

Chapter 1 — What is History?

What is history, and why should we study it?

1.1 – Introduction

More than 200,000 people gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., on a hot August day in 1963. There they heard Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. give one of the most powerful speeches in U.S. history. His "I have a dream" speech was a watershed event of the civil rights movement.

By speaking on the steps of the memorial, King underscored the historical connection between the civil rights movement and President Abraham Lincoln's efforts to end slavery. In 1863, at the height of the Civil War, Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing slaves in Confederate states. Later that year, in his famous Gettysburg Address, Lincoln reminded the nation why slavery must end: "Fourscore and seven years ago," he began, "our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." The words of the Gettysburg Address are carved on a wall of the Lincoln Memorial.

Speaking a century later, King echoed Lincoln's words:

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity. But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. . . Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice.

—Martin Luther King Jr., "I have a dream" speech, 1963

By beginning his speech with a reference to the past, King made the point that history matters. What happened long ago shapes how we live today. What he said next made another point: We are not prisoners of the past. If we can dream of a better tomorrow, it lies in our power to shape the history to come.

1.2 – History: The Past and the Stories We Tell About It

The term history can mean several related things. It can refer to events in the past, as in the history of a family. It can also refer to the stories we tell about the past. In this way, just about anyone can be a historian, or someone who reconstructs and retells stories of the past. History is also an academic, or scholarly, discipline—like economics, physics, or mathematics—and is taught and studied in schools.

This chapter considers history in each of these dimensions: as the past, as stories about the past, and as an academic subject. Its main focus, however, is on the writing, or reconstruction, of history and on how historians do their work.

History Begins with a Question or Problem

Historians begin their work with a question they hope to answer or a problem they wish to solve. For example, a historian might start with the question, Was the Civil War inevitable? Next, he or she gathers facts and information related to the question. This material becomes the evidence the historian uses to reconstruct the past. Evidence is information that can be used to prove a statement or support a conclusion.

Historical evidence can come in many forms. It might be an old letter or manuscript. Or it might be an artifact—a human-made object—such as a tool, a weapon, or part of a building. Evidence can also be found in photographs, recorded music, and old movies. And, of course, it can be found in books, magazines, and newspapers, as well as in interviews with experts or historical figures.

Historians refer to these various forms of information as sources. There are two basic types of sources on which historians typically rely when writing history. A primary source is a document or other record of past events created by people who were present during those events or during that period. An eyewitness account, such as a Civil War soldier's diary, is an example of a primary source.

Examples of a secondary source include a book or commentary from someone who was not present at the events or perhaps not even alive during that period. Many secondary sources are created long after the events in question. One example is a book about the Civil War written in the 1990s.

Historians Select and Weigh Evidence

All historical evidence, whether primary or secondary, must be critically evaluated. Historians carefully examine each source for the creator's point of view, perspective, or outlook on events. This outlook may be shaped by many factors, such as the person's age, gender, religion, occupation, or political views. For example, a historian would expect that a southern plantation owner in the 1850s would have had a point of view different from that of a northern factory worker.

Sometimes a source contains information or conclusions that reflect a distinct point of view. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but historians are careful to look for signs of bias when analyzing evidence. In general, bias is any factor that might distort or color a person's observations. Bias takes many forms, ranging from a simple friendship or preference for someone to an unfair dislike of a person or group. Whatever its form, bias can make a source less than trustworthy.

Historians Reconstruct and Interpret the Past

Once their evidence is selected and evaluated, historians begin to reconstruct what happened. They often begin by establishing a chronology, or sequence of events in

time. Once historians are certain of the correct order of events, they are better able to make connections among those events. They can identify causes and effects. They can also begin to look for long-range changes and trends that may have developed over many years or even decades. For example, in considering whether the Civil War was inevitable, a historian would examine the events leading up to the war. He or she would also look for points at which war might have been averted.

When writing history, historians do not focus only on facts or chronologies. If they did, history books would be little more than a chronicle, or a simple listing, of what happened year by year. The more challenging part of a historian's task is to interpret the past—to weave together the evidence and produce a story that helps readers understand and draw meaning from history.

The process of finding the meaning or significance of historical events is called historical interpretation. By interpreting history, historians add their analysis of events to the facts they have judged to be true. They consider not only what happened, but also how and why it happened and what effect it had on the people involved. They also consider how those events may have shaped the world today. Each historian brings a particular point of view to this task. At the same time, historians try to ensure that their interpretations are faithful to the facts of history and are supported by the evidence.

History Is Never Finished

History is not science, and it cannot be rigorously tested and proved. Much of history is still open to interpretation. Because historians have their own distinct backgrounds and points of view, their historical interpretations will often differ. They publish their work with the understanding that it will be reviewed, and often criticized, by other historians.

In this way, history continues to be debated and revised. In fact, some people describe history as an ongoing argument about the past. Differences of opinion about how to interpret the past make the academic study of history interesting and vital. This public debate also makes it possible for mistakes made by one historian to be corrected by later historians.

With each new generation of historians come new arguments. As historian Frederick Jackson Turner once wrote, "Each age tries to form its own conception of the past. Each age writes the history of the past anew with reference to the conditions uppermost in its own time." In other words, our understanding of the past is always being shaped by what we, in the present day, bring to it. In that sense, history is never finished.

1.3 – Differing Viewpoints: Historical Interpretations of Christopher Columbus

As historians write history, they analyze and interpret sources. Because they bring different approaches to their work, they often interpret the past in different ways. Consider the following interpretations of one of the best-known figures in our history—Christopher Columbus. Few historians would disagree that his four voyages to the

Americas set in motion events that would change the world. But historians do differ in how they view Columbus and his legacy, or impact on future generations.

Washington Irving: Columbus as Mythic Hero

Nineteenth-century author Washington Irving spent years in Spain researching the life of Columbus. Irving was one of the first American writers to focus on subjects and themes of American life. His four-volume biography of Columbus portrayed the explorer as an American icon, painting him in heroic terms.

Columbus was a man of great and inventive genius . . . His ambition was lofty and noble, inspiring him with high thoughts, and an anxiety to distinguish himself by great achievements . . . His conduct was characterized by the grandeur of his views and the magnanimity [nobility] of his spirit. Instead of ravaging [plundering] the newly found countries, . . . he sought to colonize and cultivate them, to civilize the natives . . . A valiant and indignant spirit . . . a visionary of an uncommon kind.

—Washington Irving, *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, 1828

Irving admitted that Columbus made mistakes, such as enslaving and killing native peoples, but he dismissed them as "errors of the times."

Samuel Eliot Morison: Columbus as Master Mariner

Writing more than a century after Irving, historian Samuel Eliot Morison portrayed Columbus as a real person with both strengths and flaws. Morison, a naval historian, focused on Columbus's skills as a mariner, or sailor and navigator.

Now, more than five hundred years after his birth, . . . [Columbus's discovery of the New World] is celebrated throughout the length and breadth of the Americas, his fame and reputation may be considered secure for all time. He had his faults and his defects, but they were largely the defects of the qualities that made him great—his indomitable will, his superb faith in God and in his own mission as the Christ-bearer to lands beyond the seas, his stubborn persistence despite neglect, poverty and discouragement. But there was no flaw, no dark side to the most outstanding . . . of all his qualities—his seamanship. As a master mariner and navigator, Columbus was supreme in his generation. Never was a title more justly bestowed than the one which he most jealously guarded—Almirante del Mar Océano, Admiral of the Ocean Sea.

—Samuel Eliot Morison, *Christopher Columbus, Mariner*, 1955

Kirkpatrick Sale: Columbus as Overrated Hero

Writer and environmentalist Kirkpatrick Sale is far more critical of Columbus. In a 1990 book, Sale portrays Columbus as a ruthless fortune hunter who set in motion the destruction of native peoples and the American landscape that continues to this day. Sale also takes issue with the view of Columbus as a "master mariner."

For all his navigational skill, about which the salty types make such a fuss, and all his fortuitous headings [accidental but lucky directions], about which they are largely silent, Admiral Colón [Columbus] could be a wretched mariner. The four voyages, properly seen, quite apart from bravery and fortitude [endurance], are replete [filled] with lubberly [clumsy] mistakes, misconceived sailing plans, foolish disregard of elementary maintenance, and stubborn neglect of basic safety . . . Almost every time Colón went wrong it was because he had refused to bend to the inevitabilities of tide and wind and reef or, more arrogantly still, had not bothered to learn about them; the very same reckless courage that led him across the ocean in the first place, and saw him through storm and tumult to return, lay behind his numerous misfortunes.

—Kirkpatrick Sale, *The Conquest of Paradise*, 1990

Different Interpretations Serving Different Purposes

You may be wondering how three writers could produce such different interpretations of the same subject. The answer lies, in part, in each one's purpose in writing about Columbus and his legacy.

Irving was an author and essayist looking for a heroic story that would appeal to American readers in the 1800s. His colorful biography of Columbus was filled with dramatic episodes, with many based more on myth than on reliable sources.

Morison's purpose was quite different. He wanted to rescue Columbus from earlier mythmakers like Irving. A sailor himself, Morison was impressed by Columbus's seafaring skills. He acknowledged that Columbus was not a saint but portrayed him as a master seaman who, through persistence, daring, and courage, changed the course of history.

Sale had yet another purpose. He wanted to show how Columbus's legacy looked from the point of view of its victims—Native Americans and Africans brought as slaves to the Americas. From Sale's perspective, Columbus, and those who followed him across the Atlantic, set in motion a dark history of exploitation and environmental destruction that has been ignored for far too long.

The facts of Columbus's life and legacy have not changed in all this time. But how people view those facts has and will continue to change.

1.4 – Why Study History?

"History is more or less bunk!" said automobile industrialist Henry Ford in a 1916 interview. They were words he would live to regret. Not only was Ford making history by putting Americans into cars they could afford, but he also discovered that learning about the past was fun. Ultimately, he used much of his fortune to create a collection of historic buildings and everyday objects from his era. "We're going to build a museum

that is going to show industrial history," he announced when he began his collection, "and it won't be bunk." The result was the largest indoor-outdoor museum in the world.

For the more than 1 million people who visit the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan, each year, history is anything but bunk. As visitors wander through Greenfield Village, they can imagine what life was like more than a century ago. Re-creations of Thomas Edison's workshop and the Wright brothers' bicycle shop bring visitors face to face with the excitement and frustration of inventing a light bulb or an airplane. By touring the automobile collection, visitors learn how this machine has changed our world. Just as Ford had hoped, seeing the past his way is highly entertaining. But that is only one reason to study history.

History Helps Us Develop Empathy for Others

Studying history can help us develop empathy for others. Empathy is the ability to imagine oneself in another's place and to understand that person's feelings, desires, ideas, and actions. It involves more than just feeling sympathy for other people. Empathy also enables one to "walk in other people's shoes"—to feel "with" them or "as one" with them.

History makes us aware of problems, sorrows, joys, and hardships faced by people in other times and places. As that awareness grows, we have a better chance of understanding our own experiences—both good and bad. We also become more skilled at empathizing with people whose lives are different from our own. As we mature, empathy becomes a useful guide in our relations with other people. As the American writer Robert Penn Warren observed,

History cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and of our common humanity, so that we can better face the future.

—Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War*, 1961

History Makes Us Better Thinkers

"History is a Greek word," wrote British historian Arnold Toynbee, "which means, literally, just investigation." The process of investigating what happened long ago involves analyzing evidence and making judgments about what sources are credible. It also requires evaluating different points of view about what is important and why.

These are all essential critical-thinking skills, not just in the history classroom but also in life. You will need to exercise these skills whenever you make an important decision about your own future. These skills will also help you make more informed decisions about public issues as a citizen and voter.

History Teaches Us to Avoid Errors of the Past

A century ago, Spanish philosopher George Santayana proposed another reason for studying history: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

History is full of examples of failed peoples and nations, and the study of history can reveal what they did—or did not do—that contributed to their doom. Looking at the failures of the past, novelist Maya Angelou wrote, "History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be un-lived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again."

The more we learn today about the errors of the past, the better chance we have of avoiding them in the future. Viewed in this way, observed writer Norman Cousins, "history is a vast early warning system."

History Is Interesting

"At the heart of good history," wrote screenwriter and journalist Stephen Schiff, "is a naughty little secret: good storytelling." And he should know. For decades, screenwriters and moviemakers have mined history for good stories and brought them to life on screen. Even movies that do not seem particularly historical are often based in part on historical events or settings. Knowing about the history behind these stories can increase your enjoyment of such films.

At a deeper level, figuring out the what and why of historical events is a lot like solving a puzzle or a mystery. Figuring out what happened can be challenging enough. Deciding what is important and why is even more of a challenge. Even so, anyone can do this detective work. And the more of the mystery of history you solve, the more alive the past will become for you.

Summary

History can refer to the past. It can be a reconstruction of the past. It is also an academic subject. Historians use various tools and techniques to reconstruct history. They try to make their accounts faithful to historical facts and events, as they understand them, while also interpreting those events.

Evidence Historians gather facts and information about people and events in history. A selection of this information becomes the evidence on which they base their historical accounts.

Primary sources Historians use primary sources, including written documents, photographs, films, and other records created by people who took part in historical events.

Secondary sources Historians use secondary sources, such as written documents and other information created by people who were not involved in the historical events in question.

Point of view Historians consider the points of view and the biases of the people who created their sources.

Historical interpretation While recounting the facts of history, historians also interpret the evidence. They assign meaning or significance to historical events. Historians often differ in their interpretations of history, which can lead to lively debates over historical issues.

Why study history The study of history can help people develop greater empathy for others, become better thinkers, and avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

Chapter 2 — Defining and Debating America's Founding Ideals

What are America's founding ideals, and why are they important?

2.1 – Introduction

On a June day in 1776, Thomas Jefferson set to work in a rented room in Philadelphia. His task was to draft a document that would explain to the world why Great Britain's 13 American colonies were declaring themselves to be "free and independent states." The Second Continental Congress had appointed a five-man committee to draft this declaration of independence. At 33, Jefferson was one of the committee's youngest and least experienced members, but his training in law and political philosophy had prepared him for the task. He picked up his pen and began to write words that would change the world.

Had he been working at home, Jefferson might have turned to his large library for inspiration. Instead, he relied on what was in his head to make the declaration "an expression of the American mind." He began,

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.

—Thomas Jefferson, *Declaration of Independence*, 1776

In these two sentences, Jefferson set forth a vision of a new nation based on ideals. An ideal is a principle or standard of perfection that we are always trying to achieve. In the years leading up to the Declaration, the ideals that Jefferson mentioned had been written about and discussed by many colonists. Since that time, Americans have sometimes fought for and sometimes ignored these ideals. Yet, throughout the years, Jefferson's words have continued to provide a vision of what it means to be an American. In this chapter, you will read about our nation's founding ideals, how they were defined in 1776, and how they are still being debated today.

2.2 – The First Founding Ideal: Equality

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

When Jefferson wrote these words, this "truth" was anything but self-evident, or obvious. Throughout history, almost all societies had been divided into unequal groups, castes, or social classes. Depending on the place and time, the divisions were described in different terms—patricians and plebeians, lords and serfs, nobles and commoners, masters and slaves. But wherever one looked, some people had far more wealth and power than others. Equality, or the ideal situation in which all people are treated the same way and valued equally, was the exception, not the rule.

Defining Equality in 1776

For many Americans of Jefferson's time, the ideal of equality was based on the Christian belief that all people are equal in God's eyes. The colonists saw themselves as rooting this ideal on American soil. They shunned Europe's social system, with its many ranks of nobility, and prided themselves on having "no rank above that of freeman."

This view of equality, however, ignored the ranks below "freeman." In 1776, there was no equality for the half million slaves who labored in the colonies. Nor was there equality for women, who were viewed as inferior to men in terms of their ability to participate in society.

Debating Equality Today

Over time, Americans have made great progress in expanding equality. Slavery was abolished in 1865. In 1920, a constitutional amendment guaranteed all American women the right to vote. Many laws today ensure equal treatment of all citizens, regardless of age, gender, physical ability, national background, and race.

Yet some people—both past and present—have argued that achieving equal rights does not necessarily mean achieving equality. Americans will not achieve equality, they argue, until we address differences in wealth, education, and power. This "equality of condition" extends to all aspects of life, including living standards, job opportunities, and medical care.

Is equality of condition an achievable goal? If so, how might it best be achieved? These and other questions about equality are likely to be hotly debated for years to come.

2.3 – The Second Founding Ideal: Rights

"They are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights."

The idea that people have certain rights would have seemed self-evident to most Americans in Jefferson's day. Rights are powers or privileges granted to people either by an agreement among themselves or by law. Living in British colonies, Americans believed they were entitled to the "rights of Englishmen." These rights, such as the right to a trial by jury or to be taxed only with their consent, had been established slowly over hundreds of years. The colonists believed, with some justice, that having these rights set them apart from other peoples in the world.

Defining Rights in 1776

Jefferson, however, was not thinking about specific legal or political rights when he wrote of "unalienable rights." He had in mind rights so basic and so essential to being human that no government should take them away. Such rights were not, in his view, limited to the privileges won by the English people. They were rights belonging to all humankind.

This universal definition of rights was strongly influenced by the English philosopher John Locke. Writing a century earlier, Locke had argued that all people earned certain natural rights simply by being born. Locke identified these natural rights as the rights to life, liberty, and property. Locke further argued that the main purpose of governments was to preserve these rights. When a government failed in this duty, citizens had the right to overthrow it.

Debating Rights Today

The debate over what rights our government should preserve began more than two centuries ago, with the writing of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and continues to this day. The Constitution (and its amendments) specifies many basic rights, including the right to vote, to speak freely, to choose one's faith, and to receive fair treatment and equal justice under the law. However, some people argue that the government should also protect certain economic and social rights, such as the right to health care or to a clean environment.

Should our definition of rights be expanded to include new privileges? Or are there limits to the number of rights a government can protect? Either way, who should decide which rights are right for today?

2.4 – The Third Founding Ideal: Liberty

"That among these [rights] are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

By the time Jefferson was writing the Declaration, the colonists had been at war with Britain for more than a year—a war waged in the name of liberty, or freedom. Every colony had its liberty trees, its liberty poles, and its Sons and Daughters of Liberty (groups organizing against the British). Flags proclaimed "Liberty or Death." A recently arrived British immigrant to Maryland said of the colonists, "They are all liberty mad."

Defining Liberty in 1776

Liberty meant different things to different colonists. For many, liberty meant political freedom, or the right to take part in public affairs. It also meant civil liberty, or protection from the power of government to interfere in one's life. Other colonists saw liberty as moral and religious freedom. Liberty was all of this and more.

However colonists defined liberty, most agreed on one point: the opposite of liberty was slavery. "Liberty or slavery is now the question," declared a colonist, arguing for independence in 1776. Such talk raised a troubling question. If so many Americans were so mad about liberty, what should this mean for the one fifth of the colonial population who labored as slaves? On the thorny issue of slavery in a land of liberty, there was no consensus.

Debating Liberty Today

If asked to define liberty today, most Americans would probably say it is the freedom to make choices about who we are, what we believe, and how we live. They would probably also agree that liberty is not absolute. For people to have complete freedom, there must be no restrictions on how they think, speak, or act. They must be aware of what their choices are and have the power to decide among those choices. In all societies, there are limits to liberty. We are not, for example, free to ignore laws or to recklessly endanger others.

Just how liberty should be limited is a matter of debate. For example, most of us support freedom of speech, especially when it applies to speech we agree with. But what about speech that we don't agree with or that hurts others, such as hate speech? Should people be at liberty to say anything they please, no matter how hurtful it is to others? Or should liberty be limited at times to serve a greater good? If so, who should decide how, why, and under what circumstances liberty should be limited?

2.5 – The Fourth Founding Ideal: Opportunity

"That among these [rights] are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Something curious happened to John Locke's definition of natural rights in Jefferson's hands. Locke had included property as the third and last right in his list. But Jefferson changed property to "the pursuit of Happiness." The noted American historian Page Smith wrote of this decision,

The change was significant and very American . . . The kings and potentates, the powers and principalities of this world [would not] have thought of including "happiness" among the rights of a people . . . except for a select and fortunate few. The great mass of people were doomed to labor by the sweat of their brows, tirelessly and ceaselessly, simply in order to survive . . . It was an inspiration on Jefferson's part to replace [property] with "pursuit of happiness" . . . It embedded in the opening sentences of the declaration that comparatively new . . . idea that a life of weary toil . . . was not the only possible destiny of "the people."

—Page Smith, *A New Age Now Begins*, 1976

The destiny that Jefferson imagined was one of endless opportunity, or the chance for people to pursue their hopes and dreams.

Defining Opportunity in 1776

The idea that America was a land of opportunity was as old as the colonies themselves. Very soon after colonist John Smith first set foot in Jamestown in 1607, he proclaimed that here "every man may be master and owner of his owne labour and land." Though Jamestown did not live up to that promise, opportunity was the great lure that drew colonists across the Atlantic to pursue new lives in a new land.

Debating Opportunity Today

More than two centuries after the Declaration of Independence was penned, the ideal of opportunity still draws newcomers to our shores. For most, economic opportunity is the big draw. Here they hope to find work at a decent wage. For others, opportunity means the chance to reunite families, get an education, or live in peace.

For all Americans, the ideal of opportunity raises important questions. Has the United States offered equal opportunity to all of its people? Or have some enjoyed more opportunity to pursue their dreams than have others? Is it enough to "level the playing field" so that everyone has the same chance to succeed in life? Or should special efforts be made to expand opportunities for the least fortunate among us?

2.6 – The Fifth Founding Ideal: Democracy

"That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

In these few words, Jefferson described the basis of a democracy—a system of government founded on the simple principle that the power to rule comes from the consent of the governed. Power is not inherited by family members, as in a monarchy. Nor is it seized and exercised by force, as in a dictatorship. In a democracy, the people have the power to choose their leaders and shape the laws that govern them.

Defining Democracy in 1776

The colonists were familiar with the workings of democracy. For many generations, the people had run their local governments. In town meetings or colonial assemblies, colonists had learned to work together to solve common problems. They knew democracy worked on a small scale. But two questions remained. First, could democracy be made to work in a country spread over more than a thousand miles? In 1776, many people were not sure that it could.

The second question was this: Who should speak for "the governed"? In colonial times, only white, adult, property-owning men were allowed to vote or hold office. This narrow definition of voters did not sit well with many Americans, even then. "How can a Man be said to [be] free and independent," protested citizens of Massachusetts in 1778, "when he has not a voice allowed him" to vote? As for women, their voices were not yet heard at all.

Debating Democracy Today

The debate over who should speak for the governed was long and heated. It took women more than a century of tenacious struggle to gain voting rights. For many minority groups, democracy was denied for even longer. Today, the right to vote is universal for all American citizens over the age of 18.

Having gained the right to vote, however, many people today do not use it. Their lack of participation raises challenging questions. Why do so many Americans choose not to

make their voices heard? Can democracy survive if large numbers of citizens decide not to participate in public affairs?

2.7 – In Pursuit of America's Ideals

"Ideals are like stars," observed Carl Schurz, a German American politician in the late 1800s. "You will not succeed in touching them with your hands, but like the seafaring man on the ocean desert of waters, you choose them as your guides, and, following them, you reach your destiny." In this book, the ideals found in the Declaration of Independence will serve as your guiding stars. You will come upon these ideals again and again—sometimes as points of pride, sometimes as prods to progress, and sometimes as sources of sorrow.

Living up to these ideals has never been a simple thing. Ideals represent the very highest standards, and human beings are far too complex to achieve such perfection. No one illustrates that complexity more clearly than Jefferson. Although Jefferson believed passionately in the Declaration's ideals, he was a slaveholder. Equality and liberty stopped at the borders of his Virginia plantation. Jefferson's pursuit of happiness depended on depriving the people who labored for him as slaves the right to pursue happiness of their own.

Soon after the Continental Congress approved the Declaration of Independence, it appointed a committee to design an official seal for the United States. The final design appears on the back of the one-dollar bill. One side shows an American eagle holding symbols of peace and war, with the eagle facing toward peace. The other shows an unfinished pyramid, symbolizing strength and endurance. Perhaps another reason for the unfinished pyramid was to show that a nation built on ideals is a work in progress. As long as our founding ideals endure, the United States will always be striving to meet them.

Summary

Throughout their history, Americans have been inspired and guided by the ideals in the Declaration of Independence—equality, rights, liberty, opportunity, and democracy. Each generation has struggled with these ideals. The story of their struggles lies at the heart of our nation's history and who we are as Americans.

Equality The Declaration of Independence asserts that "all men are created equal." During the past two centuries, our definition of equality has broadened to include women and minority groups. But we are still debating the role of government in promoting equality today.

Rights The Declaration states that we are all born with "certain unalienable Rights." Just what these rights should be has been the subject of never-ending debates.

Liberty One of the rights mentioned in the Declaration is liberty—the right to speak, act, think, and live freely. However, liberty is never absolute or unlimited. Defining the proper limits to liberty is an unending challenge to a free people.

Opportunity This ideal lies at the heart of the "American dream." It also raises difficult questions about what government should do to promote equal opportunities for all Americans.

Democracy The Declaration of Independence states that governments are created by people in order to "secure these rights." Governments receive their "just powers" to rule from the "consent of the governed." Today we define such governments as democracies.

Chapter 3 — Setting the Geographic Stage

How has geography influenced the development of the United States?

3.1 – Introduction

In late 1606, three small ships crammed with about 105 men and boys set sail from England across the Atlantic. These colonists sought, in the words of a song, "to get the pearl and gold" in "Virginia, Earth's only paradise." They were lured by visions of riches—gold, silver, gems—and the promise of adventure.

Four months later, the travel-weary settlers finally sailed into Chesapeake Bay on the eastern coast of North America. Their first impressions of Virginia exceeded expectations. One voyager wrote of "fair meadows and goodly tall trees, with such fresh waters running through the woods as I was almost ravished at [carried away by] the first site thereof." The settlers chose a site on the James River, which they named for their king, where they established Jamestown, the first permanent English colony in North America.

One of the colony's leaders, John Smith, declared the site "a very fit place for the erecting of a great city." Smith could not have been more wrong. The swampy ground swarmed with mosquitoes. It also lacked good drinking water. By the first winter, more than half the settlers had died of sickness and starvation. To top it all off, the "gold" they found turned out to be iron pyrite, a common mineral also known as "fool's gold." The hoped-for "land of opportunity" had turned out to be a land of daunting challenges. Yet the infant colony survived, due in large part to Smith's leadership and the help of local Indians, who brought the settlers food.

The story of Jamestown's struggle for survival illustrates how geography can affect human events. The North American continent, with its abundant resources, held out the promise of opportunity to all who migrated to its shores. But at the same time, as the Jamestown colonists discovered, this new land also presented those who came with countless obstacles to overcome. In this chapter, you will start to see how geography

has helped shape the course of American history, from the arrival of the first Americans to the present day.

3.2 – A Vast, Varied Land: Physical Features of the United States

The United States today measures more than 3 million square miles in area. Within this vast land lie extremely varied physical features. The country includes almost all types of landforms, from mountains and valleys to plains and plateaus. It also has many bodies of water, from enormous lakes and major rivers to tidewater marshes and swampy bayous. Since humans first arrived, these physical features have influenced patterns of migration and settlement.

Blessings and Barriers

The land and its resources have attracted people and helped shape their ways of life. America's earliest people came to the continent tens of thousands of years ago by following animals they hunted. Their descendants spread across the continent and developed ways of life suited to the land's varied environments. Some groups also shaped their environment to meet their needs—for example, by using fire to keep cleared areas of forest open.

Like these early Indians, settlers from Europe found that the nation's physical features influenced where and how they lived. In the 1500s, the Spanish began settling the Southwest and Southeast in search of gold. Once there, they stayed to run farms and mines. Starting in the 1600s, English colonists adapted to the land and its climate as they began their new lives in North America. For example, the Southeast's broad coastal plain, with its plentiful rainfall and warm temperature, was ideal for farms. By contrast, the Northeast's natural harbors developed into centers of trade and commerce. Because water was the fastest way to transport goods and people in the nation's early days, cities sprang up along internal waterways—such as New Orleans on the Mississippi River and Chicago on Lake Michigan.

Although the land has lured people for thousands of years, it has also posed challenges. For example, the Appalachian Mountains in the East, the Rocky Mountains in the West, and the deserts in the Southwest have been natural barriers to travel and settlement. Harsh climate conditions, poor soil, and lack of water have made living difficult or even impossible in some areas of the country. As you study American history, look for the effect the land has had on the nation's development.

3.3 – A Land of Plenty: Natural Resources of the United States

The abundance of natural resources in the United States has long made it a land of opportunity. Soil, forests, wildlife, and minerals have provided the basis for economic activity since the ancient peoples migrated to North America from Asia. Their descendants developed ways of life suited to local resources. Some tribes followed buffalo on the Great Plains. Others developed economies based on woodland game,

marine mammals, or fish from rivers or oceans. Still others relied on the land itself, clearing trees and diverting waterways to farm the land.

Using the Land Itself: Farming

Dazzled by stories of gold in Mexico and silver in Peru, the Jamestown colonists expected to find these precious metals in Virginia too. To their surprise, they discovered none. They reluctantly turned to farming, growing crops for both subsistence and export.

The first colonists' inability to find these precious minerals had a profound effect on the historical development of the United States. One historian argued,

One of the greatest factors in making land in North America so important was that settlers along the Atlantic Coast failed to find sources of quick mineral riches; consequently they turned to the slower processes of agriculture to gain livelihoods. Farming, from the beginning, became the main way of American frontier life.

—Thomas D. Clark, *Frontier America*, 1969

By frontier, Clark was referring to the land still unknown to, and undeveloped by, the colonists. Once colonists began to prosper by farming, the lure of western farmland drew explorers and then settlers across the Appalachians to the fertile interior plains. Even today, commercial agriculture in this part of the United States produces a significant portion of the world's crops.

Resources of the Woods, Seas, and Subsoil

Parts of our nation that do not have good farmland are rich in other resources. New England's rocky soil and cold winters limited farming to a small scale. Instead, New Englanders built their economy on the resources of the forest and sea. They exported dried fish and whale oil and used their abundant timber to build fishing boats and merchant ships. This successful shipbuilding industry, as well as the area's sheltered harbors, made New England the center of trade with other countries.

Though Virginia did not have the precious metals the colonists had hoped for, other parts of the country did contain mineral resources. As the United States expanded across the continent in the 1800s, settlers found copper, lead, gold, silver, nickel, and zinc far beneath the soil. These minerals became a source of wealth, as well as the raw materials for American factories to produce an astonishing array of goods. Today, every state has an active mining industry, even tiny Rhode Island and tropical Hawaii.

The energy resources of the United States have played a critical role in the country's economic development. Large reserves of fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, and natural gas, helped the United States become an industrial giant in the 1800s. These fuels continue to provide energy for industry and transportation. Water is another important source of energy. Today about 6.5 percent of the country's electric power is generated by

waterpower in hydroelectric dams. Energy resources will continue to play a vital part in the nation's future.

3.4 – A Growing Population: From Farms to Cities

In 1790, the United States held its first census, or official count of its population. Census takers counted about 3.9 million people that year. Of that total, only about 5 percent—roughly 195,000—lived in towns or cities that had more than 2,500 people. The rest lived spread out on farms or in small villages. This seemed just right to Thomas Jefferson, whose ideal was a nation of independent farmers.

Growth of Cities

Despite Jefferson's high opinion of farmers, the United States would not remain a strictly rural nation. Colonial cities like Boston and Philadelphia began as trading centers at transportation crossroads. As they grew, they became centers of wealth, attracting skilled artisans, professional people, and workers from near and far.

As American settlers moved west, cities developed across the landscape. Physical features influenced where cities sprouted, and ease of access was one key to the birth of cities. St. Louis, Missouri, for example, developed at the juncture of the Mississippi and the Missouri rivers. Its location made it a logical place for the exchange and shipment of farm products, raw materials, and finished products. In the 1800s, improvements to transportation—such as roads, canals, steamships, and railroads—linked cities to the outside world and contributed to their expansion.

In the late 1800s, better transportation encouraged the concentration of industries in cities. These new industries, fueled by abundant natural resources, increased the population of cities. The economic opportunity in cities drew migrants from small towns and farms, as well as large numbers of immigrants from other countries.

As historian Arthur Schlesinger observed, "The city, no less than the frontier, has been a major factor in American civilization." Urban centers of population and industry led to the growth of wealth and political power. Such centers also support arts and culture, technological innovations, and the exchange of ideas.

U.S. Population Today

From 1870 to 1920, the number of people living in U.S. cities increased from 10 million to more than 50 million. Population growth continued over the next 100 years. By 2006, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated the nation's population at nearly 300 million. More than 80 percent of those, or 240 million people, live in urban areas. The commerce and industry that these city populations generate contribute significantly to the status of the United States as one of the world's economic giants.

3.5 – United and Divided: Regions and American History

The United States is made up of 50 separate states, each with its own government. The divisions between states are political boundaries—government-defined borders with exact locations. Yet when Americans think about their country, they also divide it into unofficial regions. A region is a geographic area defined by one or more characteristics that set it apart from other areas. A region may be as large as a continent or as small as a city neighborhood characterized by a distinct economic activity, style of home, food or culture, or ethnic group.

Regional Identity

A quick glance over the American landscape today reveals remarkable similarities. From coast to coast, you see the same restaurants, stores, highways, movies, and television programs. A closer look, however, reveals that each region of the country has its own identity. Physical features, climate, and natural resources have shaped each region's economy and settlement patterns. Arid and semiarid regions, for instance, tend to be thinly settled, because they lack adequate water for farming and industry.

A region's "personality" also reflects its population. The traditions and culture of the people living in a region give it its own particular flavor. For example, each region has its own characteristic foods, such as spicy burritos in the Southwest and clam chowder in the Northeast. Each region also has its own speech patterns, building styles, and festivals, to name but a few elements of regional identity.

A region's geographic, economic, and cultural factors also shape its needs and wants. As a result, people within a region often share similar points of view and pursue similar political goals. For example, people in an agricultural region often want to protect the interests of farmers, while those in a manufacturing region tend to look out for the interests of their industries.

Regions and History

Why is it important to understand regions? For one thing, regional differences have shaped American history and culture in significant ways. People who share regional goals, concerns, and a common way of life can develop strong loyalties. These loyalties can cause division among regions. The most dramatic example of this type of division was the American Civil War, which erupted over regional economic and political differences between North and South. Long after the war was over, regional loyalty remained strong among many Southerners.

Regions also give us a useful way to study the history of a country as large and diverse as the United States. Although regional differences may cause tension, our diversity as a nation is one of our greatest strengths. Our economy relies on the varied physical resources of our vast land. Our democracy has benefited from the diverse backgrounds and concerns of people in different regions.

As you study American history, pay attention to how each region developed. Think about its issues and interests. Look for ways that its interaction with other regions influenced the course of national events.

3.6 – One Continent, Two Oceans: The United States and the World

Geography has played a significant role in how Americans interact with the rest of the world. More than 3,000 miles of Atlantic Ocean separate the United States from Europe. The distance across the Pacific Ocean to Asia is twice as far. In the nation's early years, it took weeks or even months for news to travel across these seas. As a result, to most Americans, what happened beyond their own country's shores was of little interest. They well understood George Washington's farewell advice to "steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world."

Territorial Expansion

President Washington wanted no part of political intrigues abroad. However, he foresaw that the new nation would have to interact with the world beyond its borders in other ways. In order to grow, the United States, at various times, negotiated with other countries for more territory. In 1803, the United States purchased enough land from France to double the country's size. Within several decades, it had acquired Florida from Spain and the Oregon Territory from Great Britain. In 1869, the United States agreed to purchase Alaska from Russia. The Hawaiian Islands became U.S. territory three decades later.

Not all territories became part of the United States peacefully. The original 13 states had their birth in the American Revolution against Great Britain. Winning a war with Mexico in the mid-19th century added Texas and the American Southwest to the United States. With the addition of this land, the United States spanned the continent of North America, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific.

Foreign Trade

Despite the country's isolated location between these two oceans, Americans have always engaged in international commerce. Even the original colonists traded products across the Atlantic. The first settlers at Jamestown eventually built their economy around shipping tobacco to England for sale. By 1750, the colonies were producing a variety of cash crops for sale overseas. Soon after the American Revolution, Americans began trading with Asia.

As the country industrialized during the 1800s, foreign trade also expanded. Agricultural products still led U.S. exports, but manufactured goods and natural resources, such as iron ore, were shipped abroad for sale too. Americans were also buying a wide array of imported goods, from Chinese tea to English teapots.

During the 1900s, the United States developed trade relationships with countries around the world. By the second half of the 20th century, globalization—the process by which cultures, economies, and politics of nations around the world become integrated—had taken hold. Today, the United States is a leader of the global economy and maintains trade relationships with most other countries of the world.

Immigration

President John F. Kennedy referred to the United States as "a nation of immigrants." Indeed, everyone in this country is descended, however distantly, from someone from another land. Thus, our links to the outside world are familial and cultural, as well as commercial. The opportunities offered by the land and its resources—in addition to the ideals of equality, rights, liberty, and democracy—continue to draw people to our shores. As you study American history, look at the role of the United States in its interactions with the world.

Summary

North America's physical geography has played various roles in the course of U.S. history. The land's size, landforms, natural resources, and location have all influenced the nation's historical, cultural, and economic development.

Physical features Almost every type of landform and body of water exists in the United States. Some have stood as barriers to movement. Others have proved to be suitable locations for settlement, offering a variety of economic opportunities.

Natural resources The lands of the United States offer an abundance of natural resources, which have helped the country establish and sustain itself. Resources such as fertile soil, forests, minerals, and fossil fuels have shaped the economies and cultures of the United States.

Regions Different parts of the United States have developed their own regional identities. At times, regional differences have threatened national unity, but they have also enriched American life and culture.

Population Over more than two centuries, the U.S. population has grown from fewer than 4 million to nearly 300 million. Urbanization has rapidly turned the nation into a country of cities.

World leader The Atlantic and Pacific oceans could have isolated the United States from events elsewhere in the world. However, interactions with other nations, through territorial expansion, immigration, and globalization, have helped make the United States a world leader.

Chapter 4 — The Colonial Roots of America's Founding Ideals

How did the colonial period help to shape America's five founding ideals?

4.1 – Introduction

The year was 1620. A group of 102 passengers were gathered on the *Mayflower*, a small ship anchored off the coast of Massachusetts. They had traveled from England to join the colony already established in Virginia. However, storms had blown their ship off course, carrying them hundreds of miles north to Cape Cod. Worn out by their journey, they decided to settle in Massachusetts.

About one third of the passengers were English Protestant Separatists who had come seeking religious freedom. These Separatists had broken away from the Church of England. Fearing persecution because they had formed their own church, they had fled to Holland. Later they received permission to settle in Virginia.

Other *Mayflower* passengers were simply seeking the opportunity to own land in America. According to Separatist leader William Bradford, some of these "strangers" became rebellious as the ship neared Cape Cod. They said no one "had the power to command them" as they were no longer bound by Virginia laws.

Fearing that a revolt could destroy the colony before it began, the Separatist leaders drew up an agreement known as the Mayflower Compact. The Separatists and the other passengers agreed to live in a "Civil Body Politic." They further agreed to obey "just and equal Laws" enacted by representatives of their choosing "for the general good of the Colony." This was the first written framework for self-government in what is now the United States.

The *Mayflower* passengers established Plymouth Colony, the second English foothold in North America, after Jamestown. Bradford, who became Plymouth's governor, described the Separatists as pilgrims, or people on a religious journey, which is how they are known today. Over the next century and a half, thousands of people would follow them across the Atlantic. For many, though not for all, this settlement would offer liberty, opportunity, and the chance for a new life.

4.2 – Limited Liberty, Opportunity, and Equality

The planting of colonies on the Atlantic shore triggered great changes. It brought together people from three continents—North America, Europe, and Africa—in ways that none of them were prepared for. For many, it opened up a bright new age of liberty, equality, and opportunity. For others, it brought a dark period of suffering and enslavement.

