new patterns of consumption gave them more power and, arguably, more autonomy, new household technologies and philosophies of marriage and child-rearing increased expectations, further tying these women to the home—a paradox that becomes clear in advertisements such as the one in the *Chicago Tribune*. Of course, the number of women in the workplace cannot exclusively measure changes in sex and gender norms. Attitudes towards sex, for example, continued to change in the 1920s, as well, a process that had begun decades before. This, too, had significantly different impacts on different social groups. But for many women—particularly young, college-educated white women—an attempt to rebel against what they saw as a repressive “Victorian” notion of sexuality led to an increase in premarital sexual activity strong enough that it became, in the words of one historian, “almost a matter of conformity.”

In the homosexual community, meanwhile, a vibrant gay culture grew, especially in urban centers such as New York. While gay males had to contend with increased policing of the gay lifestyle (especially later in the decade), in general they lived more openly in New York in the 1920s than they would be able to for many decades following World War II. At the same time, for many lesbians in the decade, the increased sexualization of women brought new scrutiny to same-sex female relationships previously dismissed as harmless.

Ultimately, the most enduring symbol of the changing notions of gender in the 1920s remains the flapper. And indeed, that image was a “new” available representation of womanhood in the 1920s. But it is just that: a representation of womanhood of the 1920s. There were many women in the decade of differing races, classes, ethnicities, and experiences, just as there were many men with different experiences. For some women, the 1920s were a time of reorganization, new representations and new opportunities. For others, it was a decade of confusion, contradiction, new pressures, and struggles new and old.

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"THE NEW NEGRO"

Just as cultural limits loosened across the nation, the 1920s represented a period of serious self-reflection among African Americans, most especially those in northern ghettos. New York City was a popular destination of American blacks during the Great Migration. The city's black population grew 257%, from 91,709 in 1910 to 327,706 by 1930 (the white population grew only 20%). Moreover, by 1930, some 98,620 foreign-born blacks had migrated to the U.S. Nearly half made their home in Manhattan's Harlem district.

Harlem originally lay between Fifth Avenue to Eighth Avenue and 130th Street to 145th Street. By 1930, the district had expanded to 155th Street and was home to 164,000 mostly African Americans. Continuous relocation to “the greatest Negro City in the world” exacerbated problems with crime, health, housing, and unemployment. Nevertheless, it importantly brought together a mass of black people energized by the population’s World War I military service, the urban environment, and for many, ideas of Pan-Africanism or Garveyism. Out of the area’s cultural ferment emerged the Harlem Renaissance, or what was then termed “New Negro Movement.” While this stirring in self-consciousness and racial pride was not confined to Harlem, this district was truly as James Weldon Johnson described: “The Culture Capital.” The Harlem Renaissance became a key component in African Americans’ long history of cultural and intellectual achievements.

Alain Locke did not coin “New Negro”, but he did much to popularize it. In the 1925 *The New Negro*, Locke proclaimed that the generation of subservience was no more—“we are achieving something like a spiritual emancipation.” Bringing together writings by men and women, young and old, black and white, Locke produced an anthology that was *of* African Americans rather than simply *about* them. The book joined many others. Popular Harlem Renaissance writers published some twenty-six novels, ten volumes of poetry, and countless short stories between 1922 and 1935. Alongside the well-known Langston Hughes and Claude McKay, women writers like Jessie Redmon Fauset and Zora Neale Hurston published nearly one-third of these novels. While themes varied, the literature frequently explored and countered pervading stereotypes and forms of American racial prejudice.

The Harlem Renaissance was manifested in theatre, art, and music. For the first time, Broadway presented black actors in serious roles. The 1924 production, *Dixie to Broadway*, was the first all-black show with mainstream showings. In art, Meta Vaux Warrick Fuller, Aaron Douglas, and Palmer Hayden showcased black cultural heritage as well as captured the population’s current experience. In music, jazz rocketed in popularity. Eager to hear “real jazz,” whites journeyed to Harlem’s *Cotton Club* and *Smalls*. Next to Greenwich Village, Harlem’s nightclubs and speakeasies (venues where alcohol was publicly consumed) presented a place where sexual freedom and gay life thrived. Unfortunately, while headliners like Duke Ellington were hired to entertain at Harlem’s venues, the surrounding black community was usually excluded. Furthermore, black performers were often restricted from restroom use and relegated to service door entry. As the Renaissance faded to a close, several Harlem Renaissance artists went on to produce important works indicating that this movement was but one component in African American’s long history of cultural and intellectual achievements.

The explosion of African American self-expression found multiple outlets in politics. In the 1910s and 20s, perhaps no one so attracted disaffected black activists as Marcus Garvey. Garvey was a Jamaican publisher and labor organizer who arrived in New York City in 1916. Within just a few years of his arrival, he built the largest black nationalist organization in the world, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Inspired by Pan-Africanism and Booker T. Washington's model of industrial education, and critical of what he saw as DuBois's elitist strategies in service of black elites, Garvey sought to promote racial pride, encourage black economic independence, and root out racial oppression in Africa and the Diaspora.

Headquartered in Harlem, the UNIA published a newspaper, *Negro World*, and organized elaborate parades in which members, "Garveyites," dressed in ornate, militaristic regalia and marched down city streets. The organization criticized the slow pace of the judicial focus of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), as well as this organization's acceptance of memberships and funds from whites. "For the Negro to depend on the ballot and his industrial progress alone," Garvey opined, "will be hopeless as it does not help him when he is lynched, burned, jim-crowed, and segregated." In 1919, the UNIA announced plans to develop a shipping company called the Black Star Line as part of a plan that pushed for blacks to reject the political system and to "return to Africa" instead. Most of the investments came in the form of shares purchased by UNIA members, many of whom heard Garvey give rousing speeches across the country about the importance of establishing commercial ventures between African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans, and Africans.

Garvey's detractors disparaged these public displays and poorly managed business ventures, and they criticized Garvey for peddling empty gestures in place of measures that addressed the material concerns of African Americans. NAACP leaders depicted Garvey's plan as one that simply said, "Give up! Surrender! The struggle is useless." Enflamed by his aggressive attacks on other black activists and his radical ideas of racial independence, many African American and Afro-Caribbean leaders worked with government officials and launched the "Garvey Must Go" campaign, which culminated in his 1922 indictment and 1925 imprisonment and subsequent deportation for "using the mails for fraudulent purposes." The UNIA never recovered its popularity or financial support, even after Garvey's pardon in 1927, but his movement made a lasting impact on black consciousness in the United States and abroad. He inspired the likes of Malcolm X, whose parents were Garveyites, and Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana. Garvey's message, perhaps best captured by his rallying cry, "Up, you mighty race," resonated with African Americans who found in Garveyism a dignity not granted them in their everyday lives. In that sense, it was all too typical of the Harlem Renaissance.



Marcus Garvey inspired black American activists disappointed with the lack of progress since emancipation to create a world-wide community to fight injustice. One of the many forms of social activism in the 1920s, Garveyism was seen by some as too radical to engender any real change. Yet Garveyism formed a substantial following, and was a major stimulus for later black nationalistic movements like the Black Panthers. Photograph of Marcus Garvey, August 5, 1924. [Library of Congress](#).

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CULTURE WAR

For all of its cultural ferment, however, the 1920s were also a difficult time for radicals and immigrants and anything “modern.” Fear of foreign radicals led to the executions of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, two Italian anarchists, in 1927. In May 1920, the two had been arrested for robbery and murder connected with an incident at a Massachusetts factory. Their guilty verdicts were appealed for years as the evidence surrounding their convictions was slim. For instance, while one eyewitness claimed that Vanzetti drove the get-away car, but accounts of others described a different person altogether. Nevertheless, despite around world lobbying by radicals and a respectable movement among middle class Italian organizations in the U.S., the two men were executed on August 23, 1927. Vanzetti conceivably provided the most succinct reason for his death, saying, “This is what I say . . . I am suffering because I am a radical and indeed I am a radical; I have suffered because I was an Italian, and indeed I am an Italian.”

Many Americans expressed anxieties about the changes that had remade the United States and, seeking scapegoats, many middle-class white Americans pointed to Eastern European and Latin American immigrants (Asian immigration had already been almost completely prohibited), or African Americans who now pushed harder for civil rights and after migrating out of the American South to northern cities as a part of the Great Migration, that mass exodus which carried nearly half a million blacks out of the South between just 1910-1920. Protestants, meanwhile, continued to denounce the Roman Catholic Church and charged that American Catholics gave their allegiance to the Pope and not to their country.

In 1921, Congress passed the Emergency Immigration Act as a stopgap immigration measure, and then, three years later, permanently established country-of-origin quotas through the National Origins Act. The number of immigrants annually admitted to the United States from each nation was restricted to two percent of the population who had come from that country and resided in the United States in 1890. (By pushing back three decades, past the recent waves of “new” immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Asia, the law made it extremely difficult for immigrants outside of Northern Europe to legally enter the United States.) The act also explicitly excluded all Asians, though, to satisfy southern and western growers, temporarily omitted restrictions on Mexican immigrants. The Sacco and Vanzetti trial and sweeping immigration restrictions pointed to a rampant nativism. A great number of Americans worried about a burgeoning America that did not resemble the one of times past. Many wrote of an American riven by a cultural war.

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FUNDAMENTALIST CHRISTIANITY

In addition to alarms over immigration and the growing presence of Catholicism and Judaism, a new core of Christian fundamentalists were very much concerned about relaxed sexual mores and increased social freedoms, especially as found in city centers. Although never a centralized group, most fundamentalists lashed out against what they saw as a sagging public morality, a world in which Protestantism seemed challenged by Catholicism, women exercised ever greater sexual freedoms, public amusements encouraged selfish and empty pleasures, and critics mocked prohibition through bootlegging and speakeasies.

Christian Fundamentalism arose most directly from a doctrinal dispute among Protestant leaders. Liberal theologians sought to intertwine religion with science and secular culture. These “Modernists,” influenced by the Biblical scholarship of nineteenth century German academics, argued that Christian doctrines about the miraculous might be best understood metaphorically. The church, they said, needed to adapt itself to the world. According to the Baptist pastor Harry Emerson Fosdick, the “coming of Christ” might occur “slowly...but surely, [as] His will and principles [are] worked out by God’s grace in human life and institutions.” The social gospel,

which encouraged Christians to build the Kingdom of God on earth by working against social and economic inequality, was very much tied to liberal theology.

During the 1910s, funding from oil barons Lyman and Milton Stewart enabled the evangelist A. C. Dixon to commission some ninety essays to combat religious liberalism. The collection, known as *The Fundamentals*, became the foundational documents of Christian fundamentalism, from which the movement's name is drawn. Contributors agreed that Christian faith rested upon literal truths, that Jesus, for instance, would physically return to earth at the end of time to redeem the righteous and damn the wicked. Some of the essays put forth that human endeavor would not build the Kingdom of God, while others covered such subjects as the virgin birth and biblical inerrancy. American Fundamentalists spanned Protestant denominations and borrowed from diverse philosophies and theologies, most notably the holiness movement, the larger revivalism of the nineteenth century and new dispensationalist theology (in which history proceeded, and would end, through "dispensations" by God). They did, however, all agree that modernism was the enemy and the Bible was the inerrant word of God. It was a fluid movement often without clear boundaries, but it featured many prominent clergymen, including the well-established and extremely vocal John Roach Straton (New York), J. Frank Norris (Texas), and William Bell Riley (Minnesota).

On March 21, 1925 in a tiny courtroom in Dayton, Tennessee, Fundamentalists gathered to tackle the issues of creation and evolution. A young biology teacher, John T. Scopes, was being tried for teaching his students evolutionary theory in violation of the Butler Act, a state law preventing evolutionary theory or any theory that denied "the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible" from being taught in publically-funded Tennessee classrooms. Seeing the act as a threat to personal liberty, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) immediately sought a volunteer for a "test" case, hoping that the conviction and subsequent appeals would lead to a day in the Supreme Court, testing the constitutionality of the law. It was then that Scopes, a part-time teacher and coach, stepped up and voluntarily admitted to teaching evolution (Scopes' violation of the law was never in question). Thus the stage was set for the pivotal courtroom showdown—"the trial of the century"—between the champions and opponents of evolution that marked a key moment in an enduring American "culture war."

The case became a public spectacle. Clarence Darrow, an agnostic attorney and a keen liberal mind from Chicago, volunteered to aid the defense came up against William Jennings Bryan. Bryan, the "Great Commoner," was the three-time presidential candidate who in his younger days had led the political crusade against corporate greed. He had done so then with a firm belief in the righteousness of his cause, and now he defended biblical literalism in similar terms. The theory of evolution, Bryan said, with its emphasis on the survival of the fittest, "would eliminate love and carry man back to a struggle of tooth and claw."



The Scopes trial signified a pivotal moment when science and religion became diametrically opposed. The Scopes defense team, three of whom are seen in this photograph, argued a literal interpretation of the Bible that is still popular in many fundamentalist Christian circles today. "Dudley Field Malone, Dr. John R. Neal, and Clarence Darrow in Chicago, Illinois." [The Clarence Darrow Digital Collection](#).

Newspapermen and spectators flooded the small town of Dayton. Across the nation, Americans tuned their radios to the national broadcasts of a trial that dealt with questions of religious liberty, academic freedom, parental rights, and the moral responsibility of education. For six days in July, the men and women of America were captivated as Bryan presented his argument on the morally corrupting influence of evolutionary theory (and pointed out that Darrow made a similar argument about the corruptive potential of education during his defense of the famed killers Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb a year before). Darrow eloquently fought for academic freedom.

At the request of the defense, Bryan took the stand as an "expert witness" on the Bible. At his age, he was no match for Darrow's famous skills as a trial lawyer and his answers came across as blundering and incoherent, particularly as he was not in fact a literal believer in *all* of the Genesis account (believing—as many anti-evolutionists did—that the meaning of the word "day" in the book of Genesis could be taken as allegory) and only hesitantly admitted as much, not wishing to alienate his fundamentalist followers. Additionally, Darrow posed a series of unanswerable questions: Was the "great fish" that swallowed the prophet Jonah created for that specific purpose? What precisely happened astronomically when God made the sun stand still? Bryan, of course, could cite only his faith in miracles. Tied into logical contradictions, Bryan's testimony was a public relations disaster, although his statements were expunged from the record the next day and no further experts were allowed—Scopes' guilt being established, the jury delivered a guilty verdict in minutes. The case was later thrown out on technicality. But few cared about the verdict. Darrow had, in many ways, at least to his defenders, already won: the fundamentalists seemed to have taken a beating in the national limelight. Journalist and satirist H. L.

Mencken characterized the “circus in Tennessee” as an embarrassment for fundamentalism, and modernists remembered the “Monkey Trial” as a smashing victory. If fundamentalists retreated from the public sphere, they did not disappear entirely. Instead, they went local, built a vibrant subculture, and emerged many decades later stronger than ever.

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REBIRTH OF THE KU KLUX KLAN (KKK)

Suspicions of immigrants, Catholics, and modernists contributed to a string of reactionary organizations. None so captured the imaginations of the country as the reborn Ku Klux Klan (KKK), a white supremacist organization that expanded beyond its Reconstruction Era anti-black politics to now claim to protect American values and way of life from blacks, feminists (and other radicals), immigrants, Catholics, Jews, atheists, bootleggers, and a host of other imagined moral enemies.

Two events in 1915 are widely credited with inspiring the rebirth of the Klan: the lynching of Leo Frank and the release of *The Birth of the Nation*, a popular and groundbreaking film that valorized the Reconstruction Era Klan as a protector of feminine virtue and white racial purity. Taking advantage of this sudden surge of popularity, Colonel William Joseph Simmons organized what is often called the “second” Ku Klux Klan in Georgia in late 1915. This new Klan, modeled after other fraternal organizations with elaborate rituals and a hierarchy, remained largely confined to Georgia and Alabama until 1920, when Simmons began a professional recruiting effort that resulted in individual chapters being formed across the country and membership rising to an estimated five million.

Partly in response to the migration of Southern blacks to Northern cities during World War I, the KKK expanded above the Mason-Dixon. Membership soared in Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago, and Portland, while Klan-endorsed mayoral candidates won in Indianapolis, Denver, and Atlanta. The Klan often recruited through fraternal organizations such as the Freemasons and through various Protestant churches. In many areas, local Klansmen would visit churches of which they approved and bestow a gift of money upon the presiding minister, often during services. The Klan also enticed people to join through large picnics, parades, rallies, and ceremonies. The Klan established a women’s auxiliary in 1923 headquartered in Little Rock, Arkansas. The Women of the Ku Klux Klan mirrored the KKK in practice and ideology and soon had chapters in all forty-eight states, often attracting women who were already part of the prohibition movement, the defense of which was a centerpiece of Klan activism.

Contrary to its perception of as a primarily Southern and lower-class phenomenon, the second Klan had a national reach composed largely of middle-class people. Sociologist Rory McVeigh surveyed the KKK newspaper *Imperial Night-Hawk* for the years 1924 and 1924, at the organization’s peak, and found the largest number of Klan-related activities to have occurred in Texas, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Illinois, and Georgia. The Klan was even present in Canada, where it was a powerful force within Saskatchewan’s Conservative Party. In many states and localities, the Klan dominated politics to such a level that one could not be elected without the support of the KKK. For example, in 1924, the Klan supported William Lee Cazort for governor of Arkansas, leading his opponent in the Democratic Party primary, Thomas Terral, to seek honorary membership through a Louisiana klavern so as not to be tagged as the anti-Klan candidate. In 1922, Texans elected Earle B. Mayfield, an avowed Klansman who ran openly as that year’s “klandidate,” to the United States Senate. At its peak the Klan claimed between four and five million members.

Despite the breadth of its political activism, the Klan is today remembered largely as a violent vigilante group—and not without reason. Members of the Klan and affiliated organizations often carried out acts of lynching and “nightriding”—the physical harassment of bootleggers, union activists, civil rights workers, or any others deemed “immoral” (such as suspected adulterers) under the cover of darkness or while wearing their hoods and robes. In fact, Klan violence was extensive enough in Oklahoma that Governor John C. Walton placed the entire state under martial law in 1923. Witnesses testifying before the military court disclosed accounts of Klan violence ranging from the flogging of clandestine brewers to the disfiguring of a prominent black Tulsan for registering African Americans to vote. In Houston, Texas, the Klan maintained an extensive system of surveillance that

included tapping telephone lines and putting spies into the local post office in order to root out “undesirables.” A mob that organized and led by Klan members in Aiken, South Carolina, lynched Bertha Lowman and her two brothers in 1926, but no one was ever prosecuted: the sheriff, deputies, city attorney, and state representative all belonged to the Klan.

The Klan dwindled in the face of scandal and diminished energy over the last years of the 1920s. By 1930, the Klan only had about 30,000 members and it was largely spent as a national force, only to appear again as a much diminished force during the civil rights movement in the 1950s and '60s.

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ASSIGNMENT: THE ROARING TWENTIES

One of the central facets of the Roaring Twenties was Prohibition – the banning of alcohol. Read [Percy Andreea, "A Glimpse Behind the Mask"](#) and [Richmond Hobson speech supporting Prohibition](#), then write a paragraph that addresses the following:

In a paragraph for each, answer the following:

- What did each person see as the motivation behind Prohibition?
- Can you think of a current issue that looks similar to Prohibition? Compare and contrast the current issue you picked with Prohibition. How are they similar, how are they different?
 - Be prepared to discuss this in class.

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CONCLUSION

In his inauguration speech in 1929, Herbert Hoover told Americans that the Republican Party had brought prosperity. Even ignoring stubbornly large rates of poverty and unparalleled levels of inequality, he could not see the weaknesses behind the decade's economy. Even as the new culture of consumption promoted new freedoms, it also promoted new insecurities. An economy built on credit exposed the nation to tremendous risk. Flailing European economies, high tariffs, wealth inequality, a construction bubble, and an ever-more flooded consumer market loomed dangerously until the Roaring Twenties would grind to a halt. In a moment the nation's glitz and glamour seemed to give way to decay and despair. For farmers, racial minorities, unionized workers, and other populations that did not share in 1920s prosperity, the veneer of a Jazz Age and a booming economy had always been a fiction. But for them, as for millions of Americans, the end of an era was close. The Great Depression loomed.

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PRIMARY SOURCE READING: HOBSON ARGUES FOR PROHIBITION

Richmond P. Hobson argues for prohibition

*Richmond P. Hobson, a Representative from Alabama, voiced his support for a prohibition amendment on the floor of the House of Representatives on December 22, 1914. The proposed amendment received a majority of votes, but not the necessary two-thirds majority to proceed with the process. The following is scanned from K. Austin Kerr, *The Politics of Moral Behavior: Prohibition and Drug Abuse* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1973): 97-102 [long out of print].*

Hobson:

What is the object of this resolution? It is to destroy the agency that debauches the youth of the land and thereby perpetuates its hold upon the Nation. How does the resolution propose to destroy this agent? In the simplest manner.... It does not coerce any drinker. It simply says that barter and sale, matters that have been a public function from the semicivilized days of society, shall not continue the debauching of the youth. Now, the Liquor Trust are wise enough to know that they can not perpetuate their sway by depending on debauching grown people, so they go to an organic method of teaching the young to drink. Now we apply exactly the same method to destroy them. We do not try to force old drinkers to stop drinking, but we do effectively put an end to the systematic, organized debauching of our youth through thousands and tens of thousands of agencies throughout the land. Men here may try to escape the simplicity of this problem. They can not. Some are trying to defend alcohol by saying that its abuse only is bad and that its temperate use is all right. Science absolutely denies it, and proclaims that drunkenness does not produce one-tenth part of the harm to society that the widespread, temperate, moderate drinking does. Some say it is adulteration that harms. Some are trying to say that it is only distilled liquors that do harm. Science comes in now and says that all alcohol does harm; that the malt and fermented liquors produce vastly more harm than distilled liquors, and that it is the general public use of such drinks that has entailed the gradual decline and degeneracy of the nations of the past.

[The wets] have no foundation in scientific truth to stand upon, and so they resort to all kinds of devious methods.

Their favorite contention is that we can not reach the evil because of our institutions. This assumes that here is something very harmful and injurious to the public health and morals, that imperils our very institutions themselves and the perpetuity of the Nation, but the Nation has not within itself, because of its peculiar organization, the power to bring about the public good and end a great public wrong. They invoke the principle of State rights. As a matter of fact, we are fighting more consistently for State rights than they ever dreamed of. We know the States have the right to settle this question, and furthermore our confidence in three-quarters of all the States to act wisely does not lead us to fear that if we submit the proposition to them they might establish an imperialistic empire. We believe that three-quarters of all the States have the wisdom as well as the right to settle the national prohibition question for this country.

Neither can they take refuge about any assumed question of individual liberty. We do not say that a man shall not drink. We ask for no sumptuary action. We do not say that a man shall not have or make liquor in his own home for his own use. Nothing of that sort is involved in this resolution. We only touch the sale. A man may feel he has a right to drink, but he certainly has no inherent right to sell liquor. A man's liberties are absolutely secure in this resolution. The liberties and sanctity of the home are protected. The liberties of the community are secure, the liberties of the county are secure, and the liberties of the State are secure.

Let no one imagine that a State to-day has the real power and right to be wet of its own volition. Under the taxing power of the Federal Government by act of Congress, Congress could make every State in the country dry. They need not think it is an inherent right for a State to be wet; it is not; but there is an inherent right in every State and every county and every township to be dry, and these rights are now trampled upon, and this monster prides himself in trampling upon them.

Why, here to-day Member after Member has proclaimed that prohibition does not prohibit, and I have heard them actually tell us that prohibition could not prohibit. They tell us that this interstate liquor power is greater than the National Government....

I say now, as I said before, I will meet this foe on a hundred battlefields. If the Sixty-third Congress does not grant this plain right of the people for this referendum to change their organic law, to meet this mighty evil, the Sixty-fourth Congress will be likewise invoked. I do not say that we are going to get a two-thirds majority here tonight ... because we have not yet had a chance to appeal to Caesar: but I do say that the day is coming when we shall have that referendum sent to the States, nor is that day as far distant as some may imagine. Unless this question has been made a State matter, as we are asking now for it to be so made by being removed from national politics, and referred to the States-if this is not done by the intervening Congresses, I here announce to you the determination of the great moral, the great spiritual, the great temperance and prohibition forces of this whole Nation to make this question the paramount issue in 1916, not only to gain a two-thirds majority in the Houses of Congress, but to have an administration that neither in the open nor under cover will fight this reform, so that in the spring of 1917 with an extraordinary session of the Sixty-fifth Congress we will have a command from the * masters of men and of Congress to grant this right to the people. My appeal is to each one of you now, be a man when the vote is taken and do your duty. [Applause.]

A Habit-Forming Drug

Alcohol has the property of chloroform and ether of penetrating actually into the nerve fibers themselves, putting the tissues under an anesthetic which prevents pain at first, but when the anesthetic effect is over discomfort follows throughout the tissues of the whole body, particularly the nervous system, which causes a craving for relief by recourse to the very substance that produced the disturbance. This craving grows directly with the amount and regularity of the drinking.

Undermines the Will Power

The poisoning attack of alcohol is specially severe in the cortex cerebrum-the top part of the brain-where resides the center of inhibition, or of will power, causing partial paralysis, which liberates lower activities otherwise held in control, causing a man to be more of a brute, but to imagine that he has been stimulated, when he is really partially paralyzed. This center of inhibition is the seat of the will power, which of necessity declines a little in strength every time partial paralysis takes place.

Little Less of a Man After Each Drink

Thus a man is little less of a man after each drink he takes. In this way continued drinking causes a progressive weakening of the will and a progressive growing of the craving, so that after a time, if persisted in, there must come a point where the will power can not control the craving and the victim is in the grip of the habit.

Slaves in Shackles

When the drinking begins young the power of the habit becomes overwhelming, and the victim might as well have shackles. It is estimated that there are 5,000,000 heavy drinkers and drunkards in America, and these men might as well have a ball and chain on their ankles, for they are more abject slaves than those black men who were driven by slave drivers.

Present-day Slave Owners

These victims are driven imperatively to procure their liquor, no matter at what cost. A few thousand brewers and distillers, making up the organizations composing the great Liquor Trust, have a monopoly of the supply, and they therefore own these 5,000,000 slaves and through them they are able to collect two and one-half billions of dollars cash from the American people every year.

Liquor Degenerates the Character

The first finding of science that alcohol is a protoplasmic poison and the second finding that it is an insidious, habit-forming drug, though of great importance, are as unimportant when compared with the third finding, that alcohol degenerates the character of men and tears down their spiritual nature. Like the other members of the group of oxide derivatives of hydrocarbons, alcohol is not only a general poison, but it has a chemical affinity or deadly appetite for certain particular tissues. Strychnine tears down the spinal cord. Alcohol tears down the top part of the brain in a man, attacks certain tissues in an animal, certain cells in a flower. It has been established

that whatever the line of a creature's evolution alcohol will attack that line. Every type and every species is evolving in building from generation to generation along some particular line. Man is evolving in the top part of the brain, the seat of the will power, the seat of the moral senses, and of the spiritual nature, the recognition of right and wrong, the consciousness of God and of duty and of brotherly love and of self-sacrifice.

Reverses the Life Principle of the Universe

All life in the universe is founded upon the principle of evolution. Alcohol directly reverses that principle. Man has risen from the savage up through successive steps to the level of the semisavage, the semicivilized, and the highly civilized.

Liquor and the Red Man

Liquor promptly degenerates the red man, throws him back into savagery. It will promptly put a tribe on the war path.

Liquor and the Black Man

Liquor will actually make a brute out of a negro, causing him to commit unnatural crimes.

Liquor and the White Man

The effect is the same on the white man, though the white man being further evolved it takes longer time to reduce him to the same level. Starting young, however, it does not take a very long time to speedily cause a man in the forefront of civilization to pass through the successive stages and become semicivilized, semisavage, savage, and, at last, below the brute.

The Great Tragedy

The spiritual nature of man gives dignity to his life above the life of the brute. It is this spiritual nature of man that makes him in the image of his Maker, so that the Bible referred to man as being a little lower than the angels. It is a tragedy to blight the physical life. No measure can be made of blighting the spiritual life.

The Blight Degeneracy

Nature does not tolerate reversing its evolutionary principle, and proceeds automatically to exterminate any creature, any animal, any race, any species that degenerates. Nature adopts two methods of extermination-one to shorten the life, the other to blight the offspring.

The Verdict

Science has thus demonstrated that alcohol is a protoplasmic poison, poisoning all living things; that alcohol is a habit-forming drug that shackles millions of our citizens and maintains slavery in our midst; that it lowers in a fearful way the standard of efficiency of the Nation, reducing enormously the national wealth, entailing startling burdens of taxation, encumbering the public with the care of crime, pauperism, and insanity; that it corrupts politics and public servants, corrupts the Government, corrupts the public morals, lowers terrifically the average standard of character of the citizenship, and undermines the liberties and institutions of the Nation; that it undermines and blights the home and the family, checks education, attacks the young when they are entitled to protection, undermines the public health, slaughtering, killing, and wounding our citizens many fold times more than war, pestilence, and famine combined; that it blights the progeny of the Nation, flooding the land with a horde of degenerates; that it strikes deadly blows at the life of the Nation itself and at the very life of the race, reversing the great evolutionary principles of nature and the purposes of the Almighty.

There can be but one verdict, and that is this great destroyer must be destroyed. The time is ripe for fulfillment. The present generation, the generation to which we belong, must cut this millstone of degeneracy from the neck of humanity....

The Final Conclusion

To cure this organic disease we must have recourse to the organic law. The people themselves must act upon this question. A generation must be prevailed upon to place prohibition in their own constitutional law, and such a generation could be counted upon to keep it in the Constitution during its lifetime. The Liquor Trust of necessity

would disintegrate. The youth would grow up sober. The final, scientific conclusion is that we must have constitutional prohibition, prohibiting only the sale, the manufacture for sale, and everything that pertains to the sale, and invoke the power of both Federal and State Governments for enforcement. The resolution is drawn to fill these requirements.

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PRIMARY SOURCE READING: A GLIMPSE BEHIND THE MASK OF PROHIBITION

A Glimpse behind the Mask of Prohibition

The Prohibition Movement in its Broader Bearings upon Our Social, Commercial, and Religious Liberties

by Percy Andreea in *The Prohibition Movement in its Broader Bearings upon Our Social, Commercial, and Religious Liberties*

(Editor's note: Andreea was one of the most successful spokesmen against prohibition. Closely associated with brewing interests in Cincinnati, Ohio, Andreea organized a successful resistance to the Ohio Anti Saloon League after its sweeping victories in the 1908 state elections. Eventually Andreea tried to take the Ohio resistance to a national level through an brewery-financed organization called The National Association of Commerce and Labor.)

Somewhere in the Bible it is said: "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off." I used to think the remedy somewhat radical. But to-day, being imbued with the wisdom of the prohibitionist, I have to acknowledge that, if the Bible in general, and that passage in it in particular, has a fault, it lies in its ultra-conservativeness. What? Merely cut off my own right hand if it offend me? What business have my neighbors to keep their right hands if I am not able to make mine behave itself? Off with the lot of them! Let there be no right hands; then I am certain that mine won't land me in trouble.

I have met many active prohibitionists, both in this and in other countries, all of them thoroughly in earnest. In some instances I have found that their allegiance to the cause of prohibition took its origin in the fact that some near relative or friend had succumbed to over-indulgence in liquor. In one or two cases the man himself had been a victim of this weakness, and had come to the conclusion, firstly that every one else was constituted as he was, and, therefore, liable to the same danger; and secondly, that unless every one were prevented from drinking, he would not be secure from the temptation to do so himself.

This is one class of prohibitionists. The other, and by far the larger class, is made up of religious zealots, to whom prohibition is a word having at bottom a far wider application than that which is generally attributed to it. The liquor question, if there really is such a question per se, is merely put forth by them as a means to an end, an incidental factor in a fight which has for its object the supremacy of a certain form of religious faith. The belief of many of these people is that the Creator frowns upon enjoyment of any and every kind, and that he has merely endowed us with certain desires and capacities for pleasure in order to give us an opportunity to please Him by resisting them. They are, of course, perfectly entitled to this belief, though some of us may consider it eccentric and somewhat in the nature of a libel on the Almighty. But are they privileged to force that belief on all their fellow beings? That, in substance, is the question that is involved in the present-day prohibition movement.

For it is all nonsense to suppose that because, perhaps, one in a hundred or so of human beings is too weak to resist the temptation of over-indulging in drink-or of over-indulging in anything else, for the matter of that=therefore all mankind is going to forego the right to indulge in that enjoyment in moderation. the leaders of the so-called prohibition movement know as well as you and I do that you can no more prevent an individual from taking a drink if he be so inclined than your can prevent him from scratching himself if he itches. They object to the existence of the saloon, not, bear in mind, to that of the badly conducted saloon, but to that of the well-regulated, decent saloon, and wherever they succeed in destroying the latter, their object, which is the manifestation of their political power, is attained. That for every decent, well-ordered saloon they destroy, there springs up a dive, or speak-easy, or blind tiger, or whatever other name it may be known by, and the dispensing of drink continues as merrily as before, doesn't disturb them at all. They make the sale of liquor a crime, but steadily refuse to make its purchase and consumption an offense. Time and again the industries affected by this apparently senseless crusade have endeavored to have laws passed making dry territories really dry by providing for the punishment of the man who buys drink as well as the man who sells it. But every such attempt has been fiercely opposed by the prohibition leaders. And why? Because they know only too well that the first attempt to really prohibit drinking would put an end to their power forever. They know that 80 per cent of those who, partly by coercion, partly from sentiment, vote dry, are perfectly willing to restrict the right of the remaining 20 per cent to obtain drink, but that they are not willing to sacrifice that right for themselves.

And so the farce called prohibition goes on, and will continue to go on as long as it brings grist to the mill of the managers who are producing it. But the farce conceals something far more serious than that which is apparent to the public on the face of it. Prohibition is merely the title of the movement. Its real purpose is of a religious, sectarian character, and this applies not only to the movement in America, but to the same movement in England, a fact which, strangely enough, has rarely, if at all, been recognized by those who have dealt with the question in the public press.

If there is any one who doubts the truth of this statement, let me put this to him: How many Roman Catholics are prohibitionists? How many Jews, the most temperate race on earth, are to be found in the ranks of prohibition? Or Lutherans? Or German Protestants generally? What is the proportion of Episcopalians to that of Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians, and the like, in the active prohibition army? The answer to these questions will, I venture to say, prove conclusively the assertion that the fight for prohibition is synonymous with the fight of a certain religious sect, or group of religious sects, for the supremacy of its ideas. In England it is the Nonconformists, which is in that country the generic name for the same sects, who are fighting the fight, and the suppression of liquor there is no more the ultimate end they have in view than it is here in America. It is the fads and restrictions that are part and parcel of their lugubrious notion of Godworship which they eventually hope to impose upon the rest of humanity; a Sunday without a smile, no games, no recreation, no pleasures, no music, card-playing tabooed, dancing anathematized, the beauties of art decried as impure-in short, this world reduced to a barren, forbidding wilderness in which we, its inhabitants, are to pass our time contemplating the joys of the next. Rather problematical joys, by the way, if we are to suppose we shall worship God in the next world in the same somber way as we are called upon by these worthies to do in this.

To my mind, and that of many others, the hearty, happy laugh of a human being on a sunny Sunday is music sweeter to the ears of that being's Creator than all the groaning and moanings, and *misericordias* that rise to heaven from the lips of those who would deprive us altogether of the faculty and the privilege of mirth. That some overdo hilarity and become coarse and offensive, goes without saying. There are people without the sense of proportion or propriety in all matters. Yet none of us think of abolishing pleasures because a few do not know how to enjoy them in moderation and with decency, and become an offense to their neighbors.

The drink evil has existed from time immemorial, just as sexual excess has, and all other vices to which mankind is and always will be more or less prone, though less in proportion as education progresses and the benefits of civilization increased. Sexual excess, curiously enough, has never interested our hyper-religious friends, the prohibitionists, in anything like the degree that the vice of excessive drinking does. Perhaps this is because the best of us have our pet aversions and our pet weaknesses. Yet this particular vice has produced more evil results to the human race than all other vices combined, and, in spite of it, mankind, thanks not to prohibitive laws and restrictive legislation, but to the forward strides of knowledge and to patient and intelligent education, is to-day ten times sounder in body and healthier in mind than it ever was in the world's history.

Now, if the habit of drinking to excess were a growing one, as our prohibitionist friends claim that it is, we should to-day, instead of discussing this question with more or less intelligence, not be here at all to argue it; for the evil, such as it is, has existed for so many ages that, if it were as general and as contagious as is claimed, and its results as far-reaching as they are painted, the human race would have been destroyed by it long ago. Of course, the contrary is the case. The world has progressed in this as in all other respects. Compare, for instance, the

drinking to-day with the drinking of a thousand years ago, nay, of only a hundred odd years ago, when a man, if he wanted to ape his so-called betters, did so by contriving to be carried to bed every night "drunk as a lord." Has that condition of affairs been altered by legislative measures restricting the right of the individual to control himself? No. It has been altered by that far greater power, the moral force of education and the good example which teaches mankind the very thing that prohibition would take from it: the virtue of selfcontrol and moderation in all things.

And here we come to the vital distinction between the advocacy of temperance and the advocacy of prohibition. Temperance and self-control are convertible terms. Prohibition, or that which it implies, is the direct negation of the term self-control. In order to save the small percentage of men who are too weak to resist their animal desires, it aims to put chains on every man, the weak and the strong alike. And if this is proper in one respect, why not in all respects? Yet, what would one think of a proposition to keep all men locked up because a certain number have a propensity to steal? Theoretically, perhaps, all crime or vice could be stopped by chaining us all up as we chain up a wild animal, and only allowing us to take exercise under proper supervision and control. But while such a measure would check crime, it would not eliminate the criminal. It is true, some people are only kept from vice and crime by the fear of punishment. Is not, indeed, the basis of some men's religiousness nothing else but the fear of Divine punishment? The doctrines of certain religious denominations not entirely unknown in the prohibition camp make self respect, which is the foundation of self-control and of all morality, a sin. They decry rather than advocate it. They love to call themselves miserable, helpless sinners, cringing before the flaming sword, and it is the flaming sword, not the exercise of their own enlightened will, that keeps them within decent bounds. Yet has this fear of eternal punishment contributed one iota toward the intrinsic betterment of the human being? If it had, would so many of our Christian creeds have discarded it, admitting that it is the precepts of religion, not its dark and dire threats, that make men truly better and stronger within themselves to resist that which our self-respect teaches us is bad and harmful? The growth of self-respect in man, with its outward manifestation, self-control, is the growth of civilization. If we are to be allowed to exercise it no longer, it must die in us from want of nutrition, and men must become savages once more, fretting now at their chains, which they will break as inevitably as the sun will rise to-morrow and herald a new day.

I consider the danger which threatens civilized society from the growing power of a sect whose views on prohibition are merely an exemplification of their general low estimate of man's ability to rise to higher things -by his own volition to be of infinitely greater consequence than the danger that, in putting their narrow theories to the test, a few billions of invested property will be destroyed, a number of great wealth-producing industries wiped out, the rate of individual taxation largely increased, and a million or so of struggling wage earners doomed to face starvation. These latter considerations, of course, must appeal to every thinking man but what are they compared with the greater questions involved? Already the government of our State, and indeed of a good many other States, has passed practically into the hands of a few preacher-politicians of a certain creed. With the machine they have built up, by appealing to the emotional weaknesses of the more or less unintelligent masses, they have lifted themselves on to a pedestal of power that has enabled them to dictate legislation or defeat it at their will, to usurp the functions of the governing head of the State and actually induce him to delegate to them the appointive powers vested in him by the Constitution. When a Governor elected by the popular vote admits, as was recently the case, that he can not appoint a man to one of the most important offices of the State without the indorsement of the irresponsible leader of a certain semi-religious movement, and when he submits to this same personage for correction and amendment his recommendation to the legislative body, there can scarcely be any doubt left in any reasonable mind as to the extent of the power wielded by this leader, or as to the uses he and those behind him intend putting it to.

And what does it all mean? It means that government by emotion is to be substituted for government by reason, and government by emotion, of which history affords many examples, is, according to the testimony of all ages, the most dangerous and pernicious of all forms of government. It has already crept into the legislative assemblies of most of the States of the Union, and is being craftily fostered by those who know how easily it can be made available for their purposes-purposes to the furtherance of which cool reason would never lend itself. Prohibition is but one of its fruits, and the hand that is plucking this fruit is the same hand of intolerance that drove forth certain of our forefathers from the land of their birth to seek the sheltering freedom of these shores.

What a strange reversal of conditions! The intolerants of a few hundred years ago are the upholders of liberty to-day, while those they once persecuted, having multiplied by grace of the very liberty that has so long sheltered them here, are now planning to impose the tyranny of their narrow creed upon the descendants of their persecutors of yore.

Let the greater public, which is, after all, the arbiter of the country's destinies, pause and ponder these things before they are allowed to progress too far. Prohibition, though it must collapse, and is already causing, incalculable

damage, may never succeed in this country; but that which is behind it, as the catapults and the cannon were behind the battering rams in the battles of olden days, is certain to succeed unless timely measures of prevention are resorted to; and if it does succeed, we shall witness the enthronement of a monarch in this land of liberty compared with whose autocracy the autocracy of the Russian Czar is a mere trifle.

The name of this monarch is Religious Intolerance.

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THE GREAT DEPRESSION

INTRODUCTION



"Destitute pea pickers in California. Mother of seven children. Age thirty-two. Nipomo, California," [Library of Congress](#).

The wonder of the stock market had permeated popular culture throughout the 1920s. Although it was released during the first year of the Great Depression, the 1930 film *High Society Blues* captured the speculative hope and prosperity of the previous decade. "I'm in the Market for You," a popular musical number from the film, even used the stock market as a metaphor for love: *You're going up, up, up in my estimation, / I want a thousand shares of your caresses, too. / We'll count the hugs and kisses, / When dividends are due, / Cause I'm in the market for you.*

But, just as the song was being recorded in 1929, the stock market reached the apex of its swift climb, crashed, and brought an abrupt end to the seeming prosperity of the "Roaring '20s." The Great Depression had arrived.

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VIDEO: THE GREAT DEPRESSION

In this video, John Green teaches you about the Great Depression. So, everybody knows that the Great Depression started with the stock market crash in 1929, right? Not exactly. The Depression happened after the stock market crash, but wasn't caused by the crash. John will teach you about how the depression started, what Herbert Hoover tried to do to fix it, and why those efforts failed.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/GCQfMWAikyU>

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THE ORIGINS OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION



"Crowd of people gather outside the New York Stock Exchange following the Crash of 1929," 1929. [Library of Congress](#).

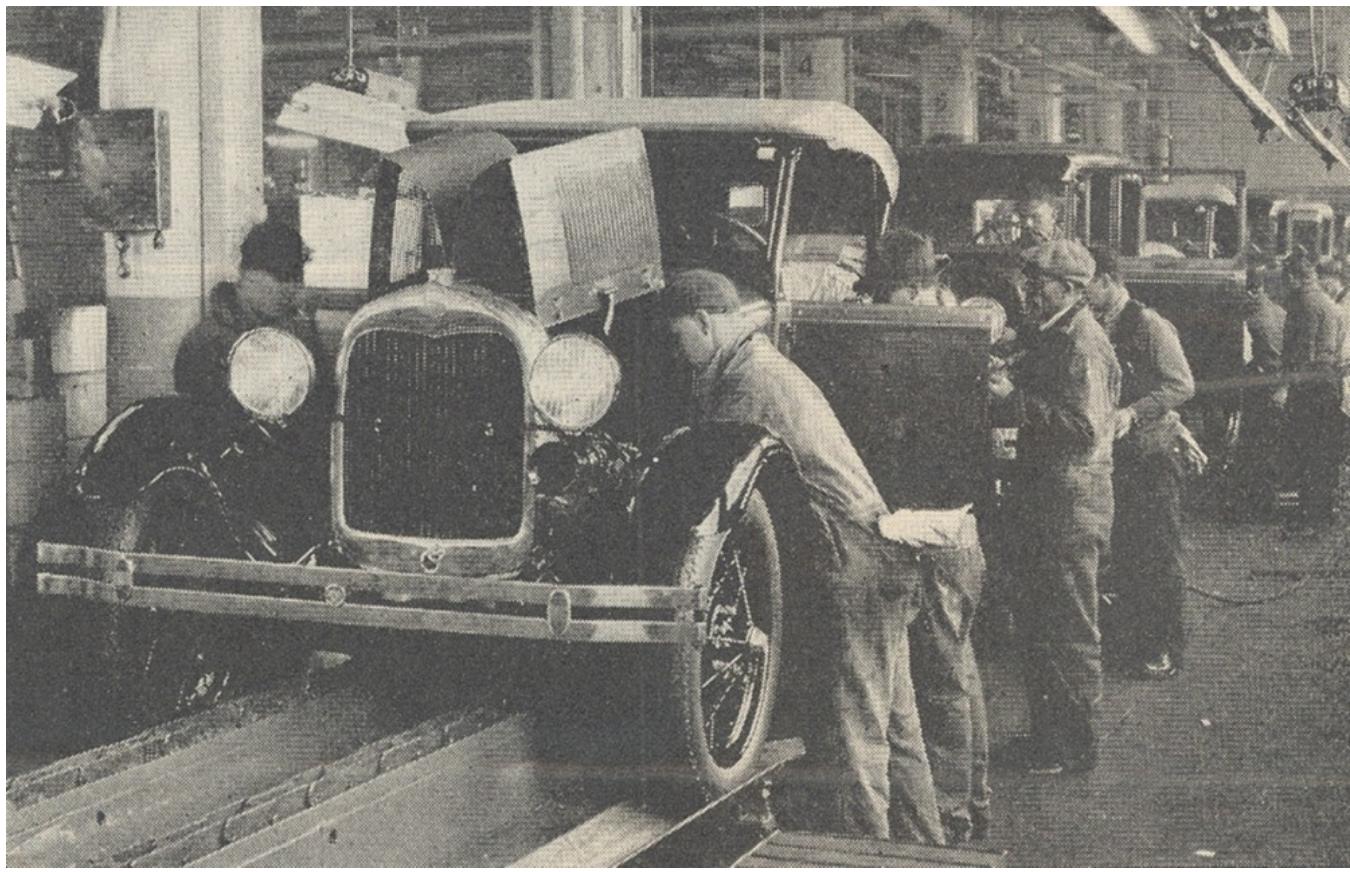
On Thursday, October 24, 1929, stock market prices suddenly plummeted. Ten billion dollars in investments (roughly equivalent to about \$100 billion today) disappeared in a matter of hours. Panicked selling set in, stock sunk to record lows, and stunned investors crowded the New York Stock Exchange demanding answers. Leading bankers met privately at the offices of J.P. Morgan and raised millions in personal and institutional contributions to halt the slide. They marched across the street and ceremoniously bought stocks at inflated prices. The market temporarily stabilized, but fears spread over the weekend, and the following week frightened investors dumped their portfolios to avoid further losses. On October 29, "Black Tuesday," the stock market began its long precipitous fall. Stock values evaporated. Shares of U.S. Steel dropped from \$262 to \$22. General Motors' stock fell from \$73 a share to \$8. Four-fifths of the J.D. Rockefeller's fortune—the greatest in American history—vanished.

Although the Crash stunned the nation, it exposed the deeper, underlying problems with the American economy in the 1920s. The stock market's popularity grew throughout the 1920s, but only 2.5% of Americans had brokerage accounts; the overwhelming majority of Americans had no direct personal stake in Wall Street. The stock market's collapse, no matter how dramatic, did not by itself depress the American economy. Instead, the

Crash exposed a great number of factors which, when combined with the financial panic, sunk the American economy into the greatest of all economic crises. Rising inequality, declining demand, rural collapse, overextended investors, and the bursting of speculative bubbles all conspired to plunge the nation into the Great Depression.

Despite progressive resistance, the vast gap between rich and poor accelerated throughout the early-twentieth century. In the aggregate, Americans in 1929 were better off than in previous years. Per capita income rose 10% for all Americans, but 75% for the nation's wealthiest citizens. The return of conservative politics in the 1920s reinforced federal fiscal policies that exacerbated the divide: low corporate and personal taxes, easy credit, and depressed interest rates overwhelmingly favored wealthy investors who, flush with cash, spent their money on luxury goods and speculative investments in the rapidly rising stock market.

The pro-business policies of the 1920s were designed for an American economy built upon the production and consumption of durable goods. Yet, by the late 1920s, much of the market was saturated. The boom of automobile manufacturing, the great driver of the American economy in the 1920s, slowed as fewer and fewer Americans with the means to purchase a car had not already done so. More and more, the well-to-do had no need for the new automobiles, radios, and other consumer goods that fueled GDP growth in the 1920s. When products failed to sell, inventories piled up, manufacturers scaled back production, and companies fired workers, stripping potential consumers of cash, blunting demand for consumer goods, and replicating the downward economic cycle. The situation was only compounded by increased automation and rising efficiency in American factories. Despite impressive overall growth throughout the 1920s, unemployment hovered around 7% throughout the decade, suppressing purchasing power for a great swath of potential consumers.



While a manufacturing innovation, Henry Ford's assembly line produced so many cars as to flood the automobile market in the 1920s. Interview with Henry Ford, Literary Digest, January 7, 1928. [Wikimedia](#).

For American farmers, meanwhile, “hard times” began long before the markets crashed. In 1920 and 1921, after several years of larger-than-average profits, farm prices in the South and West continued their long decline, plummeting as production climbed and domestic and international demand for cotton, foodstuffs, and other agricultural products stalled. Widespread soil exhaustion on western farms only compounded the problem. Farmers found themselves unable to make payments on loans taken out during the good years, and banks in

agricultural areas tightened credit in response. By 1929, farm families were overextended, in no shape to make up for declining consumption, and in a precarious economic position even before the Depression wrecked the global economy.

Despite serious foundational problems in the industrial and agricultural economy, most Americans in 1929 and 1930 still believed the economy would bounce back. In 1930, amid one of the Depression's many false hopes, President Herbert Hoover reassured an audience that "the depression is over." But the president was not simply guilty of false optimism. Hoover made many mistakes. During his 1928 election campaign, Hoover promoted higher tariffs as a means for encouraging domestic consumption and protecting American farmers from foreign competition. Spurred by the ongoing agricultural depression, Hoover signed into law the highest tariff in American history, the Smoot-Hawley Tariff of 1930, just as global markets began to crumble. Other countries responded in kind, tariff walls rose across the globe, and international trade ground to a halt. Between 1929 and 1932, international trade dropped from \$36 billion to only \$12 billion. American exports fell by 78%. Combined with overproduction and declining domestic consumption, the tariff exacerbated the world's economic collapse.

But beyond structural flaws, speculative bubbles, and destructive protectionism, the final contributing element of the Great Depression was a quintessentially human one: panic. The frantic reaction to the market's fall aggravated the economy's other many failings. More economic policies backfired. The Federal Reserve overcorrected in their response to speculation by raising interest rates and tightening credit. Across the country, banks denied loans and called in debts. Their patrons, afraid that reactionary policies meant further financial trouble, rushed to withdraw money before institutions could close their doors, ensuring their fate. Such bank runs were not uncommon in the 1920s, but, in 1930, with the economy worsening and panic from the crash accelerating, 1,352 banks failed. In 1932, nearly 2,300 banks collapsed, taking personal deposits, savings, and credit with them.

The Great Depression was the confluence of many problems, most of which had begun during a time of unprecedented economic growth. Fiscal policies of the Republican "business presidents" undoubtedly widened the gap between rich and poor and fostered a "stand-off" over international trade, but such policies were widely popular and, for much of the decade, widely seen as a source of the decade's explosive growth. With fortunes to be won and standards of living to maintain, few Americans had the foresight or wherewithal to repudiate an age of easy credit, rampant consumerism, and wild speculation. Instead, as the Depression worked its way across the United States, Americans hoped to weather the economic storm as best they could, waiting for some form of relief, any answer to the ever-mounting economic collapse that strangled so many Americans' lives.

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HERBERT HOOVER AND THE POLITICS OF THE DEPRESSION



"Unemployed men queued outside a depression soup kitchen opened in Chicago by Al Capone," February 1931. [Wikimedia](#).

As the Depression spread, public blame settled on President Herbert Hoover and the conservative politics of the Republican Party. But Hoover was as much victim as perpetrator, a man who had the misfortune of becoming a visible symbol for large invisible forces. In 1928 Hoover had no reason to believe that his presidency would be any different than that of his predecessor, Calvin Coolidge, whose time in office was marked by relative government inaction, seemingly rampant prosperity, and high approval ratings.

Coolidge had decided not to seek a second term in 1928. A man of few words, "Silent Cal" publicized this decision by handing a scrap of paper to a reporter that simply read: "I do not choose to run for president in 1928." The race therefore became a contest between the Democratic governor of New York, Al Smith, whose Catholic faith and immigrant background aroused nativist suspicions and whose connections to Tammany Hall and anti-Prohibition politics offended reformers, and the Republican candidate, Herbert Hoover, whose All-American,

Midwestern, Protestant background and managerial prowess during the First World War endeared him to American voters.

Hoover epitomized the “self-made man.” Orphaned at age 9, he was raised by a strict Quaker uncle on the West Coast. He graduated from Stanford University in 1895 and worked as an engineer for several multinational mining companies. He became a household name during World War I when he oversaw voluntary rationing as the head of the U.S. Food Administration and, after the armistice, served as the Director General of the American Relief Association in Europe. Hoover’s reputation for humanitarian service and problem-solving translated into popular support, even as the public soured on Wilson’s Progressive activism. Hoover was one of the few politicians whose career benefitted from wartime public service. After the war both the Democratic and Republican parties tried to draft him to run for president in 1920.

Hoover declined to run in 1920 and 1924. He served instead as Secretary of Commerce under both Harding and Coolidge, taking an active role in all aspects of government. In 1928, he seemed the natural successor to Coolidge. Politically, aside from the issue of Prohibition (he was a “dry,” Smith a “wet”), Hoover’s platform differed very little from Smith’s, leaving little to discuss during the campaign except personality and religion. Both benefitted Hoover. Smith’s background engendered opposition from otherwise solid Democratic states, especially in the South, where his Catholic, ethnic, urban, and anti-Prohibition background were anathema. His popularity among urban ethnic voters counted for little. Several southern states, in part owing to the work of itinerant evangelical politicking, voted Republican for the first time since Reconstruction. Hoover won in a landslide, taking nearly 60% of the popular vote.

Although Hoover is sometimes categorized as a “business president” in line with his Republican predecessors, he also embraced an inherent business progressivism, a system of voluntary action called “Associationalism” that assumed Americans could maintain a web of voluntary cooperative organizations dedicated to providing economic assistance and services to those in need. Businesses, the thinking went, would willingly limit harmful practice for the greater economic good. To Hoover, direct government aid would discourage a healthy work ethic while Associationalism would encourage the very self-control and self-initiative that fueled economic growth. But when the Depression exposed the incapacity of such strategies to produce an economic recovery, Hoover proved insufficiently flexible to recognize the limits of his ideology. And when the ideology failed, so too did his presidency.

Hoover entered office upon a wave of popular support, but by October 1929 the economic collapse had overwhelmed his presidency. Like all too many Americans, Hoover and his advisers assumed—or perhaps simply hoped—that the sharp financial and economic decline was a temporary downturn, another “bust” of the inevitable boom-bust cycles that stretched back through America’s commercial history. Many economists argued that periodic busts culled weak firms and paved the way for future growth. And so when suffering Americans looked to Hoover for help, Hoover could only answer with volunteerism. He *asked* business leaders to promise to maintain investments and employment and *encouraged* state and local charities to provide assistance to those in need. Hoover established the President’s Organization for Unemployment Relief, or POUR, to help organize the efforts of private agencies. While POUR urged charitable giving, charitable relief organizations were overwhelmed by the growing needs of the many multiplying unemployed, underfed, and unhoused Americans. By mid-1932, for instance, a quarter of all of New York’s private charities closed: they had simply run out of money. In Atlanta, solvent relief charities could only provide \$1.30 per week to needy families. The size and scope of the Depression overpowered the radically insufficient capacity of private volunteer organizations to mediate the crisis.

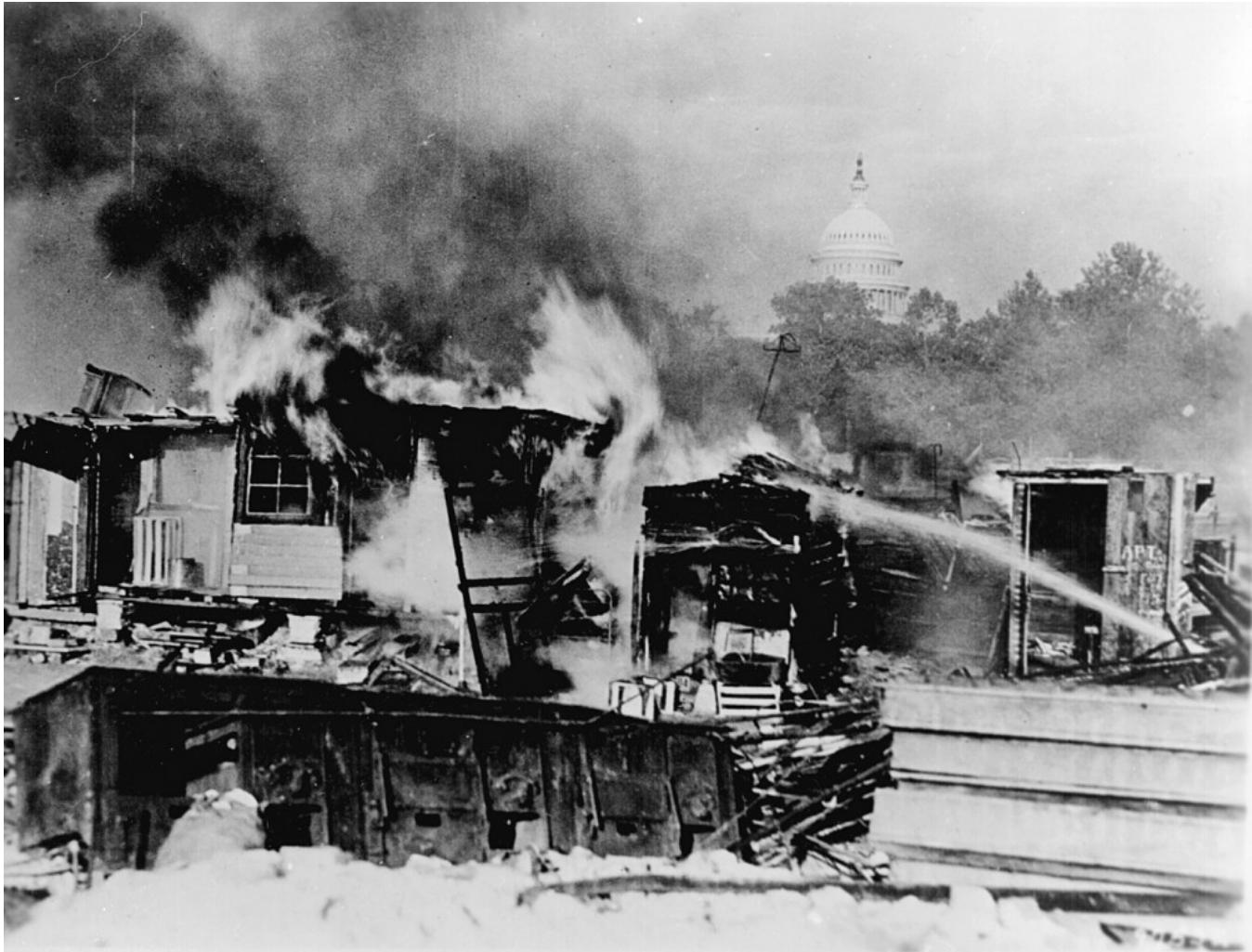
By 1932, with the economy long-since stagnant and a reelection campaign looming, Hoover, hoping to stimulate American industry, created the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to provide emergency loans to banks, building-and-loan societies, railroads, and other private industries. It was radical in its use of direct government aid and out of character for the normally *laissez-faire* Hoover, but it also bypassed needy Americans to bolster industrial and financial interests. New York Congressman Fiorello LaGuardia, who later served as mayor of New York City, captured public sentiment when he denounced the RFC as a “millionaire’s dole.”

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THE BONUS ARMY



"Shacks, put up by the Bonus Army on the Anacostia flats, Washington, D.C., burning after the battle with the military. The Capitol in the background. 1932." [Wikimedia](#).

Hoover's reaction to a major public protest sealed his legacy. In the summer of 1932, Congress debated a bill authorizing immediate payment of long-promised cash bonuses to veterans of World War I, originally scheduled to be paid out in 1945. Given the economic hardships facing the country, the bonus came to symbolize government relief for the most deserving recipients, and from across the country more than 15,000 unemployed veterans and their families converged on Washington, D.C. They erected a tent city across the Potomac River in Anacostia Flats, a "Hooverville" in the spirit of the camps of homeless and unemployed Americans then appearing in American cities.

Concerned with what immediate payment would do to the federal budget, Hoover opposed the bill, which was eventually voted down by the Senate. While most of the "Bonus Army" left Washington in defeat, many stayed to press their case. Hoover called the remaining veterans "insurrectionists" and ordered them to leave. When thousands failed to heed the vacation order, General Douglas MacArthur, accompanied by local police, infantry, cavalry, tanks, and a machine gun squadron, stormed the tent city and routed the Bonus Army. National media covered the disaster as troops chased down men and women, tear-gassed children, and torched the shantytown.

Hoover's insensitivity toward suffering Americans, his unwillingness to address widespread economic problems, and his repeated platitudes about returning prosperity condemned his presidency. Hoover of course was not responsible for the Depression, not personally. But neither he nor his advisers conceived of the enormity of the crisis, a crisis his conservative ideology could neither accommodate nor address. As a result, Americans found little relief from Washington. They were on their own.

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THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION



"Hooverville, Seattle." 1932-1937. [Washington State Archives](#).

In 1934 a woman from Humboldt County, California, wrote to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt seeking a job for her husband, a surveyor, who had been out of work for nearly two years. The pair had survived on the meager income she received from working at the county courthouse. "My salary could keep us going," she explained, "but—I am to have a baby." The family needed temporary help, and, she explained, "after that I can go back to

work and we can work out our own salvation. But to have this baby come to a home full of worry and despair, with no money for the things it needs, is not fair. It needs and deserves a happy start in life."

As the United States slid ever deeper into the Great Depression, such tragic scenes played out time and time again. Individuals, families, and communities faced the painful, frightening, and often bewildering collapse of the economic institutions upon which they depended. The more fortunate were spared worst effects, and a few even profited from it, but by the end of 1932, the crisis had become so deep and so widespread that most Americans had suffered directly. Markets crashed through no fault of their own. Workers were plunged into poverty because of impersonal forces for which they shared no responsibility. With no safety net, they were thrown into economic chaos.

With rampant unemployment and declining wages, Americans slashed expenses. The fortunate could survive by simply deferring vacations and regular consumer purchases. Middle- and working-class Americans might rely upon disappearing credit at neighborhood stores, default on utility bills, or skip meals. Those that could borrowed from relatives or took in boarders in homes or "doubled up" in tenements. The most desperate, the chronically unemployed, encamped on public or marginal lands in "Hoovervilles," spontaneous shantytowns that dotted America's cities, depending upon breadlines and street-corner peddling. Poor women and young children entered the labor force, as they always had. The ideal of the "male breadwinner" was always a fiction for poor Americans, but the Depression decimated millions of new workers. The emotional and psychological shocks of unemployment and underemployment only added to the shocking material depravities of the Depression. Social workers and charity officials, for instance, often found the unemployed suffering from feelings of futility, anger, bitterness, confusion, and loss of pride. Such feelings affected the rural poor no less than the urban.

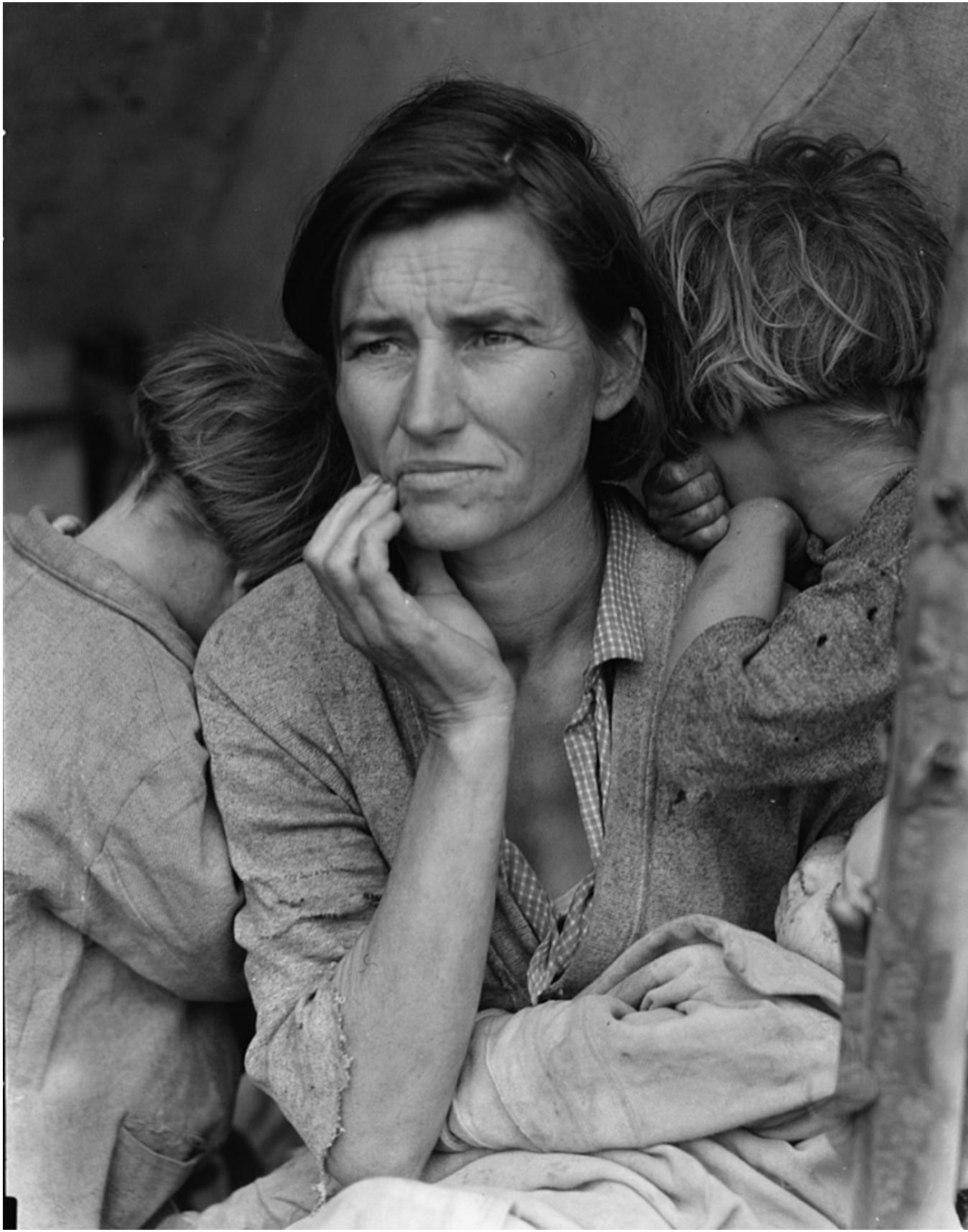
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MIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION

On the Great Plains, environmental catastrophe deepened America's longstanding agricultural crisis and magnified the tragedy of the Depression. Beginning in 1932, severe droughts hit from Texas to the Dakotas and lasted until at least 1936. The droughts compounded years of agricultural mismanagement. To grow their crops, Plains farmers had plowed up natural ground cover that had taken ages to form over the surface of the dry Plains states. Relatively wet decades had protected them, but, during the early 1930s, without rain, the exposed fertile topsoil turned to dust, and without sod or windbreaks such as trees, rolling winds churned the dust into massive storms that blotted out the sky, choked settlers and livestock, and rained dirt not only across the region but as far east as Washington, D.C., New England, and ships on the Atlantic Ocean. The "Dust Bowl," as the region became known, exposed all-too-late the need for conservation. The region's farmers, already hit by years of foreclosures and declining commodity prices, were decimated. For many in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Arkansas who were "baked out, blown out, and broke," their only hope was to travel west to California, whose rains still brought bountiful harvests and—potentially—jobs for farmworkers. It was an exodus. Oklahoma lost 440,000 people, or a full 18.4 percent of its 1930 population, to out-migration.



This iconic photograph made real the suffering of millions during the Great Depression. Dorothea Lange, "Destitute pea pickers in California. Mother of seven children. Age thirty-two. Nipomo, California" or "Migrant Mother," February/March 1936. [Library of Congress](#).

Dorothea Lange's *Migrant Mother* became one of the most enduring images of the "Dust Bowl" and the ensuing westward exodus. Lange, a photographer for the Farm Security Administration, captured the image at migrant farmworker camp in Nipomo, California, in 1936. In the photograph a young mother stares out with a worried, weary expression. She a migrant, having left her home in Oklahoma to follow the crops in the Golden State. She took part in what many in the mid-1930s were beginning to recognize as a vast migration of families out of the southwestern plains states. In the image she cradles an infant and supports two older children, who cling to her. Lange's photo encapsulated the nation's struggle. The subject of the photograph seemed used to hard work but down on her luck, and uncertain about what the future might hold.

The "Okies," as such westward migrants were disparagingly called by their new neighbors, were the most visible group many who were on the move during the Depression, lured by news and rumors of jobs in far flung regions of the country. By 1932 sociologists were estimating that millions of men were on the roads and rails travelling the country. Economists sought to quantify the movement of families from the Plains. Popular magazines and newspapers were filled with stories of homeless boys and the veterans-turned-migrants of the Bonus Army commandeering boxcars. Popular culture, such as William Wellman's 1933 film, *Wild Boys of the Road*, and, most famously, John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, published in 1939 and turned into a hit movie a year later, captured the Depression's dislocated populations.

These years witnessed the first significant reversal in the flow of people between rural and urban areas. Thousands of city-dwellers fled the jobless cities and moved to the country looking for work. As relief efforts floundered, many state and local officials threw up barriers to migration, making it difficult for newcomers to receive relief or find work. Some state legislatures made it a crime to bring poor migrants into the state and allowed local officials to deport migrants to neighboring states. In the winter of 1935-1936, California, Florida, and Colorado established "border blockades" to block poor migrants from their states and reduce competition with local residents for jobs. A billboard outside Tulsa, Oklahoma, informed potential migrants that there were "NO JOBS in California" and warned them to "KEEP Out."

Sympathy for migrants, however, accelerated late in the Depression with the publication of John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. The Joad family's struggles drew attention to the plight of Depression-era migrants and, just a month after the nationwide release of the film version, Congress created the Select Committee to Investigate the Interstate Migration of Destitute Citizens. Starting in 1940, the Committee held widely publicized hearings. But it was too late. Within a year of its founding, defense industries were already gearing up in the wake of the outbreak of World War II, and the "problem" of migration suddenly became a *lack* of migrants needed to fill war industries. Such relief was nowhere to be found in the 1930s.

Americans meanwhile feared foreign workers willing to work for even lower wages. The *Saturday Evening Post* warned that foreign immigrants, who were "compelled to accept employment on any terms and conditions offered," would exacerbate the economic crisis. On September 8, 1930, the Hoover administration issued a press release on the administration of immigration laws "under existing conditions of unemployment." Hoover instructed consular officers to scrutinize carefully the visa applications of those "likely to become public charges" and suggested that this might include denying visas to most, if not all, alien laborers and artisans. The crisis itself had served to stifle foreign immigration, but such restrictive and exclusionary actions in the first years of the Depression intensified its effects. The number of European visas issued fell roughly 60 percent while deportations dramatically increased. Between 1930 and 1932, 54,000 people were deported. An additional 44,000 deportable aliens left "voluntarily."

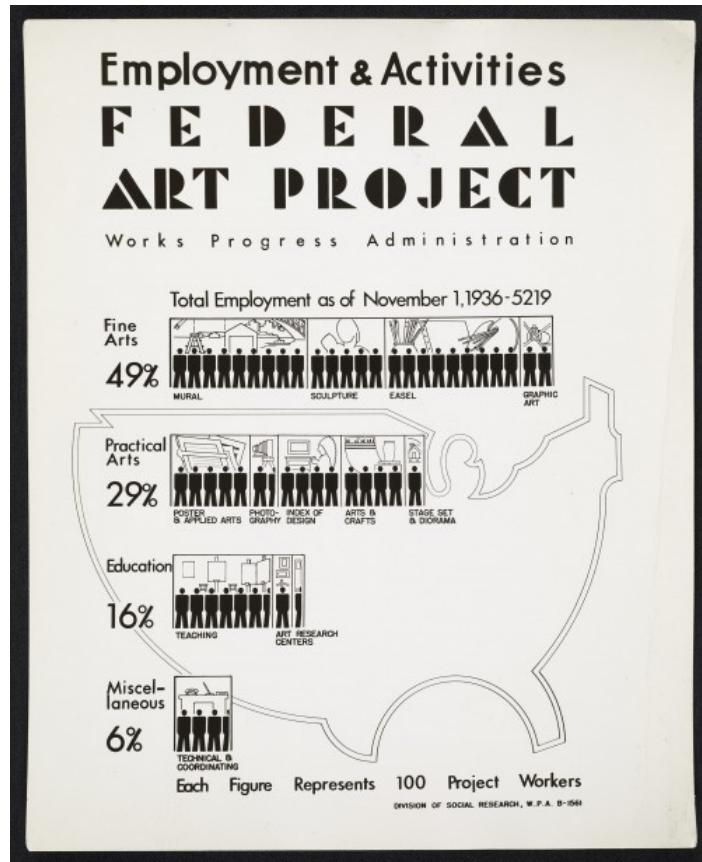
Exclusionary measures hit Mexican immigrants particularly hard. The State Department made a concerted effort to reduce immigration from Mexico as early as 1929 and Hoover's executive actions arrived the following year. Officials in the Southwest led a coordinated effort to push out Mexican immigrants. In Los Angeles, the Citizens Committee on Coordination of Unemployment Relief began working closely with federal officials in early 1931 to conduct deportation raids while the Los Angeles County Department of Charities began a simultaneous drive to repatriate Mexicans and Mexican Americans on relief, negotiating a charity rate with the railroads to return Mexicans "voluntarily" to their mother country. According to the federal census, from 1930 to 1940 the Mexican-born population living in Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas fell from 616,998 to 377,433. Franklin Roosevelt did not indulge anti-immigrant sentiment as willingly as Hoover had. Under the New Deal, the Immigration and Naturalization Service halted some of the Hoover Administration's most divisive practices, but, with jobs suddenly scarce, hostile attitudes intensified, and official policies less than welcoming, immigration plummeted and deportations rose. Over the course of the Depression, more people left the United States than entered it.

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT AND THE "FIRST" NEW DEAL

The early years of the Depression were catastrophic. The crisis, far from relenting, deepened each year. Unemployment peaked at 25% in 1932. With no end in sight, and with private firms crippled and charities overwhelmed by the crisis, Americans looked to their government as the last barrier against starvation, hopelessness, and perpetual poverty.

Few presidential elections in modern American history have been more consequential than that of 1932. The United States was struggling through the third year of the Depression and exasperated voters overthrew Hoover in a landslide to elect the Democratic governor of New York, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt came from a privileged background in New York's Hudson River Valley (his distant cousin, Theodore Roosevelt, became president while Franklin was at Harvard). Franklin Roosevelt embarked upon a slow but steady ascent through state and national politics. In 1913, he was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy, a position he held during the defense emergency of World War I. In the course of his rise, in the summer of 1921, Roosevelt suffered a sudden bout of lower-body pain and paralysis. He was diagnosed with polio. The disease left him a paraplegic, but, encouraged and assisted by his wife, Eleanor, Roosevelt sought therapeutic treatment and maintained sufficient political connections to reenter politics. In 1928, Roosevelt won election as governor of New York. He oversaw the rise of the Depression and drew from progressivism to address the economic crisis. During his gubernatorial tenure, Roosevelt introduced the first comprehensive unemployment relief program and helped to pioneer efforts to expand public utilities. He also relied on like-minded advisors. For example, Frances Perkins, then commissioner of the state's Labor Department, successfully advocated pioneering legislation which enhanced workplace safety and reduced the use of child labor in factories. Perkins later accompanied Roosevelt to Washington and serve as the nation's first female Secretary of Labor.

On July 1, 1932, Roosevelt, the newly-designated presidential nominee of the Democratic Party, delivered the first and one of the most famous on-site acceptance speeches in American presidential history. Building to a conclusion, he promised, "I pledge you, I pledge myself, to a new deal for the American people." Newspaper editors seized upon the phrase "new deal," and it entered the American political lexicon as shorthand for Roosevelt's program to address the Great Depression. There were, however, few hints in his political campaign



Posters like this showing the extent of the Federal Art Project were used to prove the worth of the WPA's various endeavors and, by extension, the value of the New Deal to the American people.
"Employment and Activities poster for the WPA's Federal Art Project," January 1, 1936. [Wikimedia](#).

that suggested the size and scope of the “New Deal.” Regardless, Roosevelt crushed Hoover. He won more counties than any previous candidate in American history. He spent the months between his election and inauguration traveling, planning, and assembling a team of advisors, the famous “Brain Trust” of academics and experts, to help him formulate a plan of attack. On March 4th, 1933, in his first Inaugural Address, Roosevelt famously declared, “This great Nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper. So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”

Roosevelt’s reassuring words would have rung hollow if he had not taken swift action against the economic crisis. In his first days in office, Roosevelt and his advisers prepared, submitted, and secured Congressional enactment of numerous laws designed to arrest the worst of the Great Depression. His administration threw the federal government headlong into the fight against the Depression.

Roosevelt immediately looked to stabilize the collapsing banking system. He declared a national “bank holiday” closing American banks and set to work pushing the Emergency Banking Act swiftly through Congress. On March 12th, the night before select banks reopened under stricter federal guidelines, Roosevelt appeared on the radio in the first of his “Fireside Chats.” The addresses, which the president continued delivering through four terms, were informal, even personal. Roosevelt used his airtime to explain New Deal legislation, to encourage confidence in government action, and to mobilize the American people’s support. In the first “chat,” Roosevelt described the new banking safeguards and asked the public to place their trust and their savings in banks. Americans responded and across the country, deposits outpaced withdrawals. The act was a major success. In June, Congress passed the Glass-Steagall Banking Act, which instituted federal deposit insurance and barred the mixing of commercial and investment banking.

Stabilizing the banks was only a first step. In the remainder of his “First Hundred Days,” Roosevelt and his congressional allies focused especially on relief for suffering Americans. Congress debated, amended, and passed what Roosevelt proposed. As one historian noted, the president “directed the entire operation like a seasoned field general.” And despite some questions over the constitutionality of many of his actions, Americans and their congressional representatives conceded that the crisis demanded swift and immediate action. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) employed young men on conservation and reforestation projects; the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) provided direct cash assistance to state relief agencies struggling to care for the unemployed; the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) built a series of hydroelectric dams along the Tennessee River as part of a comprehensive program to economically develop a chronically depressed region; several agencies helped home and farm owners refinance their mortgages. And Roosevelt wasn’t done.

The heart of Roosevelt’s early recovery program consisted of two massive efforts to stabilize and coordinate the American economy: the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) and the National Recovery Administration (NRA). The AAA, created in May 1933, aimed to raise the prices of agricultural commodities (and hence farmers’ income) by offering cash incentives to voluntarily limit farm production (decreasing supply, thereby raising prices). The National Industrial Recovery Act, which created the National Recovery Administration (NRA) in June 1933, suspended antitrust laws to allow businesses to establish “codes” that would coordinate prices, regulate production levels, and establish conditions of employment to curtail “cutthroat competition.” In exchange for these exemptions, businesses agreed to provide reasonable wages and hours, end child labor, and allow workers the right to unionize. Participating businesses earned the right to display a placard with the NRA’s “Blue Eagle,” showing their cooperation in the effort to combat the Great Depression.

The programs of the First Hundred Days stabilized the American economy and ushered in a robust though imperfect recovery. GDP climbed once more, but even as output increased, unemployment remained stubbornly high. Though the unemployment rate dipped from its high in 1933, when Roosevelt was inaugurated, vast numbers remained out of work. If the economy could not put people back to work, the New Deal would try. The Civil Works Administration (CWA) and, later, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) put unemployed men and women to work on projects designed and proposed by local governments. The Public Works Administration (PWA) provided grants-in-aid to local governments for large infrastructure projects, such as bridges, tunnels, schoolhouses, libraries, and America’s first federal public housing projects. Together, they provided not only tangible projects of immense public good, but employment for millions. The New Deal was reshaping much of the nation.

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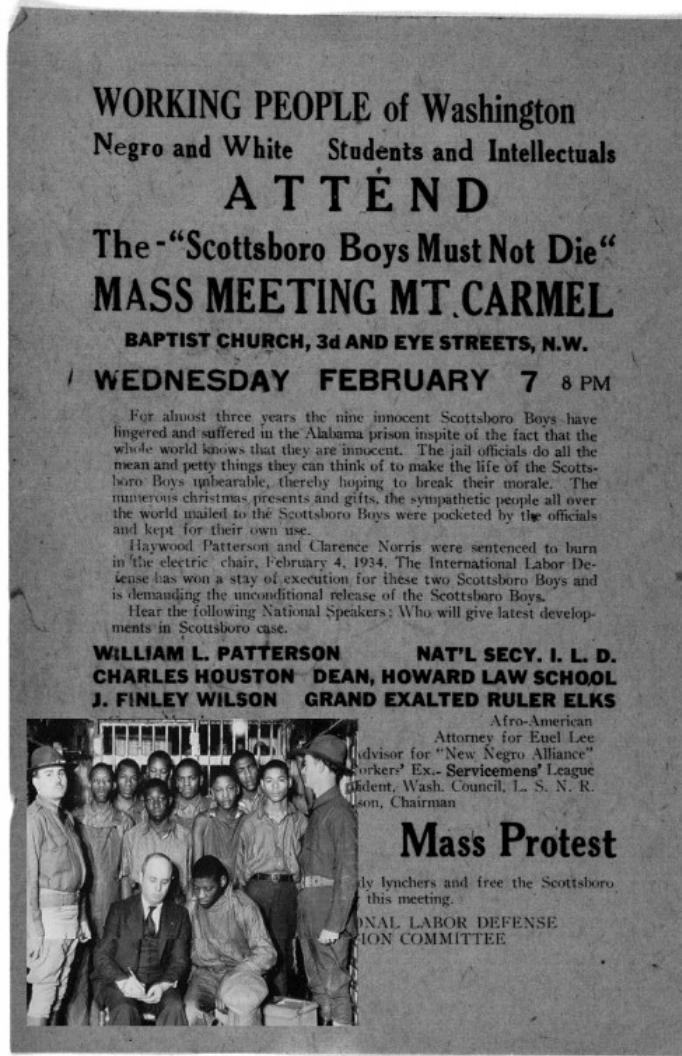
THE NEW DEAL IN THE SOUTH

The impact of initial New Deal legislation was readily apparent in the South, a region of perpetual poverty especially plagued by the Depression. In 1929 the average per capita income in the American Southeast was \$365, the lowest in the nation. Southern farmers averaged \$183 per year at a time when farmers on the West Coast made more than four times that. Moreover, they were trapped into the production of cotton and corn, crops that depleted the soil and returned ever-diminishing profits. Despite the ceaseless efforts of civic boosters, what little industry the South had remained low-wage, low-skilled, and primarily extractive. Southern workers made significantly less than their national counterparts: 75% of non-southern textile workers, 60% of iron and steel workers, and a paltry 45% of lumber workers. At the time of the crash, southerners were already underpaid, underfed, and undereducated.

Major New Deal programs were designed with the South in mind. FDR hoped that by drastically decreasing the amount of land devoted to cotton, the AAA would arrest its long-plummeting price decline. Farmers plowed up existing crops and left fields fallow, and the market price did rise. But in an agricultural world of land-owners and landless farmworkers (such as tenants and sharecroppers), the benefits of the AAA bypassed the southerners who needed them most. The government relied on land owners and local organizations to distribute money fairly to those most affected by production limits, but many owners simply kicked tenants and croppers off their land, kept the subsidy checks for keeping those acres fallow, and reinvested the profits in mechanical farming equipment that further suppressed the demand for labor. Instead of making farming profitable again, the AAA pushed landless southern farmworkers off the land.

But Roosevelt's assault on southern poverty took many forms. Southern industrial practices attracted much attention. The NRA encouraged higher wages and better conditions. It began to suppress the rampant use of child labor in southern mills, and, for the first time, provided federal protection for unionized workers all across the country. Those gains were eventually solidified in the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act, which set a national minimum wage of \$0.25/hour (eventually rising to .40/hour). The minimum wage disproportionately affected low-paid southern workers, and brought southern wages within the reach of northern wages.

The president's support for unionization further impacted the South. Southern industrialists had proven themselves ardent foes of unionization, particularly in the infamous southern textile mills. In 1934, when workers at textile mills across the southern Piedmont struck over low wages and long hours, owners turned to local and state authorities to quash workers' groups, even as they recruited thousands of strikebreakers from the many displaced farmers swelling industrial centers looking for work. But in 1935 the National Labor Relations Act, also



known as the Wagner Act, guaranteed the rights of most workers to unionize and bargain collectively. And so unionized workers, backed by the support of the federal government and determined to enforce the reforms of the New Deal, pushed for higher wages, shorter hours, and better conditions. With growing success, union members came to see Roosevelt as a protector of workers' rights. Or, as one union leader put it, an "agent of God."

Perhaps the most successful New Deal program in the South was the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), an ambitious program to use hydroelectric power, agricultural and industrial reform, flood control, economic development, education, and healthcare, to radically remake the impoverished watershed region of the Tennessee River. Though the area of focus was limited, Roosevelt's TVA sought to "make a different type of citizen" out of the area's penniless residents. The TVA built a series of hydroelectric dams to control flooding and distribute electricity to the otherwise non-electrified areas at government-subsidized rates. Agents of the TVA met with residents and offered training and general education classes to improve agricultural practices and exploit new job opportunities. The TVA encapsulates Roosevelt's vision for uplifting the South and integrating it into the larger national economy.

Roosevelt initially courted conservative southern Democrats to ensure the legislative success of the New Deal, all but guaranteeing that the racial and economic inequalities of the region remained intact, but, by the end of his second term, he had won the support of enough non-southern voters that he felt confident in confronting some of the region's most glaring inequalities. Nowhere was this more apparent than in his endorsement of a report, formulated by a group of progressive southern New Dealers, entitled "A Report on Economic Conditions in the South." The pamphlet denounced the hardships wrought by the southern economy—in his introductory letter to the Report, called the region "the Nation's No. 1 economic problem"—and blasted reactionary southern anti-New Dealers. He suggested that the New Deal could save the South and thereby spur a nationwide recovery. The Report was among the first broadsides in Roosevelt's coming reelection campaign that addressed the inequalities that continued to mark southern and national life.

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VIDEO: THE NEW DEAL

In this video, John Green teaches you about the New Deal, which was president Franklin D. Roosevelt's plan to pull the United States out of the Great Depression of the 1930's. Did it work? Maybe. John will teach you about some of the most effective and some of the best known programs of the New Deal. They weren't always the same thing. John will tell you who supported the New Deal, and who opposed it. He'll also get into how the New Deal changed the relationship between the government and citizens, and will even reveal just how the Depression ended (hint: it was war spending).

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/6bMq9Ek6jnA>

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THE NEW DEAL OF APPALACHIA

The New Deal also addressed another poverty-stricken region, Appalachia, the mountain-and-valley communities that roughly follow the Appalachian Mountain Range from southern New York to the foothills of Northern Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. Appalachia's abundant natural resources, including timber and coal, were in high demand during the country's post-Civil War industrial expansion, but Appalachian industry simply extracted these

resources for profit in far-off industries, depressing the coal-producing areas even earlier than the rest of the country. By the mid-1930s, with the Depression suppressing demand, many residents were stranded in small, isolated communities whose few employers stood on the verge of collapse. Relief workers from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) reported serious shortages of medical care, adequate shelter, clothing, and food. Rampant illnesses, including typhus, tuberculosis, pneumonia, and venereal disease, as well as childhood malnutrition, further crippled Appalachia.

Several New Deal programs targeted the region. Under the auspices of the NIRA, Roosevelt established the Division of Subsistence Homesteads (DSH) within the Department of the Interior to give impoverished families an opportunity to relocate "back to the land": the DSH established 34 homestead communities nationwide, including the Appalachian regions of Alabama, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and West Virginia. The CCC contributed to projects throughout Appalachia, including the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina and Virginia, reforestation of the Chattahoochee National Forest in Georgia, and state parks such as Pine Mountain Resort State Park in Kentucky. The TVA's efforts aided communities in Tennessee and North Carolina, and the Rural Electric Administration (REA) brought electricity to 288,000 rural households.

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VOICES OF PROTEST

Despite the unprecedented actions taken in his first year in office, Roosevelt's initial relief programs could often be quite conservative. He had usually been careful to work within the bounds of presidential authority and congressional cooperation. And, unlike Europe, where several nations had turned towards state-run economies, and even fascism and socialism, Roosevelt's New Deal demonstrated a clear reluctance to radically tinker with the nation's foundational economic and social structures. Many high-profile critics attacked Roosevelt for not going far enough, and, beginning in 1934, Roosevelt and his advisors were forced to respond.

Senator Huey Long, a flamboyant Democrat from Louisiana, was perhaps the most important "voice of protest." Long's populist rhetoric appealed those who saw deeply rooted but easily addressed injustice in the nation's economic system. Long proposed a "Share Our Wealth" program in which the federal government would confiscate the assets of the extremely wealthy and redistribute them to the less well-off through guaranteed minimum incomes. "How many men ever went to a barbecue and would let one man take off the table what's intended for nine-tenths of the people to eat?" he asked. Over 27,000 "Share the Wealth" clubs sprang up across the nation as Long traveled the country explaining his program to crowds of impoverished and unemployed Americans. Long envisioned the movement as a stepping stone to the presidency, but his crusade ended in late 1935 when he was assassinated.



Huey Long was a dynamic, indomitable force (with a wild speech-giving style, seen in the photograph) who campaigned tirelessly for the common man, demanding that Americans "Share Our Wealth." Photograph of Huey P. Long, c. 1933-35. [Wikimedia](#).

on the floor of the Louisiana state capitol. Even in death, however, Long convinced Roosevelt to more stridently attack the Depression and American inequality.

But Huey Long was not alone in his critique of Roosevelt. Francis Townsend, a former doctor and public health official from California, promoted a plan for old age pensions which, he argued, would provide economic security for the elderly (who disproportionately suffered poverty) and encourage recovery by allowing older workers to retire from the work force. Reverend Charles Coughlin, meanwhile, a priest and radio personality from the suburbs of Detroit, Michigan, gained a following by making vitriolic, anti-Semitic attacks on Roosevelt for cooperating with banks and financiers and proposing a new system of “social justice” through a more state-driven economy instead. Like Long, both Townsend and Coughlin built substantial public followings.

If many Americans urged Roosevelt to go further in addressing the economic crisis, the president faced even greater opposition from conservative politicians and business leaders. By late 1934, growing complaints from business-friendly Republicans of Roosevelt’s willingness to regulate industry and use federal spending for public works and employment programs. In the South, Democrats who had originally supported the president grew increasingly hostile towards programs that challenged the region’s political, economic, and social status quo. Yet the greatest opposition came from the Supreme Court, a conservative filled with appointments made from the long years of Republican presidents.

By early 1935 the Court was reviewing programs of the New Deal. On May 27, a day Roosevelt’s supporters called “Black Monday,” the justices struck down one of the president’s signature reforms: in a case revolving around poultry processing, the Court unanimously declared the NRA unconstitutional. In early 1936, the AAA fell.

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THE “SECOND” NEW DEAL (1935–1936)

Facing reelection and rising opposition from both the left and the right, Roosevelt decided to act. The New Deal adopted a more radical, aggressive approach to poverty, the “Second” New Deal. In 1935, hoping to reconstitute some of the protections afforded workers in the now-defunct NRA, Roosevelt worked with Congress to pass the National Labor Relations Act (known as the Wagner Act for its chief sponsor, New York Senator Robert Wagner), offering federal legal protection, for the first time, for workers to organize unions. Three years later, Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act, creating the modern minimum wage. The Second New Deal also oversaw the restoration of a highly progressive federal income tax, mandated new reporting requirements for publicly traded companies, refinanced long-term home mortgages for struggling homeowners, and attempted rural reconstruction projects to bring farm incomes in line with urban ones.

The labor protections extended by Roosevelt’s New Deal were revolutionary. In northern industrial cities, workers responded to worsening conditions by banding together and demanding support for worker’s rights. In 1935, the head of the United Mine Workers, John L. Lewis, took the lead in forming a new national workers’ organization, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, breaking with the more conservative, craft-oriented AFL. The CIO won a major victory in 1937 when affiliated members in the United Auto Workers struck for recognition and better pay and hours at a General Motors plant in Flint, Michigan. In the first instance of a “sit-down” strike, the workers remained in the building until management agreed to negotiate. GM recognized the UAW and the “sit-down” strike became a new weapon in the fight for workers’ rights. Across the country, unions and workers took advantage of the New Deal’s protections to organize and win major concessions from employers.



Unionization met with fierce opposition from owners and managers, particularly in the "Manufacturing Belt" of the Mid-West. Sheldon Dick, photographer, "Strikers guarding window entrance to Fisher body plant number three. Flint, Michigan," January/February 1937. [Library of Congress](#).

The signature piece of Roosevelt's Second New Deal came the same year, in 1935. The Social Security Act provided for old-age pensions, unemployment insurance, and economic aid, based on means, to assist both the elderly and dependent children. The president was careful to mitigate some of the criticism from what was, at the time, in the American context, a revolutionary concept. He specifically insisted that social security be financed from payroll, not the federal government; "No dole," Roosevelt said repeatedly, "mustn't have a dole." He thereby helped separate Social Security from the stigma of being an undeserved "welfare" entitlement. While such a strategy saved the program from suspicions, Social Security became the centerpiece of the modern American social welfare state. It was the culmination of a long progressive push for government-sponsored social welfare, an answer to the calls of Roosevelt's opponents on the Left for reform, a response to the intractable poverty among America's neediest groups, and a recognition that the government would now assume some responsibility for the economic well-being of its citizens. But for all of its groundbreaking provisions, the Act, and the larger New Deal as well, excluded large swaths of the American population.

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EQUAL RIGHTS AND THE NEW DEAL

The Great Depression was particularly tough for nonwhite Americans. As an African American pensioner told interviewer Studs Terkel, “The Negro was born in depression. It didn’t mean too much to him. The Great American Depression … only became official when it hit the white man.” Black workers were generally the last hired when businesses expanded production and the first fired when businesses experienced downturns. In 1932, with the national unemployment average hovering around 25%, black unemployment reached as high as 50%, while even those black who kept their jobs saw their already low wages cut dramatically.

Blacks faced discrimination everywhere, but suffered especially severe legal inequality in the Jim Crow South. In 1931, for instance, a group of nine young men riding the rails between Chattanooga and Memphis, Tennessee, were pulled from the train near Scottsboro, Alabama, and charged with assaulting two white women. Despite clear evidence that the assault had not occurred, and despite one of the women later recanting, the young men endured a series of sham trials in which all but one were sentenced to death. Only the communist-oriented International Legal Defense came to the aid of the “Scottsboro Boys,” who soon became a national symbol of continuing racial prejudice in America and a rallying point for civil rights-minded Americans. In appeals, the ILD successfully challenged the Boys’ sentencing and the death sentences were either commuted or reversed, although the last of the accused did not receive parole until 1946.

Despite a concerted effort to appoint black advisors to some New Deal programs, Franklin Roosevelt did little to directly address the difficulties black communities faced. To do so openly would provoke southern Democrats and put his New Deal coalition at risk. Roosevelt not only rejected such proposals as abolishing the poll tax and declaring lynching a federal crime, he refused to specifically target African American needs in any of his larger relief and reform packages. As he explained to the national secretary of the NAACP, “I just can’t take that risk.”

In fact, even many of the programs of the New Deal had made hard times more difficult. When the codes of the NRA set new pay scales, they usually took into account regional differentiation and historical data. In the South, where African Americans had long suffered unequal pay, the new codes simply perpetuated that inequality. The codes also exempted those involved in farm work and domestic labor, the occupations of a majority of southern black men and women. The AAA was equally problematic as owners displaced black tenants and sharecroppers, many of whom were forced to return to their farms as low-paid day labor or to migrate to cities looking for wage work.

Perhaps the most notorious failure of the New Deal to aid African Americans came with the passage of the Social Security Act. Southern politicians chaffed at the prospect of African Americans benefiting from federally-sponsored social welfare, afraid that economic security would allow black southerners to escape the cycle of poverty that kept them tied to the land as cheap, exploitable farm laborers. *The Jackson (Mississippi) Daily News* callously warned that “The average Mississippian can’t imagine himself chipping in to pay pensions for able-bodied Negroes to sit around in idleness … while cotton and corn crops are crying for workers.” Roosevelt agreed to remove domestic workers and farm laborers from the provisions of the bill, excluding many African Americans, already laboring under the strictures of legal racial discrimination, from the benefits of an expanding economic safety net.

Women, too, failed to receive the full benefits of New Deal programs. On one hand, Roosevelt included women in key positions within his administration, including the first female Cabinet secretary, Frances Perkins, and a prominently placed African American advisor in the National Youth Administration, Mary McLeod Bethune. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was a key advisor to the president and became a major voice for economic and racial justice. But many New Deal programs were built upon the assumption that men would serve as “breadwinners” and women as mothers, homemakers, and consumers. New Deal programs aimed to help both but usually by forcing such gendered assumptions, making it difficult for women to attain economic autonomy. New Deal social welfare programs tended to funnel women into means-tested, state administered relief programs while reserving “entitlement” benefits for male workers, creating a kind of two-tiered social welfare state. And so, despite great advances, the New Deal failed to challenge core inequalities that continued to mark life in the United States.

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THE END OF THE NEW DEAL (1937–1939)

By 1936 Roosevelt and his New Deal had won record popularity. In November Roosevelt annihilated his Republican challenger, Governor Alf Landon of Kansas, who lost in every state save Maine and Vermont. The Great Depression had certainly not ended, but it appeared to many to be beating a slow yet steady retreat, and Roosevelt, now safely re-elected, appeared ready to take advantage of both his popularity and the improving economic climate to press for even more dramatic changes. But conservative barriers continued to limit the power of his popular support. The Supreme Court, for instance, continued to gut many of his programs.

In 1937, concerned that the Court might overthrow Social Security in an upcoming case, Roosevelt called for legislation allowing him to expand the Court by appointing a new, younger justice for every sitting member over the age of 70. Roosevelt argued that the measure would speed up the Court's ability to handle a growing backlog of cases; however, his "court-packing scheme," as opponents termed it, was clearly designed to allow the president to appoint up to six friendly, pro-New Deal justices to drown the influence of old-time conservatives on the Court. Roosevelt's "scheme" riled opposition and did not become law, but the chastened Court upheld Social Security and other pieces of New Deal legislation thereafter. Moreover, Roosevelt was slowly able to appoint more amenable justices as conservatives died or retired. Still, the "court-packing scheme" damaged the Roosevelt administration and opposition to the New Deal began to emerge and coalesce.

Compounding his problems, Roosevelt and his advisors made a costly economic misstep. Believing the United States had turned a corner, Roosevelt cut spending in 1937. The American economy plunged nearly to the depths of 1932–1933. Roosevelt reversed course and, adopting the approach popularized by the English economist John Maynard Keynes, hoped that countercyclical, "compensatory" spending would pull the country out of the recession, even at the expense of a growing budget deficit. It was perhaps too late. The "Roosevelt Recession" of 1937 became fodder for critics. Combined with the "court-packing scheme," the recession allowed for significant gains by a "conservative coalition" of southern Democrats and Midwestern Republicans. By 1939, Roosevelt struggled to build congressional support for new reforms, let alone maintain existing agencies. Moreover, the growing threat of war in Europe stole the public's attention and increasingly dominated Roosevelt's interests. The New Deal slowly receded into the background, outshone by war.

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THE LEGACY OF THE NEW DEAL

By the end of the 1930s, Roosevelt and his Democratic congresses had presided over a transformation of the American government and a realignment in American party politics. Before World War I, the American national state, though powerful, had been a "government out of sight." After the New Deal, Americans came to see the federal government as a potential ally in their daily struggles, whether finding work, securing a decent wage, getting a fair price for agricultural products, or organizing a union. Voter turnout in presidential elections jumped in 1932 and again in 1936, with most of these newly-mobilized voters forming a durable piece of the Democratic Party that would remain loyal well into the 1960s. Even as affluence returned with the American intervention in World War II, memories of the Depression continued to shape the outlook of two generations of Americans. Survivors of the Great Depression, one man would recall in the late 1960s, "are still riding with the ghost—the ghost of those days when things came hard."

Historians debate when the New Deal “ended.” Some identify the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 as the last major New Deal measure. Others see wartime measures such as price and rent control and the G.I. Bill (which afforded New Deal-style social benefits to veterans) as species of New Deal legislation. Still others conceive of a “New Deal order,” a constellation of “ideas, public policies, and political alliances,” which, though changing, guided American politics from Roosevelt’s Hundred Days forward to Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society—and perhaps even beyond. Indeed, the New Deal’s legacy still remains, and its battle lines still shape American politics.

This chapter was edited by Matthew Downs, with content contributed by Dana Cochran, Matthew Downs, Benjamin Helwege, Elisa Minoff, Caitlin Verboon, and Mason Williams.

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PRIMARY SOURCE READING: GREATER SECURITY FOR THE AVERAGE MAN

Introduction

President Herbert Hoover lost his bid for re-election in 1932 to Franklin Roosevelt (FDR – don’t confuse FDR with Teddy Roosevelt from the Progressive lecture, that was his uncle). Americans were struggling through the Depression and, thanks to the Progressive Era, had come to expect the government to solve the problem. Hoover objected to the use of government power, even to try and stem the Depression, for fear that a big government was a threat to individual freedom. Roosevelt on the other hand felt that the federal government had an obligation, even though that would mean increasing the power of the federal government (and thus decreasing the power of the states or the public in general). Read this excerpt from FDR’s Fireside Chat 6: On Government and Capitalism, given on September 30, 1934.

Fireside Chat 6

To those who say that our expenditures for Public Works and other means for recovery are a waste that we cannot afford, I answer that no country, however rich, can afford the waste of its human resources. Demoralization caused by vast unemployment is our greatest extravagance. Morally, it is the greatest menace to our social order. Some people try to tell me that we must make up our minds that for the future we shall permanently have millions of unemployed just as other countries have had them for over a decade. What may be necessary for those countries is not my responsibility to determine. But as for this country, I stand or fall by my refusal to accept as a necessary condition of our future a permanent army of unemployed. On the contrary, we must make it a national principle that we will not tolerate a large army of unemployed and that we will arrange our national economy to end our present unemployment as soon as we can and then to take wise measures against its return. I do not want to think that it is the destiny of any American to remain permanently on relief rolls. Those, fortunately few in number, who are frightened by boldness and cowed by the necessity for making decisions, complain that all we have done is unnecessary and subject to great risks. Now that these people are coming out of their storm cellars, they forget that there ever was a storm. They point to England. They would have you believe that England has made progress out of her depression by a do-nothing policy, by letting nature take her course. England has her peculiarities and we have ours but I do not believe any intelligent observer can accuse England of undue orthodoxy in the present emergency.

Did England let nature take her course? No. Did England hold to the gold standard when her reserves were threatened? No. Has England gone back to the gold standard today? No. Did England hesitate to call in ten billion dollars of her war bonds bearing 5 percent interest, to issue new bonds therefore bearing only 3 1/2 percent interest, thereby saving the British Treasury one hundred and fifty million dollars a year in interest alone? No. And

let it be recorded that the British bankers helped. Is it not a fact that ever since the year 1909, Great Britain in many ways has advanced further along lines of social security than the United States? Is it not a fact that relations between capital and labor on the basis of collective bargaining are much further advanced in Great Britain than in the United States? It is perhaps not strange that the conservative British press has told us with pardonable irony that much of our New Deal program is only an attempt to catch up with English reforms that go back ten years or more.

Nearly all Americans are sensible and calm people. We do not get greatly excited nor is our peace of mind disturbed, whether we be businessmen or workers or farmers, by awesome pronouncements concerning the unconstitutionality of some of our measures of recovery and relief and reform. We are not frightened by reactionary lawyers or political editors. All of these cries have been heard before. More than twenty years ago, when Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson were attempting to correct abuses in our national life, the great Chief Justice White said:

"There is great danger it seems to me to arise from the constant habit which prevails where anything is opposed or objected to, of referring without rhyme or reason to the Constitution as a means of preventing its accomplishment, thus creating the general impression that the Constitution is but a barrier to progress instead of being the broad highway through which alone true progress may be enjoyed."

In our efforts for recovery we have avoided on the one hand the theory that business should and must be taken over into an all-embracing Government. We have avoided on the other hand the equally untenable theory that it is an interference with liberty to offer reasonable help when private enterprise is in need of help. The course we have followed fits the American practice of Government – a practice of taking action step by step, of regulating only to meet concrete needs – a practice of courageous recognition of change. I believe with Abraham Lincoln, that "The legitimate object of Government is to do for a community of people whatever they need to have done but cannot do at all or cannot do so well for themselves in their separate and individual capacities."

I still believe in ideals. I am not for a return to that definition of Liberty under which for many years a free people were being gradually regimented into the service of the privileged few. I prefer and I am sure you prefer that broader definition of Liberty under which we are moving forward to greater freedom, to greater security for the average man than he has ever known before in the history of America.

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PRIMARY SOURCE READING: HERBERT HOOVER ON LIBERTY

Click [HERE](#) to read a excerpt from Herbert Hoover's speech to the Republican National Convention in 1936.

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ASSIGNMENT: PERSPECTIVES ON THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND THE NEW DEAL

After reading the previous primary source readings (FDR's fireside chat [Greater Security for the Average Man](#) and [Hoover's speech on liberty](#)), answer the following in a paragraph:

1. Why did FDR see raising taxes and increasing welfare spending as an increase of freedom, and why did Hoover see it as restricting freedom?

Be sure to cite specific passages and quotations from each document in support of your answer.

NOTE: Be prepared to discuss the following in class, based on the documents above:

1. Is it ever possible for one person to gain something *without* someone else having to lose something? Can you think of a true win-win scenario? This is an important point, because back then, as today, people clamor for this or that, claiming that it will "increase freedom" or "guarantee rights," but will it do so for everyone? If it won't can you claim that a particular program or policy is truly expanding freedom and protecting rights? When is it acceptable to decrease one person's freedom in order to increase another's?

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WORLD WAR II

INTRODUCTION



Walter Rosenblum, "D Day Rescue, Omaha Beach," via [Library of Congress](#).

The 1930s and 1940s were trying times. A global economic crisis gave way to a global war that would become the deadliest and most destructive in human history. Perhaps 80 million lost their lives during World War II. Moreover, the war unleashed the most fearsome wartime technology that has ever been used in war. It saw industrialized genocide and nearly threatened the eradication of an entire people. And when it ended, the United States found itself alone as the world's greatest superpower, armed with the world's greatest economy and looking forward to a prosperous consumers' economy. But of course the war would raise as many questions as it would settle, unleashing new social forces at home and abroad that would confront new generations of Americans to come.

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VIDEOS: WORLD WAR II

In this video, John Green teaches you about World War II, a subject so big, it takes up two episodes. John will teach you how the United States got into the war, and just how involved America was before Congress actually declared war. John will actually talk a little about the military tactics involved, and he'll get into some of the weaponry involved, specifically the huge amount of aerial bombing that characterized the war, and the atomic bombs that ended the war in the Pacific.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/Objoad6rG6U>

In this second video, John Green teaches you about World War II as it was experienced on the home front. You'll learn about how the war changed the country as a whole, and changed how Americans thought about their country. John talks about government control of war production, and how the war probably helped to end the Great Depression. A broader implementation of the income tax, the growth of large corporations, and the development of the West Coast as a manufacturing center were also results of the war. The war positively changed the roles of women and African Americans, but it was pretty terrible for the Japanese Americans who were interred in camps. In short, World War II changed America's role in the world, changed American life at home, and eventually spawned the History Channel.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/HofnGQwPgqs>

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THE ORIGINS OF THE PACIFIC WAR

While the United States joined the war in 1941, two years after Europe exploded into conflict in 1939, the path to the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the surprise attack that threw the United States headlong into war, began much earlier. For the Empire of Japan, the war had begun a decade before Pearl Harbor.

On September 18, 1931, a small explosion tore up railroad tracks controlled by the Japanese-owned South Manchuria Railway near the city of Shenyang (Mukden) in the Chinese province of Manchuria. The railway company condemned the bombing as the work of anti-Japanese Chinese dissidents. Evidence, though, suggests that the initial explosion was neither an act of Chinese anti-Japanese sentiment nor an accident, but an elaborate ruse planned by the Japanese to provide a basis for invasion. In response, the privately operated Japanese Guandong (Kwangtung) army began shelling the Shenyang garrison the next day, and the garrison fell before nightfall. Hungry for Chinese territory and witnessing the weakness and disorganization of Chinese forces, but under the pretense of protecting Japanese citizens and investments, the Japanese Imperial Army ordered a full-scale invasion of Manchuria. The invasion was swift. Without a centralized Chinese army, the Japanese quickly defeated isolated Chinese warlords and by the end of February 1932, all of Manchuria was firmly under Japanese control. Japan established the nation of Manchukuo out of the former province of Manchuria.

This seemingly small skirmish—known by the Chinese as the September 18 Incident and the Japanese as the Manchurian Incident—sparked a war that would last thirteen years and claim the lives of over 35 million people. Comprehending Japanese motivations for attacking China, and the grueling stalemate of the ensuing war, are crucial for understanding Japan's seemingly unprovoked attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941, and, therefore, for understanding the involvement of the United States in World War II as well.

Despite their rapid advance into Manchuria, the Japanese put off the invasion of China for nearly three years. Japan occupied a precarious domestic and international position after the September 18 Incident. At home, Japan

was riven by political factionalism due to its stagnating economy. Leaders were torn as to whether to address modernization and lack of natural resources through unilateral expansion—the conquest of resource-rich areas such as Manchuria to export raw materials to domestic Japanese industrial bases such as Hiroshima and Nagasaki—or international cooperation—particularly a philosophy of pan-Asianism in an anti-Western coalition would push the colonial powers out of Asia. Ultimately, after a series of political crises and assassinations inflamed tensions, pro-war elements within the Japanese military triumphed over the more moderate civilian government. Japan committed itself to aggressive military expansion.

Chinese leaders Chiang Kai-shek and Zhang Xueliang appealed to the League of Nations for assistance against Japan. The United States supported the Chinese protest, proclaiming the Stimson Doctrine in January 1932, which refused to recognize any state established as a result of Japanese aggression. Meanwhile, the League of Nations sent Englishman Victor Bulwer-Lytton to investigate the September 18 Incident. After a six-month investigation, Bulwer-Lytton found the Japanese guilty of inciting the September 18 incident and demanded the return of Manchuria to China. The Japanese withdrew from the League of Nations in March 1933.

Japan isolated itself from the world. Its diplomatic isolation empowered radical military leaders who could point to Japanese military success in Manchuria and compare it to the diplomatic failures of the civilian government. The military took over Japanese policy. And in the military's eyes, the conquest of China would not only provide for Japan's industrial needs, it would secure Japanese supremacy in East Asia.

The Japanese launched a full-scale invasion of China. It assaulted the Marco Polo Bridge on August 7, 1937 and routed the forces of the Chinese National Revolutionary Army led by Chiang Kai-shek. The broken Chinese army gave up Beiping (Beijing) to the Japanese on August 8, Shanghai on November 26, and the capital, Nanjing (Nanking), on December 13. Between 250,000 and 300,000 people were killed, and tens of thousands of women were raped, when the Japanese besieged and then sacked Nanjing. The Western press labeled it the Rape of Nanjing. To halt the invading enemy, Chiang Kai-shek adopted a scorched-earth strategy of "trading space for time." His Nationalist government retreated inland, burning villages and destroying dams, and established a new capital at the Yangtze River port of Chongqing (Chungking). Although the Nationalist's scorched-earth policy hurt the Japanese military effort, it alienated scores of dislocated Chinese civilians and became a potent propaganda tool of the emerging Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Americans read about the brutal fighting in China, but the United States not only the military capacity but the will to oppose the Japanese invasion. After the gut-wrenching carnage of World War I, many Americans retreated toward a policy known as isolationism and opposed any involvement in the massive conflagrations burning in Europe and Asia. But even if Americans had wished to intervene, their military was lacking. The Japanese army was a technologically advanced force consisting of 4,100,000 million men and 900,000 Chinese collaborators—and that was in China alone. The Japanese military was armed with modern rifles, artillery, armor, and aircraft. By 1940, the Japanese navy was the third-largest and among the most technologically advanced in the world.

Still, Chinese Nationalists lobbied Washington for aid. Chiang Kai-shek's wife, Soong May-ling—known to the American public as Madame Chiang—led the effort. Born into a wealthy Japanese merchant family in 1898, Madame Chiang spent much of her childhood in the United States and had graduated from Wellesley College 1917 with a major in English literature. In contrast to her gruff husband, Madame Chiang was charming and able to use her knowledge of American culture and values to garner support for her husband and his government. But while the United States denounced Japanese aggression, it took no action.

As Chinese Nationalists fought for survival, the Communist Party was busy collecting people and supplies in the Northwestern Shaanxi Province. China had been at war with itself when the Japanese came. Nationalists battled a stubborn communist insurgency. In 1935 the Nationalists threw the communists out of the fertile Chinese coast, but an ambitious young commander named Mao Zedong recognized the power of the Chinese peasant population. In Shaanxi, Mao recruited from the local peasantry, building his force from a meager 7,000 survivors at the end of the Long March in 1935 to a robust 1.2 million members by the end of the war.

Although Japan had conquered much of the country, the Nationalists regrouped and the Communists rearmed. An uneasy truce paused the country's civil war and refocused efforts on the invaders. The Chinese could not dislodge the Japanese, but they could stall their advance. The war mired in stalemate.

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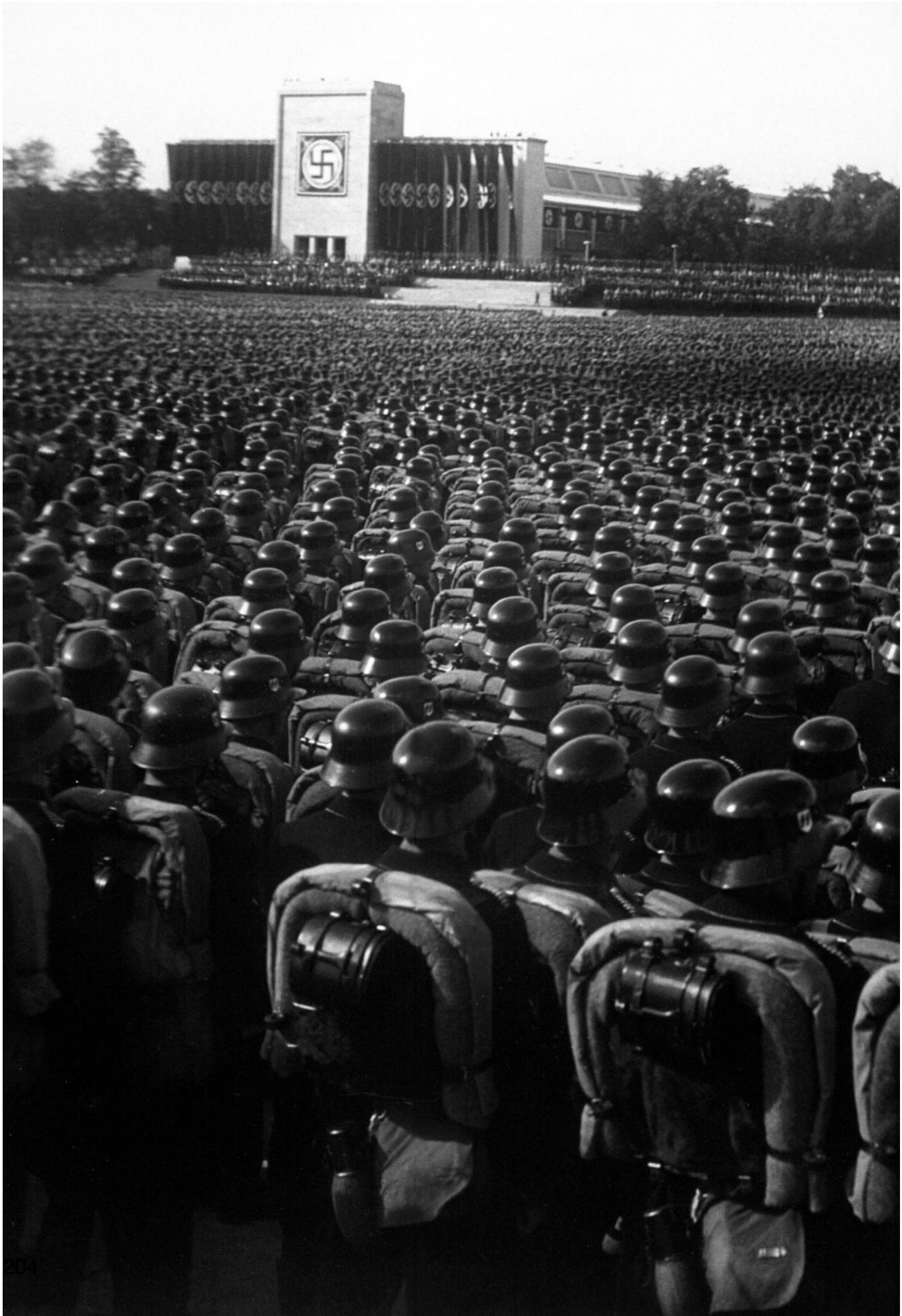
THE ORIGINS OF THE EUROPEAN WAR

Across the globe in Europe, the continent's major powers were still struggling with the after-effects of the First World War when the global economic crisis spiraled much of the continent into chaos. Germany's Weimar Republic collapsed with the economy and out of the ashes emerged Adolph Hitler's National Socialists—the Nazis. Championing German racial supremacy, fascist government, and military expansionism, Adolph Hitler rose to power and, after aborted attempts to take power in Germany, became Chancellor in 1933 and the Nazis conquered German institutions. Democratic traditions were smashed. Leftist groups were purged. Hitler repudiated the punitive damages and strict military limitations of the Treaty of Versailles. He rebuilt the German military and navy. He reoccupied regions lost during the war and re-militarized the Rhineland, along the border with France. When the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936, Hitler and Mussolini—the fascist Italian leader who had risen to power in the 1920s—intervened for the Spanish fascists, toppling the communist Spanish Republican Party. Britain and France stood by warily and began to rebuild their militaries, anxious in the face of a renewed Germany but still unwilling to draw Europe into another bloody war.

In his autobiographical manifesto, *Mein Kampf*, Hitler advocated for the unification of Europe's German peoples under one nation and that nation's need for *lebensraum*, or living space, particularly in Eastern Europe, to supply Germans with the land and resources needed for future prosperity. The *untermenschen* ("lesser" humans) would have to go. Once in power, Hitler worked toward the twin goals of unification and expansion.



"Adolf Hitler salutes troops of the Condor Legion who fought alongside Spanish Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War, during a rally upon their return to Germany, 1939." Hugo Jaeger—*Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images*.



Huge rallies like this one in Nuremberg displayed the sheer number of armed and ready troops and instilled a fierce loyalty to (or fearful silence about) Hitler and the National Socialist Party in Germany. Photograph, November, 9, 1935. [Wikimedia](#).

In 1938 Germany annexed Austria and set its sights on the Sudetenland, a large, ethnically German area of Czechoslovakia. Britain and France, alarmed but still anxious to avoid war, the major powers agreed—without Czechoslovakia's input—that Germany could annex the region in return for a promise to stop all future German aggression. It was thought that Hitler could be appeased, but it became clear that his ambitions would continue pushing German expansion. In March 1939, Hitler took the rest of Czechoslovakia and began to make demands on Poland. Britain and France promised war. And war came.

Hitler signed a secret agreement—the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact—with the Soviet Union that coordinated the splitting of Poland between the two powers and promised non-aggression thereafter. The European war began when the German *Wehrmacht* invaded Poland on September 1st, 1939. Britain and France declared war two days later and mobilized their armies. Britain and France hoped that the Poles could hold out for three to four months, enough time for the Allies to intervene. Poland fell in three weeks. The German army, anxious to avoid the rigid, grinding war of attrition that took so many millions in the stalemate of WWI, built their new modern army for speed and maneuverability. German doctrine emphasized the use of tanks, planes, and motorized infantry (infantry that used trucks for transportation instead of marching) to concentrate forces, smash front lines, and wreak havoc behind the enemy's defenses. It was called *blitzkrieg*, or lightning war.

After the fall of Poland, France and its British allies braced for an inevitable German attack. Throughout the winter of 1939-40, however, fighting was mostly confined to smaller fronts in Norway. Belligerents called it the *Sitzkrieg* (sitting war). But in May 1940, Hitler launched his attack into Western Europe. Mirroring the German's Schlieffen Plan of 1914 in the previous war, Germany attacked through the Netherlands and Belgium to avoid the prepared French defenses along the French-German border. Poland had fallen in three weeks; France lasted only a few weeks more. By June, Hitler was posing for photographs in front of the Eiffel Tower. Germany split France in half. Germany occupied and governed the north, and the south would be ruled under a puppet government in Vichy.

With France under heel, Hitler turned to Britain. Operation Sea Lion—the planned German invasion of the British Isles—required air superiority over the English Channel. From June until October the German *Luftwaffe* fought the Royal Air Force (RAF) for control of the skies. Despite having fewer planes, British pilots won the so-called Battle of Britain, saving the islands from immediate invasion and prompting the new Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, to declare, “never before in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few.”



The German aerial bombing of London left thousands homeless, hurt, or dead. This child sits among the rubble with a rather quizzical look on his face, as adults ponder their fate in the background. Toni Frissell, “[Abandoned boy holding a stuffed toy animal amid ruins following German aerial bombing of London],” 1945. [Library of Congress](#).

If Britain was safe from invasion, it was not immune from further air attacks. Stymied in the Battle of Britain, Hitler began the Blitz—a terror bombing campaign targeting cities and civilians. Hoping to crush the British will to fight, the *Luftwaffe* bombed the cities of London, Liverpool, and Manchester every night from September until the following May. Children were sent far into the countryside to live with strangers to shield them from the bombings. Remaining residents took refuge in shelters and subway tunnels, emerging each morning to put out fires and bury the dead. The Blitz came to an end in June 1941, when Hitler, confident that Britain was temporarily out of the fight, turned his attention to Operation Barbarossa—the invasion of the Soviet Union. Hoping to capture vast agricultural lands, seize numerous oil fields, and break the military threat of Stalin’s Soviet Union, Hitler broke the two powers’ 1939 non-aggression pact and, on June 22, invaded the Soviet Union. It was the largest land invasion in history. France and Poland had fallen in weeks, and German officials hoped to break Russia before the

winter. And initially, the *blitzkrieg* worked. The German military quickly conquered enormous swaths of land and netted hundreds of thousands of prisoners. But Russia was too big and the Soviets were willing to sacrifice millions to stop by the fascist advance. After recovering from the initial shock of the German invasion, Stalin moved his factories east of the Urals, out of range of the *Luftwaffe*. He ordered his retreating army to adopt a “scorched earth” policy, to move east and destroy food, rails, and shelters to stymie the advancing German army. The German Army slogged forward. It split into three pieces and stood at the gates of Moscow, Stalingrad and Leningrad, but supply lines were now thousands of miles away, Soviet infrastructure had been destroyed, partisans harried the German lines, and the brutal Russian winter arrived. Germany had won massive gains but the winter found Germany exhausted and overextended. In the north, the German Army starved Leningrad to death during an interminable siege; in the south, at Stalingrad, the two armies bled themselves to death in the destroyed city; and, in the center, on the outskirts of Moscow, in sight of the capital city, the German army faltered and fell back. It was the Soviet Union broke Hitler’s army. Twenty-five million Soviet soldiers and civilians died during the “The Great Patriotic War” and roughly 80% of all German casualties in the war came on the Eastern Front. The German army and its various conscripts suffered 850,000 casualties at the Battle of Stalingrad alone. In December 1941, Germany began its long retreat.