The Lure of the American Colonies: Land and Liberty

The 13 colonies that eventually became the United States were founded in different ways and for different reasons. Virginia was founded by a private trading company.

Some colonies, such as Pennsylvania, were founded by individual proprietors, or owners, who received large land grants from the king. New York was originally founded by the Dutch and later captured by the British. The New England colonies were started by English Protestants called Puritans because they wanted to purify the Church of England. They wanted to create "a city upon a hill," a more perfect society based on their religious beliefs. Georgia began as a home for the poor and for criminals found guilty of not paying their debts.

Like the Jamestown settlement, almost all of the colonies faced hardships in the beginning. By 1700, however, most were thriving, although not always in ways that their founders had hoped. Most proprietors had expected to transplant the society they knew in England. In English society, a small upper class held most of the wealth and power, while the lower classes did most of the work but had few of the rights and received few of the rewards. Most colonists, however, wanted more opportunity. John Smith, a leader of the Jamestown settlement, observed that "no man will go from [England] to have less freedom" in America.

The key to a better life was the abundance of land in the colonies. Land ownership increased economic opportunity and enabled colonists to escape a life of rigid inequality. Historian Eric Foner notes, "Land, English settlers believed, was the basis of liberty. Owning land gave men control over their own labor and, in most colonies, the right to vote." The colonists' access to land, however, also meant a loss of liberty for American Indians and enslaved Africans.

American Indians Suffer from Colonization

The land that drew colonists to America was, of course, already occupied. At first, relations between native peoples and colonists were mutually beneficial. American Indians taught colonists to cultivate native crops like corn, tomatoes, potatoes, and tobacco. They introduced colonists to useful inventions like canoes and snowshoes. In return, American Indians acquired goods from the colonists, such as iron tools, metal pots, guns, and woven cloth. But the Europeans also unwittingly brought diseases that wiped out entire tribes and left others severely weakened.

In addition, settlers eventually stripped eastern tribes of most of their land through purchase, wars, and unfair treaties. A treaty is a formal agreement between two or more peoples or nations. The loss of land deprived Indians of control over resources they needed to maintain their way of life. Also, settlers rarely treated them as equals. Only a few colonial leaders, notably William Penn, founder of Pennsylvania, treated them fairly and paid them for their land.

Freedom for Some, Slavery for Others

Land was the main source of wealth in the American colonies. But without labor to work it, land had little value. Many colonists bought small plots of land of their own rather than working for others. Therefore, large landowners faced a severe labor shortage.

At first, some landowners met their labor needs through contracts with indentured servants. These were poor English settlers who voluntarily gave up their freedom for three to seven years in exchange for passage to America. At the end of their contract, they were released and given a payment known as "freedom dues." However, employers complained that these servants were disrespectful and likely to run away—behavior they blamed on a "fondness for freedom."

In 1619, a Dutch ship captain sold 20 captive Africans to colonists in Virginia. For the next several decades, small numbers of Africans were brought to the colonies. At first, they worked side by side with white indentured servants. A few were even treated as indentured servants, working to earn their freedom. The vast majority, however, were enslaved. Gradually landowners came to depend more and more on slaves to meet their labor needs. Eventually every colony legalized slavery, but most slaves toiled on plantations in the southern colonies. These were huge farms that required a large labor force to grow cash crops—crops sold for profit.

Although slavery in the colonies began for economic reasons, it became firmly rooted in racism. Skin color became the defining trait of a slave. As one colonial government declared, "All Negro, mulatto [of mixed black and white ancestry], and Indian slaves within this dominion ... shall be held to be real estate." Laws established slavery as a lifetime condition, unless an owner granted freedom, and also defined children born of enslaved women as slaves.

Phillis Wheatley, a former slave who became one of the colonies' best-known poets, wrote of the yearning for freedom: "In every human Breast, God has implanted a Principle, which we call Love of Freedom; it is impatient of Oppression, and pants for Deliverance." Although some African Americans escaped the bonds of slavery, freedom did not bring equality. Like American Indians, blacks were viewed as inferior to whites.

4.3 – Colonial Rights and the Growth of Self-Government

In 1744, a doctor touring the colonies wrote of dining at a tavern with

a very mixed company of different nations and religions. There were Scots, English, Dutch, Germans, and Irish; there were Roman Catholics, Churchmen, Presbyterians, Quakers, Newlightmen, Methodists, Seven Day men, Moravians, Anabaptists, and one Jew.

—Hamilton's Itinerarium: *Being a Narrative of a Journey from May to September, 1744*

For all the differences observed by the doctor, these people shared a deep attachment to their rights and freedoms.

The "Rights of Englishmen"

For the majority of colonists, the idea that people were entitled to certain rights and freedoms was rooted in English history. They traced that idea back to the signing of the Magna Carta, or Great Charter, in 1215. This agreement between King John and his rebellious barons listed rights granted by the king to "all the freemen of our kingdom." Some of these rights established a system of justice based on due process of law. Under such a system, a government cannot deprive a person of life, liberty, or property except according to rules established by law.

Furthermore, the king agreed to make no special demands for money without the consent of his barons. This provision later led to the establishment of a legislature, a group of people chosen to make laws. This English lawmaking body was called Parliament. The Magna Carta also laid the foundation for the principle that people cannot be taxed except by their representatives in a legislature. Most importantly, the agreement made it clear that the monarch was not above the law. In contrast, rulers elsewhere typically had unlimited power over their people.

Over time, the "rights of Englishmen" were expanded, but not without conflict. One such conflict was a bitter struggle between King James II and Parliament for control of the English government. In 1688, the king was forced to flee England after a bloodless change of power called the Glorious Revolution. The throne was offered to a Dutch prince, William of Orange, husband of Princess Mary of England. Parliament then enacted the English Bill of Rights, which further limited the power of the monarch. Passed in 1689, this act confirmed that the power to tax rested only with Parliament. The act set forth individual rights, including the right to have a trial by jury and to petition the government for redress of wrongs. It also protected English citizens from "cruel and unusual punishments."

The Right to Self-Government

English colonists brought these ideas about good government with them to America. Separated from England by 3,000 miles of ocean, they needed to make laws suited to life in the colonies. At New England town meetings, for example, townspeople got together to discuss local issues and solve problems by themselves. Such meetings helped lay the early foundations for self-government in the colonies.

Over time, each colony elected a legislature. The first was Virginia's House of Burgesses, formed in 1619. The colonial legislatures were hardly models of democracy, for only white, male landowners could elect representatives. In many colonies, a person had to own a certain amount of property in order to vote. Nevertheless, the legislatures reflected a belief in self-government. These assemblies also affirmed the principle that the colonists could not be taxed except by their elected representatives in the legislatures.

For the colonists, self-government was local, with each colony operating independently of the others. In fact, the colonies were reluctant to work together even to face a common threat. In 1754, after war broke out in the Ohio Valley over rival French and British claims to land, Benjamin Franklin drafted the Albany Plan of Union. It proposed a

confederation, or alliance, of the colonies for their own defense. The idea was as old as ancient Greece, and Franklin could also point to an alliance of six American Indian tribes known as the Iroquois League. Tribal representatives met as a Grand Council to make laws, settle disputes, and plan military strategy. However, Franklin's plan for a colonial Grand Council with the powers to tax and raise an army was quickly rejected. Parliament saw a colonial confederation as a potential threat to its authority, and the colonies were unwilling to pursue the matter.

Seeking Freedom of Religion

Although colonists shared a belief in their right to self-government, they were divided by religion. In the early 1600s, the governments of most countries saw religious diversity as a danger. The Puritans were not the only people who came to America to escape harassment in England for their unorthodox beliefs. Religious persecution also led to the founding of Maryland as a haven for Catholics and Pennsylvania as a refuge for Quakers. Some colonies, such as New Jersey and Pennsylvania, had more religious diversity than others.

Experience with religious persecution did not, however, lead to tolerance. Although the Puritans sought religious freedom for themselves, they refused to grant it to those who did not share their beliefs. In 1635, Puritan leaders in Massachusetts banished Roger Williams, a preacher, for holding "newe and dangerous opinions." Williams went on to found the colony of Rhode Island, where he welcomed colonists of all faiths. He firmly believed that freedom of religion, which he called "liberty of conscience," was compatible with law and order. To make his point, Williams used the example of a society aboard a ship at sea:

There goes many a ship to sea, with ... Papists [Catholics] and Protestants, Jews and Turks [Muslims] ... I affirm, that all the liberty of conscience, that ever I pleaded for, turns on these two hinges—that none of the Papists, Protestants, Jews, or Turks be forced to come to the ship's prayers or worship, nor compelled [kept] from their own particular prayers or worship, if they practice any. I further add that I never denied, that notwithstanding this liberty, the commander of this ship ought to command the ship's course, yea, and also command that justice, peace, and sobriety be kept and practiced, both among the seamen and all the passengers.

—Roger Williams, *Letter to the Town of Providence*, 1655

Elsewhere, religious prejudice was slow to fade. When Quakers came to Virginia, the House of Burgesses tried to drive them out by making it illegal to be "loving to Quakers." In 1649, the proprietor of Maryland tried to end quarreling between Catholics and Protestants by enacting the Act of Religious Toleration. This law declared that no Christian could be in any way "troubled" because of practicing his or her religion. However, it did not apply to non-Christians. Indeed, Jews suffered from prejudice in most colonies and generally did not have the right to vote or hold office. But they were usually allowed to worship and work in peace.

The Right to Free Expression: The Zenger Trial

Governments on both sides of the Atlantic also feared freedom of expression. Even though colonies had their own legislatures, they were also subject to rule by governors appointed by the king. Following English practice for royal officials, these governors did not support freedom of expression. In the colonies, newspaper publishers who criticized governors risked being jailed. In their defense, publishers argued that "there can be ... no such thing as public liberty, without freedom of speech."

In 1734, John Peter Zenger, a New York printer, was arrested for publishing "seditious libels"—rebellious statements that are false or damaging—about the governor of New York. At the trial, the judge instructed the jury to consider only whether Zenger had published the damaging remarks without regard to their truthfulness. Zenger's attorney, Andrew Hamilton, asked the jury to consider whether the remarks were true, arguing that a free people should "have a right publicly to remonstrate against the abuses of power in the strongest terms." The jury found Zenger not guilty, and he was freed. The verdict in the 1735 Zenger trial helped promote the idea that the press should have the freedom to print the truth, and that this freedom is a right that should be protected.

The Right to Think Freely: The Great Awakening

The Zenger trial took place during a period of religious revival known as the Great Awakening. Beginning in the 1730s, traveling preachers toured the colonies, attracting huge crowds to their emotional gatherings. Critics of this revival declared that the preachers were encouraging disrespect for "the established church and her ministers." They were right. As historian Curtis Nettels observed in 1963,

The Great Awakening popularized the idea that the truth was to be found by each person in the Bible—not in man—made laws, sermons, or creeds. Authorities who violated the divine law did not merit respect... here were the seeds of revolution.

Although the Great Awakening was concerned mainly with spiritual matters, it had a broader impact, as Nettels suggests. It encouraged people to question authority and think for themselves. One revival preacher proclaimed, "The common people claim as good a right to judge and act for themselves in matters of religion as civil rulers or the learned clergy." As the colonists became more comfortable thinking freely about religious matters, they would also begin to think and speak more freely about political matters.

Summary

Between 1607 and 1733, English settlers established 13 colonies in North America. The development of colonial economies and governments showed that the ideals on which the United States would be founded had begun to take root. However, those ideals were still far from being realized.

Land and liberty Many settlers were attracted to the colonies by the opportunity to acquire land. They saw land ownership as the basis of liberty. Those who could acquire enough land could enjoy the rewards of their labor and gained the right to vote.

American Indians Opportunity for colonists came at a high cost for Indians. They lost their land and suffered from diseases brought from Europe by the colonists.

Slavery The first African slaves were brought to Virginia in 1619. Over time, slavery spread to every colony. However, the majority of slaves worked on southern plantations.

The Rights of Englishmen English colonists were deeply attached to their rights as Englishmen. These rights were rooted in the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights.

Self-government with the Virginia House of Burgesses, each colony established its own government with an elected legislature. Rejection of the Albany Plan of Union showed that each colony cherished running its own affairs.

Freedom of religion Many religious groups, such as Puritans, Quakers, Catholics, and Jews, came in search of religious freedom. The Maryland Act of Religious Toleration recognized the need to accept religious differences.

Freedom of expression and thought The Zenger trial was a victory for freedom of the press in the colonies. The Great Awakening encouraged people to question authority and think for themselves.

Chapter 5 — Americans Revolt

Were the American colonists justified in rebelling against British rule?

5.1 – Introduction

In 1770, the colonists of New York City erected a large statue of King George III on horseback. The 4,000-pound statue stood in Bowling Green, a public park near the southern tip of Manhattan. It was made of lead and was gilded to shine like pure gold. Over the next few years, the statue dominated the green, symbolizing loyalty to the king.

On July 9, 1776, the newly written Declaration of Independence was read aloud at a public gathering in New York City. The reading of the Declaration spelled doom for the King George statue. In a burst of patriotism, angry New Yorkers swarmed Bowling Green. They flung ropes around the statue and pulled it down. They cut off the king's head and set it aside, planning to impale it on a spike later. Then they chopped the rest of the statue into pieces. In the midst of all the chaos, someone stole the head; to this day, it has never been found. Many of the remaining lumps of lead were melted down to make bullets to fire at British soldiers.

What caused the conversion of these colonists from loyal British subjects to unruly vandals? Actually, their change in attitude was gradual and cumulative. Trouble had been brewing in the colonies for years.

By 1776, most colonists belonged to one of three groups, based on their views of British rule. One group was the Loyalists, who staunchly supported the British government. A second group was the Patriots, who opposed British rule and believed the colonists should separate from Britain immediately and by any means necessary. These were the people who tore down the statue of the king. The third group was the Moderates. The Moderates were unhappy with aspects of British rule, but they were cautious about the possible effects of severing ties with Britain. They hoped that the problems could be resolved peacefully. A peaceful solution was a tall order, though, given the growing antagonism between Britain and the colonies.

5.2 – The Road to Revolution

The toppling of the King George statue came on the eve of the American Revolution. But there had been discontent in the colonies for more than two decades. Some problems dated back to a war that took place in North America from 1754 to 1763. That war was part of a worldwide struggle between France and Britain for territory and power. Because many American Indians fought on the side of France, colonists called it the French and Indian War. Britain won the war, but that victory set it on a collision course with its 13 American colonies.

Britain Imposes New Regulations and Taxes

Britain now had to control a much larger empire in North America and wanted to prevent further conflict with the tribes who had been France's allies. Therefore, Parliament

passed the Proclamation of 1763, which declared that colonists could not settle west of the Appalachian Mountains. However, many colonists continued to move west. To help keep peace on the western frontier, Britain built a long chain of forts and sent more troops. It thought the colonies should help pay for this protection, but the colonists believed they could defend themselves. They also mistrusted having a large British army in their midst during peacetime.

Nevertheless, Parliament decided to raise revenue from the colonies to pay for the troops. At the time, citizens in Britain paid heavier taxes than they did in the colonies, and Parliament thought the colonists should pay their share. In 1764, it passed the Sugar Act, which placed customs duties on sugar and other non-British imports. In the past, such sales taxes were designed to regulate trade and encourage colonists to buy British goods. Also, these taxes were not enforced. The Sugar Act was the first tax by Parliament that was enforced by Britain. Colonial protests were limited, though, because the law mainly affected merchants in New England and the Middle Colonies.

In 1765, however, Parliament caused an uproar throughout the colonies by taking a new step to raise revenue. It passed the Stamp Act, which required colonists to buy a stamp for every piece of paper they used. Newspapers and documents had to be printed on stamped paper. Even playing cards had to carry a stamp. Stamp taxes were already common in Britain, but this was the first stamp tax that Parliament levied on the colonists. Furthermore, unlike the Sugar Act, the Stamp Act affected a wide range of people throughout the colonies.

The colonists argued that as British citizens they could be directly taxed only by their elected representatives. They were represented in the colonial legislatures but not in Parliament. They recognized that Parliament could regulate trade, but they saw its direct taxes as tyranny, or unjust use of government power. Patrick Henry, a Virginia lawyer and legislator, railed about "dying liberty." "No taxation without representation!" became the rallying cry for colonial protests.

After months of colonial unrest, Parliament repealed the Stamp Act in 1766. At the same time, however, it passed the Declaratory Act reaffirming its right to govern the colonies. The act stated that the colonies "have been, are, and of right ought to be, subordinate unto, and dependent upon the imperial crown and Parliament of Great Britain." Parliament declared that it could make laws binding the colonies "in all cases whatsoever." Over the next several years, it imposed new taxes and regulations, causing colonial resentment to rise.

The Colonies Increasingly Resist British Authority

The colonists were not used to Parliament asserting its authority. For 150 years, Britain had maintained an unofficial policy of salutary neglect, or healthy disregard, letting the colonies pretty much run themselves. While each colony had a royal governor, it also had its own legislature, laws, and taxes. Although the colonists were subject to British laws, they often ignored the inconvenient ones. During this long period, they had come to believe that they had the ability and right to manage their own affairs.

In 1767, Parliament passed the Townshend Acts, a set of customs duties on British glass, lead, paints, paper, and tea. Since the colonists had admitted Britain's right to regulate trade, Parliament thought they had little reason to protest. However, these duties were intended to raise revenue, so the colonists saw them as direct taxes in disguise. Samuel Adams of Boston was one of the key leaders who rallied colonists to defy the British.

One main form of protest was a boycott. This was a peaceful protest in which people refused to buy or use British goods. By boycotting British goods, the colonists hoped to influence British merchants to put pressure on Parliament to change its policies.

Relations with the British were very tense in Boston. On March 5, 1770, a group of residents confronted British soldiers on the street. A fight broke out, and the soldiers opened fire, killing five colonists. Samuel Adams called the killings a massacre. Paul Revere, a local silversmith, made an engraving that showed soldiers firing at peaceful, unarmed citizens. Prints were distributed throughout the colonies, and the event became known as the Boston Massacre.

On the same day as the Boston Massacre, Parliament repealed most of the Townshend duties, partly in response to colonial boycotts. Parliament retained the tea tax, though, to reaffirm its authority. The repeal of most of the Townshend duties appeased many colonists, so tensions died down. Adams tried to keep the spirit of protest alive, however, by organizing groups of letter writers—known as committees of correspondence—to spread news about British actions to towns throughout Massachusetts. Eventually, committees of correspondence formed in every one of the colonies.

In 1773, Parliament unintentionally sparked new protests by passing the Tea Act, which gave the British East India Company the sole right to sell tea in the colonies. The act was intended to help the struggling company, but angry colonists saw this complete control of the tea trade as a threat to colonial merchants. Committees of correspondence spread the word to boycott the company's tea. Some colonists took stronger action by destroying tea shipments, most famously in Boston. On the night of December 16, men dressed as Mohawk Indians boarded three British tea ships in Boston Harbor. They broke open the tea chests and threw about 90,000 pounds of tea into the water.

This protest, which became known as the Boston Tea Party, brought down the wrath of the British government. In 1774, Parliament passed a series of laws so harsh that the colonists called them the Intolerable Acts. These laws closed Boston Harbor, shut down the civilian courts, and placed Massachusetts under firm British control. More troops were sent to Boston.

These measures prompted anger throughout the colonies. George Washington, a Virginian, called the policies "repugnant to every principle of natural justice." Many men

and women throughout the colonies began to think of themselves firmly as Patriots working together to oppose British rule.

The Fighting Begins

After the Intolerable Acts, the colonists organized another boycott of British goods. They also began to set up militias. These were groups of men, mostly local farmers and laborers, who volunteered to be soldiers during emergencies. In New England, the militias called themselves Minutemen because they claimed that they could be ready to fight in 60 seconds.

On the evening of April 18, 1775, the Minutemen were called into action. About 700 British soldiers were marching from Boston to seize a stockpile of Patriot munitions in Concord, Massachusetts. In the early morning, they reached the village of Lexington, where 70 to 80 Minutemen were waiting for them. No one is sure who fired first, but a shot rang out. The British then unleashed a volley of bullets, killing 8 colonists and wounding 10.

The British continued six miles to Concord, where they ran into several hundred Minutemen. In a short battle at Concord's North Bridge, the colonists routed the British and sent them fleeing back to Boston. During their retreat, the British were constantly assaulted, losing over 200 men. News of the battles quickly spread throughout the colonies. Within days, militia troops by the thousands were camped around Boston, daring the British to fight again.

5.3 – Differing Viewpoints: Four Perspectives on the Colonial Rebellion

The battles at Lexington and Concord signaled that the colonies had rebelled against Britain. But not all colonists supported this rebellion. The three main groups—Loyalists, Patriots, and Moderates—had different views about relations with Britain. The British government had its own perspective.

The British Government

The king and Parliament were united in their belief that the British government had the right to control the American colonies. They believed that all citizens of Britain, no matter where they lived, were represented by Parliament and had a duty to obey British law and pay British taxes. Former Prime Minister George Grenville put it this way:

Protection and obedience are reciprocal. Great Britain protects America; America is bound to yield obedience . . . The nation [Great Britain] has run herself into an immense debt to give them their protection; and now, when they are called upon to contribute a small share toward the public expense, an expense arising from themselves, they renounce your authority.

—George Grenville, from a speech in 1766

The Loyalists

Loyalists wanted to remain subjects of the British Empire. This group included religious leaders, wealthy landowners, and government workers. Some Loyalists were motivated by strong beliefs, such as the view that the king's power came from God and that Britain was treating the colonies fairly. Others were motivated by self-interest, fearing the loss of property or government jobs if a rebellion succeeded. Many, like the minister William Smith, simply felt that the colonies were better off under British rule:

That much of our former felicity was owing to the protection of England is not to be denied; and that we might still derive great advantages from her protection and friendship . . . is equally certain . . . We have long flourished under our Charter Government. What may be the consequences of another form we cannot pronounce with certainty; but this we know, that it is a road we have not travelled, and may be worse than it is described.

—William Smith, Anglican minister, 1776

The Moderates

Moderates may have disagreed with British policy, but they were not openly rebellious. For some, it was mainly a matter of practicality. Perhaps they lived too far away from the conflicts to feel the impact or were too busy with everyday tasks to get involved in politics. For others, principles were the key factor. For example, Quakers did not wish to fight because of their religious beliefs. In general, Moderates sought peaceful solutions to the problems between Britain and the colonies. The following statement by John Dickinson of Pennsylvania was typical of Moderate thinking:

Every government at some time or other falls into wrong measures. These may proceed from mistake or passion. But every such measure does not dissolve the obligation between the governors and the governed. The mistake may be corrected; the passion may subside. It is the duty of the governed to endeavor to rectify the mistake, and to appease the passion.

—John Dickinson, lawyer and colonial delegate, 1767

The Patriots

Patriots were those who had come to believe that the colonies must free themselves from British rule, through armed struggle if necessary. Some were merchants who were angry about British taxes. Some were lawyers who thought the colonies should have more say in making their own laws. Others were working people who believed independence would improve their economic condition. Abigail Adams of Massachusetts cited both economic hardship and the threat to liberties:

We are invaded with fleets and Armies, our commerce not only obstructed, but totally ruined, the courts of Justice shut, many driven out from the Metropolis [Boston], thousands reduced to want, or dependent upon the charity of their neighbors for a daily supply of food, all the Horrors of a civil war threatening us on one hand, and the chains of Slavery ready forged for us on the other.

—Abigail Adams, from a letter written in 1774

5.4 – Declaring Independence

As the conflict between Britain and the colonies escalated, colonial leaders came together in Philadelphia to discuss options. The first meeting of this Continental Congress, in 1774, had recommended boycotts and other actions to protest the Intolerable Acts. At the Second Continental Congress, held in 1775 after the battles at Lexington and Concord, delegates decided to form a new Continental Army. As a commanding general, they chose George Washington, a leading officer in the Virginia militia. The colonies had not declared independence, however. Most colonists still hoped for a peaceful solution.

Colonists Extend an Olive Branch

While the Second Continental Congress was in session, the war around Boston continued. In June 1775, the two sides clashed at the Battle of Bunker Hill. The British won the battle, but they paid a heavy price. More than 1,000 British troops were killed or wounded, while the colonial forces suffered 450 casualties. To some colonists, the high British casualties were proof that the British were not invincible.

Still, Congress hesitated to break with Britain. In July 1775, it sent a petition to King George III affirming loyalty to him, asking for help in addressing their grievances, and expressing hope for a peaceful settlement. This letter came to be called the Olive Branch Petition because olive branches symbolize peace. However, the king refused to receive the petition, having heard the news of Bunker Hill. He proclaimed that the colonists were in "open and avowed rebellion" and that Britain would "bring the traitors to justice."

Thomas Paine Writes Common Sense

Not all colonists supported the Olive Branch Petition. To some, it made no sense to ask for peace while colonists in New England were being killed. This was certainly the opinion of Thomas Paine, a recent immigrant from Britain. Early in 1776, Paine published *Common Sense*, a 47-page pamphlet that made a fervent case for independence. It declared that nobody should be ruled by a king. Paine wrote, "Monarchy and succession have laid . . . the world in blood and ashes."

Paine mocked the idea that Britain should rule the American continent. He argued that British rule had only brought harm to the colonies, declaring that colonial trade had suffered under British control and that the colonies had been dragged into Britain's conflicts with other European countries.

Paine even proposed the kind of government Americans should set up: a representative democracy giving roughly equal weight to each colony. His pamphlet was hugely influential. Within three months, 120,000 copies of *Common Sense* had been sold. Paine's persuasive words fired up the colonists and hastened the movement toward independence.

Enlightenment Ideas Inspire Change

Paine's pamphlet helped spread ideas that were already popular among Patriot leaders. Those ideas stemmed from the Enlightenment, an intellectual movement of the 1600s and 1700s that greatly influenced the colonies. Enlightenment thinkers stressed the value of science and reason, not only for studying the natural world, but also for improving human society and government.

The writings of English philosopher John Locke particularly influenced Patriot thinking. Locke believed that people enjoyed natural rights to life, liberty, and property. Furthermore, he said that governments and citizens are bound by a social contract. People agree to obey their government if it respects their natural rights. If the government fails to do so, people have the right to overthrow it.

The Colonies Declare Independence

As their meeting continued in Philadelphia, many members of the Second Continental Congress had these Enlightenment ideas in mind. On June 7, 1776, Richard Henry Lee of Virginia introduced a resolution proposing independence for the colonies. The Lee Resolution led to formation of a committee to draft a declaration of independence. This committee was made up of Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Robert R. Livingston of New York, and John Adams of Massachusetts.

The task of crafting the words went to Thomas Jefferson. A gifted writer, Jefferson was also a strong believer in natural rights. The Declaration of Independence reflects this thinking when it lists "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" as "unalienable rights" that governments were created to protect.

The Declaration of Independence also states that governments should derive their powers from the consent of the governed, that is, from the people. It asserts that people have the right to alter or abolish a government when it becomes "destructive" of their rights. To illustrate how destructive Britain's rule had been, the Declaration includes a long list of abuses by the king and his government over the years. It then concludes,

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 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.

On July 2, Congress voted for independence by passing the Lee Resolution. Then on July 4 it formally approved the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration was later written on parchment for delegates to sign. In effect, they were signing a formal declaration of war against Britain.

5.5 – Fighting for Independence

At the war's start, the Patriots' prospects were not promising. Britain had a professional, well-trained army of about 40,000 soldiers. It also employed 30,000 German mercenaries, professional soldiers for hire. The Continental Army, on the other hand, was constantly short of soldiers. General Washington seldom had more than 20,000 troops at one time. He had to supplement his regular troops with militia forces. Many of them would fight for a while and then go home to take care of their farms and families.

The Americans Get Off to a Shaky Start

In the summer of 1776, it looked as if Britain might force a quick end to the war. Soon after the Declaration of Independence was signed, the British massed their forces for an attack on New York City. Washington's army tried to hold them off, but the outnumbered, inexperienced Americans were no match for the British professionals. Suffering heavy losses, the Continental Army was forced to retreat.

The battle for New York City was the first of many American losses in the weeks that followed. Time and again, the Americans had to pull back as British forces pursued them out of New York, through New Jersey, and across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania.

By December 1776, Congress had fled Philadelphia in despair. Many of Washington's troops had gone home. Of the few thousand who were left, many were weak and ill. But Washington would not give up. Instead, he planned a surprise attack on German mercenaries wintering in Trenton, New Jersey.

Late on December 25, about 4,000 Americans crossed the ice-choked Delaware River to march on Trenton. There they took the 1,400-man force of Germans by surprise. The mercenaries surrendered after only a brief fight. A week later, the Americans defeated a British force at Princeton, New Jersey. Nathanael Greene, one of Washington's most trusted officers, wrote modestly to Thomas Paine, "The two late actions at Trenton and Princeton have put a very different face upon affairs." Indeed, the two victories gave Americans hope that the cause of liberty was not dead.

Military Strategies Evolve

As the war continued, military leaders on both sides developed new strategies. After his losses around New York, Washington avoided large battles that could put his army at risk. He fought a defensive war by trying to wear out the British rather than soundly defeat them.

The new British strategy was to cut New England off from the rest of the colonies by taking control of New York's Hudson River valley. To do this, Britain sent General John Burgoyne with about 8,000 men south from Canada to Albany, New York. Burgoyne's troops were supposed to join up there with a second British column of about 2,000 men sent to Albany from the west.

Victory at Saratoga Brings Foreign Assistance

Burgoyne's march was dogged by problems. The army's route crossed rugged terrain, and the heavily laden troops had to chop down trees, build bridges, and lay out log roads through swamps. Along the way, there were several battles with militias.

When the British reached Saratoga Springs 30 miles north of Albany, militia troops were there to meet them. Meanwhile, British reinforcements from New York had failed to arrive. Finding himself surrounded, Burgoyne surrendered on October 17, 1777. This decisive American victory in the Battle of Saratoga was a major turning point in the revolution. Until then, the Americans had fought alone. The defeat of Burgoyne encouraged France to enter the war against Britain. French support became critical to the revolution's success.

Washington's Army Winters at Valley Forge

In the winter of 1777–78, the British still occupied Philadelphia. Washington and his army made camp at nearby Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. During that harsh winter, about one fourth of Washington's troops—2,500 men—died from disease and exposure.

Still, Washington held his ragtag army together and continued to train them for battle. When the British abandoned Philadelphia to return to New York City, Washington's forces were ready. In June 1778, they attacked the British at Monmouth, New Jersey. The battle was an American victory, and the British escaped to New York. This was the last major clash in the North.

The War Shifts to the South

Having stalled in the North, the British turned to the South. In December 1778, they captured the key port of Savannah, Georgia, and gained control over the Carolinas. But they did not keep their grip for long.

Wherever they went, the British were harried by American troops fighting in a style that later came to be called guerrilla warfare. Such fighting features small, mobile groups of soldiers who attack swiftly and then shrink back into the landscape. The South, with its tangle of deep woods and swampy terrain, was perfect for guerrilla warfare. The most successful of these fighters was Francis Marion, known as the Swamp Fox. His band of guerrillas frustrated the British by attacking without warning and quickly fading back into the swamps.

Meanwhile, regular American forces in the South engaged the British. After a long season of battles, Lord Charles Cornwallis, the British commander, brought his troops to Yorktown, Virginia.

In the fall of 1781, American troops converged on Yorktown, joined by French soldiers and naval forces. In total, more than 16,000 troops surrounded the 8,000-man British army. The Battle of Yorktown began on October 6 and lasted about two weeks. On October 19, 1781, Cornwallis surrendered.

The War Ends

Yorktown was the last battle of the war, but it took Britain several months to accept defeat. Peace talks began in Paris in 1782, and in September 1783, American and British representatives signed the Treaty of Paris, ending the war. In this treaty, Britain recognized American independence. It also gave up its claims to all lands between the Atlantic coast and the Mississippi River, from Canada south to Florida.

Victory had come at a great cost. At least 6,500 Americans were killed in combat, while another 10,000 died from disease. An additional 8,500 died as British prisoners.

Even so, most Americans savored their victory and looked forward to healing the nation's wounds. That was a big challenge in itself. But Americans faced an even larger and more daunting task: to begin creating a society that embodied the ideals of liberty, equality, and opportunity set forth in the Declaration of Independence. As a first step, they would struggle with the practical issues of forming a government based on the consent of the governed.

Summary

Beginning in the 1760s, many American colonists grew increasingly unhappy with British rule. Eventually they rebelled and declared independence. During the revolution, American forces wore down and defeated the larger and more experienced British army. In 1783, the United States became an independent country.

The Stamp Act After the French and Indian War, Britain passed the Stamp Act to raise revenue in the colonies. Protests against "taxation without representation" led to its repeal.

Differing loyalties Patriots like Samuel Adams resisted all efforts by the British to exert more control over the colonies. Loyalists, in contrast, supported British rule. Moderates had mixed feelings but hoped the differences with Britain could be settled peacefully.

The Intolerable Acts Following the Boston Tea Party, Britain cracked down on resistance with laws known in the colonies as the Intolerable Acts. Boston became an occupied city.

Lexington and Concord Tensions between colonists and British troops in Massachusetts led to armed conflict in Lexington and Concord. These battles helped spark a wider war.

Declaration of Independence On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress approved the Declaration of Independence. It asserted that the colonies were "free and independent states."

Saratoga The Continental Army suffered defeats in the early days of the war. But victory at Saratoga in 1777 turned the tide and brought France into the war as an American ally.

Yorktown The British defeat at Yorktown in 1781 ended the long war. Two years later, Britain recognized American independence in the Treaty of Paris.

Chapter 6 — Creating the Constitution

What is the proper role of a national government?

6.1 – Introduction

In 1782, an army officer wrote a letter to George Washington. In it, he expressed his hope, shared by many of his fellow officers, that the independent American states would be joined into "a kingdom with Washington as the head." The general was appalled. He had spent years in bloody battle working to sever ties with a monarchy. Washington wrote back, "Be assured Sir, no occurrence in the course of the War, has given me more painful sensations than your information of there being such ideas existing in the Army . . . banish these thoughts from your mind."

Like Washington, most Americans did not want to be ruled by a monarch. What they did want, though, was an effective government. In the minds of many, that was not what they had under the Articles of Confederation, the nation's first constitution. Troops who wanted Washington to be king were suffering from Congress's inability to meet the army's basic needs. "On the general subject of supplies," wrote a member of Congress, "we need hardly inform you that our Army is extremely clamorous, we cannot pay them—we can hardly feed them."

Over the next few years, many Americans believed that things were going from bad to worse for the new nation. In 1786, a group of rebellious farmers who could not pay their debts shut down several courthouses in Massachusetts. Congress could not help the state government deal with the rebellion. Some Americans saw this as a sign that the nation was sliding into anarchy.

If a more effective government was needed, how should it be structured? That was the question facing delegates called to a special convention in Philadelphia in 1787. This Constitutional Convention took place in the room on the facing page, in a building now known as Independence Hall. Presiding over the convention was none other than George Washington, the man who would not be king.

6.2 – A Confederation of States

In 1776, the Declaration of Independence had asserted that the colonies were independent states. Even as the war got underway, the legislatures of the 13 states began to write their own constitutions. Within a year, almost all of them had new plans of government reflecting the principles in the Declaration of Independence. In fact, the words of the Declaration were written right into the New York state constitution. However, it was not until almost the end of the war that the states agreed to form a loose confederation.

Comparing State Constitutions

The state constitutions were similar in many ways. They all began with a statement of rights. These rights were guided by three founding ideals expressed in the Declaration

of Independence: equality, freedom, and democracy. Each state constitution separated the powers of government into executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

However, the state constitutions were far from being completely democratic. They did not establish governments by consent of all of the governed. They typically limited voting rights to white men who paid taxes or owned a certain amount of property. Only New Jersey gave voting rights to women and African Americans who owned property. None of the original 13 states' constitutions outlawed slavery, and all states south of Pennsylvania denied slaves equal rights as human beings.

Decisions in Forming a National Government

While the states were writing their constitutions, the Continental Congress was trying to decide how the nation as a whole should be governed. When Congress first met in 1774 to resolve disputes with Britain, it had no authority over the colonial legislatures. Even when directing the war effort, it had no authority over the states, often begging them for soldiers and supplies. Therefore, many members of Congress wanted to form a national government, one that had powers to govern the states. However, they knew this would be a tricky undertaking. After being controlled by Britain for so long, Americans were not inclined to hand over power to another central government—even one they elected.

When Congress drafted the nation's first constitution in 1777, it knew that many Americans feared a powerful national government. For that reason, the proposed Articles of Confederation created a framework for a loose confederation of states. Within this alliance, each state would retain "sovereignty, freedom, and independence." Any power not specifically given to Congress was reserved for the states. This meant that each state could often develop its own policies.

On paper at least, the Articles did give Congress several key powers. Only Congress could declare war, negotiate with foreign countries, and establish a postal system. It could also settle disputes between states. But it had no power to impose taxes, which explains why the Continental Army was so starved of funds. In addition, the Articles did not set up an executive branch to carry out the laws or a judicial branch to settle legal questions.

But even with the war still raging, some states were hesitant to approve a plan of government that would give Congress any control over their affairs. It took three and a half years for ratification of the Articles by all 13 states.

Two Ordinances Lay the Foundation for Land Policy

Despite its limited power, Congress recorded some notable achievements under the Articles of Confederation. Perhaps its most important success was the creation of policies for the settlement of western lands.

In the Treaty of Paris ending the Revolutionary War, Britain gave up control of a region known as the Northwest Territory. No government had yet been established for this large territory that stretched from the Appalachian Mountains west to the Ohio and

Mississippi rivers. Congress wanted to organize this land and sell it to raise revenue. To do so, it passed the Land Ordinance of 1785. An ordinance is a law that sets local regulations.

The Land Ordinance of 1785 set up a system for surveying and dividing land in the new territory. After being surveyed, the land was to be divided into 36-square-mile townships. Each township would be divided into 36 numbered sections of 1 square mile each. Each section would then be divided for sale to settlers and land dealers. Section 16, however, was always set aside for schools.

In 1787, Congress passed the Northwest Ordinance to specify how these western lands would be governed. This ordinance declared that the region would be divided into three to five territories. When a territory had 5,000 free adult men, those men could elect a legislature. When the population reached 60,000 free inhabitants, the legislature could write a constitution and form a government. If Congress approved both, the territory would become a state.

A number of the ordinance's provisions reflected the principle of equality. Each new state would have equal standing with the original states, and its people would enjoy the same freedoms and rights. Furthermore, slavery would be banned in any state formed from the region.

The Northwest Ordinance set up a system that became a general guide for admission of future states. For that reason alone, it is considered the most important law passed during the period of confederation.

6.3 – The Confederation in Crisis

Although Congress under the Articles of Confederation had notable successes, many Americans saw problems with the confederation. Most of these problems stemmed from the fact that the Articles gave so much authority to the states and so little to Congress. George Washington declared that the Articles were no more effective at binding the states together than "a rope of sand."

Trouble with Foreign Countries

Congress's weaknesses were recognized not only at home but also abroad. The lack of central authority made relations with foreign countries more difficult. For example, one British official said it would be better to negotiate with each state than to do business with Congress. When Congress tried to reach a trade agreement with Britain in 1785, Britain refused because it knew the states wouldn't agree to be bound by the accord.

Many foreign countries also questioned the nation's financial stability. The United States had accumulated a huge war debt, mostly to foreign lenders. But Congress lacked funds to pay its debts. The Articles directed the state legislatures to pay taxes to the national treasury based on the value of each state's land. However, Congress could not force the states to pay.

To make matters worse, overseas trade shrank under the confederation. Britain restricted American trade by closing some of its ports to American vessels. These actions hurt the American economy, which depended heavily on the British market. Meanwhile, the United States had little success boosting trade with other countries.