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THE UNITED STATES AND THE EUROPEAN WAR

While Hitler marched across Europe, the Japanese continued their war in the Pacific. In 1939 the United States dissolved its trade treaties with Japan. In 1940 the American Neutrality Acts cut off supplies of necessary war materials by embargoing oil, steel, rubber, and other vital goods. It was hoped that economic pressure would shut down the Japanese war machine. Instead, Japan’s resource-starved military launched invasions across the Pacific to sustain its war effort. The Japanese called their new empire the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and, with the cry of “Asia for the Asians,” made war against European powers and independent nations throughout the region. Diplomatic relations between Japan and the United States collapsed. The United States demanded Japan withdraw from China; Japan considered the oil embargo a de facto declaration of war.

Japanese military planners, believing that American intervention was inevitable, planned a coordinated Pacific offensive to neutralize the United States and other European powers and provide time for Japan to complete its conquests and fortify its positions. On the morning of December 7, 1941, the Japanese launched a surprise attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Japanese military planners hoped to destroy enough battleships and aircraft carriers to cripple American naval power for years. 2,400 Americans were killed in the attack.

American isolationism fell at Pearl Harbor. Japan had assaulted Hong Kong, the Philippines, and American holdings throughout the Pacific, but it was the attack on Hawaii that threw the United States into a global conflict. Franklin Roosevelt called December 7 “a date which will live in infamy” and called for a declaration of war, which Congress answered within hours. Within a week of Pearl Harbor the United States had declared war on the entire Axis, turning two previously separate conflicts into a true world war.

The American war began slowly. Britain had stood alone militarily in Europe, but American supplies had bolstered their resistance. Hitler unleashed his U-boat “wolf packs” into the Atlantic Oceans with orders to sink anything carrying aid to Britain, but Britain and the United States’ superior tactics and technology won them the Battle of the Atlantic. British code breakers cracked Germany’s radio codes and the surge of intelligence, dubbed *Ultra*, coupled with massive naval convoys escorted by destroyers armed with sonar and depth charges, gave the advantage to the Allies and by 1942, Hitler’s *Kriegsmarine* was losing ships faster than they could be built.

In North Africa in 1942, British victory at El Alamein began pushing the Germans back. In November, the first American combat troops entered the European war, landing in French Morocco and pushing the Germans east while the British pushed west. By 1943, the Allies had pushed Axis forces out of Africa. In January President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill met at Casablanca to discuss the next step of the European war. Churchill

convinced Roosevelt to chase the Axis up Italy, into the “soft underbelly” of Europe. Afterward, Roosevelt announcing to the press that the Allies would accept nothing less than unconditional surrender.

Meanwhile, the Army Air Force (AAF) sent hundreds (and eventually thousands) of bombers to England in preparation for a massive Strategic Bombing Campaign against Germany. The plan was to bomb Germany around the clock. American bombers hit German ball-bearing factories, rail yards, oil fields and manufacturing centers during the day, while the British Royal Air Force (RAF) carpet-bombed German cities at night. Flying in formation, they initially flew unescorted, since many believed that bombers equipped with defensive firepower flew too high and too fast to be attacked. However, advanced German technology allowed fighters to easily shoot down the lumbering bombers. On some disastrous missions, the Germans shot down almost 50% of American aircraft. However, the advent and implementation of a long-range escort fighter let the bombers hit their targets more accurately while fighters confronted opposing German aircraft.



In 1944, Allied forces began a bombing campaign of railroad and oil targets in Bucharest, part of the wider policy of bombing expeditions meant to incapacitate German transportation. Bucharest was considered the number one oil target in Europe. Photograph, August 1, 1943. [Wikimedia](#).



Bombings throughout Europe caused complete devastation in some areas, leveling beautiful ancient cities like Cologne, Germany. Cologne experienced an astonishing 262 separate air raids by Allied forces, leaving the city in ruins as in these the photograph above. Amazingly, the Cologne Cathedral stands nearly undamaged even after being hit numerous times, while the area around it crumbles. Photograph, April 24, 1945. [Wikimedia](#).

In the wake of the Soviet's victory at Stalingrad, the "Big Three" (Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin) met in Tehran in November 1943. Dismissing Africa and Italy as a side-show, Stalin demanded that Britain and the United States invade France to relieve pressure on the Eastern Front. Churchill was hesitant, but Roosevelt was eager. The invasion was tentatively scheduled for 1944.

Back in Italy, the "soft underbelly" turned out to be much tougher than Churchill had imagined. Italy's narrow, mountainous terrain gave the defending Axis the advantage. Movement up the peninsula was slow and in some places conditions returned to the trench-like warfare of WWI. Americans attempted to land troops behind them at Anzio on the western coast of Italy but they became surrounded and suffered heavy casualties. But the Allies pushed up the peninsula, Mussolini's government revolted, and a new Italian government quickly made peace.

On the day the American army entered Rome, American, British and Canadian forces launched Operation Overlord, the long-awaited invasion of France. D-Day, as it became popularly known, was the largest amphibious assault in history. American general Dwight Eisenhower was uncertain enough of the attack's chances that the night before the invasion he wrote two speeches: one for success and one for failure. The Allied landings were successful, and although progress across France was much slower than hoped for, Paris was liberated roughly two months later. Allied bombing expeditions meanwhile continued to level German cities and industrial capacity. Perhaps 400,000 German civilians were killed by allied bombing.

The Nazis were crumbling on both fronts. Hitler tried but failed to turn the war in his favor in the west. The Battle of the Bulge failed to drive the Allies back into the British Channel, but the delay cost the Allies the winter. The invasion of Germany would have to wait, while the Soviet Union continued its relentless push westward, ravaging German populations in retribution for German war crimes.

German counterattacks in the east failed to dislodge the Soviet advance, destroying any last chance Germany might have had to regain the initiative. 1945 dawned with the end of European war in sight. The Big Three met again at Yalta in the Soviet Union, where they reaffirmed the demand for Hitler's unconditional surrender and began to plan for postwar Europe.

The Soviet Union reached Germany in January, and the Americans crossed the Rhine in March. In late April American and Soviet troops met at the Elbe while the Soviets, pushed relentlessly by Stalin to reach Berlin first, took the capital city in May, days after Hitler and his high command had committed suicide in a city bunker. Germany was conquered. The European war was over. Allied leaders met again, this time at Potsdam, Germany, where it was decided that Germany would be divided into pieces according to current Allied occupation, with Berlin likewise divided, pending future elections. Stalin also agreed to join the fight against Japan in approximately three months.

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THE UNITED STATES AND THE JAPANESE WAR

As Americans celebrated "V.E." (Victory in Europe) Day, they redirected their full attention to the still-raging Pacific War. As in Europe, the war in the Pacific started slowly. After Pearl Harbor, the American-controlled Philippine archipelago fell to Japan. After running out of ammunition and supplies, the garrison of American and Filipino soldiers surrendered. The prisoners were marched 80 miles to their prisoner of war camp without food, water, or rest. 10,000 died on the Bataan Death March.

But as Americans mobilized their armed forces, the tide turned. In the summer of 1942, American naval victories at the Battle of the Coral Sea Coral Sea and the aircraft carrier duel at the Battle of Midway crippled Japan's Pacific naval operations. To dislodge Japan's hold over the Pacific, the US military began island hopping: attacking island after island, bypassing the strongest but seizing those capable of holding airfields to continue pushing Japan out of the region. Combat was vicious. At Guadalcanal American soldiers saw Japanese soldiers launch suicidal charges rather than surrender. Many Japanese soldiers refused to be taken prisoner, and they refused to take prisoners. The war against Japan was fought with more brutality than the war against Germany.

Japanese defenders fought tenaciously. Few battles were as one-sided as the Battle of the Philippine Sea, or what the Americans called the Japanese counterattack "The Great Marianas Turkey Shoot." Japanese soldiers bled the Americans in their advance across the Pacific. At Iwo Jima, an eight-square-mile island of volcanic rock, 17,000 Japanese soldiers held the island against 70,000 marines for over a month. At the cost of nearly their entire force, they inflicted almost 30,000 casualties before the island was lost.

By February 1945, American bombers were in range of the mainland. Bombers hit Japan's industrial facilities but suffered high casualties. To spare bomber crews from dangerous daylight raids, and to achieve maximum effect against Japan's wooden cities, many American bombers dropped incendiary weapons that created massive fire storms and wreaked havoc on Japanese cities. Over sixty Japanese cities were fire-bombed. American fire bombs killed 100,000 civilians in Tokyo in March 1945.

In June 1945, after eighty days of fighting and tens of thousands of casualties, the Americans captured the island of Okinawa. The mainland of Japan was open before them. It was a viable base from which to launch a full invasion of the Japanese homeland and end the war.

Estimates varied but, given the tenacity of Japanese soldiers in islands far from their home, some officials estimating that an invasion of the mainland could half-million American casualties and perhaps millions of Japanese civilians. These would be the numbers used later to justify the use of atomic weapons.

Early in the war, fearing that the Germans might develop an atomic bomb, the U.S. government launched the Manhattan Project, a hugely expensive, ambitious program to harness atomic energy and create a single weapon capable of leveling entire cities. The Americans successfully exploded the world's first nuclear device, Trinity, in

New Mexico in July 1945. Two more bombs—“Fat Man” and “Little Boy”—were built and detonated over two Japanese cities. Hiroshima was hit on August 6th. Over 100,000 civilians were killed. Nagasaki followed on August 9th. Perhaps 80,000 civilians were killed.

Emperor Hirohito announced the surrender of Japan on August 14th. The following day, aboard the battleship *USS Missouri*, delegates from the Japanese government formally signed their surrender. World War II was finally over.

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SOLDIERS' EXPERIENCES

Almost eighteen million men served in World War II. Volunteers rushed to join the military after Pearl Harbor, but the majority—over 10 million—were drafted into service. Volunteers could express their preference for assignment, and many preempted the draft by volunteering. Regardless, those recruits judged I-A, “fit for service,” were moved into basic training, where soldiers were developed physically and trained in the basic use of weapons and military equipment. Soldiers were indoctrinated into the chain of command and introduced to military life. After basic, soldiers moved onto more specialized training. For example, combat infantrymen received additional weapons and tactical training and radio operators learned transmission codes and the operation of field radios. Afterward, an individual’s experience varied depending upon what service he entered and to what theatre he was assigned.

Soldiers and marines bore the brunt of on-the-ground combat. After transportation to the front by trains, ships, and trucks, they could expect to march carrying packs weighing anywhere from 20-50 pounds of rations, ammunition, bandages, tools, clothing, and miscellaneous personal items in addition to their weapons. Sailors, once deployed, spent months at sea operating their assigned vessels. Larger ships, particularly aircraft carriers, were veritable floating cities. In most, sailors lived and worked in cramped conditions, often sleeping in bunks stacked in rooms housing dozens of sailors. Senior officers received small rooms of their own. Sixty-thousand American sailors lost their lives in the war.

During World War II the Air Force was still a branch of the U.S. Army. Soldiers in the served on ground crews and air crews. World War II saw the institutionalization of massive bombing campaigns against cities and industrial production. Large bombers like the B-17 Flying Fortress required pilots, navigators, bombardiers, radio operators, and four dedicated machine gunners. Soldiers on bombing raids left from bases in England or Italy, or from Pacific Islands, endured hours of flight before approaching enemy territory. At high altitude, and without pressurized cabins, crews used oxygen tanks to breath and on-board temperatures plummeted. Once in enemy airspace crews confronted enemy fighters and anti-aircraft “flak” from the ground. While fighter pilots flew as escorts, the Air Corps suffered heavy casualties. Tens of thousands of airmen lost their lives.

On-the ground conditions varied. Soldiers in Europe endured freezing winters, impenetrable French hedgerows, Italian mountain ranges, and dense forests. Germans fought with a Western mentality familiar to Americans. Soldiers in the Pacific endured heat and humidity, monsoons, jungles, and tropical diseases. And they confronted an unfamiliar foe. Americans, for instance, could understand surrender as prudent; many Japanese soldiers saw it as cowardice. What Americans saw as a fanatical waste of life, the Japanese saw as brave and honorable. Atrocities flourished in the Pacific at a level unmatched in Europe.

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THE WARTIME ECONOMY

Economies win wars no less than militaries. The war converted American factories to wartime production, reawakened Americans' economic might, armed Allied belligerents and the American armed forces, effectively pulled America out of the Great Depression, and ushered in an era of unparalleled economic prosperity.

Roosevelt's New Deal had ameliorated the worst of the Depression, but the economy still limped its way forward into the 1930s. But then Europe fell into war, and, despite its isolationism, Americans were glad to sell the Allies arms and supplies. And then Pearl Harbor changed everything. The United States drafted the economy into war service. The "sleeping giant" mobilized its unrivalled economic capacity to wage worldwide war. Governmental entities such as the War Production Board and the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion managed economic production for the war effort and economic output exploded. An economy that was unable to provide work for a quarter of the work force less than a decade earlier now struggled to fill vacant positions.

Government spending during the four years of war *doubled* all federal spending in all of American history up to that point. The budget deficit soared, but, just as Depression Era economists had counseled, the government's massive intervention annihilated unemployment and propelled growth. The economy that came out of the war looked nothing like the one that had begun it.

Military production came at the expense of the civilian consumer economy. Appliance and automobile manufacturers converted their plants to produce weapons and vehicles. Consumer choice was foreclosed. Every American received rationing cards and, legally, goods such as gasoline, coffee, meat, cheese, butter, processed food, firewood, and sugar could not be purchased without them. The housing industry was shut down, and the cities became overcrowded.

But the wartime economy boomed. The Roosevelt administration urged citizens to save their earnings or buy war bonds to prevent inflation. Bond drives were held nationally and headlined by Hollywood celebrities. Such drives were hugely successful. They not only funded much of the war effort, they helped to tame inflation as well. So too did tax rates. The federal government raised income taxes and boosted the top marginal tax rate to 94%.



Much like during WWI, citizens during WWII were urged to buy war bonds to support the effort overseas. Rallies like this one appealed to Americans' sense of patriotism. [Wikimedia](#).

With the economy booming and twenty million American workers placed into military service, unemployment virtually disappeared. And yet limits remained. Many defense contractors still refused to hire black workers. A. Philip Randolph in 1941 threatened to lead a march on Washington in protest, compelling Roosevelt to issue Executive Order Number 8802, the Fair Employment Practice in Defense Industries Act, which established the Fair Employment Practices Committee to end racial discrimination in the federal government and the defense industry.

During the war, more and more African Americans continued to leave the agrarian south for the industrial north. And as more and more men joined the military, and more and more positions went unfilled, women joined the workforce en masse. Other American producers looked outside of the United States, southward, to Mexico, to fill its labor force. Between 1942 and 1964, the United States contracted thousands of Mexican nationals to work in American agriculture and railroads in the Bracero Program. Jointly administered by the State Department, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Justice, the binational agreement secured five million contracts across twenty four states.

With factory work proliferating across the country and agricultural labor experiencing severe labor shortages, the presidents of Mexico and the U.S. signed an agreement in July 1942 to bring the first wave of legally contracted workers to California. Discriminatory policies towards people of Mexican descent prevented bracero contracts in Texas until 1947. The Bracero Program survived the war, enshrined in law until the 1960s, when the United States liberalized its immigration laws. Though *braceros* suffered exploitative labor conditions, for the men who participated the program was a mixed blessing. Interviews with ex-braceros captured the complexity. "They would

call us pigs, I know we were a lot, but they didn't have to treat us that way," one said of his employers, while another said, "For me it was a blessing, the United States was a blessing..., it is a nation I fell in love with because of the excess work and good pay." After the exodus of Mexican migrants during the Depression, the program helped to reestablish Mexican migration, institutionalized migrant farm work across much of the country, and further planted a Mexican presence in the southern and western United States.

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WOMEN AND WORLD WAR II

President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his administration had encouraged all able-bodied American women to help the war effort. He considered the role of women in the war critical for American victory and the public expected women to assume various functions to free men for active military service. While the majority of women opted to remain at home or volunteer with charitable organizations, many went to work or donned a military uniform.

World War II brought unprecedented labor opportunities for American women. Industrial labor, an occupational sphere dominated by men, shifted in part to women for the duration of wartime mobilization. Women applied for jobs in converted munitions factories. The iconic illustrated image of "Rosie the Riveter," a muscular woman dressed in coveralls with her hair in a kerchief and inscribed with the phrase, "We Can Do It!" would come stand for female factory labor during the war. But women also worked in various auxiliary positions for the government. Although often a traditionally gendered female occupation, over a million administrative jobs at the local, state, and national levels were transferred from men to women for the duration of the war.

We Can Do It!



Howard Miller

POST FEB. 15 TO FEB. 28



WAR PRODUCTION CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

Women came into the workforces in greater numbers than ever before during WWII. With vacancies left by deployed men and new positions created by war production, posters like this iconic “We Can Do It!” urged women to support the war effort by going to work in America’s factories. Poster for Westinghouse, 1942. [Wikimedia](#).

For women who elected not to work, many volunteer opportunities presented themselves. The American Red Cross, the largest charitable organization in the nation, encouraged women to volunteer with local city chapters. Millions of females organized community social events for families, packed and shipped almost a half million ton of medical supplies overseas, and prepared twenty-seven million care packages of nonperishable items for American and other Allied prisoners of war. The American Red Cross further required all women volunteers to certify as nurse's aides, providing an extra benefit and work opportunity for hospital staffs that suffered severe manpower losses. Other charity organizations, such as church and synagogue affiliates, benevolent associations, and social club auxiliaries, gave women further outlets for volunteer work.

Military service was another option for women who wanted to join the war effort. Over 350,000 women served in several all-female units of the military branches. The Army and Navy Nurse Corps Reserves, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, the Navy's Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service, the Coast Guard's SPARs (named for the Coast Guard motto, *Semper Paratus*, "Always Ready"), and Marine Corps units gave women the opportunity to serve as either commissioned officers or enlisted members at military bases at home and abroad. The Nurse Corps Reserves alone commissioned 105,000 Army and Navy nurses recruited by the American Red Cross. Military nurses worked at base hospitals, mobile medical units, and onboard hospital "mercy" ships.

Jim Crow segregation in both the civilian and military sectors remained a problem for black women who wanted to join the war effort. Even after President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802 in 1941, supervisors that hired black women still often relegated them to the most menial tasks on factory floors. Segregation was further upheld in factory lunchrooms and many black women were forced to work at night to keep them separate from whites. In the military, only the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and the Nurse Corps Reserves accepted black women for active service, and the Army set a limited quota of ten percent of total end strength for black female officers and enlisted women and segregated black units on active duty. The American Red Cross, meanwhile, recruited only four hundred black nurses for the Army and Navy Nurse Corps Reserves, and black Army and Navy nurses worked in segregated military hospitals on bases stateside and overseas.

And for all of the postwar celebration of Rosie the Riveter, after the war ended the men returned and most women voluntarily left the work force or lost their jobs. Meanwhile, former military women faced a litany of obstacles in obtaining veteran's benefits during their transition to civilian life. The nation that beckoned the call for assistance to millions of women during the four-year crisis hardly stood ready to accommodate their postwar needs and demands.

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RACE AND WORLD WAR II

World War II affected nearly every aspect of life in the United States, and America's racial relationships were not immune. African Americans, Mexicans and Mexican Americans, Jews, and Japanese Americans were profoundly impacted.

In early 1941, months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the largest black trade union in the nation, made headlines by threatening President Roosevelt with a march on Washington, D.C. In this "crisis of democracy," Randolph said, defense industries refused to hire African Americans and the armed forces remained segregated. In exchange for Randolph calling off the march, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, banning racial and religious discrimination in defense industries and establishing the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) to monitor defense industry hiring practices. While the armed forces would remain segregated throughout the war, and the FEPC had limited influence, the order showed that the federal government could stand against discrimination. The black workforce in defense industries rose from 3 percent in 1942 to 9 percent in 1945.

More than one million African Americans fought in the war. Most blacks served in segregated, non-combat units led by white officers. Some gains were made, however. The number of black officers increased from 5 in 1940 to over 7,000 in 1945. The all-black pilot squadrons, known as the Tuskegee Airmen, completed more than 1,500 missions, escorted heavy bombers into Germany, and earned several hundred merits and medals. Many bomber crews specifically requested the "Red Tail Angels" as escorts. And near the end of the war, the army and navy began integrating some of its platoons and facilities, before, in 1948, the U.S. government finally ordered the full integration of its armed forces.



20790 A.C.

The Tuskegee Airmen stand at attention as Major James A. Ellison returns the salute of Mac Ross, one of the first graduates of the Tuskegee cadets. The photographs shows the pride and poise of the Tuskegee Airmen, who continued a tradition of African Americans honorably serving a country that still considered them second-class citizens. Photograph, 1941. [Wikimedia](#).

While black Americans served in the armed forces (though they were segregated), on the home front they became riveters and welders, rationed food and gasoline, and bought victory bonds. But many black Americans saw the war as an opportunity not only to serve their country but to improve it. The *Pittsburgh Courier*, a leading black newspaper, spearheaded the "Double V" campaign. It called on African Americans to fight two wars: the war against Nazism and Fascism abroad and the war against racial inequality at home. To achieve victory, to achieve "real democracy," the *Courier* encouraged its readers to enlist in the armed forces, volunteer on the home front, and fight against racial segregation and discrimination.

During the war, membership in the NAACP jumped tenfold, from 50,000 to 500,000. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was formed in 1942 and spearheaded the method of nonviolent direct action to achieve desegregation. Between 1940 and 1950, some 1.5 million southern blacks, the largest number than any other decade since the beginning of the Great Migration, also indirectly demonstrated their opposition to racism and violence by migrating out of the Jim Crow South to the North. But transitions were not easy. Racial tensions

erupted in 1943 in a series of riots in cities such as Mobile, Beaumont, and Harlem. The bloodiest race riot occurred in Detroit and resulted in the death of 25 blacks and 9 whites. Still, the war ignited in African Americans an urgency for equality that they would carry with them into the subsequent years.

Many Americans had to navigate American prejudice, and America's entry into the war left foreign nationals from the belligerent nations in a precarious position. The Federal Bureau of Investigation targeted numbers on suspicions of disloyalty for detainment, hearings, and possible internment under the Alien Enemy Act. Those who received an order for internment were sent to government camps secured by barbed wire and armed guards. Such internments were supposed to be for cause. Then, on February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, authorizing the removal any persons from designated "exclusion zones"—which ultimately covered nearly a third of the country—at the discretion of military commanders. 30,000 Japanese Americans fought for the United States in World War II, but wartime anti-Japanese sentiment reinforced historical prejudices and, under the order, persons of Japanese descent, both immigrants and American citizens, were detained and placed under the custody of the War Relocation Authority, the civil agency that supervised their relocation to internment camps. They lost their homes and jobs. The policy indiscriminately targeted Japanese-descended populations. Individuals did not receive individual review prior to their internment. This policy of mass exclusion and detention affected over 110,000 individuals. 70,000 were American citizens.

In its 1982 report, *Personal Justice Denied*, the congressionally appointed Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians concluded that "the broad historical causes" shaping the relocation program were "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership." Although the exclusion orders were found to have been constitutionally permissible under the vagaries of national security, they were later judged, even by the military and judicial leaders of the time, to have been a grave injustice against persons of Japanese descent. In 1988, President Reagan signed a law that formally apologized for internment and provided reparations to surviving internees.

But if actions taken during war would later prove repugnant, so too could inaction. As the Allies pushed into Germany and Poland, they uncovered the full extent of Hitler's genocidal atrocities. The Allies liberated massive camp systems set up for the imprisonment, forced labor, and extermination of all those deemed racially, ideologically, or biologically "unfit" by Nazi Germany. But the Holocaust—the systematic murder of 11 million civilians, including 6 Jews—had been underway for years. How had America responded?



This photograph became one of the most well-known images from WWII. Originally from Jürgen Stroop's May 1943 report to Heinrich Himmler, it circulated throughout Europe and America as an image of the Nazi Party's brutality. The original German caption read: "Forcibly pulled out of dug-outs". [Wikimedia](#).

Initially, American officials expressed little official concern for Nazi persecutions. At the first signs of trouble in the 1930s, the State Department and most U.S. embassies did relatively little to aid European Jews. Roosevelt publicly spoke out against the persecution, and even withdrew the U.S. ambassador to Germany after *Kristallnacht*. He pushed for the 1938 Evian Conference in France in which international leaders discussed the Jewish refugee problem and worked to expand Jewish immigration quotas by tens of thousands of people per year. But the conference came to nothing and the United States turned away countless Jewish refugees who requested asylum in the United States.

In 1939, the German ship *St. Louis* carried over 900 Jewish refugees. They could not find a country that would take them. The passengers could not receive visas under the United States' quota system. A State Department wire to one passenger read that all must "await their turns on the waiting list and qualify for and obtain immigration visas before they may be admissible into the United States." The ship cabled the president for special privilege, but the president said nothing. The ship was forced to return back to Europe. Hundreds of the *St. Louis*'s passengers would perish in the Holocaust.

Anti-Semitism still permeated the United States. Even if Roosevelt wanted to do more—it's difficult to trace his own thoughts and personal views—he judged the political price for increasing immigration quotas as too high. In 1938 and 1939 the U.S. Congress debated the Wagner-Rogers Bill, an act to allow 20,000 German-Jewish children into the United States. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt endorsed the measure but the president remained publicly silent. The bill was opposed by roughly two-thirds of the American public and was defeated. Historians speculate that Roosevelt, anxious to protect the New Deal and his rearmament programs, was unwilling to expend political capital to protect foreign groups that the American public had little interest in protecting.

Knowledge of the full extent of the Holocaust was slow in coming. When the war began, American officials, including Roosevelt, doubted initial reports of industrial death camps. But even when they conceded their existence, officials pointed to their genuinely limited options. The most plausible response was for the U.S. military to bomb either the camps or the railroads leading to them, but those options were rejected by military and civilian officials who argued that it would do little to stop the deportations, would distract from the war effort, and could cause casualties among concentration camp prisoners. Whether bombing would have saved lives remains a hotly debated question.

Late in the war, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, himself born into a wealthy New York Jewish family, pushed through major changes in American policy. In 1944, he formed the War Refugees Board (WRB) and became a passionate advocate for Jewish refugees. The efforts of the WPB saved perhaps 200,000 Jews and 20,000 others. Morgenthau also convinced Roosevelt to issue a public statement condemning the Nazi's persecution. But it was already 1944, and such policies were far too little, far too late.

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TOWARD A POSTWAR WORLD

Americans celebrated the end of the war. At home and abroad, the United States looked to create a postwar order that would guarantee global peace and domestic prosperity. Although the alliance-of-convenience with Stalin's Soviet Union would collapse, Americans nevertheless looked for the means to ensure postwar stability and economic security for returning veterans.

The inability of the League of Nations to stop German, Italian, and Japanese aggressions caused many to question whether any global organization or agreements could ever ensure world peace. This included Franklin Roosevelt who, as Woodrow Wilson's Undersecretary of the Navy, witnessed the rejection of this idea by both the American people and the Senate. In 1941, Roosevelt believed that postwar security could be maintained by an informal agreement between what he termed "the Four Policemen"—the U.S., Britain, the Soviet Union, and China—instead of a rejuvenated League of Nations. But others, including Secretary of State Cordell Hull and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, disagreed and convinced Roosevelt to push for a new global organization. As the war ran its course, Roosevelt came around to the idea. And so did the American public. Pollster George Gallup noted a "profound change" in American attitudes. The United States had rejected membership in the League of Nations after World War I, and in 1937 only a third of Americans polled supported such an idea. But as war broke out in Europe, half of Americans did. America's entry into the war bolstered support, and, by 1945, with the war closing, 81% of Americans favored the idea.

Whatever his support, Roosevelt had long showed enthusiasm for the ideas later enshrined in the United Nations charter. In January 1941, he announced his Four Freedoms—freedom of speech, of worship, from want, and from fear—that all of the world's citizens should enjoy. That same year he signed the Atlantic Charter with Churchill, which reinforced those ideas and added the right of self-determination and promised some sort of post-war economic and political cooperation. Roosevelt first used the phrase "united nations" to describe the Allied powers, not the subsequent post-war organization. But the name stuck. At Tehran in 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill convinced Stalin to send a Soviet delegation to a conference at Dumbarton Oaks, outside Washington D.C., in August 1944 where they agreed on the basic structure of the new organization. It would have a Security Council—the original "four policemen," plus France—who would consult on how best to keep the peace, and when to deploy the military power of the assembled nations. According to one historian, the organization demonstrated an understanding that "only the Great Powers, working together, could provide real security." But the plan was a kind of hybrid between Roosevelt's policemen idea and a global organization of equal representation. There would also be a General Assembly, made up of all nations, an International Court of Justice, and a council for economic and social matters. Dumbarton Oaks was a mixed success—the Soviets especially expressed concern over how the Security Council would work—but the powers agreed to meet again in San Francisco between April and June 1945 for further negotiations. There, on June 26 1945, fifty nations signed the UN charter.

Anticipating victory in World War II, leaders not only looked to the postwar global order, they looked to the fate of returning American servicemen. American politicians and interest groups sought to avoid another economic depression—the economy had tanked after World War I—by gradually easing returning veterans back into the civilian economy. The brainchild of the head of the American Legion, William Atherton, the G.I. Bill won support from progressives and conservatives alike. Passed in 1944, the G.I. Bill was a multifaceted, multi-billion-dollar entitlement program that rewarded honorably discharged veterans with numerous benefits.

Faced with the prospect of over 15 million members of the armed services (including approximately 350,000 women) suddenly returning to civilian life, the G.I. Bill offered a bevy of inducements to slow their influx into the civilian workforce as reward their service with public benefits. The legislation offered a year's worth of unemployment benefits for veterans unable to secure work. About half of American veterans (8 million) received \$4 billion in unemployment benefits over the life of the bill. The G.I. Bill also made post-secondary education a reality for many. The Veterans Administration (VA) paid the lion's share of educational expenses, including tuition, fees, supplies, and even stipends for living expenses. The G.I. Bill caused a boom in higher education. Enrollments at accredited colleges, universities, and technical and professional schools spiked, rising from 1.5 million in 1940 to 3.6 million in 1960. The VA disbursed over \$14 billion in educational aid in just over a decade. Furthermore, the Bill encouraged home ownership. Roughly 40 percent of Americans owned homes in 1945, but that figure climbed to 60 percent a decade after the close of the war. Doing away with down-payment requirements, veterans could obtain home loans for as little as \$1 down. Close to 4 million veterans purchased homes through the G.I. Bill, sparking a construction bonanza that fueled postwar growth. In addition, the V.A. also helped nearly 200,000 veterans secure farms and offered thousands more guaranteed financing for small businesses.

Not all Americans, however, benefitted equally from the G.I. Bill. Indirectly, since the military limited the number of female personnel men qualified for the bill's benefits in far higher numbers. Colleges also limited the number of female applicants to guarantee space for male veterans. African Americans, too, faced discrimination. Segregation forced black veterans into overcrowded "historically black colleges" that had to turn away close to 20,000 applicants. Meanwhile, residential segregation limited black home ownership in various neighborhoods, denying black homeowners the equity and investment that would come in home ownership. There were other limits, and other disadvantaged groups. Veterans accused of homosexuality, for instance, were similarly unable to claim GI benefits.

The effects of the G.I. Bill were significant and long-lasting. It helped to sustain the great postwar economic boom and, if many could not attain it, it nevertheless established the hallmarks of American middle class life.

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CONCLUSION

The United States entered the war in a crippling economic depression and exited at the beginning of an unparalleled economic boom. The war had been won, the United States was stronger than ever, and Americans looked forward to a prosperous future. And yet new problems loomed. Stalin's Soviet Union and the proliferation of nuclear weapons would disrupt postwar dreams of global harmony. Meanwhile, Americans that had fought a war for global democracy would find that very democracy eradicated around the world in reestablished colonial regimes and at home in segregation and injustice. The war had unleashed powerful forces, forces that would reshape the United States at home and abroad.

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ASSIGNMENT: WHY NAZIS?

It seems odd that a crazy, bloodthirsty regime like the Nazis could ever come to power in an educated, cultured and civilized nation like Germany. Why did so many Germans support the Nazi Party?

After reading the Nazi Party Program, the party's blueprint for Germany (created in the early 1920s) and write a short paragraph that answers the following:

1. Of the 25 points, how many seem quite reasonable (keeping in mind how Germany was treated at the end of WWI), how many are flat out bad ideas, and how many are a mix? I want you to give me specific numbers ("I think X are reasonable, Y are bad, and Z are a mix). Be honest; if you aren't honest then the real point of this assignment will be lost.
2. For the points that are reasonable or a mix, what makes them so? Explain in general why you decided which points are good, bad, or a mix.
3. Which category had the most in it? Now ask again, why did so many people support the Nazi Party?

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PRIMARY SOURCE READING: NAZI PARTY PLATFORM

TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENT 1708-PS

Edited by: Dr. Robert Ley

*Published by: Central Publishing House of the N.S.D.A.P.
Franz Eher, successor Munich*

The program of the NSDAP

The program is the political foundation of the NSDAP and accordingly the primary political law of the State. It has been made brief and clear intentionally.

All legal precepts must be applied in the spirit of the party program.

Since the taking over of control, the Fuehrer has succeeded in the realization of essential portions of the Party program from the fundamentals to the detail.

The Party Program of the NSDAP was proclaimed on the 24 February 1920 by Adolf Hitler at the first large Party gathering in Munich and since that day has remained unaltered. Within the national socialist philosophy is summarized in 25 points:

1. We demand the unification of all Germans in the Greater Germany on the basis of the right of self-determination of peoples.
2. We demand equality of rights for the German people in respect to the other nations; abrogation of the peace treaties of Versailles and St. Germain.

3. We demand land and territory (colonies) for the sustenance of our people, and colonization for our surplus population.
4. Only a member of the race can be a citizen. A member of the race can only be one who is of German blood, without consideration of creed. Consequently no Jew can be a member of the race.
5. Whoever has no citizenship is to be able to live in Germany only as a guest, and must be under the authority of legislation for foreigners.
6. The right to determine matters concerning administration and law belongs only to the citizen. Therefore we demand that every public office, of any sort whatsoever, whether in the Reich, the county or municipality, be filled only by citizens. We combat the corrupting parliamentary economy, office-holding only according to party inclinations without consideration of character or abilities.
7. We demand that the state be charged first with providing the opportunity for a livelihood and way of life for the citizens. If it is impossible to sustain the total population of the State, then the members of foreign nations (non-citizens) are to be expelled from the Reich.
8. Any further immigration of non-citizens is to be prevented. We demand that all non-Germans, who have immigrated to Germany since the 2 August 1914, be forced immediately to leave the Reich.
9. All citizens must have equal rights and obligations.
10. The first obligation of every citizen must be to work both spiritually and physically. The activity of individuals is not to counteract the interests of the universality, but must have its result within the framework of the whole for the benefit of all. Consequently we demand:
 11. Abolition of unearned (work and labour) incomes. Breaking of rent-slavery.
 12. In consideration of the monstrous sacrifice in property and blood that each war demands of the people personal enrichment through a war must be designated as a crime against the people. Therefore we demand the total confiscation of all war profits.
 13. We demand the nationalization of all (previous) associated industries (trusts).
 14. We demand a division of profits of all heavy industries.
 15. We demand an expansion on a large scale of old age welfare.
 16. We demand the creation of a healthy middle class and its conservation, immediate communalization of the great warehouses and their being leased at low cost to small firms, the utmost consideration of all small firms in contracts with the State, county or municipality.
 17. We demand a land reform suitable to our needs, provision of a law for the free expropriation of land for the purposes of public utility, abolition of taxes on land and prevention of all speculation in land.
 18. We demand struggle without consideration against those whose activity is injurious to the general interest. Common national criminals, usurers, Schieber and so forth are to be punished with death, without consideration of confession or race.
 19. We demand substitution of a German common law in place of the Roman Law serving a materialistic world-order.
 20. The state is to be responsible for a fundamental reconstruction of our whole national education program, to enable every capable and industrious German to obtain higher education and subsequently introduction into leading positions. The plans of instruction of all educational institutions are to conform with the experiences of practical life. The comprehension of the concept of the State must be striven for by the school [Staatsbuergerkunde] as early as the beginning of understanding. We demand the education at the expense of the State of outstanding intellectually gifted children of poor parents without consideration of position or profession.

21. The State is to care for the elevating national health by protecting the mother and child, by outlawing child-labor, by the encouragement of physical fitness, by means of the legal establishment of a gymnastic and sport obligation, by the utmost support of all organizations concerned with the physical instruction of the young.

22. We demand abolition of the mercenary troops and formation of a national army.

23. We demand legal opposition to known lies and their promulgation through the press. In order to enable the provision of a German press, we demand, that: a. All writers and employees of the newspapers appearing in the German language be members of the race: b. Non-German newspapers be required to have the express permission of the State to be published. They may not be printed in the German language: c. Non-Germans are forbidden by law any financial interest in German publications, or any influence on them, and as punishment for violations the closing of such a publication as well as the immediate expulsion from the Reich of the non-German concerned. Publications which are counter to the general good are to be forbidden. We demand legal prosecution of artistic and literary forms which exert a destructive influence on our national life, and the closure of organizations opposing the above made demands.

24. We demand freedom of religion for all religious denominations within the state so long as they do not endanger its existence or oppose the moral senses of the Germanic race. The Party as such advocates the standpoint of a positive Christianity without binding itself confessionally to any one denomination. It combats the Jewish-materialistic spirit within and around us, and is convinced that a lasting recovery of our nation can only succeed from within on the framework: common utility precedes individual utility.

25. For the execution of all of this we demand the formation of a strong central power in the Reich. Unlimited authority of the central parliament over the whole Reich and its organizations in general. The forming of state and profession chambers for the execution of the laws made by the Reich within the various states of the confederation. The leaders of the Party promise, if necessary by sacrificing their own lives, to support by the execution of the points set forth above without consideration.

Adolf Hitler proclaimed the following explanation for this program on the 13 April 1928:

Explanation

Regarding the false interpretations of Point 17 of the program of the NSDAP on the part of our opponents, the following definition is necessary:

"Since the NSDAP stands on the platform of private ownership it happens that the passage" gratuitous expropriation concerns only the creation of legal opportunities to expropriate if necessary, land which has been illegally acquired or is not administered from the view-point of the national welfare. This is directed primarily against the Jewish land-speculation companies.

Source:

Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression Volume IV
Office of the United States Chief Counsel for Prosecution of Axis Criminality
Washington, DC : United States Government Printing Office, 1946

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PROPAGANDA CARTOONS

Consider the following as you watch the following propaganda cartoons:

- How does each film portray "the enemy?"
- Which one gets the worse treatment? Why do you think that is?

Donald Duck in [Der Fuehrer's Face](#) – A popular song at the time made into a propaganda music video

[Bugs Bunny Nips the Nips](#) – Bugs defends a Pacific island from Japanese invasion

[Tokyo Jokio](#) – A cartoon introducing Americans to Japanese culture and society

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PRIMARY SOURCE READING: EISENHOWER'S FAREWELL

President Dwight Eisenhower: Farewell to the Nation, January 17, 1961

We now stand ten years past the midpoint of a century that has witnessed four major wars among great nations. Three of these involved our own country. Despite these holocausts America is today the strongest, the most influential and most productive nation in the world. Understandably proud of this pre-eminence, we yet realize that America's leadership and prestige depend, not merely upon our unmatched material progress, riches and military strength, but on how we use our power in the interests of world peace and human betterment.

Throughout America's adventure in free government, such basic purposes have been to keep the peace; to foster progress in human achievement, and to enhance liberty, dignity and integrity among peoples and among nations.

To strive for less would be unworthy of a free and religious people.

Any failure traceable to arrogance or our lack of comprehension or readiness to sacrifice would inflict upon us a grievous hurt, both at home and abroad.

Progress toward these noble goals is persistently threatened by the conflict now engulfing the world. It commands our whole attention, absorbs our very beings. We face a hostile ideology global in scope, atheistic in character, ruthless in purpose, and insidious in method. Unhappily the danger it poses promises to be of indefinite duration. To meet it successfully, there is called for, not so much the emotional and transitory sacrifices of crisis, but rather those which enable us to carry forward steadily, surely, and without complaint the burdens of a prolonged and complex struggle – with liberty the stake. Only thus shall we remain, despite every provocation, on our charted course toward permanent peace and human betterment.

Crises there will continue to be. In meeting them, whether foreign or domestic, great or small, there is a recurring temptation to feel that some spectacular and costly action could become the miraculous solution to all current difficulties. A huge increase in the newer elements of our defenses; development of unrealistic programs to cure every ill in agriculture; a dramatic expansion in basic and applied research – these and many other possibilities, each possibly promising in itself, may be suggested as the only way to the road we wish to travel.

But each proposal must be weighed in light of a broader consideration; the need to maintain balance in and among national programs – balance between the private and the public economy, balance between the cost and hoped for advantages – balance between the clearly necessary and the comfortably desirable; balance between our essential requirements as a nation and the duties imposed by the nation upon the individual; balance between the actions of the moment and the national welfare of the future. Good judgment seeks balance and progress; lack of it eventually finds imbalance and frustration.

The record of many decades stands as proof that our people and their Government have, in the main, understood these truths and have responded to them well in the face of threat and stress.

But threats, new in kind or degree, constantly arise.

Of these, I mention two only.

A vital element in keeping the peace is our military establishment. Our arms must be mighty, ready for instant action, so that no potential aggressor may be tempted to risk his own destruction.

Our military organization today bears little relation to that known by any of my predecessors in peacetime, or indeed by the fighting men of World War II or Korea.

Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry. American makers of plowshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. But now we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions. Added to this, three and a half million men and women are directly engaged in the defense establishment. We annually spend on military security more than the net income of all United States corporations.

This conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience. The total influence – economic, political, even spiritual – is felt in every city, every Statehouse, every office of the Federal government. We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources and livelihood are all involved; so is the very structure of our society.

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.

We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.

Akin to, and largely responsible for the sweeping changes in our industrial-military posture, has been the technological revolution during recent decades.

In this revolution, research has become central, it also becomes more formalized, complex, and costly. A steadily increasing share is conducted for, by, or at the direction of, the Federal government.

Today, the solitary inventor, tinkering in his shop, has been overshadowed by task forces of scientists in laboratories and testing fields. In the same fashion, the free university, historically the fountainhead of free ideas and scientific discovery, has experienced a revolution in the conduct of research. Partly because of the huge costs involved, a government contract becomes virtually a substitute for intellectual curiosity. For every old blackboard there are now hundreds of new electronic computers.

The prospect of domination of the nation's scholars by Federal employment, project allocations, and the power of money is ever present – and is gravely to be regarded.

Yet, in holding scientific research and discovery in respect, as we should, we must also be alert to the equal and opposite danger that public policy could itself become the captive of a scientific-technological elite.

It is the task of statesmanship to mold, to balance, and to integrate these and other forces, new and old, within the principles of our democratic system – ever aiming toward the supreme goals of our free society.

Source: from *The Department of State Bulletin*, XLIV, No. 1128 (February 6, 1961), pp. 179-182.

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- President Dwight Eisenhower: Farewell to the Nation, January 17, 1961. Located at: <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1961eisenhower-farewell.asp>. Project: Internet Modern History Sourcebook. License: [Public Domain: No Known Copyright](#)

ASSIGNMENT: EISENHOWER'S FAREWELL

After reading the Eisenhower [Farewell Address](#) (or [watching the video of it](#)), answer the following in a paragraph:

- What is the military-industrial complex and how does it work?
- What benefits has it provided to the nation?
- Why should the nation be afraid of it? What dangers does it pose?

Remember to use specific quotes and passages from the speech in support of your answer.

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VIEW: MAPS

Here's the blank [pre-WWI map](#) and the [global map](#) that will be used on this unit test.

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THE COLD WAR

THE COLD WAR



French government's test of the Licorne thermonuclear weapon, Mururoa atoll, French Polynesia, 1970, via Flickr user [Pierre J.](#)

In a public address on February 9, 1946, Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin blamed the outbreak of the Second World War on “economic and political forces” driven by “monopoly capitalism.” Many saw it as empty rhetoric to rally the Soviet Union’s capitalists, but officials in the United States and Britain, long suspicious of Stalin’s postwar intentions, viewed it with alarm. On February 22, the Charge d’Affaires of the US Embassy in Moscow, George Kennan cabled the State Department his belief assessment that “world communism” was “a malignant parasite” that “feeds only on diseased tissue,” and “the steady advance of uneasy Russian nationalism” in its “new guise of international Marxism” was “more dangerous and insidious than ever before.” The telegram made waves among American officials. On March 5, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill visited President Harry Truman and gave a speech in his home state of Missouri declaring that Europe had been cut in half by into two spheres separated by an “iron curtain” that had “descended across the Continent.”

The Cold War, a global geopolitical and ideological struggle between (western) capitalist and (eastern) communist countries, fueled a generations-long, multifaceted rivalry between the remaining superpowers of the postwar world: the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Tensions ran highest, perhaps, during the “first Cold War,” which lasted from the mid-1940s through the mid-1960s, after which followed a period of relaxed tensions and increased communication and cooperation, known by the French term *détente*, until the “second Cold War” interceded from roughly 1979 until the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. “Cold” because it was not a “Hot” shooting war, the Cold War reshaped the world, altered American life, and affected generations of Americans.

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VIDEOS: THE COLD WAR

In this video, John Green teaches you about the Cold War, which was the decades long conflict between the USA and the USSR. The Cold War was called cold because of the lack of actual fighting, but this is inaccurate. There was plenty of fighting, from Korea to Vietnam to Afghanistan, but we'll get into that stuff later. This episode, we'll talk about how the Cold War started. In short, it grew out of World War II. Basically, the Soviets occupied eastern Europe, and the U.S. supported western Europe. This setup would spill across the world, with client states on both sides. It's all in the video. You should just watch it.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/9C72ISMF_D0

In this second video, John Green teaches you about the Cold War as it unfolded in Asia. As John pointed out previously, the Cold War was occasionally hot, and a lot of that heat was generated in Asia. This is starting to sound weird with the hot/cold thing, so let's just say that the United States struggled against communist expansion escalated to full-blown, boots on the ground war in Korea and Vietnam. In both of these cases, the United States sent soldiers to intervene in civil wars that it looked like communists might win. That's a bit of a simplification, but John will explain it all to you.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/Y2lcmLkuhG0>

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POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND MILITARY DIMENSIONS

The Cold War grew out of a failure to achieve a durable settlement among leaders from the 'Big Three' Allies—the US, Britain, and the Soviet Union—as they met at Yalta in Russian Crimea and at Potsdam in occupied Germany to shape the postwar order. The Germans had pillaged their way across Eastern Europe and the Soviets had pillaged their way back across it at the cost of millions of lives. Stalin considered within the Soviet 'sphere of influence.' With Germany's defeat imminent, the Allies set terms for unconditional surrender, while deliberating over reparations, tribunals, and the nature of an occupation regime that would initially be divided into American, British, French, and Soviet zones. Even as plans were made to end the fighting in the Pacific, and it was determined that the Soviets would declare war on Japan within ninety days of Germany's surrender, suspicion and mistrust were already mounting. The political landscape was altered drastically by Franklin Roosevelt's sudden death in April 1945, just days before the inaugural meeting of the United Nations (UN). Roosevelt had remained skeptical of Stalin but held out a trusting hope that the Soviets could be brought into the "Free World," but Truman, like Churchill, had no illusions of Stalin's postwar cooperation and was committed to a hardline anti-Soviet approach.

At the Potsdam Conference, held on the outskirts of Berlin from mid-July to early August, the allies debated the fate of Soviet-occupied Poland. Toward the end of the meeting, the American delegation received word that Manhattan Project scientists had successfully tested an atomic bomb. On July 24, when Truman told Stalin about

this “new weapon of unusual destructive force,” the Soviet leader simply nodded his acknowledgement and said that he hoped the Americans would make “good use” of it.

The Cold War had long roots. An alliance of convenience during World War II to bring down Hitler’s Germany was not enough to erase decades of mutual suspicions. The Bolshevik Revolution had overthrown the Russian Tsarists during World War I. Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin urged an immediate worldwide peace that would pave the way for world socialism just as Woodrow Wilson brought the United States into the war with promises of global democracy and free trade. The United States had intervened militarily against the Red Army during the Russian civil war, and when the Soviet Union was founded in 1922 the United States refused to recognize it. The two powers were brought together only by their common enemy, and, without that common enemy, there was little hope for cooperation.

On the eve of American involvement in World War II, on August 14, 1941, Roosevelt and Churchill had issued a joint declaration of goals for postwar peace, known as the Atlantic Charter. An adaptation of Wilson’s Fourteen Points, the Atlantic Charter established the creation of the United Nations. The Soviet Union was among the fifty charter UN member-states and was given one of five seats—alongside the US, Britain, France, and China—on the select Security Council. The Atlantic Charter, though, also set in motion the planning for a reorganized global economy. The July 1944 United Nations Financial and Monetary Conference, more popularly known as the Bretton Woods Conference, created the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the forerunner of the World Bank, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). The “Bretton Woods system” was bolstered in 1947 with the addition of the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), forerunner of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Soviets rejected it all.

Many Soviet and American officials knew that the Soviet-American relationship would dissolve into renewed hostility upon the closing of the war, and events proved them right. In a 1947 article for *Foreign Affairs*—written under the pseudonym “Mr. X”—George Kennan warned that Americans should “continue to regard the Soviet Union as a rival, not a partner,” since Stalin harbored “no real faith in the possibility of a permanent happy coexistence of the Socialist and capitalist worlds.” He urged US leaders to pursue “a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians” wherever they threaten the interests of peace and stability.

Truman, on March 12, 1947, announced \$400 million in aid to Greece and Turkey, where “terrorist activities...led by Communists” jeopardized “democratic” governance. With Britain “reducing or liquidating its commitments in several parts of the world, including Greece,” it fell on the US, Truman said, “to support free peoples...resisting attempted subjugation by...outside pressures.” The so-called “Truman Doctrine” became a cornerstone of the American policy of “containment.”

In the harsh winter of 1946-47, famine loomed in much of continental Europe. Blizzards and freezing cold halted coal production. Factories closed. Unemployment spiked. Amid these conditions, the Communist parties of France and Italy gained nearly a third of the seats in their respective Parliaments. American officials worried that Europe’s impoverished masses were increasingly vulnerable to Soviet propaganda. The situation remained dire through the spring, when Secretary of State General George Marshall gave an address at Harvard University, on June 5, 1947, suggesting that “the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health to the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace.” Although Marshall had stipulated to potential critics that his proposal was “not directed against any country, but against hunger, poverty...and chaos,” Stalin clearly understood the development of the ERP as an assault against Communism in Europe; he saw it as a ‘Trojan Horse’ designed to lure Germany and other countries into the capitalist web.

The European Recovery Program (ERP), popularly known as the Marshall Plan, pumped enormous sums into Western Europe. From 1948-1952 the US invested \$13 billion toward reconstruction while simultaneously loosening trade barriers. To avoid the postwar chaos of World War I, the Marshall Plan was designed to rebuild Western Europe, open markets, and win European support for capitalist democracies. The Soviets countered with the Molotov Plan, a symbolic pledge of aid to Eastern Europe. Polish leader Józef Cyrankiewicz was rewarded with a five-year, \$450 million dollar trade agreement from Russia for boycotting the Plan. Czechoslovakia received \$200 million of American assistance but was summoned to Moscow where Stalin threatened Czech foreign minister Jan Masaryk. Masaryk later recounted that he “went to Moscow as the foreign minister of an independent sovereign state,” but “returned as a lackey of the Soviet Government.” Stalin exercised even tighter control over Soviet “satellite” countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

The situation in Germany meanwhile deteriorated. Berlin had been divided into communist and capitalist zones. In June 1948, when the US, British, and French officials introduced a new currency, the Soviet Union initiated a

ground blockade, cutting off rail and road access to West Berlin (landlocked within the Soviet occupation zone) to gain control over the entire city. The United States organized and coordinated a massive airlift that flew essential supplies into the beleaguered city for eleven months, until the Soviets lifted the blockade on May 12, 1949. Germany was officially broken in half. On May 23, the western half of the country was formally renamed the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the eastern Soviet zone became the German Democratic Republic (GDR) later that fall. Berlin, which lay squarely within the GDR, was divided into two sections (later famously separated from August 1961 until November 1989 by walls).



The Berlin Blockade and resultant Allied airlift was one of the first major crises of the Cold War. Photograph, U.S. Navy Douglas R4D and U.S. Air Force C-47 aircraft unload at Tempelhof Airport during the Berlin Airlift, c. 1948-1949. [Wikimedia](#).

In the summer of 1949, American officials launched the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO), a mutual defense pact in which the US and Canada were joined by England, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland. The Soviet Union would formalize its own collective defensive agreement in 1955, the Warsaw Pact, which included Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and East Germany.

Liberal journalist Walter Lippmann was largely responsible for popularizing the term “the Cold War” in his book, *The Cold War: A Study in U.S. Foreign Policy*, published in 1947. Lippmann envisioned a prolonged stalemate between the US and the USSR, a war of words and ideas in which direct shots would not necessarily be fired between the two. Lippmann agreed that the Soviet Union would only be “prevented from expanding” if it were “confronted with...American power,” but he felt “that the strategical conception and plan” recommended by Mr. X (George Kennan) was “fundamentally unsound,” as it would require having “the money and the military power always available in sufficient amounts to apply ‘counter-force’ at constantly shifting points all over the world.”

Lippmann cautioned against making far-flung, open-ended commitments, favoring instead a more limited engagement that focused on halting the influence of communism in the ‘heart’ of Europe; he believed that if the Soviet system were successfully restrained on the Continent, it could otherwise be left alone to collapse under the weight of its own imperfections.

A new chapter in the Cold War began on October 1, 1949, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) led by Mao Tse-tung declared victory against “Kuomintang” Nationalists led by the Western-backed Chiang Kai-shek. The Kuomintang retreated to the island of Taiwan and the CCP took over the mainland under the red flag of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Coming so soon after the Soviet Union’s successful test of an atomic bomb, on August 29, the “loss of China,” the world’s most populous country, contributed to a sense of panic among American foreign policymakers, whose attention began to shift from Europe to Asia. After Dean Acheson became Secretary of State in 1949, Kennan was replaced in the State Department by former investment banker Paul Nitze, whose first task was to help compose, as Acheson later described in his memoir, a document designed to “bludgeon the mass mind of ‘top government’” into approving a “substantial increase” in military expenditures.



The communist world system rested, in part, on the relationship between the two largest communist nations—the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China. This 1950 Chinese Stamp depicts Joseph Stalin shaking hands with Mao Zedong. [Wikimedia](#).

“National Security Memorandum 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security,” a national defense memo known as “NSC-68,” achieved its goal. Issued in April 1950, the nearly sixty-page classified memo warned of “increasingly terrifying weapons of mass destruction,” which served to remind “every individual” of “the ever-present possibility of annihilation.” It said that leaders of the USSR and its “international communist movement” sought only “to retain and solidify their absolute power.” As the central “bulwark of opposition to Soviet expansion,” America had become “the principal enemy” that “must be subverted or destroyed by one means or another.” NSC-68 urged a “rapid build-up of political, economic, and military strength” in order to “roll back the Kremlin’s drive for world domination.” Such a massive commitment of resources, amounting to more than a threefold increase in the annual defense budget, was necessary because the USSR, “unlike previous aspirants to hegemony,” was “animated by a new fanatic faith,” seeking “to impose its absolute authority over the rest of the world.” Both Kennan and Lippmann were among a minority in the ‘foreign policy establishment’ who argued to no avail that such a ‘militarization of containment’ was tragically wrongheaded.

On June 25, 1950, as US officials were considering the merits of NSC 68’s proposals, including “the intensification of...operations by covert means in the fields of economic...political and psychological warfare” designed to foment “unrest and revolt in...[Soviet] satellite countries,” fighting erupted in Korea between communists in the north and American-backed anti-communists in the south.

After Japan surrendered in September 1945, a US-Soviet joint occupation had paved the way for the division of Korea. In November 1947, the UN passed a resolution that a united government in Korea should be created but the Soviet Union refused to cooperate. Only the south held elections. The Republic of Korea (ROK), South Korea, was created three months after the election. A month later, communists in the north established the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Both claimed to stand for a unified Korean peninsula. The UN recognized the ROK, but incessant armed conflict broke out between North and South.

In the spring of 1950, Stalin hesitantly endorsed North Korean leader Kim Il Sung's plan to 'liberate' the South by force, a plan heavily influenced by Mao's recent victory in China. While he did not desire a military confrontation with the US, Stalin thought correctly that he could encourage his Chinese comrades to support North Korea if the war turned against the DPRK. The North Koreans launched a successful surprise attack and Seoul, the capital of South Korea, fell to the communists on June 28. The UN passed resolutions demanding that North Korea cease hostilities and withdraw its armed forces to the 38th parallel and calling on member states to provide the ROK military assistance to repulse the Northern attack.

That July, UN forces mobilized under American General Douglass MacArthur. Troops landed at Inchon, a port city around 30 miles away from Seoul, and took the city on September 28. They moved on North Korea. On October 1, ROK/UN forces crossed the 38th parallel, and on October 26 they reached the Yalu River, the traditional Korea-China border. They were met by 300,000 Chinese troops who broke the advance and rolled up the offensive. On November 30, ROK/UN forces began a fevered retreat. They returned across the 38th parallel and abandoned Seoul on January 4, 1951. The United Nations forces regrouped, but the war entered into a stalemate. General MacArthur, growing impatient and wanting to eliminate the communist threats, requested authorization to use nuclear weapons against North Korea and China. Denied, MacArthur publicly denounced Truman. Truman, unwilling to threaten World War III and refusing to tolerate MacArthur's public insubordination, dismissed the General in April. On June 23, 1951, the Soviet ambassador to the UN suggested a cease-fire, which the US immediately accepted. Peace talks continued for two years.



With the policy of “containing” communism and at home and abroad, the U.S. pressured the United Nations to support the South Koreans, ultimately supplying American troops to fight in the civil war. Though rather forgotten in the annals of American history, the Korean War caused over 30,000 American deaths and 100,000 wounded, leaving an indelible mark on those who served.

Wikimedia.

General Dwight Eisenhower defeated Truman in the 1952 presidential election and Stalin died in March 1953. The DPRK warmed to peace, and an armistice agreement was signed on July 27, 1953. Upwards of 1.5 million people had died during the conflict.

Coming so soon after World War II and ending without clear victory, Korea became for many Americans a ‘forgotten war.’ Decades later, though, the nation’s other major intervention in Asia would be anything but forgotten. The Vietnam War had deep roots in the Cold War world. Vietnam had been colonized by France and seized by Japan during World War II. The nationalist leader Ho Chi Minh had been backed by the US during his anti-Japanese insurgency and, following Japan’s surrender in 1945, “Viet Minh” nationalists, quoting Thomas Jefferson, declared an independent Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). Yet France moved to reassert authority over its former colony in Indochina, and the United States sacrificed Vietnamese self-determination for France’s colonial imperatives. Ho Chi Minh turned to the Soviet Union for assistance in waging war against the French colonizers in a protracted war.

After French troops were defeated at the ‘Battle of Dien Bien Phu’ in May 1954, US officials helped broker a temporary settlement that partitioned Vietnam in two, with a Soviet/Chinese-backed state in the north and an American-backed state in the south. To stifle communist expansion southward, the United States would send arms, offer military advisors, prop up corrupt politicians, stop elections, and, eventually, send over 500,000 troops, of whom nearly 60,000 would be lost before the communists finally reunified the country.

THE ARMS BUILDUP, THE SPACE RACE, AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

Harnessing years of discoveries in nuclear physics, the work of hundreds of world-class scientists, and \$2 billion in research funds, during World War II the Manhattan Project had created atomic weapons. The first nuclear explosive device, “Trinity,” exploded on the deserts of New Mexico on July 16, 1945 with the destructive power equivalent of 20,000 tons of TNT. Choking back tears, physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer would remember the experience by quoting from Hindu scripture: “I have become Death, the destroyer of worlds.” The director of the Trinity test was plainer: “Now, we’re all sons of bitches.”

The world soon saw what nuclear weapons could do. In August, two bombs leveled two cities and killed perhaps 180,000 people. The world was never the same.

The Soviets accelerated their research in the wake of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, expedited in no small part by spies such as Klaus Fuchs, who had stolen nuclear secrets from the Manhattan Project. Soviet scientists successfully tested an atomic bomb on August 29, 1949, years before American officials had estimated they would. This unexpectedly quick Russian success not only caught the United States off guard, caused tensions across the Western world, and propelled a nuclear “arms race” between the US and the USSR.

The United States detonated the first thermonuclear weapon, or hydrogen bomb (using fusion explosives of theoretically limitless power) on November 1, 1952. The blast measured over 10 megatons and generated an inferno five miles wide with a mushroom cloud 25 miles high and 100 miles across. The irradiated debris—fallout—from the blast circled the Earth, occasioning international alarm about the effects of nuclear testing on human health and the environment. It only hastened the arms race, with each side developing increasingly advanced warheads and delivery systems. The USSR successfully tested a hydrogen bomb in 1953, and soon thereafter Eisenhower announced a policy of “massive retaliation.” The US would henceforth respond to threats or acts of aggression with perhaps its entire nuclear might. Both sides, then, would theoretically be deterred from starting a war, through the logic of “mutually-assured destruction,” (MAD). Oppenheimer likened the state of “nuclear deterrence” between the US and the USSR to “two scorpions in a bottle, each capable of killing the other,” but only by risking their own lives.



In response to the Soviet Union's test of a pseudo-hydrogen bomb in 1953, the United States began Castle Bravo — the first U.S. test of a dry fuel, hydrogen bomb. Detonated on March 1, 1954, it was the most powerful nuclear device ever tested by the U.S. But the effects were more gruesome than expected, causing nuclear fall-out and radiation poisoning in nearby Pacific islands. Photograph, March 1, 1954. [Wikimedia](#).

Fears of nuclear war produced a veritable atomic culture. Films such as *Godzilla*, *On the Beach*, *Fail-Safe*, and *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* plumb the depths of American anxieties with plots featuring radioactive monsters, nuclear accidents, and doomsday scenarios. Anti-nuclear protests in the United States and abroad warned against the perils of nuclear testing and highlighted the likelihood that a thermonuclear war would unleash a global environmental catastrophe. Yet at the same time, peaceful nuclear technologies, such as fission and fusion-based energy, seemed to herald a utopia of power that would be clean, safe, and “too cheap to meter.” In 1953, Eisenhower proclaimed at the UN that the US would share the knowledge and means for other countries to use atomic power. Henceforth, “the miraculous inventiveness of man shall not be dedicated to his death, but consecrated to his life.” The ‘Atoms for Peace’ speech brought about the establishment of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), along with worldwide investment in this new economic sector.