Another problem was national defense. In the Treaty of Paris, Britain had agreed to withdraw troops from the Northwest Territory. Once it saw how weak Congress was, however, it refused to pull them out. Britain and Spain supplied arms to American Indians and urged them to attack settlers. Having disbanded the Continental Army after the war, Congress had no military force to counteract this threat.

Quarrels Between the States

There were troubles between the states, too. As foreign trade declined, the economy relied more on interstate commerce, trade between states. But states often treated each other like separate countries by imposing tariffs, or import taxes, on each other's goods. In theory, Congress had authority to settle tariff disputes between the states, but the states often ignored its decisions.

Money was another divisive issue. The Articles allowed Congress to issue currency, but the states were still allowed to print their own paper money. Because there was no uniform currency, people had little faith in the money. In some cases, it was worth little more than the paper it was printed on. Gold and silver coins were readily accepted as payment, but they were in short supply. The lack of confidence in paper money made interstate commerce and travel even more difficult.

The combination of high debt, weak currency, and falling trade caused the country to slide into an economic depression. This drastic decline, marked by business failures and unemployment, caused discontent to spread throughout the country.

Discontent Fuels Shays' Rebellion in Massachusetts

Farmers were among those who suffered most from the economic depression. Falling crop prices and the loss of foreign markets left many farmers with crippling debts they could not repay. Farmers in western Massachusetts were hit especially hard. Some had their property auctioned off by local courts for nonpayment of debts and taxes. Others were sent to debtors' prison when they could not pay their debts.

In the summer of 1786, armed and angry farmers occupied a courthouse to prevent the court from doing business. In the following weeks, these rebels took over other Massachusetts courts, hoping to prevent trials and imprisonment of debtors. This uprising, known as Shays' Rebellion after its main leader, Daniel Shays, quickly mushroomed. In September 1786, Shays led hundreds of farmers to occupy the courthouse in Springfield, Massachusetts. A few months later, he led about 1,200 farmers to try to seize a weapons stockpile in the same city. This time, the Massachusetts militia stopped them, and the rebellion collapsed.

To face the threat of Shays' Rebellion, Massachusetts had needed funds to hire and supply a larger militia. But Congress had been unable to send money. Instead, private donations from wealthy people had helped the state militia put down the revolt. In the aftermath of Shays' Rebellion, rich businesspeople and landowners were particularly worried about Congress's weakness. They feared that anarchy would engulf the nation. Many Americans were not so pessimistic but did agree that the government should be strengthened.

A Call for a Constitutional Convention

While Shays' Rebellion was erupting in Massachusetts, delegates were gathering at a convention in Annapolis, Maryland. This formal assembly was called to fix trade problems between the states. But the delegates knew they had more serious problems to address.

Two important political leaders, Alexander Hamilton of New York and James Madison of Virginia, were among the delegates. They drafted a request that all states send representatives to a constitutional convention to be held in Philadelphia in May 1787. The purpose would be to revise the Articles of Confederation to create a stronger, more effective system of government.

6.4 – The Constitutional Convention

The Constitutional Convention opened on May 25, 1787. Delegates from every state but Rhode Island gathered in the room where the Declaration of Independence had been signed 11 years before. Congress had instructed them to revise, not replace, the Articles of Confederation. However, many delegates were already convinced that a new constitution was needed. Through months of debate, the delegates would work out this plan of government and then set it forth in a document called the Constitution of the United States.

A Distinguished Group of Delegates

The 55 delegates were the cream of American political life. Historian James McGregor Burns has described them as the "well-bred, the well-fed, the well-read, and the well-wed." All were white men. Among them were former soldiers, governors, members of Congress, and men who had drafted state constitutions. Their average age was 42.

The delegates represented a wide range of personalities and experience, and many were eloquent speakers. At 81, Benjamin Franklin was the senior member. The wisdom and amicable wit of this writer, inventor, and diplomat enlivened the proceedings. George Washington, hero of the Revolution, lent dignity to the gathering. Alexander Hamilton, his former military aide, brought intellectual brilliance. Other delegates, like Roger Sherman of Connecticut, contributed law and business experience. James Madison of Virginia was perhaps the most profound political thinker and the best prepared of all the delegates.

A few key leaders of the Revolution did not attend. Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were serving as representatives of the United States in Europe. Reading a list of the

delegates in Paris, Jefferson described them as "an assembly of demigods." Other leaders, like Samuel Adams, were not there because they opposed efforts to strengthen the national government. Patrick Henry was named as a Virginia delegate but chose to stay home, saying he "smelt a rat." Indeed, many Americans remained fearful of giving a central government too much power.

The Ideas Behind the Constitution

No one had a greater role than Madison. He worked tirelessly to develop and promote the new plan. For his role in shaping the new framework, he is called "the Father of the Constitution."

The delegates' political views were strongly influenced by Enlightenment thinkers. English philosopher John Locke's ideas about natural rights and the social contract helped shape the Declaration of Independence. They would also be guiding principles for drafting the Constitution.

The delegates also looked to the ideas of the Baron de Montesquieu, another Enlightenment thinker. He favored a three-part government with separation of powers between executive, legislative, and judicial branches. These branches would work together in a system of checks and balances, each branch limiting the power of the others. This would prevent tyranny by keeping each branch from seizing excessive power.

The delegates discussed these and other ideas for almost four months. Day after day, through a long, sweltering summer, they would debate, argue, write, revise, and debate some more. As they met, they knew that, once again, they were making history.

The Convention Begins with a Plan from Virginia

The first thing the delegates did was to elect George Washington as presiding officer. Next, they adopted rules of procedure. One was the rule of secrecy. The delegates needed to speak freely and frankly, and they could not do so if the public were watching. So despite the intense summer heat, they shut the windows, drew the drapes, and posted a sentry outside.

The Virginia delegates wanted to establish a strong national government and promptly proposed a plan. The Virginia Plan, written mainly by James Madison, was clearly meant to replace the Articles, not revise them. It called for a national government with three branches, just as Montesquieu had described. The legislative branch would make laws, the executive branch would carry out the laws, and the judicial branch would interpret the laws.

Under the Virginia Plan, the new government would have a bicameral legislature, a lawmaking body made up of two houses. In contrast, the Articles of Confederation had established Congress as a unicameral, or one-house, legislature. The Virginia Plan proposed that representation in the two houses of Congress should be based on the

population of each state. This would give the more populous states more delegates, and therefore more influence, than states with smaller populations.

New Jersey Introduces a Rival Plan

For about two weeks, the delegates discussed the Virginia Plan. Some thought it gave too much power to the national government. Some opposed a bicameral legislature. Moreover, smaller states did not like their representation in Congress being limited by population.

On June 13, William Paterson of New Jersey introduced an alternative to the Virginia Plan. The New Jersey Plan proposed a series of amendments to the Articles of Confederation. It called for a less powerful national government with a unicameral Congress in which all states had equal representation.

Delegates of the smaller states welcomed the New Jersey Plan. But after several days of debate, the convention voted to reject this proposal and return to discussion of the Virginia Plan.

Discontent, Debate, and the Great Compromise

For the next month, the delegates debated the Virginia Plan point by point. They continued to argue about the critical issue of representation in the legislature. Debate grew so heated that delegates from some states threatened to leave the convention.

Finally, Roger Sherman of Connecticut came forward with a compromise designed to satisfy all sides. His plan called for a bicameral legislature with a different form of representation in each house. In the Senate, the states would have equal representation. In the House of Representatives, states would have representation based on their populations. Sherman's plan, known as the Great Compromise, resolved the thorny issue of representation in Congress.

Slavery and Commerce Issues Divide the States

Other issues also divided the delegates. Those from northern and southern states differed strongly on questions of slavery and commerce. A number of northern states wanted to include a provision for abolishing slavery. But most southerners opposed ending a system of labor on which their agricultural economy depended.

Differences over slavery generated strong debate on representation and taxes. Since most slaves lived in the South, southern states wanted slaves to be counted in determining representation in the House of Representatives. Yet they did not want them counted when determining each state's share of taxes to support the national government. In contrast, the northern states wanted slaves to be counted for taxation but not when determining representation.

In the end, the delegates reached another important compromise. For representation in the House, every five slaves would be counted as equal to three whites. The Three-Fifths Compromise settled the dispute, but the contradiction between the ideals of the

Declaration of Independence and the practice of slavery would haunt the country in the decades to come.

North and South also argued over commerce. Northerners favored giving Congress broad powers to control trade. Southerners worried that Congress might outlaw the slave trade and place heavy taxes on southern exports of crops such as cotton and tobacco. Again, the delegates reached a compromise. Congress would have the power to regulate foreign and interstate commerce, but it could not tax exports and it could not outlaw the slave trade until 1808.

Creating the Executive Branch

Another major issue concerned the formation of the executive branch. Some delegates wanted a single executive to head the government. Others were concerned that giving power to a single leader might lead to monarchy or tyranny. They favored an executive committee made up of at least two members. In the end, though, the delegates voted for a single president.

The next question was how to elect the president. Some delegates thought Congress should do it, while others favored popular elections. They finally decided to set up a special body called the Electoral College. This body would be made up of electors from each state who would cast votes to elect the president and vice president. Each state would have as many electors as the number of senators and representatives it sent to Congress.

On September 17, 1787, after months of hard work, the Constitution was signed by 39 of the 42 delegates present. The Constitutional Convention was over, but the Constitution still needed to be ratified by the states. The document began with the ringing words, "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union . . ." Now each state would decide whether this plan of government was indeed "more perfect" and thus worthy of becoming the law of the land.

6.5 – Ratifying the Constitution

The proposed Constitution included a provision for ratification. To go into effect, the plan of government would need to be approved by 9 out of the 13 states. Ratification would take place at state conventions, but it was by no means assured. Many Americans were concerned that the Constitution gave too much power to the national government. As a result, supporters of the Constitution would have to work hard to win its ratification.

Federalists and Anti-Federalists

The people who supported the Constitution called themselves Federalists. They favored a federal government—a strong central government that shared power with the states. Those who preferred a loose association of states with a weaker central government were called Anti-Federalists. The battle between Federalists and Anti-Federalists would be played out in the press, in state legislatures, and at the state ratifying conventions.

Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay led the Federalist campaign. Using the pen name "Publius," they wrote a series of 85 essays designed to win support for the Constitution. These essays, known as *The Federalist Papers*, were published over the course of several months and made a strong case for the new plan of government. Some historians have called their publication one of the most powerful public relations campaigns in history.

In *The Federalist Papers*, Hamilton, Madison, and Jay provided detailed explanations of key parts of the Constitution. On the issue of central power, for example, Madison explained how the system of checks and balances would ensure that no one branch of government would have control over the other two. He also explained why such a system was needed:

If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.

—James Madison, *The Federalist* No. 51, 1788

Because *The Federalist Papers* explain the purpose of the Constitution, people who read these essays today can gain insight into the intentions of the Constitution's original drafters.

The Call for a Bill of Rights

By January 1788, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey had ratified the Constitution. Georgia and Connecticut soon followed. But a bitter debate in Massachusetts brought to the forefront a major Anti-Federalist concern about the Constitution: the lack of a bill of rights.

Anti-Federalists in Massachusetts complained that the Constitution did not adequately protect individual rights and freedoms against encroachment by the national government. They argued that it should be altered to include such rights as the freedoms of speech, religion, and the press. They also wanted guarantees that every citizen would have such rights as the right to trial by jury and protection against unreasonable seizure of property. The lack of such guarantees became a sticking point in many states as the ratification process wore on.

After much debate, Massachusetts agreed to ratify if amendments were added after ratification to protect fundamental rights. A number of other states ratified the Constitution with the same understanding. By the summer of 1788, all but two states had ratified. North Carolina joined the new union in 1789 and Rhode Island in 1790.

With James Madison leading the way, the first Congress of the new government framed the proposed amendments. Madison himself believed that individual rights were already

protected by the Constitution, making the amendments unnecessary. However, his friend Thomas Jefferson helped change his mind. Jefferson wrote from France that "a bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth, general or particular, and what no government should refuse." He argued that the great strength of such a bill of rights was "the legal check which it puts into the hands of the judiciary."

On December 15, 1791, enough states had ratified 10 amendments to make them part of the Constitution. These 10 amendments are known collectively as the Bill of Rights. Over the course of the nation's history, 17 more amendments have been added to the Constitution.

Today the Constitution is the oldest written framework of national government in use anywhere in the world. Forged over the course of a few months in the summer of 1787, the Constitution of the United States has more than stood the test of time.

Summary

After the Revolution, the states first formed a loose confederation. However, many Americans thought this arrangement did not satisfy the need for a strong central authority. Delegates from the various states came together to write a new constitution that would provide the basis for a durable and balanced government.

The Articles of Confederation The nation's first constitution established a governing framework that gave the states more power than the national government. This lack of central authority contributed to various problems, including a poor economy and weak national defense.

The Northwest Ordinance This land policy established rules for the creation of governments in the Northwest Territory and the eventual admission of western states.

The Constitution of the United States Frustrated by weaknesses of the confederation, delegates met in Philadelphia in 1787 for the Constitutional Convention. Instead of revising the Articles, they wrote a new constitution that established a national government with three branches.

The Electoral College After much debate, the delegates decided that a single executive, a president, should lead the executive branch. A body called the Electoral College, made up of electors from each state, would elect the president and vice president.

Ratification After the Constitution was completed in September 1787, it was sent to the states for ratification. During the debate over ratification, supporters agreed to add amendments to guarantee basic freedoms. With this assurance, the Constitution was ratified in 1788 and became law. The first 10 amendments, known as the Bill of Rights, were ratified in 1791.

Chapter 7 — An Enduring Plan of Government

Does the Constitution support the ideals in the Declaration of Independence?

7.1 – Introduction

On September 17, 2003, the nation's leaders met in the Rotunda of the National Archives building in Washington, D.C. The heads of the three branches of the national government were there. The leaders of the Senate and the House of Representatives represented the legislative branch. The president represented the executive branch. The chief justice represented the judicial branch.

These leaders were attending a ceremony to celebrate the unveiling of some newly restored historical documents. The documents had been carefully preserved with the latest tools and technology. They rested on cushions of handmade paper and were encased in frames of titanium and aluminum. They were further protected by sapphire windows, traveling light beams, and precisely positioned mirrors set up to detect any changes that could harm the documents.

Why were these documents given such importance? They are the "Charters of Freedom" upon which our government was founded: the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. In a speech at the unveiling ceremony, President George W. Bush said, "The courage of America's first leaders gave us the Declaration. Their patience and wisdom gave us the Constitution . . . The supreme law of this land is the work of practical minds addressed to practical questions."

When the president spoke of "the supreme law of this land," he was referring to the Constitution. Although this plan of government was written over 200 years ago, its rules and principles still guide our political system. The Constitution has weathered the centuries because it is a flexible, "living document" that can be interpreted and amended to meet changing needs.

An archivist at the ceremony noted why more than a million people a year come to see the Charters of Freedom. It is "not just because they are historical documents," he said, "but because they are a living part of the democracy we live in today."

7.2 – A Strong Yet Balanced Government

In 1789, Benjamin Franklin wrote, "Our new Constitution is now established, and has an appearance that promises permanency; but in this world nothing can be said to be certain except death and taxes." Franklin's words were prophetic, but they also sounded a note of caution. While our constitutional government has survived for more than two centuries, there is no guarantee that it will continue to endure. Its survival depends on our upholding the principles of the Constitution.

The framers of the Constitution worked hard to set up a political system that would last. They wanted a government that was strong enough to govern, but not so strong that it endangered citizens' freedoms. They also wanted ordinary Americans to understand and support the Constitution. For this reason, they organized it very carefully.

The Constitution has three parts. The first part, the Preamble, describes the purpose of the document and the government it creates. The second part, the articles, establishes how the government is structured and how the Constitution can be changed through amendments. The third part, the amendments, includes the Bill of Rights and other changes to the Constitution.

The Preamble Establishes the Purposes of the Government

A preamble is an introduction explaining the purpose of a document, typically a legal document. The Preamble to the Constitution begins with the phrase, "We the people . . ." These words announce that the Constitution's authority is based on the people themselves. The power to form the government did not come from an existing government, or the states, or a supreme being. "We the people" echoes the idea in the Declaration of Independence that governments should derive "their just powers from the consent of the governed."

The next phrase, "in Order to form a more perfect Union," shows the framers' determination to improve upon the government established under the Articles of Confederation. They wanted the union of states to become stronger so that the states would work together, rather than fight among themselves.

The rest of the Preamble lists goals for the new government. The framers wanted to "establish justice" by creating a government that would establish and carry out fair laws that applied equally to all people. They wanted to "insure domestic Tranquility." In this phrase, "domestic" refers to the internal affairs of the nation. By insuring domestic tranquility, the framers hoped to establish a country of peace and order. They also wanted the government to "provide for the common defense," the protection of the country as a whole against foreign enemies.

The framers wanted the United States to have a society and an economy in which people could thrive and prosper. So they declared that the government should "promote the general Welfare." They also wanted to "secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity." By posterity, they meant future generations.

The framers knew that achieving these goals required a strong central government. However, they recognized that the Constitution must also limit that government's powers.

The Articles Define the Powers of Government

The Constitution has seven articles. The first three lay out the structures and powers of the three parts of the government: the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

Dividing the government into three branches sets up a strong central government, yet also distributes power. The system of checks and balances ensures that no branch becomes too powerful. Each branch can limit the power of another. For example, the president can veto a bill, but the bill can still become law if a two-thirds majority of Congress votes to override the veto. In this example, the executive branch checks the power of the legislative branch, which then checks the power of the executive branch.

To give another example, when the Supreme Court rejects a law as unconstitutional, it is checking the power of the legislative and executive branches. Checks and balances also extend to the appointment of key officials. For example, the president's nominations of Supreme Court justices are subject to the Senate's approval.

Through the system of checks and balances, Congress has the power to impeach and convict the president, vice president, and any civilian official of the United States. To impeach an official is to charge that person with an offense committed while in office. Only the House of Representatives can vote to impeach—to accuse an official of committing what the Constitution calls "Treason, Bribery, or other High Crimes and Misdemeanors." However, only the Senate can convict. If the Senate votes by a two-thirds majority to convict, the official is removed from office. Two presidents have been impeached, but neither was convicted.

The Constitution does not only divide power among the three branches of the national, or federal, government. As you will see, it also divides power between the federal government and state governments.

7.3 – The Legislative Branch Makes the Laws

The framers wanted to establish a fair way to make laws and to ensure that lawmakers are accountable to the people. Therefore, Article I of the Constitution defines the basic structure, procedures, and powers of Congress.

The Structure of Congress

To balance the powers of small and large states, the framers set up Congress as a bicameral, or two chamber, legislature. The two chambers are the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The membership of the Senate is based on equal representation of the states. It is made up of 100 senators, two from each state. Senators serve a six-year term.

Representation in the House is based on state population. There are 435 members. Every 10 years, a census determines how that number is apportioned by state. Each state is then divided into congressional districts. As of the 2000 census, the most populous state, California, had 53 districts. In contrast, some states consist of only one district. The people of each district elect one House representative, who serves a two-year term.

How Congress Does Its Job

The main function of Congress is to make laws. Most laws begin as bills, proposals for new laws. Tax bills must begin in the House. Other bills can be initiated in either chamber. If the House and Senate pass a bill, it goes to the president, who has 10 days to sign or veto it. Congress can override a veto with a two-thirds majority vote in each house.

Congressional Powers

Article I grants certain powers to Congress. For example, Congress can coin and regulate money, collect taxes, maintain an army and navy, declare war, pay government debts, and regulate foreign trade. In addition, it may "make all laws which shall be necessary and proper" to carry out such powers. This clause has been called the elastic clause because it gives Congress flexibility to fulfill its duties. In 1791, for example, Congress created a national bank to help collect taxes, pay debts, and regulate trade. Some people, however, think that Congress sometimes "stretches" its powers too far.

7.4 – The Executive Branch Enforces the Laws

Article II describes the election, powers, and duties of the president. As chief executive, the president is the head of the largest branch of the federal government. Under the Constitution, the president and the rest of the executive branch must "take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed."

Powers of the Chief Executive

In addition to enforcing laws, the president proposes legislation, including the annual federal budget. As commander in chief, the president is head of the military and has considerable authority in war. The president also oversees foreign relations, a power that includes making treaties and appointing ambassadors with the Senate's consent. The president's judicial powers include appointing Supreme Court justices, again with Senate approval, and granting pardons to people who have broken federal laws.

The Role of Other Executive Officials, Departments, and Agencies

Many other officials help carry out executive duties. The vice president, the White House staff, and other close advisors help the president make key policy decisions. The president also gets advice from the cabinet, a group that consists mainly of the heads of executive departments that enforce the laws. These department heads, such as the secretary of state and attorney general, are appointed by the president and approved by the Senate. Their number has risen from four in George Washington's first cabinet to 15 today.

Cabinet members advise the president on policy matters relating to their departments. For example, the secretary of state gives advice on foreign affairs, and the secretary of labor advises on policies relating to the workplace. Some other executive departments are those of defense, education, agriculture, transportation, and energy. One of the newest is the Department of Homeland Security, created to prevent terrorism and respond to natural disasters.

Within each executive department are agencies that address different issues. For example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) are three agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services.

There are also independent agencies outside the executive departments. Some are executive agencies that report to the president, such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Others are regulatory commissions formed by Congress, such as the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Other semi-governmental agencies, such as the U.S. Postal Service, provide specific services.

7.5 – The Judicial Branch Interprets the Laws

The judicial branch interprets the Constitution, the "supreme Law of the Land." Article III establishes the Supreme Court and gives Congress authority to set up "inferior," or lower, federal courts. The Supreme Court and lower federal courts make up the federal judiciary, or federal court system.

The Federal Judiciary

The federal courts have been called "the guardians of the Constitution" because they judge whether laws and actions conform to constitutional principles. However, a court may address a legal issue only if a relevant case comes before it. It cannot try to solve legal problems on its own.

Most legal disputes involve state and local laws and are addressed in the state court systems. The federal court system hears cases involving issues that are not limited to one state, such as violations of the U.S. Constitution or federal laws. Other examples are cases in which the United States, a state, or a foreign nation is a named party.

Most federal cases are first heard in the lower courts, starting with a U.S. district court. That court's decision can be appealed to a U.S. court of appeals. The final appeal is to petition the Supreme Court to hear the case. The Supreme Court may also choose to hear an appeal of a state supreme court decision involving a state or local law. Such cases usually raise an important constitutional issue affecting the nation as a whole.

Higher courts agree to hear an appeal only when they believe that a lower court may have incorrectly applied the law. The appeal process does not involve witnesses or juries. Instead, an appeals court reviews a case based on court records and oral arguments from attorneys and then makes its decision.

The Supreme Court

The U.S. Supreme Court is the highest court in the land. It consists of nine justices, including a chief justice. Like other federal judges, they are appointed for life, and their salaries cannot be lowered. The framers wanted to ensure an independent judiciary—a

system in which judges cannot be removed or have their salaries reduced for making unpopular decisions.

The Supreme Court is the last stop in the judicial system. Its decisions are final and binding on lower federal courts and on state courts. Every year, it receives about 7,000 petitions to hear cases and accepts about 100 to 150. Its rulings become precedents, court decisions used as guides in deciding similar cases. State courts, lower federal courts, and the Supreme Court itself are guided by precedents set by Supreme Court decisions.

The Power of Judicial Review

A key authority exercised by the Supreme Court is judicial review, the power to review an action of the legislative or executive branch and declare it unconstitutional. This power stems from an 1803 Court case, *Marbury v. Madison*, in which the Court overturned an act of Congress. In that case, Chief Justice John Marshall ruled that Congress, in passing the law, had acted outside the bounds of its constitutional power. Judicial review has sparked debate over the years. Some argue that the Court should take an active role in making policy by overturning laws, whereas others urge restraint.

7.6 – Federalism: A System of Divided Powers

As you have seen, the Constitution defines different powers for the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal government. The Constitution also establishes the principle of federalism, the division of power between the federal and state governments. Both the federal and state governments have some exclusive powers of their own, while sharing others.

The Powers of the National Government

Article I, Section 8, lists the powers granted to Congress and therefore to the national government. Among these delegated powers are the powers to borrow money, coin money, raise an army and navy, declare war, make treaties, establish post offices, and protect patents and copyrights. The elastic clause enables Congress to make laws necessary to carry out these and other delegated powers.

Some of the delegated powers are given to the national government alone and specifically denied to the states. For example, only Congress has the power to coin or print money. The framers wanted to avoid the monetary confusion that existed under the Articles of Confederation, when many states produced their own currency. Also, it is appropriate that only the national government can declare war or make treaties with other nations. Another example is the power to regulate trade with other nations and between the states. By regulating interstate commerce, Congress helps to create a national market with few internal barriers to trade and finance.

The Powers of the States

The Constitution is much less specific about state powers. In fact, the only power specifically granted to the states, in Article V, is the power to ratify amendments. On the

other hand, Article I specifies those powers that are denied to the states, including taxing imports or exports without the consent of Congress, coining money, and making treaties.

During the ratification debates, many Americans expressed concern that the lack of delegated state powers in the Constitution might leave the federal government with too much power. This concern resulted in ratification of the Tenth Amendment, which declares, "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." In other words, any power not expressly granted to the national government would remain with the states and the people. These powers are called reserved powers.

Reserved powers include those that are appropriately handled at the state or local level. Providing police and fire protection, establishing schools, and regulating businesses within the state are all reserved powers. So are issuing marriage and driver's licenses, conducting elections, and establishing local governments.

Article IV says that states must give "full Faith and Credit" to the laws and decisions of other states. This means that states, for the most part, must accept the legal documents and actions of other states. States also have certain responsibilities to each other. For example, they must allow a child born in another state to attend their public schools. They must also help each other track down criminals.

Shared Powers of the Federal and State Governments

Some of the powers delegated to Congress are not denied to the states. These are called concurrent powers because the federal government and the state governments can independently exercise them at the same time. For example, the federal and state governments both collect taxes. Both build roads, establish courts, borrow money, make and enforce laws, and spend money for the general welfare.

Their overlapping responsibilities often require the state and federal governments to work together. For example, Congress sets the date for national elections, and the states register voters and run the elections. The states count the ballots, and Congress organizes the Electoral College vote. Federal and state officials also coordinate efforts to provide such services as law enforcement and disaster relief.

The sharing of power can also create conflict between the federal and state governments. The Constitution provides the general framework for concurrent powers, but it does not spell out every one of them. Nor does it resolve all the issues that arise when powers are shared. Through the years, the system of shared powers has evolved through new laws, amendments to the Constitution, and court decisions.

The Law of the Land

Article VI contains a very important clause that declares, "This Constitution, and the Laws 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." Since this clause affirms that the Constitution and federal laws are the supreme law of the land, it is often called the supremacy clause.

The supremacy clause establishes that federal law must be followed in cases involving a conflict between federal and state law. A state's constitution, laws, and judicial decisions cannot conflict with the U.S. Constitution or with the laws and treaties of the United States.

7.7 – Amending the Constitution

The framers knew that the Constitution would have to change over time to remain relevant and useful to succeeding generations. As Thomas Jefferson wrote, the Constitution "belongs to the living and not to the dead."

Changing the Constitution

Even before the Constitution was ratified, there were calls for amendments, especially in the form of a bill of rights. Article V sets up a procedure for amending the Constitution. The framers wanted to keep the government long lasting and stable, though, so they made changing the Constitution difficult.

There are two ways to propose amendments to the Constitution. Congress can propose an amendment with a two-thirds vote in each house. Alternatively, two thirds of state legislatures can ask Congress to call a national convention to draft an amendment. Either way, an amendment must have the approval of three fourths of the states to become part of the Constitution.

The Bill of Rights

When ratifying the Constitution in 1788, five states included a list of amendments they wanted added to the document. Many other states and individuals also agreed that certain amendments were necessary. The main demand was for the explicit protection of individual liberties and freedoms.

The new Congress listened to the concerns of the states and the people. James Madison then put together a set of constitutional amendments. By 1791, 10 amendments protecting rights had been ratified, becoming part of the "supreme Law of the Land." They are known as the Bill of Rights.

Many people consider the First Amendment to be the most important amendment in the Bill of Rights. It protects five freedoms: the freedoms of religion, speech, the press, and assembly, and the right to petition the government.

The next three amendments are designed to protect citizens from abuses of power by the federal government. The Second Amendment refers to the necessity of a "well-regulated militia" and to "the right of the people to keep and bear arms." Debate continues over whether this right was meant to apply to individuals or to members of a state militia. The Third Amendment states that homeowners cannot be forced to provide

room and board to members of the military in times of peace. The Fourth Amendment guards against unreasonable searches, seizures of property, and arrests.

The next four amendments lay out rights and protections for people who are accused of crimes or are involved in other legal disputes. The Fifth Amendment is the longest one in the Bill of Rights. It says that people cannot be held for committing a crime unless they are properly indicted, or charged. It states that no person can be tried twice for a crime if the punishment is "loss of life or limb." People cannot be forced to testify against themselves, and they cannot be deprived of life, liberty, or property without "due process of law." Finally, it says that the government cannot take private property without paying a fair price for it.

The Sixth Amendment guarantees the right to a speedy and fair trial in criminal cases. The Seventh Amendment ensures the right to trial by jury in certain types of federal civil cases, those involving disputes between people or businesses. The Eighth Amendment prohibits cruel and unusual punishments and forbids courts to impose excessive bail or fines.

The last two amendments are quite general. The Ninth Amendment says that the people have other rights in addition to those listed, and that those rights must not be violated. The Tenth Amendment says that powers not delegated to the federal government belong to the states or to the people.

Further Amendments

Thousands of additional amendments have been proposed over the years, but only 17 have been ratified, bringing the total number of amendments to 27. One amendment—the Eighteenth, which banned the making and selling of alcohol—was ratified and then later repealed by the Twenty-first Amendment.

Four of the additional amendments—the Twelfth, Seventeenth, Twentieth, and Twenty-second—concern the election and terms of office of public officials. Many of the other amendments stem from efforts to expand civil rights and the right to vote. The Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery. The Fourteenth Amendment confers citizenship on all persons born or naturalized in the United States, thereby barring states from denying citizenship to blacks. This amendment also affirms that all citizens have "equal protection of the laws." The Fifteenth Amendment states that race, color, and previous condition of servitude cannot be used to deny voting rights. The Nineteenth Amendment says that gender cannot be used to deny the vote. Finally, the Twenty-sixth Amendment sets the voting age at 18.

7.8 – Popular Participation in Government

Our nation was founded on the ideal that government should be based on the will of the people. In the early years, "We the People" did not include all members of American society. Today there are many ways for all citizens to have a say in government. Participation is the key to an effective democracy.

"We the People," Past and Present

The U.S. government exists to serve its citizens. By electing our local, state, and national representatives and leaders, "we the people" have a say in government.

When "we the people" vote, we are using the principle of majority rule to make decisions. In our early history, with very few exceptions, only white property-owning males could vote. As a result, they were the ones who made the decisions. Today "we the people" includes all citizens, regardless of race, culture, or gender. The diversity of voters now makes the government much more representative of the people.

The Role of Political Parties in Government

A political party is an organized group of people who have similar ideas about government. The first two American political parties emerged during the 1790s. One party, led by Thomas Jefferson, wanted to give the states more power, help small farmers, and reduce the size of the federal government. The other, led by Alexander Hamilton, favored a strong federal government that could help businesses. These parties drew more citizens into the electoral process.

Over the years, the names and beliefs of political parties have changed, but typically two parties have been dominant. Since the mid-1800s, the two parties have been the Republican and Democratic parties. Today they largely control American politics, especially at the state and national levels. Even those who consider themselves "independents" often show loyalty to one of the two parties. A candidate has a better chance of winning an election if he or she is a member of one of the two major political parties, rather than a small third party. The two-party system is so dominant that it plays a significant role in shaping public policy.

Political Participation Beyond Voting

Despite the dominance of political parties, Americans also participate in the political process as individuals. They campaign for candidates they support or run for office themselves. They volunteer with public service organizations. They attend town meetings, public hearings, and demonstrations. They write and promote ballot measures, which are proposed laws or amendments initiated and voted on by the public, not the legislature. They also join committees, organizations, and professional societies.

Some people join special interest groups to make their feelings known to the government. Special interest groups are organizations whose members share a specific interest or concern and want to influence policymaking. Groups like the American Medical Association (AMA), the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), the National Rifle Association (NRA), and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) spend a lot of time and money lobbying the government on behalf of their causes.

Summary

The framers of the Constitution wanted to create a strong yet balanced government that guaranteed individual freedoms.

The "supreme Law of the Land" The Constitution is the supreme legal document of the United States. It consists of three parts: the Preamble, the Articles, and the amendments.

Three branches of government The first three articles establish the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. A system of checks and balances ensures that powers are distributed among the branches.

The legislative branch The main function of this branch of government is to enact laws. Congress consists of two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives. The elastic clause of the Constitution gives Congress the flexibility it needs to carry out its duties.

The executive branch The main task of this branch is to enforce the laws. The president is the chief executive, or head of the executive branch. This branch also includes many other executive officials, departments, and agencies.

The judicial branch The federal judiciary is made up of the Supreme Court and many lower courts across the country. These courts interpret and apply laws in cases that come before them. The power of judicial review allows the Supreme Court to judge whether acts of Congress are constitutional.

Federalism The Constitution establishes a federal system that balances national and state powers, but it grants controlling authority to the national government in its supremacy clause.

The amendment process As a "living document," the Constitution can be amended. The first 10 amendments make up the Bill of Rights. Seventeen more amendments have been added over the years.

Political participation Citizens can participate in government in many ways. They can vote, join political parties, run for office, and exert political influence through public meetings, interest groups, and other means.

Chapter 8 — Changes in a Young Nation

Did changes in the young nation open the door to opportunity for all Americans?

8.1 – Introduction

In 1803, two army officers, Captain Meriwether Lewis and Lieutenant William Clark, arrived in the frontier outpost of St. Louis, Missouri. The two men were on a mission from President Thomas Jefferson to explore western rivers for a route to the Pacific Ocean. On the way, they were to collect information about the Louisiana Territory, a huge expanse of land the United States had just purchased from France.

At the time, St. Louis was a sleepy town of around 200 houses, perched on a bluff above the Mississippi River. There were no shops or hotels. The town's residents were mainly French settlers who lived by farming, fur trapping, and trading along the river. Traders would dock their boats by the river's edge and travel the grid of dirt roads that led away from the river.

Very likely, no one in St. Louis in 1803 thought much about what Lewis and Clark's arrival would mean for the little town. However, by opening the West to settlement, Lewis and Clark's expedition brought big changes to St. Louis.

By 1850, St. Louis had grown to a bustling city of more than 70,000. Its ideal location near the junction of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers made St. Louis a center of trade and commerce. Along the waterfront, wharves and brick warehouses replaced the sandy beach where small boats once landed. Dozens of large, paddle-wheel steamboats lined the docks. One visitor wrote, "The whole of the levee is covered as far as the eye can see, with merchandise landed or to be shipped; thousands of barrels of flour and bags of corn, hogsheads of tobacco, and immense piles of lead."

The makeup of St. Louis's population also changed. Once a town of trappers and fur traders, St. Louis now had prosperous merchants and bankers who rubbed shoulders with farmers and workers. Between 1840 and 1860, a wave of immigration from Germany and Ireland reshaped the ethnic mix of the city. St. Louis had become a cosmopolitan city and the "gateway to the West."

8.2 – The First Years of the New Nation

In 1790, the United States was beginning its new life as a nation. It had a Constitution and its first president, George Washington. That year, the government took its first national census and learned that the country had nearly 4 million people. Most Americans were still clustered along the eastern seaboard, but some hardy pioneers had begun to move inland.

The Country Expands Beyond Its Colonial Borders

In these early years, the United States was predominantly a rural nation. However, it did have a number of flourishing cities, including the old colonial centers of Philadelphia, New York, and Boston.

The country was also expanding beyond its original 13 states. Between 1790 and 1800, three new states entered the Union: Vermont, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Many settlers were migrating west across the Appalachian Mountains into the area known as the Northwest Territory. This territory would later become the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Settlers were also moving into the area of present-day Mississippi and Alabama. By the early 1800s, American settlements were scattered across a large territory, from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Mississippi River in the west.

Agriculture Is the Center of the Nation's Economy

In states old and new, farming was the nation's most important economic activity. Most Americans farmed on small plots, producing food for themselves and their families. If they produced a surplus, they might sell it in nearby towns or cities.

The United States had little industry at this time. Most farmers made their own clothing and tools. In urban areas, artisans produced manufactured goods by hand in small workshops. In the Northeast, there were a few small textile mills that spun cotton by machine, but large factories did not yet exist.

Lack of good transportation kept most states and regions remote from each other. Moving people or goods across great distances was expensive and difficult. The few roads linking towns and cities were deeply rutted in dry weather and treacherous swamps in wet weather. Most long-distance travel took place on rivers or the ocean.

George Washington Gives Shape to the Office of President

When George Washington took the oath of office as the nation's first president in 1789, he faced a delicate task. On the one hand, as he said in his inaugural speech, he was determined to provide Americans with "the benefits of an united and effective government." On the other hand, he had to reassure those "fellow-citizens" who feared a strong president could mean the return of a monarchy. President Washington had no road map, other than the Constitution, to guide him. "I walk on untrodden ground," he said. "There is scarcely any part of my conduct which may not hereafter be drawn into precedent."

The first test of Washington's authority as president came in 1791, when Congress passed a tax on whiskey to raise money. Western farmers, who turned their grain into whiskey for sale, were outraged. Many refused to pay the tax. Angry farmers in western Pennsylvania rose up in rebellion, attacking tax collectors and setting buildings on fire. Washington saw the Whiskey Rebellion as a threat to the federal government's authority. In 1794, President Washington sent a militia force across the Appalachians to stamp out the protests. In doing so, he made it clear that the federal government would enforce its laws.

One of Washington's first official actions was to sign Congress's Federal Judiciary Act into law. This act created the federal court system, with its district and circuit courts, that we still live under today. Washington also created the first cabinet, or group of department heads that meets to advise the president.

Political Parties Emerge

Washington's most prominent cabinet members were Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton and Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson. Both were brilliant thinkers, but their ideas often clashed. "Hamilton and myself were daily pitted . . . like two fighting cocks," Jefferson wrote of their growing hostility. These differences led to the creation of the country's first political parties, the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans.

Hamilton's Federalist Party supported a strong central government with wide powers. The Federalists believed that a powerful government was needed to keep order among the states. They had little faith in the wisdom of the average citizen and thought that a capable, educated elite should run the country.

In contrast, Jefferson's Democratic-Republican Party favored a small central government with limited powers. The party believed that states had the right to judge whether Congress was overstepping its constitutional powers, a view known as the states' rights theory. The Democratic-Republicans had great confidence in the ability of ordinary people to make good decisions. They also believed that political power should lie with the majority of voters rather than with a wealthy elite.

In general, Washington favored Federalist ideas. Nonetheless, in his Farewell Address, delivered near the end of his second term in 1796, he warned of "the danger of parties" and spoke of "the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness." Once Washington left office, however, debates between the two parties grew increasingly acrimonious.

John Adams, a Federalist, succeeded Washington as president. In 1800, Adams ran for a second term against Thomas Jefferson. During the campaign, partisan feelings ran so high, some worried the new nation might self-destruct. Nevertheless, the 1800 election took place without serious disturbance. Thomas Jefferson won the presidency, and power shifted peacefully from one party to the other. The country had survived a major political test.

8.3 – Geographic Changes

In May 1804, Lewis and Clark set out from St. Louis on their journey to the Pacific Ocean. They paddled up the Missouri River and into the unexplored world of the American West, crossing vast plains and snowcapped mountains. They discovered plants and animals they had never seen before. They encountered American Indian tribes and learned about their ways of life. They even found the remains of a prehistoric dinosaur. Two years and four months later, they were back in St. Louis. The news of their expedition thrilled Americans and helped promote western settlement.

From Sea to Shining Sea: Acquiring the West

Much of the area that Lewis and Clark explored was part of the Louisiana Purchase. In 1803, Jefferson had bought the Louisiana Territory from France for \$15 million, which was a large sum of money at the time. The Louisiana Purchase Treaty pushed the western boundary of the United States from the Mississippi River to the distant Rocky Mountains, at a cost of about four cents an acre.

Many people criticized Jefferson's action. Some thought the country did not need any more undeveloped land. Others protested that the purchase was unconstitutional, because the Constitution did not give the president the power to buy foreign territory. But Jefferson could not pass up an opportunity to double the size of the United States. The Louisiana Purchase furthered his vision of an "empire for liberty" stretching from sea to sea.

Many Americans had good reasons for supporting national expansion. The country's population was growing rapidly. Good farmland in the settled, eastern part of the country was becoming less plentiful. As a result, more and more people were moving west in search of cheap land. Many also believed expansion would make the country safer by reducing the threat of foreign invasion from the west. The idea of a larger, more powerful country also appealed to the American sense of nationalism.

This combination of nationalism and expansionism gave rise in the 1840s to a belief known as manifest destiny. The term means "obvious fate," and it seemed obvious to many Americans that the United States was meant to spread its founding ideals and democratic way of life across the continent and beyond. One politician at the time wrote, "Nothing less than a continent can suffice as the basis and foundation for that nation whose destiny is involved in the destiny of mankind."

The idea of manifest destiny inspired further expansion. Spain was persuaded to cede Florida to the United States in 1819. In 1845, Texas joined the Union as a state, after first gaining independence from Mexico. The United States and Great Britain signed a treaty in 1846 giving the United States control over about half of Oregon Country. That same year, the United States went to war with Mexico over a border dispute in Texas. At the end of the Mexican War, the United States gained most of the American Southwest in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The Gadsden Purchase of 1853, which added a portion of present-day southern Arizona and New Mexico, completed the nation's continental expansion at that time.

Settlers Find Opportunity and Liberty in the West

As the United States expanded, American settlers moved into the newly acquired territories. Some traveled by wagon along the Santa Fe Trail, which was an old trade route from the Missouri River to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Many more headed west on the Oregon Trail, which stretched from Independence, Missouri, to Portland, Oregon. The journey along the Oregon Trail, across the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains, took

many months and cost countless settlers their lives. Those who made it found fertile farmlands in the green valleys of Oregon.

One group that made the journey west in the 1840s was made up of the Mormons. This religious group traveled over the Oregon Trail to Utah to escape persecution. They settled on the desert lands surrounding Great Salt Lake and created a thriving, prosperous community.

American Indians Face a Forced Westward Migration

Although westward expansion provided new opportunities for settlers, it spelled tragedy for many American Indians. As the United States added new territories, it also brought many Indian homelands within its national borders. Settlers who coveted these lands agitated for the removal of tribes to less desirable areas.

In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act to clear Indians from lands east of the Mississippi River. The plan was to move the tribes west to Indian Territory, which later became the state of Oklahoma. In a message to Congress entitled "On Indian Removal," President Andrew Jackson praised the act for placing "a dense and civilized population in large tracts of country now occupied by a few savage hunters."

Although most tribes reluctantly went along with removal, some resisted. The Cherokees attempted a legal defense, claiming they were protected from removal by earlier treaties. When Georgia refused to recognize the treaty rights, the Cherokees appealed to the Supreme Court. In *Worcester v. Georgia*, the Court upheld the Cherokees' treaty rights. President Jackson, however, refused to enforce the Court's decision. Other tribes, such as the Seminoles of Florida and the Sauk and Fox Indians of Wisconsin Territory, turned to armed resistance. These tribes were nearly wiped out by army troops.

In the end, the tribes that resisted removal were moved by force. The most famous forced migration was that of the Cherokees in 1838. On the journey to Indian Territory, about 4,000 of the more than 17,000 Cherokees died from starvation, disease, and harsh winter weather. This tragic journey is remembered today as the Trail of Tears.

The Country Develops Sectional Identities

As the United States expanded, the three main sections of the country—North, South, and West—began to develop distinct identities. These identities were influenced by the different geographic characteristics of each section and by the people who settled there.

The North included the states that stretched from Pennsylvania north to New England and from the Atlantic to the Appalachians. In New England, cold winters and poor soil led many people to turn to commerce, shipbuilding, and fishing for a living. Elsewhere, most northerners farmed for a living. However, by the mid-1800s, some northerners were leaving their farms to work in the growing number of mills and factories. Many new immigrants also flocked to northern cities in search of jobs.

The South stretched from the Chesapeake Bay south to Florida and west to the Mississippi River. With the South's mild climate and rich soil, agriculture was the dominant occupation through the mid-1800s. Although most southerners were small farmers, plantation agriculture was becoming more and more important. Plantation owners relied on slave labor to cultivate cash crops, such as cotton and tobacco. The most successful planters lived lives of great affluence.

In the early 1800s, the West meant the lands between the Appalachians and the Mississippi River. By the 1840s, however, the West meant the area west of the Mississippi. Early settlement of the West was motivated by farmers' desire for cheap, fertile land. Americans, as well as immigrants from many countries, crossed the continent in search of new opportunities in the West. As they mixed with Indians and Mexicans already living there, new patterns of life emerged.

8.4 – Political Changes in an Emerging Democracy

From 1790 to 1830, there was an expansion of democracy in the United States. Few Americans represented this change better than Andrew Jackson. Born into poverty in the Carolina backcountry, Jackson managed to prosper as a planter, buying land and slaves. He went on to become a judge, a U.S. senator, and a military hero. Despite his wealth and fame, Jackson maintained a common, man-of-the-people image. This image and a new spirit of democracy in the country helped sweep Jackson to the presidency in 1828.

Democracy for the Common Man—But Not Woman

Jackson owed his victory in part to an expansion of suffrage, or voting rights. By 1828, most states had dropped the requirement that voting citizens must own property. The number of popular votes increased from around 350,000 in 1824 to some 1,155,000 the year Jackson was elected president. Although these changes marked an expansion of democracy, many Americans were still denied this most basic political right. No states allowed women, American Indians, or slaves to vote. Only a few granted suffrage to free African American men.

Other changes were also making the election process more democratic. In many states, secret paper ballots were replacing the more public voice-vote system. This change encouraged people to vote without fear of intimidation at the polls. By 1832, open national conventions had replaced private party meetings, called caucuses, to nominate candidates for president and vice president.

Political parties made politics more democratic by involving more people in election campaigns. By the 1820s, parties were using newspapers, campaign songs, and get-out-the-vote rallies to drum up interest in voting. The percentage of eligible voters who actually went to the polls increased sharply as campaigns became more interesting.

Jackson Loses, Then Wins, the Presidency

Jackson first ran for president in 1824. That year, four candidates ran for president, all of them claiming to be Democratic-Republicans. Each candidate represented the interests of a different section of the country. Jackson managed to attract enough voters in all sections to win the popular vote. However, he did not have enough votes in the Electoral College to win the presidency. In accordance with the Constitution, the election went to the House of Representatives, which chose John Quincy Adams to be president. Jackson's supporters vowed revenge in the next election.

Jackson knew there would be many new voters in 1828, most of them "common people." To gain their support, he formed a new political party known as the Democratic Party. Democrats claimed to speak for ordinary farmers and workers, rather than for the wealthy and privileged few. This new party supported a decentralized government and states' rights.

Jackson's opponent, John Quincy Adams, also headed a new party, the National Republican Party. The National Republicans represented business, shipping, and banking interests in the Northeast. This party favored a strong central government that would fund internal improvements, such as roads and canals, to grow the economy. Southerners feared that they would be taxed in the form of high tariffs to pay for these improvements. They also worried that a stronger federal government might be tempted to interfere with slavery.

Both parties tried to win voters by avoiding sectional issues and flinging nasty charges at one another. When the mudslinging was over, Jackson's "common man" appeal won him a landslide victory. At his inauguration, Jackson threw open the White House doors to his followers. They tromped through the residence with muddy boots and spilled punch on the furniture. It was a raucous celebration of popular democracy.

Once in office, Jackson rewarded his loyal supporters with government jobs. Those who lost their jobs to make way for Jackson supporters denounced this practice as a spoils system. The name comes from the ancient wartime saying, "To the victor belong the spoils [prizes] of war." Jackson, however, defended "rotation in office" as a democratic reform. Government jobs, he argued, were not the property of an elite few but should be open to all.

Nullification: Defining the Limits of State and Federal Powers

A key issue facing the young republic was the balance between state and federal power. This issue first came up in 1798, when Congress passed two controversial laws known as the Alien and Sedition Acts. Believing the laws to be unconstitutional, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison penned protests known as the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions. The resolutions called on states to nullify, or declare void, any federal law that violates the Constitution. This principle of nullification would become a flash point in a later battle over states' rights.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court under Chief Justice John Marshall made a number of rulings that affirmed federal power. The first ruling came in 1819 in *McCulloch v.*

Maryland, which arose when Maryland tried to tax the Baltimore branch of the Bank of the United States, a national bank created by an act of Congress. The Marshall Court ruled that "the power to tax involves the power to destroy." Under the Supremacy Clause, no state had the right to destroy or in any way nullify what Congress had enacted. In *Gibbons v. Ogden*, the Supreme Court reaffirmed the power of Congress to regulate interstate commerce. The case arose when the New York legislature granted two men the exclusive right to run steamboats on the Hudson River. New Jersey, which shares the river with New York, protested. The Court rejected New York's effort to control boat traffic on the river, on the ground that it interfered with interstate commerce.

The issue of states' rights reached a boiling point in 1832, when South Carolina tried to nullify two federal tariff laws. Like many southern states, South Carolina relied on imports of cheap manufactured goods, and tariffs raised the prices on these goods. As the nullification crisis heated up, state leaders threatened to withdraw from the Union if the tariff laws were enforced. President Jackson stood his ground, preparing to use force if necessary. At the same time, he rushed a lower tariff bill through Congress. The crisis passed, but the tension between states' rights and federal power did not go away.

8.5 – Economic Changes in a Developing Nation

In 1789, a young Englishman named Samuel Slater came to the United States looking for opportunity. Unlike most immigrants, however, he was not seeking land to farm. Instead, he came to set up a cotton-spinning mill using the latest technology. While working in an English textile mill, Slater had memorized the designs for machines that spun cotton fiber into thread. Soon after arriving in the United States, he built a mill in Rhode Island and was on his way to fame and fortune. Slater's mill marked the beginning of industrialization in the United States. Industrialization is the move from producing goods by hand to producing them by machine.

New Inventions Make Production More Efficient

Slater was not alone. Other inventors in the United States were working on new machines that would spur industrialization. One of the most successful of these inventors was a New Englander named Eli Whitney. While visiting a Georgia plantation in 1793, Whitney observed how slaves spent hours cleaning the seeds from cotton. Within days, he had invented the cotton gin, a machine that could clean 50 pounds of cotton in the time it took to clean one pound by hand.

Whitney's cotton gin revolutionized cotton production, making cotton the nation's leading cash crop. The cotton gin also revolutionized slavery. Until then, many had expected slavery to die out in the South, as it had in the North. Instead, as cotton production increased, so did the demand for slave labor.

Whitney also introduced the idea of interchangeable parts. Until then, musket parts were made by hand, and each part was slightly different. Whitney showed how muskets could be put together using identical parts that could be made in quantity and interchanged from one gun to another. Whitney's system made musket manufacturing

much faster and paved the way for the mass production of goods. Mass production is the making of goods on a large scale in factories.

In the 1830s, new machines increased productivity—the rate at which goods can be produced—in agriculture. John Deere invented the steel-tipped plow, which drastically reduced the labor required to plow a field. Around the same time, Cyrus McCormick created a mechanical reaper that could harvest grain much faster than traditional methods with less labor. In response, farmers began to focus on cash crops, using the money they made to buy the expensive new machines and other goods they needed.

The Factory System Changes How People Work

New technology brought new ways of working. Boston merchant Francis Cabot Lowell, father of the factory system, opened his first cotton mill in 1814. Lowell's factory used a series of machines, housed in one building, that turned raw cotton into finished cloth. He hired young women from local farms to tend his machines. Many of these "mill girls" were happy to leave their unpaid farm work for a factory job with wages.

The new factory system was a far cry from the old system of handmade goods produced at home or in small workshops for local use. Factories churned out large quantities of goods for consumption across the country. The mass production of goods helped bring about a change from a traditional to a market economy. This change was known as the market revolution. In a traditional economy, people make most of the things they use. Goods are often traded by barter or other informal types of exchange. In a market economy, people buy and sell goods for money, rather than producing them for themselves.

These economic developments had positive and negative effects. As productivity increased, living standards usually improved. Americans with cash in their pockets had more goods to choose from when they shopped. However, many factory workers had to work for low wages in unsafe, unhealthy conditions to produce these goods.

Canals, Roads, and Rails: Connecting the Country

The growth of the market economy sparked a transportation revolution. In the early 1800s, good roads were hard to find anywhere in the United States. By the mid-1800s, however, American engineers had built all-weather roads that had stone surfaces and proper drainage. The most ambitious project was the National Road, which stretched across the Appalachians from Maryland to the Mississippi River. On this road, a trip from Maryland to Illinois that once took weeks could be completed in days.

Traveling by river was cheaper than building roads, but traveling upstream was a problem. In 1807, Robert Fulton attached a steam engine to two huge paddle wheels mounted on a raft. This steam-powered riverboat, the Clermont, chugged up the Hudson River from New York to Albany, launching a steamboat craze. By 1830, approximately 200 steamboats were traveling the nation's waterways, hauling freight and passengers.

Canals extended water travel to places rivers did not run. In 1817, when construction of the Erie Canal began, most canals were 2 or 3 miles long. In contrast, the Erie Canal, which linked the Hudson River to Lake Erie, stretched 363 miles. Once the canal was completed, goods could travel from New York City to the Midwest by river, through the canal, and onto the Great Lakes. The canal helped make New York City the country's biggest and most prosperous city. The success of the Erie Canal prompted dozens of other canal projects throughout the country.

Railroads were another key element in the transportation revolution. Inspired by steamboats, engineers built steam-powered locomotives that hauled freight and passenger cars along railroad lines, even in winter when rivers and canals froze. By the mid-1800s, thousands of miles of track stretched across the nation.

8.6 – Social Changes in the Young Republic

The first half of the 19th century was a time of great change in American life. The country was expanding, the economy was growing, and the political system was becoming more democratic. These developments filled many people with hope for the future. But not all Americans benefited from these changes. Many continued to suffer from poverty, limited opportunity, and a lack of rights. As a result, various reform movements arose to tackle problems in American society.

The Second Great Awakening Inspires Reformers

The reform efforts of the early 1800s found inspiration in a religious revival known as the Second Great Awakening. Preachers traveled from town to town, holding revival meetings and calling on people to embrace the Christian faith. These preachers urged people to turn from the sins of their selfish lives and receive God's love and forgiveness. Revivalists preached an egalitarian message: God's love and redemption were open to everyone. They taught that Christians could transform society by working for justice. This optimism and outpouring of religious fervor helped fuel the reform movements of the early 1800s.

Few reformers accomplished more than Dorothea Dix. Deeply religious, Dix found her calling after visiting a Boston jail. She was shocked to see inmates locked in small, dark, unheated cells. Among the inmates were mentally ill women who had not committed any crime. Dix made a two-year study of other jails and found the same inhumane conditions. Children, debtors, and the mentally ill were all treated like hardened criminals. Her reform efforts brought substantial change in the penal system and in mental health care across the United States.

The spirit of reform and Jacksonian democracy affected education. In the early 1800s, few children had the chance to go to school. Horace Mann, an early American educator, believed that free, public education would strengthen democracy and help young people escape poverty. Mann pushed for a public school system in Massachusetts. His idea soon caught on in other states as well. By 1850, many states were promoting public education.

Another reform effort fueled by the Second Great Awakening was the temperance movement. Many reformers blamed crime, poverty, and mental illness on alcohol abuse. They called for temperance, or moderation in drinking habits. The American Temperance Union attracted more than a million members within a year of its formation. It also became a training ground for leaders in other areas of reform.

Reformers Push to Abolish Slavery

One reform movement came to overshadow all others: the movement to end slavery. Opposition to slavery had existed since the first Africans were brought to Virginia in the early 1600s. Congress banned the importation of slaves in 1808, and opponents of slavery hoped slavery would eventually just die out. Instead, the rise in cotton production that followed the invention of the cotton gin fueled a dramatic expansion of slavery.

In the early 1800s, free African Americans in the North formed several antislavery societies. Their efforts got a big boost from the religious fervor at revival meetings. Revivalists attacked slavery on the grounds that it was immoral. They also helped people see that slavery went against such ideals as liberty and equality, which lay at the heart of American democracy. Although some antislavery reformers believed slavery should be ended gradually, others called for immediate abolition, or the end of slavery, everywhere.

Abolitionists gave speeches, wrote pamphlets, and lobbied government officials in an effort to end slavery. The abolitionist movement gained power and public attention in the 1830s through a newspaper called *The Liberator*, published by William Lloyd Garrison. Garrison advocated not only an immediate end to slavery but also full equality for African Americans, a radical idea at the time. Another important abolitionist was Frederick Douglass, a former slave whose autobiography recounted his own struggle for freedom. Douglass's personal story and his dynamic stage presence made him a powerful spokesman for abolition.

As the abolition movement grew, supporters of slavery—both northern and southern—went on the attack. Mobs attacked abolitionists, burned their homes, and destroyed their printing presses. In spite of these attacks, abolitionists continued their work, making slavery the most crucial issue of their time.

Women Demand Equal Rights

A number of abolitionist leaders also joined the growing movement for women's rights. One was a former slave named Sojourner Truth. A tall, striking woman who knew how to stand up for herself, Truth was not afraid to speak out. At one gathering, after hearing men portray women as being weak, she exclaimed, "Look at my arm! I have plowed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head [outdo] me—and ain't I a woman?"

In the mid-1800s, women were still second-class citizens in America. They were denied many of the rights and privileges given to men, including the right to vote and to control their own money or property. Most women were expected to stay at home and not try to "better" themselves by pursuing an education or a career. But a growing number of women began to challenge these restrictions. Their efforts gave rise to the first women's movement.

In 1848, supporters of women's rights gathered for the Seneca Falls Convention, in Seneca Falls, New York. There they drafted a statement called the Declaration of Sentiments, which was based on the Declaration of Independence. It began, "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal." The statement went on to list various acts of tyranny by men against women.

In the years after the Seneca Falls Convention, reformers like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony continued to struggle for women's rights. Progress was slow, but over time, states began to change their laws. New York, for example, gave women control over their property and wages. Other states passed more liberal divorce laws. Getting the right to vote would take much longer, but eventually, in 1920, that barrier to women's rights would also fall.

Summary

The United States experienced political, geographic, economic, and social changes in the first half of the 1800s. During this time, the nation expanded from 13 states along the Atlantic coast to a huge nation that spanned a continent.

Manifest destiny Inspired by the belief that their nation was destined to expand, Americans acquired vast western lands and began a movement to settle these new territories.

Indian Removal Act As settlers moved westward, they pushed Indians out of their homelands and forced their removal to lands set aside as Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma.

Jacksonian democracy As voting rights expanded, the United States became more democratic. In 1828, Andrew Jackson was elected president as the champion of the common man.

Marshall Court In the ongoing struggle between states' rights and federal power, the Marshall Court made key decisions that strengthened the federal government's power.

Factory system New machines and ways of organizing work in factories made production more efficient and changed the way Americans worked. A market economy began to develop.

Second Great Awakening A major religious revival movement inspired reform movements in many areas of American life, including prison reform, temperance, public education, and the abolition of slavery.

Seneca Falls Convention At an 1848 meeting in Seneca Falls, New York, a women's movement was launched that would last for decades. Its goal was equality under the law for both men and women.

Chapter 9 — A Dividing Nation

Was the Civil War inevitable?

9.1 – Introduction

On May 22, 1856, Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts was savagely beaten on the floor of the Senate. The attack followed a speech Sumner had given entitled "The Crime Against Kansas." Sumner was an ardent abolitionist, and in his speech, he had blasted fellow senators for passing a law that would allow slavery in Kansas Territory.

Sumner heaped particular scorn on one of the law's authors, Senator Andrew P. Butler of South Carolina. Sumner sneered at Butler for his proslavery beliefs and his tendency to drool when he spoke. Butler was an aged but distinguished member of the Senate. Many senators found Sumner's speech offensive, and Southerners were outraged.

Two days later, Preston Brooks, Butler's nephew and a member of the House, approached Sumner, who was seated at his desk. Declaring Sumner's speech a "libel on South Carolina and Mr. Butler," Brooks began to beat Sumner over the head with his gold-tipped cane. Brooks eventually broke his cane, but not before he had left Sumner bloody and unconscious on the Senate floor. Sumner survived the attack, but it was three years before he recovered from his injuries and returned to the Senate.

The incident underscored the country's deep divisions over the issue of slavery. Southerners praised Brooks for defending the South and his family's honor. Many Southerners sent Brooks new canes to replace the one he had broken on Sumner's head. The city of Charleston, South Carolina, even sent a cane with the inscription, "Hit him again."

In contrast, many Northerners were appalled by the incident. They saw it as another example of the same Southern brutality that was responsible for slavery. Many in the North who had previously rejected the antislavery movement as too radical now found themselves more sympathetic to limiting slavery—and more hostile toward the South.

9.2 – Sectional Differences Divide the Union

The Ohio River meanders for nearly 1,000 miles from its origins in western Pennsylvania to the Mississippi River, at Cairo, Illinois. The Ohio has played a significant role in American history. It served as the main route for westward migration into the old Northwest Territory. It also served as a boundary between North and South. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 declared that all lands north of the Ohio would be free of slaves, leaving slavery allowable in lands to the south. This law helped make the creation of new western states easier for a time. But it did not solve the problem of slavery. As the country expanded, sectional differences over slavery increasingly divided the country.

Slavery Comes to the National Stage: The Missouri Compromise

In the early 1800s, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois applied for statehood. Because they were all north of the Ohio River, they entered the Union as free states. During the same period, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama—all south of the Ohio—entered as slave states.

By 1819, the number of slave states and free states was balanced at 11 each. That meant neither North nor South had a controlling majority in the Senate. But that year, Missouri, which lay to the west of the Ohio River, applied for admission as a slave state. If admitted, Missouri would tip the balance of power in the Senate toward the South.

Suddenly, slavery became a national issue. Northerners in Congress protested that most of Missouri lay north of the point where the Ohio River met the Mississippi. By all rights, they said, it should be a free state. They also worried that making Missouri a slave state might turn the rest of Louisiana Territory toward slavery. So they insisted that Missouri could only enter as a free state. Southern senators disagreed. Congress was deadlocked.

When the Senate took up the matter again in 1820, however, things had changed. Maine was asking to join the Union as a free state. This opened the way for a deal known as the Missouri Compromise, which was sponsored by Speaker of the House Henry Clay. Under the terms of the compromise, Missouri would enter the Union as a slave state and Maine as a free state, preserving the balance of power in the Senate. In addition, the law drew a line across the Louisiana Territory at latitude 36°30'. North of that line, slavery would be banned. South of the line, it would be permitted.

The Missouri Compromise broke the deadlock in the Senate, but it pleased no one. Northerners were angry about the extension of slavery to Missouri. Southerners disliked the ban on slavery in much of the Louisiana Territory. The compromise eased tensions temporarily, but it was not a permanent solution. Meanwhile, nothing had been settled about the future of slavery. Reflecting on this failure, John Quincy Adams wrote in his diary,

I have favored this Missouri compromise, believing it to be all that could be effected [accomplished] under the present Constitution, and from extreme unwillingness to put the Union at hazard [risk] . . . If the Union must be dissolved, slavery is precisely the question on which it ought to break. For the present however, the contest is laid asleep.

—John Quincy Adams, 1820

Two Ways of Life: The North and the South

The dispute between North and South over Missouri was more than a battle over slavery. It was a conflict over different ways of life. Sectionalism, or a strong attachment to regional interests, had become a major issue in American politics.

By midcentury, the North was becoming increasingly urban, as people migrated from farms to cities in search of economic opportunities. In the Northeast, between 1800 and 1860, the percentage of the population living in cities grew from 9 to 35 percent. Some cities grew very fast. The population of New York City, for example, soared during that time from 60,000 to more than 800,000. Waves of immigration, mostly from Ireland and Germany, helped swell populations.

In contrast, the South was still predominantly rural in 1860. Most of the population lived on small farms or large plantations scattered across the countryside. The largest Southern city, New Orleans, had a population of only 169,000 people.

The economies of the two regions were also different. Although agriculture was still a significant part of the North's economy, workshops, factories, and mills also churned out large amounts of manufactured goods. Most of the immigrants entering the country in the 1840s and 1850s settled in the North because that was where the jobs were.

A growing network of canals and railroad lines in the North helped carry the products of mills and factories to customers. By 1860, more than 20,000 miles of rail lines crisscrossed the northern half of the country. These lines connected the cities and factories of the Northeast with the farming regions of the Midwest. In contrast, the South invested much less in transportation and had only half as many rail lines. Instead, it relied on rivers for transportation.

Unlike the North, the South had little industry in 1860. Its economy continued to be based on the export of agricultural products. Rice, corn, and cotton all grew well in the South, with cotton being the most important of the three crops. Some white Southerners owned large plantations worked by large numbers of slaves. But most were small farmers who depended on family members for labor. Only one in four Southern households owned slaves.

Still, plantation agriculture and slave labor formed the basis of the Southern economy. Without slavery, the plantation system would collapse, causing great economic harm to the South. For that reason, most Southerners saw abolitionism as a threat to their economy and way of life.

9.3 – The Ongoing Debate over Slavery: 1850-1856

It was 1850, and Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky was once again trying to save the Union. Clay was one of the country's leading statesmen, spending much of his political career trying to mend sectional differences. His efforts to win passage of the Missouri Compromise in 1820 had earned him the title "The Great Compromiser." Now, 30 years later, North and South were once again on the brink of dividing the Union over the issue of slavery. The elderly Clay was tired and ill, but he would make one last effort to hold the country together.

The Growing Divide over Slavery

In both the North and the South, people had mixed views on slavery. Many moderates in the North accepted slavery where it already existed. They did, however, object to extending slavery into new territories and states, an opinion known as the Free-Soil position.

More radical abolitionists wanted to end slavery everywhere. Until that happened, many stood ready to help slaves liberate themselves. They did so by establishing a network of secret escape routes and safe houses for runaways that became known as the Underground Railroad. An escaped slave-turned-abolitionist named Harriet Tubman was the best-known "conductor" on the Underground Railroad. Tubman risked her life many times by returning to the South to guide slaves to freedom in the North.

In the South, moderates saw slavery as a necessary evil that would eventually die out as more and more slaves were freed. Southern radicals, however, held that slaves were property and that limiting the expansion of slavery into new territories deprived Southerners of their property rights.

Territorial expansion became the flash point in the ongoing debate over slavery. Just how divided the country was became clear in 1846, when President James K. Polk asked Congress for money to negotiate with Mexico for the acquisition of California. David Wilmot, a representative from Pennsylvania, attached an amendment to the funding bill known as the Wilmot Proviso. The amendment would have banned slavery from any territory that the United States might acquire. Wilmot's objective, he said, was "to preserve for free white labor a fair country." The Wilmot Proviso passed several times in the House, which had a majority from the North. Its passage was blocked, however, in the Senate, where the South had more senators—and thus, more power.

The debate over the expansion of slavery was renewed after the United States acquired vast lands in the Southwest in its war with Mexico. Moderates in both the North and the South proposed settling these new territories on the basis of popular sovereignty, or rule by the people. This meant allowing voters in the territories to decide whether to permit slavery. But popular sovereignty did not address the problem of keeping a balance of power in Congress if and when these territories became states.

This problem came front and center when California applied for admission to the Union as a free state in 1849. California's entry as a free state would tip the balance of power toward the North. Of course, Northerners welcomed this idea, while Southerners strongly opposed it. Congress was deadlocked again, and some Southerners spoke of withdrawing from the Union.

A Compromise with Something for Everyone

At this point, Henry Clay stepped forward with a plan known as the Compromise of 1850. Clay's plan had something for everyone. It admitted California into the Union as a free state, which pleased the North. It divided the rest of the Southwest into two territories—New Mexico and Utah—and opened both to slavery, which pleased the

South. It ended the slave trade in Washington, D.C., but allowed existing slaveholders there to keep their slaves, making both sides happy.

The Compromise of 1850 also included a strong Fugitive Slave Law. The new law required the return of escaped slaves to their owners, something slaveholders had been demanding for years. "All good citizens," it added, "are hereby commanded to aid and assist in the prompt and efficient execution of this law." Those who did not could be fined or jailed.

To get his plan through Congress, Clay persuaded Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts to lend his support. Webster opposed slavery, but he agreed to support Clay's compromise in an effort to end the crisis. In a speech before Congress, Webster urged his fellow senators to unite for the good of the nation. "I wish to speak today, not as a Massachusetts man, nor as a Northern man, but as an American," he said. "I speak today for the preservation of the Union." The debate went on for months, but Congress finally approved Clay's compromise.

The Compromise Satisfies No One

Clay and Webster hoped the Compromise of 1850 would placate both sides and help ease tensions over slavery. Instead, the compromise pleased almost no one. The Fugitive Slave Law caused particular friction. The law allowed Southern "slave catchers" to come north to retrieve escaped slaves and required Northerners to come to the aid of these slave catchers or face fines, even imprisonment. Many Northerners felt the law was immoral and refused to obey it. Their resistance outraged Southerners.

Friction between the sections was further intensified by publication in 1852 of Uncle Tom's Cabin. In this best-selling novel, Harriet Beecher Stowe described the cruelties of slavery through the story of a dignified slave named Uncle Tom. The novel describes Tom's experiences with three slaveholders. Two of them treat Tom kindly. The third, Simon Legree, abuses Tom and has Tom beaten to death for refusing to tell where two escaped slaves are hiding.

Stowe hoped her novel would help bring slavery to a quick and peaceful end. Instead, the book increased the hostility of many Northerners toward the South. Southerners, in turn, saw Stowe's description of slavery as both inaccurate and an insult to their way of life.

Let the People Decide: The Kansas-Nebraska Act

In 1854, another act of Congress set the North and the South on a collision course. That year, Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois introduced a bill to organize the Great Plains for settlement. Because this area lay north of the Missouri Compromise line, the bill did not mention slavery. Southerners in Congress agreed to vote for the bill if the two new territories—Kansas and Nebraska—were organized on the basis of popular sovereignty. With Southern support, the Kansas-Nebraska Act made it through Congress. "The true intent and meaning of this act," it said, was "not to legislate slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom."

The Kansas-Nebraska Act dismayed many Northerners. They thought the Missouri Compromise had put most of the Great Plains off-limits to slavery. Now they feared slavery would spread like a plague across the country. To prevent that from happening, antislavery activists and settlers, or Free-Soilers, united to form a new political party in 1854. The new Republican Party took a firm stand against the Fugitive Slave Law and the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

Kansas Becomes a Battleground over Slavery

By 1855, settlers were pouring into Kansas. Most were peaceful farmers seeking good land to farm. But the territory also attracted agitators, or protesters, who wanted to influence the vote on slavery. Abolition societies in the North sent in Free-Soilers, while groups in the South recruited proslavery settlers to occupy Kansas.

It was not long before these two opposing groups came into conflict. From Missouri, armed agitators called "border ruffians" crossed into Kansas and threatened the Free-Soilers. On May 21, 1856, proslavery forces raided the Free-Soil town of Lawrence, Kansas. They burned buildings, looted stores, and destroyed two printing presses. Northern newspapers called the border ruffians' rampage the "Sack of Lawrence."

Antislavery activists led by John Brown met violence with violence. Brown was an antislavery zealot who had dedicated his life to ending slavery by any means necessary. He urged his followers to "fight fire with fire" and "strike terror in the hearts of the proslavery people." Two days after the Lawrence raid, Brown and seven of his supporters attacked the proslavery town of Pottawatomie. They dragged five men out of their homes and killed them with their swords.

Brown's massacre prompted still more bloodshed in Kansas, as proslavery and antislavery forces battled for control of the territory. But the violence was not restricted to Kansas. It was also infecting the nation's capital. The day after the Lawrence raid, Preston Brooks attacked and beat Charles Sumner on the Senate floor. Despite efforts at compromise, the struggle over slavery was getting more violent.

9.4 – From Compromise to Crisis: 1857-1861

Like many slaves, Dred Scott and his wife, Harriet, wanted their freedom. But rather than run away, they tried to win it legally. In 1846, they sued for their freedom in a St. Louis, Missouri, court. The Scotts had lived with their owner for several years in the free territory of Wisconsin. They based their suit on the argument that living in a free territory had made them free people. What began as a simple lawsuit led to one of the most notorious Supreme Court decisions in the history of the nation.

The Dred Scott Decision Outrages the North

In 1856, the case of Scott v. Sandford reached the Supreme Court. The Court, led by Chief Justice Roger Taney, faced two key questions. First, did slaves have the right to bring a case before a federal court? Second, did the Scott's stay in Wisconsin make

them free? Taney, however, saw in this case the opportunity to resolve the slavery issue once and for all. He asked the Court to consider two additional questions. Did Congress have the power to make laws concerning slavery in the territories? If so, was the Missouri Compromise a constitutional use of that power?

The Court issued the Dred Scott decision in 1857. It began by reviewing the Declaration of Independence's words that "all men are created equal." Writing for majority, Taney said,

The general words . . . seem to embrace the whole human family . . . But it is too clear for dispute, that the enslaved African race were not intended to be included, and formed no part of the people who framed and adopted this declaration.

—Chief Justice Roger Taney, *Scott v. Sandford*, 1857

To this Taney added, "Dred Scott was not a citizen of Missouri within the meaning of the Constitution . . . and [is] not entitled as such to sue in its courts."

The Court also rejected the idea that Scott's stay in Wisconsin had made him a free man. Taney reasoned that giving Scott his freedom would be like taking property from his owner. The Fifth Amendment to the Constitution protects private property. Thus, the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional by establishing territories "which prohibited a citizen from holding or owning property of this kind."

The ruling struck the nation like a bombshell. Southerners were thrilled. They believed the Court had settled the slavery question in their favor. Northerners were stunned. The Court's decision had invalidated the whole idea of "free soil" and opened all territories to slavery. "The decision," wrote a New York newspaper, "is the moral assassination of a race and cannot be obeyed."

John Brown's Raid on Harpers Ferry Shocks the South

The Dred Scott decision helped convince radical abolitionists like John Brown that slavery would never be ended by legal means. In 1859, Brown decided to try a different approach—he provoked an armed uprising of slaves to free themselves.

With 21 other men, Brown seized the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. An arsenal is a place where guns and ammunition are stored. Brown intended to distribute the weapons to slaves in the area and spark a slave revolt.

Brown's plan was thwarted when federal troops stormed the arsenal and captured him and his men. Brown was tried for treason, convicted, and executed. Even so, John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry shocked the South and prompted widespread fears of a slave rebellion. Most Southerners saw Brown as a lunatic whose extreme views were representative of the antislavery movement.

Many Northerners, on the other hand, saw Brown as a hero and martyr to the cause of abolition. Poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson declared that Brown would make the gallows "as glorious as a cross." When the Civil War began a few months later, Union troops marched into battle singing, "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave, His soul goes marching on."

The Election of 1860 Splits the Nation

The presidential election of 1860 drove a final wedge between North and South. Sectional strains had split the Democratic Party into northern and southern factions, or competing groups. Northern Democrats nominated Stephen Douglas of Illinois and backed popular sovereignty in the territories. Southern Democrats picked John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky, who wanted slavery to be allowed in all territories. John Bell of Tennessee, who ran as the candidate of the Constitutional Union Party, tried to avoid the divisive issue of slavery.

It was the fourth candidate, however, who polarized the nation. He was Abraham Lincoln, the Republican Party nominee. Lincoln, an Illinois lawyer, was a moderate but firm opponent of slavery who had first gained national attention during a run for the Senate in 1858. In a famous series of debates against his opponent, Stephen Douglas, Lincoln had condemned slavery as "a moral, social, and political wrong."

Lincoln lost the Senate race to Douglas, but his campaign had won him strong antislavery support in the North. This support, as well as the split in the Democratic Party, helped sweep Lincoln to victory in 1860. Lincoln won the presidency with less than 40 percent of the votes, all of them cast in the North. His name did not even appear on the ballot in many Southern states.

Lincoln's victory raised the cry of secession, or withdrawal from the Union, in the South. Southerners feared that with a Republican in the White House, Congress would try to abolish slavery. Lincoln tried to calm Southern fears. He said he would not interfere with slavery in the South. He also said he would support enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law. But he refused to support the extension of slavery to the western territories. On that question, he said, there could be no compromise.

Secession Spreads Across the South

Lincoln tried to hold the nation together, but his efforts had little effect. On December 20, 1860, South Carolina seceded from the Union. Over the next several weeks, six more Southern states pulled out. Together they formed the Confederate States of America, with Jefferson Davis as president.

In his inaugural address, Lincoln declared that secession was both wrong and unconstitutional. He added that he had no legal right to interfere with slavery in the states where it existed, but he expressed his determination to keep the Union together. He appealed to the rebellious states to return. "In your hands, my fellow dissatisfied countrymen, and not in mine," he said, "is the momentous issue of civil war."

On April 12, 1861, Southern forces opened fire on Fort Sumter, a federal fort in Charleston harbor. After a day and a half of bombardment, the troops in the fort surrendered. The attack on Fort Sumter provoked fury in the North. "There is no more thought of bribing or coaxing the traitors who have dared to aim their cannon balls at the flag of the Union," wrote one newspaper. There could be no more compromise. The Civil War had begun.

Summary

In the mid-1800s, the United States was deeply divided over slavery. By 1860, a series of events had widened this gulf to the breaking point. The election of Abraham Lincoln as president that year triggered a secession crisis that led to the Civil War.

Missouri Compromise This 1820 compromise banned slavery from much of the Louisiana Territory while maintaining the balance of power between slave and free states in the Senate.

Compromise of 1850 Henry Clay hoped this compromise on slavery in the West would please everyone. But its inclusion of the Fugitive Slave Law deeply angered many Northerners.

Uncle Tom's Cabin This best-selling novel touched the hearts of Northerners with its story of a kind slave who was mistreated by a brutal owner, turning many against slavery.

Kansas-Nebraska Act This 1854 act opened Kansas and Nebraska to settlement under the banner of popular sovereignty. Kansas erupted in violence as proslavery and antislavery settlers battled for control of the territory.

Republican Party Antislavery activists and Free-Soilers came together in 1854 to form the Republican Party, which was committed to stopping the spread of slavery.

Dred Scott decision This 1858 Supreme Court decision denied citizenship to African Americans and opened all western territories to slavery. Northerners were appalled and Southerners pleased.

Election of 1860 Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln won election in 1860 with a minority of the popular votes. Fearing that Republicans would try to interfere with slavery, several slave states seceded. On April 10, 1861, Southern forces attacked Fort Sumter, beginning the Civil War.

Chapter 10 — The Civil War

How did the Civil War affect the United States and its people?

10.1 – Introduction

Wilmer McLean was about to sit down to lunch with a group of Confederate officers on July 18, 1861, when a cannonball ripped through his roof. It landed in the stewpot, scattering stew all over the kitchen.

This was more than McLean had bargained for when he moved his family to a farm in the country. McLean had been a prosperous merchant in Alexandria, Virginia, just outside Washington, D.C. When he retired, he decided to move to the countryside for some peace and quiet. He bought a farm outside the small village of Manassas Junction, Virginia. The farm was comfortable and pleasant, with fields, woods, and a small stream called Bull Run. Unfortunately for McLean, Manassas was also the site of an important railroad junction. These rail lines made Manassas a strategic location in the Civil War—one that both the North and the South wanted to control.