As Germany fell at the close of World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union each sought to acquire elements of the Nazi’s V-2 superweapon program. A devastating rocket that had terrorized England, the V-2 was capable of delivering its explosive payload up to a distance of nearly 600 miles, and both nations sought to capture the scientists, designs, and manufacturing equipment to make it work. A former top German rocket scientist, Wernher Von Braun, became the leader of the American space program; the Soviet Union’s program was secretly managed by former prisoner Sergei Korolev. After the end of the war, American and Soviet rocket engineering teams worked to adapt German technology in order to create an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). The Soviets achieved success first. They even used the same launch vehicle on October 4, 1957, to send Sputnik 1, the world’s first human-made satellite, into orbit. It was a decisive Soviet propaganda victory.

In response, the US government rushed to perfect its own ICBM technology and launch its own satellites and astronauts into space. In 1958, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was created as a successor to the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA). Initial American attempts to launch a satellite into orbit using the Vanguard rocket suffered spectacular failures, heightening fears of Soviet domination in space. While the American space program floundered, on September 13, 1959, the Soviet Union's "Luna 2" capsule became the first human-made object to touch the moon. The "race for survival," as it was called by the *New York Times*, reached a new level. The Soviet Union successfully launched a pair of dogs (Belka and Strelka) into orbit and returned them to Earth while the American Mercury program languished behind schedule. Despite countless failures and one massive accident that killed nearly one hundred Soviet military and rocket engineers, Russian 'cosmonaut' Yuri Gagarin was launched into orbit on April 12, 1961. Astronaut Alan Shepard accomplished a sub-orbital flight in the Freedom 7 capsule on May 5. John Kennedy would use America's losses in the "space race" to bolster funding for a moon landing.

While outer space captivated the world's imagination, the Cold War still captured its anxieties. The ever-escalating arms race continued to foster panic. In the early 1950s, the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FDCA) began preparing citizens for the worst. Schoolchildren were instructed, via a film featuring Bert the Turtle, to "duck and cover" beneath their desks in the event of a thermonuclear war.

Although it took a back seat to space travel and nuclear weapons, the advent of modern computing was yet another major Cold War scientific innovation, the effects of which were only just beginning to be understood. In 1958, following the humiliation of the Sputnik launches, Eisenhower authorized the creation of an Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) housed within the Department of Defense (later changed to DARPA). As a secretive military research and development operation, ARPA was tasked with funding and otherwise overseeing the production of sensitive new technologies. Soon, in cooperation with university-based computer engineers, ARPA would develop the world's first system of "network packing switches" and computer networks would begin connecting to one another.

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THE COLD WAR RED SCARE, MCCARTHYISM, AND LIBERAL ANTI-COMMUNISM



Joseph McCarthy, Republican Senator from Wisconsin, fueled fears during the early 1950s that communism was rampant and growing. This intensified Cold War tensions felt by every segment of society, from government officials to ordinary American citizens. Photograph of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, March 14, 1950. National Archives and Records Administration.

Joseph McCarthy burst onto the national scene during a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia on February 9, 1950. Waving a sheet of paper in the air, he proclaimed: "I have here in my hand a list of 205...names that were made known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping [US] policy." Since the Wisconsin Republican had no actual list, when pressed, the number changed to fifty-seven, then, later, eighty-one. Finally he promised to disclose the name of just one communist, the nation's "top Soviet agent." The shifting numbers brought ridicule, but it didn't matter, not really: McCarthy's claims won him fame and fueled the ongoing "red scare."

Within a ten-month span beginning in 1949, the USSR developed a nuclear bomb, China fell to Communism, and over 300,000 American soldiers were deployed to fight land war in Korea. Newspapers, meanwhile, were filled with headlines alleging Soviet espionage.

During the war, Julius Rosenberg had worked briefly at the US Army Signal Corps Laboratory in New Jersey, where he had access to classified information. He and his wife Ethel, who had both been members of the American Communist Party (CPUSA) in the 1930s, were accused of passing secret bomb-related documents into the hands of Soviet officials. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg who were indicted in August 1950 on charges of giving 'nuclear secrets' to the Russians. After a trial in March 1951, the Rosenbergs were found guilty and executed on June 19, 1953. The Rosenbergs offered anti-communists such as McCarthy the evidence they needed to allege a vast Soviet conspiracy to infiltrate and subvert the US government, allegations that justified the smearing all left-liberal, even those resolutely anti-communist. In the run-up to the 1950 and 1952 elections, progressives saw this not as a legitimate effort to expose actual subversive activity, but rather a campaign to tarnish the reputations of 'New Dealers' in the Democratic Party. Alger Hiss was another prize for conservatives, who identified him as the highest-ranking government official linked to Soviet espionage. While working for the State Department's Office of Far Eastern Affairs, Hiss had been a prominent member of the US delegation to Yalta before serving as secretary-general of the UN Charter Conference in San Francisco, from April-June 1945. He left the State Department in 1946. Hounded by a young congressman named Richard Nixon, public accusations finally won results. On August 3, 1948, Whittaker Chambers gave testimony to the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) claiming that he and Hiss had worked together as part of the secret 'communist underground' in Washington DC during the 1930s. Hiss, who always maintained his innocence, stood trial twice. Following a 'hung jury' decision in July 1949, he was finally convicted on two counts of perjury, the statute of limitations for espionage having expired. Although later evidence certainly suggested their guilt, the prominent convictions of a few suspected spies fueled a frenzy by many who saw communists everywhere. Not long after his February 1950 speech in Wheeling, Joe McCarthy's sensational charges became a source of growing controversy. Forced to respond, President Truman arranged a partisan congressional investigation designed to discredit McCarthy. The Tydings Committee held hearings from early March through July, 1950, then issued a final report admonishing McCarthy for perpetrating a "fraud and a hoax" on the American public. American progressives saw McCarthy's crusade as nothing less than a political witch hunt. In June 1950, *The Nation* magazine editor Freda Kirchwey characterized "McCarthyism" as "the means by which a handful of men, disguised as hunters of subversion, cynically subvert the instruments of justice...in order to help their own political fortunes." Truman's liberal supporters and leftists like Kirchwey hoped that McCarthy and the new 'ism' that bore his name would blow over quickly. Yet 'McCarthyism' was ultimately just a symptom of the widespread anti-communist hysteria that engulfed American society during the first Cold War. Faced with a growing awareness of Soviet espionage, and a tough election on the horizon, in March 1947 Truman gave in to pressure and issued Executive Order 9835, establishing loyalty reviews for federal employees. In the case of Foreign Service officers, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was empowered to conduct closer examinations of all potential 'security risks'; congressional committees, namely the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (SPSI), were authorized to gather facts and hold hearings. Following Truman's "loyalty order," anti-subversion committees emerged in over a dozen state



The environment of fear and panic instigated by McCarthyism led to the arrest of many innocent people. Still, some Americans accused of supplying top-secret information to the Soviets were in fact spies. The Rosenbergs were convicted of espionage and executed in 1953 for giving information about the atomic bomb to the Soviets. This was one case that has proven the test of time, for as recently as 2008 a co-conspirator of the Rosenbergs admitted to spying for the Soviet Union. Roger Higgins, "[Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, separated by heavy wire screen as they leave U.S. Court House after being found guilty by jury]," 1951. Library of Congress.

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legislatures, while review procedures proliferated in public schools and universities across the country. At the University of California, for example, thirty-one professors were dismissed in 1950 after refusing to sign a loyalty oath. The Senate Internal Security (McCarran) Act passed in September 1950 mandated all “communist organizations” to register with the government and created a Senate investigative subcommittee equivalent to HUAC. The McCarran Act gave the government greater powers to investigate sedition and made it possible to prevent suspected individuals from gaining or keeping their citizenship. Between 1949 and 1954, HUAC, SPSI, and a new McCarran Committee conducted over one hundred distinct investigations of subversive activities.

There had been an American communist presence. The Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA) formed in the aftermath of the 1917 Russian Revolution when the Bolsheviks created a Communist International (the Comintern) and invited socialists from around the world to join as they raised the red banner of revolution atop the palace in Leningrad (formerly St. Petersburg). During its first two years of existence, the CPUSA functioned in secret, hidden from a surge of anti-radical and anti-immigrant hysteria, investigations, deportations, and raids at the end of World War I. The CPUSA began its public life in 1921, after the panic subsided. Communism remained on the margins of American life until the 1930s, when leftists and liberals began to see the Soviet Union as a symbol of hope amid the Great Depression.

During the 1930s, many communists joined the “Popular Front,” an effort to adapt communism to the United States and make it mainstream. During the Popular Front era communists were integrated into mainstream political institutions through alliances with progressives in the Democratic Party. The CPUSA enjoyed most of its influence and popularity among workers in unions linked to the newly formed Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). Communists also became strong opponents of southern ‘Jim Crow’ segregation and developed a presence in both the NAACP and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The CPUSA, moreover, established “front” groups such as the League of American Writers, in which intellectuals participated without direct knowledge of its ties to the Comintern. But even at the height of the global economic crisis, communism never attracted many Americans. Even at the peak of its membership, in 1944, the CPUSA had just 80,000 national “card-carrying” members. From the mid-1930s through the mid-1940s, “the Party” exercised most of its power indirectly, through coalitions with liberals and reformers. But in the late 1930s, particularly when news broke of Hitler and Stalin’s non-aggression pact of 1939, many fled the Party, a bloc of left-liberal anti-communists purged remaining communists in their ranks, and the Popular Front collapsed.

Lacking the legal grounds to abolish the CPUSA, officials instead sought to expose and contain CPUSA influence. Following a series of predecessor committees, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) was established in 1938, then reorganized after the war and given the explicit task of investigating communism. By the time the Communist Control Act was passed in August 1954, effectively criminalizing Party membership, the CPUSA had long ceased to have meaningful influence.

Anti-communists were driven to eliminate remaining CPUSA influence from progressive institutions, including the NAACP and the CIO. The Taft-Hartley Act (1947) gave union officials the initiative to purge communists from the labor movement. A kind of “Cold War” liberalism took hold. In January 1947, anti-communist liberals formed Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), whose founding members included labor leader Walter Reuther and NAACP chairman Walter White, as well as historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr., theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, and former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Working to help Truman defeat former vice-president Henry Wallace’s popular front-backed campaign in 1948, the ADA combined social and economic reforms with staunch anti-communism.

The domestic Cold War was bipartisan, fueled by a consensus drawn from a left-liberal and conservative anti-communist alliance that included politicians and policymakers, journalists and scientists, business and civic/religious leaders, and educators and entertainers.

Led by its imperious director, J. Edgar Hoover, the FBI took an active role in the domestic battle against communism. Hoover’s FBI helped incite panic by assisting the creation of blatantly propagandistic films and television shows, including *The Red Menace* (1949), *My Son John*, (1951), and *I Led Three Lives* (1953-1956). Such alarmist depictions of espionage and treason in a ‘free world’ imperiled by communism heightened a culture of fear experienced in the 1950s. In the fall of 1947, HUAC entered the fray with highly publicized hearings of Hollywood. Film mogul Walt Disney and actor Ronald Reagan, among others, testified to aid investigators’ attempts to expose communist influence in the entertainment industry. A group of writers, directors, and producers who refused to answer questions were held in contempt of Congress. This ‘Hollywood Ten’ created the precedent for a ‘blacklist’ in which hundreds of film artists were barred from industry work for the next decade.

HUAC made repeated visits to Hollywood during the 1950s, and their interrogation of celebrities often began with the same intimidating refrain: "Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of the Communist Party?" Many witnesses cooperated, and "named names," naming anyone they knew who had ever been associated with communist-related groups or organizations. In 1956, black entertainer and activist Paul Robeson chided his HUAC inquisitors, claiming that they had put him on trial not for his politics, but because he had spent his life "fighting for the rights" of his people. "You are the un-Americans," he told them, "and you ought to be ashamed of yourselves." As Robeson and other victims of McCarthyism learned first-hand, this "second red scare," in the glow of nuclear annihilation and global "totalitarianism," fueled an intolerant and skeptical political world, what Cold War liberal Arthur Schlesinger, in his *The Vital Center* (1949), called an "age of anxiety."

Anti-communist ideology valorized overt patriotism, religious conviction, and faith in capitalism. Those who shunned such "American values" were open to attack. If communism was a plague spreading across Europe and Asia, anti-communist hyperbole infected cities, towns, and suburbs throughout the country. The playwright Arthur Miller, whose popular 1953 *The Crucible* compared the red scare to the Salem Witch Trials, wrote, "In America any man who is not reactionary in his views is open to the charge of alliance with the Red hell. Political opposition, thereby, is given an inhumane overlay which then justifies the abrogation of all normally applied customs of civilized intercourse. A political policy is equated with moral right, and opposition to it with diabolical malevolence. Once such an equation is effectively made, society becomes a congeries of plots and counterplots, and the main role of government changes from that of the arbiter to that of the scourge of God."

Rallying against communism, American society urged conformity. "Deviant" behavior became dangerous. Having entered the workforce *en masse* as part of a collective effort in World War II, middle class women were told to return to house-making responsibilities. Having fought and died abroad to for American democracy, blacks were told to return home and acquiesce to the American racial order. Homosexuality, already stigmatized, became dangerous. Personal secrets were seen as a liability that exposed one to blackmail. The same paranoid mindset that fueled the second red scare also ignited the Cold War "lavender scare."

American religion, meanwhile, was fixated on what McCarthy, in his 1950 Wheeling speech, called an "all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity." Cold warriors in the US routinely referred to a fundamental incompatibility between "godless communism" and god-fearing Americanism. Religious conservatives championed the idea of traditional nuclear god-fearing family as a bulwark against the spread of atheistic totalitarianism. As Baptist minister Billy Graham sermonized in 1950, communism aimed to "destroy the American home and cause ... moral deterioration," leaving the country exposed to communist infiltration.

In an atmosphere in which ideas of national belonging and citizenship were so closely linked to religious commitment, Americans during the early Cold War years attended church, professed a belief in a supreme being, and stressed the importance of religion in their lives at higher rates than in any time in American history. Americans sought to differentiate themselves from godless communists through public displays of religiosity. Politicians infused government with religious symbols. The Pledge of Allegiance was altered to include the words "one nation, under God" in 1954. "In God We Trust" was adopted as the official national motto in 1956. In popular culture, one of the most popular films of the decade, *The Ten Commandments* (1956), retold the biblical Exodus



Many accused of Communist sentiments vehemently denied such allegations, including the one of the most well-known Americans at the time, African American actor and signer Paul Robeson. Unwilling to sign an affidavit confirming he was Communist, his U.S. passport was revoked. During the Cold War, he was condemned by the American press and neither his music nor films could be purchased in the U.S. [Photograph](#).

story as a Cold War parable, echoing (incidentally) NSC 68's characterization of the Soviet Union as a "slave state." Monuments of the Ten Commandments went to court houses and city halls across the country.

While the link between American nationalism and religion grew much closer during the Cold War, many Americans began to believe that just believing in almost any religion was better than being an atheist. Gone was the overt anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic language of Protestants in the past. Now, leaders spoke of a common "Judeo-Christian" heritage. In December 1952, a month before his inauguration, Dwight Eisenhower said that "our form of government makes no sense unless it is founded in a deeply-felt religious faith, and I don't care what it is."

Joseph McCarthy, an Irish Catholic, made common cause with prominent religious anti-communists, including southern evangelist Billy James Hargis of *Christian Crusade*, a popular radio and television ministry that peaked in the 1950s and 1960s. Cold War religion in America also crossed the political divide. During the 1952 campaign, Eisenhower spoke of US foreign policy as "a war of light against darkness, freedom against slavery, Godliness against atheism." His Democratic opponent, former Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson said that America was engaged in a battle with the "Anti-Christ." While Billy Graham became a spiritual adviser to Eisenhower as well as other Republican and Democratic presidents, the same was true of the liberal Protestant Reinhold Niebuhr, perhaps the nation's most important theologian when he appeared on the cover of *Life* in March 1948.

Though publicly rebuked by the Tydings Committee, McCarthy soldiered on. In June 1951, on the floor of Congress, McCarthy charged that then-Secretary of Defense (and former secretary of state) Gen. George Marshall had fallen prey to "a conspiracy on a scale so immense as to dwarf any previous such venture in the history of man." He claimed that Marshall, a war hero, had helped to "diminish the United States in world affairs," enable the US to "finally fall victim to Soviet intrigue... and Russian military might." The speech caused an uproar. During the 1952 campaign, Eisenhower, who was in all things moderate and politically cautious, refused to publicly denounce McCarthy. "I will not...get into the gutter with that guy," he wrote privately. McCarthy campaigned for Eisenhower, who won a stunning victory.

So did the Republicans, who regained Congress. McCarthy became chairman of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (SPSI). He targeted many, and turned his newfound power against the government's overseas broadcast division, the Voice of America (VOA). McCarthy's investigation in February-March 1953 resulted in several resignations or transfers. McCarthy's mudslinging had become increasingly unrestrained. Soon he went after the U.S. Army. After forcing the Army to again disprove theories of a Soviet spy ring at Ft. Monmouth in New Jersey, McCarthy publicly berated officers suspected of promoting leftists. McCarthy's badgering of witnesses created cover for critics to publicly denounce his abrasive fear-mongering.

On March 9, CBS anchor Edward Murrow, a cold war liberal, told his television audience that McCarthy's actions had "caused alarm and dismay amongst ... allies abroad, and given considerable comfort to our enemies." Yet, Murrow explained, "He didn't create this situation of fear; he merely exploited it—and rather successfully. Cassius was right. 'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves.'"

Twenty million people saw the "Army-McCarthy Hearings" unfold over thirty-six days in 1954. The Army's head counsel, Joseph Welch, captured much of the mood of the country when he defended a fellow lawyer from McCarthy's public smears, saying, "Let us not assassinate this lad further, Senator. You've done enough. Have you no sense of decency, sir? At long last, have you left no sense of decency?" In September, a senate subcommittee recommended that McCarthy be censured. On December 2, 1954, his colleagues voted 67-22 to "condemn" his actions. Humiliated, McCarthy faded into irrelevance and alcoholism and died in May 1957, at age 48.

By the late 1950s, the worst of the second red scare was over. Stalin's death, followed by the Korean War armistice, opened new space—and hope—for the easing of Cold War tensions. Détente and the upheavals of the late 1960s were on the horizon. But McCarthyism outlasted McCarthy and the 1950s. McCarthy made an almost unparalleled impact on Cold War American society. The tactics he perfected continued to be practiced long after his death. "Red-baiting," the act of smearing a political opponent by linking them to communism or some other demonized ideology, persevered. McCarthy had hardly alone.

Congressman Richard Nixon, for instance, used his place on HUAC and his public role in the campaign against Alger Hiss to catapult himself into the White House alongside Eisenhower and later into the presidency. Ronald Reagan bolstered the fame he had won in Hollywood with his testimony before Congress and his anti-communist work for major American corporations such as General Electric. He too would use anti-communism to enter public life and chart a course to the presidency. In 1958, radical anti-communists founded the John Birch Society, attacking liberals and civil rights activists such as Martin Luther King Jr. as communists. Although joined by Cold

War liberals, the weight of anti-communism was used as part of an assault against the New Deal and its defenders. Even those liberals, such as historian Arthur Schlesinger, who had fought against communism found themselves smeared by the red scare. Politics and culture both had been reshaped. The leftist American tradition was in tatters, destroyed by anti-communist hysteria. Movements for social justice, from civil rights to gay rights to feminism, were all suppressed under Cold War conformity.

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DECOLONIZATION AND THE GLOBAL REACH OF THE ‘AMERICAN CENTURY’

In an influential 1941 *Life* magazine editorial titled “The American Century,” publishing magnate Henry Luce, envisioning the US as a “dominant world power,” outlined his “vision of America as the principal guarantor of freedom of the seas” and “the dynamic leader of world trade.” In his embrace of an American-led international system, the conservative Luce was joined by liberals including historian Arthur Schlesinger, who in his 1949 Cold War tome *The Vital Center*, proclaimed that a “world destiny” had been “thrust” upon the United States, with perhaps no other nation becoming “a more reluctant great power.” Emerging from the war as the world’s preeminent military and economic force, the US was perhaps destined to compete with the Soviet Union for influence in the Third World, where a power vacuum had been created by the demise of European imperialism. As France and Britain in particular struggled in vain to control colonies in Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa, the United States assumed responsibility for maintaining order and producing a kind of “pax-Americana.” Little of the postwar world, however, would be so peaceful.

Based on the logic of militarized containment established by NSC-68 and American Cold War strategy, interventions in Korea and Vietnam were seen as appropriate American responses to the ascent of communism in China. Unless Soviet power in Asia was halted, Chinese influence would ripple across the continent, and one country after another would “fall” to communism. Easily transposed onto any region of the world, the “Domino Theory” became a standard basis for the justification of US interventions abroad, such as in Cuba after 1959, which was seen as a communist beachhead that imperiled Latin America, the Caribbean, and perhaps eventually the United States. Like Ho Chi Minh, Cuban leader Fidel Castro was a revolutionary nationalist whose career as a communist began in earnest after he was rebuffed by the United States and American interventions targeted nations that never espoused official communist positions. Many interventions in Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere were driven by factors that were shaped by but also that transcended anti-communist ideology.



The Cuban Revolution seemed to confirm the fears of many Americans that the spread of communism could not be stopped. It is believed that American government intervened in the new government of Fidel Castro in covert ways, and many attribute the La Coubre explosion to the American Central Intelligence Agency. In this photograph, Castro and Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara march in a memorial for those killed in the explosion in March, 1960 in Havana Cuba. [Wikimedia](#).

Instead of dismantling its military after World War II, as the United States had after every major conflict, the Cold War facilitated a new permanent defense establishment. Federal investments in national defense affected the entire country. Different regions housed various sectors of what sociologist C. Wright Mills, in 1956, called the “permanent war economy.” The aerospace industry was concentrated in areas like Southern California and Long Island, New York; Massachusetts was home to several universities that received major defense contracts; the Midwest became home base for intercontinental ballistic missiles pointed at the Soviet Union; many of the largest defense companies and military installations were concentrated in the South, so much so that in 1956 author William Faulkner, who was born in Mississippi, remarked, “Our economy is the Federal Government.”

A radical critic of US policy, Mills was one of the first thinkers to question the effects of massive defense spending, which, he said, corrupted the ruling class, or “power elite,” who now had the potential to take the country into war for the sake of corporate profits. Yet perhaps the most famous critique of the entrenched war economy came from an unlikely source. During his farewell address to the nation in January 1961, President Eisenhower cautioned Americans against the “unwarranted influence” of a “permanent armaments industry of vast proportions” which could threaten “liberties” and “democratic processes.” While the “conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry” was a fairly recent development, this “military-industrial complex” had cultivated a “total influence,” which was “economic, political, even spiritual...felt in every city...Statehouse ... [and] office of the Federal government.” There was, he said, great danger in failing to “comprehend its grave implications.”

In Eisenhower’s formulation, the “military-industrial complex” referred specifically to domestic connections between arms manufacturers, members of Congress, and the Department of Defense. Yet the new alliance between corporations, politicians, and the military was dependent on having an actual conflict to wage, without which there could be no ultimate financial gain. To critics, military-industrial partnerships at home were now linked

to US interests abroad. Suddenly American foreign policy had to ensure foreign markets and secure favorable terms for American trade all across the globe. Seen in such a way, the Cold War was just a bi-product of America's new role as the remaining Western superpower. Regardless, the postwar rise of US power correlated with what many historians describe as a "national security consensus" that has dominated American policy since World War II. And so the United States was now more intimately involved in world affairs than ever before.

Ideological conflicts and independence movements erupted across the postwar world. More than eighty countries achieved independence, primarily from European control. As it took center stage in the realm of global affairs, the United States played a complicated and often contradictory role in this process of "decolonization." The sweeping scope of post-1945 US military expansion was unique in the country's history. Critics believed that the advent of a "standing army," so feared by many Founders, set a disturbing precedent. But in the postwar world, American leaders eagerly set about maintaining a new permanent military juggernaut and creating viable international institutions.

But what of independence movements around the world? Roosevelt had spoken for many in his remark to British Premier Winston Churchill, in 1941, that it was hard to imagine "fight[ing] a war against fascist slavery, and at the same time not work to free people all over the world from a backward colonial policy." American postwar foreign policy planners therefore struggled to balance support for decolonization against the reality that national independence movements often posed a threat to America's global interests.

As American strategy became consumed with thwarting Russian power and the concomitant global spread of communism, to foreign policy officials it increasingly made little difference whether insurgencies or independence movements had direct involvement with the Soviet Union, so long as a revolutionary movement or government could in some way be linked to international communism. The Soviet Union, too, was attempting sway the world. Stalin and his successors pushed an agenda that included not only the creation of Soviet client states in Eastern and Central Europe, but also a tendency to support leftwing liberation movements everywhere, particularly when they espoused anti-American sentiment. As a result, the US and the USSR engaged in numerous proxy wars in the "Third World."

American planners felt that successful decolonization could demonstrate the superiority of democracy and capitalism against competing Soviet models. Their goal was in essence to develop an informal system of world power based as much as possible on consent (hegemony) rather than coercion (empire). European powers still pushed colonization. American officials feared that anti-colonial resistance would breed revolution and push nationalists into the Soviet sphere. And when faced with such movements, American policy dictated alliances with colonial regimes, alienating nationalist leaders in Asia and Africa.

The architects of American power needed to sway the citizens of decolonizing nations toward the United States. In 1948, Congress passed the Smith-Mundt Act to "promote a better understanding of the United States in other countries." The legislation established cultural exchanges with various nations, including even the USSR, in order to showcase American values through its artists and entertainers. The Soviets did the same, through what they called an international peace offensive, which by most accounts was more successful than the American campaign. Although making strides through the initiation of various overt and covert programs, US officials still perceived that they were lagging behind the Soviet Union in the "war for hearts and minds." But as unrest festered in much of the Third World, American officials faced difficult choices.

As American blacks fought for justice at home, prominent American black radicals, including Malcolm X, Paul Robeson, and the aging W.E.B. DuBois, joined in solidarity with the global anti-colonial movement, arguing that the United States had inherited the racist European imperial tradition. Supporters of the Soviet Union made their own effort to win over countries in the non-aligned world, claiming that Marxist-Leninist doctrine offered a roadmap for their liberation from colonial bondage. Moreover, Kremlin propaganda pointed to injustices of the American South as an example of American hypocrisy: how could the United States claim to fight for global freedom when it refused to guarantee freedoms for its own citizenry? In such ways the Cold War connected the black freedom struggle, the Third World, and the global Cold War.

In "Возьмите со Своим" ("The Riches at His Beach") Moscow, No 17-18, 1930.
In God's Country, that is, the United States of America.

В стране «господа-бога», т. е. в С.-А. Соединенных Штатах.

Н. КОГОУТ



Линчевание негров — это самая гнусная и архимерзительная форма проявления расовой ненависти, высшая на почве христианской религии, насквозь эксплуататорской и человеконенавистнической. Для буржуа и попов линчевание — самое высокое проявление культурности и христианской морали, действие, угодное господу-богу.

The lynching of negroes, — the basest and most abominable form of expression of race hatred, has thrived under the Christian religion which exploits and is maintaining through and through. For the bourgeoisie and the clergy lynching is the highest expression of culture and C

The Soviet Union took advantage of the very real racial tensions in the U.S. to create anti-American propaganda. This 1930 Soviet poster shows a black American being lynched from the Statue of Liberty, while the text below asserts the links between racism and Christianity. 1930 issue of Bezbozhnik. [Wikimedia](#).

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CONCLUSION

In June 1987, American President Ronald Reagan stood at Berlin Wall and demanded that Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev “Tear down this wall!” Less than three years later, amid civil unrest in November 1989, East German authorities announced that their citizens were free to travel to and from West Berlin. The concrete curtain would be lifted and East Berlin would be opened to the world. Within months, the Berlin Wall was reduced to rubble by jubilant crowds anticipating the reunification of their city and their nation, which took place on October 3, 1990. By July 1991 the Warsaw Pact had crumbled, and on December 25 of that year, the Soviet Union was officially dissolved. Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the Baltic States (Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania) were freed from Russian domination.

Partisans fight to claim responsibility for the break-up of the Soviet Union and the ending of the Cold War. Whether it was the triumphalist rhetoric and militaristic pressure of conservatives or the internal fracturing of ossified bureaucracies and work of Russian reformers that shaped the ending of the Cold War is a question of later decades. Questions about the Cold War’s end must pause before appreciations of the Cold War’s impact at home and abroad. Whether measured by the tens of millions killed in Cold War-related conflicts, in the reshaping of American politics and culture, or in the transformation of America’s role in the world, the Cold War pushed American history upon a new path, one that it has yet to yield.

This chapter was edited by Ari Cushner, with content contributions by Michael Brenes, Ari Cushner, Michael Franczak, Joseph Haker, Jonathan Hunt, Jun Suk Hyun, Zack Jacobson, Micki Kaufman, Lucie Kyrova, Celeste Day Moore, Joseph Parrott, Colin Reynolds, and Tanya Roth.

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EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENT: DR. STRANGELOVE

One of the most famous American films that deals with the Cold War is Stanley Kubrick’s *Dr. Strangelove*. Exploring the dangers of Cold War tension, nuclear policy, and military strategy, Kubrick’s film depicts “what might happen” in a Cold War worst case scenario.

Watch *Dr. Strangelove** and complete the attached [film guide](#). Submit it for up to 10 extra credit points me through Blackboard. The answers to the analytical questions need to be about a paragraph in length. The other questions can be just a sentence or two.

The film is rather dense in terms of concepts, while at the same time it’s a dark comedy. In the past students have said they had to watch it twice; once to simply get the idea of plot, characters, etc., then a second time to actually start looking for answers to the questions.

*You will need Microsoft Silverlight installed to be able to watch the film. If your computer doesn’t have it you will be prompted to download it when you try to watch the film.

NOTE: The analytical questions will require knowledge and comprehension of historical themes and information that lies outside the film. In other words: you will need to use what we've covered in class about the Cold War in order to correctly answer some of them.

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THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION



Migrant Farm Workers, 1959, Michael Rougier—Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images. Via *Life*.

In 1958, Harvard economist and public intellectual John Kenneth Galbraith published *The Affluent Society*. Galbraith's celebrated book examined America's new post-World War II consumer economy and political culture. The book, which popularized phrases such as "conventional wisdom," noted the unparalleled riches of American economic growth but criticized the underlying structures of an economy dedicated to increasing production and the consumption of goods. Galbraith argued that the United States' economy, based on an almost hedonistic consumption of luxury products, would and must inevitably lead to economic inequality as the private sector interests enriched themselves at the expense of the American public. Galbraith warned that an economy where "wants are increasingly created by the process by which they are satisfied," was unsound, unsustainable, and, ultimately, immoral. "The Affluent Society," he said, was anything but.

The contradictions that Galbraith noted mark the decade of the 1950s. While economists and scholars continue to debate the merits of Galbraith's warnings and predictions, his analysis was so insightful that the title of his book has come to serve as a ready label for postwar American society. In the almost two decades after the end of World War II, the American economy witnessed massive and sustained growth that reshaped American culture through the abundance of consumer goods. Standards of living climbed to unparalleled heights. All income levels shared and inequality plummeted in what some economists have called "The Great Compression."

And yet, as Galbraith noted, the Affluent Society had fundamental flaws. The new consumer economy that lifted millions of Americans into its burgeoning middle class also produced inequality. Women struggled to claim equal

rights as full participants in American society. The ranks of America's poor struggled to win access to good schools and good healthcare and good jobs. The Jim Crow South tenaciously defended segregation and American blacks and other minorities everywhere suffered discrimination. The suburbs gave middle class Americans new space, but left cities to wither in spirals of poverty and crime.

It is the contradictions of the Affluent Society that define a decade of unrivaled prosperity and crippling poverty, of expanded opportunity and entrenched discrimination, and of new lifestyles and stifling conformity.

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THE RISE OF SUBURBS



Levittown, early 1950s, via Flickr user [markgregory](#).

While the electric streetcar of the late-nineteenth century facilitated the outward movement of the well to do, the seeds of a suburban nation were planted in the mid-twentieth century. At the height of the Great Depression, in 1932, some 250,000 households lost their property to foreclosure. A year later, half of all U.S. mortgages were in default. The foreclosure rate stood at more than a 1,000 per day. In response, FDR's New Deal created the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC), which began purchasing and refinancing existing mortgages at risk of default. HOLC introduced the amortized mortgage, allowing borrowers to pay back interest and principle over twenty to thirty years instead of the then standard five-year mortgage that carried large balloon payments at the end of the contract. Though homeowners paid more for their homes under this new system, home-ownership was opened to the multitudes who could now gain residential stability, lower monthly mortgage payments, and accrue equity and wealth as property values rose over time.

Additionally, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), another New Deal organization, increased access to homeownership by insuring mortgages and protecting lenders from financial loss in the event of a default. Though only slightly more than a third of homes had an FHA backed mortgage by 1964, FHA backed loans had a ripple effect with private lenders granting more and more home loans even to non-FHA backed mortgages. Though started in the midst of the Great Depression, the effects of government programs and subsidies like HOLC and

the FHA were fully felt in the postwar economy and fueled the growth of homeownership and the rise of the suburbs.

Though domestic spending programs like HOLC and FHA helped create the outlines of the new consumer economy, United States involvement and the Allied victory in World War II pushed the country out of depression and into a sustained economic boom. Wartime spending exploded and, after the war, sustained spending fueled further growth. Government expenditures provided loans to veterans, subsidized corporate research and development, and built the Interstate Highway System. In the decades after World War II, business boomed, unionization peaked, wages rose, and sustained growth buoyed a new consumer economy. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act (The G.I. Bill), passed in 1944, offered low-interest home loans, a stipend to attend college, loans to start a business, and unemployment benefits.

The rapid growth of homeownership and the rise of suburban communities helped drive the postwar economic boom. Suburban neighborhoods of single-family homes tore their way through the outskirts of cities. William Levitt built the first Levittown, the archetype suburban community, in 1946 in Long Island, New York. Purchasing mass acreage, "subdividing" lots, and contracted crews to build countless homes at economies of scale, Levitt offered affordable suburban housing to veterans and their families. Levitt became the prophet of the new suburbs, heralding a massive internal migration. The country's suburban share of the population rose from 19.5% in 1940 to 30.7% by 1960. Homeownership rates rose from 44% in 1940 to almost 62% in 1960. Between 1940 and 1950, suburban communities of greater than 10,000 people grew 22.1%, and planned communities grew at an astonishing rate of 126.1%. As historian Lizabeth Cohen notes, these new suburbs "mushroomed in territorial size and the populations they harbored." Between 1950 and 1970, America's suburban population nearly doubled to 74 million, with 83 percent of all population growth occurring in suburban places.

The postwar construction boom fed into countless industries. As manufacturers converted back to consumer goods after the war, and as the suburbs developed, appliance and automobile sales rose dramatically. Flush with rising wages and wartime savings, homeowners also used newly created installment plans to buy new consumer goods at once instead of saving for years to make major purchases. The mass-distribution of credit cards, first issued in 1950, further increased homeowners' access to credit. Fueled by credit and no longer stymied by the Depression or wartime restrictions, consumers bought countless washers, dryers, refrigerators, freezers, and, suddenly, televisions. The percentage of Americans that owned at least one television increased from 12% in 1950 to more than 87% in 1960. This new suburban economy also led to increased demand for automobiles. The percentage of American families owning cars increased from 54% in 1948 to 74% in 1959. Motor fuel consumption rose from some 22 million gallons in 1945 to around 59 million gallons in 1958.

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AUGUST
1950

SCIENCE and **MECHANICS**

The Magazine That Shows You How



Raymond Loewy's
Car of the Future

Electronic Garage Door Opener

While the car had been around for decades by the 1950s, car culture really took off as a national fad during the decade. Arthur C. Base, August 1950 issue of Science and Mechanics. [Wikimedia](#).

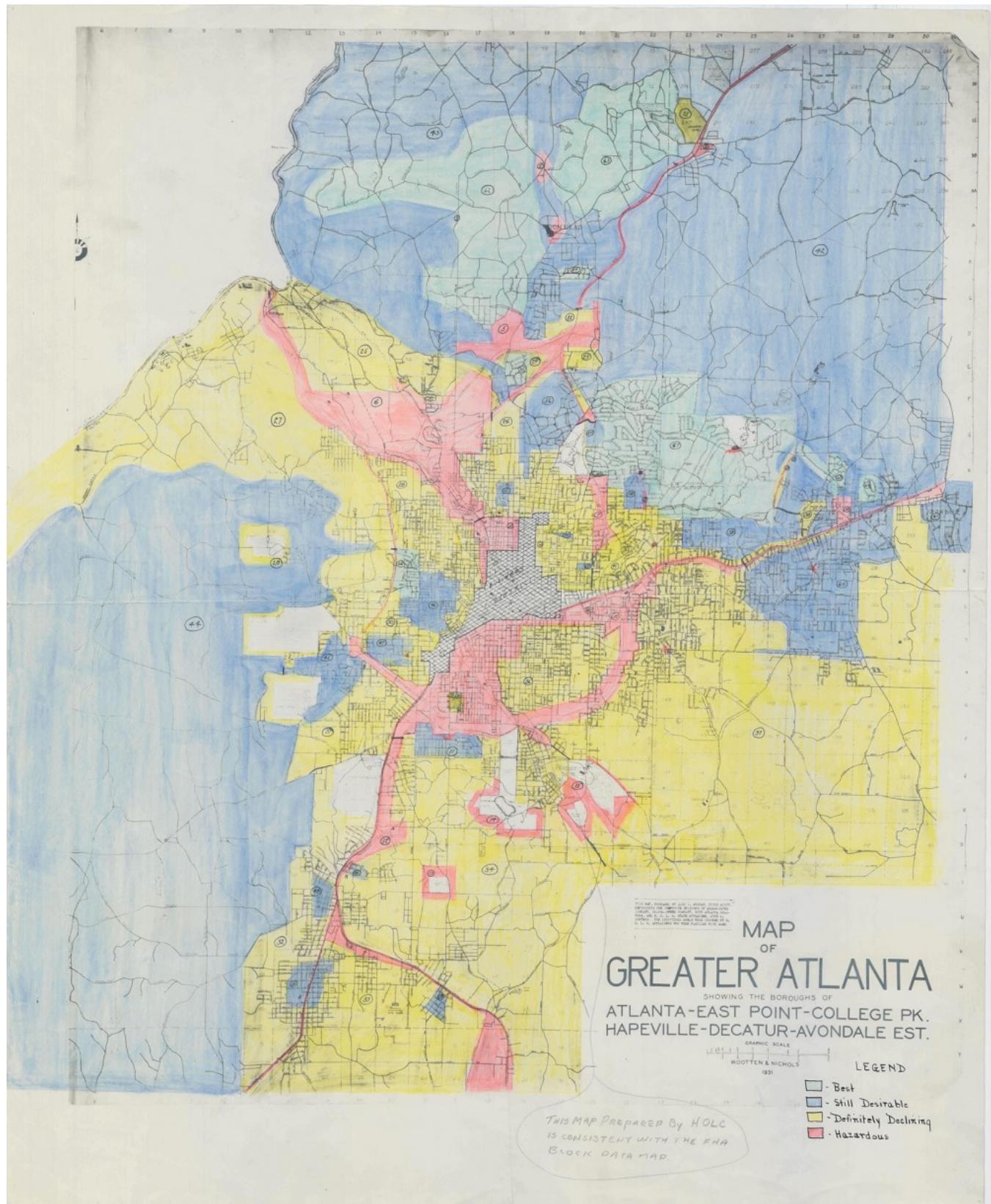
The rise of the suburbs transformed America's countryside as suburban growth reclaimed millions of acres of rural space, turning agrarian communities into suburban landscapes. As suburban homeowners retreated from the cities into new developments, new developments wrenched more and more agricultural workers off the land, often pushing them into the very cities that suburbanites were fleeing.

The process of suburbanization drove the movement of Americans and turned the wheels of the new consumer economy. Seen from a macroeconomic level, the postwar economic boom turned America into a land of economic abundance. For advantaged buyers, loans had never been easier to attain, consumer goods had never been more accessible, and well-paying jobs had never been more abundant. And yet, beneath the aggregate numbers, patterns of racial disparity, sexual discrimination, and economic inequality persevered and questioned man of the assumptions of an Affluent Society.

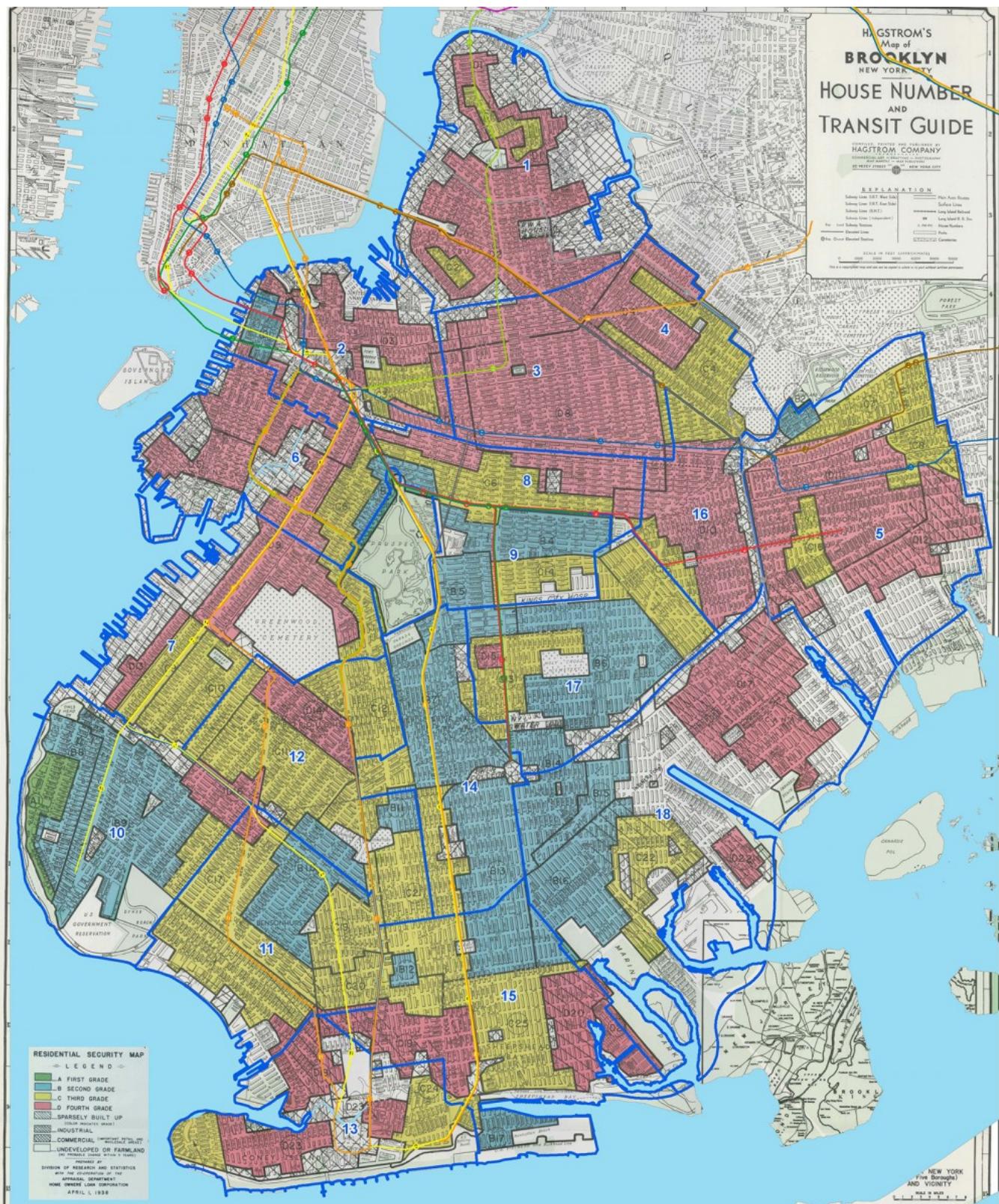
In 1939 real estate appraisers arrived in sunny Pasadena, California. Armed with elaborate questionnaires to evaluate the city's building conditions, the appraisers were well-versed in the policies of the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC). In one neighborhood, the majority of structures were rated in "fair" repair and it was noted that there was a lack of "construction hazards or flood threats." However, appraisers concluded that the area "is detrimentally affected by 10 owner occupant Negro families." While "the Negroes are said to be of the better class," the appraisers concluded, "it seems inevitable that ownership and property values will drift to lower levels."

While suburbanization and the new consumer economy produced unprecedented wealth and affluence, the fruits of this economic and spatial abundance did not reach all Americans equally. The new economic structures and suburban spaces of the postwar period produced perhaps as much inequality as affluence. Wealth created by the booming economy filtered through social structures with built-in privileges and prejudices. Just when many middle and lower class white American families began their journey of upward mobility by moving to the suburbs with the help of government spending and government programs such as the FHA and the GI Bill, many African Americans and other racial minorities found themselves systematically shut out.

A look at the relationship between federal organizations such as the HOLC and FHA and private banks, lenders, and real estate agents tells the story of standardized policies that produced a segregated housing market. At the core of HOLC appraisal techniques, which private parties also adopted, was the pernicious insistence that mixed-race and minority dominated neighborhoods were credit risks. In partnership with local lenders and real estate agents, HOLC created Residential Security Maps to identify high and low risk-lending areas. People familiar with the local real estate market filled out uniform surveys on each neighborhood. Relying on this information, HOLC assigned every neighborhood a letter grade from A to D and a corresponding color code. The least secure, highest risk neighborhoods for loans received a D grade and the color red. Banks refused to loan money in these "redlined" areas.



Black communities in cities like Detroit, Chicago, Brooklyn, and Atlanta experienced "redlining," the process by which banks and other organizations demarcated minority neighborhoods on a map with a red line. Doing so made visible the areas they believed were unfit for their services, denying black residents loans, housing, groceries, and other necessities of modern life. [Redlined Map of Greater Atlanta](#).



1938 Brooklyn Redline map. UrbanOasis.org via National Archives (NARA II RG 195 Entry 39 Folder "Brooklyn (Kings Co.)" Box 58). Edited by ASommer, [PlaNYourCity](#).

Phrases like “subversive racial elements” and “racial hazards” pervade the redlined area description files of surveyors and HOLC officials. Los Angeles’ Echo Park neighborhood, for instance, had concentrations of Japanese and African Americans and a “sprinkling of Russians and Mexicans.” The HOLC security map and

survey noted that the neighborhood's "adverse racial influences which are noticeably increasing inevitably presage lower values, rentals and a rapid decrease in residential desirability."

While the HOLC was a fairly short-lived New Deal agency, the influence of its security maps lived on in the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) and the GI Bill dispensing Veteran's Administration (VA). Both of these government organizations, which set the standard that private lenders followed, refused to back bank mortgages that did not adhere to HOLC's security maps. On the one hand FHA and VA backed loans were an enormous boon to those who qualified for them. Millions of Americans received mortgages that they otherwise would not have qualified for. But FHA-backed mortgages were not available to all. Racial minorities could not get loans for property improvements in their own neighborhoods—seen as credit risks—and were denied mortgages to purchase property in other areas for fear that their presence would extend the red line into a new community. Levittown, the poster-child of the new suburban America, only allowed whites to purchase homes. Thus HOLC policies and private developers increased home ownership and stability for white Americans while simultaneously creating and enforcing racial segregation.

The exclusionary structures of the postwar economy pushed African Americans and other minorities to protest. Over time the federal government attempted to rectify the racial segregation created, or at least facilitated, in part by its own policies. In 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court case *Shelley v. Kraemer* struck down explicitly racial neighborhood housing covenants, making it illegal to explicitly consider race when selling a house. It would be years, however, until housing acts passed in the 1960s could provide some federal muscle to complement grassroots attempts to ensure equal access.

During the 1950s and early 1960s many Americans retreated to the suburbs to enjoy the new consumer economy and search for some normalcy and security after the instability of depression and war. But many could not. It was both the limits and opportunities of housing that shaped the contours of postwar American society.

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RACE AND EDUCATION



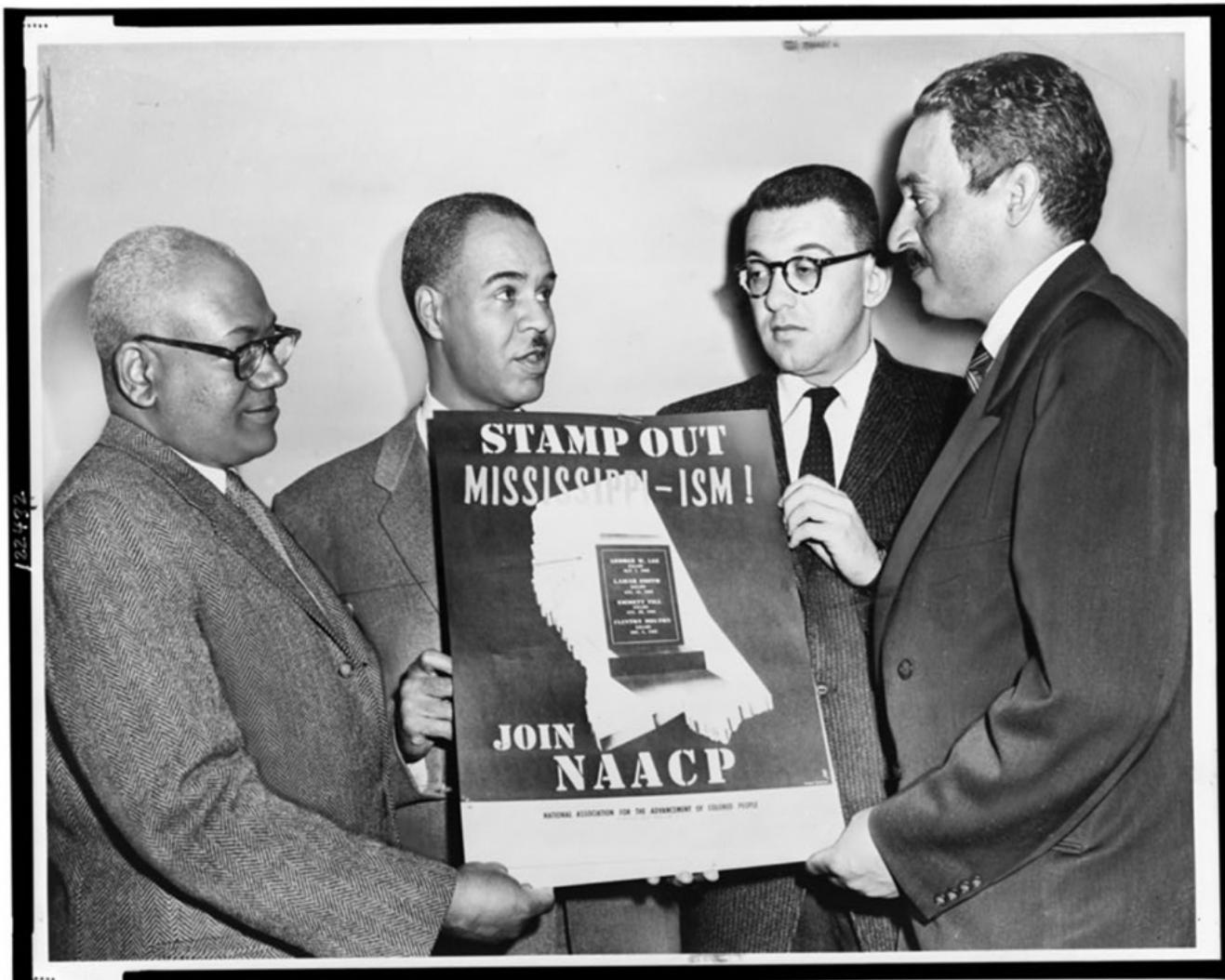
School desegregation was a tense experience for all involved, but none more so than the African American students brought into white schools. The “Little Rock Nine” were the first to do this in Arkansas; their escorts, the 101st Airborne Division of the U.S. Army, provided protection to these students who so bravely took that first step. Photograph, 1957. [Wikimedia](#).

Older battles over racial exclusion also confronted postwar American society. One long-simmering struggle targeted segregated schooling. Since the Supreme Court’s decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), black Americans, particularly in the American South, had fully felt the deleterious effects of segregated education. Their battle against *Plessy* for inclusion in American education stretched across half a century when the Supreme Court again took up the merits of “separate but equal.”

On May 17, 1954, after two years of argument, re-argument, and deliberation, Chief Justice Earl Warren announced the Supreme Court’s decision on segregated schooling in *Oliver Brown, et al v. Board of Education of Topeka, et al.* The court found by a unanimous 9-0 vote that racial segregation violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The court’s decision declared, “Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.” “Separate but equal” was made unconstitutional.

Decades of African American-led litigation, local agitation against racial inequality, and liberal Supreme Court justices made *Brown v. Board* possible. In the early 1930s, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) began a concerted effort to erode the legal underpinnings of segregation in the American South. Legal, or *de jure*, segregation subjected racial minorities to discriminatory laws and policies. Law and custom in the South hardened anti-black restrictions. But through a series of carefully chosen and contested court cases concerning education, disfranchisement, and jury selection, NAACP lawyers such as Charles Hamilton Houston, Robert L. Clark, and future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall undermined Jim Crow’s

constitutional underpinnings. Initially seeking to demonstrate that states systematically failed to provide African American students “equal” resources and facilities, and thus failed to live up to *Plessy*, by the late 1940s activists began to more forcefully challenge the assumptions that “separate” was constitutional at all.



The NAACP was a central organization in the fight to end segregation, discrimination, and injustice based on race. NAACP leaders, including Thurgood Marshall (who would become the first African American Supreme Court Justice), hold a poster decrying racial bias in Mississippi in 1956. Photograph, 1956. [Library of Congress](#).

Though remembered as just one lawsuit, *Brown* consolidated five separate cases that had originated in the southeastern United States: *Briggs v. Elliott* (South Carolina), *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* (Virginia), *Beulah v. Belton* (Delaware), *Boiling v. Sharpe* (Washington, D. C.), and *Brown v. Board of Education* (Kansas). Working with local activists already involved in desegregation fights, the NAACP purposely chose cases with a diverse set of local backgrounds to show that segregation was not just an issue in the Deep South, and that a sweeping judgment on the fundamental constitutionality of *Plessy* was needed.

Briggs v. Elliott had illustrated, on the one hand, the extreme deficiencies in segregated black schools. The first case accepted by the NAACP, *Briggs* originated in rural Clarendon County, South Carolina, where taxpayers in 1950 spent \$179 to educate each white student while spending \$43 for each black student. The district's twelve white schools were cumulatively worth \$637,850; the value of its sixty-one black schools (mostly dilapidated, over-crowded shacks), was \$194,575. While *Briggs* underscored the South's failure to follow *Plessy*, the *Brown v. Board* suit focused less on material disparities between black and white schools (which were significantly less than in places like Clarendon County) and more on the social and spiritual degradation that accompanied legal segregation. This case cut to the basic question of whether or not “separate” was itself inherently unequal. The NAACP said the two notions were incompatible. As one witness before the U. S. District Court of Kansas said,

"the entire colored race is craving light, and the only way to reach the light is to start [black and white] children together in their infancy and they come up together."

To make its case, the NAACP marshaled historical and social scientific evidence. The Court found the historical evidence inconclusive, and drew their ruling more heavily from the NAACP's argument that segregation psychologically damaged black children. To make this argument, association lawyers relied upon social scientific evidence, such as the famous doll experiments of Kenneth and Mamie Clark. The Clarks demonstrated that while young white girls would naturally choose to play with white dolls, young black girls would, too. The Clarks argued that black children's aesthetic and moral preference for white dolls demonstrated the pernicious effects and self-loathing produced by segregation.

Identifying and denouncing injustice, though, is different from rectifying it. Though *Brown* repudiated *Plessy*, the Court's orders did not extend to segregation in places other than public schools and, even then, while recognizing the historical importance of the decision, the justices set aside the divisive yet essential question of remediation and enforcement to preserve a unanimous decision. Their infamously ambiguous order in 1955 (what came to be known as *Brown II*) that school districts desegregate "with all deliberate speed" was so vague and ineffectual that it left the actual business of desegregation in the hands of those who opposed it.

In most of the South, as well as the rest of the country, school integration did not occur on a wide scale until well after *Brown*. Only in the 1964 Civil Rights Act did the federal government finally implement some enforcement of the *Brown* decision by threatening to withhold funding from recalcitrant school districts, financially compelling desegregation, but even then southern districts found loopholes. Court decisions such as *Green v. New Kent County* (1968) and *Alexander v. Holmes* (1969) finally closed some of those loopholes, such as "freedom of choice" plans, to compel some measure of actual integration.

When *Brown* finally was enforced in the South, the quantitative impact was staggering. In the early 1950s, virtually no southern black students attended white schools. By 1968, fourteen years after *Brown*, some eighty percent of black southerners remained in schools that were ninety- to one-hundred-percent nonwhite. By 1972, though, just twenty-five percent were in such schools, and fifty-five percent remained in schools with a simple nonwhite minority. By many measures, the public schools of the South ironically became the most integrated in the nation.

As a landmark moment in American history, *Brown's* significance perhaps lies less in what immediate tangible changes it wrought in African American life—which were slow, partial, and inseparable from a much longer chain of events—than in the idealism it expressed and the momentum it created. The nation's highest court had attacked one of the fundamental supports of Jim Crow segregation and offered constitutional cover for the creation of one of the greatest social movements in American history.

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CIVIL RIGHTS IN AN AFFLUENT SOCIETY



Segregation extended beyond private business property; this segregated drinking fountain was located on the ground of the Halifax county courthouse in North Carolina. Photograph, April 1938. [Wikimedia](#).

Education was but one aspect of the nation's Jim Crow machinery. African Americans had been fighting against a variety of racist policies, cultures and beliefs in all aspects of American life. And while the struggle for black inclusion had few victories before World War II, the war and the "Double V" campaign as well as the postwar economic boom led to rising expectations for many African Americans. When persistent racism and racial segregation undercut the promise of economic and social mobility, African Americans began mobilizing on an unprecedented scale against the various discriminatory social and legal structures.

While many of the civil rights movement's most memorable and important moments, such as the sit-ins freedom rides and especially the March on Washington, occurred in the 1960s, the 1950s were a significant decade in the sometimes-tragic, sometimes-triumphant march of civil rights in the United States. In 1953, years before Rosa Parks' iconic confrontation on a Montgomery city bus, an African American woman named Sarah Keys publicly challenged segregated public transportation. Keys, then serving in the Women's Army Corps, traveled from her army base in New Jersey back to North Carolina to visit her family. When the bus stopped in North Carolina, the driver asked her to give up her seat for a white customer. Her refusal to do so landed her in jail in 1953 and led to a landmark 1955 decision, *Sarah Keys v. Carolina Coach Company*, in which the Interstate Commerce Commission ruled that "separate but equal" violated the Interstate Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution. Poorly enforced, it nevertheless gave legal coverage for the freedom riders years later. Moreover, it was a

morale-building decision. Six days after the decision was announced, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat in Montgomery.

But if some events encouraged civil rights workers with the promise of progress, others were so savage they convinced activists that they could do nothing but resist. In the summer of 1955, two white men in Mississippi kidnapped and brutally murdered a fourteen-year-old boy Emmett Till. Till, visiting from Chicago and perhaps unfamiliar with the etiquette of Jim Crow, allegedly whistled at a white woman named Carolyn Bryant. Her husband, Roy Bryant, and another man, J.W. Milam, abducted Till from his relatives' home, beat him, mutilated him, shot him, and threw his body in the Tallahatchie River. But the body was found. Emmett's mother held an open-casket funeral so that Till's disfigured body could make national news. The men were brought to trial. The evidence was damning, but an all-white jury found the two not guilty. Only months after the decision the two boasted of their crime in *Look* magazine. For young black men and women soon to propel the civil rights movement, the Till case was an indelible lesson.

Four months after Till's death, Rosa Parks refused to surrender her seat on a Montgomery city bus. Her arrest launched the Montgomery bus boycott, a foundational moment in the civil rights crusade. Montgomery's public transportation system had longstanding rules that required African American passengers to sit in the back of the bus and give up their seats to white passengers when the buses filled. Parks refused to move on December 1, 1955 and was arrested. She was not the first to protest against the policy by staying seated on a Montgomery bus, but she was the woman around whom Montgomery activists rallied a boycott around.

Soon after Parks' arrest, Montgomery's black population, organized behind the recently arrived Baptist minister Martin Luther King Jr. and formed the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) to coordinate a widespread boycott. During December 1955 and all of 1956, King's leadership sustained the boycott and thrust him into the national spotlight. The Supreme Court ruled against Montgomery and on December 20, 1956 King brought the boycott to a successful conclusion, ending segregation on Montgomery's public transportation and establishing his reputation as a national leader in African American efforts for equal rights.

Motivated by the success of the Montgomery boycott, King and other African American leaders looked for ways to continue the fight. In 1957, King helped create the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Unlike the MIA, which targeted one specific policy in one specific city, the SCLC was a coordinating council to helping civil rights groups across the South coordinate and sustain boycotts, protests, and assaults on southern Jim Crow laws.

As pressure built, congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the first such measure passed since Reconstruction. Although the act was nearly compromised away to nothing, although it achieved some gains, such as creating the Civil Rights Commission in the Department of Justice to investigate claims of racial discrimination, it nevertheless signaled that pressure was finally mounting for Americans to finally confront the racial legacy of slavery and discrimination.

Despite successes at both the local and national level, the civil rights movement faced bitter opposition. Those opposed to the movement often used violent tactics to scare and intimidate African Americans and subvert legal rulings and court orders. For example, a year into the Montgomery bus boycott, angry white southerners bombed four African American churches as well as the homes of King and fellow civil rights leader E. D. Nixon. Though King, Nixon and the MIA persevered in the face of such violence, it was only a taste of things to come. Such unremitting hostility and violence left the outcome of the burgeoning civil rights movement in doubt. Despite its successes, civil rights activists looked back on the 1950s as a decade of at best mixed results and incomplete accomplishments. While the bus boycott, Supreme Court rulings and other civil rights activities signaled progress, church bombings, death threats, and stubborn legislators demonstrated the distance that still needed to be traveled.