Since the shelling of Fort Sumter in April 1861, the North and the South had been in a state of war. However, there had been no major combat since that first engagement. Then, in mid-July, the two opposing armies gathered their forces near McLean's farm.

Three days after the cannonball landed in McLean's kitchen, the First Battle of Bull Run began. The fighting raged across McLean's land for hours, but by afternoon, the Union forces were in full retreat. In the Union army, this embarrassing flight would be remembered as "the great skedaddle." A year later, another battle took place on McLean's farm. At that point, McLean decided to leave Manassas and find a safer place to live.

The McLean family relocated to the south in a small Virginian town called Appomattox Court House. McLean hoped that the town's remote location would keep the war away from his doorstep. But as you will read later in this chapter, he did not get his wish. Wilmer McLean had one more important role to play in the Civil War.

10.2 – Four Long Years of War

At the time of the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861, seven states had seceded from the Union. In the months that followed, the eight slave states in the Upper South faced a difficult decision—to secede or not. Finally, four of them—Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri—remained in the Union, but not without serious reservations. The country, now formally divided between the Union and the Confederacy, braced for war.

The Advantages of the Union and the Confederacy

As the war began, both sides were confident of a quick victory. Northerners were certain they could overwhelm the South with their superior resources. Not only did the Union

have more than twice as many people than the South, but it also had a much more diverse economy. The North outstripped the South in farm production, factories, naval force, and railroad lines, which were crucial for moving troops and supplies.

Yet Southerners were optimistic. They had the advantage of fighting a defensive war on their own soil, as well as outstanding military leadership. All they had to do to win was push back invading Union forces. Before long, they believed, the Union would tire of battle and leave the Confederacy in peace.

Believing their cause was just, volunteers on both sides rushed to enlist. The 70,000 new troops that marched into battle on Wilmer McLean's farm in 1861 were certain the other side would collapse at the first whiff of gunpowder. The realities of the First Battle of Bull Run, however, destroyed such illusions. Although the South won the day, their victory did not come easily. For the North, the defeat at Bull Run was a harsh wake-up call.

The Anaconda Plan Begins to Squeeze the Confederacy

After Bull Run, President Abraham Lincoln realized he had to plan for a long war. With General Winfield Scott, he devised a strategy that came to be known as the Anaconda Plan. As the name suggests, the idea was to surround the South and squeeze it to death, like an anaconda snake crushing its prey.

To accomplish this goal, the Union planned to set up a naval blockade—a line of ships stopping sea traffic in and out of Southern ports. The blockade would keep the South from trading its cotton in Europe for the war supplies it needed. Next, the Union navy would take control of the Mississippi River, separating Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas from the rest of the South. From there, the Union army would move east to squeeze the life out of the Deep South. Finally, Union forces would invade Virginia and lop off the enemy's head, in this case the Confederate capital of Richmond.

The Union enjoyed early success with the first two steps in the plan. The navy blockaded Southern ports and stopped most trade. It also seized New Orleans and began to move up the Mississippi River. At the same time, Union forces commanded by General Ulysses S. Grant fought their way south toward the Mississippi. Along the way, Grant won decisive battles that brought much of Tennessee under Union control.

Not everything went the North's way, however. The Union navy's push up the Mississippi was blocked at Vicksburg, a key city on the river. Union armies also failed to take Richmond, despite a major offensive in the summer of 1862. The Confederate capital remained safe from Union forces for two more years.

Antietam: The Bloodiest Day of the War

After Union forces failed to capture Richmond, the South tried to turn the tables on the North. The top Confederate general, Robert E. Lee, decided to invade Union territory by crossing into Maryland. He hoped this show of strength would persuade Maryland to

join the Confederacy. He also hoped that major victories on Union soil would encourage Great Britain and France to give aid to the Confederacy.

After crossing the Potomac River, Lee's army clashed with Union forces on September 17, 1862, at Antietam Creek, near Sharpsburg, Maryland. The Battle of Antietam was the bloodiest one-day battle in American history, with more than 20,000 soldiers killed or wounded. One soldier recalled, "I have never in my soldier[s] life seen such a sight. The dead and wounded covered the ground." Despite the enormous human cost, the battle ended in a stalemate, and Lee retreated back across the Potomac into Virginia.

Although the Battle of Antietam was not decisive, it was a turning point in the war. Not only had Lee's invasion of the North failed, but he had also lost a quarter of his army in the effort. European countries remained reluctant to recognize or assist the Confederacy. Furthermore, Lee's failure gave Lincoln the chance to take a step that would change the course of the war.

The Emancipation Proclamation Changes Union War Aims

Although Lincoln opposed slavery, he refused at first to make abolition a war aim. "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union," he wrote, "and is not either to save or destroy slavery." But as the war dragged on, Lincoln decided that tying the war effort to emancipation—freeing the slaves—made sense.

Calling for the end of slavery, Lincoln knew, would link the war to a moral cause in the North. It would also win support in Europe, where opposition to slavery was strong. Freeing the slaves could also deprive the South of part of its workforce. In fact, since the start of the war, thousands of slaves had freed themselves by running away to the Union lines. News of these runaways may have influenced Lincoln's decision to call for the emancipation of all slaves.

A few days after Antietam, Lincoln issued a warning to the Confederate states: Return to the Union by January 1, 1863, or he would free their slaves. The Confederacy ignored the warning, and on January 1, Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared all slaves living in states "in rebellion against the United States" to be "thenceforward, and forever free." Slaves living in areas loyal to or under Union control were not affected.

The Emancipation Proclamation had little immediate effect, because the Confederacy ignored it. Nevertheless, it gave the Union a great moral purpose and signified that a Union victory would mean the end of slavery.

Turning the Tide: Vicksburg and Gettysburg

To hasten that victory, General Grant continued to battle his way toward the Mississippi River. In May 1863, he arrived at the Confederate stronghold of Vicksburg, Mississippi, and settled in for a long siege. For six weeks, his troops shelled the city from one side, while Union gunboats battered it from the other. The Confederates dug caves into the

hillsides and tried to ride it out. But eventually, they gave in. On July 4, the Confederate army at Vicksburg surrendered, and the Union finally gained control of the Mississippi.

Meanwhile, another great battle was underway in the village of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. It began when General Lee invaded the North a second time. On July 1, 1863, his army of approximately 75,000 troops met a Union force of about 95,000 just west of the town. The Battle of Gettysburg lasted for three terrible days. At first, Lee's troops held their position, but on July 3, they suffered devastating losses and were forced to retreat. More than 50,000 soldiers were killed or wounded. Having lost a third of his army, Lee would not attack the North again but would fight a defensive war only. For the North, this victory marked a major turning point in the war.

Several months later, President Lincoln visited Gettysburg. There he gave one of the most stirring speeches in American history, the Gettysburg Address. Lincoln noted that the war was testing whether a nation "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that 'all men are created equal' . . . can long endure." He then declared that the nation would endure and that out of war would come a "new birth of freedom."

Total War Forces the South to Surrender

After the defeats at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, Southerners continued to defend their land fiercely, despite dwindling resources. To force a Confederate surrender, General Grant adopted a policy known as total war, which called for doing whatever was necessary to undermine the enemy's willingness or capacity to fight. To implement this policy, Grant adopted a two-pronged strategy. He would lead his forces into Virginia to engage Lee's army and take the Confederate capital of Richmond. Meanwhile, another Union general, William Tecumseh Sherman, would wage a campaign of destruction through Georgia and the Carolinas.

Sherman was a battle-hardened veteran who believed in total war. "We cannot change the hearts of these people of the South," he said, "but we can make war so terrible . . . and make them so sick of war that generations [will] pass away before they again appeal to it." In May 1864, he marched his troops southward from Tennessee with orders to inflict "all the damage you can."

In September, Sherman captured Atlanta and burned much of it to the ground. He then continued toward the coast. During Sherman's March to the Sea, his troops destroyed everything they found of value. They looted houses, burned fields, and killed livestock. After taking the port city of Savannah, Georgia, Sherman turned north and swept through the Carolinas.

While Sherman waged total war, Grant and Lee were locked in fierce combat in Virginia. Despite heavy losses, Grant continued on toward Richmond. On April 3, 1865, he captured the capital. With his army surrounded, Lee was finally forced to surrender.

On April 9, Lee and Grant met at the village of Appomattox Court House. Oddly enough, their meeting took place in the house of Wilmer McLean, the same man whose farm in

Manassas had been the site of the first real battle of the war. As McLean later said, "The war started in my front yard and ended in my parlor." The terms of surrender Grant offered Lee were generous. Confederate officers could keep their weapons. Any officers or troops who claimed their own horses could keep them. Most important, "Each officer and man will be allowed to return to his home, not to be disturbed by the United States authorities." At long last, the Civil War was over.

10.3 – Challenges Facing Government Leaders

While the war raged, leaders in both the Union and the Confederacy faced enormous challenges. Not only did they have to mount a huge military effort, but they also had to find ways to pay for a long war. In addition, they had to shore up public support for an increasingly unpopular struggle.

Lincoln's Balancing Act

President Lincoln was elected in 1860 without getting a majority of the popular vote. Because his base of support was so thin, he faced daunting political problems as he tried to hold the Union together. His every move was criticized by political opponents and an often-hostile press.

Early in the war, one of Lincoln's top priorities was to keep the border states of Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri in the Union. Maryland, in particular, was crucial, because it surrounded Washington, D.C., on three sides. At the start of the war, pro-secession mobs attacked a Union regiment as it passed through Baltimore. Lincoln sent in troops and suspended the constitutional right of habeas corpus—the right of a person to appear in court so a judge can determine whether the person is being imprisoned lawfully. Suspending this right allowed the Union to jail suspected opponents without charge and to hold them indefinitely. Lincoln's policy was harsh, but he saw it as necessary to keep Maryland and neighboring Delaware from seceding.

The question of emancipation posed even more challenges for Lincoln. Although abolitionists pressured him to end slavery immediately, he resisted for fear of alienating the border states or angering those in the Union who did not support abolition. After it became apparent to him that emancipation was necessary, he waited until he could make his announcement from a position of strength. Even then, he made sure that his proclamation did not cover slaves in states loyal to the Union. Although that decision upset the abolitionists, they still regarded the Emancipation Proclamation as a major step forward.

As the war dragged on, Lincoln faced other difficulties. One was finding enough men to fight. Lacking sufficient volunteers, Congress enacted a military draft in 1863. The draft law required all white men between the ages of 20 and 45 to report for military duty. However, the law had loopholes. For \$300, a man who did not want to serve could buy his way out of the draft, or he could hire a replacement to serve in his place. This meant that affluent Northerners could avoid service, while the poor went off to war.

Anger over the new law triggered rioting in New York and other cities. Bitter about being drafted to free slaves, the New York City rioters directed their rage at African Americans. Estimates of casualties in the New York City draft riots ran as high as 1,000 killed and wounded.

President Lincoln also faced the challenge of leading a Union that was far from united. One wing of the Democratic Party did not believe the cost of the war—in lives, money, and civil liberties—was justified. These Democrats also did not see emancipation as a worthy war objective. Republicans nicknamed these critics Copperheads, after a poisonous snake. "Every victory of the government they lament as a defeat of their party," wrote a Philadelphia observer. "In every success of the rebels they see a party victory and hail it with triumph."

Challenges for Southern Leaders

Confederate president Jefferson Davis also faced challenges in raising an army. In 1862, the South had passed America's first draft law. Like the Northern version that came later, this law included a loophole that allowed rich plantation owners to avoid military service. This issue prompted complaints of it being a "rich man's war but a poor man's fight." Some Southern states tried to evade the law, calling it an assault on states' rights.

The main challenge for Davis and other Confederate leaders, however, was figuring out how to pay for the war while keeping the Southern economy afloat. Prior to the war, the South had relied on cotton sales for most of its income. Much of that cotton was shipped to Europe, especially to Great Britain, where it played a key role in the textile industry. When the war began, the South placed an embargo on cotton exports in an attempt to force Great Britain and other European countries to recognize the Confederacy and assist it with arms and money. But Southern leaders failed to realize that Great Britain already had a surplus of cotton and was developing new sources of supply. Thus, the cotton embargo failed to prompt European action, and the South lost valuable export income.

Without income from cotton sales, the South could not import the goods it needed to fight a long war. That problem was exacerbated by the Union naval blockade. Shortages of goods soon led to rising prices. Between 1860 and 1863, food prices in the South rose by more than 1,000 percent. Bacon went from 12 cents a pound to \$1.50 and butter from 23 cents a pound to \$3.00. With their purchasing power eroding day by day, Southerners lost faith in the Confederate currency. "An oak leaf," said a Georgian in 1863, "will be worth just as much as the promise of the Confederate treasury to pay one dollar."

As these economic problems hit home, Southerners began to show signs of discontent. They complained about high prices and a lack of food for the poor. They also accused wealthy Southerners of hoarding goods. At times, their anger erupted into violence.

In April 1863, a bread riot broke out in Richmond, Virginia. Hundreds of women rampaged through downtown, breaking windows and stealing food, shoes, and other goods. According to one account, President Davis confronted the women. "You say you are hungry and have no money," he said. "Here is all I have." He dug into his pockets and flung coins into the crowd. Then he threatened to have troops open fire if the rioters did not leave. The women went home, but other similar riots broke out in towns and cities across the South.

10.4 – The Effect of the War on Soldiers

Around 3 million men fought in the Civil War. As many as a third of these soldiers died or were wounded in battle. Even for those who escaped without injury, the war exacted a tremendous cost. Soldiers had to leave their homes and families for up to four years while enduring numerous hardships.

New Weapons Make Battle More Deadly

The Civil War was an extremely brutal and destructive conflict. One reason for this was the development of new and deadlier weapons, such as the rifled musket. Unlike the old smoothbore musket, this gun had grooves on the inside of the barrel that caused the bullet to spin, allowing it to travel much faster, farther, and with greater accuracy. Improved cannons with explosive shells also allowed armies to unleash a hail of artillery fire on their opponents.

These new weapons were deadly enough, but poor battlefield tactics exacerbated their effects. Instead of spreading troops out to make them difficult to target, generals massed the soldiers together for large frontal assaults on enemy lines. This tactic had worked well enough in previous wars, when guns were less accurate. But in the Civil War, snipers who were dug into defensive positions could mow down a line of charging troops with ease, even at great distances. This mismatch of new weapons with old tactics led to incredibly bloody battles, like the one at Antietam.

Civil War battles were typically chaotic, terrifying events. Fifty years later, a former soldier could still recall the awful sound of battle:

The screaming and bursting of shells, . . . the death screams of wounded animals, the groans of their human companions, wounded and dying and trampled underfoot by hurrying batteries, riderless horses and the moving lines of battle . . . a perfect hell on earth.

—Unknown Union soldier, describing the Battle of Gettysburg

Battles often took place in open fields. But sometimes, as the following soldier describes, the battles occurred in wooded areas, where the enemy was hard to spot:

No one could see the fight fifty feet from him. The lines were very near each other, and from the dense underbrush and the tops of trees came puffs of smoke,

the "ping" of the bullets and the yell of the enemy. It was a blind and bloody hunt to the death, in bewildering thickets, rather than a battle.

—Unknown Union soldier, describing the Battle of the Wilderness, 1864

Although men on both sides fought with courage, it was the rare soldier who eagerly sought conflict. As one put it, "When bullets are whacking against tree trunks and solid shots are cracking skulls like egg-shells, the consuming passion in the breast of the average man is to get out of the way."

Medical Care on the Battlefield

Many soldiers who were wounded in battle died where they fell. Those who were rescued often faced a grim fate in the hands of military doctors. In the 1860s, medical knowledge was quite limited. Doctors did not know how to treat many diseases, nor did they understand the causes of infection and the need for sanitary procedures in surgery.

Battlefield surgeons often worked in clothes covered with blood. They wiped their hands and surgical tools on their jackets or dipped them in dirty water between operations. One of their most common tools was the bone saw, which was used to perform amputations. Because musket balls typically shattered bones on impact, doctors had little recourse but to remove whole limbs, often without anesthesia. Piles of arms, legs, and feet would stack up outside medical tents.

Poor hygiene was another major problem in camp. Soldiers often pitched their tents near open latrines and bathed in the same water that they used for drinking. These practices encouraged the spread of disease. For every soldier who died in battle, an estimated two or three more died of disease from unsanitary conditions in camp.

Keeping Busy Between Battles

The life of soldiers was not all about the horrors of war. Most of their time was spent away from combat. On average, for every day of battle, they spent 50 days hanging around the camp. When they were not marching or drilling, the men usually had a lot of time on their hands.

To stay occupied in camp, soldiers on both sides pursued various pastimes. Reading was a common activity. Many soldiers were particularly interested in newspapers from home. Soldiers also wrote letters to their loved ones, played cards, and went swimming. Hunting and fishing were popular, as were sports like baseball and wrestling. Soldiers even performed magic shows, skits, and plays for their campmates. One Confederate production, called "Medical Board," satirized army doctors and their fondness for amputation.

Music played a special part in the lives of soldiers. To raise their spirits before battle, they sang patriotic songs like "The Battle Cry of Freedom" and "Dixie." Most of the time, however, they preferred traditional folk songs and sentimental ballads. They also made

up songs about the hardships of war and the tedium of camp life. One mournful song, "Weeping Sad and Lonely," was a favorite among homesick troops on both sides.

Weeping, sad and lonely,
Hopes and fears how vain! . . .
When this cruel war is over,
Praying that we meet again.

—Henry Tucker, 1863

When Union and Confederate forces were camped near each other, as sometimes happened, troops from both armies might even join in songs together, their voices echoing across the distance between their camps.

10.5 – The Effect of the War on African Americans

Although the war started as a conflict over states' rights and a fight to preserve the Union, at heart it was a struggle over the future of slavery. As former slave and abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass wrote,

The Negro is the key to the situation, the pivot upon which the whole rebellion turns . . . This war, disguise it as they may, is virtually nothing more or less than perpetual [everlasting] slavery against universal freedom.

—Frederick Douglass, 1861

The Promise of Freedom Stirs African Americans

Although the Emancipation Proclamation did not free any slaves when it was issued, it did cause great rejoicing among African Americans in the North. Many saw emancipation as the first step toward gaining equal rights for blacks. One man described the ecstatic response he saw at a public reading of the proclamation in Washington, D.C.:

Men squealed, women fainted, dogs barked, white and colored people shook hands, songs were sung, and by this time cannons began to fire . . . and follow in the wake of the roar that had . . . been going on behind the White House . . . The President came to the window and made responsive bows, and thousands told him, if he would come out of that palace, they would hug him to death . . . It was indeed a time of times, . . . nothing like it will ever be seen again in this life.

—Henry M. Turner, *The Negro in Slavery, War, and Peace*, 1913

African Americans and the War Effort

Even before the Emancipation Proclamation, thousands of slaves had fled to Union lines. Because there was no government policy on the fugitives, Union commanders were left to make their own decisions about what to do with them. Some tried to return

fugitives to their former owners or to keep them out of Union camps. Others paid the fugitives wages for noncombat work as cooks, carpenters, guides, and drivers.

Black leaders and abolitionists had favored the idea of African American recruitment since the start of the war. But Lincoln had sidestepped offers by free blacks in the North to raise African American regiments, fearing the effect black troops might have on the border states. Widely held prejudices also played a role in his reluctance to recruit blacks. Many Northerners doubted that African Americans would make good soldiers. Frederick Douglass complained, "Colored men were good enough to fight under Washington, but they are not good enough to fight under [General George] McClellan."

As the war wore on, public opinion began to change. Congress authorized African American recruitment in 1862. The next year, the War Department issued General Order 143, which authorized the "organization of Colored Troops." The most famous black unit was the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, which played a critical role in winning acceptance for black soldiers. On July 18, 1863, the 54th stormed the Confederate defenses at Fort Wagner, South Carolina. The assault failed, and more than 40 percent of the regiment was killed. But the troops fought valiantly and earned the praise of the nation. One newspaper wrote that without the 54th, "two hundred thousand troops for whom it was a pioneer [first experience] would never have put into the field."

Other black regiments also showed great courage under fire. Several were made up of freedmen—freed slaves—in the Confederate Army, including the 1st South Carolina Volunteers and the 1st and 3rd Louisiana regiments. After seeing the Louisiana troops in battle, one white officer wrote, "You have no idea how my prejudices with regard to negro troops have been dispelled . . . [They] behaved magnificently and fought splendidly . . . They are far superior in discipline to the white troops, and just as brave."

Racism and Discrimination Persist

Despite their contributions to the war effort, African Americans still faced racism and hostility. During the New York City draft riots, dozens of African Americans were killed. In the military, black soldiers were usually assigned menial tasks, like digging ditches. They were often given poor weapons and did not receive the same training for battle as did white soldiers. As a result, they suffered higher casualty rates. In addition, black soldiers who were captured in the South faced the risk of being enslaved or executed rather than imprisoned, as white soldiers were.

African American troops were also paid as laborers, not soldiers. While white soldiers earned \$13 a month, African Americans were paid just \$10. Some black regiments protested by refusing to accept any pay at all. Others took a more militant approach. In November 1863, a company of black soldiers stacked their weapons and refused to pick them up again until they received equal pay. Their leader, a black sergeant named William Walker, was charged with mutiny and executed by firing squad. Finally, in June 1864, Congress agreed to equalize pay for white and black soldiers, including all back pay.

10.6 – The Contributions of Women to the War Effort

Women on both sides of the conflict played a vital role in the war effort. One of these women was Clara Barton. When the war began, Barton volunteered for war relief on the Union side. "While our soldiers stand and fight," she said, "I can stand and feed and nurse them." She began by gathering food and other supplies for the troops. Later she became a nurse and cared for hundreds of wounded soldiers. At Antietam, when the field hospital came under artillery attack, she steadied the operating table while the doctor completed his surgery. The doctor later called her "the angel of the battlefield."

Women Soldiers and Spies

Though women were not allowed in the armed forces, some saw combat on the front lines. As many as 400 women disguised themselves as men and enlisted in the Union and Confederate armies. One woman, "Franklin Thompson" of Michigan, had to desert on her way to a hospital in order to keep her secret.

Other women served behind the lines in the dangerous role of spy. Women made good spies, in part because they were not suspected as quickly as men. If caught, they were also less likely to be punished severely. One of the most famous Confederate spies was Rose Greenhow. A well-connected member of Washington society, she used her contacts to learn about Union troop movements and passed this information along to the Confederate army. Her reports helped the Confederates win the First Battle of Bull Run in 1861. Eventually, Greenhow was discovered, arrested, and banished to the South.

Elizabeth Van Lew, a resident of Richmond, was a successful spy for the Union. She even managed to plant one of her assistants, a former slave named Mary Elizabeth Bowser, as a maid in the home of Jefferson Davis. In that way, Bowser and Van Lew gained access to Confederate war plans. Van Lew managed to divert suspicion and avoid arrest by pretending to be mentally unbalanced. In public, she muttered to herself and looked confused. The locals called her "Crazy Bet," but when Union troops took Richmond in 1865, she dropped the act and was honored as a hero.

Women Provide Medical Care

Other women, like reformer Dorothea Dix, played a crucial role by providing medical care to wounded and sick soldiers. Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman served as Union nurses as well, dividing their time between medical work and scouting for the Union army. In the end, more than 3,000 women served as nurses to the Union army.

Southern women also worked as nurses, and because almost all of the fighting took place on Southern soil, many turned their homes into medical shelters. After the First Battle of Bull Run, for instance, Sally Tompkins established a hospital in a private home and began caring for wounded Confederate soldiers. Altogether, she treated more than 1,300 men over the course of the war, while registering just 73 deaths. In honor of her achievements, Jefferson Davis made Tompkins a captain in the army. She was the only woman to become an officer in the Confederate army.

Women often had to overcome prejudice in order to serve. At the start of the war, many men viewed caring for wounded soldiers as "unladylike." Others believed the presence of women nurses in hospitals would distract the soldiers or that women would prove too delicate for battlefield conditions. As Confederate nurse Kate Cumming wrote, conditions were often shockingly bad, but women got used to them:

Nothing that I had ever heard or read had given me the faintest idea of the horrors witnessed here . . . I sat up all night, bathing the men's wounds, and giving them water . . . The men are lying all over the house, on their blankets, just as they were brought in from the battlefield . . . The foul air from this mass of human beings at first made me giddy and sick, but I soon got over it. We have to walk, and when we give the men anything kneel, in blood and water, but we think nothing of it.

—Kate Cumming, *Kate: The Journal of a Confederate Nurse*, 1959

Women doctors faced even greater obstacles. Surgeon Mary Walker tried but failed to get approval to join the Union army as a doctor. Instead, she volunteered as an assistant surgeon in a Washington hospital. Throughout the war, she worked as a battlefield doctor and later received the congressional Medal of Honor for her services.

Women Hold Down the Home Front

With thousands of men fighting in the war, women—black and white—stepped in to perform crucial jobs to support their families and the war effort. They took over family farms and businesses. They also organized aid societies to raise money for war supplies and to collect and distribute food to soldiers.

Northern women had already been a part of the prewar workforce in the textile industry. As the war dragged on, rising demand for military uniforms led to more women working in textile mills and garment factories. Women in the South also made clothes, though most worked at home as private contractors.

The war also provided new job opportunities for women. For the first time, women filled a significant number of government positions. They worked in offices copying documents, for the Treasury Department minting money, and for the postal service. Women also took dangerous jobs in munitions factories, making bullets and artillery shells for the Union and the Confederate armies. Accidents in these factories were common, and many women lost their lives.

10.7 – Differing Viewpoints: How Did the Civil War Change Us?

Few events in American history have done more to define the American identity and values than the Civil War. Even today, many Americans remain fascinated by the war. Historical societies mount exhibits, and every year, hundreds of Americans dress up in Civil War uniforms to reenact battles of the war. Scholars still publish books about the

Civil War, as they continue to debate its causes and assess its impact on American life. Here, two scholars discuss the changes brought about by that great struggle.

Shelby Foote: It Made Us an 'Is'

Shelby Foote was a Southern writer and the author of a three-volume history of the Civil War. When asked, "How did the war change us? What did we become?" he replied,

The Civil War was one of those watershed things . . . The nation had come face-to-face with a dreadful tragedy and we reacted the way a family would do with a dreadful tragedy . . . And yet that's what made us a nation. Before the war, people had a theoretical notion of having a country, but when the war was over, on both sides they knew they had a country. They'd been there. They had walked its hills and tramped its roads . . . And they knew the effort that they had expended and their dead friends had expended to preserve it. It did that. The war made their country an actuality.

Before the war, it was said, "The United States are. . .". Grammatically, it was spoken that way and thought of as a collection of independent states. After the war, it was always "The United States is . . ."—as we say today without being self-conscious at all. And that sums up what the war accomplished. It made us an "is."

—Shelby Foote, quoted in Geoffrey Ward, *The Civil War*, 1990

Eric Foner: A New Birth of Freedom

Historian Eric Foner argued that the Civil War forever changed how Americans thought about liberty:

The Civil War was a "new birth of freedom" for the United States. Now, I do not need to persuade you that there is no idea more central to our conception of ourselves as Americans than freedom. This is the central word in our political vocabulary, and between freedom and its twin word—liberty—you can find these concepts in just about every key document of American history . . .

Both sides in the Civil War fought in the name of freedom . . . Indeed, many southern whites believed that slavery was the foundation of liberty . . .

Union soldiers, of course, also spoke about . . . the "magic word freedom." They saw the war as an effort to preserve the United States as what Lincoln called "the last, best hope of earth" . . . But as the war progressed, these abstract definitions of . . . liberty began to give way to a more concrete meaning of freedom tied to the emancipation of the slaves. Millions of northerners who had not been abolitionists when the war began became convinced that securing the Union as the embodiment of liberty required the destruction of slavery. This was Lincoln's meaning when he spoke about "the new birth of freedom" . . .

"We all declare for liberty," [Lincoln] observed in 1864, "but in using the same word, we do not mean the same thing. To the North," he went on, freedom meant "for every man to enjoy the product of his labor . . . To southern whites, it meant mastership, the power . . . to do as they please with other men and the product of other men's labor." To Lincoln, ultimately, slavery was a form of theft, stealing the products of labor of one person and appropriating [taking] it by another.

The Union's triumph consolidated [strengthened] this northern vision of freedom as control over your own person . . . In the process, the meaning of freedom and the definition of those who were entitled to enjoy liberty were very radically transformed.

—Eric Foner, "The Civil War and a New Birth of Freedom", 2001

Summary

The Civil War lasted four years and cost 620,000 lives. It was by far the most destructive conflict ever waged on American soil.

Anaconda Plan Once it became clear that the war would not be quickly won, President Lincoln prepared for a long conflict with a plan to slowly crush the Confederacy.

Emancipation Proclamation By 1863, Lincoln issued a proclamation freeing all slaves in the rebellious states. However, freedom for most slaves did not come until the end of the war.

Gettysburg Address In his dedication of a cemetery for the men who died in the Battle of Gettysburg, Lincoln reminded the Union that it was fighting to preserve a nation "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

Sherman's March to the Sea The Union won the war in 1865 after General William T. Sherman waged total war across Georgia and General Ulysses S. Grant captured Richmond, Virginia.

Copperheads Both Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis had to deal with opposition groups that did not support their war aims. In the North, Copperheads urged an immediate end to the war. In the South, part of Virginia seceded and joined the Union as West Virginia.

Draft riots and bread riots The leaders of the Union and the Confederacy faced challenges in managing the war effort. In the North, protesters rioted over draft laws. In the South, women protested severe shortages of food and supplies.

54th Massachusetts Regiment African Americans welcomed emancipation and the chance to fight for the Union. Although they showed great courage, blacks continued to suffer from racism and inequality.

Women's service Women made great contributions to the war effort. They collected supplies and served as soldiers, spies, medical personnel, and farm and factory workers.

Chapter 11 — Reconstruction

How was the nation's commitment to its founding ideals tested during Reconstruction?

11.1 – Introduction

How could a nation torn apart by civil war put itself back together? That was the question facing all Americans in 1865. In his second inaugural address, Abraham Lincoln spoke of healing the wounds on both sides of the conflict:

With malice [hatred] toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

—Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, March 1865

But Lincoln would not have the chance to put his plan into action. A little more than a month after his inauguration, he was assassinated while attending a play at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. Northerners were deeply grieved by his murder. Young Caroline Cowles Richards wrote in her diary, "I have felt sick over it all day and so has every one that I have seen. All seem to feel as though they had lost a personal friend, and tears flow plenteously."

Lincoln's assassin, an actor named John Wilkes Booth, believed he was saving the Confederacy by murdering the president. Although few Southerners rejoiced at Lincoln's death, many Northerners blamed the South for his murder, as well as for the war. They wanted the South punished.

With Lincoln gone, the task of bringing these two sides together fell to his vice president, Andrew Johnson. A large part of healing the nation's wounds would be to rebuild the devastated South. This undertaking, called Reconstruction, was an enormous task. But it was also an enormous opportunity to extend the ideals of liberty, equality, and opportunity to the almost 4 million African Americans who had just been freed from slavery.

11.2 – Andrew Johnson Begins Presidential Reconstruction

"The queerest character that ever occupied the White House"—that is how one observer described Andrew Johnson. Certainly, Johnson's path to the presidency was unusual. When the war broke out, Johnson was a senator from Tennessee. Even though his state seceded, he kept his senate seat—the only senator from a Southern state to do so. A lifelong Democrat, Johnson was nonetheless nominated by Republicans to run for vice president in 1864. True to his party roots, Johnson saw himself as a champion of the common man. But though he condemned former

slaveholders as a "pampered, bloated, corrupted aristocracy," he had little concern for former slaves. They would have no role in his plans for reconstructing the South.

Johnson's Reconstruction Plan: A Smooth Return for Southern States

Fewer than two months after taking office, Johnson announced his Reconstruction plan. A former Confederate state could rejoin the Union once it had written a new state constitution, elected a new state government, repealed its act of secession, canceled its war debts, and ratified the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution. The first of three Reconstruction-era amendments, the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery. Republicans in Congress urged Johnson to add a requirement that Southern states must grant freedmen the right to vote. Johnson, however, resisted their pleas. "White men alone," he insisted, "must manage the South."

Former Slaves Test Their New Freedom

As Presidential Reconstruction got underway, former slaves were testing the meaning of freedom. For many, it meant freedom to travel. Before emancipation, slaves could not leave their homes without a travel pass from their masters. Now they took to the road, often in search of loved ones who had been sold in slavery times. For others, freedom meant the right to wed, knowing that the marriage was not only legal but could also last "until death do us part." "Weddings, just now, are very popular and abundant among the colored people," wrote an army chaplain. "I have married during the month twenty-five couples, mostly those who have families, and have been living together for years."

Freedom also meant the right to pursue something else long denied to slaves—an education. Freedmen flocked to schools set up by various groups. Booker T. Washington, a freedman who became a leading educator, observed,

It was a whole race trying to go to school. Few were too young, and none too old, to make the attempt to learn. As fast as any kind of teachers could be secured, not only were day-schools filled, but night-schools as well. The great ambition of the older people was to try to learn to read the Bible before they died.

—Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography*, 1901

Along with education, freedmen were desperate to acquire land to farm. During the war, Congressman Thaddeus Stevens had advocated breaking up Southern plantations to give freed slaves "forty acres and a mule" in return for their years of unpaid labor. "We have turned, or are about to turn, loose four million slaves without a hut to shelter them or a cent in their pockets," he argued. "If we do not furnish them with homesteads . . . we had better have left them in bondage." Congress, however, refused to implement Stevens's plan, arguing that to take planters' land without payment would violate their property rights.

Before the end of the war, the Union government had established the Freedmen's Bureau to assist former slaves and poor whites living in the South. The bureau provided food, clothing, education, and medical care. It also gave legal assistance to former

slaves and acted as a court of law in some situations. But its attempts to solve the problem of farmland for freedmen were thwarted by Johnson, who pardoned former Confederates and returned the land to them.

Black Codes Restrict the Freedom of Former Slaves

As new Southern governments were formed, Johnson withdrew Union troops from the South. Many Northerners did not share Johnson's willingness to let the South reconstruct itself. Congressman Benjamin Flanders warned of former Confederate leaders: "Their whole thought and time will be given to plans for getting things back as near to slavery as possible."

Sadly, Flanders was right. Across the South, state legislatures passed black codes—laws intended to restrict the freedom and opportunities of African Americans. The black codes served three purposes. The first was to spell out the rights of African Americans. They could own property, work for wages, marry, and file lawsuits. But other civil rights, or rights of citizenship, such as the right to vote or to serve on juries, were denied them. The second purpose was to ensure a workforce for planters who had lost their slaves. The codes required freedmen to sign yearly labor contracts each January. Those who did not could be arrested and sent to work for a planter.

The final purpose of the black codes was to maintain a social order in the South that limited the upward mobility of African Americans. The codes barred blacks from any jobs but farm work and unskilled labor, making it impossible for them to rise economically or to start their own businesses. Such restrictions led a Northern journalist touring the South to write,

The whites seem wholly unable to comprehend that freedom for the negro means the same thing as freedom for them. They readily enough admit that the Government has made him free, but appear to believe that they still have the right to exercise over him the same old control.

—Sidney Andrews, *Atlantic Monthly*, 1866

11.3 – Congress Takes Control of Reconstruction

By the end of 1865, every Southern state had formed a new government. The Thirteenth Amendment had been added to the Constitution. In President Andrew Johnson's view, Reconstruction was over. After looking at the black codes enacted across the South, many in the North disagreed with Johnson. One Republican newspaper wrote,

We tell the white men of Mississippi that the men of the North will convert the state of Mississippi into a frog pond before they will allow such laws to disgrace one foot of soil in which the bones of our soldiers sleep and over which the flag of freedom waves.

—Chicago Tribune, December 1865

Radical Republicans Challenge Johnson's Reconstruction

When Congress met in December 1865, many lawmakers were of the opinion that Reconstruction had hardly begun. A group of Radical Republicans, led by Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner, were especially critical of Johnson's plan. The Radicals had been abolitionists before the war. Now they were determined to reconstruct the nation on the basis of equal rights for all. Their commitment to racial equality put them on a collision course with the president.

Early in 1866, the Radical Republicans joined with more moderate lawmakers to enact two bills designed to help former slaves. The first extended the life of the Freedmen's Bureau beyond its original one-year charter and gave the bureau greater powers. The second, the Civil Rights Act of 1866, took direct aim at the black codes. It declared that African Americans were entitled to "equal benefit of all laws . . . enjoyed by white citizens."

To Congress's surprise, President Johnson vetoed both bills. The continuation of the Freedmen's Bureau, he argued, was too costly and would encourage freedmen to lead a "life of indolence [laziness]." He rejected the Civil Rights Act as a violation of states' rights. In one of his veto messages, Johnson claimed to be representing the will of the people. "This [claim] is modest," quipped one Republican, "for a man made president by an assassin."

Republicans gathered the two-thirds majority in each house needed to override Johnson's veto of the Civil Rights Act. This was the first time in American history that a major piece of legislation became law over a president's veto. Next, they enacted a new Freedmen's Bureau bill. When Johnson vetoed it, Congress overrode his action once again.

To further protect the rights of freedmen, Congress passed the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. The basic principle underlying this amendment, Stevens said, was that state laws "shall operate equally upon all." The amendment reversed the Dred Scott decision by defining "all persons born or naturalized in the United States" as citizens. It further prohibited any state from denying its citizens "due process" or "the equal protection of the laws."

The Fourteenth Amendment became a major issue in the election of 1866. President Johnson toured the North, making fiery speeches against the amendment and its Republican supporters. His tour did the president more harm than good. Republicans won a veto-proof, two-thirds majority in both houses of Congress. From that point on, Congress would control Reconstruction.

Congress Puts the South Under Military Rule

In 1867, Congress laid out its plan for Reconstruction in a series of laws known as the Reconstruction Acts. These acts outlined a process for admitting Southern states back

into the Union. The South was to be divided into five districts, each controlled by federal troops. Election boards in each state would register male voters—both black and white—who were loyal to the Union. Southerners who had actively supported the Confederacy would not be allowed to vote. The voters would elect conventions to write new state constitutions. The constitutions had to grant African Americans the right to vote. The voters would then elect state legislatures, which were required to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment.

In addition, Congress enacted two laws designed to keep Johnson from interfering with its Reconstruction plan. The Command of the Army Act limited the president's power as commander in chief of the army. The Tenure of Office Act barred the president from firing certain federal officials without the "advice and consent" of the Senate.

President Johnson Faces Impeachment

President Johnson blasted both of these laws as unconstitutional restrictions on his power. To prove his point, he fired Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, a Radical Republican appointed to office by President Lincoln. Two days later, the House of Representatives voted to impeach Johnson for violating the Tenure of Office Act. The House further charged that "Andrew Johnson had brought the high office of the President of the United States into contempt, ridicule, and disgrace, to the great scandal of all good citizens." Johnson then faced trial in the Senate. If two thirds of the senators found him guilty of any charge, he would be removed from office.

During his Senate trial, the president's lawyers argued that Johnson's only "crime" had been to oppose Congress. Were he to be removed for that reason, "no future President will be safe who happens to differ with a majority of the House and . . . Senate." They also quietly spread the word that if acquitted, Johnson would no longer oppose Congressional Reconstruction. When the votes were cast, Johnson escaped removal by a vote of 36 to 25, just one vote short of the two-thirds majority required.

11.4 – Living Under Congressional Reconstruction

White Southerners were shocked by the return of federal troops to the South under the Reconstruction Acts. Having complied with Johnson's plan, they believed that Reconstruction was over. Black Southerners, however, were elated. For months, freedmen had been organizing to fight discrimination. "We simply ask," one group declared in a petition to Congress, "that the same laws that govern white men shall govern black men." As election boards began registering voters across the South in 1867, it seemed their pleas had been heard.

The South's New Voters: Freedmen, Scalawags, and Carpetbaggers

With former Confederates barred from registering, the right to vote was limited to three groups. The largest was freedmen, who had never voted before. Most of them joined the Republican Party, which they saw as the party of Lincoln and emancipation.

The next largest group consisted of white Southerners who had opposed secession. Many were poor farmers who also had never voted before. Because they viewed the Democratic Party as the party of secession, they, too, registered as Republicans. Southern Democrats, who viewed these new Republicans as traitors to the South, scorned them as "scalawags," or worthless scoundrels. The last group of voters was made up of Northerners, most of them former soldiers, who were attracted to the South after the war. Yankee-hating Southerners called them "carpetbaggers," a term for a piece of luggage travelers often carried. They despised carpetbaggers as fortune hunters who invaded the South to profit from the misfortunes of Southerners.

The newly registered voters cast their first ballots in the 1868 presidential election. The Republican candidate for president was the Union war hero Ulysses S. Grant. He supported Congressional Reconstruction and promised to protect the rights of freedmen in the South. His democratic opponent, Horatio Seymour, promised to end Reconstruction and return the South to its traditional leaders—white Democrats.

The election was marred by violence in several Southern states. A white Republican in Georgia wrote, "We cannot vote without all sorts of threats and intimidations. Freedmen are shot with impunity [no punishment]." Even so, the Republican Party swept every Southern state except for Louisiana and Georgia, where attacks on Republicans had made campaigning impossible. Nationwide, Seymour won a majority of white votes. Grant, however, won the popular vote with the help of half a million black voters. For Republicans, the lesson of the election was clear: Their party needed the black vote in order to remain in power.

Grant's victory helped persuade Congress to pass the last of the Reconstruction amendments. The Fifteenth Amendment states that "the right of citizens . . . to vote shall not be denied or abridged [limited] by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." "Nothing in all history," wrote abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, equaled "this wonderful, quiet, sudden transformation of four millions of human beings from . . . the auction-block to the ballot box."

New State Governments Begin to Rebuild the South

Across the South, voters chose delegates—about one fourth of them African Americans—to state constitutional conventions. These delegates wrote constitutions that not only banned racial discrimination but also guaranteed blacks the right to vote and to hold public office. Elections were then held to form governments. To the dismay of white Democrats, a majority of those elected were Republicans and about a fifth of them freedmen. The new governments quickly ratified the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments, the last step of the Reconstruction process. By 1870, every Southern state had been readmitted to the Union.

The most enduring accomplishment of these Reconstruction governments was the creation of the South's first public, tax-supported school systems. At first, whites stayed away rather than mix with blacks. To attract white students, most states segregated their schools by race, even where doing so was prohibited by law. Segregation—the forced

separation of races in public places—was not the rule in other areas of life. In fact, several of the Reconstruction governments outlawed segregation in transportation, places of entertainment, and other businesses. But these laws were hard to enforce.

The South's Economic Recovery Remains Slow

The new state governments undertook ambitious programs to strengthen the Southern economy. They hoped economic growth would alleviate poverty and racial tensions. Unfortunately, money intended to rebuild roads and bridges and to expand railroads often fell into the hands of corrupt government officials. Although industry and trade led to the rebirth of some Southern cities, most of the South remained dependent on agriculture.

The plight of Southern farmers became increasingly desperate. The South was still suffering the staggering costs of the war. During the conflict, many whites had lost all they had—their homes, farms, and businesses. Taxes and debts led some to sell their land. Even once-wealthy planters were struggling. They had land but no money to hire workers to produce crops. Many planters divided their land into small plots that they rented to workers who would grow crops, a system known as tenant farming. In some cases, tenant farmers would pay a share of their crop as rent instead of cash.

At first, sharecropping looked promising to both black and white landless farmers. They hoped that in time they would earn enough money to buy land for themselves. In reality, these farmers often experienced a new form of bondage: debt. Most sharecroppers had to borrow money from planters to buy the food, tools, and supplies they needed. Few ever earned enough from the sale of their crops to repay these debts. As a result, sharecropping usually led to a life of debt peonage rather than one of economic independence. Under this system, debtors were forced to work for the person they owed money to until they paid off their debts. "We make as much cotton and sugar as we did when we were slaves," noted one Texas sharecropper, "and it does us as little good now as it did then."

11.5 – Reversing Reconstruction

The South's experiment with Reconstruction governments was short. Thomas Miller, a black lawmaker in South Carolina, would later recall,

We were eight years in power. We had built schoolhouses, established charitable institutions, built and maintained the penitentiary system, provided for the education of the deaf and dumb . . . rebuilt the bridges and reestablished the ferries. In short, we had reconstructed the state and placed it on the road to prosperity.

—Thomas Miller

Former Confederates, however, saw this period of biracial government quite differently. For them, it was a time of struggle to return the South to "white man's rule."

White Resistance to Reconstruction

Most Southern whites refused to support Reconstruction governments for a number of reasons. Many considered the governments illegal, because so many former Confederates had been prevented from voting or running for office. Others were angry at the governments for raising taxes to pay for schools and other improvements. Some had even lost their land when they were unable to pay taxes on it. Still others were upset by the corruption in the new governments.

Underlying all of these complaints was the fact that most Southern whites could not accept the idea of former slaves voting and holding office. Many were white supremacists who believed in the superiority of the white race. The most radical turned to violence, forming terrorist groups with names like the White Brotherhood and the Knights of the White Camelia. Members of the best-known terror group, the Ku Klux Klan, had to swear that they were "opposed to negro equality, both social and political." These groups terrorized blacks and white Republicans to keep them from voting. Their tactics included the burning of African American schools, attacks on Freedmen's Bureau officials, and even outright murder.

Northerners Grow Tired of Reconstruction

In 1870 and 1871, Congress took action to end the wave of terror by passing the Enforcement Acts. These laws made it a federal crime to deprive citizens of their civil rights. President Grant sent federal marshals into the South to crush the terror groups. These officials arrested hundreds of men and sent a few to prison. The result was a temporary reduction in terrorism.

After passage of the Enforcement Acts, however, Northerners seemed to lose interest in reconstruction of the South. In 1872, Congress closed the Freedmen's Bureau. That same year, it passed an amnesty act. This act granted amnesty, or a general pardon, to most former Confederates, allowing them to vote and hold office once again. Even President Grant had grown tired of the South and its problems. In 1875, the governor of Mississippi asked Grant for help in protecting freedmen's voting rights during the state's November election. Grant refused the request by saying, "The whole public are tired out with these annual autumnal [election season] outbreaks in the South."

By this time, Grant had other things to worry about. Leading members of his administration had been accused of corruption. The economy had crashed. Moreover, a new generation of Republican leaders had come to power and recognized that voters in the North no longer cared about Reconstruction.

The Election of 1876 Brings an End to Reconstruction

President Grant did not run for reelection in 1876. Instead, the Republicans nominated Ohio's Rutherford B. Hayes, a former Union general. The Democratic candidate for president was New York governor Samuel Tilden, a crusader for clean government. Tilden won the popular vote, but his 184 electoral votes were one shy of the 185 needed to win.

The electoral votes of South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana were disputed. Republican leaders claimed that Hayes won the most votes in those states. Democrats said Tilden won more votes. With no clear resolution, the election went to the House of Representatives.

After weeks of secret dealing, leaders of both parties in the House arrived at an agreement known as the Compromise of 1877. Under this agreement, Hayes received the electoral votes from the three disputed states and became president. In return, he agreed to name a Southerner to his cabinet, remove the last remaining federal troops from the South, and give federal aid to Southern railroad construction. Much of the deal fell apart after Hayes took office, but the troops were removed, and Reconstruction was officially over.

African Americans Lose Ground Under Redeemer Governments

By the time Reconstruction ended, white supremacists calling themselves Redeemers had regained power in every Southern state. Their goal was to redeem, or save, the South by returning it to "white man's rule." "The whole South," commented a freedman, "had got into the hands of the very men who held us as slaves."

Once in office, the Redeemers reversed improvements made in education by cutting spending for public schools. As the governor of Virginia explained, "Schools are a luxury . . . to be paid for, like any other luxury, by the people who wish their benefits." As public funding dried up, schools either closed their doors or began to charge fees. By the 1880s, only about half of all black children in the South attended school.

The Redeemers put even more effort into reversing the political gains made by freedmen during Reconstruction. Many states passed laws requiring citizens who wanted to vote to pay a poll tax. The tax was set high enough to make voting, like schooling, a luxury most blacks could not afford. Some states also required potential voters to pass a literacy test. The tests were made so difficult that almost nobody could pass, no matter how well educated.

In theory, poll taxes and literacy tests applied equally to both black and white citizens, as required by the Fifteenth Amendment. In practice, however, whites were excused from both by a grandfather clause inserted in voting laws. This clause exempted citizens whose ancestors had voted before January 1, 1867. Because no African Americans could vote in the South before that day, the grandfather clause applied only to whites.

The Redeemer governments also reversed laws that had outlawed segregation in public places. New legislation drew a "color line" between blacks and whites in public life. Whites called these new acts Jim Crow laws, an insulting reference to a black character in a popular song. African Americans were not allowed to sit with whites in buses or rail cars. Restaurants and other businesses served whites only or served black customers separately. These are just a few of the examples of how blacks were discriminated against.

African Americans Struggle to Protect Their Rights

Blacks resisted attacks on their rights in many ways. The boldest protested openly. This put them at risk of being lynched—killed by hanging—by white mobs.

Homer Plessy, a black man arrested for sitting in a whites-only railroad car in Louisiana, looked to the courts for help. Plessy argued that Jim Crow laws violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. In 1896, his case, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, reached the Supreme Court. The majority of the justices ruled that segregation was constitutional as long as the facilities provided to blacks were equal to those provided to whites. This "separate but equal" doctrine was soon applied to almost every aspect of life in the South. However, the facilities set apart for African Americans in Southern states were seldom equal to those labeled "whites only."

Some African Americans chose to move to the North rather than endure the humiliation of forced segregation. Most African Americans, however, remained in the South and got by as best they could. With participation in politics closed to them, they focused on their families, churches, and communities. The majority farmed for a living, often as sharecroppers or tenant farmers. A growing number of African Americans started their own businesses. The number of black-owned businesses in the South soared from 2,000 in 1865 to nearly 25,000 by 1903.

African Americans also banded together to build schools and colleges for their children. By 1900, more than a million and a half black children were attending school. As a result, literacy rates for Southern blacks rose from near zero to 50 percent. The South's new black colleges offered vocational training in such fields as farming and carpentry, as well as professional training in law, medicine, and teaching.

For the next half century, segregation would rule life in the South. But the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments, with their promise of equal rights, were not completely forgotten. In time, they would be reawakened as part of a new struggle for racial equality.

Summary

The Reconstruction era lasted from 1865 to 1877. During these years, biracial governments were established across the South. These governments expanded the rights and opportunities of former slaves. But when Reconstruction ended, the South returned to "white man's rule."

Reconstruction amendments During Reconstruction, three amendments were added to the Constitution. The Thirteenth Amendment outlawed slavery, the Fourteenth Amendment made former slaves citizens, and the Fifteenth Amendment gave African American men the right to vote.

Presidential Reconstruction In 1865, President Johnson allowed the Southern states to reconstruct themselves. Most enacted black codes that severely restricted the rights of former slaves.

Congressional Reconstruction Congress took control of Reconstruction in 1867. Federal troops were sent to the South to oversee the establishment of state governments that were more democratic.

Reconstruction governments The South's first biracial state governments established a public school system and outlawed racial segregation. But these governments were bitterly opposed by white terrorist groups like the Ku Klux Klan.

Jim Crow laws Reconstruction ended as part of the Compromise of 1877. Once Democrats regained control of the state governments in the South, they passed Jim Crow laws that segregated blacks from whites in public life. In 1896, the Supreme Court ruled in Plessy v. Ferguson that segregation was constitutional under the doctrine of "separate but equal."

Chapter 12 — Change and Conflict in the American West

What opportunities and conflicts emerged as Americans moved westward?

12.1 – Introduction

By the mid-1800s, many Americans felt the need for a change, for a fresh start. Like the early settlers who crossed the Appalachians, they migrated westward in search of opportunity.

Entire families packed their belongings into covered wagons and hit the westward trail. Sooner or later, they crossed the Mississippi River. From their perspective, this mighty river was the frontier, or boundary, marking the beginning of wilderness. "I do remember my emotions after we were all landed on the [other] side of the river," one traveler recalled. "I felt as if we had left all civilization behind us."

In many ways, they had. Overland travelers would spend weeks or months on what amounted to a long and challenging expedition. They would have to adapt themselves to the demands of living on the trail, such as repairing wagons and handling oxen and other livestock. They also had to learn to cook and clean under tough circumstances.

The travelers had to survive with limited resources. Water and wood were scarce on the plains, and food was also difficult to find. They brought very little to eat besides flour, bacon, beans, salt, and coffee. One woman wrote in her journal, "About the only change we have from bread and bacon is bacon and bread."

Many of the new migrants were farmers, but other people also sought opportunity in the West. Miners searched for gold, silver, and other minerals in the hills and mountains. On the grassy plains, ranchers hired cowboys to herd their cattle. Immigrant workers found jobs laying rail lines, and railroad owners made profits shipping western goods to market. However, this rising tide of migration brought further conflict with American Indians. The tribes of the Great Plains, in particular, would fight long and hard against the massive invasion of their lands and destruction of their way of life.

12.2 – Mining and Ranching Opportunities in the West

The first settlers heading west from the Mississippi Valley had a distant objective. They wanted to reach the rich farmlands of the Far West. They moved as fast as they could across the Great Plains. Then they struggled to get over the Rocky Mountains. Most of them stopped for good only when they reached the fertile fields and valleys of Oregon and California. By 1848, 14,000 people had made this journey. This trickle of migration changed quickly in the mid-1800s, however, after settlers found gold in California.

Miners: In Search of the Big Strike

In 1848, a landowner named John Sutter was building a sawmill on the American River, in California's Central Valley. This river flowed down from the Sierra Nevada range to

the east. In January of that year, Sutter's workers found gold near the mill. Sutter tried to keep the gold a secret, but eventually word got out. Up and down the Pacific Coast, men deserted their work to head for Sutter's Mill. By the year's end, gold fever gripped the whole nation and even spread abroad. The California gold rush was on.

In the spring of 1849, some 40,000 migrants from the East headed overland to California. That same year, about 40,000 more people boarded steamships bound for San Francisco. Soon California swarmed with "forty-niners," as these miners were called. About nine out of ten were men, most of them young. Many came from Mexico, and thousands more arrived from as far away as Europe and China. All of them were motivated by one great hope—to strike it rich.

Few of these prospectors and treasure hunters knew anything about mining. Luckily, much of California's gold was not locked up in solid rock. Over time, water erosion had dislodged much of the gold and washed it down into streambeds. Miners called this placer gold, which they could mine using simple tools, such as pans and shovels. Other prospectors looked for veins of gold and silver in solid rock. Often working in groups, they used hand tools and weak explosives to extract the metal. Miners called a thick vein a lode. Every prospector's dream was to find the "mother lode" that would produce untold riches.

Between 1850 and 1860, California's population jumped from about 93,000 to over 380,000. Prospectors set up tent camps near their claims. Merchants of all kinds followed close on their heels. As stores, banks, saloons, and restaurants opened up, some camps swelled into towns. When a site no longer produced much metal, most prospectors moved on.

For three decades after the California gold rush, hordes of miners chased their dream of riches from Mexico to Alaska and east as far as the Black Hills of Dakota. They endured backbreaking work and conditions that were dismal and sometimes dangerous. However, very few prospectors ever struck it rich. After years of searching, most would have agreed with the familiar saying, "Gold is where I ain't!"

By the early 1850s, most of the ore that could be easily mined in California had been found. Individual prospectors eventually gave way to large mining companies that used hydraulic machines to wash away whole hillsides in search of gold. In the process, they damaged the environment, destroying habitat, polluting rivers, and leaving behind large piles of debris on which nothing could grow.

Ranchers and Cowboys Find a Home on the Range

While miners uncovered the West's valuable stores of gold, silver, and other minerals, cattle ranchers found opportunity in a different kind of natural resource: grass. Their beef cattle thrived on the abundant grasses and open range of the Great Plains.

Plains cattle ranching had started in Texas before the Civil War. The region had a long tradition of ranching going back to the first Spanish settlers. Mexican vaqueros started

many cowboy customs. They rode horses and wore boots with pointed toes and wide-brimmed hats. They rounded up cattle and branded them.

Many Texas ranchers went off to fight in the Civil War and never returned. Untended, their cattle multiplied. By the mid-1860s, several million tough longhorn cattle roamed wild on the open plains. Many lacked the brands that showed ownership. Some Texans began to round up unbranded cattle with an eye toward driving, or herding, them north to market.

Their timing was good. The growing populations of eastern cities had raised the demand for beef. In the East, ranchers could get \$40 a head for cattle that sold for \$5 or less back in Texas. Also, railroad companies had begun extending rail lines west from Missouri into Kansas. Cowhands could drive their herds to "cow towns" that sprang up along the rail lines. The potential for large profits made a long cattle drive to one of these cow towns seem well worth the effort.

The era of the long drive began in 1867, when cowboys following the Chisholm Trail drove longhorns north from San Antonio, Texas, to Abilene, Kansas. From Abilene and other cow towns, live cattle were shipped in rail cars to meatpacking centers like Chicago. Working as a team, a dozen cowboys could drive more than a thousand cattle at a time along the trail. African Americans and Mexican Americans made up at least a quarter of all cowboys on the long drives.

Cowboys led rough lives, working outdoors and sleeping on the ground in all types of weather. They had to be prepared to defend the herd against people who wanted to steal the cattle, as well as against Indian attacks. There was also the constant threat of a stampede.

The long drives ended once rail lines reached into cattle country during the 1880s. The new lines not only transported cattle to market but also brought farmers to the plains. The newcomers sparked conflict with the cattle ranchers by fencing off their farms with barbed wire, effectively closing the open range. Nature dealt cattle ranching an even harsher blow when the blizzards of 1886 and 1887 killed thousands of cattle, forcing many ranchers into bankruptcy. Those who survived decided to fence in their ranches and raise only as many cattle as their land could support.

12.3 – Railroads Open the West to Rapid Settlement

An easterner bound for the California goldfields in 1849 could not have made it halfway to the Mississippi River by train alone. Before the 1850s, most railroads were short lines, connecting cities and towns in just one region. A flurry of rail building in the 1850s changed that. By 1860, rail lines extended from the Atlantic Coast across the Mississippi. This expansion set the stage for opening up western lands to settlement and for linking the East and West coasts by rail.

The gold rush had produced a population explosion in the Far West. Yet this growing region remained in isolation, essentially separated from the rest of the nation. During the 1850s, many people pointed out the need for better transportation and communication between East and West. In particular, merchants demanded a faster way to transport goods across the Great Plains and the Rockies. They wanted a transcontinental railroad, one that spanned the continent. This need presented a great opportunity to railroad builders.

The First Transcontinental Railroad Creates Huge Challenges

In 1861, four wealthy merchants in Sacramento, California, founded the Central Pacific Railroad Company. Known as the "Big Four," they sought government support for a transcontinental railroad. One of them, C. P. Huntington, went to Washington to act as a lobbyist to push for a railroad bill. Lobbyists try to persuade legislators to pass laws favorable to groups they represent.

Plans for a transcontinental railroad had been stalled by debate in Congress over whether to follow a northern or southern route. However, the South's secession and the onset of the Civil War led Congress to approve a northern route that would unite California and Oregon with the rest of the Union. The Pacific Railway Act, passed in 1862, directed the Central Pacific and the newly created Union Pacific Railroad Company to construct railway and telegraph lines from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean. The Union Pacific would start in Omaha, Nebraska, and work its way west. The Central Pacific would start in Sacramento and head east.

Building the first transcontinental railroad posed tremendous challenges. One problem was raising enough funds. Under the Pacific Railway Act, the government pledged to help each company by granting it 6,400 acres of land and up to \$48,000 in loans for each mile of track laid. Once the laying of rails began, the owners could sell the land to settlers to help pay for construction costs. But they needed startup money. The Union Pacific had trouble raising funds and did not lay its first rails until 1865.

The Union Pacific also faced conflicts with some of the tribes that lived on the Great Plains. Its route followed the Platte River through territory controlled by the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Lakota Sioux. All three tribes had been battling the U.S. Army for years, and their attacks on railroad workers sometimes stopped construction.

For the Central Pacific, rough terrain was a major challenge. Crossing the Sierra Nevada was an epic engineering feat. The rail line had to pass over, and sometimes through, high mountain passes. It also had to bridge deep canyons. On some days, progress was measured in inches. Beyond the Sierra Nevada lay the Great Basin, a vast, dry region where summers are blistering hot.

Working on the Railroad: Jobs and Hardships for Immigrants

In meeting these construction challenges, the two railroad companies owed much of their success to immigrant labor. At first, both companies faced a severe labor shortage.

They needed thousands of workers, but the Civil War and the gold rush had siphoned off a large part of the labor pool.

The end of the Civil War in 1865 solved part of the Union Pacific's labor problem. Ex-soldiers and former slaves eagerly joined company crews. So did immigrants from Europe. In fact, the bulk of its 12,000-man workforce was made up of Irish immigrants. Large numbers of Irish began immigrating to the United States after a potato disease brought famine to Ireland in 1845. Many first settled in eastern cities, where they were looked down on for being Catholic and poor. In the face of such discrimination, railroad jobs seemed like an attractive opportunity.

When the Central Pacific began construction in 1865, it also faced a shortage of workers. In desperation, it decided to hire workers from China, despite widespread prejudice against the Chinese. The company advertised in China, promising impoverished workers good pay. By 1868, the Central Pacific was employing about 10,000 Chinese workers, who made up four fifths of its labor force. Chinese workers were paid lower wages than white workers and were targets of racism.

Working on the railroad was both strenuous and dangerous. Some workers were killed in Indian attacks. The use of dynamite to blast tunnels through the Sierra Nevada also resulted in injuries and deaths. Extreme cold in winter left many workers with frostbite, and snow avalanches killed others. Yet the workers who survived had money in their pockets.

Railroads Become Lifelines in the West

Both companies overcame all obstacles, and on May 10, 1869, their lines met at Promontory Point, Utah. That day marked a turning point in the history of the West. With the completion of the railroad, travel time between the Pacific and Atlantic coasts shrank from 4 months to 10 days. To mark the occasion, two officials, one from each company, drove ceremonial spikes of gold and silver into the railroad ties.

Once the first transcontinental railroad had been completed, railroad construction continued elsewhere with a fury. This rapid expansion made many "railroad barons," like the Big Four, very rich. It also encouraged settlement by making land available to farm families. Towns sprang up along the routes. In addition, railroads served the transportation needs of new industries, such as mining and lumbering. Perhaps most importantly, they united East and West.

For many people in the West, the railroads became lifelines. But because farmers depended on them, the railroads could charge excessive rates to ship their crops to market. Such policies led to growing demands for some government control over the railroad companies.

12.4 – Indian Wars Shatter Tribal Cultures

To many people, the railroad represented progress. But for the Indians on the Great Plains, it was a threat to their very existence. The railroad cut through their hunting grounds, disturbing the buffalo, their main source of food, clothing, and shelter. It also brought ranchers, farmers, and soldiers to the hunting grounds. In response, many tribes fought the railroad, waging war to stop the rush of settlement that jeopardized their ways of life. Their battle for survival represented the latest round of what are known as the Indian Wars.

Cultures Clash on the Great Plains

From the perspective of a nation bent on expanding westward, the many Indian tribes in the West presented a problem. They refused to change their customs to conform to the settlers' culture. For example, they believed that tribes or villages had rights to areas of land. However, they did not believe that land could be owned, bought, or sold.

Differences between Indians and settlers over land had led to conflict early in the nation's history. Conflicts continued as settlers crossed the Appalachians and laid claim to tribal lands in the Ohio and Mississippi river valleys. To end such conflicts, the Indian Removal Act of 1830 had forced the largest tribes living east of the Mississippi to move west to Oklahoma Territory on the Great Plains. When settlers began to populate the West after the Civil War, they again clashed with native peoples. The Indians were once more viewed as "an obstacle to the progress of settlement and industry," as one government official put it.

A complex clash of cultures occurred on the Great Plains. Nomadic tribes had roamed the plains freely for centuries in pursuit of buffalo. They had little in common with eastern tribes, who had been conquered and "removed" to the plains in the 1830s. These differences led to conflict between nomadic tribes that wanted more open land and settled tribes that wanted to protect their farmland.

Larger conflicts arose with the advance of white civilization. As settlers moved westward, they slaughtered millions of buffalo, endangering a vital element of tribal cultures. Many tribes refused to give up their homelands and ways of life without a fight. Their warriors began attacking settlers.

The U.S. Army responded with attacks on the plains tribes. In 1864, troops raided a party of Cheyennes and Arapahos who had camped at Sand Creek, Colorado, with permission from the commander of a nearby fort. More than 150 people, many of them women and children, were killed. The Sand Creek Massacre sparked a general uprising among the plains tribes.

In an effort to end conflict and open up land for settlers, the federal government tried to confine most western tribes to reservations. A reservation is an area of federal land reserved for an Indian tribe. Federal officials promised to protect these tribes. However, instead of protecting Indians, the government far too often helped prospectors and settlers who invaded a reservation. For example, a gold strike in the Black Hills of the Dakota Territory brought hordes of miners onto the Sioux reservation in the 1870s. The

government ignored the invasion, even though the Treaty of Fort Laramie, signed in 1868, guaranteed the Sioux exclusive rights to the land.

Many tribes, from the Apaches and Comanches in the south to the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahos in the north, refused to stay on reservations. Bands of raiders moved out onto the plains, where they fought to stop the expansion of settlements. In 1876, Sioux and Cheyennes who were camped near the Little Bighorn River in Montana came under attack by U.S. Cavalry troops under George Armstrong Custer. The much larger Indian force, led by Sioux chiefs Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, wiped out Custer's troops.

After the Battle of the Little Bighorn, also known as "Custer's Last Stand," federal forces hunted down and captured about 3,000 Sioux warriors. Over the next few years, the army subdued the other major tribes of the Great Plains.

Adaptation and Efforts to Assimilate American Indians

The settlement of the West was disastrous for large numbers of American Indians. Many died as a result of violence, disease, and poverty. Others clung to a miserable existence on reservations.

The survivors struggled to adapt to their changed circumstances. Some Indians tried agriculture. The eastern tribes that had been removed to Oklahoma became successful farmers. Many tribes established their own government and schools.

At the same time, the U.S. government adopted policies aimed at speeding the assimilation, or absorption, of Indians into the dominant culture. Federal officials set up about two dozen boarding schools to educate American Indians in "white men's ways." Congress furthered the assimilation push by enacting the Dawes Act of 1887. Under this law, a tribe could no longer own reservation lands as a group. Instead, the government began distributing land to individuals within a tribe. Each family was granted its own plot of land, which it could hold or sell. This change eroded a cornerstone of American Indian cultures—the belief that land could not be bought or sold. Land sales, both free and forced, greatly decreased the amount of Indian-owned land.

12.5 – Settling the Great Plains

Despite resistance from tribes of the Great Plains, settlers continued to migrate there during the second half of the 19th century. They ventured on foot, on horseback, and in ox-drawn wagons. Later they came by rail. Most had one goal: the opportunity to turn a plot of grassland into a farm.

Opportunities and Challenges on the Great Plains

Several factors transformed the Great Plains from a place to pass through on route to the West Coast into a land of opportunity. Perhaps the most important was the steady expansion of the railroads. The railroads carried settlers onto the plains, and the railroad companies sold settlers land that the companies had been granted by the government. Another factor was that families felt much safer migrating to the West because the army

had reduced the threat of attack by plains tribes. A third factor was the passage in 1862 of two federal laws that encouraged settlement.

The two new laws were the Homestead Act and the Morrill Land-Grant Act. The Homestead Act was designed to provide tracts of land called homesteads to settlers in the West. The act offered 160 acres of public land for a small fee to anyone who agreed to work the land and live on it for five years. This law attracted about 600,000 farmers who claimed more than 80 million acres of land by the end of the 19th century. The Morrill Land-Grant Act gave each state large tracts of public land to help finance the establishment of agricultural colleges. To raise funds to build colleges, states sold homesteads to settlers.

The plains offered settlers a fresh start. The settlers knew by the look and smell of the rich soil that crops would thrive in this land. To be successful, however, they had to overcome some difficult challenges. The first was building houses on the largely treeless plains. Lacking lumber, some homesteaders simply dug a hole in the side of a hill as a shelter. Other settlers fashioned houses out of the tough plains turf, or sod. They called these houses "soddies." Sod blocks, cut out of the ground with a shovel or an ax, formed the walls. Most roofs were made of sod as well. Once farmers could afford lumber delivered by train, they replaced their dugouts and soddies with wood-frame houses.

Another challenge was the environment. The Great Plains region typically has an arid climate. The settlers who flocked there in the 1870s and 1880s arrived during an abnormally wet period. The unusual amounts of rain helped crops flourish. Still, farmers had to deal with winter's deep cold, piercing winds, and blizzard snows. By the early 1890s, drought conditions had returned, especially in Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, and the Dakotas. As the soil dried up, wheat, corn, and other crops failed. Farmers also had to contend with grasshoppers. Great clouds of these pests, thick enough to darken the sky, descended on fields with little warning. They chewed for days on everything edible, destroying entire crops.

In the face of these hardships, many farmers left the plains. The sides of their covered wagons bore the words "In God We Trusted, In Kansas We Busted." Others worked to overcome the harsh conditions by using dry-farming techniques. To conserve soil moisture, they plowed and planted a field one year and left it uncultivated the next. Also, tools had made farm life easier. The steel plow, invented in 1837, had made it easier to cut through the thick prairie sod and prepare it for planting. The mechanical reaper neatly cut and bound sheaves of grain at harvesttime. Windmills pumped water from deep wells for household use and irrigation.

African Americans See the Plains as the "Promised Land"

The women and men who settled the West represented a broad range of Americans. Many were native-born white farm families from the Midwest. Some had moved at least once before. Other settlers were immigrants from Europe. Often they were lured by the

claims of railroad agents skilled at stretching the truth. Still others were former slaves searching for the opportunity to own their own land.

After the Civil War, many African Americans fled the South in search of better lives elsewhere. Thousands joined the westward movement. Freedmen worked as cowboys in Texas. They also joined the army, helping to protect settlers. However, most African Americans who headed west became farmers.

Former slaves such as Henry Adams and Benjamin "Pap" Singleton encouraged African Americans to build farm communities on the Great Plains. These leaders helped organize a postwar migration to Kansas and beyond. The migrants became known as Exodusters, a reference to Exodus, the second book of the Bible, which recounts the Israelites' escape from slavery in Egypt, the beginning of their journey to the "Promised Land."

Offered the opportunity to succeed or fail on their own terms, as independent farmers, thousands of African Americans made the trek to Kansas. Some bought farmland and formed new communities, such as Nicodemus, a town of about 700 black settlers from Kentucky. Others found work in towns and on farms in Texas, Oklahoma, and other plains states.

Despite their rising numbers and the independence that came with owning land, African Americans in the West still faced racism. For example, when a group of black migrants from Mississippi tried to settle in Lincoln, Nebraska, white townspeople drove them away. The migrants persisted, however, and Lincoln eventually accepted black residents into the community.

12.6 – Farmers Rise Up in Protest

Farmers transformed the grasslands of the Great Plains into bountiful croplands. Their hard work, aided by improved farm machinery, greatly increased agricultural productivity. Yet many of them failed to prosper. To buy costly new machinery, many had taken out bank loans, often at high interest rates. They also owed money to merchants for the seeds they bought on credit every year, and to railroads, which kept raising shipping rates. Crop prices, however, dropped as supply outstripped demand at home and in the world market. With their incomes reduced, farmers found it difficult to pay their debts. As their debts mounted, so did their anger.

Farmers' Frustrations Give Rise to Populism

In 1867, Oliver Hudson Kelley started an educational and social organization to help farmers in Minnesota. Known as the National Grange, it soon spread throughout the country. The Grange helped farmers find their political voice. They channeled their anger into a protest movement based on populism, a political philosophy that favors the common person's interests over those of wealthy people or business interests.

In the early 1870s, several states passed "Granger laws" to regulate railroad rates. In 1886, the Supreme Court ruled in the case *Wabash, St. Louis and Pacific R.R. v. Illinois* that only the federal government has the right to regulate interstate commerce. In response, Congress passed the Interstate Commerce Act in 1887. This law established the Interstate Commerce Commission to ensure that railroads set "reasonable and just" rates.

Farmers also took action through other organizations. One of these groups, the Greenback Party, was formed in the mid-1870s with a plan to raise crop prices and relieve farmers' debts. The Greenbackers' goal was to increase the amount of greenbacks, or paper money, in circulation by changing the monetary policy of the government. Monetary policy is aimed at controlling the supply and value of a country's currency.

At that time, the amount of money flowing through the U.S. economy was controlled by a monetary policy known as the gold standard. According to this policy, every paper dollar in circulation had to be backed by a dollar's worth of gold in the U.S. Treasury. The gold standard ensured the value of U.S. currency but limited the amount of money the government could print.

The Greenbackers wanted the government to increase the money supply by issuing greenbacks backed by both gold and silver. By increasing the money supply, Greenbackers hoped to fuel inflation, or a general rise in prices, including crop prices. Higher crop prices would give farmers more income with which to pay off their debts. The Greenback Party failed to achieve its main goal, but it did open many Americans' eyes to the farmer's plight.

In the 1880s, farmers in the South and Midwest formed local organizations called Farmers' Alliances. These groups later led protests against railroads, banks, and other powerful interests centered in the East. In the 1890 election, many Democratic and Republican candidates claiming to support policies proposed by Farmers' Alliances won elections at the state level and seats in Congress. Yet they enacted only a few Alliance proposals into law. In response, disappointed Alliance members vowed to create their own national political party.

The Rise and Fall of the Populist Party

By 1892, populism had broadened its appeal beyond farmers to include industrial workers. That year, farm and labor leaders met in Omaha, Nebraska, to launch the People's Party, also known as the Populist Party. Populist candidate James B. Weaver ran for president that year on a platform that called for government ownership of railroads, the coinage of silver to increase the money supply, and other reforms designed to help working people. More than a million Americans voted for Weaver, about 8.5 percent of the total vote.

The money supply remained a major issue during the 1890s. The opposing sides of the debate became known as "silverites" and "gold bugs." The Republicans generally

avored the gold standard. The Democrats were deeply divided, but the silverites prevailed as the election of 1896 approached. William Jennings Bryan won the Democratic presidential nomination with a moving speech that condemned the gold standard. In a booming voice he declared, "You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold."

Instead of running their own candidate, the populists endorsed Bryan. The Democrats lost the election, and the Populist Party soon faded from the political scene. But the anger and idealism that had given rise to populism did not fade with it. During the party's short life, many Americans had begun to rethink what government could and should do to promote opportunity for all. "The power of government—in other words the power of the people—should be expanded," declared the populists' Omaha Platform, to end "oppression, injustice, and poverty." This vision would soon inspire a new generation of reformers.

Summary

Settlement of the West in the mid- and late 1800s brought opportunities for many Americans. This migration also sparked conflict as settlers invaded Indian homelands.

Mining Gold-rush fever sparked a rush of prospectors to the West. Though few fortunes were made, this migration helped populate California and other western regions.

Ranching Riding along the Chisholm Trail and other routes, cowboys herded cattle north to be shipped to meatpacking plants.

Transcontinental railroad Building the first rail line to California was a huge undertaking that relied on government support and immigrant labor. The spread of railroads across the West brought wealth to railroad barons and opened the region to settlement.

Indian wars The tribes on the Great Plains fought to preserve their way of life. To prevent conflict and open lands for settlement, the government moved tribes onto reservations. Through the Dawes Act, it tried to assimilate Indians into white culture.

Homestead Act The Homestead Act brought more farmers to the Great Plains, including African Americans who called themselves Exodusters. Farmers faced such challenges as crop-eating insects and drought.

Protests by farmers Burdened by falling crop prices and large debts, farmers formed political organizations such as the Grange. Their protest movements gave rise to the Populist Party.

Chapter 13 — The Age of Innovation and Industry

Was the rise of industry good for the United States?

13.1 – Introduction

In September 1878, a young inventor from Menlo Park, New Jersey, went to see a set of experimental arc lights. The lights were too hot and bright for practical use, but they fascinated him. The more he studied the lights and the generator that powered them, the more excited he became.

The inventor, Thomas Alva Edison, knew he could invent a better lighting system, one that could be used anywhere. At the age of 31, he was already known as the "Wizard of Menlo Park." Among his many inventions were the phonograph and a highly efficient automated telegraph system. Now Edison vowed to invent a practical incandescent lamp—what we would call a light bulb.

Edison and his team of scientists and mechanics set to work. Other inventors had tried for decades to produce a practical light bulb. The main problem was finding a filament—a thin fiber or wire—that would heat to a bright glow when electric current passed through it, but would not melt. Edison tried thousands of materials, from platinum to twine to human hair. Finally, around 1879, he tried bamboo fibers that he had pulled from a Japanese fan. After carbonization—the process of converting a fiber to pure carbon—the bamboo filament burned and burned without melting. Edison finally had his light bulb.

That major success did not end Edison's quest. He was already hard at work on other components of a complete electric lighting system. He and his team were designing generators, meters, and cables. They were making plans for distributing electricity. They were installing lighting displays to promote the benefits of the electric lamp. Edison did not simply invent the light bulb. He envisioned the future of electricity, and he acted to make his vision a reality.

Inventions like Edison's light bulb helped spur a new age of innovation and industry after the Civil War. This period also saw the rise of big businesses that created great wealth. This chapter explores how industrialization affected the nation as a whole. The next chapter examines its effects on workers.

13.2 – New Inventions and Technologies

Edison was one of thousands of ingenious inventors, mechanics, and scientists working to create new products and machines in the late 1800s. Thanks in part to their work, American life changed dramatically. The United States evolved from a largely agricultural nation into a complex industrial society.

This shift brought modern conveniences to many consumers. In 1865, Americans still lived in the "horse and buggy" era. They lit their homes with candles or oil lamps. They

kept fresh foods in an icebox, a cabinet cooled by a large block of ice. And they waited a month or more for letters to cross the country. By 1900, many Americans illuminated their homes with electric lights. They kept foods cold in an electric refrigerator. They could send news across the continent in an instant by telegraph or telephone. A few could even afford to replace their horse and buggy with a new automobile.

Americans Invest in New Technology

These innovations captured the imagination of investors who were willing to finance, or fund, the development of new products. Without this financial backing, many inventions would never have reached the market. Some would never have been built at all.

This willingness to risk money on new businesses lies at the heart of capitalism. Capitalism is an economic system in which factories, equipment, and other means of production are privately owned rather than being controlled by government. Capitalists in the late 1800s provided the funds to build railroads and factories and furnish them with machinery and supplies. They put money into new technology and scientific research. In return for risking their money, they hoped to reap rewards if the new business proved profitable.

Edison, for example, received generous financial support from a group of capitalists led by the wealthy banker J. P. Morgan. Together they formed the Edison Electric Light Company. In 1880 alone, this group provided the inventor with \$150,000. In return, Edison gave the company the rights to his lighting inventions for a five-year period. The investors helped Edison pursue his vision, and they profited handsomely as a result.

Financial backers often protected their investments by making sure inventors acquired patents. A patent gives an inventor the sole legal right to make or sell an invention for a specified period of time. The federal government began issuing patents in 1790. By 1860, only 36,000 had been granted. Between 1860 and 1900, the number skyrocketed to more than 600,000. Edison holds the record for patents issued to one person, with 1,093 in all.

Revolutionary Changes in Communication and Transportation

The use of electricity had brought dramatic progress in communications even before the Civil War. Artist and inventor Samuel F. B. Morse created the first practical telegraph by 1837. To send messages by electrical signal, he used a dot-and-dash system later known as Morse code. In 1843, Morse set up an experimental telegraph line linking Washington, D.C., with Baltimore, Maryland. He opened this line to commercial use the following year.