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VIDEO: CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE 1950S

In this video, John Green teaches you about the early days of the Civil Rights movement. By way of providing context for this, John also talks a bit about wider America in the 1950s. The 1950s are a deeply nostalgic period for many Americans, but there is more than a little idealizing going on here. The 1950s were a time of economic expansion, new technologies, and a growing middle class. America was becoming a suburban nation thanks to cookie-cutter housing developments like the Levittowns. While the white working class saw their wages and status improve, the proverbial rising tide wasn't lifting all proverbial ships. A lot of people were excluded from the prosperity of the 1950s. Segregation in housing and education made for some serious inequality for African Americans. As a result, the Civil Rights movement was born. John will talk about the early careers of Martin Luther King, Thurgood Marshall, Rosa Parks, and even Earl Warren. He'll teach you about Brown v. Board of Education, and the lesser known Mendez v. Westminster, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and all kinds of other stuff.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/S64zRnnn4Po>

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GENDER AND CULTURE IN THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY



allyedelsteincollage.com



sallyedelsteincollage

New inventions to make housework easier and more fun for women proliferated in the post-war era, creating an advertising and marketing frenzy to attract female consumers to certain products. *Envisioning the American Dream*.

America's consumer economy reshaped how Americans experienced culture and shaped their identities. The Affluent Society gave Americans new experiences, new outlets, and new ways to understand and interact with one another.

"The American household is on the threshold of a revolution," the *New York Times* declared in August 1948. "The reason is television." A distinct post-war phenomenon, television was actually several years in the making before it transformed postwar American culture. Presented to the American public at New York World's Fair in 1939, the commercialization of television in the United States lagged during the war year. In 1947, though, regular full-scale broadcasting became available to the public. Television was instantly popular, so much so that by early 1948 *Newsweek* reported that it was "catching on like a case of high-toned scarlet fever." Indeed, between 1948 and 1955 close to two-thirds of the nation's households purchased a television set. By the end of the 1950s, 90 percent of American families had one and the average viewer was tuning in for almost 5 hours a day.

The technological ability to transmit images via radio waves gave birth to television. Television borrowed radio's organizational structure, too. The big radio broadcasting companies, NBC, CBS, and ABC, used their technical expertise and capital reserves to conquer the airwaves. They acquired licenses to local stations and eliminated their few independent competitors. The Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) refusal to issue any new licenses between 1948 and 1955 was a de facto endorsement of the big three's stranglehold on the market.

In addition to replicating radio's organizational structure, television also looked to radio for content. Many of the early programs were adaptations of popular radio variety and comedy shows, including the *Ed Sullivan Show* and

Milton Berle's Texaco Star Theater. These were accompanied by live plays, dramas, sports, and situation comedies. Due to the cost and difficulty of recording, most programs were broadcast live, forcing stations across the country to air shows at the same time. And since audiences had a limited number of channels to choose from, viewing experiences were broadly shared. Upwards of two thirds of television-owning households, for instance, watched popular shows such as *I Love Lucy*.

The limited number of channels and programs meant that networks selected programs that appealed to the widest possible audience to draw viewers and, more importantly, television's greatest financers: advertisers. By the mid-1950s, an hour of primetime programming cost about \$150,000 (about \$1.5 million in today's dollars) to produce. This proved too expensive for most commercial sponsors, who began turning to a joint financing model of 30-second spot ads. The commercial need to appeal to as many people as possible promoted the production of shows aimed at the entire family. Programs such as *Father Knows Best* and *Leave it to Beaver* featured light topics, humor, and a guaranteed happy ending the whole family could enjoy.



Advertising began creeping up everywhere in the 1950s. No longer confined to commercials or newspapers, advertisements were subtly (or not so subtly in this case) worked into TV shows like the Quiz Show "21". (*Geritol* is a dietary supplement.) Orlando Fernandez, "[Quiz show "21" host Jack Barry turns toward contestant Charles Van Doren as fellow contestant Vivienne Nearine looks on]," 1957. [Library of Congress](#).

Television's broad appeal, however, was about more than money and entertainment. Shows of the 1950s, such as *Father Knows Best* and *I Love Lucy*, depicted a decade that extolled the nuclear family, adhered to "traditional" gender roles, and embraced white, middle-class domesticity. *Leave It to Beaver* centered on the breadwinner-father and homemaker-mother guiding their children through life lessons. Cold War American culture idealized the

so-called “nuclear family.” There was a societal consensus that such a lifestyle was not only beneficial, but the most effective way to safeguard American prosperity against deviancy and communist threats. The marriage of the suburban consumer culture and Cold War security concerns facilitated, and in turn was supported by, the ongoing postwar baby boom. From 1946 to 1964, American fertility experienced an unprecedented spike. A century of declining birth rates abruptly reversed. Although popular memory credits the cause of the baby boom to the return of virulent soldiers from battle, the real story is more nuanced. After years of economic depression families were now wealthy enough to support larger families and had homes large enough to accommodate them, while women married younger and American culture celebrated the ideal of a large, insular family. Underlying this “reproductive consensus” was the new cult of professionalism that pervaded postwar American culture, including the professionalization of homemaking. Mothers and fathers alike flocked to the experts for their opinions on marriage, sexuality, and, most especially, child-rearing. Psychiatrists held an almost mythic status as people took their opinions and prescriptions, as well as their vocabulary, into their everyday life. Books like Dr. Spock’s *Baby and Child Care* (1946) were diligently studied by women who took their careers as house-wife as just that: a career, complete with all the demands and professional trappings of job development and training. And since most women had multiple children roughly the same age as their neighbors’, a cultural obsession with kids flourished throughout the decade. Women bore the brunt of this pressure, chided if they did not give enough of their time to the children—especially if it was at the expense of a career—yet cautioned that spending too much time would lead to “Momism,” producing “sissy” boys who would be incapable of contributing to society and extremely susceptible to the communist threat. A new youth culture exploded in American popular culture. On the one hand, the anxieties of the atomic age hit America’s youth particularly hard. Keenly aware of the discontent bubbling beneath the surface of the Affluent Society, for instance, many youth embraced rebellion. The 1955 film *Rebel Without a Cause* demonstrates the restlessness and emotional incertitude of the postwar generation, highlighting both the affluence of their lifestyle and the lack of satisfaction they derived from it. At the same time, perhaps yearning for something beyond the “massification” of American culture but having few other options beyond popular culture, American youth turned to rock ‘n’ roll. They listened to Little Richard, Buddy Holly, and especially Elvis Presley (whose hip movement alone was seen as culturally subversive).



nowthen1470



While an accepted part of culture in the twenty-first century, Rock and Roll music was seen by many as devilish, having a corruptive influence on the youth of America. Chuck Berry defined the rhythm and style that made Rock and Roll so distinctive and irresistible. Publicity photo, c. 1971. [Wikimedia](#).

The popularity of rock and roll, which emerged in the postwar years, had not yet blossomed into the countercultural musical revolution of the coming decade, but it provided a magnet for teenage restlessness and rebellion. “Television and Elvis,” the musician Bruce Springsteen would recollect, “gave us full access to a new language, a new form of communication, a new way of being, a new way of looking, a new way of thinking; about sex, about race, about identity, about life; a new way of being an American, a human being; and a new way of hearing music.” American youth had seen so little of Elvis’ energy and sensuality elsewhere in their culture. “Once Elvis came across the airwaves,” Springsteen said, “once he was heard and seen in action, you could not put the genie back in the bottle. After that moment, there was yesterday, and there was today, and there was a red hot, rockabilly forging of a new tomorrow, before your very eyes.”



While black musicians like Chuck Berry created Rock and Roll, it was brought into the mainstream (white) American culture through performers like Elvis. His good looks, sensual dancing, and sonorous voice stole the hearts of millions of American teenage girls, which was at that moment becoming a central segment of the consumer population. [Wikimedia](#).

But while the Affluent Society the pressure to conform was intense, many Americans in the 1950s took larger steps to reject conformity and domesticity. The writers of the Beat Generation expressed their disillusionment with capitalism, consumerism, and traditional gender roles by seeking a deeper meaning in life. Beats traveled across the country, studied Eastern religions, and experimented with drugs and sex and artistic form.

Behind the scenes, Americans were challenging sexual mores. The gay rights movement, for instance, stretched back into the Affluent Society. While the country proclaimed homosexuality a mental disorder, gay men established the Mattachine Society in Los Angeles and gay women formed the Daughters of Bilitis in San Francisco as support groups. They held meetings, distributed literature, provided legal and counseling services, and formed chapters across the country. Much of their work, however, remained secretive because homosexuals risked arrest and abuse, if discovered.

Society's "consensus," on everything from the consumer economy to gender roles, did not go unchallenged. Much discontent was channeled through the machine itself: advertisers sold rebellion no less than they sold baking soda. And yet others were rejecting the old ways, choosing new lifestyles, challenging old hierarchies, and embarking upon new paths.

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POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGY IN THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY

Postwar economic prosperity and the creation of new suburban spaces inevitably shaped Americans' politics. In stark contrast to the Great Depression, the new prosperity renewed belief in the superiority of capitalism, cultural conservatism, and religion.

In the 1930s, the economic ravages of the international economic catastrophe knocked the legs out from under the intellectual justifications for keeping government out of the economy. And yet, despite the inhospitable intellectual and cultural climate, there were pockets of true believers who kept the gospel of the free market alive. The single most important was the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM). In the midst of the depression, NAM, under the leadership of a group known as the "Brass Hats" reinvented itself and went on the offensive, initiating advertising campaigns supporting "free enterprise" and "The American Way of Life." More importantly, NAM became a node for business leaders, such as J. Howard Pew of Sun Oil and Jasper Crane of DuPont Chemical Co., to network with like-minded individuals and take the message of free enterprise to the American people. The network of business leaders that NAM brought together in the midst of the Great Depression formed the financial, organizational and ideological underpinnings of the free market advocacy groups that emerged and found ready adherents in America's new suburban spaces in the post-war decades.

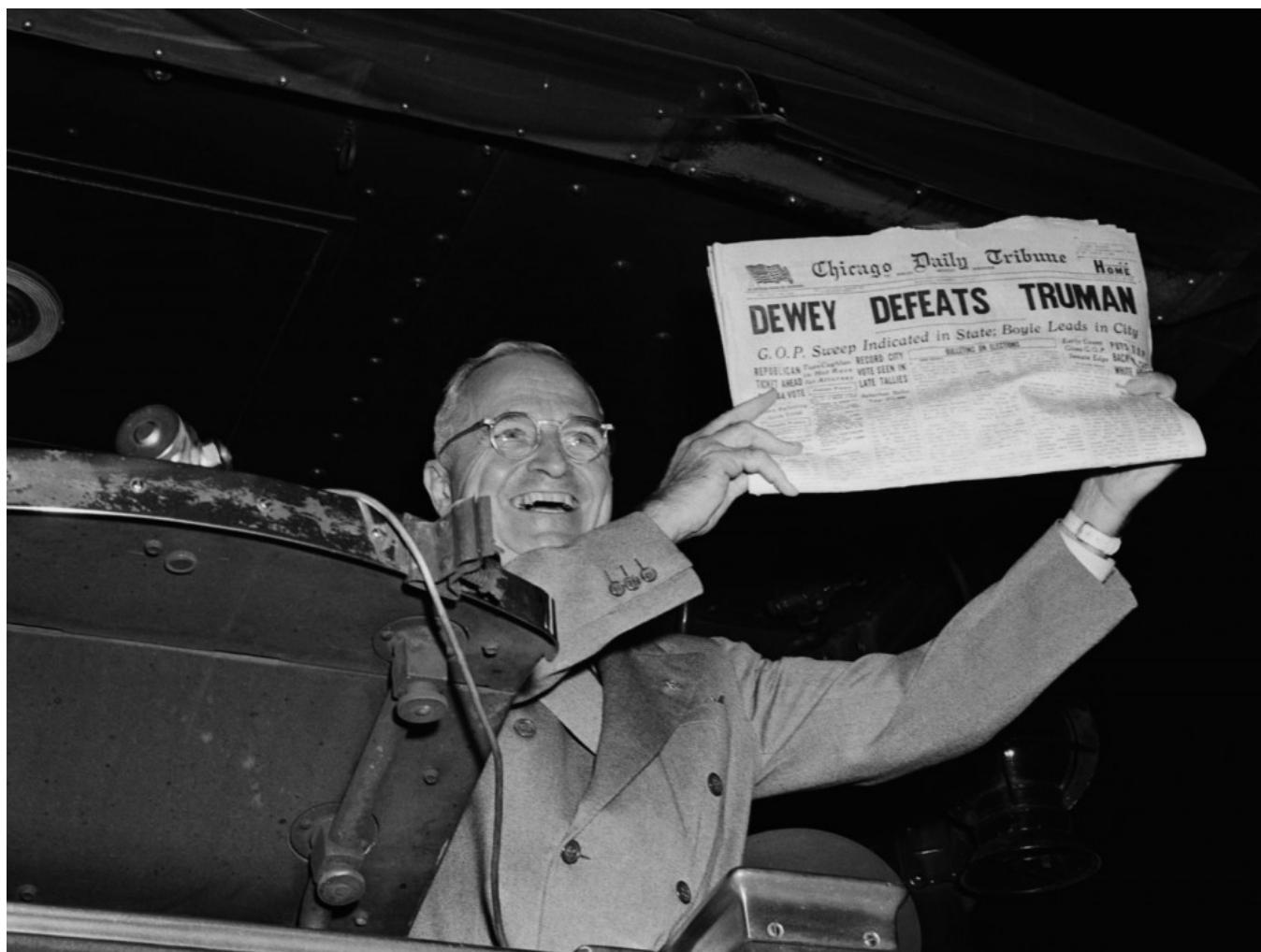
One of the most important advocacy groups that sprang up after the war was Leonard Read's Foundation for Economic Education. Read founded FEE in 1946 on the premise that "The American Way of Life" was essentially individualistic and that the best way to protect and promote that individualism was through libertarian economics. FEE, whose advisory board and supporters came mostly from the NAM network of Pew and Crane, became a key ideological factory, supplying businesses, service clubs, churches, schools and universities with a steady stream of libertarian literature, much of it authored by Austrian economist Ludwig Von Mises.

Shortly after FEE's formation, Austrian economist and libertarian intellectual Friedrich Hayek founded the Mont Pelerin Society (MPS) in 1947. Unlike FEE, whose focus was more ideological in nature, the MPS's focus on the intellectual work of promoting and improving capitalism brought together intellectuals from both sides of the Atlantic in common cause. Like FEE, many of the lay supporters of the MPS, such as Pew and Jasper Crane, also came from the NAM network. The MPS successfully challenged liberal, Keynesian economics on its home turf, academia, particularly when the brilliant University of Chicago economist Milton Friedman became its president. Friedman's willingness to advocate for and apply his libertarian economics in the political realm made him, and the MPS, one of the most influential free market advocates in the world. Together with the Chicago

School of Economics, the MPS carved out a critical space in academia that legitimized the libertarian ideology so successfully evangelized by FEE, its descendant organizations, and libertarian populizers such as Ayn Rand.

Libertarian politics and evangelical religion were shaping the origins of a conservative, suburban constituency. Suburban communities' distance from government and other top-down community-building mechanisms left a social void that evangelical churches eagerly filled. More often than not the theology and ideology of these churches reinforced socially conservative views while simultaneously reinforcing congregants' belief in economic individualism. These new communities and the suburban ethos of individualism that accompanied them became the building blocks for a new political movement. And yet, while the growing suburbs, and the conservative ideology that found a ready home there, eventually proved immensely important in American political life, their impact was not immediately felt. They did not yet have a champion.

In the post-World War II years the Republican Party faced a fork in the road. Its complete lack of electoral success since the Depression led to a battle within the party about how to revive its electoral prospects. The more conservative faction, represented by Ohio Senator Robert Taft (son of former President William Howard Taft) and backed by many party activists and financers such as J. Howard Pew, sought to take the party further to the right, particularly in economic matters, by rolling back New Deal programs and policies. On the other hand, the more moderate wing of the party led by men such as New York Governor Thomas Dewey and Nelson Rockefeller sought to embrace and reform New Deal programs and policies. There were further disagreements among party members about how involved the United States should be in the world. Issues such as foreign aid, collective security, and how best to fight Communism divided the party.



Just like the Internet, don't always trust what you read in newspapers. This obviously incorrect banner from the front page of the Chicago Tribune on November 3, 1948 made its own headlines as the newspaper's most embarrassing gaff. [Britannica](#).

Initially, the moderates, or “liberals,” won control of the party with the nomination of Thomas Dewey in 1948. Dewey’s shocking loss to Truman, however, emboldened conservatives, who rallied around Taft as the 1952 presidential primaries approached. With the conservative banner riding high in the party, General Dwight Eisenhower, most recently NATO supreme commander, felt obliged to join the race in order to beat back the conservatives and “prevent one of our great two Parties from adopting a course which could lead to national suicide.” In addition to his fear that Taft and the conservatives would undermine collective security arrangements such as NATO, he also berated the “neanderthals” in his party for their anti-New Deal stance. Eisenhower felt that the best way to stop Communism was to undercut its appeal by alleviating the conditions under which it was most attractive. That meant supporting New Deal programs. There was also a political calculus to Eisenhower’s position. He observed, “Should any political party attempt to abolish social security, unemployment insurance, and eliminate labor laws and farm programs, you would not hear of that party again in our political history.”

The primary contest between Taft and Eisenhower was close and controversial, with Taft supporters claiming that Eisenhower stole the nomination from Taft at the convention. Eisenhower, attempting to placate the conservatives in his party picked California Congressman and virulent anti-Communist Richard Nixon as his running mate. With the Republican nomination sewn up, the immensely popular Eisenhower swept to victory in the 1952 general election, easily besting Truman’s hand-picked successor, Adlai Stevenson. Eisenhower’s popularity boosted Republicans across the country, leading them to majorities in both houses of Congress.

The Republican sweep in the 1952 election proved less momentous than its supporters hoped. Eisenhower’s popularity helped elect a congress that was more conservative than he had hoped. Within two years of his election, Eisenhower saw his legislative proposals routinely defeated by an unlikely alliance of conservative Republicans, who thought Eisenhower was going too far, and liberal Democrats, who thought he was not going far enough. For example, in 1954 Eisenhower proposed a national Health Care plan that would have provided Federal support for increasing health care coverage across the nation without getting the government directly involved in regulating the health care industry. The proposal was defeated in the house by a 238-134 vote with a swing bloc of 75 conservative Republicans joining liberal Democrats voting against the plan. Eisenhower’s proposals in education and agriculture often suffered similar defeats. By the end of his presidency, Ike’s domestic legislative achievements were largely limited to expanding social security, making Housing, Education and Welfare (HEW) a cabinet position, passing the National Defense Education Act, and bolstering federal support to education, particularly in math and science.

Like any president, Eisenhower’s record was as much about his impact outside of the legislative arena. Ike’s “Middle-of-the-Road” philosophy guided his foreign as much as his domestic policy. Indeed, like his attempts to use federal dollars to give state and local governments as well as individuals the power to act at home, his foreign policy sought to keep the United States from intervening abroad by bolstering its allies. Thus Ike funneled money to the French in Vietnam fighting the Ho Chi Minh led Communists, walked a tight line between helping Chiang Kai-Shek’s Taiwan without overtly provoking Mao Tse-Tung’s China, and materially backed native actors who destabilized “unfriendly” governments in Iran and Guatemala. The centerpiece of Ike’s foreign policy was “massive retaliation,” or the threat of nuclear force in the face of Communist expansion, thus getting more “bang” for his government “buck.” While Ike’s “mainstream” “middle-way” won broad popular support, his own party was slowly moving away from his positions. By 1964 the party had moved far enough to the Right to nominate Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater, the most conservative candidate in a generation. The political moderation of the Affluent Society proved little more than a way station on the road to liberal reform and a future conservative ascendancy.

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CONCLUSION

The postwar American “consensus” held great promise. Despite the looming threat of nuclear war, millions experienced an unprecedented prosperity and an increasingly proud American identity. Prosperity seemed to promise ever higher standards of living. But things fell apart, and the center could not hold. Wracked by contradiction, dissent, discrimination, and inequality, the Affluent Society stood on the precipice of revolution.

This chapter was edited by James McKay, with content contributions by Edwin C. Breeden, Maggie Flamingo, Destin Jenkins, Kyle Livie, Jennifer Mandel, James McKay, Laura Redford, Ronny Regev, and Tanya Roth.

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ASSIGNMENT: WOMEN IN THE 1950S

The 1950s was a golden age in the United States. WWII was over, business was booming, everyone had a house, a car, and a white picket fence. There were, however, sources of discontent brewing beneath the surface, most notably civil rights, women's rights, and youth rebellion.

- Read [How to Be a Good Housewife](#). It's probably not a real document, but the ideas in it are 100% accurate is describing "The Cult of Domesticity" – the role assigned to women in the 1950s.

Answer the following:

1. How would you summarize the list and describe the Cult of Domesticity?
2. Why would the United States want to put such a straitjacket on women in the 1950s? (Hint: what were women able to do during WWII? What were women's rights in the Soviet Union like? How did the US see itself in relation to the Soviet Union? – the answer to these three questions will point you toward the main point)

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THE SIXTIES

THE SIXTIES



"Participants, some carrying American flags, marching in the civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama in 1965," via Library of Congress.

Perhaps no decade is so immortalized in American memory as the 1960s. Couched in the colorful rhetoric of peace and love, complemented by stirring images of the civil rights movement, and fondly remembered for its music, art, and activism, for many the decade brought hopes for a more inclusive, forward-thinking nation. But the decade was also plagued by strife, tragedy, and chaos. It was the decade of the Vietnam War, of inner-city riots, and assassinations that seemed to symbolize the death of a new generation's idealistic ambitions. A decade of struggle and disillusionment rocked by social, cultural, and political upheaval, the 1960s are remembered because so much changed, and because so much did not.

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VIDEO: THE 1960S IN AMERICA

In this video, John Green teaches you about a time of relative tumult in the United States, the 1960s. America was changing rapidly in the 1960s, and rights movements were at the forefront of those changes. Civil Rights were dominant, but the 60s also saw growth in the Women's Movement, the LGBT rights movement, the Latino rights movement, and the American Indian movement. Also, Americans began to pay a bit more attention to the environment. All this change happened against the backdrop of the Cold War and the Rise of Conservatism. It was just wild. John will teach you about sit-ins, Freedom Rides, The March on Washington, MLK, JFK, LBJ, and NOW. Man, that is a lot of initialisms. And one acronym.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/lkXFb1sMa38>

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THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT CONTINUES

So much of the energy and character of “the sixties” emerged from the civil rights movement, which won its greatest victories in the early years of the decade. The movement itself was changing. Many of the civil rights activists pushing for school desegregation in the 1950s were middle-class and middle-aged. In the 1960s, a new student movement arose whose members wanted swifter changes in the segregated South. Confrontational protests, marches, boycotts, and sit-ins accelerated.

The tone of the modern U.S. civil rights movement changed at a North Carolina department store in 1960, when four African American students participated in a “sit-in” at a whites-only lunch counter. The 1960 Greensboro sit-ins were typical. Activists sat at segregated lunch counters in an act of defiance, refusing to leave until being served and willing to be ridiculed, attacked, and arrested if they were not. It drew resistance but it forced the desegregation of Woolworth’s department store. It prompted copycat demonstrations across the South. The protests offered evidence that student-led direct action could enact social change and established the civil rights movement’s direction in the forthcoming years.

The following year, civil rights advocates attempted a bolder variation of a “sit-in” when they participated in the Freedom Rides. Activists organized interstate bus rides following a Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation on public buses and trains. The rides intended to test the court’s ruling, which many southern states had ignored. An interracial group of Freedom Riders boarded buses in Washington D.C. with the intention of sitting in integrated patterns on the buses as they traveled through the Deep South. On the initial rides in May 1961, the riders encountered fierce resistance in Alabama. Angry mobs composed of KKK members attacked riders in Birmingham, burning one of the buses and beating the activists who escaped. Despite the fact that the first riders abandoned their trip and decided to fly to their destination, New Orleans, civil rights activists remained vigilant. Additional Freedom Rides launched through the summer and generated national attention amid additional violent resistance. Ultimately, the Interstate Commerce Commission enforced integrated interstate buses and trains in November 1961.

In the fall of 1961, civil rights activists descended on Albany, a small city in southwest Georgia. A place known for entrenched segregation and racial violence, Albany seemed an unlikely place for black Americans to rally and demand civil rights gains. The activists there, however, formed the Albany Movement, a coalition of civil rights organizers that included members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC, or, “snick”), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the NAACP. But in Albany the movement was stymied by police chief Laurie Pritchett, who launched mass arrests but refused to engage in police brutality and bailed out leading officials to avoid negative media attention. It was a peculiar scene, and a lesson for southern activists.

Despite its defeat, Albany captured much of the energy of the civil rights movement. The Albany Movement included elements of the Christian commitment to social justice in its platform, with activists stating that all people were "of equal worth" in God's family and that "no man may discriminate against or exploit another." In many instances in the 1960s, black Christianity propelled civil rights advocates to action and demonstrated the significance of religion to the broader civil rights movement. King's rise to prominence underscored the role that African American religious figures played in the 1960s civil rights movement. Protestors sang hymns and spirituals as they marched. Preachers rallied the people with messages of justice and hope. Churches hosted meetings, prayer vigils, and conferences on nonviolent resistance. The moral thrust of the movement strengthened African American activists while also confronting white society by framing segregation as a moral evil.

As the civil rights movement garnered more followers and more attention, white resistance stiffened. In October 1962, James Meredith became the first African American student to enroll at the University of Mississippi. Meredith's enrollment sparked riots on the Oxford campus, prompting President John F. Kennedy to send in U.S. Marshals and National Guardsmen to maintain order. On an evening known infamously as the Battle of Ole Miss, segregationists clashed with troops in the middle of campus, resulting in two deaths and hundreds of injuries. Violence despite federal intervention served as a reminder of the strength of white resistance to the civil rights movement, particularly in the realm of education.



James Meredith, accompanied by U.S. Marshalls, walks to class at the University of Mississippi in 1962. Meredith was the first African-American student admitted to the still segregated Ole Miss. Marion S. Trikosko, "Integration at Ole Miss[issippi] Univ[ersity]," 1962. Library of Congress.

The following year, 1963, was perhaps the decade's most eventful year for civil rights. In April and May, the SCLC organized the Birmingham Campaign, a broad campaign of direct action aiming to topple segregation in Alabama's largest city. Activists used business boycotts, sit-ins, and peaceful marches as part of the campaign. SCLC leader Martin Luther King Jr. was jailed, prompting his famous handwritten letter urging not only his nonviolent approach but active confrontation to directly challenge injustice. The campaign further added to King's national reputation and featured powerful photographs and video footage of white police officers using fire hoses and attack dogs on young African American protesters. It also yielded an agreement to desegregate public

accommodations in the city: activists in Birmingham scored a victory for civil rights and drew international praise for the nonviolent approach in the face of police-sanctioned violence and bombings.



Images of police brutality against peaceful Civil Rights demonstrators shocked many Americans and helped increase support for the movement. [Photograph](#).

White resistance magnified. In June, Alabama Governor George Wallace famously stood in the door of a classroom building in a symbolic attempt to halt integration at the University of Alabama. President Kennedy addressed the nation that evening, criticizing Wallace and calling for a comprehensive civil rights bill. A day later, civil rights leader Medgar Evers was assassinated at his home in Jackson, Mississippi. Civil rights leaders gathered in August 1963 for the March on Washington. The march called for, among other things, civil rights legislation, school integration, an end to discrimination by public and private employers, job training for the unemployed, and a raise in the minimum wage. On the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, an internationally renowned call for civil rights and against racism that raised the movement's profile to unprecedented heights. The year would end on a somber note with the assassination of President Kennedy, a public figure considered an important ally of civil rights, but it did not halt the civil rights movement.



White activists increasingly joined African Americans in the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s. This photograph shows Martin Luther King, Jr., and other black civil rights leaders arm-in-arm with leaders of the Jewish community. Photograph, August 28, 1963. [Wikimedia](#).

President Lyndon Johnson embraced the civil rights movement. The following summer he signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, widely considered to be among the most important pieces of civil rights legislation in American history. The comprehensive act barred segregation in public accommodations and outlawed discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, and national or religious origin.



Lyndon B. Johnson sits with Civil Rights Leaders in the White House. One of Johnson's greatest legacies would be his staunch support of civil rights legislation. Photograph, January 18, 1964. [Wikimedia](#).



Lyndon B. Johnson was not afraid to use whatever means necessary to get his legislation passed. Johnson was notoriously crude, rude, and irreverent, making the massive amount of legislation he got passed even more incredible. Yoichi R. Okamoto, *Photograph of Lyndon B. Johnson pressuring Senator Richard Russell, December 17, 1963.* [Wikimedia](#).

Direct action continued through the summer, as student-run organizations like SNCC and CORE (The Congress of Racial Equality) helped with the Freedom Summer in Mississippi, a drive to register African American voters in a state with an ugly history of discrimination. Freedom Summer campaigners set up schools for African American children and endured intimidation tactics. Even with progress, violent resistance against civil rights continued, particularly in regions with longstanding traditions of segregation.

Direct action and resistance to such action continued in March 1965, when activists attempted to march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, with the support of prominent civil rights leaders on behalf of local African American voting rights. In a narrative that had become familiar, "Bloody Sunday" featured peaceful protesters attacked by white law enforcement with batons and tear gas. After they were turned away violently a second time, marchers finally made the 70-mile trek to the state capitol later in the month. Coverage of the first march prompted President Johnson to present the bill that became the Voting Rights Act of 1965, an act that abolished voting discrimination in federal, state, and local elections with an eye on African American enfranchisement in the South. In two consecutive years, landmark pieces of legislation had helped to weaken *de jure* segregation and disenfranchisement in America.



Five leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. From left: Bayard Rustin, Andrew Young, N.Y. Congressman William Ryan, James Farmer, and John Lewis in 1965. Stanley Wolfson, Photograph, 1965. [Library of Congress](#).

And then things began to stall. Days after the ratification of the Voting Rights Act, race riots broke out in the Watts District of Los Angeles. Rioting in Watts stemmed from local African American frustrations with residential segregation, police brutality, and racial profiling. Waves of riots would rock American cities every summer thereafter. Particularly destructive riots occurred in 1967—two summers later—in Newark and Detroit. Each resulted in deaths, injuries, arrests, and millions of dollars in property damage. In spite of black achievements, inner-city problems persisted for many African Americans. The phenomenon of “white flight”—when whites in metropolitan areas fled city centers for the suburbs—often resulted in “re-segregated” residential patterns. Limited access to economic and social opportunities in urban areas bred discord. In addition to reminding the nation that the civil rights movement was a complex, ongoing event without a concrete endpoint, the unrest in northern cities reinforced the notion that the struggle did not occur solely in the South. Many Americans also viewed the riots as an indictment of the Great Society, President Johnson’s sweeping agenda of domestic programs that sought to remedy inner-city ills by offering better access to education, jobs, medical care, housing, and other forms of social welfare. The civil rights movement was never the same.

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BEYOND CIVIL RIGHTS

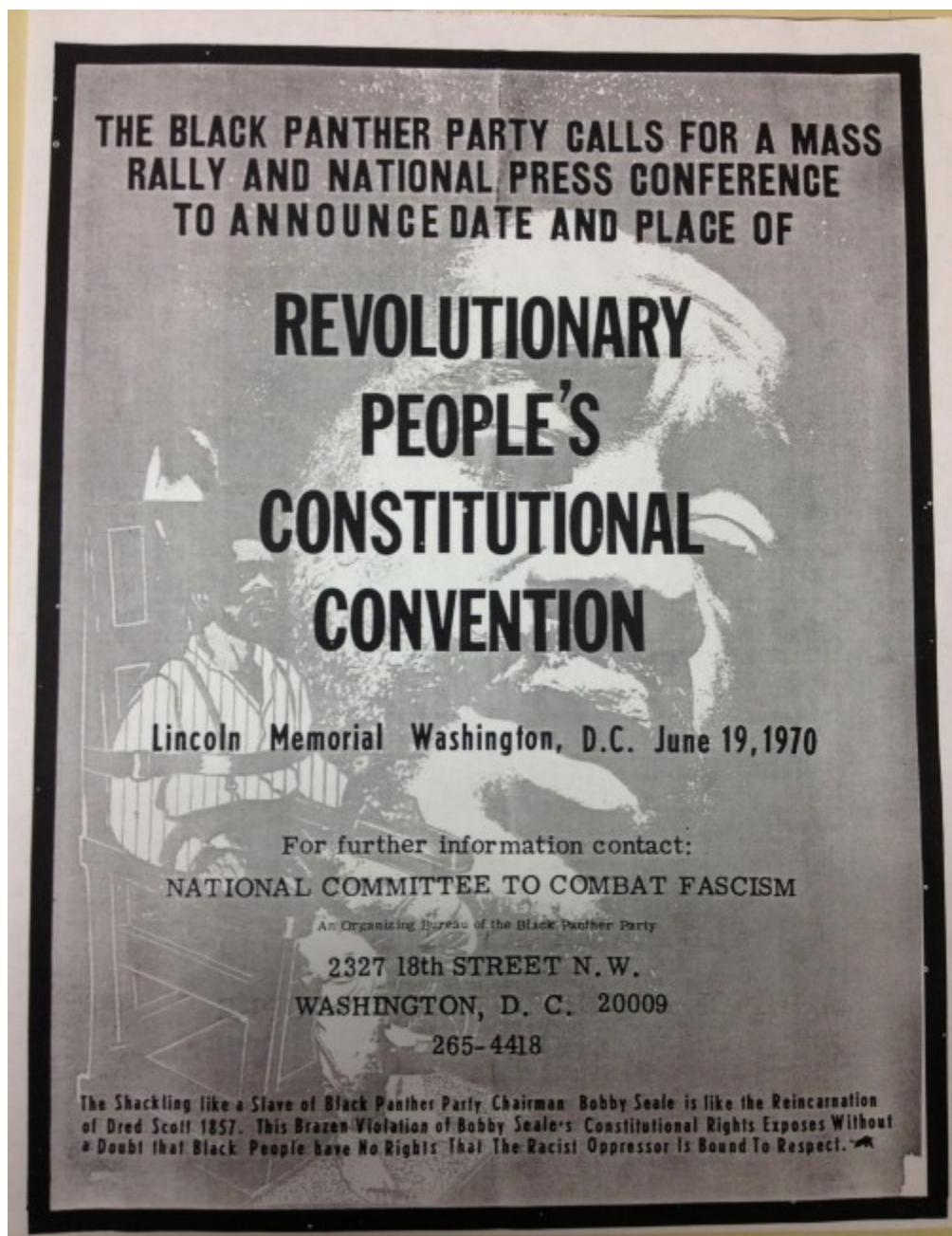
As tension continued to mount in cities through the decade, the tone of the civil rights movement changed yet again. Activists became less conciliatory in their calls for civil rights progress, embracing the more militant message of the burgeoning Black Power Movement and the late Malcolm X, a Nation of Islam (NOI) minister who had encouraged African Americans to pursue freedom, equality, and justice by “any means necessary.” Prior to his death, Malcolm X and the NOI emerged as the radical alternative to the racially integrated, largely Protestant approach of the Martin Luther King, Jr.-led civil rights movement. Malcolm advocated armed resistance in defense for the safety and well being of black Americans, stating, “I don’t call it violence when it’s self-defense, I call it intelligence.” For his part, King and leaders from more mainstream organizations like the NAACP and the Urban League criticized both Malcolm X and the NOI for what they perceived to be racial demagoguery. King believed Malcolm’s speeches were a “great disservice” to black Americans, claiming that X’s speeches lamented the problems of African Americans without offering solutions. The differences between Dr. King and Malcolm X represented a core ideological tension that would inhabit black political thought throughout the 1960s and 1970s.



Like Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois before them, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X represented two styles of racial uplift while maintaining the same general goal of ending racial discrimination. How they would get to that goal is where the men diverged. Marion S. Trikosko, “[Martin Luther King and Malcolm X waiting for press conference],” March 26, 1964. [Library of Congress](#).

By the late 1960s, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, led by figures such as Stokely Carmichael, had expelled its white members and shunned the interracial effort in the rural South, focusing instead on injustices in northern urban areas. After President Johnson refused to take up the cause of the black delegates in the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party at the 1964 Democratic National Convention, SNCC activists became frustrated with institutional tactics and turned away from the organization’s founding principle of nonviolence over the course of the next year. This evolving, more aggressive movement called for African Americans to play a

dominant role in cultivating black institutions and articulating black interests rather than relying on interracial, moderate approaches. At a June 1966 civil rights march, Carmichael told the crowd, "What we gonna start saying now is black power!" The slogan not only resonated with audiences, it also stood in direct contrast to King's "Freedom Now!" campaign. The political slogan of black power could encompass many meanings, but at its core stood for the self-determination of blacks in political, economic, and social organizations.



The Black Panther Party used radical and incendiary tactics to bring attention to the continued oppression of blacks in America. Read the bottom paragraph on this rally poster carefully.
[Wikimedia](#).

While Carmichael asserted that "black power meant black people coming together to form a political force," to many it also meant violence. In 1966, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale formed the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California. The Black Panthers became the standard-bearers for direct action and self-defense, using the concept of "decolonization" in their drive to liberate black communities from white power structures. The revolutionary organization also sought reparations and exemptions for black men from the military draft. Citing police brutality and racist governmental policies, the Panthers aligned themselves with the "other people of color in the world" against whom America was fighting abroad. Although it was perhaps most well-known for its open display of

weapons, military-style dress, and black nationalist beliefs, the Party's 10-Point Plan also included employment, housing, and education. The Black Panthers worked in local communities to run "survival programs" that provided food, clothing, medical treatment, and drug rehabilitation. They focused on modes of resistance that empowered black activists on their own terms.

By 1968, the civil rights movement looked quite different from the one that had emerged out of the 1960 Greensboro sit-ins. The movement had never been monolithic, but prominent, competing ideologies had now fractured it significantly. King's assassination on a Memphis hotel room balcony in April sparked another wave of riots in over 100 American cities and brought an abrupt, tragic end to the life of the movement's most famous figure. Only a week after his assassination, President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, another significant piece of federal legislation that outlawed housing discrimination. Two months later, on June 6, Robert Kennedy was gunned down in a Los Angeles hotel while campaigning to be the Democratic candidate for President. The assassinations of both national leaders in succession created a sense of national anger and dissolution.

The frustration prompted dozens of national protest organizations to converge on the Democratic National Convention in Chicago at the end of August. A bitterly fractured Democratic Party gathered to assemble a passable platform and nominate a broadly acceptable presidential candidate. Outside the convention hall, numerous student and radical groups—the most prominent being Students for a Democratic Society and the Youth International Party—identified the conference as an ideal venue for demonstrations against the Vietnam War and planned massive protests in Chicago's public spaces. Initial protests were peaceful, but the situation quickly soured as police issued stern threats and young people began to taunt and goad officials. Many of the assembled students had protest and sit-in experiences only in the relative safe havens of college campuses, and were unaccustomed to the heavily armed, big-city police force, accompanied by National Guard troops in full riot gear. Attendees recounted vicious beatings at the hands of police and Guardsmen, but many young people—convinced that much public sympathy could be won via images of brutality against unarmed protesters—continued stoking the violence. Clashes spilled from the parks into city streets, and eventually the smell of tear gas penetrated upper floors of the opulent hotels hosting Democratic delegates.

The ongoing police brutality against the protesters overshadowed the convention and culminated in an internationally televised standoff in front of the Hilton Hotel, where policeman beat protestors chanting, "the whole world is watching!" For many on both sides, the Chicago riots engendered a growing sense of the chaos rocking American life. The disparity in force between students and police frightened some radicals out of advocacy for revolutionary violence, while some officers began questioning the war and those who waged it. Many more, though, saw disorder and chaos where once they had seen idealism and progress. Ultimately, the violence of 1968 was not the death knell of a struggle simply for the end of black-white segregation, but rather a moment of transition that pointed to the continuation of past oppression and foreshadowed many of the challenges of the future. At decade's end, civil rights advocates could take pride in significant gains while acknowledging that many of the nation's racial issues remained unresolved.

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CULTURE AND ACTIVISM



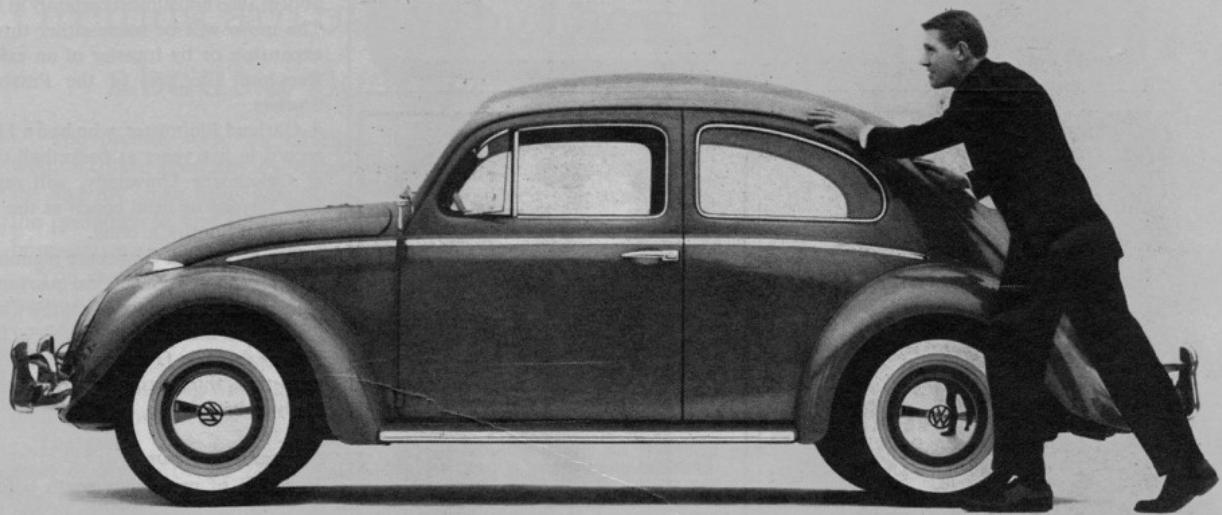
Epitomizing the folk music and protest culture of 1960s youth, Joan Baez and Bob Dylan are pictured here singing together at the March on Washington in 1963. Photograph, [Wikimedia](#).

The 1960s wrought enormous cultural change. The United States that entered the decade looked and sounded nothing like the one that left it. Popular culture often challenged norms from the supposedly hidebound 1950s, promoting rebellion and individualism and, in the process, bringing the counterculture into the mainstream. Native Americans, Chicanos, women, and environmentalists all participated in movements demonstrating that “rights” activism also applied to ethnicity, gender, and the nation’s natural resources. Even established religious institutions like the Catholic Church underwent transformation that reflected an emerging emphasis on freedom and tolerance. In each instance, the decade brought about substantial progress with a reminder that the activism in each cultural realm remained fluid and unfinished.

At the dawn of the 1960s, trends from the 1950s still flourished. While only half of American households owned a television in the mid-1950s, for example, nearly 90 percent of homes had a set by 1962. With the increasing popularity of rock and roll, established white musicians like Elvis Presley continued to imitate and adapt black musical genres. Newcomers also adopted this tactic: the Beatles’ first album featured two covers of popular songs by the Shirelles.

Advertisers continued to appeal to teenagers and the expanding youth market. What differed in the 1960s, perhaps, was the commodification of the counterculture. Popular culture and popular advertising in the 1950s had promoted an ethos of “fitting in” and buying products to conform. The new counterculture ethos, however, touted

individuality and rebellion. Some advertisers used this ethos subtly; advertisements for Volkswagens openly acknowledged the flaws of their cars and emphasized their strange look. One ad read, “Presenting America’s slowest fastback,” which “won’t go over 72 mph even though the speedometer shows a wildly optimistic speed of 90.” Another stated, “And if you run out of gas, it’s easy to push.” By marketing the car’s flaws and reframing them as positive qualities, the advertisers commercialized young peoples’ resistance to commercialism. And it positioned the VW as a car for those who didn’t mind standing out in a crowd. A more obviously countercultural ad for the VW Bug showed two cars: one black and one painted multi-color in the hippie style; the contrasting captions read, “We do our thing,” and “You do yours.”



©1962 VOLKSWAGEN OF AMERICA, INC.

And if you run out of gas, it's easy to push.

See?

We think of everything.
Getting a Volkswagen to the side of the road is a pushover.

It's a little surprising that VW owners don't run out of gas more often.
A figure like 32 miles to the gallon can make you a little hazy about when you

last filled up.

And you spend so little time in gas stations, there are almost no reminders.

You'll probably never need oil between changes, for example.

You'll never need water or anti-freeze because the engine is air-cooled.

40,000 miles on a set of tires won't break

any Volkswagen records.

And repairs are few and far between.
So this year we've installed a gas gauge to help you remember.

But we haven't taken all the fun away.
You still have to remember to look at it.



The Volkswagen Beetle became an icon of 1960s culture and a paradigm of a new advertising age. This tongue-in-cheek advertisement attracted laughs and attention from the public and business world. [Video Surrey](#).

Companies marketed their products as countercultural in and of themselves. One of the more obvious examples was a 1968 ad from Columbia Records, a hugely successful record label since the 1920s. The ad pictured a group of stock rebellious characters—a shaggy-haired white hippie, a buttoned up Beat, two biker types, and a black jazz man sporting an afro—in a jail cell. The counterculture had been busted, the ad states, but “the man can’t bust our music.” Merely buying records from Columbia was an act of rebellion, one that brought the buyer closer to the counterculture figures portrayed in the ad.

Even when pop culture in the 1960s was not tied to counterculture, it still stood in contrast to a more conservative past. The dominant style of women’s fashion in the 1950s was the poodle skirt and the sweater, tight-waisted and buttoned up. The 1960s, however, ushered in an era of much less restrictive clothing. Capri pants became popular casual wear. Skirts became shorter. When Mary Quant invented the miniskirt in 1964, she said it was a garment “in which you could move, in which you could run and jump.” By the late 1960s, the hippies’ more androgynous look had become trendy. Such fashion trends bespoke the overall popular ethos of the 1960s: freedom, rebellion, and individuality.



Fashion can tell us a lot about a generation’s values and world view. Miniskirts – one of the most radical and popular fashions of the 1960s – demonstrated the new sexual openness of young women during this era of free love. Photograph of young woman in Eugene, Oregon, 1966. [Wikimedia](#).

In a decade plagued by social and political instability, the American counterculture also sought psychedelic drugs as its remedy for alienation. For young, middle-class whites, society had become stagnant and bureaucratic. Psychedelic drug use arose as an alternate form of activism. LSD began its life as a drug used primarily in psychological research before it trickled down into college campuses and out into society at large. The counterculture’s notion that American stagnation could be remedied by a spiritual-psychadelic experience was drawn almost entirely from psychologists and sociologists.

The irony, of course, was that LSD's popularity outside of science eventually led to its demise within labs. By 1966, enough incidents had been connected to LSD to spur a Senate hearing on the drug; newspapers reported that hundreds of LSD users had been admitted to psychiatric wards. While many of these reports were sensationalistic or altogether untrue, LSD's uses did become increasingly bizarre and even dangerous throughout the late 1960s. The 1967 Summer of Love failed to live up to its mantra as an idyllic, psychedelic retreat, and the summer was instead characterized by housing shortages and deadly inner-city riots. Similarly, while 1969's Woodstock embodied the countercultural ethos of creativity and community, the Altamont Free Concert held the same year resulted in riots and deadly violence.

The turmoil and growing grassroots activism in the 1960s among American youth and university students, including Native Americans, created an atmosphere for reform in both Congress and the courts. In the summer of 1961, Native American university students founded a new organization, the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC). While the Council shared many of its core values and goals with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)—sovereignty, self-determination, treaty rights, and cultural preservation, the NIYC employed direct action tactics and more combative rhetoric.

The NIYC came from a tradition of student clubs and organizations. The 1944 GI Bill opened the door for many Native Americans to university education, and the increased presence of Native students at universities led to the establishment of Native college clubs and organizations, where members discussed major problems in Indian Country, such as termination policy, treaty rights, and poverty. Many also benefited from summer workshops on American Indian Affairs, designed to prepare Indian youth for future leadership roles. Participants in the workshops overwhelmingly embraced the principles of self-determination and tribal sovereignty. They recognized that regardless of tribal membership, Native people faced similar problems, which could be best confronted through a united, intertribal effort. This view was reinforced at the American Indian Chicago Conference in 1961, where the delegates drafted "The Declaration of Indian Purpose," a document outlining Indian solutions to Indian problems. Despite the promise of the Chicago Conference, the students were disenchanted with the slow progress of change. The growing frustration of the younger generation, combined with ideas from the workshops and experiences at the Chicago Conference, led to the founding of the NIYC in August 1961.

The first opportunity for the Council to generate support and attract public attention happened in the Pacific Northwest. Washington State tribal nations reserved the right to fish off reservation without being subject to state regulations in their nineteenth-century treaties. This right was challenged by the state in the early 1960s; Native fishermen who fished in violation of state laws were arrested and subsequently required to purchase permissions for off-reservation fishing. With little justice received from the courts, Washington State tribal nations appealed to NIYC for assistance. NIYC members decided to hold a series of "fish-ins," which involved activists casting nets from their boats and waiting for the police to arrest them. In 1974, fishing rights activists and tribal leaders reached a legal victory in *United States v. Washington* known as the Boldt Decision, which declared that Native Americans were entitled to up to 50 percent of the fish caught in the "usual and accustomed places" as stated in the 1850s treaties.

NIYC's militant rhetoric and use of direct action marked the beginning of the Red Power movement. It paved the way for future intertribal activism and gathered a national exposure to Native issues



While the Pan-Indian movement of the 1960s failed, a sign remains of the Native American occupation of Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco Bay. Photograph, July 18, 2006. [Wikimedia](#).

through news media. Native Americans created pan-Indian communities in cities and demanded respect for their rights and culture, actively responding to discrimination and violence against them. To prevent police harassment, Native Americans in Minneapolis formed “Indian patrols” to monitor the behavior of police in Indian neighborhoods. From these patrols grew the American Indian Movement (AIM), founded in Minneapolis in 1968. The actions of AIM, while not bringing any specific or immediate results, brought national and international attention to Native issues, and the organization helped to create a more favorable climate for a policy shift. The NCAI, NIYC, and AIM continued their work, with and within the established American political system, to influence new laws on Native issues and concentrate on local problems.

The Chicano movement in the 1960s emerged out of the broader Mexican American civil rights movement of the post-World War II era. While “Chicano” was initially considered a derogatory term for Mexican immigrants, activists in the 1960s reclaimed the term and used it as a catalyst to campaign for political and social change among Mexican Americans. The Chicano movement confronted discrimination in schools, politics, agriculture, and other formal and informal institutions. Organizations like the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) and the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund (MALDF) buoyed the Chicano movement and patterned themselves after similar influential groups in the African American civil rights movement.

Cesar Chavez became the most well-known figure of the Chicano movement, using nonviolent tactics to campaign for workers’ rights in the grape fields of California. Chavez and activist Dolores Huerta founded the National Farm Workers Association, which eventually merged and became the United Farm Workers of America (UFWA). The UFWA fused the causes of Chicano and Filipino activists protesting subpar working conditions of California farmers on American soil. In addition to embarking on a hunger strike and a boycott of table grapes, Chavez led a 300-mile march in March and April of 1966 from Delano, California to the state capital of

Sacramento. The pro-labor campaign garnered the national spotlight and the support of prominent political figures such as Robert Kennedy. Today, Chavez's birthday (March 31) is observed as a federal holiday in California, Colorado, and Texas.



The United Farm Workers Union become a strong force for bettering working conditions of laborers in California and Florida agriculture. Cesar Chavez (center) and UFW supporters attend an outdoor Mass on the capitol steps in Sacramento, Calif., before start of a labor protest march, date unknown. [Huffington Post](#).

Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales was another activist whose calls for Chicano self-determination resonated long past the 1960s. A former boxer and Denver native, Gonzales founded the Crusade for Justice in 1966, an organization that would establish the first annual Chicano Liberation Day at the National Chicano Youth Conference by decade's end. The conference also yielded the Plan Espiritual de Aztlan, a Chicano nationalist manifesto that reflected Gonzales' vision of Chicano as a unified, historically grounded, all-encompassing group fighting against discrimination in the United States. By 1970, the Texas-based La Raza Unida political party had a strong foundation for promoting Chicano nationalism and continuing the campaign for Mexican American civil rights.



The 1966 Rio Grande Valley Farm Workers March ("La Marcha"). August 27, 1966. Via the University of Texas-San Antonio Libraries' Special Collections (MS 360: E-0012-187-D-16)

The feminist movement also made great strides in the 1960s. Women were active in both the civil rights movement and the labor movement, but their increasing awareness of gender inequality did not find a receptive audience among male leaders in those movements. In the 1960s, then, many of these women began to form a movement of their own. Soon the country experienced a groundswell of feminist consciousness.

An older generation of women who preferred to work within state institutions figured prominently in the early part of the decade. When John F. Kennedy established the President's Commission on the Status of Women in 1961, former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt headed the effort. The Commission's *Invitation to Action* was released in 1963. Finding discriminatory provisions in the law and practices of industrial, labor, and governmental organizations, the Commission advocated for "changes, many of them long overdue, in the conditions of women's opportunity in the United States." Change was necessary in areas of employment practices, federal tax and benefit policies affecting women's income, labor laws, and services for women as wives, mothers, and workers. This call for action, if heeded, would ameliorate the types of discrimination primarily experienced by middle-class and elite white working women, all of whom were used to advocating through institutional structures like government agencies and unions.

Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* hit bookshelves the same year the Commission released its report. Friedan had been active in the union movement, and was by this time a mother in the new suburban landscape of post-war America. In her book, Friedan labeled the "problem that has no name," and in doing so helped many white middle-class American women come to see their dissatisfaction as housewives not as something "wrong with [their] marriage, or [themselves]," but instead as a social problem experienced by millions of American women. Friedan observed that there was a "discrepancy between the reality of [women's] lives and the image to which we were trying to conform, the image I call the feminine mystique." No longer would women allow society to blame the "problem that has no name" on a loss of femininity, too much education, or too much female independence and equality with men.

The 1960s also saw a different group of women pushing for change in government policy. Welfare mothers began to form local advocacy groups in addition to the National Welfare Rights Organization founded in 1966. Mostly African American, these activists fought for greater benefits and more control over welfare policy and implementation. Women like Johnnie Tillmon successfully advocated for larger grants for school clothes and household equipment in addition to gaining due process and fair administrative hearings prior to termination of welfare entitlements.

Yet another mode of feminist activism was the formation of consciousness-raising groups. These groups met in women's homes and at women's centers, providing a safe environment for women to discuss everything from experiences of gender discrimination to pregnancy, from relationships with men and women to self-image. The goal of consciousness-raising was to increase self-awareness and validate the experiences of women. Groups framed such individual experiences as examples of society-wide sexism, and claimed that "the personal is political." Consciousness-raising groups created a wealth of personal stories that feminists could use in other forms of activism and crafted networks of women that activists could mobilize support for protests.

The end of the decade was marked by the Women's Strike for Equality celebrating the 50th anniversary of women's right to vote. Sponsored by NOW (the National Organization for Women), the 1970 protest focused on employment discrimination, political equality, abortion, free childcare, and equality in marriage. All of these issues foreshadowed the backlash against feminist goals in the 1970s. Not only would feminism face opposition from other women who valued the traditional homemaker role to which feminists objected, the feminist movement would also fracture internally as minority women challenged white feminists' racism and lesbians vied for more prominence within feminist organizations.



The women's movement stagnated after gaining the vote in 1920, but by the 1960s it was back in full force. Inspired by the Civil Rights Movement and fed up with gender discrimination, women took to the streets to demand their rights as American citizens.
Warren K. Leffler, "Women's lib[eration] march from Farrugut Sq[uare] to Lafayette [i.e., Lafayette] P[ar]k," August 26, 1970. [Library of Congress](#).

American environmentalism made significant gains in the 1960s that piggybacked off the post-World War II trend of Americans using their growing resources and leisure time to explore nature. They backpacked, went to the

beach, fished, and joined birding organizations in greater numbers than ever before. These experiences, along with increased formal education, made Americans more aware of threats to the environment and, consequently, to themselves. Many of these threats increased in the post-war years as developers bulldozed open space for suburbs and new hazards from industrial and nuclear pollutants loomed over all organisms. By the time that biologist Rachel Carson published her landmark book, *Silent Spring*, in 1962, a nascent environmentalism had emerged in America. *Silent Spring* stood out as an unparalleled argument for the interconnectedness of ecological and human health. Pesticides, Carson argued, also posed a threat to human health, and their over-use threatened the ecosystems that supported food production. Carson's argument was compelling to many Americans, including President Kennedy, and was virulently opposed by chemical industries that suggested the book was the product of an emotional woman, not a scientist. After *Silent Spring*, the social and intellectual currents of environmentalism continued to expand rapidly, culminating in the largest demonstration in history, Earth Day, on April 22, 1970, and in a decade of lawmaking that significantly restructured American government. Even before the massive gathering for Earth Day, lawmakers from the local to federal level had pushed for and achieved regulations to clean up the air and water. President Richard Nixon signed the National Environmental Policy Act into law in 1970, requiring environmental impact statements for any project directed or funded by the federal government. He also created the Environmental Protection Agency, the first agency charged with studying, regulating, and disseminating knowledge about the environment. A raft of laws followed that were designed to offer increased protection for air, water, endangered species, and natural areas. In keeping with the activist themes of the decade, the Catholic Church reevaluated longstanding traditions in the 1960s. The Second Vatican Council became the defining moment for the modern church. Called by Pope John XXIII to bring the church into closer dialogue with the non-Catholic world, Vatican II functioned as a vehicle for a spirit of *aggiornamento*, or a bringing up to date, for individual Catholics and their church. The council met from 1962 to 1965, and its members—the bishops of the worldwide Catholic Church—discussed varied topics, ranging from ecumenism and the role of laypeople to religious freedom and the changing nature of the priesthood. Vatican II went beyond mere discussion, however. Its proclamations brought about the rise of the vernacular Mass, a larger role for laypeople in the liturgy and in the administration of parishes and dioceses, increased contact with non-Catholics, and renewed recognition of the church as “the people of God” rather than primarily as a body of priests and bishops. A number of American Catholics had long called for such reforms, and the post-conciliar period often saw dramatic changes to the form of worship in Catholic parishes, with many adopting more informal, contemporary styles. Vatican II also opened the way for women to claim a larger degree of power in the life of the Catholic Church. The council, though, was not without controversy. More conservative Catholics often resisted what they perceived as rapid, dangerous changes overtaking their church, which frequently led to tensions between clergy and laity and among laypeople. Priests and male and female religious figures also felt the council’s influence. Some scholars have cited the general opening, liberalizing effect of Vatican II’s message and its implementation as key factors in the decline of the number of American priests that began in the era of the Second Vatican Council. Nuns seized the opportunity provided by the council to revisit the rules governing their



Losing membership and influence throughout the world, leaders of the Catholic Church met in 1965 institute new measures to modernize and open the church. This ecumenical council would become known as the Second Vatican Council or Vatican II. Photograph of the grand procession of the Council Fathers at St. Peter's Basilica, October 11, 1962. Wikimedia.

communities, and many decided to leave the cloister and do away with older forms of religious garb—including the habit—reflecting one of Vatican II’s goals of more thorough engagement of the church with the outside world. As with priests, many nuns decided to leave consecrated religious life. Vatican II’s influence and tensions resonated for decades after its conclusion and it remains the lens through which Catholics and non-Catholics alike must view the modern church.

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POLITICS AND POLICY

The decade’s political landscape began with a watershed presidential election. Americans were captivated by the 1960 race between Republican Vice President Richard Nixon and Democratic Senator John F. Kennedy, two candidates who pledged to move the nation forward and invigorate an economy experiencing the worst recession since the Great Depression. Kennedy promised to use federal programs to strengthen the economy and address pockets of longstanding poverty, while Nixon called for a reliance on private enterprise and reduction of government spending. Both candidates faced criticism as well; Nixon had to defend Dwight Eisenhower’s domestic policies, while Kennedy, who was attempting to become the first Catholic president, had to counteract questions about his faith and convince voters that he was experienced enough to lead.

One of the most notable events of the Nixon-Kennedy presidential campaign was their televised debate in September, the first of its kind between major presidential candidates. The debate focused on domestic policy and provided Kennedy with an important moment to present himself as a composed, knowledgeable statesman. In contrast, Nixon, an experienced debater who faced higher expectations, looked sweaty and defensive. Radio listeners famously thought the two men performed equally well, but the TV audience was much more impressed by Kennedy, giving him an advantage in subsequent debates. Ultimately, the election was extraordinarily close; in the largest voter turnout in American history up to that point, Kennedy bested Nixon by less than one percentage point (34,227,096 to 34,107,646 votes). Although Kennedy's lead in electoral votes was more comfortable at 303 to 219, the Democratic Party's victory did not translate in Congress, where Democrats lost a few seats in both houses. As a result, Kennedy entered office in 1961 without the mandate necessary to achieve the ambitious agenda he would refer to as the New Frontier.

Kennedy's assassination in Dallas in November of 1963 left the nation in a malaise. With the youthful, popular president gone, Vice President Lyndon Johnson was sworn in and tasked with fulfilling the liberal promises of the New Frontier. On a May morning in 1964, President Johnson laid out a sweeping vision for a package of domestic reforms known as the Great Society. Speaking before that year's graduates of the University of Michigan, Johnson called for "an end to poverty and racial injustice" and challenged both the graduates and American people to "enrich and elevate our national life, and to advance the quality of our American civilization." At its heart, he promised, the Great Society would uplift racially and economically disfranchised Americans, too long denied access to federal guarantees of equal democratic and economic opportunity, while simultaneously raising all Americans' standards and quality of life.

The Great Society's legislation was breathtaking in scope, and many of its programs and agencies are still with us today. Most importantly, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 codified federal support for many of the civil rights movement's goals by prohibiting job discrimination, abolishing the segregation of public accommodations, and providing vigorous federal oversight of southern states' primary and general election laws in order to guarantee minority access to the ballot. Ninety years after Reconstruction, these measures effectively ended Jim Crow.

In addition to this civil rights orientation, however, the Great Society took on a range of quality of life concerns that seemed solvable at last in a society of such affluence. It established the first federal Food Stamp Program. Medicare and Medicaid would ensure access to quality medical care for the aged and poor. In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was the first sustained and significant federal investment in public education, totaling more than \$1 billion. Significant funds were poured into colleges and universities as well. To "elevate and enrich our national life," the Great Society also established the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, federal investments in arts and letters that fund American cultural expression to this day.

While these programs persisted and even thrived, in the years immediately following this flurry of legislative activity, the national conversation surrounding Johnson's domestic agenda largely focused on the \$3 billion spent on War on Poverty programming within the Great Society's Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. No EOA program was more controversial than Community Action, considered the cornerstone antipoverty program. Johnson's antipoverty planners felt the key to uplifting disfranchised and impoverished Americans was involving poor and marginalized citizens in the actual administration of poverty programs, what they called "maximum feasible participation." Community Action Programs would give disfranchised Americans a seat at the table in planning and executing federally funded programs that were meant to benefit themselves—a significant sea change in the nation's efforts to confront poverty, which had historically relied upon local political and business elites or charitable organizations for administration.

In fact, Johnson himself had never conceived of poor Americans running their own poverty programs. While the president's rhetoric offered a stirring vision of the future, he had singularly old-school notions for how his poverty policies would work. In contrast to "maximum feasible participation," the President imagined a second New Deal: local elite-run public works camps that would instill masculine virtues in unemployed young men. Community Action almost entirely bypassed local administrations and sought to build grassroots civil rights and community advocacy organizations, many of which had originated in the broader civil rights movement. Despite widespread support for most Great Society programs, the War on Poverty increasingly became the focal point of domestic criticisms from the left and right. On the left, frustrated liberals recognized the president's resistance to empowering minority poor and also assailed the growing war in Vietnam, the cost of which undercut domestic poverty spending. As racial unrest and violence swept across urban centers, critics from the right lambasted federal spending for "unworthy" and even criminal citizens. When Richard Nixon was elected in 1968, he moved swiftly to return control over federal poverty spending to local political elites.

Despite the fact that the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts and the War on Poverty were crucial catalysts for the rise of Republicans in the South and West, Nixon and subsequent presidents and Congresses have left largely intact the bulk of the Great Society. Many of its programs such as Medicare and Medicaid, food stamps, federal spending for arts and literature, and Head Start are considered by many to be effective forms of government action. Even Community Action programs, so fraught during their few short years of activity, inspired and empowered a new generation of minority and poverty community activists who had never before felt, as one put it, "this government is with us."

While much of the rhetoric surrounding the 1960s focused on a younger, more liberal generation's progressive ideas, conservatism maintained a strong presence on the American political scene. Few political figures in the decade embodied the working-class, conservative views held by millions of Americans quite like George Wallace. Wallace's vocal stance on segregation was immortalized in his 1963 inaugural address as Alabama governor with the phrase: "Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever!" Just as the civil rights movement began to gain unprecedented strength, Wallace became the champion of the many white southerners uninterested in the movement's goals. Consequently, Wallace was one of the best examples of the very real opposition civil rights activists faced in the late twentieth century.

As governor, Wallace used his position to enforce segregation whenever possible. Just five months after becoming governor, in his "Stand in the Schoolhouse Door," Wallace himself tried to block two African American students from enrolling at the University of Alabama. His efforts were largely symbolic, but they earned him national recognition as a political figure willing to fight for what many southerners saw as their traditional way of life. Wallace made similar efforts to try to block federally mandated integration of his state's public, elementary, and secondary schools in the fall of 1963. In all cases, President John F. Kennedy had to supersede Wallace's actions to ensure integration moved forward.



Alabama governor George Wallace stands defiantly at the door of the University of Alabama, blocking the attempted integration of the school. Wallace was perhaps the most notoriously pro-segregation politician of the 1960s, proudly proclaiming in his 1963 inaugural address "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever." Warren K. Leffler, "[Governor George Wallace attempting to block integration at the University of Alabama]," June 11, 1963. [Library of Congress](#).

In contrast to Wallace's traditional stance on southern race relations, he took a very nontraditional approach to maintain power at the end of his term as governor. Because the state of Alabama only allowed governors to serve one term at that time, Wallace persuaded his wife, Lurleen, to run for governor so that he could use his influence with her to help shape state politics. Not only did Lurleen win, other Wallace supporters helped remove the term limits on governors, opening up future opportunities for him to serve as governor. Wallace entered the national political fray in 1968, when he made an unsuccessful presidential bid as a third-party candidate. After 1970, he served three more terms as governor of Alabama, survived an assassination attempt while campaigning for president, and eventually repudiated the segregationist views that made him so famous. Beleaguered by an unpopular war, inflation, and domestic unrest, President Johnson opted against reelection in March of 1968—an unprecedented move in modern American politics. The forthcoming presidential election was shaped by Vietnam and the aforementioned unrest as much as the campaigns of Democratic nominee Vice President Hubert Humphrey, Republican Richard Nixon, and third-party challenger George Wallace. The Democratic Party was in disarray in the spring of 1968, when senators Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy challenged Johnson's nomination and the president responded with his shocking announcement. Nixon's candidacy was aided further by riots that broke out across the country after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the shock and dismay experienced after the slaying of Robert Kennedy in June. The Republican nominee's campaign was defined by shrewd maintenance of his public appearances and a pledge to restore peace and prosperity to what he called "the silent center; the millions of people in the middle of the political spectrum." This campaign appeal was carefully calibrated to attract suburban Americans by linking liberals in favor of an overbearing federal government with the Silent Majority's implied inverse: noisy urban minorities. Many embraced Nixon's message; a September 1968 poll found that 80 percent of Americans believed public order had "broken down." Meanwhile, Humphrey struggled to distance himself from Johnson and maintain working-class support in northern cities, where voters were drawn to Wallace's appeals for law and order and a rejection of civil rights. The vice president had a final surge in northern cities with the aid of union support, but it was not enough to best Nixon's campaign. The final tally was close: Nixon won 43.3 percent of the popular vote (31,783,783), narrowly besting Humphrey's 42.7 percent (31,266,006). Wallace, meanwhile, carried five states in the Deep South, and his 13.5 percent (9,906,473) of the popular vote constituted an impressive showing for a third-party candidate. The Electoral College vote was more decisive for Nixon; he earned 302 electoral votes, while Humphrey and Wallace received only 191 and 45 votes, respectively. Although Republicans won a few seats, Democrats retained control of both the House and Senate and made Nixon the first president in 120 years to enter office with the opposition party controlling both houses.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The United States entered the 1960s unaccustomed to stark foreign policy failures, having emerged from World War II as a global superpower before waging a Cold War against the Soviet Union in the 1950s. In the new decade, unsuccessful conflicts in Cuba and Vietnam would yield embarrassment, fear, and tragedy, stunning a nation used to triumph and altering the way many thought of America's role in international affairs.

On January 8, 1959, Fidel Castro and his forces triumphantly entered Havana and initiated a new era in Cuban history. Castro and compatriots such as Che Guevara and Celia Sánchez had much to celebrate as they made their way through the city's streets. After losing American support, Cuban President Fulgencio Batista had fled the nation the previous week, ending the long war Castro's forces and countless other armed revolutionary factions had fought to oust the dictator. The United States initially expressed public sympathy with Castro's government, which was immediately granted diplomatic recognition. Behind the scenes, however, President Dwight Eisenhower and members of his administration were wary of the new leader. The relationship between the two governments rapidly deteriorated following Castro's April 1959 visit to Washington, which included a troubled meeting with Vice President Richard Nixon. On October 19, 1960, the United States instituted a trade embargo to economically isolate the Cuban regime, and in January 1961 the two nations broke off formal diplomatic relations.

As the new Cuban government instituted leftist policies that centered on agrarian reform, land redistribution, and the nationalization of private enterprises, Cuba's wealthy and middle class citizens fled the island in droves and

began to settle in Miami and other American cities. The Central Intelligence Agency, acting under the mistaken belief that the Castro government lacked popular support and that Cuban citizens would revolt if given the opportunity, began to recruit members of the exile community to participate in an invasion of the island. On April 16, 1961, an invasion force consisting primarily of Cuban émigrés landed on Girón Beach at the Bay of Pigs. Cuban soldiers and civilians quickly overwhelmed the exiles, many of whom were taken prisoner. The Cuban government's success at thwarting the Bay of Pigs invasion did much to legitimize the new regime and was a tremendous embarrassment for the Kennedy administration.

As the political relationship between Cuba and the United States disintegrated, the Castro government became more closely aligned with the Soviet Union. This strengthening of ties set the stage for the Cuban Missile Crisis, perhaps the most dramatic foreign policy crisis in the history of the United States. In 1962, in response to the US's long-time maintenance of a nuclear arsenal in Turkey and at the invitation of the Cuban government, the Soviet Union deployed nuclear missiles in Cuba. On October 14, 1962, American spy planes detected the construction of missile launch sites, and on October 22, President Kennedy addressed the American people to alert them to this threat. Over the course of the next several days, the world watched in horror as the United States and the Soviet Union hovered on the brink of nuclear war. Finally, on October 28, the Soviet Union agreed to remove its missiles from Cuba in exchange for a US agreement to remove its missiles from Turkey and a formal pledge that the United States would not invade Cuba, and the crisis was resolved peacefully.



The Cuban Missile Crisis was a time of great fear throughout America. Women in this photograph urged President Kennedy to be cautious of instigating war. Phil Stanzola, "800 women strikers for peace on 47 St near the UN Bldg," 1962. [Library of Congress](#).

Though the Cuban Missile Crisis temporarily halted the flow of Cuban refugees into the United States, emigration reinitiated in earnest in the mid-1960s. In 1965, the Johnson administration and the Castro government brokered a deal that facilitated the reunion of families that had been separated by earlier waves of migration, opening the door for thousands to leave the island. In 1966 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Cuban Adjustment Act, a law granting automatic permanent residency to any Cuban who entered the United States. Over the course of the 1960s, hundreds of thousands of Cubans left their homeland and began to build new lives for themselves in America.

American involvement in the Vietnam War began during the age of decolonization. With the Soviet Union backing nationalist movements across the globe, the United States feared the expansion of communist influence and pledged to confront communist revolutions in the Truman Doctrine. Between 1946 and 1954, France fought a counterinsurgency campaign against the nationalist Vietminh forces led by Ho Chi Minh. America assisted the French war effort with funds, arms, and advisors. On the eve of the Geneva Peace Conference in 1954, Vietminh forces defeated the French army at Dien Bien Phu. The conference temporarily divided Vietnam into two separate states until United Nations-monitored elections occurred. Elections, however, never transpired as the US feared a Communist victory. Consequently the US established the Republic of Vietnam, or South Vietnam, with Ngo Dinh Diem serving as prime minister. America viewed Diem favorably; although he was a nationalist, Diem was anticommunist and had lived in the US. In 1955, the CIA supported Diem in his bid to defeat all opposing political elements in South Vietnam.

A series of events hampered America and South Vietnam's early effort against communist forces. The Battle of Ap Bac in 1963 demonstrated a South Vietnam not fully prepared for the challenges of an insurgency. Despite a clear numerical advantage, as well as mechanized and airborne infantry, Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) forces were mauled by Vietcong (VC) units. Modeled after the US Army, ARVN was too technology-dependent to operate without US assistance. In the wake of Diem's assassination and the merry-go-round of subsequent military dictators, the situation in South Vietnam further deteriorated. In 1964, the USS Maddox reported incoming fire from North Vietnamese ships. Although the validity of the Gulf of Tonkin incident remains questionable, the event resulted in the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. This act of Congress provided Johnson with the power to defend Southeast Asia with any measures he deemed necessary. By 1965, the U.S. forces sought to engage the VC and NVA in battle. Under General William Westmoreland, head of Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), defeating the VC and NVA was the top priority. MACV commenced a war of attrition meant to exact a human toll Hanoi could not bear. The use of helicopters to transport soldiers into battle, kill ratios, and failure to retain hard-won ground came to epitomize the war.

Although American officials like Westmoreland and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara claimed a communist defeat was on the horizon, by 1968 the realities in Vietnam proved otherwise. On January 30, during the Vietnamese lunar new year of Tet, VC and NVA forces launched a massive, nationwide assault against South Vietnam's major population centers. The Communist offensive failed to topple the Saigon government and American and South Vietnamese troops decimated the VC ranks.

The 1968 Tet Offensive was indeed the turning point in the Vietnam War. As a major setback for the communist forces, American-sponsored nation-building efforts flourished across much of South Vietnam. Yet the fallout from Tet proved a public relations triumph for North Vietnam. As the first truly televised war, scenes of fighting, particularly those from Tet, fueled antiwar movements in the US. Images from Vietnam presented an out-of-control conflict where Americans were needlessly dying. The My Lai Massacre, which involved US soldiers killing unarmed South Vietnamese citizens in March of 1968, further soured public opinion of the war and contributed to the misconception that all American soldiers were murderers.

When the most trusted news anchor in America, Walter Cronkite, declared that the US could not win the war, the Johnson administration knew it had lost public support. With growing antiwar sentiment after years of endless war, Johnson excused himself from the upcoming 1968 presidential election.

After Richard Nixon was elected, his administration sought to disengage America from the war in Vietnam. American combat forces were withdrawn from South Vietnam in a process called Vietnamization. Dubbed "victory with honor," this process amounted to the American abandonment of South Vietnam, and the US had entered into peace negotiations with the North Vietnamese. Peace talks, however, stalled as both sides refused to compromise. Hoping the absence of American ground forces would afford a quick victory for Hanoi, the NVA launched a massive assault on South Vietnam known as the 1972 Easter Offensive. Only resilient ARVN units and US airpower stymied the NVA offensive. Consequently, secret negotiations between Hanoi and Washington resulted in the 1973 Paris Peace Accords. Omitted from negotiations, the South Vietnamese felt betrayed as the accords permitted NVA units to occupy South Vietnamese territory; the accords also severely curtailed US

monetary and military support for Saigon. Without such assistance, the Republic of Vietnam succumbed to communist rule after North Vietnam's 1975 invasion of the country.

This rapid growth of Asian American communities after 1965 emerged from the exigencies of Vietnam and the broader Cold War. Aware that the nation's discriminatory immigration laws favoring Western European immigrants were a liability in the Cold War, the US Congress passed the Hart-Cellar Immigration Act of 1965; the act supplanted immigration laws based on national quotas with a system that provided a pathway for skilled workers and the reunification of families. This sparked the migration of scientists, engineers, and other researchers from East Asia who participated in the nation's defense research industry. Given the shortage of medical professionals in the nation's urban and rural areas and America's neo-colonial relationship with the Philippines, at least 25,000 Filipina nurses came to the US in the decades after the 1965 Immigration Act was passed.

The end of America's wars in Southeast Asia triggered the dislocation of thousands of refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. After an initial exodus of about 100,000 Vietnamese refugees who were characterized by their relative wealth, education, and connections with the US government, over 300,000 additional Vietnamese refugees fled the political and economic instability wrought by the institution of re-education camps and a border war with China. This next wave of migration also included thousands of Cambodians fleeing the Khmer Rouge genocide and smaller numbers of Cham, Mien, and Lao refugees. Although the US sought to assimilate refugees as quickly as possible by dispersing them into America's interior, Southeast Asian Americans migrated to be with their co-ethnics or to areas with existing Asian communities once they accrued enough capital. Since the 1970s, Asian migrants have been economically diverse, and recent immigration trends have considerably changed the landscape of Asian America. From 2000 to 2010 the Asian American population grew by 46 percent, and there are now over 17.3 million Asian Americans in the US.

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CONCLUSION

In 1969, Americans hailed the moon landing as a profound victory in the “space race” against the Soviet Union that fulfilled the promise of the late John F. Kennedy, who had declared in 1961 that the U.S. would put a man on the moon by the end of the decade. But while Neil Armstrong said his steps marked “one giant leap for mankind,” and Americans marveled at the achievement, the brief moment of wonder only punctuated years of turmoil. The Vietnam War disillusioned a generation, riots rocked cities, protests hit campuses, and assassinations robbed the nation of many of its leaders. The forward-thinking spirit of a complex decade had waned. Uncertainty loomed.

This chapter was edited by Samuel Abramson, with content contributions by Samuel Abramson, Marsha Barrett, Brent Cebul, Michell Chresfield, William Cossen, Jenifer Dodd, Michael Falcone, Leif Fredrickson, Jean-Paul de Guzman, Jordan Hill, William Kelly, Lucie Kyrova, Maria Montalvo, Emily Prifogle, Ansley Quiros, Tanya Roth, and Robert Thompson.

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ASSIGNMENT: THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

Yea, you read that right. This assignment is about women's rights, feminism, and orgasms. Not votes, not jobs, orgasms.

The Sexual Revolution and the Feminist movement were two of the social movements that defined the 1960s and 1970s (both for good and bad). This assignment allows us to look at an area where those two movements intersect.

In 1970 Anne Koedt wrote an article titled “[The Myth of the Female Orgasm](#)” in which she championed women’s rights and liberation. She didn’t focus on school, career, or even birth control or abortion. Instead she examines social paradigms regarding sexual intimacy and uses it to make a case for feminism. The article is a bit lengthy, but given the subject matter I imagine you shouldn’t have too much trouble with it. After reading the article, answer the following:

1. What is her argument, evidence, and logical progression? (summarize the document)

Remember to use quotes and specific passages to support your answer.

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THE UNRAVELING

INTRODUCTION



Abandoned Packard Automotive Plant in Detroit, Michigan. Via [Wikimedia](#).

Like many young Americans in 1969, Meredith Hunter was a fan of rock 'n' roll. When news spread that the Rolling Stones were playing a massive free concert at California's Altamont Motor Speedway, Hunter, who was black, made plans to attend with his white girlfriend. But his sister, Dixie, protested. She later recalled, "It was a time when black men and white women were not supposed to be together." Their home, Berkeley, was more tolerant but, she explained, "things [were] different in Berkeley than the outskirts of town." She feared what might happen.

Meredith went anyway. He joined 300,000 others eager to hear classic sixties bands—Jefferson Airplane, the Grateful Dead, and, of course, the Rolling Stones—for free. Altamont was to climax the Stones' first American tour in three years and would be a feature of the documentary (later released as *Gimme Shelter*) recording it, but the concert was a disorganized disaster. Inadequate sanitation, a horrid sound system, and tainted drugs contributed to a tense and uneasy atmosphere. The Hell's Angels biker gang were paid \$500 in beer to be the show's "security team."

High on dope and armed with sawed-off pool cues, the Angels indiscriminately beat concert-goers who tried to come on the stage. One of those was Meredith Hunter. High on methamphetamines, Hunter approached the stage multiple times and, growing agitated, brandished a revolver. He was promptly stabbed to death by an Angel and his lifeless body was stomped into the ground. The Stones, unaware of the murder just a few feet away, continued jamming "Sympathy for the Devil."

If the more famous Woodstock music festival typified an idyllic sixties youth culture, Altamont revealed a darker side of American culture, one in which drugs and music were associated not with peace and love but with violence, anger, and death. While many Americans continued to celebrate the political and cultural achievements of the 1960s, a more anxious, conservative mood afflicted many Americans. For some, the United States had not gone nearly far enough to promote greater social equality. For others, the nation had gone too far, had unfairly trampled the rights of one group to promote the selfish needs of others. Onto these brewing dissatisfactions the 1970s dumped the divisive remnants of a failed war, the country's greatest political scandal, and an intractable economic crisis. To many, it seemed as if the nation stood ready to unravel.

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VIETNAM

Perhaps no single issue contributed more to public disillusionment than the Vietnam War. The “domino theory”—the idea that if a country fell to communism, then neighboring states would soon follow—governed American foreign policy. After the communist takeover of China in 1949, the United States financially supported the French military’s effort to retain control over its colonies in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. But the French were defeated in 1954 and Vietnam was divided into the communist North and anti-communist South.

The American public remained largely unaware of Vietnam in the early 1960s, even as President John F. Kennedy deployed over sixteen thousand military advisers to help South Vietnam suppress a domestic communist insurgency. This all changed in 1964, when Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution after a minor episode involving American and North Vietnamese naval forces. The Johnson administration distorted the incident to provide a pretext for escalating American involvement in Vietnam. The resolution authorized the president to send bombs and troops into Vietnam. Only two senators opposed the resolution.

The first combat troops arrived in South Vietnam in 1965 and as the war deteriorated the Johnson administration escalated the war. Soon hundreds of thousands of troops were deployed. Stalemate, body counts, hazy war aims, and the draft all catalyzed the anti-war movement and triggered protests throughout the United States and Europe. With no end in sight, protesters burned their draft cards, refused to pay income tax, occupied government buildings, and delayed trains loaded with war materials. By 1967, anti-war demonstrations drew crowds in the hundreds of thousands. In one protest, hundreds were arrested after surrounding the Pentagon.



Frank Wolfe, Vietnam War protestors at the March on the Pentagon, Lyndon B. Johnson Library via [Wikimedia](#).

Vietnam was the first “living room war.” Television, print media, and liberal access to the battlefield provided unprecedented coverage of the war’s brutality. Americans confronted grisly images of casualties and atrocities. In 1965, *CBS Evening News* aired a segment in which United States Marines burned the South Vietnamese village of Cam Ne with little apparent regard for the lives of its occupants, who had been accused of aiding Viet Cong guerrillas. President Johnson berated the head of CBS, yelling “Your boys just shat on the American flag.”

While the U. S. government imposed no formal censorship on the press during Vietnam, the White House and military nevertheless used press briefings and interviews to paint a positive image of the war effort. The United States was winning the war, officials claimed. They cited numbers of enemies killed, villages secured, and South Vietnamese troops trained. American journalists in Vietnam, however, quickly realized the hollowness of such claims (the press referred to afternoon press briefing in Saigon as “the Five O’Clock Follies”). Editors frequently toned down their reporters’ pessimism, often citing conflicting information received from their own sources, who were typically government officials. But the evidence of a stalemate mounted. American troop levels climbed yet victory remained elusive. Stories like CBS’s Cam Ne piece exposed the “credibility gap,” the yawning chasm between the claims of official sources and the reality on the ground in Vietnam. Nothing did more to expose this gap than the 1968 Tet Offensive. In January, communist forces engaged in a coordinated attack on more than one hundred American and South Vietnamese sites throughout South Vietnam, including the American embassy in Saigon. While U.S. forces repulsed the attack and inflicted heavy casualties on the Viet Cong, Tet demonstrated that, despite repeated claims by administration officials, after years of war the enemy could still strike at will anywhere in the country. Subsequent stories and images eroded public trust even further. In 1969, investigative reporter Seymour Hersh revealed that U.S. troops had massacred hundreds of civilians in the village of My Lai. Three years later, Americans cringed at Nick Ut’s wrenching photograph of a naked Vietnamese child fleeing an American napalm attack. More and more American voices came out against the war.

Reeling from the war’s growing unpopularity, on March 31, 1968, President Johnson announced on national television that he would not seek reelection. Eugene McCarthy and Robert F. Kennedy unsuccessfully battled against Johnson’s vice president, Hubert Humphrey, for the Democratic Party nomination (Kennedy was assassinated in June). At the Democratic Party’s national convention in Chicago, local police brutally assaulted protestors on national television. In a closely fought contest, Republican challenger Richard Nixon, running on a platform of “law and order” and a vague plan to end the War. Well aware of domestic pressure to wind down the war, Nixon sought, on the one hand, to appease anti-war sentiment by promising to phase out the draft, train South Vietnamese troops, and gradually withdraw American troops. He called it “Vietnamization.” At the same time, however, Nixon appealed to the so-called “silent majority” of Americans who still supported the war and opposed the anti-war movement by calling for an “honorable” end to the war (he later called it “peace with honor”). He narrowly edged Humphrey in the fall’s election.

LIFE

TRAGEDY AT KENT

Cambodia and Dissent:
The Crisis of
Presidential Leadership



A Kent State student
lies wounded

MAY 15 • 1970 • 50¢

"Tragedy at Kent," May 15, 1970, *Life Magazine*.

Public assurances of American withdrawal, however, masked a dramatic escalation of conflict. Looking to incentivize peace talks, Nixon pursued a "madman strategy" of attacking communist supply lines across Laos and Cambodia, hoping to convince the North Vietnamese that he would do anything to stop the war. Conducted without public knowledge or Congressional approval, the bombings failed to spur the peace process and talks stalled before the American imposed November 1969 deadline. News of the attacks renewed anti-war

demonstrations. Police and National Guard troops killed six students in separate protests at Jackson State University in Mississippi, and, more famously, Kent State University in Ohio in 1970.

Another three years passed—and another 20,000 American troops died—before an agreement was reached. After Nixon threatened to withdraw all aid and guaranteed to enforce a treaty militarily, the North and South Vietnamese governments signed the Paris Peace Accords in January of 1973, marking the official end of U. S. force commitment to the Vietnam War. Peace was tenuous, and when war resumed North Vietnamese troops quickly overwhelmed Southern forces. By 1975, despite nearly a decade of direct American military engagement, Vietnam was united under a communist government.

The fate of South Vietnam illustrates of Nixon's ambivalent legacy in American foreign policy. By committing to peace in Vietnam, Nixon lengthened the war and widened its impact. Nixon and other Republicans later blamed the media for America's defeat, arguing that negative reporting undermined public support for the war. In 1971, the Nixon administration tried unsuccessfully to sue the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* to prevent the publication of the *Pentagon Papers*, a confidential and damning history of U. S. involvement in Vietnam that was commissioned by the Defense Department and later leaked. Nixon faced a rising tide of congressional opposition to the war, led by prominent senators such as William Fulbright. Congress asserted unprecedented oversight of American war spending. And in 1973, Congress passed the War Powers Resolution, which dramatically reduced the president's ability to wage war without congressional consent.

The Vietnam War profoundly shaped domestic politics. Moreover, it poisoned Americans' perceptions of their government and its role in the world. And yet, while the anti-war demonstrations attracted considerable media attention and stand as a hallmark of the sixties counterculture so popularly remembered today, many Americans nevertheless continued to regard the war as just. Wary of the rapid social changes that reshaped American society in the 1960s and worried that anti-war protests further threatened an already tenuous civil order, a growing number of Americans criticized the protests and moved closer to a resurgent American conservatism that brewed throughout the 1970s.

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THE POLITICS OF LOVE, SEX, AND GENDER



Warren K. Leffler, *Demonstrators opposed to the ERA in front of the White House, 1977* via [Library of Congress](#).

Many looked optimistically at what the seventies might offer. Many hoped, like George Clinton's funk band Funkadelic, that Americans might dance together under a disco glitter ball as "one nation under a groove." Many Americans—feminists, gay men, lesbians, and married couples across—carried the sexual revolution further. Whether women rejected the monogamy and rigid gender roles at the heart of the nuclear family, American women had fewer children, cohabitation without marriage spiked, straight couples married later (if at all), and divorce levels climbed. Sexuality, decoupled from marriage and procreation, was transformed into a source of personal fulfillment and a worthy political cause.

At the turn of the decade, sexuality was considered a private matter, but one closely linked to civil rights. American law defined legitimate sexual expression within the confines of patriarchal, procreative, middle-class marriage. Interracial marriage was illegal until 1967 and remained largely taboo throughout the 1970s, while government-led sterilization programs threatened the reproductive freedom of poor women of color. Same-sex intercourse and cross-dressing were criminalized in most states, and gay men, lesbians, and transgender people were vulnerable to violent police enforcement as well as discrimination in housing and employment.

Two landmark legal rulings in 1973 established the battle lines for the "sex wars" of the 1970s: First, the Supreme Court's 7-1 ruling in *Roe v. Wade* struck down a Texas law that prohibited abortion in all cases when a mother's life was not in danger. The Court's decision built upon precedent from a 1965 ruling that, in striking down a Connecticut law prohibiting married couples from using birth control, recognized a constitutional "right to privacy." In *Roe*, the Court reasoned that "this right of privacy . . . is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision

whether or not to terminate her pregnancy.” The Court held that states could not interfere with a woman’s right to an abortion during the first trimester of pregnancy and could only fully prohibit abortions during the third trimester. Other Supreme Court rulings, however, held that sexual privacy could be sacrificed for the sake of “community” good. Another 1973 decision, *Miller v. California*, held that the first amendment did not protect “obscene” material, defined by the Court as anything with sexual appeal that lacked “serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.” The ruling expanded states’ abilities to pass laws prohibiting materials like hardcore pornography. State laws were unevenly enforced, however, and pornographic theaters and sex shops proliferated. Americans debated whether these were immoral atrocities, the “vanguard of a new ‘pansexual’ utopia,” as one bathhouse owner called it, or “the ultimate conclusion of sexist logic,” as poet and lesbian feminist Rita Mae Brown charged.

Furthermore, new laws prohibiting employment discrimination increased opportunities for women to make a living outside of the home and marriage. Women—haltingly and with significant disparities—advanced into traditional male occupations, into politics, and into corporate management.

The seventies saw the reform of divorce law. Between 1959 and 1979 the American divorce rate doubled. Close to half of all marriages formed in the 1970s ended in divorce. The stigma attached to divorce evaporated and American culture encouraged individuals to leave abusive or unfulfilling marriages. Before 1969, most states required one spouse to prove that the other was guilty of a specific offense, such as adultery. The difficulty of getting a divorce under this system encouraged widespread lying in divorce courts. Even couples desiring an amicable split were sometimes forced to claim that one spouse had cheated on the other even if neither (or both) had. Other couples temporarily relocated to states with more lenient divorce laws, such as Nevada. Widespread recognition of such practices prompted reforms. In 1969, California adopted the first no-fault divorce law. By the end of the 1970s, almost every state had adopted some form of no-fault divorce. The new laws allowed for divorce on the basis of “irreconcilable differences,” even if only one party felt that he or she could not stay in the marriage.

As straight couples eased the bonds of matrimony, gay men and women negotiated a harsh world that stigmatized homosexuality as a mental illness or depraved immoral act. Building upon postwar efforts by gay rights organizations to bring homosexuality into the mainstream of American culture, young gay activists of the late sixties and seventies began to challenge what they saw as the conservative gradualism of the “homophile” movement. Inspired by the burgeoning radicalism of the Black Power movement, the New Left protests of the Vietnam War, and the counterculture movement for sexual freedom, gay and lesbian activists agitated for a broader set of sexual rights that emphasized an assertive notion of “liberation” rooted not in mainstream assimilation, but in pride of sexual difference.

Perhaps no single incident did more to galvanize gay and lesbian activism than the 1969 uprising at the Stonewall Inn in New York City’s Greenwich Village. Police regularly raided gay bars and hangouts. But when police raided the Stonewall in June 1969, the bar patrons protested and sparked a multi-day street battle that catalyzed a national movement for gay liberation. Seemingly overnight, calls for homophile respectability were replaced with chants of “Gay Power!”

In the seventies, gay activists attacked the popular culture that demanded them to keep their sexuality hidden. Activists urged gay Americans to “come out.” Gay rights organizations cited statistics proving that secrecy contributed to stigma and “coming out” could reduce suicide rates. All movements, however, proceeded haltingly. Transgender people were often banned from participating in Gay Pride rallies and lesbian feminist conferences and they, in turn, mobilized to fight the high incidence of rape, abuse, and murder of transgender people. Activists now declared “all power to Trans Liberation.”

Throughout the following years, gay Americans gained unparalleled access to private and public spaces. A step towards the “normalization” of homosexuality occurred in 1973, when the American Psychiatric Association stopped classifying homosexuality as a mental illness. Pressure mounted on politicians. In 1982, Wisconsin became the first state to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and more than eighty cities and nine states followed over the following decade. But progress proceeded unevenly and gay Americans continued to suffer hardships from a hostile culture.

As events in the 1970s broadened sexual freedoms and promoted greater gender equality, so too did they generate sustained and organized opposition. Evangelical Christians and other moral conservatives, for instance, mobilized to reverse gay victories. In 1977, Dade County, Florida used the slogan “Save Our Children” to overturn an ordinance banning discrimination based on sexual orientation. A leader of the brewing religious right, Jerry Falwell, said in 1980 that “It is now time to take a stand on certain moral issues We must stand against the Equal Rights Amendment, the feminist revolution, and the homosexual revolution. We must have a revival in this country.”

The most stunning conservative counterattack of the seventies was the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Versions of the Amendment, which declared, “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex,” were introduced to Congress each year since 1923. It finally passed amid the revolutions of the sixties and seventies and went to the states for ratification in March 1972. With high approval ratings, the ERA seemed destined to swiftly pass through state legislatures and become the Twenty-Seventh Amendment. Hawaii ratified the Amendment the same day it was passed by Congress. Within a year, thirty states had done likewise. But then the Amendment stalled. It took years for passage in more states. In 1977, Indiana became the thirty-fifth and last state to ratify.

By 1977, anti-ERA forces had gathered and deployed their strength against the Amendment. At a time when many women shared Betty Friedan’s frustration that society seemed to confine women to the role of homemaker, Phyllis Schlafly’s STOP ERA organization (“Stop Taking Our Privileges”) trumpeted the value and advantages of homemakers and mothers. Schlafly worked tirelessly to stifle the ERA. She lobbied legislators and organized counter-rallies to ensure that Americans heard “from the millions of happily married women who believe in the laws which protect the family and require the husband to support his wife and children.” The Amendment had needed only three more states for ratification. It never got them. In 1982 the ratification crusade expired.



The window under the Stonewall sign reads: “We homosexuals plead with our people to please help maintain peaceful and quiet conduct on the streets of the Village—Mattachine.” Stonewall Inn 1969,
[Wikimedia](#).

The failed battle for the ERA uncovered the limits of the feminist crusade. And it illustrated the women's movement's inherent incapacity to represent fully the views of fifty percent of the country's population, a population riven by class differences, racial disparities, and cultural and religious divisions.

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RACE AND SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANXIETIES



Los Angeles police hustle rioter into car, August 13, 1965, Wikimedia.

The lines of race and class and culture ruptured American life throughout the 1970s. Americans grew disenchanted with the pace of social change: it was insufficient, some said; it was excessive, said others. The idealism of the 1960s died. Alienation took its place.

As the monolith of American culture shattered—a monolith pilloried in the fifties and sixties as exclusively white, male-dominated, conservative, and stifling—the culture seemed to fracture and Americans retreated into tribal subcultures. Mass culture became segmented. Marketers targeted particular products to ever smaller pieces of the population, including previously neglected groups such as African Americans, who, despite continuing inequality, acquired more disposable income. Subcultures often revolved around certain musical styles, whether pop, disco, hard rock, punk rock, country, or hip-hop. Styles of dress and physical appearance likewise aligned with cultures of choice.

If the popular rock acts of the sixties appealed to a new counterculture, the seventies witnessed the resurgence of cultural forms that appealed to a white working class confronting the social and political upheavals of the 1960s. Country hits such as Merle Haggard's "Okie from Muskogee" evoked simpler times and places where people "still wave Old Glory down at the courthouse" and they "don't let our hair grow long and shaggy like the hippies out in San Francisco." A popular television sitcom, *All in the Family*, became an unexpected hit among "middle America." The main character Archie Bunker was designed to mock reactionary middle-aged white men. "Isn't anyone interested in upholding standards?" he lamented in an episode dealing with housing integration. "Our world is coming crumbling down. The coons are coming!"



CBS Television, *All in the Family* Cast 1973, [Wikimedia](#).

As Bunker knew, African-Americans were becoming much more visible in American culture. While black cultural forms had been prominent throughout American history, they assumed new popular forms in the 1970s. Disco offered a new, optimistic, racially integrated pop music. Behind the scenes, African American religious styles became an outsized influence on pop music. Musicians like Aretha Franklin, Andre Crouch, and "fifth Beatle" Billy Collins brought their background in church performance to their own recordings as well as to the work of white artists like the Rolling Stones, with whom they collaborated. And by the end of the decade African American

musical artists had introduced American society to one of the most significant musical innovations in decades: the Sugarhill Gang's 1979 record, *Rapper's Delight*. A lengthy paean to black machismo, it became the first rap single to reach the top 40.

Just as rap represented a hyper-masculine black cultural form, Hollywood popularized its white equivalent. Films such as 1971's *Dirty Harry* captured a darker side of the national mood. Clint Eastwood's titular character exacted violent justice on clear villains, working within the sort of brutally simplistic ethical standard that appealed to Americans anxious about a perceived breakdown in "law and order" (more than one critic slammed the film's glorified "fascism") and the need for violent reprisals.

Violence increasingly marked American race relations. No longer confined to the anti-black terrorism that struck the southern civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s, violence now broke out across the country among blacks in urban riots and among whites protesting new civil rights programs. In the mid-1970s, for instance, protests over the use of busing to integrate public schools in Boston erupted in violence among whites and blacks.

Racial violence in the nation's cities tainted many white Americans' perception of the civil rights movement and urban life in general. Civil unrest broke out across the country, but the riots in Watts/Los Angeles (1965), Newark (1967), and Detroit (1967) were most shocking. In each, a physical altercation between white police officers and African Americans spiraled into days of chaos and destruction. Tens of thousands participated in urban riots. Many looted and destroyed white-owned business. There were dozens of deaths, tens of millions of dollars in property damage, and an exodus of white capital that only further isolated urban poverty.

In 1967, President Johnson appointed the Kerner Commission to investigate the causes of America's riots. Their report became an unexpected bestseller. The Commission cited black frustration with the hopelessness of urban poverty. As the head of the black National Business League testified, "It is to be more than naïve—indeed, it is a little short of sheer madness—for anyone to expect the very poorest of the American poor to remain docile and content in their poverty when television constantly and eternally dangles the opulence of our affluent society before their hungry eyes." A Newark rioter who looted several boxes of shirts and shoes put it more simply: "They tell us about that pie in the sky but that pie in the sky is too damn high." But white conservatives blasted the conclusion that white racism and economic hopelessness were to blame for the violence. African Americans wantonly destroying private property, they said, was not a symptom of America's intractable racial inequalities, but the logical outcome of a liberal culture of permissiveness that tolerated, even encouraged, nihilistic civil disobedience. Many moderates and liberals, meanwhile, saw the explosive violence as a sign African Americans had rejected the nonviolent strategies of the civil rights movement.

The unrest of the late '60s did, in fact, reflect a real and growing disillusionment among African Americans with the fate of the civil rights crusade. Political achievements such as the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Act were indispensable legal preconditions for social and political equality, but the movement's long (and now often forgotten) goal of economic justice proved as elusive as ever. 1968 found Martin Luther King, Jr., organized the Poor People's Campaign, a multi-racial struggle to uproot America's entrenched poverty. "I worked to get these people the right to eat cheeseburgers," Martin Luther King Jr. supposedly said to Bayard Rustin as they toured the devastation in Watts some years earlier, "and now I've got to do something...to help them get the money to buy it." What good was the right to enter a store without money for purchases?

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DEINDUSTRIALIZATION AND THE RISE OF THE SUNBELT



Abandoned Youngstown factory, via Flickr user [stu_spivack](#).

Though black leaders like King and Rustin denounced urban violence, they recognized the frustrations that fueled it. In the still-moldering ashes of Jim Crow, African Americans in Watts and similar communities across the country bore the burdens of lifetimes of legally sanctioned discrimination in housing, employment, and credit. The inner cities had become traps that too few could escape.

Segregation survived the legal dismantling of Jim Crow. The perseverance into the present day of stark racial and economic segregation in nearly all American cities destroyed any simple distinction between southern “de jure” segregation and non-southern “de facto” segregation.

Meanwhile, whites and white-owned businesses fled the inner cities, depleted municipal tax bases, and left behind islands of poverty. This flight of people and capital was felt most acutely in the deindustrializing cities of the Northeast and Midwest. Few cases better illustrate these transformations than Detroit. As the automobile industry expanded and especially as the United States transitioned to a wartime economy during World War II, Detroit boomed. When auto manufacturers like Ford and General Motors converted their assembly lines to build machines for the American war effort, observers dubbed the city the “arsenal of democracy.” Newcomers from around the country flooded the city looking for work. Between 1940 and 1947, manufacturing employment increased by 40 percent, and between 1940 and 1943 the number of unemployed workers fell from 135,000 to a mere four thousand. Thanks to New Deal labor legislation and the demands of war, unionized workers in Detroit and elsewhere enjoyed secure employment and increased wages. A vast middle class populated a thriving city with beautiful public architecture, theaters, and libraries.

Workers made material gains throughout the 1940s and 1950s. During the so-called “Great Compression,” Americans of all classes enjoyed in postwar prosperity. A highly progressive tax system and powerful unions lowered income inequality. Rich and poor advanced together. Working class standard-of-living nearly doubled between 1947 and 1973 and unemployment continually fell.

But general prosperity masked deeper vulnerabilities. After the war automobile firms began closing urban factories and moving to outlying suburbs. Several factors fueled the process. Some cities partly deindustrialized themselves. Municipal governments in San Francisco, St. Louis, and Philadelphia banished light industry to make room for high-rise apartments and office buildings. Mechanization seemed to contribute to the decline of American labor. A manager at a newly automated Ford engine plant in postwar Cleveland captured the interconnections between these concerns when he glibly noted to United Automobile Workers (UAW) president Walter Reuther, “you are going to have trouble collecting union dues from all of these machines.” More importantly, however, manufacturing firms sought to lower labor costs by automating, downsizing, and relocating to areas with “business friendly” policies such as low tax rates, anti-union “right-to-work” laws, and low wages.

Detroit began to bleed industrial jobs. Between 1950 and 1958, Chrysler cut its Detroit production workforce in half. In the years between 1953 and 1959, East Detroit lost ten plants and over seventy-one thousand jobs. Detroit was a single-industry town, it was built upon the auto industry. Decisions made by the “Big Three” automakers, therefore, reverberated across the city’s industrial landscape. When auto companies mechanized or moved their operations, ancillary suppliers such as machine tool companies were cut out of the supply chain and were likewise forced to cut their own workforce. Between 1947 and 1977, the number of manufacturing firms in the city dropped from 3,272 to fewer than two thousand. The labor force was gutted. Manufacturing jobs fell from 338,400 to 153,000 over the same three decades.

Industrial restructuring decimated all workers, and many middle-class blacks managed to move out of the city’s ghettos, but deindustrialization fell heaviest on the city’s African Americans. By 1960, 19.7 percent of black autoworkers in Detroit were unemployed, compared to just 5.8 percent of whites. Overt discrimination in housing and employment had for decades confined blacks to segregated neighborhoods where they were forced to pay exorbitant rents for slum housing. Subject to residential intimidation and cut off from traditional sources of credit, few blacks could afford to follow industry as it left the city for the suburbs and other parts of the country. Detroit devolved into a mass of unemployment, crime, and crippled municipal resources. When riots rocked Detroit in 1967, 25 to 30 percent of blacks between age eighteen and twenty-four were unemployed.

Deindustrialization went hand in hand with the long assault on unionization that had begun in the aftermath of World War II. Without the political support they had enjoyed during the New Deal years, unions such as the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and the United Auto Workers (UAW) shifted tactics and accepted labor-management accords in which cooperation, not agitation, was the strategic objective. This accord held mixed results for workers. On the one hand, management encouraged employee loyalty through privatized welfare systems that offered workers health benefits and pensions. Grievance arbitration and collective bargaining also allowed workers official channels in which to criticize and push for better conditions. At the same time, unions became increasingly weighed down by bureaucracy and corruption. Union management came to hold primary influence in what was ostensibly a “pluralistic” power relationship, and workers—though still willing to protest—by necessity pursued a more moderate agenda compared to the union workers of the 1930s and 40s.

The decline of labor coincided with ideological changes within American liberalism. Labor and its political concerns undergirded Roosevelt’s New Deal coalition, but by the 1960s many liberals had forsaken working class politics. More and more saw poverty as stemming not from structural flaws in the national economy, but from the failure of individuals to take full advantage of the American system. For instance, while Roosevelt’s New Deal might have attempted to rectify unemployment with government jobs, Johnson’s Great Society and its imitators funded government-sponsored job training, even in places without available jobs. Union leaders in the ‘50s and ‘60s typically supported such programs and philosophies.

Widely shared postwar prosperity leveled off and began to retreat by the mid-1970s. Growing international competition, technological inefficiency, and declining productivity gains stunted working- and middle-class wages. As the country entered recession, wages decreased and the pay gap between workers and management began its long widening. The tax code became less progressive and labor lost its foothold in the marketplace. Unions representing a third of the workforce in the 1950s, but only one in ten workers belonged to one as of 2006.

Geography dictated much of labor’s fall. American firms fled from pro-labor states in the 1970s and 1980s. Some went overseas in the wake of new trade treaties to exploit low-wage foreign workers, but others turned to the anti-union states in the South and West stretching from Virginia to Texas to southern California. Factories shuttered in the North and Midwest and by the 1980s commentators had dubbed America’s former industrial heartland the “the Rust Belt.”

Coined by journalist Kevin Phillips in 1969, the “Sun Belt” refers to the swath of southern and western states that saw unprecedented economic, industrial, and demographic growth after World War II. During the New Deal,

President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared the American South “the nation’s No. 1 economic problem” and injected massive federal subsidies, investments, and military spending into the region. During the Cold War, Sun Belt politicians lobbied hard for military installations and government contracts for their states.

Meanwhile, the state’s hostility toward labor beckoned corporate leaders. The Taft-Hartley Act in 1949 facilitated southern states’ frontal assault on unions. Thereafter, cheap, nonunionized labor, low wages, and lax regulations stole northern industries away from the Rust Belt. Skilled northern workers followed the new jobs southward and westward, lured by cheap housing and a warm climate slowly made more tolerable by modern air conditioning.

The South attracted business but struggled to share their profits. Middle class whites grew prosperous, but often these were recent transplants, not native southerners. As the cotton economy shed farmers and laborers, poor white and black southerners found themselves mostly excluded from the fruits of the Sun Belt. Public investments were scarce: white southern politicians channeled federal funding away from primary and secondary public education and toward high-tech industry and university-level research. The Sun Belt inverted Rust Belt realities: the South and West brought growing numbers of high-skill, high-wage jobs but lacked the social and educational infrastructure needed to supply the native poor and middle classes with those same jobs.

Although massive federal investments sparked the Sun Belt’s explosive growth, the New Right took its firmest hold there. The South ran rife with conservative religious ideas, which it exported westward. The leading figures of the nascent religious right rose to prominence in the Sun Belt. Moreover, business-friendly politicians successfully synthesized conservative Protestantism and free-market ideology, creating a potent new political force.

Sunbelt cities were automobile cities. They sprawled across the landscapes. Public space was more limited than in older, denser cities. Politics often revolved around suburban life. Housewives organized reading groups in their homes, and from those reading groups sprouted new organized political activities. Prosperous and mobile, old and new suburbanites gravitated towards an individualistic vision of free enterprise espoused by the Republican Party. Some, especially those most vocally anti-communist, joined groups such as the Young Americans for Freedom and the John Birch Society. Less radical suburban voters, however, still gravitated towards the more moderate brand of conservatism promoted by Richard Nixon.

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VIDEO: THE RISE OF CONSERVATISM

In this video, John Green teaches you about the rise of the conservative movement in United States politics. So, the sixties are often remembered for the liberal changes that the decade brought to America, but lest you forget, Richard Nixon was elected to the presidency during the sixties. The conservative movement didn’t start with Nixon though.

Modern conservatism really entered mainstream consciousness during the 1964 presidential contest between incumbent president and Kennedy torch-bearer Lyndon B Johnson, and Republican senator Barry Goldwater. While Goldwater never had a shot in the election, he used the campaign to talk about all kinds of conservative ideas. At the same time, several varying groups, including libertarian conservatives and moral conservatives, began to work together. Goldwater’s trailblazing and coalition-building would pay off in 1968 when Richard Nixon was elected to the White House, and politics changed forever when Nixon resigned over the Watergate scandal. You’ll also learn about the ERA, EPA, OSHA, the NTSB, and several other acronyms and initialisms.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/OCrxD19DHA8>

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NIXON



Richard Nixon campaigns in Philadelphia during the 1968 presidential election. [National Archives via Wikimedia](#).

Once installed in the White House, Richard Nixon focused his energies on shaping American foreign policy. He publicly announced the “Nixon Doctrine” in 1969. While asserting the supremacy of American democratic capitalism, and conceding that the U. S. would continue supporting its allies financially, he denounced previous administrations’ willingness to commit American forces to third world conflicts and warned other states to assume responsibility for their own defense. He was turning America away from the policy of active, anti-communist containment, and toward a new strategy of “détente.”

Promoted by national security advisor and eventual Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, détente sought to stabilize the international system by “thawing” relations with Cold War rivals and bilaterally freezing arms levels. Taking advantage of tensions between the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the Soviet Union, Nixon pursued closer relations in order to de-escalate tensions and strengthen the United States’ position relative to both countries. The strategy seemed to work. Nixon became the first American president to visit communist China and the first to visit the Soviet Union in 1971 and 1972, respectively. Direct diplomacy and cultural exchange programs with both countries grew and culminated with the formal normalization of U. S.-Chinese relations and the signing of two U. S.-Soviet arms agreements: the anti-ballistic missile (ABM) treaty and the Strategic Arms Limit Treaty (SALT I). By 1973, after almost thirty years of Cold War tension, peaceful coexistence suddenly seemed possible. Short-term gains, however, failed to translate into long-term stability. By the decade’s end, a fragile calm gave way once again to Cold War instability.

A brewing energy crisis interrupted Nixon’s presidency. In November 1973, Nixon appeared on television to inform Americans that energy had become “a serious national problem” and that the United States was “heading toward the most acute shortages of energy since World War II.” The previous month Arab members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), a cartel of the world’s leading oil producers, embargoed oil exports to the United States in retaliation for American intervention in the Middle East. The embargo caused an “oil shock” and launched the first energy crisis. By the end of 1973, the global price of oil had quadrupled. Drivers waited in line for hours to fill up their cars. Individual gas stations ran out of gas. American motorists worried that oil could run out at any moment. A Pennsylvania man died when his emergency stash of gasoline ignited in his trunk. OPEC rescinded its embargo in 1974, but the economic damage had been done and the energy crisis nevertheless extended into the late 1970s.

Like the Vietnam War, the oil crisis showed that small countries perceived could still hurt the United States. At a time of anxiety about the nation's future, Vietnam and the energy crisis accelerated Americans' disenchantments with the United States' role in the world and the efficacy and quality of its leaders. Furthermore, scandals in the 1970s and early 80s sapped trust in America's public institutions. Watergate catalyzed the disenchantment of the Unraveling.

On June 17, 1972, five men were arrested inside the offices of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) in the Watergate Complex in downtown Washington, D.C. After being tipped by a security guard, police found the men attempting to install sophisticated bugging equipment. One of those arrested was a former CIA employee then working as a security aide for the Nixon administration's Committee to Reelect the President (lampooned as "CREEP").

While there is no direct evidence that Richard Nixon ordered the Watergate break-in, Nixon had been recorded in conversation with his Chief of Staff requesting the DNC chairman be illegally wiretapped to obtain the names of the committee's financial supporters, which could then be given to the Justice Department and the IRS to conduct spurious investigations into their personal affairs. (Nixon was also recorded ordering his Chief of Staff to break into the offices of the Brookings Institute and take files relating to the war in Vietnam, saying, "Goddamnit, get in and get those files. Blow the safe and get it.") Whether or not the president ordered the Watergate break-in, the White House launched a massive cover-up. Administration officials ordered the CIA to halt the FBI investigation and paid hush-money to the burglars and White House aides. Nixon distanced himself from the incident publicly and went on to win a landslide election victory in November 1972. But, thanks largely to two persistent journalists at the *Washington Post*, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, information continued to surface that tied the burglaries ever closer to the CIA, the FBI, and the White House. The Senate held televised hearings. Nixon fired his Chief of Staff and appointed a special prosecutor to investigate the burglary and ongoing investigation, and then, when the investigation progressed, ordered the Attorney General to fire that same prosecutor. Citing "executive privilege," Nixon refused to comply with orders to produce tapes from the White House's secret recording system. In July 1974, the House Judiciary Committee approved a bill to impeach the president. Nixon resigned before the full House could vote on impeachment. He became the first and only American president to resign his office.

Vice President Gerald Ford was sworn in as his successor and a month later granted Nixon a full presidential pardon. Nixon disappeared from public life without ever publicly apologizing, accepting responsibility, or facing charges stemming from the scandal.

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CARTER

Watergate weighed on voters' minds. Nixon's disgrace netted big congressional gains for the Democrats in the 1974 mid-term elections. President Ford, the presumptive Republican nominee in 1976, damaged his popularity by pardoning Nixon. Voters seemed to want a Washington outsider untainted by the Beltway politics of the previous decade.

A wide field of Democratic presidential hopefuls reflected the diversity and disunity of the party. According to late January Gallup polls, segregationist Alabama governor George Wallace and moderate former Vice President Hubert Humphrey led with eighteen and seventeen percent respectively. A distant third at five percent was conservative Washington Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson. In fourth place, with four percent, was former Georgia governor Jimmy Carter, a nuclear physicist and peanut farmer who represented the rising generation of younger, racially liberal "New South" Democrats.

After the chaos of the 1968 Chicago convention, the Democrats reformed party rules to bring in women, African Americans, young people, and Spanish speakers. One way the committee sought to improve popular participation (as well as stifle backstage maneuvering and public bickering) to increase the weight of caucuses and primaries on the presidential nomination process, reducing the machinations of party officials at the convention. Jimmy Carter and his energetic staff of Georgians understood the importance of these primaries and spent two years traveling the country, getting to know local Democrats and winning grassroots support.

Unlike his Democratic opponents—and unlike President Ford—Carter was a Washington outsider. He was unidentified with either his party's liberal or conservative wings. Indeed, his appeal was more personal and moral than political. He ran on no great political issues. Instead, crafting an optimistic campaign centered on the slogan, "Why not the best?", he let his background as a hardworking, honest, Southern Baptist navy-man ingratiate him to voters around the country, especially in his native South, where support of Democrats had wavered in the wake of the civil rights movement. Carter's wholesome image was painted in direct contrast to the memory of Nixon and by association with the man who pardoned him, his vice president, Gerald Ford. Carter sealed his party's nomination in June and won a close victory in November.

When Carter assumed took the oath of office on January 20, 1977, he became president of a nation in the midst of economic turmoil. Oil shocks, inflation, stagnant growth, unemployment, and sinking wages weighed down the nation's economy. The age of affluence was over, and the unraveling had begun, culminating deeply rooted problems that had lain dormant during the long postwar prosperity.



Pumpkins carved in the likeness of President Jimmy Carter in Polk County, Florida, October 1980, State Library and Archives of Florida via [Flickr](#).



The 1979 energy crisis prompted a panic for consumers who remembered the 1973 oil shortage, prompting many Americans to buy oil in huge quantities. Long lines and high gas prices characterized 1979, oil prices remained quite high until the mid-1980s. Warren K. Leffler, "Gasoline lines," June 15, 1979. [Library of Congress](#).

At the end of the Second World War, American leaders erected a complex system of trade policies to help rebuild the shattered economies of Western Europe and Asia. In the glow of the Cold War, American diplomats and politicians used trade relationships to win influence and allies around the globe and they saw the economic health of their allies, particularly West Germany and Japan, as a crucial bulwark against the expansion of communism. Americans encouraged these nations to develop vibrant export-oriented economies and tolerated restrictions on U.S. imports. This came at great cost to the United States. As the American economy stalled, Japan and West Germany soared and became major forces in the global production for autos, steel, machine tools, and electrical products. By 1970, the United States began to run massive trade deficits. The value of American exports dropped and the prices of its imports skyrocketed. Coupled with the huge cost of the Vietnam War and the rise of oil-producing states in the Middle East, growing trade deficits sapped the United States' dominant position in the global economy.

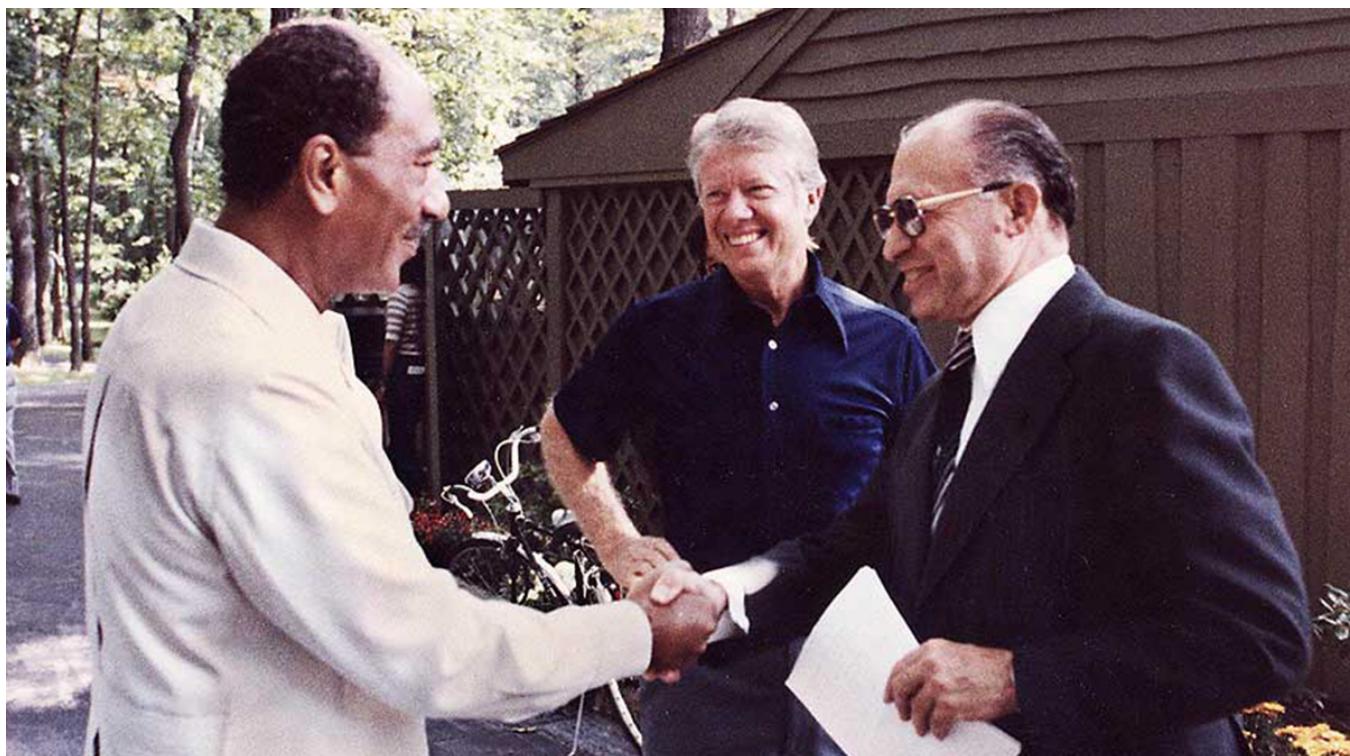
American leaders didn't know how to respond. After a series of negotiations with leaders from France, Great Britain, West Germany, and Japan in 1970 and 1971, the Nixon administration allowed these rising industrial nations to continue flouting the principles of free trade by maintaining trade barriers that sheltered their domestic markets from foreign competition while at the same time exporting growing amounts of goods to the United States, which no longer maintained so comprehensive a tariff system. By 1974, in response to U. S. complaints and their own domestic economic problems, many of these industrial nations overhauled their protectionist practices but developed even subtler methods, such as state subsidies for key industries, to nurture their economies.

Carter, like Ford before him, presided over a hitherto unimagined economic dilemma: the simultaneous onset of inflation and economic stagnation, a combination popularized as "stagflation." Neither Carter nor Ford had the means nor the ambition to protect American jobs and goods from foreign competition. As firms and financial institutions invested, sold goods, and manufactured in new rising economies, such as Mexico, Taiwan, Japan,

Brazil, and elsewhere, American politicians allowed them to sell their often less costly products in the United States.

As American officials institutionalized this new unfettered global trade, many suffering American manufacturers perceived only one viable path to sustained profitability: moving overseas, often by establishing foreign subsidiaries or partnering with foreign firms. Investment capital, especially in manufacturing, fled the U. S. looking for overseas investments and hastened the decline in the productivity of American industry while rising export-oriented industrial nations flooded the world market with their cheaply produced goods. Global competition swiftly undermined the dominance enjoyed by American firms. By the end of the decade, the United States suffered from perennial trade deficits and weakened U.S. industry while many Americans suffered eroded job security and stagnating incomes.

As Carter failed to slow the unraveling of the American economy, he also struggled to shift American foreign policy away from blind anti-communism toward a human-rights based agenda. Carter was a one-term Georgia governor with little foreign policy experience and few knew what to expect from his presidency. Carter did not make human rights a central theme of his campaign. Only in May 1977 did the new president offer a definitive statement when, speaking before the graduating class at the University of Notre Dame, he declared his wish to move away from a foreign policy in which “an inordinate fear of communism” caused American leaders to “adopt the flawed and erroneous principles and tactics of our adversaries.” (Cold War foreign policy, he said, had resulted in the “profound moral crisis” of the Vietnam War.) Carter proposed instead “a policy based on constant decency in its values and on optimism in our historical vision.” Carter’s focus on human rights, mutual understanding, and peaceful solutions to international crises resulted in some successes. Under Carter, the U. S. either reduced aid to or ceased aiding altogether the American-supported right-wing dictators guilty of extreme human rights abuses in places such as South Korea, Argentina, and the Philippines. And despite intense domestic opposition, in September 1977, partly under the belief that such a treaty would signal a renewed American commitment to fairness and respect for all nations, Carter negotiated the return of the Panama Canal to Panamanian control.



Camp David, Menachem Begin, and Anwar Sadat, 1978, [Wikimedia](#).

Carter's arguably greatest foreign policy achievement was the Camp David Accords. In September 1978, Carter negotiated a peace treaty between Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. After thirteen days of secret negotiations hosted by Carter at the presidency's rural Maryland retreat, Camp David, two agreements were reached. The first established guidelines for Palestinian autonomy and a set of principles that would govern Israel's relations to its Arab neighborhoods. The second provided the basis for Egyptian-Israeli

peace by returning the Sinai Peninsula to Egyptian control and opening the Suez Canal to Israeli ships. The Accords, however, had significant limits. Though Sadat and Begin won a Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts, the Accords were as significant for what they left unresolved as for what they achieved. Though they represented the first time since the establishment of Israel that Palestinians were promised self-government and the first time that an Arab state fully recognized Israel as a nation, most of the Arab world rejected the Accords. The agreement ensured only limited individual rights for Palestinians and precluded territorial control or the possibility of statehood. Indeed, Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) chairman Yasser Arafat later described the Accords' version of Palestinian autonomy as, "no more than managing the sewers."