Telegraph lines soon crisscrossed the countryside, mainly following railroad tracks. The railroads relied on the telegraph to keep track of their trains. Newspapers also used the telegraph to gather information and send stories to local newspapers. Several companies established telegraph networks. By the 1870s, however, the Western Union Telegraph Company dominated the industry. By 1900, nearly a million miles of telegraph wires were carrying more than 60 million messages a year.

The next revolution in communications came with the telephone. For nearly 12 years, the inventor Alexander Graham Bell had pursued the idea of sending speech over wires. He finally succeeded on March 10, 1876. According to popular legend, the first telephone message was the result of an emergency—with Bell calling out to his lab assistant, Watson, after accidentally spilling acid. However, in a letter to his father, Bell made no mention of any accident:

I was in one room at the Transmitting Instrument and Mr. Watson at the Receiving Instrument in another room—out of ear shot. I called out into the Transmitting Instrument, "Mr. Watson—come here—I want to see you"—and he came! He said he had heard each word perfectly . . . I feel that I have at last struck the solution of a great problem—and the day is coming when telegraph wires will be laid on to houses just like water or gas—and friends converse with each other without leaving home.

Bell's invention attracted plenty of financial support. In 1877, he founded the Bell Telephone Company. That same year, the first commercial telephone line was strung in Boston, where Bell lived. By 1893, more than 250,000 phones were in use. That year, Bell's patent ran out, allowing others to profit from his invention. Independent telephone companies formed across the country, helping create a surge in home use of the new technology. By 1920, the number of telephones had grown to at least 13 million.

Two other inventions changed how Americans moved. The first, the automobile, came to the United States from Europe. The second, the airplane, was home grown. In 1903, the brothers Orville and Wilbur Wright made the first successful powered-airplane flights in history, near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. After that first success, inventors worked continually to improve airplane design.

"Rock Oil" Provides a New Source of Fuel

The development of new fuels gave rise to another new industry. Before the Civil War, lamps mainly burned whale oil, which was very expensive. In the mid-1800s, a Canadian scientist discovered how to refine crude oil that seeped out of the ground into a lamp oil called kerosene. But the supply of surface oil was limited. Then a former railroad conductor named Edwin Drake made an important discovery.

In 1858, Drake went to Titusville, Pennsylvania, on business. He had bought stock in the Pennsylvania Rock Oil Company, which gathered surface oil for use in medicine. While in Titusville, Drake studied the techniques of drilling salt wells. Drake decided to lease land from the company for oil drilling. In August 1859, after several weeks of drilling, he struck oil.

Countless more wells were drilled in Pennsylvania and 13 other states. Oil drilling and refining became a huge industry, supplying fuel for lamps, lubricating oils for machinery, and later, gasoline for automobiles.

The Bessemer Process Revolutionizes Steelmaking

A new technology for turning iron into steel gave rise to another major industry. Iron is a useful metal, but it is brittle and fairly soft. Steel is a purified form of iron mixed with carbon. Engineers prefer steel for most purposes because it is harder, stronger, and lighter than iron. Before the 1850s, however, the process for making steel out of iron was time-consuming and expensive.

In 1855, a British inventor named Henry Bessemer patented a new method of making steel. The Bessemer process involved blowing air through molten iron. The blast of air removed impurities. Using this process, steel could be produced far more cheaply and quickly than in the past. After seeing the process at work in England, Andrew Carnegie decided to invest heavily in steel production in the United States. In 1873, he began to form the Carnegie Steel Company, which later built the largest and most modern steel mill of its time near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

As the steel industry grew, steel became the metal of choice for heavy construction. Railroads switched to steel rails. Builders began using steel to construct longer bridges and taller buildings. In 1883, the longest suspension bridge in the world opened. This towering structure, the Brooklyn Bridge, stretched for 6,700 feet across the East River in New York City. Two years later, builders erected the world's first skyscraper, a 10-story building in downtown Chicago. Neither of these structures could have been built without the use of steel.

Electricity Lights Up America

A single invention can have far-reaching effects. Edison's light bulb, for example, gave birth to the electric power industry. In 1882, Edison built a central generating station in New York City. Its wiring electrified a section of lower Manhattan. Before long, the demand for electricity became too great for the Edison Electric Light Company to meet on its own. Throughout the country, other companies built their own central generating stations to meet customers' needs. By 1891, there were more than 1,300 stations, providing enough electricity to power about 3 million light bulbs.

Access to electricity had a huge impact on American industry. Artificial light allowed businesses to stay open longer. Factories could run through the night. Electricity changed home life too. Americans could not only work and read at night but also plug in electric refrigerators and other appliances. Electricity was costly at first, though, and power companies built stations mainly in the cities. Many Americans, especially in rural areas, had to wait decades more for electric transmission lines to reach them.

13.3 – An Explosion of Industrial Growth

The growth of technology and the creation of communication and electric power networks helped fuel the expansion of American industry in the late 1800s. Companies that had once served mainly local markets expanded to sell their goods nationwide. To meet the needs of this growing national market, companies developed new ways of operating.

New Ways to Manage Work

Farsighted business owners realized they could profit from serving customers nationwide. But to do this, they had to create systems of mass production that would enable them to supply a much larger market. The basic elements of this system already existed. By the early 1800s, factories were using interchangeable parts to produce goods in large quantities.

After the Civil War, factory owners improved these methods of mass production. They built specialized machinery that could produce identical parts for quick assembly into finished products. They no longer needed skilled artisans to craft individual parts. Instead, they could use unskilled workers to run the machines and hire supervisors to manage the day-to-day operations.

Engineers reorganized factory work to increase productivity, dividing up the production process so that each worker did a single task. One engineer, Frederick W. Taylor, used scientific techniques to analyze these tasks. He watched workers and timed them with a stopwatch. Through these time-and-motion studies, he determined the most efficient way to perform each task. He trained workers to work faster by reducing wasted motion. Speed boosted productivity, which increased profits.

Taylor later published his findings in a book called *The Principles of Scientific Management*. The book had a profound effect on industry in the early 1900s. One person who took it seriously was Henry Ford, who pioneered the moving assembly line to mass-produce automobiles. In a Ford plant, there was no wasted motion. Workers stood in one place all day, while a conveyor belt brought the work to them. Each worker did one or two small tasks, and then the belt moved the car to the next worker's station. One worker might put bolts in the frame while the next worker tightened them down. The process continued, part by part, until the car rolled off the assembly line, ready to be driven away.

Increased productivity resulted in cheaper goods. But it also meant that a factory could operate with fewer workers. Those who remained had to perform the same dull task all day long, but at a faster pace. Many assembly-line workers felt as though they had become machines. As you will read in Chapter 14, workers often protested for better working conditions.

New Ways to Finance and Organize Businesses

Before the Civil War, individual owners ran most businesses. As businesses grew larger, however, their need for the three basic factors of production—land, labor, and capital—grew as well. Land, which includes resources such as soil, forests, and minerals, was still abundant. Labor was plentiful as well thanks to a steady stream of immigrants into the country during this period. Capital, however, was a problem. Capital is any asset that can be used to produce an income. Money, buildings, tools, and machinery are all forms of capital.

Small business owners did not have all the capital they needed to expand. For this reason, many of them formed corporations.

A corporation is a company that is recognized by law as existing independently from its owners. A corporation can own property, borrow money, sue, or be sued. People invest in corporations by buying stock, or a share in the ownership of the business. By buying stock, investors became owners of the company. The money they paid for their stock helped to finance the corporation. Wealthy capitalists controlled corporations by buying huge amounts of stock.

As owners of a corporation, stockholders could profit from its success. Unlike the owners of small businesses, however, investors were not liable for a corporation's debts. The most they could lose was the amount they invested. Also, these owners did not run the daily operations. The corporation hired managers, accountants, engineers, and others to keep production going.

Competition among corporations provided consumers with a wide choice of new products, but it caused headaches for business owners. In the battle to sell products, companies slashed prices. Profits fell, debts rose, and many companies went bankrupt. Cutthroat competition threatened to drag down even the best-run companies. As a result, some powerful capitalists decided that to stay in business, they would have to limit competition.

Business owners began devising ways to reduce competition. One method was to buy or bankrupt competitors. John D. Rockefeller had great success with this approach in the oil industry. During the 1860s, he earned a fortune refining oil in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1870, he formed a corporation called Standard Oil. Standard Oil expanded by buying out or merging with other companies. Rockefeller's company also undercut its competitors by making deals with railroads, which agreed to ship its oil at discount prices. The savings on shipping allowed Standard Oil to cut its oil prices. These price cuts forced smaller oil companies to reduce prices too, causing many of them to either be sold to Standard Oil or go bankrupt. Rockefeller told one independent oil refiner, "You can't compete with the Standard . . . If you refuse to sell, it will end in your being crushed."

By 1882, Standard Oil had become a monopoly, a company that completely dominates a particular industry. It controlled 90 percent of the nation's oil production. With its competitors out of the way, Standard Oil could raise its prices and reap great profits.

Another approach to reducing competition was to form business trusts. A trust is a set of companies that are managed by a small group known as trustees. The trustees have the power to prevent companies in the trust from competing with each other.

13.4 – Big Business and the Government

Trusts and monopolies concentrated capital—and power—in the hands of a few people. With less competition, companies grew larger and more profitable. Americans began to refer to these industrial giants as "big business." Unlike owners of small, traditional businesses, those who ran huge corporations seldom knew their workers. Big business was impersonal, extremely profit-driven, and responsive mainly to investors.

Businesses Grow Larger and More Powerful

Corporations generally expanded in one of two ways. The first strategy was horizontal integration. This approach called for joining together as many firms from the same industry as possible. An example was Standard Oil's practice of buying up refineries to gain control of the oil-refining industry.

A second strategy was known as vertical integration. This approach involved taking control of each step in the production and distribution of a product, from acquiring raw materials to manufacturing, packaging, and shipping. Carnegie expanded his steel company through vertical integration. He bought the iron mines and coalfields that sent raw materials to his company's mills. He bought the ships and railroads that transported supplies and finished products. Vertical integration gave Carnegie complete control of the production process and the power to dominate the steel industry.

The Government Leaves Business Alone

By the late 1800s, many Americans realized that big business was limiting competition. Lack of competition allowed prices to rise, which helped producers but hurt consumers. However, lawmakers were unwilling to stop such business practices. Most politicians had long favored a policy of *laissez-faire*. This doctrine held that the market, through supply and demand, would regulate itself if government did not interfere. The French phrase *laissez-faire* translates as "allow to do." To political leaders, this meant "leave business alone."

Another influential idea at the time, social Darwinism, also discouraged government regulation of business practices. Based on Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, social Darwinism held that the best-run businesses led by the most capable people would survive and prosper. This doctrine's most avid supporter, Herbert Spencer, coined the phrase "survival of the fittest." Social Darwinists argued that government should leave businesses alone to succeed or fail on their own.

In reality, the federal government did not leave businesses alone, but actually helped many of them. It gave the railroads hundreds of millions of dollars worth of land. It sold natural resources such as forests and minerals at very low prices to companies that were prepared to exploit them. It also imposed protective tariffs on foreign goods to make them more expensive than American-made goods. Tariffs forced consumers to pay higher prices than they would have in a free market.

During the late 1800s, some businesses bribed legislators to pass laws favoring their companies. Much of the free land handed out to the railroads, for example, came in return for cash payments to politicians. In 1904, journalist Lincoln Steffens wrote, "Our

political leaders are hired, by bribery . . . to conduct the government of city, state, and nation, not for the common good, but for the special interests of private business."

Tariffs and other government aid did help industry prosper. In the late 1800s, the American economy grew rapidly. From 1877 to 1900, the value of American exports doubled. By 1900, the United States had the strongest industrial economy in the world.

Government Takes Some Action to Limit Business

As trusts and monopolies multiplied, many Americans grew alarmed that they were denying opportunities to smaller businesses. A few states passed laws or filed lawsuits to try to restore competition. Big business, however, just kept getting bigger.

Increasing public concern finally provoked a response from the federal government. In 1890, Congress passed the Sherman Antitrust Act, which outlawed trusts, monopolies, and other forms of business that restricted trade. However, the government made only feeble attempts to enforce the new law. One problem was the wording of the law. Written by lawyers who favored laissez-faire, the Sherman Antitrust Act was full of vague language. Congress left it to the courts to clarify the law, but the courts were not impartial, or unbiased. They often interpreted the law in favor of big business. For example, in 1895 the Supreme Court blocked government efforts to break up a sugar trust that controlled most of the nation's sugar manufacturing. In *United States v. E.C. Knight Co.*, the Court ruled that the Sherman Act applied only to trade, not to manufacturing.

13.5 – The Gilded Age

In 1873, the writer Mark Twain coauthored a book about rich industrialists and corrupt politicians called *The Gilded Age*. Something that is gilded looks like gold, but only on the outside. The title described American society in this period well. Industrialists who had made great fortunes led glittering lives. But beneath that glitter, this period was marked by political corruption and social unrest.

From Industrialists to Philanthropists

During the Gilded Age, the growth of three industries fueled a rapid expansion of the American economy. From 1870 to 1900, steel production rose from 77,000 tons to more than 11 million tons. Oil production swelled from around 5 million barrels annually to more than 63 million barrels. Railroad track expanded from 53,000 to around 200,000 miles. From these industries, three towering figures emerged: Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Cornelius Vanderbilt. All three started as entrepreneurs—bold risk-takers who established new businesses. Along the way, they amassed huge fortunes.

In 1890, Carnegie earned \$25 million. That year, the average industrial worker made about \$440. Carnegie lived in a 4-story, 64-room mansion on Millionaire's Row in New York City. Workers near his Pittsburgh mill lived in cramped, poorly ventilated rooms with primitive sanitation. This huge gap in living standards did not bother most

industrialists. Some would have explained it as social Darwinism in action. Others might have said that by working hard and following Carnegie's example, anyone could be rich.

Carnegie's rags-to-riches story supported such views. After arriving from Scotland in 1848 at the age of 12, he worked in a Pennsylvania cotton mill earning \$1.20 a week. His thrift and shrewd investments gave him a \$50,000 annual income by the time he was 30. Through a combination of daring business tactics and technological innovation, Carnegie prospered and gained control of several steel plants. In 1889, the year before his income hit \$25 million, he published an article titled "Wealth." In it, he declared that rich people had a duty to use their surplus wealth for "the improvement of mankind." He added, "A man who dies rich dies disgraced."

Carnegie set a splendid example by using his fortune to benefit society. In 1911, he established the Carnegie Corporation of New York. This charitable foundation offered grants of money to promote the advancement of knowledge. It focused on education, especially libraries. Carnegie helped build more than 2,500 free public libraries throughout the world. He also used his money to support cultural institutions and to promote international peace.

Like Carnegie, Rockefeller had the foresight to get in on the ground floor of an industry with a bright future. He started with one oil refinery, which he built into a huge corporation, Standard Oil. Rockefeller's monopolistic approach to business brought him fabulous wealth—and a terrible reputation. In an era of tough competition, he stood out for his ruthless tactics. However, like Carnegie, he became a philanthropist, a person who gives money to support worthy causes. He used his fortune to help establish the University of Chicago in 1892. He also started several charitable organizations, including the Rockefeller Foundation. Through these organizations, he supported medical research, education, and the arts.

Cornelius Vanderbilt followed a similar path to wealth. In 1810, at the age of 16, he started a ferry business in New York Harbor. Later he built up a fleet of steamships. By upgrading his ships and cutting shipping rates, he prospered. Ambitious and clever, Vanderbilt mastered the world of trade and transportation. He set up a profitable route from New York to San Francisco in time to carry many forty-niners to the goldfields. In 1862, he sold his steamer business and invested in railroad stock. He soon owned several rail lines, opening the first direct service from New York City to Chicago. Unlike Carnegie and Rockefeller, however, Vanderbilt never believed he had a duty to use his wealth to benefit society. Nevertheless, in 1873, he donated \$1 million to found Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee.

Robber Barons or Captains of Industry?

History is not quite sure how to judge the business giants of the Gilded Age. Critics call them robber barons for the way they gained their wealth and the lordly style in which they lived. Supporters call them captains of industry who, despite some shady dealings, helped usher in our modern economy.

From the critics' point of view, the industrialists prospered for mostly negative reasons. They ruthlessly drove rivals out of business and raised prices by limiting competition. They robbed the nation of its natural resources and bribed officials to ensure their success. They kept wages low and imposed dreadful working conditions, while trying to squeeze every ounce of work out of their employees.

Supporters argue, however, that industrialists prospered for mostly positive reasons. They worked hard and took advantage of new technology. Industrialists found new ways to finance and organize businesses for greater efficiency and productivity. And their success created jobs for millions of Americans. Shopkeepers, doctors, lawyers, and others in the growing middle class profited from the up-surge in business. Their living standards climbed along with the rising economy. But it would take years of struggle before workers shared in these benefits, as you will read in the next chapter. Perhaps the greatest inequality in American history occurred during the Gilded Age.

This debate about the overall impact of the industrialists may never be resolved. But one thing is clear. The industrial expansion of the late 1800s helped give rise to a vibrant economy and consumer society. Americans had access to an unprecedented abundance of goods and services—and they kept demanding more. By the early 1900s, economic growth had helped make the United States one of the most powerful nations in the world.

Summary

Innovations in technology and business boosted American industry in the late 1800s. Large steel, oil, and railroad corporations dominated the economy, with little governmental control. Industrial expansion produced greater access to goods and services, and it improved standards of living for many Americans, but not all.

Innovations and inventions Innovations, such as the electric light bulb and kerosene, spurred the growth of new industries. The telegraph and telephone brought modern communications to homes and businesses. The Bessemer process lowered the cost of steel and encouraged new forms of construction.

New business techniques Business leaders formed corporations to attract capital from investors, who became owners by buying stock. They improved production methods in order to mass-produce more goods in less time. By promoting horizontal or vertical integration, some leaders gained control of major industries. They also sought to reduce competition by forming monopolies and trusts.

Laissez-faire The federal government generally adopted a laissez-faire policy toward business. This hands-off approach reflected a belief in social Darwinism. The Sherman Antitrust Act was only feebly enforced.

The Gilded Age While industrialists amassed great fortunes, society was tainted by political corruption and a huge gap between rich and poor. Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Vanderbilt used some of their wealth to promote the common good. Historians debate their overall impact, noting increased industrial productivity but also unfair business practices.

14.1 – Introduction

In 1898, a young woman named Rose Schneiderman was hired at a factory in New York City. Her job was to sew the linings into men's caps. But she would soon take on a much larger role in the story of American labor.

Like most factory workers at the time, Schneiderman worked long hours under difficult conditions. At night, she returned home to a crowded, run-down apartment. But Schneiderman was determined to improve these conditions. She began to organize the workers at the cap factory. Before long, she had become a leader of the New York City branch of the Women's Trade Union League, a national labor organization.

In 1909, Schneiderman helped organize a major labor action known as the "Uprising of 20,000." In this event, thousands of young women walked off their jobs making clothing at garment factories in New York. The women were demanding higher wages and better working conditions. Some companies made settlements with the workers. However, demands for unlocked factory doors and working fire escapes were never met. Although their walkout failed to achieve all of their goals, it did set the stage for more labor actions to come.

Two years later, a tragedy at a garment factory helped focus even more attention on the plight of workers. In 1911, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory caught fire. Because the doors to the factory were locked, many of the women couldn't escape. One hundred forty-six workers died in the fire. Afterward, on April 2, Schneiderman gave an impassioned speech. In it, she said,

This is not the first time girls have been burned alive in the 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 . . . It is up to the working people to save themselves. The only way they can save themselves is by a strong working-class movement.

Over the years, Schneiderman continued her efforts on behalf of American workers. She became one of the key figures in the American labor movement.

14.2 – Conditions of the Working Class

Americans have long cherished the ideal of equality. Unlike European countries, the United States has never had monarchs or noble families who held economic and political power just because they were part of an upper class. In the Gilded Age, however, a class system started to emerge in the United States. That is, society began to divide into unequal groups based on wealth and power.

In 1879, the economist Henry George described this change as an "immense wedge" being forced through society. "Those who are above the point of separation are elevated, but those who are below are crushed down." The people being crushed belonged to the working class.

Many Workers Labored Under Terrible Conditions

The working class included men, women, and children. They provided the skill and the muscle that helped push American productivity to new heights and made employers rich. Yet those same employers often treated their workers—their human resources—as if they were merely parts of the machinery.

Industrial workers had an exhausting schedule. They typically worked 6 days a week, for 10 or more hours a day. For their efforts, workers earned about \$1 a day. The work itself was repetitive and boring. Unlike farming or craft work, in which a worker did a variety of tasks, the factory system relied on a division of labor. This meant that production was divided into separate tasks, with one task assigned to each worker. Factory owners designed the system this way for the sake of efficiency.

Workers often performed their tasks in hazardous environments. A priest described a steel plant as "the slaughterhouse; they kill them [workers] there every day." Whirling shafts, slippery floors, spinning blades, and molten steel all had the potential to injure or kill. Unlike today, worker safety was not a major concern. Workers were not given helmets or safety glasses, and those who were hurt or disabled received little or no financial compensation for their injuries. Factory owners believed that paying wages fulfilled their obligation to workers.

Industrial processing often created toxic gases and dust. Workers in textile mills, for example, inhaled cotton dust all day. Worse yet was the situation of coal miners. Mary Harris ("Mother") Jones, a labor activist, described the "wretched work" that miners did. Their lungs "breathe coal dust," she wrote, and "coal dust grinds itself into the skin, never to be removed." Textile workers and miners suffered from lung diseases. Workers in cramped, unventilated sweatshops faced the constant threat of contagious diseases such as tuberculosis. A sweatshop is a small factory where employees work long hours under poor conditions for low wages.

Laborers put up with such adversity, or hardship, because they could lose their jobs if they protested. With immigrants pouring into the country, employers had little trouble replacing a complaining worker.

Widespread Child Labor

Children worked in industry for two main reasons. First, even with both parents employed, a typical family could barely survive. The child's wages, though meager, made a crucial difference. Secondly, children earned less than adults, so factory owners were happy to employ them. At the same time, children were expected to do the same amount of work as their parents.

Throughout the 1800s, critics voiced concerns about child labor. Some states enacted laws setting a minimum age for workers, often 14 or 15 years. However, these laws led to little change. Where child-labor laws existed, companies often ignored them, and states often failed to enforce them. As a result, 6-year-olds worked in Georgia's cotton mills, and boys as young as 8 worked in the coal mines of Pennsylvania. In 1907, poet Edwin Markham described a typical street scene in New York's garment district: "Nearly any hour on the East Side of New York City you can see them—pallid boy or spindling girl—their faces dulled, their backs bent under a heavy load of garments piled on head and shoulders."

Child workers experienced some of the most dangerous working conditions. Because they were small, they could squeeze inside running machinery to make repairs. Young miners driving mules through tunnels risked being crushed by loads of coal. In January 1876, a Pennsylvania newspaper noted, "During the past week nearly one boy a day has been killed" in the mines.

Unsanitary Living Conditions

When their shifts finally ended, worn-out industrial workers headed home. For most, however, home offered little comfort. The great mass of workers, especially immigrants, lived in slums—heavily populated parts of a city marked by filth and squalor. Jane Addams, a social reformer, described a typical slum in Chicago:

The streets are inexpressibly dirty, the number of schools inadequate, sanitary legislation unenforced, the street lighting bad, the paving miserable and altogether lacking in the alleys and smaller streets, and the stables foul beyond description.

—Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House*, 1910

In the slums, workers lived in tenements, run-down apartment buildings of four to six stories, usually housing four families on each floor. A New York commission noted that these families "cook, eat, and sleep in the same room, men, women, and children together." Disease flourished in such cramped and often airless quarters, and fire was an ever-present danger.

14.3 – The Labor Movement

In the late 1800s, workers in American industry faced a set of painful facts. Their pay was low, and they worked in dangerous and unhealthy conditions. Their homes were often equally dismal, and their children had little opportunity to go to school. Whenever the economy slumped, life got even worse. Employers cut workers' pay or eliminated their jobs. Perhaps most distressing of all, individual workers had little power to change their circumstances. They could not bargain with employers. Nor could they seek help from the government, which did little to regulate working conditions.

Workers Unite for Better Conditions

In the early years of the Industrial Revolution, some workers developed a strategy for improving their lives. They formed labor unions. A labor union is a group of workers organized to protect the interests of its members. Historically, most labor unions have focused on three primary goals: higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions.

The first worker organizations in the United States appeared in the late 1700s in New York City and Philadelphia. By the mid-1800s, local unions had formed in many other cities. Much of a union's power came from the threat of a strike, a labor action in which workers simply refuse to go to work. A strike could easily shut down a factory, railroad, or mine. Unions generally used the strike as a last resort, when owners would not sit down to discuss the issues.

A Difficult Start for National Labor Organizations

After the Civil War, local unions began to realize that they might benefit from cooperating with each other to achieve their goals. As a result, a number of unions joined forces to form a national labor federation, or group of unions. This federation focused on efforts to establish an eight-hour workday. But poor leadership and lack of unity led to its collapse in 1872.

In the mid-1870s, an economic depression inflicted more damage on efforts to create national labor unions. In times of economic crisis, high unemployment intensified the competition for jobs.

Some business owners used this competition to undermine unions. They pressured workers to sign "yellow-dog contracts," written pledges not to join a union. Owners would not hire workers who did not sign a pledge. They also exchanged lists of union members and organizers, refusing jobs to any worker whose name was on these blacklists. Yellow-dog contracts and blacklists discouraged workers from joining unions.

Common Goals, Different Strategies

During the depression of the 1870s, business owners' tactics succeeded in smashing many labor unions. After the economy regained its strength, however, the labor movement also revived. A series of new national labor organizations arose, bringing together various unions under one banner.

One of these new federations was the Knights of Labor. It attracted many members in the late 1870s with a policy of accepting both skilled and unskilled workers, including women and African Americans. However, the Knights declined after 1886, in part because of competition from another federation.

That rival group was the American Federation of Labor (AFL). Unlike the Knights, the AFL concentrated mainly on organizing skilled workers. It also had a more narrow focus on "bread-and-butter" worker objectives, such as higher wages and shorter workdays. Founded in 1886, the AFL became the only major national labor organization in the 1890s.

In the early 1900s, another labor organization arose, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Its members were nicknamed Wobblies. IWW leaders introduced radical ideas into the union movement, adopting the socialist theories of the German political philosopher Karl Marx. Socialism is a political theory that advocates ownership of the means of production, such as factories and farms, by the people rather than by capitalists and landowners. Its goals are the elimination of private property and the fair treatment of workers. IWW members saw socialism as the path to a better life for workers.

In practice, each of these national labor organizations acted as a union. They engaged in collective bargaining—negotiations between employers and employee representatives concerning wages, working conditions, and other terms of employment. They also called strikes when collective bargaining failed.

14.4 – Strikes Erupt Nationwide

As labor unions gained strength in the late 1800s, workers showed a greater willingness to strike. At the same time, business owners stubbornly opposed union demands. As a result, confrontations between unions and owners increased. These struggles intensified after a bitter railroad strike in 1877.

Violence Marks the Railroad Strike of 1877

The railroad strike began during the depression of the mid-1870s. The government, holding to its laissez-faire policy, did nothing to boost the economy or help suffering workers. As families starved and children died, rage boiled up in working-class communities.

Meanwhile, railroad companies responded to the depression by slashing wages. In 1877, rail workers in West Virginia went on strike. The strike soon spread across the country. Before long, strikers had shut down at least half of the nation's rail lines. It was the largest labor uprising in U.S. history.

To keep the tracks closed, strikers battled police and state militias. Meanwhile, riots broke out in various cities as strike supporters expressed their anger by burning and looting railroad property. Police and militia forces could not control the chaos. Finally, President Rutherford B. Hayes called in the army. He used federal troops to restore order and get the trains rolling again. It was the first time the U.S. Army had been used to break a strike, but it would not be the last.

Two weeks of turmoil had left about 100 people dead and millions of dollars worth of property destroyed. The violence and destruction alarmed many Americans. They feared a working-class revolution, perhaps led by socialists or other radical groups. Such a revolution did not take place, but the stage was set for even larger and more violent strikes.

More Strikes, More Violence

The Railroad Strike of 1877 boosted union membership and gave members a greater sense of their own power. In the years that followed, national labor organizations tried to harness that power to change working conditions. Strikes became more numerous during this time. Three major events during this period underscored the growing struggle between owners and workers: the Haymarket Affair, the Homestead Strike, and the Pullman Strike.

The Haymarket Affair took place in Chicago in 1886. It started when strikers fought with "scabs," nonunion workers brought in to replace striking workers. Police trying to break up the fight shot into the crowd, killing at least one striker and wounding others. A group of anarchists—people who reject all forms of government—called for a protest meeting the next day in Haymarket Square.

More than a thousand people showed up for the meeting, including the city's mayor. Several speakers addressed the crowd. The mayor noted that the crowd remained calm. Near the end of the speeches, however, a force of about 180 Chicago police stormed in to break up the gathering. In the confusion that followed, someone threw a bomb that exploded among the police. Panicked, the police fired into the crowd, killing at least four protesters. Several officers died.

The bomber was never identified, but four radical anarchists were tried and executed for their part in the demonstration. The Haymarket Affair divided and confused the labor movement. Many workers backed the anarchists, but union leaders feared that supporting the radicals might further inflame public fears.

The Homestead Strike came several years later, in 1892. It involved iron- and steelworkers at the Carnegie Steel plant in Homestead, Pennsylvania. Andrew Carnegie was away in Europe at the time and had left his manager, Henry Frick, in charge. Frick hired 300 private guards from the Pinkerton Agency to protect the plant against the strikers. Industrialists had hired Pinkerton agents before. They often worked as spies, joining unions to discover their plans and identify union members. Though not police officers, the Pinkerton men carried guns.

When the Pinkerton agents arrived at the plant, the strikers were armed and ready. After a daylong gun battle in which nine strikers died, the Pinkerton agents gave up and the strikers took control of the town. Pennsylvania's governor then called out the state militia, and the strikers scattered. Frick brought in nonunion workers to run the plant, and the union was shut out for the next four decades.

In the Pullman Strike of 1894, the government again supported management against striking workers. The Pullman Palace Car Company, in the southern part of Chicago, made fancy railcars for long-distance travelers. Its employees all lived in the company town of Pullman. In company towns, workers rented company-owned housing and bought food and other goods at company stores, often at inflated prices. As a result,

many workers owed large debts to the company. Often all of their wages went toward paying off bills at the company store.

In the spring of 1894, during another depression, Pullman cut wages, but not rents or other charges, by about 25 percent. Frustrated, the workers went on strike. The American Railway Union supported the Pullman Strike. Its members shut down most rail traffic in the Midwest by refusing to handle trains with Pullman cars. Some of those trains included mail cars, and interfering with the mail was a federal offense. Therefore, President Grover Cleveland sent federal troops into Chicago to break the strike. After a violent encounter between troops and strikers, the strike collapsed, and the troops withdrew.

14.5 – Mixed Success for Unions

The union struggles of the late 1800s brought mixed results for organized labor. Unions generally experienced more setbacks than gains and failed to get government support or the backing of most Americans. Through collective bargaining and strikes, however, they made some advances, especially on the issues of hours and wages.

Setbacks: Government Favors Owners over Workers

Although the Railroad Strike of 1877 helped boost union membership, it prompted the federal government to take the side of business owners in most labor disputes. Unions needed government support to improve the lives of workers, but the federal government generally opposed union activities. It sent troops to break up strikes and used legal means to undermine unions.

The Pullman Strike revealed one way the federal government could intervene to favor employers over unions. To end the strike, a federal court issued an injunction against the American Railway Union and its head, Eugene V. Debs. An injunction is a court order that prohibits a specific action. The court based the injunction on a broad interpretation of the Sherman Antitrust Act. This act was designed to prohibit trusts and monopolies. Now it was being used against striking workers, on the grounds that their strike limited trade and commerce.

When Debs and other railway union leaders ignored the injunction, they were arrested and sent to jail. Later the Supreme Court ruled, in the case *In re Debs*, that such a broad, or "blanket," injunction was legal. After that decision, federal judges could and did shut down any strikes or boycotts that they ruled to be "conspiracies in restraint of trade."

To thrive, unions needed the support and respect of the American people. They failed to win either. The violent nature of strikes and of events like the Haymarket Affair caused many Americans to view union members as dangerous radicals. Violence and radicalism also weakened unions by scaring away potential union members.

Gains: Unions Win Small Bread-and-Butter Victories

Most unions remained relatively small in the late 1800s. Only about 10 percent of the employed labor force joined unions. Yet for that minority, work hours and wages improved steadily. From 1890 to 1915, average work hours per week for union employees fell from 54 to 49. At the same time, weekly pay rose from \$17.60 to \$21.30.

Wages and hours for nonunion workers also improved, though not to the same degree. Skilled laborers, whether union or nonunion, made the greatest gains. Most unskilled laborers, consisting largely of white women, African Americans, and new immigrants, still struggled to make ends meet.

Unions achieved more than just better wages, hours, and working conditions. They also won some recognition of workers' rights. They challenged an economic system in which owners could treat their workers no better than machines. Unions insisted that workers should be able to sit down with owners, as equals, at the bargaining table. This in itself gave some power to the working class, where it had little or none before.

Summary

The efforts of industrial workers in the late 1800s helped boost the American economy. Yet factory owners often treated their workers poorly, imposing low wages, long hours, and poor working conditions. Many workers joined labor unions to fight for better treatment and to raise their standard of living. But hostility between unions and employers sometimes led to violence.

Working-class conditions The working class suffered greatly during the Gilded Age. Industrial workers accepted low pay and dangerous conditions because they could not afford to lose their jobs. Many working-class families occupied run-down tenements in poor city slums.

Child labor American industry relied on the labor of whole families, including children, who often worked longer hours than adults.

Labor unions Workers united to form labor unions and to negotiate better wages and working conditions. Union membership increased with the rise of national unions and labor federations, such as the American Federation of Labor.

Strikes Failed negotiations led often to strikes and sometimes to violence. The government generally took the side of business and industry and often helped to break strikes.

Losses and gains for workers Periodic depressions shrank union membership, while violent incidents like the Haymarket Affair, Homestead Strike, and Pullman Strike helped turn public opinion against unions. However, unions gained wage increases and reductions in work hours.

Chapter 15 — Through Ellis Island and Angel Island: The Immigrant Experience

What was it like for an immigrant to the United States at the turn of the century?

15.1 – Introduction

In 1886, the Statue of Liberty, a gift from France, was unveiled on an island in New York Harbor. The colossal statue, with its torch of freedom held high, made a strong impression on the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who passed by it each year. One of those newcomers, Edward Corsi, recalled what it was like seeing Lady Liberty for the first time:

I looked at that statue with a sense of bewilderment, half doubting its reality. Looming shadowy through the mist, it brought silence to the decks of the Florida. This symbol of America—this enormous expression of what we had all been taught was the inner meaning of this new country we were coming to—inspired awe in the hopeful immigrants. Many older persons among us, burdened with a thousand memories of what they were leaving behind, had been openly weeping ever since we entered the narrower waters on our final approach toward the unknown. Now somehow steadied, I suppose, by the concreteness of the symbol of America's freedom, they dried their tears.

—Edward Corsi, *In the Shadow of Liberty*, 1935

Corsi understood the symbolism of the Statue of Liberty for freedom-seeking immigrants. So did poet Emma Lazarus, who grew up in an immigrant family. These words she wrote about the statue are inscribed on its base:

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

—Emma Lazarus, "The New Colossus," 1883

15.2 – Why Europeans Immigrated to the United States

Lazarus's poem suggests that the United States was a land of opportunity for the world's poor and downtrodden masses. By the 1880s, this had already been true for decades. Great waves of immigration had washed over the country since at least the 1840s. Some immigrants who chose to come to the United States were from Asia, Mexico, and Canada, but the vast majority crossed the Atlantic Ocean from Europe. They entered the country mainly through the port of New York City.

From the 1840s until the 1890s, most of these Europeans came from northern and western Europe. Millions of Irish, British, Germans, and Scandinavians crossed the ocean to become Americans. In the late 1800s, however, immigration from southern and eastern Europe steadily increased. Italians, Greeks, Hungarians, Poles, and Russians began to dominate the steamship passenger lists. For all of these immigrants, the reasons for moving can be divided into push factors and pull factors. Push factors are problems that cause people to move, whereas pull factors are attractions that draw them to another place.

Difficulties Push People from Europe

Population growth and hunger were two major push factors that caused Europeans to emigrate, or leave their homeland. Much of Europe experienced rapid population growth in the 1800s. This growth resulted in crowded cities, a lack of jobs, and food shortages. Crop failures added to people's woes. Potato rot left many Irish starving in the 1840s. The Irish potato famine led to a wave of Irish emigration to the United States.

Another push factor was scarcity of arable land, or land suitable for growing crops. In the 1800s, mechanization of agriculture led to the growth of commercial farming on large tracts of land in Europe. In the process, common lands, traditionally available to all, were combined and enclosed by fences. Many peasants were suddenly thrown off the land and into poverty. Even families with large estates faced land shortages. In parts of Europe, landholdings were divided among all children at the death of their parents. After a few generations of such divisions, the resulting plots were too small to support a family. A hunger for land drove many Europeans across the Atlantic.

Some immigrants planned to go to the United States, make their fortune, and return to their homelands. Others had no wish to go back. Many of those people emigrated because of the fourth major push factor: religious persecution. Russian and Polish Jews, for example, fled their villages to escape deadly attacks by people who abhorred their religion. Lazarus wrote her Statue of Liberty poem with this group of immigrants in mind. Lazarus had heard stories told by Jewish refugees from Russia. They described the pogroms, or organized anti-Jewish attacks, that had forced them to leave their country. Armenian immigrants, many of them Catholics, told similar stories about persecution and massacres at the hands of Turks in the largely Muslim Ottoman Empire.

Opportunities Pull Europeans to the United States

One of the great pull factors for European immigrants was the idea of life in a free and democratic society. They longed to live in a country where they had the opportunity to achieve their dreams. Less abstract, or more concrete, factors such as natural resources and jobs also exerted a strong pull.

The United States had ample farmland, minerals, and forests. Germans, Scandinavians, and eastern Europeans brought their farming skills to the rolling hills and plains of the Midwest. They introduced new types of wheat and other grains that would help turn this region into the country's breadbasket. European immigrants also prospected for gold

and silver. They mined iron and coal. They chopped down forests and sawed the trees into lumber.

Booming industries offered jobs to unskilled workers, like the Irish, Italian, Polish, and Hungarian peasants who poured into the cities in the late 1800s. These new immigrants also worked on the ever-expanding rail system, sometimes replacing Irish and Chinese laborers. American railroad companies advertised throughout Europe. They offered glowing descriptions of the Great Plains, hoping to sell land they received as government grants.

An even greater lure, however, came in the form of personal communications from friends and relatives who had already immigrated. Their letters back to the old country, known as America letters, might be published in newspapers or read aloud in public places. Sometimes the letters overstated the facts. Europeans came to think of the United States as the "land of milk and honey" and a place where the "streets are paved with gold." America letters helped persuade many people to immigrate to the United States.

Improvements in Transportation Make Immigration Easier

After the Civil War, most European immigrants crossed the Atlantic by steamship, a techno-logical advance over sailing ships. What had once been a three-month voyage now took just two weeks. Some passengers could afford cabins in the more comfortable upper decks of the ship. But most had to settle for steerage, the open area below the main deck.

In steerage, hundreds of strangers were thrown together in huge rooms, where they slept in rough metal bunks. The rolling of the ship often made them ill. Seasickness, spoiled food, and filthy toilets combined to create an awful stench. During the day, steerage passengers crowded onto the main deck for fresh air.

15.3 – To Ellis Island and Beyond

At the turn of the century, European immigrants arrived in New York Harbor by the thousands every day. After all they had been through, they looked forward to stepping onto dry land. First-class and second-class passengers—those on the upper decks—did just that. After a brief onboard examination, they disembarked at the Hudson River piers. Steerage passengers, however, had to face one last hurdle: Ellis Island.