Carter, however, could not balance his insistence on human rights with the realities of the Cold War. While his administration reduced aid to some authoritarian states, the U.S. continued to provide military and financial support to allies it considered truly vital to American interests—most notably, the oil-rich nation of Iran. When the President and First Lady (Rosalynn Carter) visited Tehran in January 1978, the President praised the nation's dictatorial ruler, Shah Reza Pahlavi and remarked on the "respect and the admiration and love" of Iranians for their leader. A year later, the Iranian Revolution deposed the Shah. In November, 1979, revolutionary Iranians, irate over America's interventions in Iranian affairs and its long support of the Shah, stormed the U. S. embassy in Tehran and took fifty-two Americans hostage. At the same time, Americans again felt the energy pinch when revolutionaries shut down Iranian oil fields, spiking the price of oil for the second time in a decade. Americans not only felt the nation's weakness at the gas pump, they watched it every night on national television: for many Americans, the hostage crisis that stretched across the next 444 days became a source of both jingoistic unity and a constant reminder of the country's new global impotence. The nation that had defeated the Nazis and the Empire of Japan in the Second World War found itself, thirty years later, humiliated by both half of an obscure southeast Asian country and a relatively small and unstable Middle Eastern nation.

With his popularity plummeting Carter, in April 1980, ordered a secret rescue mission, Operation Eagle Claw, that ended in disaster. A U. S. helicopter crashed in the middle of the desert, killing eight servicemen, and leading Carter to take responsibility for the losses and the continued inability to free the American hostages.

Moreover, Carter's efforts to ease the Cold War by achieving a new nuclear arms control agreement (SALT II) disintegrated under domestic opposition led by conservative hawks such as Ronald Reagan. They accused Carter of weakness, and cited Soviet support for African leftist revolutionaries as evidence of Soviet duplicity. And then the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, returning the Cold War to the forefront of U.S. foreign policy. A month later, a beleaguered Carter committed the United States to defending its "interests" in the Middle East against Soviet incursions, declaring that "an assault [would] be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." Known as the "Carter Doctrine," the President's declaration signaled the administration's ambivalent commitment to human rights and a renewed reliance on military force in its anti-communist foreign policy. The seeds of Ronald Reagan's more aggressive foreign policy had been sown.

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VIDEO: FORD, CARTER, AND THE ECONOMIC MALAISE

In this video, John Green teaches you about the economic malaise that beset the United States in the 1970s. A sort of perfect storm of events, it combined the continuing decline of America's manufacturing base and the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979, and brought about an stagnant economy, paired with high inflation. Economists with a flair for neologisms and portamenteau words called this "stagflation," and it made people miserable. Two presidential administrations were scuttled at least in part by these economic woes; both Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter are considered failed presidents for many reasons, but largely because of an inability to improve the economy (hint: In reality, no one person can materially change something as big as the world economy, even if they are president, but one person sure can make a handy scapegoat!). So, by and large, the '70s were a pretty terrible time in America economically, but at least the decade gave us Mr. Green.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/pyN5LPHEQ_0

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CONCLUSION

Though American politics moved right after Lyndon Johnson's resignation, Nixon's 1968 election had marked no conservative counterrevolution. American politics and society remained in flux throughout the 1970s. American politicians on the right and the left pursued relatively moderate courses compared to those in the preceding and succeeding decades. But a groundswell of anxieties and angers brewed beneath the surface. The world's greatest military power had floundered in Vietnam and an American president stood flustered by Middle Eastern revolutionaries. The cultural clashes from the 60s persisted and accelerated. While cities burned, a more liberal sexuality permeated American culture. The economy crashed, leaving America's cities prone before poverty and crime and its working class gutted by deindustrialization and globalization. American weakness was everywhere. And so, by 1980, many Americans—especially white middle- and upper-class Americans—felt a nostalgic desire for simpler times and simpler answers to the frustratingly complex geopolitical, social, and economic problems crippling the nation. The appeal of Carter's soft drawl and Christian humility had signaled this yearning, but his utter failure to stop the unraveling opened the way for a new movement, with new personalities and a new conservatism, which promised to undo the damage and restore the United States to its nostalgic image of itself.

This chapter was edited by Edwin Breeden, with content contributions by Seth Anziska, Jeremiah Bauer, Edwin Breeden, Kyle Burke, Alexandra Evans, Sean Fear, Anne Grey Fischer, Destin Jenkins, Matthew Kahn, Suzanne Kahn, Brooke Lamperd, Katherine McGarr, Matthew Pressman, Adam Parsons, Emily Prifogle, John Rosenberg, Brandy Thomas Wells, and Naomi R. Williams.

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PRIMARY SOURCE READING: THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY PLATFORM

Read [The Black Panther Party Platform \(October 1966\)](#).

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ASSIGNMENT: BLACK PANTHER PARTY PLATFORM

Though legally successful in the mid 1960s, the battle for civil rights continued on into the 1970s. It seems that not everybody has the same idea of what it means to be “equal,” especially in the area of race relations. Everyone knows about Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “dream,” but not everyone was catching the dream, even within the black community. King represented the middle ground, but what about the radical fringe? After reading the [Black Panther Party Platform](#) answer the following in a paragraph:

1. What’s the general message? How does it compare with King’s “[I have a Dream](#)” speech? Do they have the same dream? How was the Black Panther Party an obstacle to King’s dream of a racially integrated society?

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THE RISE OF THE RIGHT

INTRODUCTION



Activist Phyllis Schlafly campaigns against the Equal Rights Amendment in 1978. *Bettmann/Corbis*.

Speaking to Detroit autoworkers in October of 1980, Republican presidential candidate Ronald Reagan described what he saw as the American Dream under Democratic President Jimmy Carter. The family garage may have still held two cars, cracked Reagan, but they were “both Japanese and they’re out of gas.” The charismatic former governor of California suggested that a once-proud nation was running on empty, but he held out hope for redemption. Stressing the theme of “national decline,” Reagan nevertheless promised to make the United States once again a “shining city upon a hill.” His vision of a dark present and a bright future triumphed.

Reagan stood at the head of a powerful political movement often referred to as the New Right, in contrast to their more moderate conservative predecessors. During the 1970s and 1980s the New Right evolved into the most influential wing of the Republican Party and contributed to its stunning electoral success. During the last quarter of the twentieth century, after decades of liberal dominance, conservative leaders and grassroots activists wrenching the country fully onto a new rightward course. The conservative ascendency built upon the steady unraveling of the New Deal political order during the previous decade and drew in new “Reagan Democrats,” blue-collar voters who lost faith in the old liberal creed, and the emergent religious right, a coalition of conservative religious activists. All the while, enduring conflicts over race, economic policy, gender and sexual politics, and foreign affairs fatally fractured the liberal consensus that had dominated American politics since the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt.

The rise of the right affected Americans' everyday lives in numerous ways. The Reagan administration embraced "free market" economic theory, dispensing with the principles of income redistribution and social welfare that had animated the New Deal and Great Society. Conservative policymakers tilted the regulatory and legal landscape of the United States toward corporations and wealthy individuals while weakening the "rights" framework that had undergirded advancements by African Americans, Mexican Americans, women, lesbians and gays, and other marginalized groups.

In many ways, however, the rise of the Right promised more than it delivered. Battered but intact, the programs of the New Deal and Great Society survived the 1980s. Despite Republican vows of fiscal discipline, both the federal government and the national debt ballooned. Conservative Christians viewed popular culture as more vulgar and hostile to their values than ever before. In the near term, the New Right registered only partial victories on a range of public policies and cultural issues. Yet, from a long-term perspective conservatives achieved a subtler and more enduring transformation of American politics. In the words of one historian, the conservative movement successfully "changed the terms of debate and placed its opponents on the defensive." Liberals and their programs and their policies did not disappear, but they increasingly fought battles on terrain chosen by the New Right.

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CONSERVATIVE ASCENDANCE

The "Reagan Revolution" marked the culmination of a long process of political mobilization on the American right. In the first two decades after World War II the New Deal seemed firmly embedded in American electoral politics and public policy. Even two-term Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower declined to roll back the welfare state. To be sure, *National Review* founder William F. Buckley tapped into a deep vein of elite conservatism in 1955 with his call to "stand athwart history yelling 'stop.'" Senator Joseph McCarthy and John Birch Society founder Robert Welch stirred anti-communist fervor. But in general, the far right lacked organizational cohesion. Following Lyndon Johnson's resounding defeat of Republican Barry Goldwater in the 1964 presidential election, many observers declared American conservatism finished. New York Times columnist James Reston wrote that Goldwater had "wrecked his party for a long time to come."

The Conservative insurgency occurred within both major political parties, but the New Right gradually coalesced under the Republican tent. The heightened appeal of conservatism had several causes. The expansive social and economic agenda of Johnson's Great Society reminded anti-communists of Soviet-style central planning and enflamed fiscal conservatives worried about deficits. Race also drove the creation of the New Right. The civil rights movement, along with the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, upended the racial hierarchy of the Jim Crow South. All of these occurred under Democratic leadership, pushing the South toward the Republican Party. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Black Power, affirmative action, and court-ordered busing of children between schools to achieve racial balance brought "white backlash" to the North, often in cities previously known for political liberalism. To many ordinary Americans, the urban rebellions, antiwar protests, and student uprisings of the late 1960s unleashed social chaos. At the same time, declining wages, rising prices, and growing tax burdens brought economic vulnerability to many working- and middle-class citizens. Liberalism no longer seemed to offer ordinary Americans a roadmap to prosperity, so they searched for new political solutions.

Former Alabama governor and conservative Democrat George Wallace masterfully exploited the racial, cultural, and economic resentments of working-class whites during presidential runs in 1968 and 1972. Wallace's record as a staunch segregationist made him a hero in the Deep South, where he won five states as a third-party candidate in the 1968 general election. Wallace's populist message also resonated with blue-collar voters in the industrial North who felt left behind by the rights revolution. On the campaign stump, the fiery candidate lambasted hippies, anti-war protestors, and government bureaucrats. He assailed female welfare recipients for "breeding children as a cash crop" and ridiculed "over-educated, ivory-tower" intellectuals who "don't know how to park a bicycle straight." Yet, Wallace also advanced progressive proposals for federal job training programs, a minimum wage hike, and legal protections for collective bargaining. Running as a Democrat in 1972 (and with anti-busing rhetoric as a new arrow in his quiver), Wallace captured the Michigan primary and polled second in

Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Indiana. In May 1972 an assassin's bullet left Wallace paralyzed and ended his campaign. Nevertheless, his amalgamation of older, New Deal-style proposals and conservative populism emblematized the rapid re-ordering of party loyalties in the late '60s and early '70s. Richard Nixon similarly harnessed the New Right's sense of grievance through his rhetoric about "law and order" and the "silent majority." But the New Right remained restive under Nixon and his Republican successor, Gerald Ford.

Religious conservatives also felt themselves under siege from liberalism. In the early 1960s, the Supreme Court decisions prohibiting teacher-led prayer (*Engel v. Vitale*) and Bible reading in public schools (*Abington v. Schempp*) led some on the right to conclude that a liberal judicial system threatened Christian values. In the following years, the counterculture's celebration sex and drugs, along with relaxed obscenity and pornography laws, intensified the conviction that "permissive" liberalism encouraged immorality in private life. Evangelical Protestants—Christians who professed a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, upheld the Bible as an infallible source of truth, and felt a duty to convert, or evangelize, nonbelievers—comprised the core of the so-called "religious right." The movement also drew energy from devout Catholics. The development of the religious right was not inevitable for several reasons. First, many evangelicals had for decades eschewed politics in favor of spiritual matters; moreover, evangelicalism did not necessarily lead to conservative politics (Democrat Jimmy Carter was an evangelical). Second, Roman Catholics had a long record of loyalty to the Democratic Party. Third, the alliance between evangelicals and Catholics had to overcome decades of mutual antagonism. Only the common enemy of liberalism brought the groups together.

Beginning in the early 1970s the religious right mobilized to protect the "traditional" family. Women comprised a striking number of the religious right's foot soldiers. Catholic activist Phyllis Schlafly marshaled opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment, while evangelical pop singer Anita Bryant drew national headlines for her successful fight to repeal Miami's gay rights ordinance in 1977. In 1979, Beverly LaHaye (whose husband Tim—an evangelical pastor in San Diego—would later co-author the *Left Behind* novels) founded Concerned Women for America, which linked small groups of local activists opposed to the ERA abortion, homosexuality, and no-fault divorce.

Activists like Schlafly and LaHaye valorized motherhood as the highest calling of all women and abortion therefore struck at the core of female identity. More than perhaps any other issue, abortion drew different segments of the religious right—Catholics and Protestants, women and men—together. The Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling outraged many devout Catholics, including Long Island housewife and political novice Ellen McCormack. In 1976, McCormack entered the Democratic presidential primaries in an unsuccessful attempt to steer the party to a pro-life position. *Roe v. Wade* also intensified anti-abortion sentiment among evangelicals (who had been less universally opposed to the procedure than their Catholic counterparts). Christian author Francis Schaeffer cultivated evangelical opposition to abortion through the 1979 documentary film *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* arguing that the "fate of the unborn is the fate of the human race." With the procedure framed in stark, existential terms, many evangelicals felt compelled to combat the procedure through political action.

Whatever Happened to the Human Race?

Practices
once labelled
unthinkable

are now
considered
acceptable...

abortion...
infanticide...
euthanasia

**Francis A. Schaeffer
C. Everett Koop, MD**

*This book cover succinctly demonstrates the mindset of many conservatives in the Reagan era:
what happened to the human race? [University of Wales](#).*

Grassroots passion drove anti-abortion activism, but a set of religious and secular institutions turned the various strands of the New Right into a sophisticated movement.

In 1979 Jerry Falwell—a Baptist minister and religious broadcaster from Lynchburg, Virginia—founded the Moral Majority, an explicitly political organization dedicated to advancing a “pro-life, pro-family, pro-morality, and pro-American” agenda. Business-oriented institutions also joined the attack on liberalism, fueled by stagflation and by the federal government’s creation of new regulatory agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Conservative business leaders bankrolled new “think tanks” like the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute. These organizations provided grassroots activists with ready-made policy prescriptions. Other business leaders took a more direct approach by hiring Washington lobbyists and creating Political Action Committees (PACs) to press their agendas in the halls of Congress and federal agencies. Between 1976 and 1980 the number of corporate PACS rose from under 300 to over 1200.

Grassroots activists and business leaders received unlikely support from a circle of “neoconservatives”—disillusioned intellectuals who had rejected liberalism and become Republicans. Irving

Kristol, a former Marxist who championed free-market capitalism as a *Wall Street Journal* columnist, defined a neoconservative as a “liberal who has been mugged by reality.” Neoconservative journals like *Commentary* and *Public Interest* argued that the Great Society had proven counterproductive, perpetuating the poverty and racial segregation that it aimed to cure. By the middle of the 1970s, neoconservatives felt mugged by foreign affairs as well. As ardent Cold Warriors, they argued that Nixon’s policy of détente left the United States vulnerable to the Soviet Union.

In sum, several streams of conservative political mobilization converged in the late 1970s. Each wing of the burgeoning conservative movement—disaffected blue-collar workers, white Southerners, evangelicals and devout Catholics, business leaders, disillusioned intellectuals, and Cold War hawks—turned to the Republican Party as the most effective vehicle for their political counter-assault on liberalism and the New Deal political order. After years of mobilization, the domestic and foreign policy catastrophes of the Carter administration provided the head winds that brought the conservative movement to shore.

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THE CONSERVATISM OF CARTER YEARS

The election of Jimmy Carter in 1976 brought a Democrat to the White House for the first time since 1969. Large Democratic majorities in Congress provided the new president with an opportunity to move aggressively on the legislative front. With the infighting of the early 1970s behind them, many Democrats hoped the Carter administration would update and expand the New Deal. But Carter won the presidency on a wave of post-Watergate disillusionment with government that did not translate into support for liberal ideas. Events outside Carter’s control helped discredit liberalism, but the president’s own policies also pushed national politics further to the right. In his 1978 State of the Union address, Carter lectured Americans that “[g]overnment cannot solve our problems...it cannot eliminate poverty, or provide a bountiful economy, or reduce inflation, or save our cities, or cure illiteracy, or provide energy.” The statement neatly captured the ideological transformation of the country. Rather than leading a resurgence of American liberalism, Carter became, as one historian put it, “the first president to govern in a post-New Deal framework.”

In its early days the Carter administration embraced several policies backed by liberals. It pushed an economic stimulus package containing \$4 billion in public works, extended food stamp benefits to 2.5 million new recipients, enlarged the Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income households, and expanded the Nixon-era Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). But the White House quickly realized that Democratic control of Congress did not guarantee support for the administration’s left-leaning economic proposals. Many of the Democrats elected to Congress in the aftermath of Watergate were more moderate than their predecessors who had been catechized in the New Deal gospel. These conservative Democrats sometimes partnered with Congressional Republicans to oppose Carter, most notably in response to the administration’s proposal for a federal office of consumer protection.

At a deeper level, Carter’s own temperamental and philosophical conservatism hamstrung the administration. Early in his first term, Carter began to worry about the size of the federal deficit and killed a tax rebate he had proposed and Congressional Democrats had embraced. The president’s comprehensive national urban policy veered to the right by transferring many programs to state and local governments, relying on privatization, and endorsing voluntarism and self-help. Organized labor felt abandoned by Carter, who remained cool to several of their highest legislative priorities. The president offered tepid support for national health insurance proposal and declined to lobby aggressively for a package of modest labor law reforms. The business community rallied to defeat the latter measure, in what AFL-CIO chief George Meany described as “an attack by every anti-union group in America to kill the labor movement.” In 1977 and 1978 liberals Democrats rallied behind the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment and Training Act, which promised to achieve full employment through government planning. The bill aimed not only to guarantee a job to every American but also to re-unite the interracial, working-class Democratic coalition that had been fractured by deindustrialization and affirmative action. “We must create a climate of shared interests between the needs, the hopes, and the fears of the minorities, and the needs, the hopes, and the fears of the majority,” wrote Senator Hubert Humphrey, Lyndon Johnson’s vice president and the

bill's co-sponsor. Carter's lack of enthusiasm for the proposal allowed conservatives from both parties to water down the bill to a purely symbolic gesture. Liberals, like labor leaders, came to regard the president as an unreliable ally.

Carter also came under fire from Republicans, especially the religious right. His administration incurred the wrath of evangelicals in 1978 when the Internal Revenue Service established new rules revoking the tax-exempt status of racially segregated, private Christian schools. The rules only strengthened a policy instituted by the Nixon administration; however, the religious right accused Carter of singling out Christian institutions. Republican activist Richard Viguerie described the IRS controversy as the "spark that ignited the religious right's involvement in real politics." Race sat just below the surface of the IRS fight. After all, many of the schools had been founded to circumvent court-ordered desegregation. But the IRS ruling allowed the New Right to rain down fire on big government interference while downplaying the practice of racial exclusion at the heart of the case.

While the IRS controversy flared, economic crises multiplied. Unemployment, which had fallen in Carter's first years in office, rose above 7% by 1980. The rate of inflation averaged 11.3% in 1979, sending prices upward. In another bad omen, the iconic Chrysler Corporation appeared close to bankruptcy. The administration responded to these challenges in fundamentally conservative ways. First, Carter proposed a tax cut for the upper-middle class, which Congress passed in 1978. Second, the White House embraced a long-time goal of the conservative movement by deregulating the airline and trucking industries in 1978 and 1980, respectively. Third, Carter proposed balancing the federal budget—much to the dismay of liberals, who would have preferred that he use deficit spending to finance a *new* New Deal. Finally, to halt inflation, Carter turned to Paul Volcker, his appointee as Chair of the Federal Reserve. Volcker raised interest rates and tightened the money supply—policies designed to reduce inflation in the long run but which increased unemployment in the short run. Liberalism was on the run.

The "energy crisis" in particular brought out the Southern Baptist moralist in Carter. On July 15, 1979, the president delivered a nationally televised speech on energy policy in which he attributed the country's economic woes to a "crisis of confidence." Carter lamented that "too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption." The president's push to reduce energy consumption was reasonable, and the country's initial response to the speech was favorable. Yet Carter's emphasis on discipline and sacrifice, his spiritual diagnosis for economic hardship, sidestepped deeper questions of large-scale economic change and downplayed the harsh toll of inflation on regular Americans.

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THE ELECTION OF 1980

These domestic challenges, combined with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the hostage crisis in Iran, hobbled Carter heading into his 1980 reelection campaign. Many Democrats were dismayed by his policies. The president of the International Association of Machinists dismissed Carter as "the best Republican President since Herbert Hoover." Angered by the White House's refusal to back national health insurance, Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy challenged Carter in the Democratic primaries. Running as the party's liberal standard-bearer and heir to the legacy of his slain older brothers, Kennedy garnered support from key labor unions and leftwing Democrats. He won the Michigan and Pennsylvania primaries—states where Democrats had embraced George Wallace eight years earlier. Carter ultimately vanquished Kennedy, but the close primary tally betrayed the president's vulnerability.

Carter's opponent in the general election was Ronald Reagan, who ran as a staunch fiscal conservative and a Cold War hawk. He vowed to reduce government spending and shrink the federal bureaucracy while eliminating the departments of Energy and Education that Carter created. As in his 1976 primary challenge to Gerald Ford, Reagan accused his opponent of failing to confront the Soviet Union. The GOP candidate vowed steep increases in defense spending and hammered Carter for canceling the B-1 bomber and signing the Panama Canal and Salt II treaties. Carter responded by labeling Reagan a warmonger, but events in Afghanistan and Iran discredited Carter's foreign policy in the eyes of many Americans.

The incumbent fared no better on domestic affairs. Unemployment reached 7.8% in May 1980, while the Fed's anti-inflation measures pushed interest rates to an unheard-of 18.5%. On the campaign trail Reagan brought down the house by proclaiming: "A recession is when your neighbor loses his job, and a depression is when you lose your job." Reagan would pause before concluding, "And a recovery is when Jimmy Carter loses his job." Carter reminded voters that his opponent opposed the creation of Medicare in 1965 and warned that Reagan would slash popular programs if elected. But the anemic economy prevented Carter's blows from landing.

Social and cultural issues presented yet another challenge for the president. Despite Carter's background as a "born-again" Christian and Sunday School teacher, he struggled to court the religious right. Carter scandalized devout Christians by admitting to lustful thoughts during an interview with *Playboy* magazine in 1976, telling the reporter, "I've committed adultery in my heart many times." Although Reagan was only a nominal Christian and rarely attended church, the religious right embraced him. Reverend Jerry Falwell directed the full weight of the Moral Majority behind Reagan. The organization registered an estimated 2 million new voters in 1980. Ellen McCormack, the New York Catholic who ran for president as a Democrat on an anti-abortion platform in 1976, moved over to the GOP in 1980. Reagan also cultivated the religious right by denouncing abortion and endorsing prayer in school. The IRS tax exemption issue resurfaced as well, with the 1980 Republican platform vowing to "halt the unconstitutional regulatory vendetta launched by Mr. Carter's IRS commissioner against independent schools." Early in the primary season, Reagan condemned the policy during a speech at South Carolina's Bob Jones University, which had recently sued the IRS after losing its tax-exempt status because of the fundamentalist institution's ban on interracial dating.

Reagan's campaign appealed subtly but unmistakably to the racial hostilities of white voters. The candidate held his first post-nominating convention rally at the Neshoba County Fair near Philadelphia, Mississippi, the town where three civil rights workers had been murdered in 1964. In his speech, Reagan championed the doctrine of states rights, which had been the rallying cry of segregationists in the 1950s and 1960s. In criticizing the welfare state, Reagan had long employed thinly veiled racial stereotypes about a "welfare queen" in Chicago who drove a Cadillac while defrauding the government or a "strapping young buck" purchasing T-bone steaks with food stamps. Like George Wallace before him, Reagan exploited the racial and cultural resentments of struggling white working-class voters. And like Wallace, he attracted blue-collar workers in droves.

With the wind at his back on almost every issue, Reagan only needed to blunt Carter's characterization of him as an angry extremist. Reagan did so during their only debate by appearing calm and amiable. "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" he asked the American people at the conclusion of the debate. The answer was no. Reagan won the election with 51% of the popular vote to Carter's 41%. (Independent John Anderson captured 7%.) Despite capturing only a slim majority, Reagan scored a decisive 489-49 victory in the Electoral College. Republicans gained control of the Senate for the first time since 1955 by winning 12 seats. Liberal Democrats George McGovern, Frank Church, and Birch Bayh went down in defeat, as did liberal Republican Jacob Javits. The GOP picked up 33 House seats, narrowing the Democratic advantage in the lower chamber. The New Right had arrived in Washington, DC.



Jerry Falwell, the wildly popular TV evangelist, founded the Moral Majority political organization in the late 1970s. Decrying the demise of the nation's morality, the organization gained a massive following, helping to cement the status of the New Christian Right in American politics. Photograph, date unknown. [Wikimedia](#).

THE NEW RIGHT IN POWER



Harkening back to Jeffersonian politics of limited government, a viewpoint that would only increase in popularity over the next three decades, Ronald Reagan launched his campaign by saying bluntly, "I believe in states' rights." Reagan secured the presidency through appealing to the growing conservatism of much of the country. Ronald Reagan and wife Nancy Reagan waving from the limousine during the Inaugural Parade in Washington, D.C. on Inauguration Day, 1981. [Wikimedia](#).

In his first inaugural address Reagan proclaimed that "government is not the solution to the problem, government is the problem." In reality, Reagan focused less on eliminating government than on redirecting government to serve new ends. In line with that goal, his administration embraced "supply-side" economic theories that had recently gained popularity among the New Right. While the postwar gospel of Keynesian economics had focused on stimulating consumer demand, supply-side economics held that lower personal and corporate tax rates would encourage greater private investment and production. The resulting wealth would "trickle down" to lower-income groups through job creation and higher wages. Conservative economist Arthur Laffer predicted that lower tax rates would generate so much economic activity that federal tax revenues would actually increase. The

administration touted the so-called “Laffer Curve” as justification for the tax cut plan that served as the cornerstone of Reagan’s first year in office. Keynesian logic viewed tax cuts as inflationary, stifling the economy. But Republican Congressman Jack Kemp, an early supply-side advocate and co-sponsor of Reagan’s tax bill, promised that it would unleash the “creative genius that has always invigorated America.”



The Iranian hostage crisis ended literally during President Reagan's inauguration speech. By a coincide of timing, then, the Reagan administration received credit for ending the conflict. This group photograph shows the former hostages in the hospital before being released back to the U.S. Johnson Babela, Photograph, 1981. [Wikimedia](#).

The tax cut faced early skepticism from Democrats and even some Republicans. Vice president George H.W. Bush had belittled supply-side theory as “voodoo economics” during the 1980 Republican primaries. But a combination of skill and serendipity pushed the bill over the top. Reagan aggressively and effectively lobbied individual members of Congress for support on the measure. Then on March 30, 1981, Reagan survived an assassination attempt by John Hinckley. Public support swelled for the hospitalized president. Congress ultimately approved a \$675-billion tax cut in July 1981 with significant Democratic support. The bill reduced overall federal taxes by more than one quarter and lowered the top marginal rate from 70% to 50%, with the bottom rate dropping from 14% to 11%. It also slashed the rate on capital gains from 28% to 20%. The next month, Reagan scored another political triumph in response to a strike called by the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO). During the 1980 campaign, Reagan had wooed organized labor, describing himself as “an old union man” (he had led the Screen Actor’s Guild from 1947 to 1952) who still held Franklin Roosevelt in high regard. PATCO had been one of the few labor unions to endorse Reagan. Nevertheless, the president ordered the union’s striking air traffic controllers back to work and fired more than 11,000 who refused. Reagan’s actions crippled PATCO and left the American labor movement reeling. For the rest of the 1980s the economic terrain of the United States—already unfavorable to union organizing—shifted decisively in favor of employers. The unionized portion of the private-sector workforce fell from 20% in 1980 to 12% in 1990. Reagan’s defeat of PATCO and his tax bill enhanced the economic power of corporations and high-income households; the conflicts confirmed that a conservative age had dawned in American politics.

The new administration appeared to be flying high in the fall of 1981, but other developments challenged the rosy economic forecasts emanating from the White House. As Reagan ratcheted up tension with the Soviet Union,

Congress approved his request for \$1.2 trillion in new military spending. Contrary to the assurances of David Stockman—the young supply-side disciple who headed the Office of Management and Budget—the combination of lower taxes and higher defense budgets caused the national debt to balloon. (By the end of Reagan's first term it equaled 53% of GDP, as opposed to 33% in 1981.) Meanwhile, Federal Reserve Chairman Paul Volcker continued his policy from the Carter years of combating inflation by maintaining high interest rates—they surpassed 20% in June 1981. The Fed's action increased the cost of borrowing money and stifled economic activity.

As a result, the United States experienced a severe economic recession in 1981 and 1982. Unemployment rose to nearly 11%, the highest figure since the Great Depression. Reductions in social welfare spending heightened the impact of the recession on ordinary people. Congress had followed Reagan's lead by reducing funding for food stamps and Aid to Families with Dependent Children, eliminated the CETA program and its 300,000 jobs, and removed a half-million people from the Supplemental Social Security program for the physically disabled. The cuts exacted an especially harsh toll on low-income communities of color. The head of the NAACP declared the administration's budget cuts had rekindled "war, pestilence, famine, and death." Reagan also received bipartisan rebuke in 1981 after proposing cuts to Social Security benefits for early retirees. The Senate voted unanimously to condemn the plan, and Democrats framed it as a heartless attack on the elderly. Confronted with recession and harsh public criticism, a chastened White House worked with Democratic House Speaker Tip O'Neil in 1982 on a bill that restored \$98 billion of the previous year's tax cuts. Despite compromising with the administration on taxes, Democrats railed against the so-called "Reagan Recession," arguing that the president's economic policies favored the most fortunate Americans. This appeal, which Democrats termed the "fairness issue," helped them win 26 House seats in the autumn Congressional races. The New Right appeared to be in trouble.

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MORNING IN AMERICA

Reagan nimbly adjusted to the political setbacks of 1982. Following the rejection of his Social Security proposals, Reagan appointed a bipartisan panel to consider changes to the program. In early 1983, the commission recommended a one-time delay in cost-of-living increases, a new requirement that government employees pay into the system, and a gradual increase in the retirement age from 65 to 67. The commission also proposed raising state and federal payroll taxes, with the new revenue poured into a trust fund that would transform Social Security from a pay-as-you-go system to one with significant reserves. Congress quickly passed the recommendations into law, allowing Reagan to take credit for strengthening a program cherished by most Americans. The president also benefited from an economic rebound. Real disposable income rose 2.5% in 1983 and 5.8% the following year. Unemployment dropped to 7.5% in 1984. Meanwhile, the "harsh medicine" of high interest rates helped lower inflation to 3.5%.

While campaigning for reelection in 1984, Reagan pointed to the improving economy as evidence that it was "morning again in America." His personal popularity soared. Most conservatives ignored the debt increase and tax hikes of the previous two years. Reagan's Democratic opponent in 1984 was Walter Mondale, Jimmy Carter's vice president and a staunch ally of organized labor. In the Democratic primaries Mondale had faced civil rights activist Jesse Jackson and Colorado Senator Gary Hart, who rose to prominence in 1972 as George McGovern's campaign manager and took office two years later as one of the "Watergate babies." Jackson offered a thoroughly progressive program but won only two states. Hart's platform—economically moderate but socially liberal—inverted the political formula of Mondale's New Deal liberalism. Throughout the primaries, Hart contrasted his "new ideas" with Mondale's "old-fashioned" labor-liberalism. Mondale eventually secured his party's nomination but suffered a crushing defeat in the general election. Reagan captured 49 of 50 states, winning 58.8% of the popular vote.

Mondale's loss demoralized Democrats. The future of their party belonged to post-New Deal liberals like Hart and to the constituency that supported him in the primaries: upwardly mobile professionals and suburbanites. In February 1985, a group of moderates and centrists formed the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) as a vehicle for distancing the party from organizing labor and cultivating the business community. Jesse Jackson dismissed the DLC as "Democrats for the Leisure Class," but the organization included many of the party's future leaders,

including Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton. The formation of the DLC illustrated the degree to which the New Right had transformed American politics.

Reagan entered his second term with a much stronger mandate than in 1981, but the GOP makeover of Washington, DC stalled, especially after Democrats regained control of the Senate in 1986. Democratic opposition prevented Reagan from eliminating means-tested social welfare programs; however, Congress failed to increase benefit levels for welfare programs or raise the minimum wage, decreasing the real value of those benefits. Democrats and Republicans occasionally fashioned legislative compromises, as with the Tax Reform Act of 1986. The bill lowered the top corporate tax rate from 46% to 34% and reduced the highest marginal rate from 50% to 28%, while also simplifying the tax code and eliminating numerous loopholes. Both parties—as well as the White House—claimed credit for the bargain, but it made virtually no net change to federal revenues. In 1986, Reagan also signed into law the Immigration Reform and Control Act. American policymakers hoped to do two things: deal with the millions of undocumented immigrants already in the United States while simultaneously choking off future unsanctioned migration. The former goal was achieved (nearly three million undocumented workers were granted legal status) but the latter proved elusive.

One of Reagan's most far-reaching victories occurred through judicial appointments. He named 368 district and federal appeals court judges during his two terms. Observers noted that almost all of the appointees were white men. (Seven were African American, fifteen were Latino, and two were Asian American.) Reagan also appointed three Supreme Court justices: Sandra Day O'Connor, who to the dismay of the religious right turned out to be a moderate; Anthony Kennedy, a solidly conservative Catholic who occasionally sided with the court's liberal wing; and arch-conservative Antonin Scalia. The New Right's transformation of the judiciary had limits. In 1987, Reagan nominated Robert Bork to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court. Bork, a federal judge and former Yale University law professor, was a staunch conservative. He had opposed the 1964 Civil Rights Act, affirmative action, and the *Roe v. Wade* decision. After acrimonious confirmation hearings, the Senate rejected Bork's nomination by a vote of 58-42. African Americans read the nomination as another signal of the conservative movement's hostility to their social, economic, and political aspirations.

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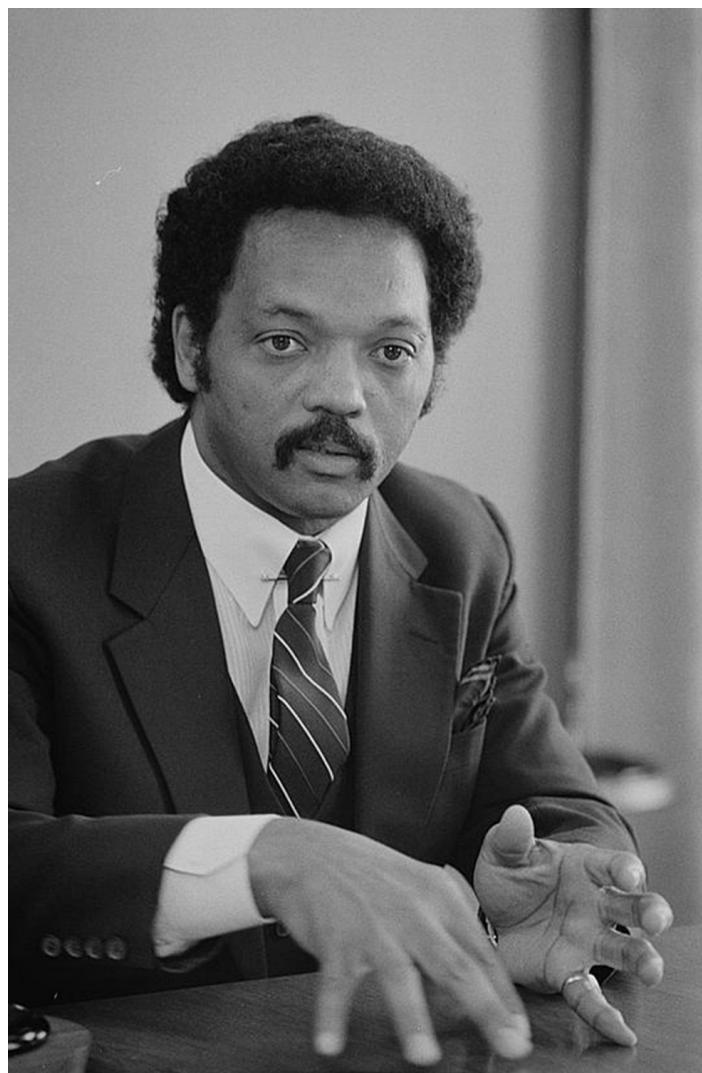
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AFRICAN AMERICAN LIFE IN REAGAN'S AMERICA

Ronald Reagan's America presented African Americans with a series of contradictions. Blacks achieved significant advances in politics, culture, and socio-economic status. African Americans continued a trend from the late 1960s and 1970s by gaining control of municipal governments during the 1980s. In 1983, voters in Philadelphia and Chicago elected Wilson Goode and Harold Washington, respectively, as their cities' first black mayors. At the national level, civil rights leader Jesse Jackson became the first African American man to run for president when he campaigned for the Democratic Party's nomination in 1984 and 1988. Propelled by chants of "Run, Jesse, Run," Jackson achieved notable success in 1988, winning nine state primaries and finishing second with 29% of the vote.

The excitement created by Jackson's campaign mirrored the acclaim received by a few prominent African Americans in media and entertainment. Comedian Eddie Murphy rose to stardom on television's *Saturday Night Live*, and achieved box office success with movies like *48 Hours* and *Beverly Hills Cop*. In 1982 pop singer Michael Jackson released *Thriller*, the best-selling album of all time. Oprah Winfrey began her phenomenally successful nationally syndicated talk show in 1985. Comedian Bill Cosby's sitcom about an African American doctor and lawyer raising their four children drew the highest ratings on television for most of the decade. The popularity of *The Cosby Show* revealed how class informed perceptions of race in the 1980s. Cosby's fictional TV family represented the growing number of black middle-class professionals in the United States. Indeed, income for the top fifth of African American households increased faster than that of white households for most of the decade. Middle-class African Americans found new doors open to them in the 1980s, but poor and working-class blacks faced continued challenges. During Reagan's last year in office the African American poverty rate stood at 31.6%, as opposed to 10.1% for whites. Black unemployment remained double that of whites throughout the decade. By 1990, the median income for black families was \$21,423, 42% below white households. The Reagan administration did little to address such disparities and in many ways intensified them. Furthermore, the New Right threatened the legal principles and federal policies of the rights revolution and the Great Society. Reagan appointed conservative opponents of affirmative action to lead the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (future Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas) and the Civil Rights Commission while sharply reduced their funding and staffing levels. Federal spending cuts disproportionately affected AFDC, Medicaid, food stamps, school lunch, and job training programs that provided crucial support to African American households. In 1982 the National Urban League's annual "State of Black America" report concluded that "[n]ever [since the first report in 1976]...has the state of Black America been more vulnerable. Never in that time have black economic rights been under such powerful attack." The stigma of violent crime also hung over African American communities during the Reagan years. Homicide was the leading cause of death for black males between 15 and 24, occurring at a rate six times higher than for other Americans. Nonetheless, sensationalistic media reports encouraged widespread anxiety about black-on-white crime in big cities. Ironically, such fear could by itself spark violence. In December 1984 a thirty-seven-year-old white engineer, Bernard Goetz, shot and seriously wounded four black teenagers on a New York City subway car. The so-called "Subway Vigilante" suspected the young men—armed with screwdrivers—planned to rob him. Pollsters found that 90% of white New Yorkers sympathized with Goetz. Race relations often seemed more polarized than ever during the 1980s. The attempts by the Reagan administration to roll back affirmative action and shrink welfare programs did not always succeed. By the end of the decade, "diversity" programs were firmly entrenched in private sector employment. Nonetheless, Reagan's policies and rhetoric had altered the course of racial politics in the United States. Full economic and social equality remained elusive for African Americans in the 1980s.



Jesse Jackson was only the second African American to mount a national campaign for the presidency. His work as a civil rights activist and Baptist minister garnered him a significant following in the African American community, but never enough to secure the Democratic nomination. His Warren K. Leffler, "IVU w/ [i.e., interview with] Rev. Jesse Jackson," July 1, 1983. [Library of Congress](#).

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BAD TIMES AND GOOD TIMES

Working- and middle-class Americans, especially those of color, struggled to maintain economic equilibrium during the Reagan years. The growing national debt generated fresh economic pain. The federal government borrowed money to finance the debt, raising interest rates to heighten the appeal of government bonds. Foreign money poured into the United States, raising the value of the dollar and attracting an influx of goods from overseas. The imbalance between American imports and exports grew from \$36 billion in 1980 to \$170 billion in 1987. Foreign competition battered the already anemic manufacturing sector. The appeal of government bonds likewise drew investment away from American industry.

Continuing a recent trend, many steel and automobile factories in the industrial Northeast and Midwest closed or moved overseas during the 1980s. Bruce Springsteen, the bard of blue-collar America, offered eulogies to Rust Belt cities in songs like “Youngstown” and “My Hometown,” in which the narrator laments that his “foreman says these jobs are going boys/and they ain’t coming back.” Meanwhile, a “farm crisis” gripped the rural United States. Expanded world production meant new competition for American farmers, while soaring interest rates caused the already sizable debt held by family farms to mushroom. Farm foreclosures skyrocketed during Reagan’s tenure. In September 1985 prominent musicians including Neil Young and Willie Nelson organized “Live Aid,” a benefit concert at the University of Illinois’s football stadium designed to raise money for struggling farmers.

At the other end of the economic spectrum, wealthy Americans thrived thanks to the policies of the New Right. The financial industry found new ways to earn staggering profits during the Reagan years. Wall Street brokers like “junk bond king” Michael Milken reaped fortunes selling high-risk, high-yield securities. Reckless speculation helped drive the stock market steadily upward until the crash of October 19, 1987. On “Black Friday,” the market plunged 800 points, erasing 13% of its value. Investors lost more than \$500 billion. An additional financial crisis loomed in the savings and loan industry, and Reagan’s deregulatory policies bore significant responsibility. In 1982 Reagan signed a bill increasing the amount of federal insurance available to savings and loan depositors, making those financial institutions more popular with consumers. The bill also allowed “S & L’s” to engage in high-risk loans and investments for the first time. Many such deals failed catastrophically, while some S & L managers brazenly stole from their institutions. In the late 1980s, S & L’s failed with regularity, and ordinary Americans lost precious savings. The 1982 law left the government responsible for bailing out S&L’s out at an eventual cost of \$132 billion.

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CULTURE WARS OF THE 1980S

Popular culture of the 1980s offered another venue in which conservatives and liberals waged a battle of ideas. Reagan’s militarism and patriotism pervaded movies like *Top Gun* and the *Rambo* series, starring Sylvester Stallone as a Vietnam War veteran haunted by his country’s failure to pursue victory in Southeast Asia. In contrast, director Oliver Stone offered searing condemnations of the war in *Platoon* and *Born on the Fourth of July*. Television shows like *Dynasty* and *Dallas* celebrated wealth and glamour, reflecting the pride in conspicuous consumption that emanated from the White House and corporate boardrooms during the decade. At the same time, films like *Wall Street* and novels like Tom Wolfe’s *Bonfire of the Vanities* satirized the excesses of the rich. Yet the most significant aspect of 1980s’ popular culture was its lack of politics altogether. Rather, Steven

Spielberg's *E.T: The Extra-Terrestrial* and his Indiana Jones adventure trilogy topped the box office. Cinematic escapism replaced the serious social examinations of 1970s' film. Quintessential Hollywood leftist Jane Fonda appeared frequently on television but only to peddle exercise videos.

New forms of media changed the ways in which people experienced popular culture. In many cases, this new media contributed to the privatization of life, as people shifted focus from public spaces to their own homes. Movie theaters faced competition from the video cassette recorder (VCR), which allowed people to watch films (or exercise with Jane Fonda) in the privacy of their living room. Arcades gave way to home video game systems. Personal computers proliferated, a trend spearheaded by the Apple Company and its Apple II computer. Television viewership—once dominated by the “big three” networks of NBC, ABC, and CBS—fragmented with the rise of cable channels that catered to particular tastes. Few cable channels so captured the popular imagination as MTV, which debuted in 1981. Telegenic artists like Madonna, Prince, and Michael Jackson skillfully used MTV to boost their reputations and album sales. Conservatives condemned music videos for corrupting young people with vulgar, anti-authoritarian messages, but the medium only grew in stature. Critics of MTV targeted Madonna in particular. Her 1989 video “Like a Prayer” drew protests for what some people viewed as sexually suggestive and blasphemous scenes. The religious right increasingly perceived popular culture as hostile to Christian values.



The Apple II computer, introduced in 1977, was the first successful mass-produced microcomputer meant for home use. Rather chunky-looking to our twenty-first-century eyes, this 1984 version of the Apple II was the smallest and sleekest model yet introduced. Indeed, it revolutionized both the substance and design of personal computers. Photograph of the Apple ii cb. [Wikimedia](#).

Cultural battles were even more heated in the realm of gender and sexual politics. Abortion became an increasingly divisive issue in the 1980s. Pro-life Democrats and pro-choice Republicans grew rare, as the National Abortion Rights Action League enforced pro-choice orthodoxy on the left and the National Right to Life Commission did the same with pro-life orthodoxy on the right. Religious conservatives took advantage of the

Republican takeover of the White House and Senate in 1980 to push for new restrictions on abortion—with limited success. Senators Jesse Helms of North Carolina and Orrin Hatch of Utah introduced versions of a “Human Life Amendment” to the U.S. Constitution that defined life as beginning at conception; their efforts failed, though in 1982 Hatch’s amendment came within 18 votes of passage in the Senate. Reagan, more interested in economic issues than social ones, provided only lukewarm support for these efforts. He further outraged anti-abortion activists by appointing Sandra Day O’Connor, a supporter of abortion rights, to the Supreme Court. Despite these setbacks, anti-abortion forces succeeded in defunding some abortion providers. The 1976 Hyde Amendment prohibited the use of federal funds to pay for abortions; by 1990 almost every state had its own version of the Hyde Amendment. Yet some anti-abortion activists demanded more. In 1988 evangelical activist Randall Terry founded Operation Rescue, an organization that targeted abortion clinics and pro-choice politicians with confrontational—and sometimes violent—tactics. Operation Rescue demonstrated that the fight over abortion would grow only more heated in the 1990s.

The emergence of a deadly new illness, Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), simultaneously devastated, stigmatized, and energized the nation’s homosexual community. When AIDS appeared in the early 1980s, most of its victims were gay men. For a time the disease was known as GRID—Gay-Related Immunodeficiency Disorder. The epidemic rekindled older pseudo-scientific ideas about inherently diseased nature of homosexual bodies.

The Reagan administration met the issue with indifference, leading Congressman Henry Waxman to rage that “if the same disease had appeared among Americans of Norwegian descent...rather than among gay males, the response of both the government and the medical community would be different.” Some religious figures seemed to relish the opportunity to condemn homosexual activity; Catholic columnist Patrick Buchanan remarked that “the sexual revolution has begun to devour its children.” Homosexuals were left to forge their own response to the crisis. Some turned to confrontation—like New York playwright Larry Kramer. Kramer founded the Gay Men’s Health Crisis, which demanded a more proactive response to the epidemic. Others sought to humanize AIDS victims; this was the goal of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, a commemorative project begun in 1985. By the middle of the decade the federal government began to address the issue haltingly. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, an evangelical Christian, called for more federal funding on AIDS-related research, much to the dismay of critics on the religious right. By 1987 government spending on AIDS-related research reached \$500 million—still only 25% of what experts advocated. In 1987 Reagan convened a presidential commission on AIDS; the commission’s report called for anti-discrimination laws to protect AIDS victims and for more federal spending on AIDS research. The shift encouraged activists. Nevertheless, on issues of abortion and gay rights—as with the push for racial equality—activists spent the 1980s preserving the status quo rather than building on previous gains. This amounted to a significant victory for the New Right.



The AIDS epidemic hit the gay and African American communities particularly hard in the 1980s, prompting awareness campaigns by celebrities like Patti LaBelle. Poster, c. 1980s. [Wikimedia](#).

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THE NEW RIGHT ABROAD

If the conservative movement recovered lost ground on the field on gender and sexual politics, it captured the battlefield on American foreign policy in the 1980s—for a time, at least. Ronald Reagan entered office a committed Cold Warrior. He held the Soviet Union in contempt, denouncing it in a 1983 speech as an “evil empire.” And he never doubted that the Soviet Union would end up “on the ash heap of history,” as he said in a 1982 speech to the British Parliament. Indeed, Reagan believed it was the duty of the United States to speed the Soviet Union to its inevitable demise. His “Reagan Doctrine” declared that the United States would supply aid to anti-communist forces everywhere in the world. To give this doctrine force, Reagan oversaw an enormous expansion in the defense budget. Federal spending on defense rose from \$171 billion in 1981 to \$229 billion in 1985, the highest level since the Vietnam War. He described this as a policy of “peace through strength,” a phrase that appealed to Americans who, during the 1970s, feared that the United States was losing its status as the world’s most powerful nation. Yet the irony is that Reagan, for all his militarism, helped bring the Cold War to an end. He achieved it not through nuclear weapons but through negotiation, a tactic he had once scorned.

Reagan’s election came at a time when many Americans feared their country was in an irreversible decline. American forces withdrew in disarray from South Vietnam in 1975. The United States returned control of the Panama Canal to Panama in 1978, despite protests from conservatives. Pro-American dictators were toppled in Iran and Nicaragua in 1979. The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan that same year, leading conservatives to warn about American weakness in the face of Soviet expansion. Such warnings were commonplace in the 1970s. “Team B,” a group of intellectuals commissioned by the CIA to examine Soviet capabilities, released a report in 1976 stating that “all evidence points to an undeviating Soviet commitment to...global Soviet hegemony.” The Committee on the Present Danger, an organization of conservative foreign policy experts, issued similar statements. When Reagan warned, as he did in 1976, that “this nation has become Number Two in a world where it is dangerous—if not fatal—to be second best,” he was speaking to these fears of decline.



Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, leaders of two of the world's most powerful countries, formed an alliance that benefited both throughout their tenures in office. Photograph of Margaret Thatcher with Ronald Reagan at Camp David, December 22, 1984. [Wikimedia](#).

The Reagan administration made Latin America a showcase for its newly assertive policies. Jimmy Carter had sought to promote human rights in the region, but Reagan and his advisers scrapped this approach and instead focused on fighting communism—a term they applied to all Latin American left-wing movements. Reagan justified American intervention by pointing out Latin America’s proximity to the United States: “San Salvador [in El Salvador] is closer to Houston, Texas, than Houston is to Washington, DC,” he said in one speech, adding, “Central America *is* America.” And so when communists with ties to Cuba overthrew the government of the Caribbean nation of Grenada in October 1983, Reagan dispatched the United States Marines to the island. Dubbed “Operation Urgent Fury,” the Grenada invasion overthrew the leftist government after less than a week of fighting. Despite the relatively minor nature of the mission, its success gave victory-hungry Americans something to cheer about after the military debacles of the previous two decades.



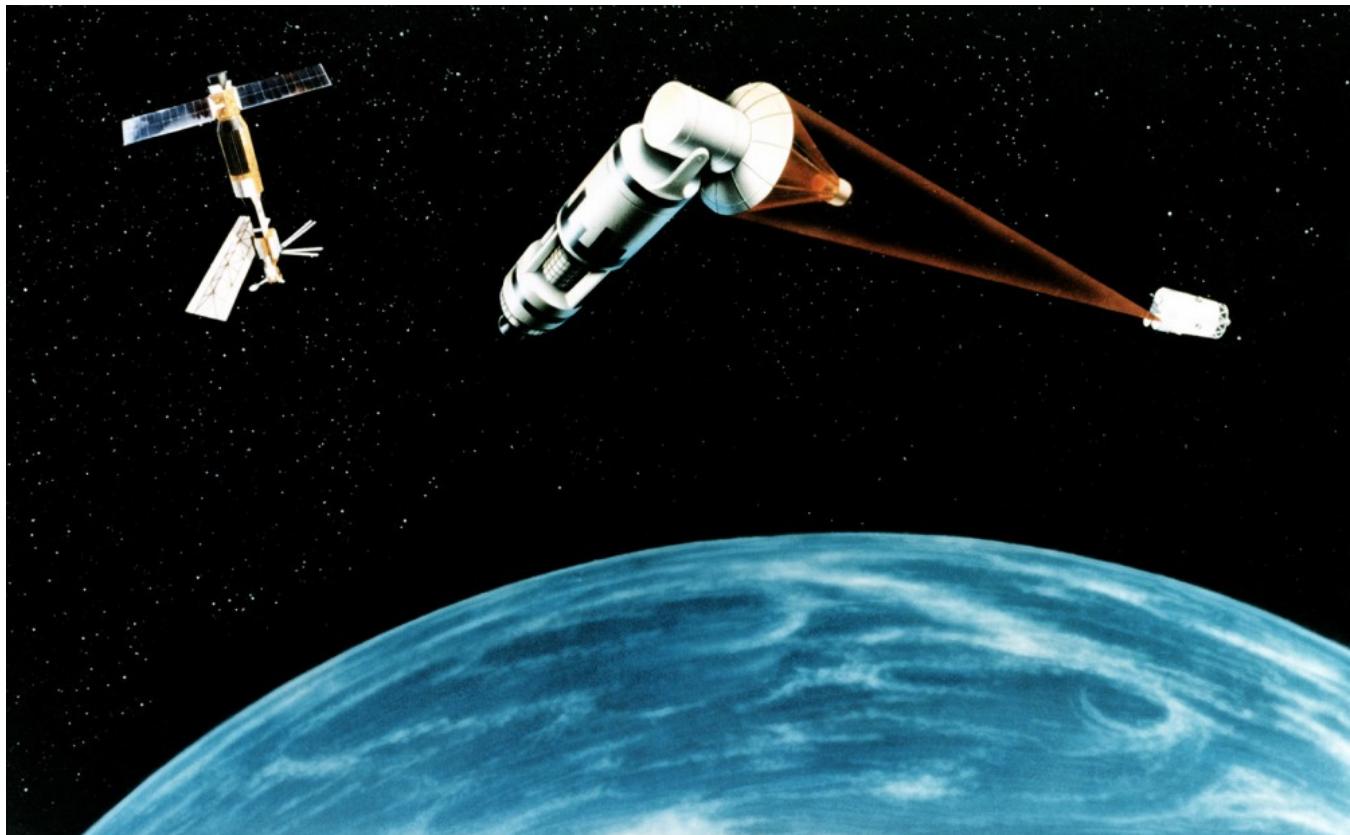
Operation Urgent Fury, which the U.S. invasion of Grenada came to be called, was broadly supported by the U.S. public, even though it was violation of international law. This support was in large part due to incorrect intelligence disseminated by the U.S. government. This photograph shows the deployment of U.S. Army Rangers into Grenada. Photograph, October 25, 1983.

Wikimedia.

Grenada was the only time Reagan deployed the American military in Latin America, but the United States also influenced the region by supporting right-wing, anti-communist movements there. From 1981 to 1990, the United States gave more than \$4 billion to the government of El Salvador in a largely futile effort to defeat the guerillas of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). Salvadoran security forces equipped with American weapons committed numerous atrocities, including the slaughter of almost 1,000 civilians at the village of El Mozote in December 1981. The United States also supported the contras, a right-wing insurgency fighting the leftist Sandinista government in Nicaragua. Reagan, overlooking the contras' brutal tactics, hailed them as the "moral equivalent of the Founding Fathers."

The Reagan administration took a more cautious approach in the Middle East, where its policy was determined by a mix of anti-communism and hostility to the Islamic government of Iran. When Iraq invaded Iran in 1980, the United States supplied Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein with military intelligence and business credits—even after it became clear that Iraqi forces were using chemical weapons. Reagan's greatest setback in the Middle East came in 1982, when, shortly after Israel invaded Lebanon, he dispatched Marines to the Lebanese city of Beirut to serve as a peacekeeping force. On October 23, 1983, a suicide bomber killed 241 Marines stationed in Beirut. Congressional pressure and anger from the American public forced Reagan to recall the Marines from Lebanon in March 1984. Reagan's decision demonstrated that, for all his talk of restoring American power, he took a pragmatic approach to foreign policy. He was unwilling to risk another Vietnam by committing American troops to Lebanon.

Though Reagan's policies toward Central America and the Middle East aroused protest, it was his policy on nuclear weapons that generated the most controversy. Initially Reagan followed the examples of presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter by pursuing arms limitation talks with the Soviet Union. American officials participated in the Intermediate-range Nuclear Force Talks (INF) that began in 1981 and Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) in 1982. But the breakdown of these talks in 1983 led Reagan to proceed with plans to place Pershing II nuclear missiles in Western Europe to counter Soviet SS-20 missiles in Eastern Europe. Reagan went a step further in March 1983, when he announced plans for a "Strategic Defense Initiative," a space-based system that could shoot down incoming Soviet missiles. Critics derided the program as a "Star Wars" fantasy, and even Reagan's advisors harbored doubts. "We don't have the technology to say this," Secretary of State George Shultz told aides. These aggressive policies fed a growing "nuclear freeze" movement throughout the world. In the United States, organizations like the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy organized protests that culminated in a June 1982 rally that drew almost a million people to New York City's Central Park.



President Reagan proposed space- and ground-based systems to protect the United States from nuclear missiles in his 1984 Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). Scientists argued it was unrealistic or impossible with contemporary technology, and it was lambasted in the media as "Star Wars." Indeed, as this artist's representation of SDI shows, it was rather ridiculous. Created October 18, 1984. [Wikimedia](#).

Protests in the streets were echoed by opposition in Congress. Congressional Democrats opposed Reagan's policies on the merits; congressional Republicans, though they supported Reagan's anti-communism, were wary of the administration's fondness for circumventing Congress. In 1982 the House voted 411-0 to approve the Boland Amendment, which barred the United States from supplying funds to overthrow Nicaragua's Sandinista government. A second Boland Amendment in 1984 prohibited any funding for the anti-Sandinista contra movement. The Reagan administration's determination to flout these amendments led to a scandal that almost destroyed Reagan's presidency. Robert MacFarlane, the president's National Security Advisor, and Oliver North, a member of the National Security Council, raised money to support the contras by selling American missiles to Iran and funneling the money to Nicaragua. When their scheme was revealed in 1986, it was hugely embarrassing for Reagan. The president's underlings had not only violated the Boland Amendments but had also, by selling arms to Iran, made a mockery of Reagan's declaration that "America will never make concessions to the terrorists." But while the Iran-Contra affair generated comparisons to the Watergate scandal, investigators were never able to prove Reagan knew about the operation. Without such a "smoking gun," talk of impeaching Reagan remained talk.

Though the Iran-Contra scandal tarnished the Reagan administration's image, it did not derail Reagan's most significant achievement: easing tensions with the Soviet Union. This would have seemed impossible in Reagan's first term, when the president exchanged harsh words with a succession of Soviet leaders—Leonid Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov, and Konstantin Chernenko. In 1985, however, Chernenko's death handed leadership of the Soviet Union to Mikhail Gorbachev. Gorbachev, a true believer in socialism, nonetheless realized that the Soviet Union desperately needed reform. He instituted a program of *perestroika*, which referred to the restructuring of the Soviet system, and of *glasnost*, which meant greater transparency in government. Gorbachev also reached out to Reagan in hopes of negotiating an end to the arms race that was bankrupting the Soviet Union. Reagan and Gorbachev met in Geneva, Switzerland in 1985 and Reykjavik, Iceland in 1986, where, although they could not agree on anything concrete—thanks to Reagan's refusal to limit the Strategic Defense Initiative—they developed a rapprochement unprecedented in the history of US-Soviet relations. This trust made possible the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty of 1987, which committed both sides to a sharp reduction in their nuclear arsenal.

By the late 1980s the Soviet empire was crumbling. Some credit must go to Reagan, who successfully combined anti-communist rhetoric—such as his 1987 speech at the Berlin Wall, where he declared, “General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace...tear down this wall!”—with a willingness to negotiate with Soviet leadership. But the real causes of collapse lay within the Soviet empire itself. Soviet-allied governments in Eastern Europe tottered under pressure from dissident organizations like Poland's Solidarity and East Germany's Neues Forum; some of these countries were also pressured from within by the Roman Catholic Church, which had turned toward active anti-communism under Pope John Paul II. When Gorbachev made it clear that he would not send the Soviet military to prop up these regimes, they collapsed one by one in 1989—in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and East Germany. Within the Soviet Union, Gorbachev's proposed reforms, rather than bring stability, instead unraveled the decaying Soviet system. By 1991 the Soviet Union itself had vanished, dissolving into a “Commonwealth of Independent States.”

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VIDEO: THE REAGAN REVOLUTION

In this video, John Green teaches you about what is often called the Reagan Era. Mainly, it covers the eight years during which a former actor who had also been governor of the state of California was president of the United States. John will teach you about Reagan's election victory over the hapless Jimmy Carter, tax cuts, Reagan's Economic Bill of Rights, union busting, and the Iran-Contra among other things. Learn about Reagan's domestic and foreign policy initiatives, and even a little about Bonzo the Chimp.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/2h4DkpFP_aw

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CONCLUSION

Reagan left office with the Cold War waning and the economy booming. Unemployment had dipped to 5% by 1988. Between 1981 and 1986, gas prices fell from \$1.38 per gallon to 95¢. The stock market recovered from the crash, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average—which stood at 950 in 1981—reached 2,239 by the end of Reagan's second term. Yet, the economic gains of the decade were unequally distributed. The top fifth of households enjoyed rising incomes while the rest stagnated or declined. In constant dollars, annual CEO pay rose from \$3 million in 1980 to roughly \$12 million during Reagan's last year in the White House. Between 1985 and

1989 the number of Americans living in poverty remained steady at 33 million. Real per capita money income grew at only 2% per year, a rate roughly equal to the Carter years. The American economy saw more jobs created than lost during the 1980s, but half of the jobs eliminated were in high-paying industries. Furthermore, half of the new jobs failed to pay wages above the poverty line. The economic divide was most acute for African Americans and Latinos, one-third of whom qualified as poor. Trickle-down economics, it seemed, rarely trickled down.

The conservative triumph of the Reagan years proved incomplete. The number of government employees actually increased under Reagan. With more than 80% of the federal budget committed to defense, entitlement programs, and interest on the national debt, the right's goal of deficit elimination floundered for lack of substantial areas to cut. Between 1980 and 1989 the national debt rose from \$914 billion to \$2.7 trillion. Despite steep tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy, the overall tax burden of the American public basically remained unchanged. Moreover, so-called regressive taxes on payroll and certain goods *increased* the tax burden on low- and middle-income Americans. Finally, Reagan slowed but failed to vanquish the five-decade legacy of economic liberalism. Most New Deal and Great Society proved durable. Government still offered its neediest citizens a safety net, if a now continually shrinking one.

Yet the discourse of American politics had irrevocably changed. The preeminence of conservative political ideas grew ever more pronounced, even when as controlled Congress or the White House. Indeed, the Democratic Party adapted its own message in response to the conservative mood of the country. The United States was on a rightward path.

This chapter was edited by Richard Anderson and William J. Schultz, with content contributions by Richard Anderson, Laila Ballout, Marsha Barrett, Seth Bartee, Eladio Bobadilla, Kyle Burke, Andrew Chadwick, Jennifer Donnelly, Leif Fredrickson, Kori Graves, Karissa A. Haugeberg, Jonathan Hunt, Stephen Koeth, Colin Reynolds, William J. Schultz, and Daniel Spillman.

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ASSIGNMENT: AMERICAN CONSERVATISM

The 1960s was a liberal decade, the 1970s was a mess, and the 1980s was a conservative decade. In 1964, while helping the Goldwater campaign, a young up-and-coming figure in the Republican Party named Ronald Reagan gave a speech titled "[A Time for Choosing](#)" (if you don't want to read it there you can [watch it here](#)).

This speech became a foundational address in the modern Republican Party, put Reagan on the fast-track to the White House, and defined American Conservatism from then to the present. After reading (or watching) the speech answer the following in a paragraph:

1. What are the main points of the speech? If it's a time for choosing, what are the choices?
2. How did this speech set the tone for the current political right?

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PRIMARY SOURCE READING: RONALD REAGAN "A TIME FOR CHOOSING"

Ronald Reagan: A Time for Choosing Speech, 1964

I am going to talk of controversial things. I make no apology for this.

It's time we asked ourselves if we still know the freedoms intended for us by the Founding Fathers. James Madison said, "We base all our experiments on the capacity of mankind for self government."

This idea? that government was beholden to the people, that it had no other source of power is still the newest, most unique idea in all the long history of man's relation to man. This is the issue of this election: Whether we believe in our capacity for self-government or whether we abandon the American Revolution and confess that a little intellectual elite in a far-distant capital can plan our lives for us better than we can plan them ourselves.

You and I are told we must choose between a left or right, but I suggest there is no such thing as a left or right. There is only an up or down. Up to man's age-old dream-the maximum of individual freedom consistent with order or down to the ant heap of totalitarianism. Regardless of their sincerity, their humanitarian motives, those who would sacrifice freedom for security have embarked on this downward path. Plutarch warned, "The real destroyer of the liberties of the people is he who spreads among them bounties, donations and benefits."

The Founding Fathers knew a government can't control the economy without controlling people. And they knew when a government sets out to do that, it must use force and coercion to achieve its purpose. So we have come to a time for choosing.

Public servants say, always with the best of intentions, "What greater service we could render if only we had a little more money and a little more power." But the truth is that outside of its legitimate function, government does nothing as well or as economically as the private sector.

Yet any time you and I question the schemes of the do-gooders, we're denounced as being opposed to their humanitarian goals. It seems impossible to legitimately debate their solutions with the assumption that all of us share the desire to help the less fortunate. They tell us we're always "against," never "for" anything.

We are for a provision that destitution should not follow unemployment by reason of old age, and to that end we have accepted Social Security as a step toward meeting the problem. However, we are against those entrusted with this program when they practice deception regarding its fiscal shortcomings, when they charge that any criticism of the program means that we want to end payments....

We are for aiding our allies by sharing our material blessings with nations which share our fundamental beliefs, but we are against doling out money government to government, creating bureaucracy, if not socialism, all over the world.

We need true tax reform that will at least make a start toward restoring for our children the American Dream that wealth is denied to no one, that each individual has the right to fly as high as his strength and ability will take him.... But we can not have such reform while our tax policy is engineered by people who view the tax as a means of achieving changes in our social structure....

Have we the courage and the will to face up to the immorality and discrimination of the progressive tax, and demand a return to traditional proportionate taxation? . . . Today in our country the tax collector's share is 37 cents of -very dollar earned. Freedom has never been so fragile, so close to slipping from our grasp.

Are you willing to spend time studying the issues, making yourself aware, and then conveying that information to family and friends? Will you resist the temptation to get a government handout for your community? Realize that the doctor's fight against socialized medicine is your fight. We can't socialize the doctors without socializing the

patients. Recognize that government invasion of public power is eventually an assault upon your own business. If some among you fear taking a stand because you are afraid of reprisals from customers, clients, or even government, recognize that you are just feeding the crocodile hoping he'll eat you last.

If all of this seems like a great deal of trouble, think what's at stake. We are faced with the most evil enemy mankind has known in his long climb from the swamp to the stars. There can be no security anywhere in the free world if there is no fiscal and economic stability within the United States. Those who ask us to trade our freedom for the soup kitchen of the welfare state are architects of a policy of accommodation.

They say the world has become too complex for simple answers. They are wrong. There are no easy answers, but there are simple answers. We must have the courage to do what we know is morally right. Winston Churchill said that "the destiny of man is not measured by material computation. When great forces are on the move in the world, we learn we are spirits-not animals." And he said, "There is something going on in time and space, and beyond time and space, which, whether we like it or not, spells duty."

You and I have a rendezvous with destiny. We will preserve for our children this, the last best hope of man on earth, or we will sentence them to take the first step into a thousand years of darkness. If we fail, at least let our children and our children's children say of us we justified our brief moment here. We did all that could be done.

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THE RECENT PAST

INTRODUCTION



New York City, before September 11, 2001, via [Library of Congress](#).

Time marches forever on. The present becomes the past and the past becomes history. But, as William Faulkner wrote, “The past is never dead. It’s not even past.” The last several decades of American history have culminated in the present, an era of innovation and advancement but also of stark partisan division, sluggish economic growth, widening inequalities, widespread military interventions, and pervasive anxieties about the present and future of the United States. Through boom and bust, national tragedy, foreign wars, and the maturation of a new generation, a new chapter of American history awaits.

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VIDEO: GEORGE H.W. BUSH AND THE END OF THE COLD WAR

In this video, John Green teaches you about the end of the Cold War and the presidency of George H.W. Bush. It was neither the best of times, nor the worst of times. On the domestic front, the first president Bush inherited the relative prosperity of the later Reagan years, and watched that prosperity evaporate. That was about all the interest Bush 41 had, domestically, so let's move to foreign policy, which was a bigger deal at this time.

The biggie was the end of the Cold War, which is the title of the video, so you know it's important. The collapse of the Soviet Union was the biggest deal of Bush's term, and history has assigned the credit to Ronald Reagan. We give the guy a break, and say that he helped. He was certainly expert in foreign policy, having been an envoy to China, ambassador to the United Nations, and head of the CIA. Bush also oversaw the first Gulf War, which was something of a success, in that the primary mission was accomplished, and the vast majority of the troops were home in short order. It didn't do much to address some of the other problems in the region, but we'll get to that in the next few weeks. Along with all this, you'll learn about Bush's actions, or lack thereof, in Somalia and the Balkans, and you'll even be given an opportunity to read Bush's lips.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/L-K19rVDxoM>

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VIDEO: THE CLINTON YEARS, OR THE 1990S

In this video, John Green teaches you about the United States as it was in the 1990s. You'll remember from last week that the old-school Republican George H.W. Bush had lost the 1992 presidential election to a young upstart Democrat from Arkansas named Bill Clinton. Clinton was a bit of a dark horse candidate, having survived a sex scandal during the election, but a third party run by Ross Perot split the vote, and Clinton was inaugurated in 1993. John will teach you about Clinton's foreign policy agenda, which included NATO action in the Balkans and the Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO. He'll also cover some of the domestic successes and failures of the Clinton years, including the failed attempt at healthcare reform, the pretty terrible record on GLBTQ issues, Welfare reform, which got mixed reviews, and the happier issues like the huge improvements in the economy. Also computers—cheap, effective, readily available computers came along in the 1990s and they kind of changed the world, culminating in this video.

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/-rboN6F2g-k>

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AMERICAN POLITICS FROM GEORGE H.W. BUSH TO SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

The conservative “Reagan Revolution” lingered over an open field of candidates from both parties as voters approached the presidential election of 1988. At stake was the legacy of a newly empowered conservative movement, a movement that would move forward with Reagan’s vice president, George H. W. Bush, who triumphed over Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis with a promise to continue the conservative work that had commenced in the 1980s.

George H. W. Bush was one of the most experienced men every to rise to the presidency. Bush’s father, Prescott Bush, was a United States Senator from Connecticut. George H. W. Bush served as chair of the Republican National Committee, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and was elected to the House of Representatives from his district in Texas. He was elected vice president in 1980 and president eight years later. His election signaled Americans’ continued embrace of Reagan’s conservative program.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union left the United States as the world’s only remaining superpower. Global capitalism seemed triumphant. The 1990s brought the development of new markets in Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe. Observers wondered if some final stage of history had been reached, if the old battles had ended, a new global consensus had been reached and a future of peace and open markets would reign forever.

The post-Cold War world was not without international conflicts. Congress granted President Bush approval to intervene in Kuwait in Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm, commonly referred to as the first Gulf War. With the memories of Vietnam still fresh, many Americans were hesitant to support military action that could expand into a protracted war or long-term commitment of troops. But the war was a swift victory for the United States. President Bush and his advisers opted not to pursue the war into Baghdad and risk an occupation and insurgency. And so the war was won. Many wondered if the “ghosts of Vietnam” had been exorcised. Bush won enormous popularity. Gallup polls showed a job approval rating as high as 89% in the weeks after the end of the war.



The Iraqi military set fire to Kuwait's oil fields during the Gulf War, many of which burned for months and caused massive pollution. Photograph of oil well fires outside Kuwait City, March 21, 1991. [Wikimedia](#).

President Bush's popularity seemed to suggest an easy reelection in 1992. Bush faced a primary challenge from political commentator Patrick Buchanan, a former Reagan and Nixon White House adviser, who cast Bush as a moderate, an unworthy steward of the conservative movement who was unwilling to fight for conservative Americans in the nation's ongoing "culture war." Buchanan did not defeat Bush in the Republican primaries, but he inflicted enough damage to weaken his candidacy.

The Democratic Party nominated a relative unknown, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton. Dogged by charges of marital infidelity and draft-dodging during the Vietnam War, Clinton was a consummate politician and had both enormous charisma and a skilled political team. He framed himself as a "New Democrat," a centrist open to free trade, tax cuts, and welfare reform. Twenty-two years younger than Bush, and the first Baby Boomer to make a serious run at the presidency, Clinton presented the campaign as a generational choice. During the campaign he appeared on MTV. He played the saxophone on the Arsenio Hall Show. And he told voters that he could offer the United States a new way forward.

Bush ran on his experience and against Clinton's moral failings. The GOP convention in Houston that summer featured speeches from Pat Buchanan and religious leader Pat Robertson decrying the moral decay plaguing American life. Clinton was denounced as a social liberal that would weaken the American family with his policies and his moral character. But, Clinton was able to convince voters that his moderated Southern brand of liberalism would be more effective than the moderate conservatism of George Bush. Bush's candidacy, of course, was most crippled by a sudden economic recession. "It's the economy, stupid," Clinton's political team reminded the country.

Clinton would win the election, but the Reagan Revolution still reigned. Clinton and his running mate, Tennessee Senator Albert Gore, Jr., both moderate southerners, promised a path away from the old liberalism of the 1970s and 1980s. They were Democrats, but ran conservatively.

In his first term Clinton set out an ambitious agenda that included an economic stimulus package, universal health insurance, a continuation of the Middle East peace talks initiated by Bush's Secretary of State James Baker, welfare reform, and a completion of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to abolish trade barriers between the U.S., Mexico, and Canada.

With NAFTA, Clinton, reversed decades of Democratic opposition to free trade and opened the nation's northern and southern borders to the free flow of capital and goods. Critics, particularly in the Midwest's Rust Belt, blasted the agreement for opening American workers to deleterious competition by low-paid foreign workers. Many American factories did relocate by setting up shops—*maquilas*—in northern Mexico that took advantage of Mexico's low wages. Thousands of Mexicans rushed to the *maquilas*. Thousands more continued on past the border.

If NAFTA opened American borders to goods and services, people still navigated strict legal barriers to immigration. Policymakers believed that free trade would create jobs and wealth that would incentivize Mexican workers to stay home, and yet multitudes continued to leave for opportunities in *el norte*. The 1990s proved that prohibiting illegal migration was, if not impossible, exceedingly difficult. Poverty, political corruption, violence, and hopes for a better life in the United States—or simply higher wages—continued to lure immigrants across the border. Between 1990 and 2000, the proportion of foreign-born individuals in the United States grew from 7.9 percent to 12.9 percent, and the number of undocumented immigrants tripled from 3.5 million to 11.2 during the same period. While large numbers continued to migrate to traditional immigrant destinations—California, Texas, New York, Florida, New Jersey, and Illinois—the 1990s also witnessed unprecedented migration to the American South. Among the fastest-growing immigrant destination states were Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Georgia, and North Carolina, all of which had immigration growth rates in excess of 100% during the decade.

In response to the continued influx of immigrants and the vocal complaints of anti-immigration activists, policymakers responded with such initiatives as Operations Gatekeeper and Hold the Line, which attempted to make crossing the border more prohibitive. By strengthening physical barriers and beefing up Border Patrol presence in border cities and towns, a new strategy of “funneling” immigrants to dangerous and remote crossing areas emerged. Immigration officials hoped the brutal natural landscape would serve as a natural deterrent.

In his first weeks in office, Clinton reviewed Department of Defense policies that restricted homosexuals from serving in the armed forces. He pushed through a compromise plan, “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” that removed any questions about sexual preference in induction interview but also required that gay servicemen and women keep their sexual preference private. Social conservatives were outraged and his credentials as a conservative southerner suffered.

In his first term Clinton put forward universal health care as a major policy goal and put First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton in charge of the initiative. But the push for a national healthcare law collapsed on itself. Conservatives revolted, the health care industry flooded the airwaves with attack ads, and voters bristled.

The mid-term elections of 1994 were a disaster for the Democrats, who lost the House of Representatives for the first time since 1952. Congressional Republicans, led by Georgia Congressman Newt Gingrich and Texas Congressman Dick Armey, offered a new “Contract with America.” Republican candidates from around the nation gathered on the steps of the Capitol to pledge their commitment to a conservative legislative blueprint to be enacted if the GOP won control of the House. The strategy worked.

Social conservatives were mobilized by an energized group of religious activists, especially the Christian Coalition, led by Pat Robertson and Ralph Reed. Robertson was a television minister and entrepreneur whose 1988 long shot run for the Republican presidential nomination brought him a massive mailing list and network of religiously motivated voters around the country. From that mailing list, the Christian Coalition organized around the country, seeking to influence politics on the local and national level.

In 1996 the generational contest played out again when the Republicans nominated another aging war hero, Senator Bob Dole of Kansas, but Clinton again won the election, becoming the first Democrat to serve back-back terms since Franklin Roosevelt.

Clinton's presided over a booming economy fueled by emergent computing technologies. Personal computers had skyrocketed in sales and the internet become a mass phenomenon. Communication and commerce were never again the same. But the tech boom was driven by companies and the '90s saw robust innovation and entrepreneurship. Investors scrambled to find the next Microsoft or Apple, the suddenly massive computing companies. But it was the internet, “the world wide web,” that sparked a bonanza. The “dot-com boom” fueled enormous economic growth and substantial financial speculation to find the next Google or Amazon.

Republicans, defeated at the polls in 1996 and 1998, looked for other ways to sink Clinton's presidency. Political polarization seemed unprecedented as the Republican congress spent millions on investigations hoping to uncover some shred of damning evidence to sink Clinton's presidency, whether it be real estate deals, White House staffing, or adultery. Rumors of sexual misconduct had always swirled around Clinton, and congressional investigations targeted the allegations. Called to testify before a grand jury and in a statement to the American public, Clinton denied having "sexual relations" with Monica Lewinsky. Republicans used the testimony to allege perjury. Congress voted to impeach the president. It was a radical and wildly unpopular step. On a vote that mostly fell upon party lines, Clinton was acquitted by the Senate.

The 2000 election pit Vice President Albert Gore, Jr. against George W. Bush, the son of the former president who had been elected twice as Texas governor. Gore, wary of Clinton's recent impeachment despite Clinton's enduring approval ratings, distanced himself from the president and eight years of relative prosperity and ran as a pragmatic, moderate liberal.

Bush, too, ran as a moderate, distancing himself from the cruelties of past Republican candidates by claiming to represent a "compassionate conservatism" and a new faith-based politics. Bush was an outspoken evangelical. In a presidential debate, he declared Jesus Christ his favorite political philosopher. He promised to bring church leaders into government and his campaign appealed to churches and clergy to get out the vote. Moreover, he promised to bring honor, dignity, and integrity to the Oval Office, a clear reference to Clinton. Utterly lacking the political charisma that had propelled Clinton, Gore withered under Bush's attacks. Instead of trumpeting the Clinton presidency, Gore found himself answering the media's questions about whether he was sufficiently an "alpha male" and whether he had "invented the internet."

Few elections have been as close and contentious as the 2000 election, which ended in a deadlock. Gore had won the popular vote by 500,000 votes, but the Electoral College math seemed to have failed him. On election night the media had called Florida for Gore, but then Bush made gains and news organizations backpedaled and then they declared the state for Bush—and Bush the probable president-elect. Gore conceded privately to Bush, then backpedaled as the counts edged back toward Gore yet again. When the nation awoke the next day, it was unclear who had been elected president. The close Florida vote triggered an automatic recount.

Lawyers descended on Florida. The Gore campaign called for manual recounts in several counties. Local election boards, Florida Secretary of State Kathleen Harris, and the Florida Supreme Court all weighed in until the United Supreme Court stepped in and, in an unprecedented 5-4 decision in *Bush v. Gore*, ruled that the recount had to end. Bush was awarded Florida by a margin of 537 votes, enough to win him the state, a majority in the Electoral College, and the presidency.

In his first months in office, Bush fought to push forward enormous tax cuts skewed toward America's highest earners and struggled with an economy burdened by the bursting of the dot-com-bubble. Old fights seemed ready to be fought, and then everything changed.

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SEPTEMBER 11 AND THE WAR ON TERROR

On the morning of September 11, 2001, 19 operatives of the al-Qaeda terrorist organization hijacked four passenger planes on the East Coast. American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City at 8:46 a.m. EDT. United Airlines Flight 175 crashed into the South Tower at 9:03. American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the western façade of the Pentagon at 9:37. At 9:59, the South Tower of the World Trade Center collapsed. At 10:03, United Airlines Flight 93 crashed in a field outside of Shanksville, Pennsylvania, likely brought down by passengers who had received news of the earlier hijackings. And at 10:28, the North Tower collapsed. In less than two hours, nearly 3,000 Americans had been killed.



Six days after the September 11th attacks, the World Trade Center was still crumbling and dozens of men and women were still unaccounted for. [Wikimedia](#).

The attacks shocked Americans. Bush addressed the nation and assured the country that “The search is underway for those who are behind these evil acts.” At Ground Zero three days later, Bush thanked the first responders. A worker said he couldn’t hear him. “I can hear you,” Bush shouted back, “The rest of the world hears you. And the people who knocked these buildings down will hear all of us soon.”

American intelligence agencies quickly identified the radical Islamic militant group al-Qaeda, led by the wealthy Saudi Osama Bin Laden, as the perpetrators of the attack. Sheltered in Afghanistan by the Taliban, the country’s Islamic government, al-Qaeda was responsible for a 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center and a string of attacks at U.S. embassies and military bases across the world. Bin Laden’s Islamic radicalism and his anti-American aggression attracted supporters across the region and, by 2001, al-Qaeda was active in over sixty countries.

The War on Terror

Although in his campaign Bush had denounced foreign “nation-building,” his administration was populated by “neo-conservatives,” firm believers in the expansion of American democracy and American interests abroad. Bush advanced what was sometimes called the Bush Doctrine, a policy in which the United States would have to the right to unilaterally and pre-emptively make war upon any regime or terrorist organization that posed a threat to the United States or to United States’ citizens. It would lead the United States to protracted conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and entangle the United States in nations across the world.

The United States and Afghanistan

The United States had a history in Afghanistan. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979 to quell an insurrection that threatened to topple Kabul's communist government, the United States financed and armed anti-Soviet insurgents, the Mujahedeen. In 1981, the Reagan Administration authorized the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to provide the Mujahedeen with weapons and training to strengthen the insurgency. An independent wealthy young Saudi, Osama bin Laden, also fought with and funded the mujahedeen. The insurgents began to win. Afghanistan bled the Soviet Union dry. The costs of the war, coupled with growing instability at home, convinced the Soviets to withdraw from Afghanistan in 1989.

Osama bin Laden relocated al-Qaeda to Afghanistan after the country fell to the Taliban in 1996. The United States under Bill Clinton had launched cruise missiles into Afghanistan at al-Qaeda camps in retaliation for al-Qaeda bombings on American embassies in Africa.

Then, after September 11, with a broad authorization of military force, Bush administration officials made plans for military action against al-Qaeda and the Taliban. What would become the longest war in American history began with the launching of Operation Enduring Freedom in October 2001. Air and missile strikes hit targets across Afghanistan. U.S. Special Forces joined with fighters in the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance. Major Afghan cities fell in quick succession. The capital, Kabul, fell on November 13. Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda operatives retreated into the rugged mountains along the border of Pakistan in eastern Afghanistan. The United States military settled in.

The United States and Iraq

After the conclusion of the Gulf War in 1991, American officials established economic sanctions, weapons inspections, and "no-fly zones" in Iraq. By mid-1991, American warplanes were routinely patrolling Iraqi skies, where they periodically came under fire from Iraqi missile batteries. The overall cost to the United States of maintaining the two no-fly zones over Iraq was roughly \$1 billion a year. Related military activities in the region added about another half million to the annual bill. On the ground in Iraq, meanwhile, Iraqi authorities clashed with U.N. weapons inspectors. Iraq had suspended its program for weapons of mass destruction, but Saddam Hussein fostered ambiguity about the weapons in the minds of regional leaders to forestall any possible attacks against Iraq.

In 1998, a standoff between Hussein and the United Nations over weapons inspections led President Bill Clinton to launch punitive strikes aimed at debilitating what was thought to be a fairly developed chemical weapons program. Attacks began on December 16, 1998. More than 200 cruise missiles fired from U.S. Navy warships and Air Force B-52 bombers flew into Iraq, targeting suspected chemical weapons storage facilities, missile batteries and command centers. Airstrikes continued for three more days, unleashing in total 415 cruise missiles and 600 bombs against 97 targets. The amount of bombs dropped was nearly double the amount used in the 1991 conflict.

The United States and Iraq remained at odds throughout the 1990s and early 2000, when Bush administration officials began considering "regime change." The Bush Administration began publicly denouncing Saddam Hussein's regime and its alleged weapons of mass destruction. It was alleged that Hussein was trying to acquire uranium and that it had aluminum tubes used for nuclear centrifuges. George W. Bush said in October, "Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof—the smoking gun—that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud." The United States Congress passed the Authorization for Use of Military Force against Iraq Resolution, giving Bush the power to make war in Iraq.

In late 2002 Iraq began cooperating with U.N. weapons inspectors. But the Bush administration pressed on. On February 6, 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell, who had risen to public prominence as an Army general during the Persian Gulf War in 1991, presented allegations of a robust Iraqi weapons program to the United Nations.

The first American bombs hit Baghdad on March 20, 2003. Several hundred-thousand troops moved into Iraq and Hussein's regime quickly collapsed. Baghdad fell on April 9. On May 1, 2003, aboard the *USS Abraham Lincoln*, beneath a banner reading "Mission Accomplished," George W. Bush announced that "Major combat operations in Iraq have ended." No evidence of weapons of mass destruction had been found or would be found. And combat operations had not ended, not really. The insurgency had begun, and the United States would spend the next ten years struggling to contain it.



Despite the celebration of President Bush, combat operations in Iraq would continue for years more. In some ways, it has not ended. Although combat troops were withdrawn from Iraq by December 2011, President Obama announced the use of airstrikes against Iraqi militants in August 2014. [Wikimedia](#).

Efforts by various intelligence gathering agencies led to the capture of Saddam Hussein, hidden in an underground compartment near his hometown, on December 13, 2003. The new Iraqi government found him guilty of crimes against humanity and he was hanged on December 30, 2006.

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VIDEO: TERRORISM, WAR, AND BUSH

In this video, John Green teaches you about the tumultuous 2000s in the United States of America, mainly the 2000s that coincide with the presidency of George W Bush. From the controversial election in 2000, to the events of 9/11 and Bush's prosecution of the War on Terror, the George W. Bush presidency was an eventful one. John will teach you about Bush's domestic policies like tax cutting, education reform, and he'll get into the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The events that came to pass during Bush's presidency are still very much affecting the United States and the world today, so listen up!

Watch this video online: <https://youtu.be/nlsnnhn3VWE>

THE END OF THE BUSH YEARS

The War on Terror was a centerpiece in the race for the White House in 2004. The Democratic ticket, headed by Massachusetts Senator John F. Kerry, a Vietnam War hero who entered the public consciousness for his subsequent testimony against it, attacked Bush for the ongoing inability to contain the Iraqi insurgency or to find weapons of mass destruction, the revelation, and photographic evidence, that American soldiers had abused prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison outside of Baghdad, and the inability to find Osama Bin Laden. Moreover, many who had been captured in Iraq and Afghanistan were “detained” indefinitely at a military prison in Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. “Gitmo” became infamous for its harsh treatment, indefinite detentions, and the torture of prisoners. Bush defended the War on Terror and his allies attacked critics for failing to support the troops. Moreover, Kerry had voted for the war. He had to attack what had authorized. Bush won a close but clear victory.

The second Bush term saw the continued deterioration of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but Bush’s presidency would take a bigger hit from his perceived failure to respond to the domestic tragedy that followed Hurricane Katrina’s devastating hit on the Gulf Coast. Katrina had been a category 5 hurricane, what New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin called “the one we always feared.”

New Orleans suffered a direct hit, the levees broke, and the bulk of the city flooded. Thousands of refugees flocked to the Superdome, where supplies and medical treatment and evacuation were slow to come. Individuals were dying in the heat. Bodies wasted away. Americans saw poor black Americans abandoned. Katrina became a symbol of a broken administrative system, a devastated coastline, and irreparable social structures that allowed escape and recovery for some, and not for others. Critics charged that Bush had staffed his administration with incompetent supporters and had further ignored the displaced poor and black residents of New Orleans.



Hurricane Katrina was one of the deadliest and more destructive hurricanes to hit American soil in U.S. history. It nearly destroyed New Orleans, Louisiana, as well as cities, towns, and rural areas across the Gulf Coast. It sent hundreds of thousands of refugees to near-by cities like Houston, Texas, where they temporarily resided in massive structures like the Astrodome. Photograph, September 1, 2005. [Wikimedia](#).

Immigration had become an increasingly potent political issue. The Clinton Administration had overseen the implementation of several anti-immigration policies on the border, but hunger and poverty were stronger incentives than border enforcement policies. Illegal immigration continued, often at great human cost, but nevertheless fanned widespread anti-immigration sentiment among many American conservatives. Many immigrants and their supporters, however, fought back. 2006 saw waves of massive protests across the country. Hundreds of thousands marched in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles, and tens of thousands marched in smaller cities around the country. Legal change, however, went nowhere. Moderate conservatives feared upsetting business interests' demand for cheap, exploitable labor and alienating large voting blocs by stifling immigration and moderate liberals feared upsetting anti-immigrant groups by pushing too hard for liberalization of immigration laws.

Afghanistan and Iraq, meanwhile, continued to deteriorate. In 2006, the Taliban reemerged, as the Afghan Government proved both highly corrupt and highly incapable of providing social services or security for its citizens. Iraq only descended further into chaos.

In 2007, 27,000 additional United States forces deployed to Iraq under the command of General David Petraeus. The effort, "the surge," employed more sophisticated anti-insurgency strategies and, combined with Sunni moves against the disorder, pacified many of Iraq's cities and provided cover for the withdrawal of American forces. On December 4, 2008, the Iraqi government approved the U.S.-Iraq Status of Forces Agreement and United States combat forces withdrew from Iraqi cities before June 30, 2009. The last US combat forces left Iraq on December 18, 2011. Violence and instability continued to rock the country.



Opened in 2005, this beautiful new mosque at the Islamic Center of America in Dearborn, Michigan, is the largest such religious structure in the United States. Muslims in Dearborn have faced religious and racial prejudice, but the suburb of Detroit continues to be a central meeting-place for American Muslims. Photograph July 8, 2008. [Wikimedia](#).

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THE GREAT RECESSION

The Great Recession began, as most American economic catastrophes began, with the bursting of a speculative bubble. Throughout the 1990s and into the new millennium, home prices continued to climb, and financial services firms looked to cash in on what seemed to be a safe but lucrative investment. Especially after the dot-com bubble burst, investors searched for a secure investment that was rooted in clear value and not trendy technological speculation. And what could be more secure than real estate? But mortgage companies began writing increasingly risky loans and then bundling them together and selling them over and over again, sometimes so quickly that it became difficult to determine exactly who owned what. Decades of lax regulation had again enabled risky business practices to dominate the world of American finance. When American homeowners began to default on their loans, the whole system tumbled quickly. Seemingly solid financial services firms disappeared almost overnight. In order to prevent the crisis from spreading, the federal government poured billions of dollars into the industry, propping up hobbled banks. Massive giveaways to bankers created shock waves of resentment throughout the rest of the country. On the Right, conservative members of the Tea Party decried the cronyism of an Obama administration filled with former Wall Street executives. The same energies also motivated the Occupy

Wall Street movement, as mostly young left-leaning New Yorkers protesting an American economy that seemed overwhelmingly tilted toward “the one percent.”

The Great Recession only magnified already rising income and wealth inequalities. According to the Chief Investment Officer at JPMorgan Chase, the largest bank in the United States, “profit margins have reached levels not seen in decades,” and “reductions in wages and benefits explain the majority of the net improvement.” A study from the Congressional Budget authority found that since the late 1970s, after-tax benefits of the wealthiest 1% grew by over 300%. The “average” American’s benefits had grown 35%. Economic trends have disproportionately and objectively benefited the wealthiest Americans. Still, despite some political rhetoric, American frustration has not generated anything like the social unrest of the early twentieth century. A weakened labor movement and a strong conservative base continue to stymie serious attempts at redistributing wealth. Occupy Wall Street managed to generate a fair number of headlines and shift public discussion away from budget cuts and toward inequality, but its membership amounted to only a fraction of the far more influential and money-driven Tea Party. Its presence on the public stage was fleeting.

The Great Recession, however, was not. While American banks quickly recovered and recaptured their steady profits, and the American stock market climbed again to new heights, American workers continued to lag. Job growth would remain minuscule and unemployment rates would remain stubbornly high. Wages froze, meanwhile, and well-paying full-time jobs that were lost were too often replaced by low-paying, part-time work. A generation of workers coming of age within the crisis, moreover, had been savaged by the economic collapse.

Unemployment among young Americans hovered for years at rates nearly double the national average.

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THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY

By the 2008 election, with Iraq still in chaos, Democrats were ready to embrace the anti-war position and sought a candidate who had consistently opposed military action in Iraq. Senator Barack Obama of Illinois had been a member of the state senate when Congress debated the war actions but he had publicly denounced the war, predicting the sectarian violence that would ensue, and remained critical of the invasion through his 2004 campaign for the U.S. Senate. He began running for president almost immediately after arriving in Washington.

A former law professor and community activist, Obama became the first black candidate to ever capture the nomination of a major political party. During the election, Obama won the support of an increasingly anti-war electorate. Already riding a wave of support, however, Bush’s fragile economy finally collapsed in 2007 and 2008. Bush’s policies were widely blamed, and Obama’s opponent, John McCain, was tied to Bush’s policies. Obama won a convincing victory in the fall and became the nation’s first African American president.

President Obama’s first term was marked by domestic affairs, especially his efforts to combat the Great Recession and to pass a national healthcare law. Obama came into office as the economy continued to deteriorate. He managed the bank bailout begun under his predecessor and launched a limited economic stimulus plan to provide countercyclical government spending to spare the country from the worst of the downturn.

Obama’s most substantive legislative achievement proved to be a national healthcare law, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, but typically “Obamacare” by opponents and supporters like. The plan, narrowly passed by Congress, would require all Americans to provide proof of a health insurance plan that measured up to government-established standards. Those who did not purchase a plan would pay a penalty tax, and those who could not afford insurance would be eligible for federal subsidies.

Nationally, as prejudices against homosexuality fell and support for gay marriage reached a majority of the population, the Obama administration moved tentatively. Refusing to push for national interventions on the gay marriage front, Obama did, however, direct a review of Defense Department policies that repealed the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy in 2011.

In 2009, President Barack Obama deployed 17,000 additional troops to Afghanistan as part of a counterinsurgency campaign that aimed to “disrupt, dismantle, and defeat” al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Meanwhile, U.S. Special Forces and CIA drones targeted al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders. In May 2011, U.S. Navy SEALs conducted a raid deep into Pakistan that led to the killing of Osama bin Laden. The United States and NATO began a phased withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2011, with an aim of removing all combat troops by 2014. Although weak militarily, the Taliban remained politically influential in south and eastern Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda remained active in Pakistan, but shifted its bases to Yemen and the Horn of Africa. As of December 2013, the war in Afghanistan had claimed the lives of 3,397 U.S. service members.



These former Taliban fighters surrendered their arms to the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan during a reintegration ceremony at the provincial governor's compound in May 2012. [Wikimedia](#).

Climate change, the role of government, gay marriage, the legalization of marijuana, the rise of China, inequality, surveillance, a stagnant economy, and a host of other issues have confronted recent Americans with sustained urgency.

In 2012, Barack Obama won a second term by defeating Republican Mitt Romney, the former governor of Massachusetts. However, Obama’s inability to pass legislation and the ascendancy of Tea Party Republicans effectively shut down partisan cooperation and stunted the passage of meaningful legislation. Obama was a lame duck before he ever won reelection. Half-hearted efforts to address climate change, for instance, went nowhere. The economy continued its half-hearted recovery. While corporate profits climbed unemployment continued to sag. The Obama administration campaigned on little to address the crisis and accomplished far less.

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VIDEO: OBAMANATION

In this video, John Green teaches you about recent history. By which we mean *very* recent history. John covers the end of George W. Bush's administration and the presidency of Barack Obama (so far). Some people would say, "It's too soon to try to interpret the historical importance of such recent events!" To those people we answer, "You're right." Nonetheless, it's worthwhile to take a look at the American we live in right now as a way of looking back at how far we've come. Anyway, John will teach you about Obama's election, some of his policies like the Affordable Care Act, the 2009 stimulus, and the continuation of the war on terror. If you still can't reconcile a history course teaching such recent stuff, just think of this one as a current events episode.

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NEW HORIZONS

Much public commentary in the early twenty-first century concerned the "millennials," the new generation that had come of age in the new millennium. Commentators, demographers, and political prognosticators continue to ask what the new generation will bring. Pollsters have found certain features that distinguish the millennials from older Americans. They are, the pollsters say, more diverse, more liberal, less religious, and wracked by economic insecurity.

Millennial attitudes toward homosexuality and gay marriage reflect one of the most dramatic changes in popular attitudes toward recent years. After decades of advocacy, attitudes over the past two decades have shifted rapidly. Gay characters—and characters with depth and complexity—can be found across the cultural landscape and, while national politicians have refused to advocate for it, a majority of Americans now favor the legalization of gay marriage.

Even as anti-immigrant initiatives like California's Proposition 187 (1994) and Arizona's SB1070 (2010) reflected the anxieties of many, younger Americans proved far more comfortable with immigration and diversity—which makes sense, given that they are the most diverse American generation in living memory. Since Lyndon Johnson's Great Society liberalized immigration laws, the demographics of the United States have been transformed. In 2012, nearly one-quarter of all Americans were immigrants or the sons and daughters of immigrants. Half came from Latin America. The ongoing "Hispanicization" of the United States and the ever shrinking proportion of non-Hispanic whites have been the most talked about trends among demographic observers. By 2013, 17% of the nation was Hispanic. In 2014, Latinos surpassed non-Latino whites to become the largest ethnic group in California. In Texas, the image of a white cowboy hardly captures the demographics of a "minority-majority" state in which Hispanic Texans will soon become the largest ethnic group. For the nearly 1.5 million people of Texas's Rio Grande Valley, for instance, where a majority of residents speak Spanish at home, a full three-fourths of the population is bilingual. Political commentators often wonder what political transformations these populations will bring about when they come of age and begin voting in larger numbers.

Younger Americans are also more concerned about the environment and climate change, and yet, on that front, little has changed. In the 1970s and 1980s, experts substantiated the theory of anthropogenic (human-caused) global warming. Eventually, the most influential of these panels, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded in 1995 that there was a "discernable human influence on global climate." This conclusion, though stated conservatively, was by that point essentially a scientific consensus. By 2007, the IPCC

considered the evidence “unequivocal” and warned that “unmitigated climate change would, in the long term, be likely to exceed the capacity of natural, managed and human systems to adapt.”

Climate change became a permanent and major topic of public discussion and policy in the twenty-first century. Fueled by popular coverage, most notably, perhaps, the documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*, based on Al Gore’s book and presentations of the same name, climate change entered much of the American left. And yet American public opinion and political action still lagged far behind the scientific consensus on the dangers of global warming. Conservative politicians, conservative, think tanks, and energy companies waged war against to sow questions in the minds of Americans, who remain divided on the question, and so many others.

Much of the resistance to addressing climate change is economic. As Americans look over their shoulder at China, many refuse to sacrifice immediate economic growth for long-term environmental security. Twenty-first century relations with China are characterized by contradictions and interdependence. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, China reinvigorated its efforts to modernize its country. By liberating and subsidizing much of its economy and drawing enormous foreign investments, China has posted enormous growth rates during the last several decades. Enormous cities rise by the day. In 2000 China had a gross domestic product around an eighth the size of the United States. Based on growth rates and trends, analysts suggest that China’s economy will bypass the United States’ soon. American concerns about China’s political system have persisted, but money sometimes speaks matters more to Americans. China has become one of the country’s leading trade partners. Cultural exchange has increased, and more and more Americans visit China each year, with many settling down to work and study. Conflict between the two societies is not inevitable, but managing bilateral relations will be one of the great challenges of the next decade. It is but one of several aspects of the world confronting Americans of the twenty-first century.

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CONCLUSION

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought neither global peace nor stability and the later attacks of September 11, 2001 plunged the United States into interminable conflicts around the world. At home, economic recession, entrenched joblessness, and general pessimism infected American life as contentious politics and cultural divisions poisoned social harmony. But trends shift, things change, and history turns. A new generation of Americans look to the future with uncertainty.

This chapter was edited by Michael Hammond, with content contributions by Eladio Bobadilla, Andrew Chadwick, Zach Fredman, Leif Fredrickson, Michael Hammond, Richara Hayward, Joseph Locke, Mark Kukis, Shaul Mitelpunkt, Michelle Reeves, Elizabeth Skilton, Bill Speer, and Ben Wright.

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APPENDICES

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. —That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. —Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Brittish brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the

circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

The 56 signatures on the Declaration appear in the positions indicated:

Column 1

Georgia:

Button Gwinnett

Lyman Hall

George Walton

Column 2

North Carolina:

William Hooper

Joseph Hewes

John Penn

South Carolina:

Edward Rutledge

Thomas Heyward, Jr.

Thomas Lynch, Jr.

Arthur Middleton

Column 3

Massachusetts:

John Hancock

Maryland:

Samuel Chase

William Paca

Thomas Stone

Charles Carroll of Carrollton

Virginia:

George Wythe

Richard Henry Lee

Thomas Jefferson

Benjamin Harrison

Thomas Nelson, Jr.

Francis Lightfoot Lee

Carter Braxton

Column 4

Pennsylvania:

Robert Morris

Benjamin Rush

Benjamin Franklin

John Morton

George Clymer

James Smith

George Taylor

James Wilson

George Ross

Delaware:

Caesar Rodney

George Read

Thomas McKean

Column 5

New York:

William Floyd

Philip Livingston

Francis Lewis

Lewis Morris

New Jersey:

Richard Stockton

John Witherspoon

Francis Hopkinson

John Hart

Abraham Clark

Column 6

New Hampshire:

Josiah Bartlett

William Whipple

Massachusetts:

Samuel Adams

John Adams

Robert Treat Paine

Elbridge Gerry

Rhode Island:

Stephen Hopkins

William Ellery

Connecticut:

Roger Sherman

Samuel Huntington

William Williams

Oliver Wolcott

New Hampshire:

Matthew Thornton

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THE CONSTITUTION

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article. I.

Section. 1.

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section. 2.

The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The Number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty Thousand, but each State shall have at Least one Representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to chuse three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New-York six, New Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina five, and Georgia three.

When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive Authority thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies.

The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other Officers; and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.

Section. 3.

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.

Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the first Election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three Classes. The Seats of the Senators of the first Class shall be vacated at the Expiration of the second Year, of the second Class at the Expiration of the fourth Year, and of the third Class at the Expiration of the sixth Year, so that one third may be chosen every second Year; and if Vacancies happen by Resignation, or otherwise, during the Recess of the Legislature of any State, the Executive thereof may make temporary Appointments until the next Meeting of the Legislature, which shall then fill such Vacancies.

No Person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, and been nine Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen.

The Vice President of the United States shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no Vote, unless they be equally divided.

The Senate shall chuse their other Officers, and also a President pro tempore, in the Absence of the Vice President, or when he shall exercise the Office of President of the United States.

The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments. When sitting for that Purpose, they shall be on Oath or Affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: And no Person shall be convicted without the Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present.

Judgment in Cases of Impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from Office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any Office of honor, Trust or Profit under the United States: but the Party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to Indictment, Trial, Judgment and Punishment, according to Law.

Section. 4.

The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of chusing Senators.

The Congress shall assemble at least once in every Year, and such Meeting shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by Law appoint a different Day.

Section. 5.

Each House shall be the Judge of the Elections, Returns and Qualifications of its own Members, and a Majority of each shall constitute a Quorum to do Business; but a smaller Number may adjourn from day to day, and may be authorized to compel the Attendance of absent Members, in such Manner, and under such Penalties as each House may provide.

Each House may determine the Rules of its Proceedings, punish its Members for disorderly Behaviour, and, with the Concurrence of two thirds, expel a Member.

Each House shall keep a Journal of its Proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such Parts as may in their Judgment require Secrecy; and the Yeas and Nays of the Members of either House on any question shall, at the Desire of one fifth of those Present, be entered on the Journal.

Neither House, during the Session of Congress, shall, without the Consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days, nor to any other Place than that in which the two Houses shall be sitting.

Section. 6.

The Senators and Representatives shall receive a Compensation for their Services, to be ascertained by Law, and paid out of the Treasury of the United States. They shall in all Cases, except Treason, Felony and Breach of the Peace, be privileged from Arrest during their Attendance at the Session of their respective Houses, and in going to and returning from the same; and for any Speech or Debate in either House, they shall not be questioned in any other Place.

No Senator or Representative shall, during the Time for which he was elected, be appointed to any civil Office under the Authority of the United States, which shall have been created, or the Emoluments whereof shall have been encreased during such time; and no Person holding any Office under the United States, shall be a Member of either House during his Continuance in Office.

Section. 7.

All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives; but the Senate may propose or concur with Amendments as on other Bills.

Every Bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and the Senate, shall, before it become a Law, be presented to the President of the United States; If he approve he shall sign it, but if not he shall return it, with his Objections to that House in which it shall have originated, who shall enter the Objections at large on their Journal, and proceed to reconsider it. If after such Reconsideration two thirds of that House shall agree to pass

the Bill, it shall be sent, together with the Objections, to the other House, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered, and if approved by two thirds of that House, it shall become a Law. But in all such Cases the Votes of both Houses shall be determined by yeas and Nays, and the Names of the Persons voting for and against the Bill shall be entered on the Journal of each House respectively. If any Bill shall not be returned by the President within ten Days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the Same shall be a Law, in like Manner as if he had signed it, unless the Congress by their Adjournment prevent its Return, in which Case it shall not be a Law.

Every Order, Resolution, or Vote to which the Concurrence of the Senate and House of Representatives may be necessary (except on a question of Adjournment) shall be presented to the President of the United States; and before the Same shall take Effect, shall be approved by him, or being disapproved by him, shall be repassed by two thirds of the Senate and House of Representatives, according to the Rules and Limitations prescribed in the Case of a Bill.

Section. 8.

The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

To borrow Money on the credit of the United States;

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;

To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

To establish Post Offices and post Roads;

To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;

To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;

To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offences against the Law of Nations;

To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;

To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;

To provide and maintain a Navy;

To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings;—And

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

Section. 9.

The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight, but a Tax or duty may be imposed on such Importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each Person.

The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it.

No Bill of Attainder or ex post facto Law shall be passed.

No Capitation, or other direct, Tax shall be laid, unless in Proportion to the Census or enumeration herein before directed to be taken.

No Tax or Duty shall be laid on Articles exported from any State.

No Preference shall be given by any Regulation of Commerce or Revenue to the Ports of one State over those of another: nor shall Vessels bound to, or from, one State, be obliged to enter, clear, or pay Duties in another.

No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time.

No Title of Nobility shall be granted by the United States: And no Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under them, shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State.

Section. 10.

No State shall enter into any Treaty, Alliance, or Confederation; grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal; coin Money; emit Bills of Credit; make any Thing but gold and silver Coin a Tender in Payment of Debts; pass any Bill of Attainder, ex post facto Law, or Law impairing the Obligation of Contracts, or grant any Title of Nobility.

No State shall, without the Consent of the Congress, lay any Imposts or Duties on Imports or Exports, except what may be absolutely necessary for executing its inspection Laws: and the net Produce of all Duties and Imposts, laid by any State on Imports or Exports, shall be for the Use of the Treasury of the United States; and all such Laws shall be subject to the Revision and Control of the Congress.

No State shall, without the Consent of Congress, lay any Duty of Tonnage, keep Troops, or Ships of War in time of Peace, enter into any Agreement or Compact with another State, or with a foreign Power, or engage in War, unless actually invaded, or in such imminent Danger as will not admit of delay.

Article. II.

Section. 1.

The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President, chosen for the same Term, be elected, as follows

Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or Person holding an Office of Trust or Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector.

The Electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by Ballot for two Persons, of whom one at least shall not be an Inhabitant of the same State with themselves. And they shall make a List of all the Persons voted for, and of the Number of Votes for each; which List they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the Seat of the Government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate. The President of the Senate shall, in

the Presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the Certificates, and the Votes shall then be counted. The Person having the greatest Number of Votes shall be the President, if such Number be a Majority of the whole Number of Electors appointed; and if there be more than one who have such Majority, and have an equal Number of Votes, then the House of Representatives shall immediately chuse by Ballot one of them for President; and if no Person have a Majority, then from the five highest on the List the said House shall in like Manner chuse the President. But in chusing the President, the Votes shall be taken by States, the Representation from each State having one Vote; A quorum for this Purpose shall consist of a Member or Members from two thirds of the States, and a Majority of all the States shall be necessary to a Choice. In every Case, after the Choice of the President, the Person having the greatest Number of Votes of the Electors shall be the Vice President. But if there should remain two or more who have equal Votes, the Senate shall chuse from them by Ballot the Vice President.

The Congress may determine the Time of chusing the Electors, and the Day on which they shall give their Votes; which Day shall be the same throughout the United States.

No Person except a natural born Citizen, or a Citizen of the United States, at the time of the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to the Office of President; neither shall any Person be eligible to that Office who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty five Years, and been fourteen Years a Resident within the United States.

In Case of the Removal of the President from Office, or of his Death, Resignation, or Inability to discharge the Powers and Duties of the said Office, the Same shall devolve on the Vice President, and the Congress may by Law provide for the Case of Removal, Death, Resignation or Inability, both of the President and Vice President, declaring what Officer shall then act as President, and such Officer shall act accordingly, until the Disability be removed, or a President shall be elected.

The President shall, at stated Times, receive for his Services, a Compensation, which shall neither be encreased nor diminished during the Period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive within that Period any other Emolument from the United States, or any of them.

Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the following Oath or Affirmation:—"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Section. 2.

The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States; he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offences against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment.

He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States, whose Appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by Law: but the Congress may by Law vest the Appointment of such inferior Officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the Courts of Law, or in the Heads of Departments.

The President shall have Power to fill up all Vacancies that may happen during the Recess of the Senate, by granting Commissions which shall expire at the End of their next Session.

Section. 3.

He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either of them, and in Case of Disagreement between them, with Respect to the Time of Adjournment, he may adjourn them to such Time as he shall think proper; he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers; he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall Commission all the Officers of the United States.

Section. 4.

The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.

Article III.

Section. 1.

The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish. The Judges, both of the supreme and inferior Courts, shall hold their Offices during good Behaviour, and shall, at stated Times, receive for their Services, a Compensation, which shall not be diminished during their Continuance in Office.

Section. 2.

The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases, in Law and Equity, arising under this Constitution, the Laws of the United States, and Treaties made, or which shall be made, under their Authority;—to all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls;—to all Cases of admiralty and maritime Jurisdiction;—to Controversies to which the United States shall be a Party;—to Controversies between two or more States;—between a State and Citizens of another State,—between Citizens of different States,—between Citizens of the same State claiming Lands under Grants of different States, and between a State, or the Citizens thereof, and foreign States, Citizens or Subjects.

In all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, and those in which a State shall be Party, the supreme Court shall have original Jurisdiction. In all the other Cases before mentioned, the supreme Court shall have appellate Jurisdiction, both as to Law and Fact, with such Exceptions, and under such Regulations as the Congress shall make.

The Trial of all Crimes, except in Cases of Impeachment, shall be by Jury; and such Trial shall be held in the State where the said Crimes shall have been committed; but when not committed within any State, the Trial shall be at such Place or Places as the Congress may by Law have directed.

Section. 3.

Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying War against them, or in adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort. No Person shall be convicted of Treason unless on the Testimony of two Witnesses to the same overt Act, or on Confession in open Court.

The Congress shall have Power to declare the Punishment of Treason, but no Attainder of Treason shall work Corruption of Blood, or Forfeiture except during the Life of the Person attainted.

Article. IV.

Section. 1.

Full Faith and Credit shall be given in each State to the public Acts, Records, and judicial Proceedings of every other State. And the Congress may by general Laws prescribe the Manner in which such Acts, Records and Proceedings shall be proved, and the Effect thereof.

Section. 2.

The Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States.

A Person charged in any State with Treason, Felony, or other Crime, who shall flee from Justice, and be found in another State, shall on Demand of the executive Authority of the State from which he fled, be delivered up, to be removed to the State having Jurisdiction of the Crime.

No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.

Section. 3.

New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new State shall be formed or erected within the Jurisdiction of any other State; nor any State be formed by the Junction of two or more States, or Parts of States, without the Consent of the Legislatures of the States concerned as well as of the Congress.

The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

Section. 4.

The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government, and shall protect each of them against Invasion; and on Application of the Legislature, or of the Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened), against domestic Violence.

Article. V.

The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year One thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the Ninth Section of the first Article; and that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate.

Article. VI.

All Debts contracted and Engagements entered into, before the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be as valid against the United States under this Constitution, as under the Confederation.

This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.

The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.

Article. VII.

The Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the Establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the Same.

Done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present the Seventeenth Day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and Eighty seven and of the Independance of the United States of America the Twelfth In witness whereof We have hereunto subscribed our Names,

G. Washington

Presidt and deputy from Virginia

Delaware

Geo: Read

Gunning Bedford jun

John Dickinson

Richard Bassett

Jaco: Broom

Maryland

James McHenry

Dan of St Thos. Jenifer

Danl. Carroll

Virginia

John Blair

James Madison Jr.

North Carolina

Wm. Blount

Richd. Dobbs Spaight

Hu Williamson

South Carolina

J. Rutledge

Charles Cotesworth Pinckney

Charles Pinckney

Pierce Butler

Georgia

William Few

Abr Baldwin

New Hampshire

John Langdon

Nicholas Gilman

Massachusetts

Nathaniel Gorham

Rufus King

Connecticut

Wm. Saml. Johnson

Roger Sherman

New York

Alexander Hamilton

New Jersey

Wil: Livingston

David Brearley

Wm. Paterson

Jona: Dayton

Pennsylvania

B Franklin

Thomas Mifflin

Robt. Morris

Geo. Clymer

Thos. FitzSimons

Jared Ingersoll

James Wilson

Gouv Morris

Constitutional Amendments

The U.S. Bill of Rights (Amendments 1–10)

The Preamble to The Bill of Rights

Congress of the United States begun and held at the City of New-York, on Wednesday the fourth of March, one thousand seven hundred and eighty nine.

The Conventions of a number of the States, having at the time of their adopting the Constitution, expressed a desire, in order to prevent misconstruction or abuse of its powers, that further declaratory and restrictive clauses should be added: And as extending the ground of public confidence in the Government, will best ensure the beneficent ends of its institution.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, two thirds of both Houses concurring, that the following Articles be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States, as amendments to the Constitution of the United States, all, or any of which Articles, when ratified by three fourths of the said Legislatures, to be valid to all intents and purposes, as part of the said Constitution; viz.

Articles in addition to, and Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America, proposed by Congress, and ratified by the Legislatures of the several States, pursuant to the fifth Article of the original Constitution.

Note: The following text is a transcription of the first ten amendments to the Constitution in their original form. These amendments were ratified December 15, 1791, and form what is known as the "Bill of Rights."

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Amendment II

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

Amendment III

No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

Amendment IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Amendment V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Amendment VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defence.

Amendment VII

In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

Amendment VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Amendment IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Amendment X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

Amendment XI

The Judicial power of the United States shall not be construed to extend to any suit in law or equity, commenced or prosecuted against one of the United States by Citizens of another State, or by Citizens or Subjects of any Foreign State.

Amendment XII

The Electors shall meet in their respective states and vote by ballot for President and Vice-President, one of whom, at least, shall not be an inhabitant of the same state with themselves; they shall name in their ballots the

person voted for as President, and in distinct ballots the person voted for as Vice-President, and they shall make distinct lists of all persons voted for as President, and of all persons voted for as Vice-President, and of the number of votes for each, which lists they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to the seat of the government of the United States, directed to the President of the Senate; — the President of the Senate shall, in the presence of the Senate and House of Representatives, open all the certificates and the votes shall then be counted; — The person having the greatest number of votes for President, shall be the President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of Electors appointed; and if no person have such majority, then from the persons having the highest numbers not exceeding three on the list of those voted for as President, the House of Representatives shall choose immediately, by ballot, the President. But in choosing the President, the votes shall be taken by states, the representation from each state having one vote; a quorum for this purpose shall consist of a member or members from two-thirds of the states, and a majority of all the states shall be necessary to a choice. [And if the House of Representatives shall not choose a President whenever the right of choice shall devolve upon them, before the fourth day of March next following, then the Vice-President shall act as President, as in case of the death or other constitutional disability of the President. —]* The person having the greatest number of votes as Vice-President, shall be the Vice-President, if such number be a majority of the whole number of Electors appointed, and if no person have a majority, then from the two highest numbers on the list, the Senate shall choose the Vice-President; a quorum for the purpose shall consist of two-thirds of the whole number of Senators, and a majority of the whole number shall be necessary to a choice. But no person constitutionally ineligible to the office of President shall be eligible to that of Vice-President of the United States.

**Superseded by Section 3 of the 20th amendment.*

Amendment XIII

Section 1.

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XIV

Section 1.

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Section 2.

Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice-President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the Executive and Judicial officers of a State, or the members of the Legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age,* and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State.

Section 3.

No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.

Section 4.

The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. But neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void.

Section 5.

The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

**Changed by Section 1 of the 26th amendment.*

Amendment XV

Section 1.

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude—

Section 2.

The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XVI

The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several States, and without regard to any census or enumeration.

Amendment XVII

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, elected by the people thereof, for six years; and each Senator shall have one vote. The electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State legislatures.

When vacancies happen in the representation of any State in the Senate, the executive authority of such State shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies: *Provided*, That the legislature of any State may empower the executive thereof to make temporary appointments until the people fill the vacancies by election as the legislature may direct.

This amendment shall not be so construed as to affect the election or term of any Senator chosen before it becomes valid as part of the Constitution.

Amendment XVIII

Section 1.

After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

Section 2.

The Congress and the several States shall have concurrent power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Section 3.

This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the States by the Congress.

Amendment XIX

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XX

Section 1.

The terms of the President and the Vice President shall end at noon on the 20th day of January, and the terms of Senators and Representatives at noon on the 3d day of January, of the years in which such terms would have ended if this article had not been ratified; and the terms of their successors shall then begin.

Section 2.

The Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and such meeting shall begin at noon on the 3d day of January, unless they shall by law appoint a different day.

Section 3.

If, at the time fixed for the beginning of the term of the President, the President elect shall have died, the Vice President elect shall become President. If a President shall not have been chosen before the time fixed for the beginning of his term, or if the President elect shall have failed to qualify, then the Vice President elect shall act as President until a President shall have qualified; and the Congress may by law provide for the case wherein neither a President elect nor a Vice President elect shall have qualified, declaring who shall then act as President, or the manner in which one who is to act shall be selected, and such person shall act accordingly until a President or Vice President shall have qualified.

Section 4.

The Congress may by law provide for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the House of Representatives may choose a President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them, and for the case of the death of any of the persons from whom the Senate may choose a Vice President whenever the right of choice shall have devolved upon them.

Section 5.

Sections 1 and 2 shall take effect on the 15th day of October following the ratification of this article.

Section 6.

This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission.

Amendment XXI

Section 1.

The eighteenth article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States is hereby repealed.

Section 2.

The transportation or importation into any State, Territory, or possession of the United States for delivery or use therein of intoxicating liquors, in violation of the laws thereof, is hereby prohibited.

Section 3.

This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by conventions in the several States, as provided in the Constitution, within seven years from the date of the submission hereof to the States by the Congress.

Amendment XXII

Section 1.

No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of the President more than once. But this Article shall not apply to any person holding the office of President when this Article was proposed by the Congress, and shall not prevent any person who may be holding the office of President, or acting as President, during the term within which this Article becomes operative from holding the office of President or acting as President during the remainder of such term.

Section 2.

This article shall be inoperative unless it shall have been ratified as an amendment to the Constitution by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within seven years from the date of its submission to the States by the Congress.

Amendment XXIII

Section 1.

The District constituting the seat of Government of the United States shall appoint in such manner as the Congress may direct:

A number of electors of President and Vice President equal to the whole number of Senators and Representatives in Congress to which the District would be entitled if it were a State, but in no event more than the least populous State; they shall be in addition to those appointed by the States, but they shall be considered, for the purposes of the election of President and Vice President, to be electors appointed by a State; and they shall meet in the District and perform such duties as provided by the twelfth article of amendment.

Section 2.

The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XXIV

Section 1.

The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice President, for electors for President or Vice President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.

Section 2.

The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XXV

Section 1.

In case of the removal of the President from office or of his death or resignation, the Vice President shall become President.

Section 2.

Whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the Vice President, the President shall nominate a Vice President who shall take office upon confirmation by a majority vote of both Houses of Congress.

Section 3.

Whenever the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that he is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, and until

he transmits to them a written declaration to the contrary, such powers and duties shall be discharged by the Vice President as Acting President.

Section 4.

Whenever the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive departments or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall immediately assume the powers and duties of the office as Acting President.

Thereafter, when the President transmits to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives his written declaration that no inability exists, he shall resume the powers and duties of his office unless the Vice President and a majority of either the principal officers of the executive department or of such other body as Congress may by law provide, transmit within four days to the President pro tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office. Thereupon Congress shall decide the issue, assembling within forty-eight hours for that purpose if not in session. If the Congress, within twenty-one days after receipt of the latter written declaration, or, if Congress is not in session, within twenty-one days after Congress is required to assemble, determines by two-thirds vote of both Houses that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office, the Vice President shall continue to discharge the same as Acting President; otherwise, the President shall resume the powers and duties of his office.

Amendment XXVI

Section 1.

The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

Section 2.

The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Amendment XXVII

No law, varying the compensation for the services of the Senators and Representatives, shall take effect, until an election of Representatives shall have intervened.

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PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Presidents of the United States of America

Order	Election Year	President
1	1788–1789	George Washington
1	1792	George Washington

Order	Election Year	President
2	1796	John Adams
3	1800	Thomas Jefferson
3	1804	Thomas Jefferson
4	1808	James Madison
4	1812	James Madison
5	1816	James Monroe
5	1820	James Monroe
6	1824	John Quincy Adams
7	1828	Andrew Jackson
7	1832	Andrew Jackson
8	1836	Martin Van Buren
9	1840	William Henry Harrison
10	1840	John Tyler
11	1844	James K. Polk
12	1848	Zachary Taylor
13	1848	Mallard Fillmore
14	1852	Franklin Pierce
15	1856	James Buchanan
16	1860	Abraham Lincoln
16	1864	Abraham Lincoln
17	1864	Andrew Johnson
18	1868	Ulysses S. Grant
18	1872	Ulysses S. Grant
19	1876	Rutherford B. Hayes
20	1880	James A. Garfield
21	1880	Chester A. Arthur
22	1884	Grover Cleveland

Order	Election Year	President
23	1888	Benjamin Harrison
24	1892	Grover Cleveland
25	1896	William McKinley
25	1900	William McKinley
26	1904	Theodore Roosevelt
27	1908	William Howard Taft
28	1912	Woodrow Wilson
28	1916	Woodrow Wilson
29	1920	Warren G. Harding
30	1924	Calvin Coolidge
31	1928	Herbert Hoover
32	1932	Franklin D. Roosevelt
32	1936	Franklin D. Roosevelt
32	1940	Franklin D. Roosevelt
32	1944	Franklin D. Roosevelt
33	1948	Harry S. Truman
34	1952	Dwight D. Eisenhower
34	1956	Dwight D. Eisenhower
35	1960	John F. Kennedy
36	1964	Lyndon B. Johnson
37	1968	Richard Nixon
37	1972	Richard Nixon
38	1972	Gerald Ford
39	1976	Jimmy Carter
40	1980	Ronald Reagan
40	1984	Ronald Reagan
41	1988	George H. W. Bush

Order	Election Year	President
42	1992	Bill Clinton
42	1996	Bill Clinton
43	2000	George W. Bush
43	2004	George W. Bush
44	2008	Barack Obama
44	2012	Barack Obama

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U.S. POLITICAL MAP



(credit: U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, The National Atlas of the United States of America/nationalatlas.gov)

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U.S. TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP



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22. Panama
23. Little Rock, AR
24. Nicaragua

25. Moscow
26. Beijing
27. Cambodia

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