The Ellis Island Immigration Station, built in 1892 on a small piece of land in the harbor, was the port of entry for most European immigrants arriving in New York. Steerage passengers passed through a set of buildings staffed by officers of the Bureau of Immigration. This was a time of high anxiety for the immigrants. An array of officials would examine them closely to make sure they were fit to enter the country. Some of them would not pass inspection.

Medical Inspections at Ellis Island

Outside the main building at Ellis Island, officials attached an identification tag to each immigrant. The medical inspection began after the immigrants entered the building. Public Health Service doctors watched as people crossed through the baggage room and climbed the steep stairs to the enormous Registry Room, or Great Hall. This brief observation period became known as the "six-second exam." People who limped, wheezed, or otherwise showed signs of disease or disability would be pulled aside for closer inspection.

In the Great Hall, the immigrants underwent a physical examination and an eye test. During the brief physical, the doctor checked for a variety of health problems, using chalk to mark the immigrant's clothing with a symbol for the suspected disease or other problem. For example, an L stood for lameness, an H meant a possible heart condition, and an X indicated a mental problem. Disabled individuals or those found to have incurable illnesses would face deportation, a forced return to their home country. The most dreaded mark was an E for eye condition. The doctor would check for trachoma, a contagious infection that could lead to blindness. Anyone with trachoma would certainly be rejected. In fact, this disease accounted for the most deportations by far.

Legal Interviews in the Great Hall

Immigrants with medical problems would be sent to a detention area. The rest got in line and slowly worked their way to the back of the Great Hall for the legal interview. One by one, they stood before the primary inspector, who usually worked with an interpreter. The inspector asked a list of 29 questions, starting with "What is your name?" It was once thought that many names were shortened or respelled at Ellis Island, but actually such changes were rare. Passenger lists, including the 29 questions and answers, were created at the port of departure in Europe. Immigrants provided their name, age, sex, race, marital status, occupation, destination, and other information. Steamship officials wrote the answers on the passenger list. In most cases, Ellis Island inspectors merely asked the questions again to verify that the answers matched those on the passenger list.

The trickiest question was, "Do you have work waiting for you in the United States?" Those immigrants who wanted to show they were able to succeed in their new country sometimes answered yes. However, the Foran Act, a law passed by Congress in 1885, made it illegal for U.S. employers to import foreigners as contract laborers. The law's main purpose was to prevent the hiring of new immigrants to replace striking workers. Any immigrant who admitted to signing a contract to work for an employer in the United States could be detained.

About 20 percent of immigrants failed either the medical examination or the legal interview. This does not mean they were denied entry. Those with treatable illnesses were sent to a hospital on Ellis Island for therapy. There they might stay for days or weeks until a doctor pronounced them fit. Other detained immigrants had to await a hearing in front of a Board of Special Inquiry. These immigrants stayed in dormitories on

the second and third floors of the main building, sleeping in iron bunks that resembled those in steerage.

The board members reviewed the details of each immigrant's case and listened to testimony from the detainee's friends and relatives, if any lived nearby. The board voted to accept almost all of the immigrants who came before it. In the end, about 2 percent of all immigrants were deported.

Most of the immigrants who passed through Ellis Island spent a very short time undergoing medical and legal examination. Yet the whole process, including the waiting time, lasted for several agonizing hours. It ended with the legal interview. Immigrants who passed that final test were free to go. Relieved that the long ordeal was over, they boarded a ferry bound for New York City and a new life.

Beyond Ellis Island: Life in the Cities

Some new European immigrants quickly found their way to the farm country of the Midwest. However, the majority of the jobs were in the cities, so most immigrants stayed in New York or boarded trains bound for Boston, Cleveland, Chicago, or other industrial centers. As a result, urban populations exploded. From 1870 to 1920, the proportion of Americans who lived in cities jumped from about 25 percent to 50 percent.

Newly arrived urban immigrants tended to live in the least desirable districts, where housing was cheapest. Such areas often contained the factories and shops that provided their livelihoods. Amid the city's din and dirt, immigrants crowded into tenement buildings and other run-down, slum housing. In 1914, an Italian immigrant described such an area of Boston:

Here was a congestion the like of which I had never seen before. Within the narrow limits of one-half square mile were crowded together thirty-five thousand people, living tier upon tier, huddled together until the very heavens seemed to be shut out. These narrow alley-like streets of Old Boston were one mass of litter. The air was laden with soot and dirt. Ill odors arose from every direction . . . A thousand wheels of commercial activity whirled incessantly day and night, making noises which would rack the sturdiest of nerves.

—Constantine M. Panunzio, *The Soul of an Immigrant*, 1969

Immigrants generally settled among others from their home country. They felt comfortable among people who spoke the same language, ate the same foods, and held the same beliefs. As a result, different areas of the city often had distinctive ethnic flavors. Jacob Riis, a writer and photographer, imagined a map of New York's ethnic communities. "A map of the city," he wrote in 1890, "colored to designate nationalities, would show more stripes than on the skin of a zebra, and more colors than any rainbow."

15.4 – Responses to New European Immigrants

Immigrants typically came to the United States with little money and few possessions. Because of their general poverty and lack of education, most were not welcomed into American society. Without much support, they had to work hard to get ahead. In time, some saved enough to move out of the slums and perhaps even buy a home. A few opened small businesses, such as a grocery store or a tailor's shop. But many remained stuck in dangerous, low-wage factory jobs that barely paid their bills. An accident on the job or an economic downturn might leave them without work and possibly homeless and hungry.

Immigrants Receive Aid from Several Sources

In the late 1800s, the government did not provide aid or assistance to unemployed workers. They were expected to fend for themselves. But needy immigrants did have several places to turn for help. The first sources of aid were usually relatives or friends, who might provide housing and food.

If necessary, the needy might seek assistance from an immigrant aid society. These ethnic organizations started as neighborhood social groups. They met mainly in churches and synagogues, groceries, and saloons—the centers of immigrant community life. They might pass the hat to collect money for a family in need. In time, local immigrant aid societies joined together to form regional and national organizations, such as the Polish National Alliance and the Sons of Italy in America.

During the 1890s, a type of aid organization called a settlement house arose in the ethnic neighborhoods of many large cities. A settlement house was a community center that provided a variety of services to the poor, especially to immigrants. It might offer daytime care for children, as well as classes, health clinics, and recreational opportunities for the entire community.

Immigrants might also turn to political bosses for help. These bosses were powerful leaders who ran local politics in many cities. They were in a position to provide jobs and social services to immigrants in exchange for the political support of immigrants who could vote. These supporters often voted for the boss and his slate of candidates in local elections.

The Assimilation of Immigrants

Many immigrants held on to their old customs and language as they gradually adapted to American life. This was especially true for older immigrants living in ethnic neighborhoods. The children of immigrants, however, typically found assimilation into American society much easier than their parents did.

Education was the main tool of assimilation. Immigrant children in public schools studied American history and civics, and they learned to speak English. Yearning to fit in, they more eagerly adopted American customs.

Some patriotic organizations pushed for the Americanization of immigrants, fearing that increased immigration posed a threat to American values and traditions. Through efforts such as the publishing of guides for new citizens, they promoted loyalty to American values.

Some Americans Reject Immigrants

Many Americans disliked the recent immigrants, in part because of religious and cultural differences. Most of the earlier immigrants were Protestants from northern Europe. Later waves of immigrants came from southern and eastern Europe and were often Catholics or Jews. Their customs seemed strange to Americans of northern European ancestry, who often doubted that these more recent immigrants could be Americanized. Many people also blamed them for the labor unrest that had spread across the country in the late 1800s. They especially feared that foreign anarchists and socialists might undermine American democracy.

Dislike and fear provoked demands to limit immigration and its impact on American life. This policy of favoring the interests of native-born Americans over those of immigrants is called nativism. Nativism had a long history in the United States. Before the Civil War, nativists had opposed the immigration of Irish Catholics. In the 1850s, they formed a secret political party known as the Know-Nothings, because when asked a question about the group, members were told to answer, "I don't know."

As the main source of immigration shifted to southern and eastern Europe in the late 1800s, nativism flared up again. Nativists were not only bothered by religious and cultural differences, but also saw immigrants as an economic threat. Native workers worried that immigrants were taking their jobs and lowering wages. Immigrants often worked for less money and sometimes served as scabs, replacement workers during labor disputes.

In 1894, a group of nativists founded the Immigration Restriction League. This organization wanted to limit immigration by requiring that all new arrivals take a literacy test to prove they could read and write. In 1897, Congress passed such a bill, but the president vetoed it. Twenty years later, however, another literacy bill became law. Meanwhile, efforts to slow immigration continued. During the 1920s, Congress began passing quota laws to restrict the flow of European immigrants into the United States.

15.5 – Immigration from Asia

Although immigration after the Civil War was mainly from Europe, many immigrants also arrived each year from Asia. They made important contributions to the country. They also provoked strong reactions from nativists.

Chinese Immigrants Seek Gold Mountain

You have read about the thousands of Chinese railroad workers who laid track through the Sierra Nevada for the Central Pacific Railroad. Thousands more joined the swarms

of prospectors who scoured the West for gold. In fact, the Chinese referred to California, the site of the first gold rush, as Gold Mountain.

The vast majority of Chinese immigrants were men. They streamed into California, mainly through the port of San Francisco. Most expected to work hard and return home rich. However, they usually ended up staying in the United States.

Besides finding employment in mining and railroad construction, Chinese immigrants worked in agriculture. Some had first come to Hawaii as contract laborers to work on sugar plantations. There they earned a reputation as reliable, steady workers. Farm owners on the mainland saw the value of their labor and began bringing the Chinese to California. The Chinese were willing to do the "stoop labor" in the fields that many white laborers refused to do. By the early 1880s, most harvest workers in the state were Chinese.

Many businesses hired the Chinese because they were willing to work for less money. This allowed owners to reduce production costs even further by paying white workers less. As a result, friction developed between working-class whites and Chinese immigrants.

The Exclusion Act: Shutting the Doors on the Chinese

During the 1870s, a depression and drought knocked the wind out of California's economy. Seeking a scapegoat, many Californians blamed Chinese workers for their economic woes. The Chinese made an easy target. They looked different from white Americans, and their language, religion, and other cultural traits were also very different. As a result, innocent Chinese became victims of mob violence, during which many were driven out of their homes and even murdered.

Anti-Chinese nativism had a strong racial component. The Chinese were seen as an inferior people who could never be Americanized. Economist Henry George reflected this racist point of view in characterizing the Chinese as "utter heathens, treacherous, sensual, cowardly, cruel."

Nativists demanded that Chinese immigration be curtailed, or reduced. Their outcries led to the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. This law prohibited the immigration of Chinese laborers, skilled or unskilled, for a period of 10 years. It also prevented Chinese already in the country from becoming citizens. For the first time, the United States had restricted immigration based solely on nationality or race.

The Chinese Exclusion Act still allowed a few Chinese to enter the country, including merchants, diplomats, teachers, students, and relatives of existing citizens. But the act did what it was supposed to do. Immigration from China fell from a high of nearly 40,000 people in 1882 to just 279 two years later.

Angel Island: The Ellis Island of the West

Although the Chinese Exclusion Act was highly effective, some Chinese managed to evade the law by using forged documents and false names. In response, federal officials developed tougher procedures for processing Asian immigrants. They also decided to replace the old immigrant-processing center in San Francisco with a new, more secure facility located on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay.

Completed in 1910, the Angel Island Immigration Station became known as the "Ellis Island of the West." It was designed to enforce the exclusion act by keeping new Chinese arrivals isolated from friends and relatives on the mainland and preventing them from escaping. At Angel Island, immigrants underwent a thorough physical exam. Then they faced an intense legal interview, more involved and detailed than the Ellis Island version. Officials hoped to exclude Chinese who falsely claimed to be related to American citizens.

Interviewers asked applicants specific questions about their home village, their family, and the house they lived in. They also questioned witnesses. The process could take days. Those who failed the interviews could enter an appeal, but additional evidence took time to gather. Applicants were often detained for weeks, months, or even years.

Chinese detained at Angel Island stayed locked in wooden barracks. These living quarters were crowded and unsanitary. Detainees felt miserable and frustrated to be stopped so close to their goal. From their barracks, they could see across the water to the mainland. Some carved poems onto the walls to express their feelings. One Chinese detainee wrote,

Imprisoned in the wooden building day after day,
My freedom withheld; how can I bear to talk about it?

—from Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 1989

Many Chinese never made it to the mainland. About 10 percent were put on ships and sent back to China after failing the medical exam or legal interview.

Other Asian Groups Immigrate to the United States

The Chinese Exclusion Act created a shortage of farm laborers. Large-scale farmers looked to Japan and later to Korea and the Philippines for workers. These other Asian immigrants had experiences similar to those of the Chinese. Many first emigrated to work on Hawaiian sugar plantations. They came to the United States through Angel Island to work in orchards, in vineyards, and on farms in California, Oregon, and Washington. Some worked for railroads and other industries.

A number of Japanese immigrants leased farmland and had great success growing fruits and vegetables. They formed ethnic neighborhoods that provided for their economic and social needs. Koreans had less success. Only a small number moved from Hawaii to the mainland in the early 1900s, and they led more isolated lives. Immigrants from the Philippines migrated up and down the West Coast, taking part in

fruit and vegetable harvests. In the winter, many of these Filipinos worked in hotels and restaurants.

Despite their contributions, all Asian immigrants faced prejudice, hostility, and discrimination. In 1906, anti-Asian feelings in San Francisco caused the city to segregate Asian children in separate schools from whites. When Japan's government protested, President Theodore Roosevelt got involved. Hoping to avoid offending East Asia's most powerful nation, the president persuaded San Francisco's school board to repeal the segregation order. In return, he got a pledge from Japan to discuss issues related to immigration.

In 1907 and 1908, the American and Japanese governments carried out secret negotiations through a series of notes. These notes became known as the Gentlemen's Agreement. In the end, Japanese officials agreed not to allow laborers to emigrate to the United States. They did, however, insist that wives, children, and parents of Japanese in the United States be allowed to immigrate.

15.6 – Immigration from North and South

The East and West coasts were the main gateways for immigrants to the United States in the late 1800s and early 1900s. But immigrants also crossed the country's northern and southern borders. Before 1900, people passed back and forth across these land borders largely unchecked. Even later, the length and isolation of the country's borders made enforcement of immigration laws almost impossible. Europeans and Asians sometimes crossed by land to avoid immigration restrictions. However, most who came this way were either French Canadians from the north or Mexicans from the south.

Crossing the Southern Border: Immigrants from Mexico

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, legal restrictions on Chinese and Japanese immigration mounted. As they did, the population of Asian farmworkers in the United States shrank. Commercial farmers in the West began to rely on a different source of labor: Mexico. By the late 1920s, Mexicans constituted a large portion of California's agricultural workers. Many Mexicans also became migrant farmworkers and construction workers in Texas.

Mexicans had lived in the area of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California since the earliest Spanish settlements. In the late 1800s, more Mexicans moved to this area, in part to escape poverty and civil unrest in Mexico. By 1890, many Mexicans were migrating into the Southwest. Around this time, railroads began extending their lines across the border, which made travel faster and easier.

Higher wages in the United States attracted many Mexicans. Some came to work on the railroads. Others labored in the copper mines of Arizona. Still others worked on the farms and in the citrus groves that blossomed throughout the region with the expansion of irrigation. The Mexican Revolution, which began in 1910, pushed even more Mexicans across the border.

Like other immigrant groups, the Mexicans often suffered at the hands of native-born Americans. They might be welcomed as cheap labor, but they were commonly scorned as inferior to white Americans. Racist attitudes toward Mexicans, especially those with dark skin, led to discrimination. They were kept in low-level jobs and commonly denied access to public facilities, including restaurants. Many Mexican children were only allowed to attend segregated schools.

Crossing the Northern Border: The French Canadians

Many Canadians also came to the United States after the Civil War. Between 1865 and 1900, more than 900,000 immigrants arrived from Canada. Some of these were English-speaking Protestants, but a larger number were French-speaking Catholics. They arrived mainly from the province of Quebec.

Like other immigrants, the French Canadians were seeking greater opportunities than they had at home. Typically, they traveled by train across the border to the United States. But most did not go too far south. The majority settled in New England and around the Great Lakes. There they worked chiefly in textile mills and lumber camps.

With their language, religion, and customs, the French Canadians differed from the English-speaking society around them. At first, they resisted Americanization, preferring to maintain their cultural and historical ties to Quebec. In part because of their apparent unwillingness to assimilate, French Canadians came under attack by nativists. In 1881, a Massachusetts official declared,

The Canadian French are the Chinese of the Eastern States. They care nothing for our institutions . . . Their purpose is merely to sojourn [stay temporarily] a few years as aliens . . . They are a horde of industrial invaders, not a stream of stable settlers.

—Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, Twelfth Annual Report, 1881

European, Asian, Mexican, and French Canadian immigrants all faced accusations that they were unwilling to become members of American society. In time, all would prove the nativists wrong. They would establish vibrant ethnic communities, and their cultures would become vital pieces of the American mosaic.

15.7 – Current Connections: The Three Great Waves of Immigration

Immigration has always been an important part of American life. Immigrants helped to populate and settle the United States. They have played a key role in shaping our history and culture.

Since 1820, immigration to the United States has come in three great waves, or surges. The first wave, from 1820 to around 1870, came mostly from northern and western Europe. The second wave, from about 1880 to 1920, included people from all parts of

world, but especially southern and eastern Europe. A third great wave began in 1965 and continues today. You can see these waves on the graph.

These ebbs and flows of immigration reflect many factors. Immigration policy, for instance, has had a huge impact. In the early 1920s, laws were passed that severely limited immigration from most parts of the world. They remained in effect for over 40 years. Major wars have also had a chilling effect on immigration. So have economic downturns, such as the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Changes in immigration policy in 1965 triggered the last great wave of immigration. By 2003, the number of foreign-born people living in the United States rose to 33 million, nearly 12 percent of the population. Like earlier immigrants, the most recent newcomers are raising questions about how we define ourselves as a people and a nation.

Summary

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, large numbers of immigrants came to the United States. Most emigrated from Europe, but many also arrived from Asia and from other parts of North America. They all saw the United States as a land of opportunity, but they faced challenges entering the United States and assimilating into American culture.

Push and pull factors Overcrowded cities, civil unrest, and shortages of food, land, and jobs pushed immigrants out of their homelands. The promise of wealth, jobs, land, and freedom pulled them to the United States.

Through Ellis Island In the late 1800s, Europeans crossed the Atlantic on steamships, many of them in steerage. In New York Harbor, steerage passengers underwent a medical inspection and a legal interview at the Ellis Island Immigration Station. Most of these new immigrants found homes in the ethnic neighborhoods of large cities or on farms in the Midwest.

Through Angel Island Asians immigrated to the United States in smaller numbers than Europeans. Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and Filipinos found work mainly on the commercial farms of the West Coast. After 1910, Asians had to pass a rigorous inspection at the Angel Island Immigration Station before entering the country.

Across the northern and southern borders Other immigrants came from Mexico and French Canada. Mexican immigrants tended to settle in the Southwest and California. Immigrants from French Canada settled mainly in New England and the Great Lakes states. Both ethnic groups faced many of the same challenges as immigrants from other countries.

Nativism Some Americans objected to mass immigration, especially from Asia and southern and eastern Europe. Strong opposition from nativists led to the persecution of immigrants and restrictions on immigration.

Chapter 16 — Uncovering Problems at the Turn of the Century

What social, political, and environmental problems did Americans face at the turn of the century?

16.1 – Introduction

Jacob Riis, a photographer and journalist, took the picture of three homeless boys sleeping in an alley that you see on the opposite page. It is one of many arresting photographs that made Riis one of the most respected journalists in New York City in the late 1800s.

Homeless boys were a common sight in New York at the time. In his book *How the Other Half Lives*, Riis wrote about the conditions of the urban poor. In one passage, he described the boys who lived on the streets:

Like rabbits in their burrows, the little ragamuffins sleep with at least one eye open, and every sense alert to the approach of danger: of their enemy, the policeman, whose chief business in life is to move them on, and of the agent bent on robbing them of their cherished freedom. At the first warning shout they scatter and are off. To pursue them would be like chasing the fleet-footed mountain goat . . . There is not an open door, a hidden turn or runway, which they do not know, with lots of secret passages and short cuts no one else ever found.

—Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York*, 1890

Riis was no stranger to poverty himself. He had arrived in New York as a poor immigrant in 1870 and had suffered through hard times. When he became a reporter, he dedicated himself to exposing the conditions of the poor.

Riis was one of a group of journalists known as muckrakers. President Theodore Roosevelt gave them that name because they "raked the mud of society." They uncovered the nation's problems and wrote about them.

In this chapter, you will read about the social, environmental, and political problems Americans faced in the early 1900s. In the next two chapters, you will see how reformers worked to solve these problems.

16.2 – The State of the Union in 1900

In 1900, the United States looked very different from a century before. Westward expansion had added vast new territory to the country. In addition, the rise of industry had stimulated rapid urbanization—the growth of cities—by creating jobs that drew rural residents and new immigrants to American cities. The United States had moved far

beyond Thomas Jefferson's vision of a nation of small farmers. It was becoming an urban, industrial society with an increasingly diverse population from around the world.

Settlement in the West: The Closing of the Frontier

By 1900, the nation included 45 states and stretched across the North American continent. Americans had fulfilled what many saw as their "manifest destiny"—their right to expand across the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

This expansion was so successful that in 1890 a report from the Census Bureau announced that the "American frontier" was closed. This report said that most of the land beyond the Appalachian Mountains had been settled. Of course, there was still land available to settlers after 1890, but the popular notion of the "wide-open spaces" of the West was becoming an idea of the past.

Factories Increase Production

Industrialization also brought changes to American life. Advances in technology, transportation, and communications helped fuel rapid industrial growth after the Civil War. American factory workers produced more goods much faster than anyone had ever thought possible. The numbers tell the story. In 1865, American industry produced \$2 billion worth of products. By 1900, that figure had risen to \$13 billion. In only 35 years, production had grown by more than six times.

More efficient machines and production methods made this increase possible. The textile industry was one of the first to mechanize. Mass production of textiles had begun in New England before the Civil War. After the war, the industry spread to the South, where the use of modern machinery produced a boom in textile production. The iron and steel industry also thrived in the late 1800s. Between 1870 and 1900, production rose from about 3 million tons to more than 29 million tons.

As factory production increased, businesses looked for new ways to sell their products. One method was the mail-order catalog. Companies like Montgomery Ward and Sears, Roebuck and Company published and distributed catalogs offering goods of all kinds, from hardware and tools to clothes and appliances. They took orders by mail and shipped the products by railroad and canal to customers around the country.

Other companies, like Macy's and Marshall Field's, opened department stores in major cities. These large stores sold a variety of goods and even offered services, like childcare, all under one roof. Smaller chain stores like Woolworths established branches across the country to serve more Americans in the towns and cities where they lived.

Cities Attract Masses of Newcomers

The United States was becoming an increasingly urban nation. In 1800, only 6 percent of Americans had lived in cities. By 1900, nearly 40 percent lived in urban areas. City residents included many newcomers. Most immigrants settled in cities because they could find work and mingle with others from their homelands. African Americans were also beginning to move from the South to northern cities, seeking equality and

opportunity. Other new arrivals were rural residents from the North, who moved to cities in large numbers in the late 1800s.

Jobs were the most important attraction in cities, but other features also drew migrants. Cities had many amusements for people to enjoy when not working. Theaters presented popular dramas and musical comedies. A type of theater called vaudeville was especially popular for its lively combination of music, comedy, and dance. Circuses were another common form of entertainment, as were spectator sports like baseball and football.

Cities had other modern attractions. Department stores took up whole city blocks and were so impressive that people called them "palaces of merchandise." Cities also boasted broad avenues lined with the mansions of wealthy residents. In some cities, steel-framed skyscrapers rose above downtown streets, reaching heights of 10 stories or more. These modern buildings become symbols of American progress and prosperity.

The Census Reveals an Increasingly Diverse People

Between 1870 and 1920, at least 12 million immigrants arrived in the United States. By 1910, a majority of the population in key cities like New York, Chicago, and Cleveland consisted of foreign-born residents and their children. Over half of the nation's industrial labor force was foreign born.

By the turn of the century, immigration from different parts of the world was changing the face of American culture and society. New waves of immigrants from southern Europe and Asia were joined by immigrants from Mexico and Canada. All of these newcomers added their customs and languages to the nation's mix of cultures.

16.3 – Poor Living and Working Conditions

While many Americans enjoyed the benefits of urban life in 1900, cities and city dwellers also suffered from serious problems. Many urban residents lived in poverty and labored under backbreaking conditions. They may have been tempted by the many goods generated by mass production, but most could not afford them. Even those who did have the money had no guarantee that the products were safe or reliable. Through their writings, muckrakers like Jacob Riis sought to expose these and other problems of urban life.

Conditions in the Slums

Many of the urban poor lived in slum tenements. They were crammed together in shoddy apartment buildings that housed four families on each floor. Each family had a very small living space. In Jacob Riis's book, a typical tenement is described as "one or two dark closets, used as bedrooms, with a living room twelve feet by ten."

Not only was each tenement crowded, but the buildings themselves were packed together. Some slum neighborhoods were among the most densely populated areas in the world. New York's Lower East Side, for example, housed 450,000 people in 1900.

That amounted to more than 300,000 people per square mile. In contrast, New York City as a whole housed around 90,000 people per square mile.

One reason for poor living conditions in cities like New York was that the urban infrastructure was inadequate for such a large population. Infrastructure refers to the facilities and equipment required for an organization or community to function. It includes roads, sewage and power systems, and transportation. A number of muckrakers blamed city governments for failing to provide adequate infrastructure and services.

Lack of fire protection was one serious problem. At the turn of the century, many city roads and sidewalks were constructed of wood, making cities virtual firetraps. One historian described American cities of the day as "long lines of well-laid kindling." Much of Chicago burned to the ground in 1871, and much of San Francisco burned after the 1906 earthquake.

Cities also suffered from sanitation problems. By 1900, many middle-class homes had running water and indoor plumbing. These amenities reduced the incidence of disease in some neighborhoods, but they increased the amount of wastewater that cities had to remove. City engineers developed sewer systems to do the job. In poorer neighborhoods that lacked indoor plumbing, however, the waste often ended up on the streets. As a result of poor sanitation, contagious diseases such as tuberculosis and pneumonia often spread quickly through crowded slums.

Problems in the Workplace

Muckrakers also exposed terrible working conditions. By 1900, unskilled factory work had replaced most skilled manufacturing jobs. Many factory workers found their work boring and strenuous. One worker said, "Life in a factory is perhaps, with the exception of prison life, the most monotonous life a human being can live."

Factory work was also dangerous. Sharp blades threatened meatpackers. Cotton dust plagued textile workers. And fire posed a risk to nearly everyone who worked in close quarters in factories. Injuries could put workers out of jobs and throw their families into dire poverty.

Other workers, especially in the garment industry, worked at home for companies that paid them for each piece of work they completed. Many employers squeezed their workers by reducing the rate they paid per piece. Workers then had to work harder and faster to earn the same amount. It was common among immigrants for entire families, including children, to do piecework so that the family could make enough money to survive.

Unsafe Products: Buyer Beware

Increased production meant that more products were available, but buying them was not always a good idea. Consumers often did not know what was in the products because the government did not regulate product quality.

Meat was one example. In his 1906 novel *The Jungle*, muckraker Upton Sinclair wrote about unsanitary conditions in meatpacking plants: "There would be meat stored in great piles in rooms; and the water from leaky roofs would drip over it, and thousands of rats would race about on it." Sinclair reported that rat droppings, and even the rats themselves, often become part of processed meat. Canned goods were not regulated either. Toxic chemical preservatives like borax and formaldehyde contaminated many processed foods.

Many common medicines, like cough syrup, were also unregulated. Some products made ridiculous claims for curing illnesses, with the "cures" often involving narcotics. Medicine labels boasted such ingredients as morphine, opium, and cocaine. These substances were not prohibited, but their risks were becoming more apparent. Popular magazines told stories of consumers who believed that these medicines would cure their illnesses, only to fall prey to drug addiction.

Meanwhile, the growth of big businesses went largely unregulated, as monopolies took over many industries. Many Americans worried that small companies were being driven out of business and that monopolies were stifling opportunity. Muckrakers protested that big businesses were growing richer, while small businesses and the poor struggled even harder to survive.

16.4 – Problems with the Environment

By the turn of the century, urbanization and industrialization were transforming not only American society but also the natural environment. Alexis de Tocqueville, a Frenchman who had visited the United States in 1831, noted that Americans seemed to think nothing of remaking nature for the sake of progress. He observed that in the process of building towns, they could destroy forests, lakes, and rivers and "not see anything astonishing in all this. This incredible destruction, this even more surprising growth, seems to [them] the usual process of things in this world." By 1900, Americans had settled much of the country and exploited many of its natural resources. Doing so enabled tremendous economic growth, but it also came at a cost to the environment.

Changing the Landscape

As the 20th century began, economic activities had significantly changed the landscape. Forests were one example. Farmers cleared trees to plant crops, and loggers cut down large areas of woodland. The government encouraged logging by selling large plots of land in the Northwest for the lumber they could provide. By 1900, only a fraction of the country's virgin, or original, forests were still standing.

Ranching also transformed the landscape. Before settlers moved onto the Great Plains, buffalo had roamed across the region and grazed on its abundant grasslands. By the time the buffalo returned to places they had grazed before, the grass had grown back. But the cattle and sheep brought in by ranchers grazed the same area over and over, without moving on. As a result, they stripped the land of its natural vegetation and left it more vulnerable to erosion.

Extracting Natural Resources

The landscape was also transformed by extractive industries, businesses that take mineral resources from the earth. By 1900, mining companies were using explosives and drilling equipment to extract silver, copper, gold, iron, coal, and other minerals. Meanwhile, oil companies drilled deep to pump petroleum out of the ground.

Coal and other minerals were required to fuel industry. Factories burned coal to heat water to make the steam that powered machinery. The country was particularly rich in coal. Between 1860 and 1884, the amount of coal mined per year increased from 14 million tons to 100 million tons.

Mining was dangerous and also harmed the environment. Workers risked being buried alive if a mine caved in, and many got black-lung disease from breathing coal dust day after day. Mining scarred the land, leaving open shafts, slag heaps, and polluted streams behind. Unlike today, the government imposed no environmental regulations on mining companies.

Oil drilling also took its toll on the land. The first commercial oil wells were drilled in Pennsylvania. By 1900, oil extraction was underway in Texas and California as well. But finding oil was difficult. Developers often drilled deep in search of black gold, only to come away empty-handed. Whether successful or not, they left the earth torn behind them.

One historian explained that most Americans in the 1800s believed that "the river was waiting to be dammed . . . the prairie was waiting to be farmed, the woodlands to be cut down, and the desert to be irrigated." In other words, most people saw no problem with exploiting the environment and took no notice of the harm being done to the natural landscape.

Polluting Water and Air

Economic activities were also polluting the air and water in urban areas. In some cities, factories belched so much black smoke that it was difficult for people to breathe. In 1881, angry residents of New York City reported that the air smelled like sulfur, ammonia, kerosene, acid fumes, and phosphate fertilizer.

Pittsburgh, a steelmaking city, was known for being particularly filthy. The air was so polluted that it soiled everything. The people who lived closest to the steel plants suffered the worst of the pollution, but it affected those living outside the industrial center as well. One historian has written, "People's hands and faces were constantly grimy, clean collars quickly acquired a thin layer of soot, and the . . . coal dust gave clothes hung out in the weekly wash a permanent yellow tinge."

Another pollutant came from animals that lived in cities. Horses pulled carriages, and pigs roamed the streets eating garbage. Animal waste was often left where it landed, producing a foul stench and a serious disposal problem. According to one estimate, the

15,000 horses in Rochester, New York, left enough waste in a year to cover an acre of land with a layer 175 feet high.

City water was also polluted. In some cities, household sewage and industrial pollutants were simply released into nearby water sources without regard for the consequences. Other cities did try to avoid contaminating their drinking water. In Chicago, for example, engineers reversed the flow of the Chicago River so that sewage and factory waste would not flow into Lake Michigan. Some cities developed reservoirs to keep drinking water separate from wastewater. In some cases, rivers that were in the way or became too much of a health hazard were simply paved over.

16.5 – The Politics of Fraud and Bribery

Another problem at the turn of the century was political corruption. In 1902, the muckraking journalist Lincoln Steffens published *The Shame of the Cities*, a book on corruption in city government. The book exposed the rampant fraud that plagued cities throughout the nation. Steffens reported that politicians spoke openly about accepting bribes. "I make no pretensions to virtue," one politician said, "not even on Sunday."

Corruption served the interests of dishonest politicians and those who bribed them, while weakening the political influence of average Americans. In short, it distorted and undermined democracy.

Political Machines and Bosses

By 1900, many cities were controlled by political machines. These organizations consisted of full-time politicians whose main goal was to get and keep political power and the money and influence that went with it. Machines were usually associated with a political party. Party politicians joined forces to limit competition, while increasing their own power and wealth. At the top of this corrupt structure was the political boss, who controlled the machine and its politicians. Perhaps the most infamous of these bosses was William "Boss" Tweed of New York's Tammany Hall machine, who in the early 1870s cheated the city out of as much as \$200 million.

Political machines exercised control at all levels of city government, down to the wards and precincts that subdivided most cities. Ward bosses and precinct captains got to know local residents and offered them assistance in exchange for political support. They helped immigrants who were sick or out of work. As one New York City ward boss said, "I never ask a hungry man about his past; I feed him, not because he is good, but because he needs food." This aid could take a wide variety of forms, including supplying a Christmas turkey or helping a grieving family by paying for a funeral. In exchange, residents agreed to vote for machine politicians at election time.

In some ways, the political machines worked for the good of city dwellers, particularly immigrants. At a time when the national and state governments did not provide such benefits as welfare for unemployed workers, local political machines filled the void.

Corruption in Local and State Politics

Although political machines provided aid, they also stifled opportunity for many citizens. Political bosses controlled access to city jobs, such as employment in the police and fire departments or on construction projects. With a good word from a boss, a poorly qualified person could land a job in place of a capable applicant.

The political machine also controlled business opportunities. To get a city work contract, a company often had to donate to the machine's reelection campaign. Many businesses also paid politicians to keep the city government from interfering with their activities. Such payoffs became part of the cost of doing business. Muckrakers called them bribery.

The political machines profited from urban entertainment, both legal and illegal. In exchange for a payoff, the boss could clear the way for such illegal activities as gambling. Even legal businesses such as baseball teams and vaudeville theaters paid the machine. Some political bosses saw these payments as informal taxes. They used some of the revenue to help those in need, but they made sure they profited themselves.

To keep control, political machines rigged local elections. Average citizens had little influence in choosing candidates, and the machine frequently used fraud to win at the polls. Candidates might pay citizens for their votes or stuff the ballot box with phony votes. By controlling elections, political machines maintained their grip on American cities.

At the state level, corrupt politicians tied to powerful industries, such as railroads and mining, controlled many state governments. In passing legislation that favored big business, state legislatures and governors often ignored the needs of average citizens.

Corruption on the National Level

The national government also suffered from corruption. For example, the Constitution gave state legislatures the power to choose senators, but corporations often bribed state legislators to elect their favored candidates to the Senate. The Senate became known as the Millionaires Club because many of its members were wealthy men with close ties to powerful industries.

In both the House and the Senate, politicians received campaign contributions from big business in exchange for passing favorable legislation. The railroad monopolies, for example, frequently gave company stock to members of Congress who passed laws that strengthened the railroads. Other businesses also gave money to lawmakers who worked to limit competition.

Politicians frequently engaged in patronage—giving jobs to friends and supporters. Some of these jobs went to unqualified people. In 1883, Congress passed the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act to limit patronage. The Pendleton Act set guidelines for hiring civil service employees—nonmilitary government workers. It set up a civil

service commission to administer exams to new applicants for government jobs. The jobs covered by this test had to be specified by the president. Over the years, most presidents have agreed to expand the number of specified jobs. Most civil service jobs are now based on merit.

16.6 – Social Tensions

American cities in 1900 brought together many types of people in crowded and often difficult circumstances. As a result, social tensions increased. Many poor city dwellers resented the comfortable lives of the rich, while the rich often looked down on the poor as the source of urban problems. Many African Americans faced racism and violence as they struggled to improve their lives and claim their democratic rights. Women were also demanding greater opportunities and rights. Meanwhile, many American families feared that the stresses and strains of urban life were eroding traditional values.

Growing Differences Between Social Classes

During the late 1800s, the gap between rich and poor grew wider. Between 1865 and 1900, a small percentage of Americans grew fabulously wealthy. By 1891, according to one estimate, there were 120 Americans who were worth at least \$10 million, an enormous sum at the time.

At the same time, the arrival of many immigrants swelled the ranks of the working class. Many workers found it nearly impossible to get ahead. Although wages increased gradually, the cost of living rose faster. So while the rich got richer, the poor continued to live in harsh circumstances. Many took lodgers into their tiny flats to help share the cost of rent.

Between the two extremes, the middle class expanded as a result of the rising productivity of the American economy. The growing middle class included doctors, lawyers, ministers, small business owners, merchants, and mid-level company managers.

By 1900, American cities were organized in ways that reflected class, race, and ethnic differences. The rich lived in mansions on streets like New York's elegant Fifth Avenue. Many Fifth Avenue residents also owned summer homes in places like Newport, Rhode Island. Their summer "cottages" were actually mansions resembling European palaces.

During this period, many middle-class families moved to comfortable homes in newly built suburbs. The men often commuted on streetcars, part of new urban transit systems. Members of the middle class tried to make their homes appear as elegant as the homes of the wealthy. Their houses often featured stained glass windows and fine furniture. Many also had reproductions of famous paintings hanging on their walls.

Working-class people remained in the cities. Immigrants tended to cluster together in ethnic neighborhoods, where they could maintain many of their old customs. Some immigrants, however, stayed in these areas because they were not allowed to live

anywhere else. The Chinese in San Francisco were jammed together in one district known as Chinatown because they were barred from other areas. In cities like San Antonio and Los Angeles, Mexican immigrants lived in neighborhoods called barrios. African American migrants, too, generally lived in neighborhoods separated from other city residents.

Life for African Americans

In the 35 years since the end of the Civil War and the abolition of slavery, African Americans had made few gains in their struggle for equality. Many southern states had passed Jim Crow laws that segregated blacks from whites in trains, schools, hospitals, and other public places. Signs saying "White Only" and "Colored Only" told black Americans which waiting rooms they could enter, which bathrooms they could use, and where they could sit in theaters. Segregation affected nearly every aspect of public life in the South at the beginning of the 20th century.

In addition, by 1900 most African Americans in the South had been disenfranchised. Although the Fifteenth Amendment declared that voting rights could not be denied on the basis of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude," southern states found ways to bypass the law. Some state laws required potential voters to prove that they could read and write. These literacy tests often kept African American men from voting. So did poll taxes and property requirements. "Grandfather clauses" were another way to deny African American men the vote. Such clauses limited voting only to those men whose fathers or grandfathers had had the right to vote in 1867.

Violence against blacks was also common. Between 1882 and 1900, about 70 lynchings took place every year, mostly in the South. The victims were typically hanged or burned to death. In some cities, in both the North and the South, large-scale mob violence broke out against African Americans.

In response to racism, many African Americans fled from the South in the late 1800s. By 1900, more than 30 northern cities had 10,000 or more black residents. The number of black migrants from the South increased even more dramatically in the years that followed.

The Changing Role of Women

Life for American women was changing, too. One trend was the growing number of women working outside the home. The number of women in the labor force nearly tripled between 1870 and 1900. At the start of the 20th century, women made up around 18 percent of the workforce. Many of these new workers were native-born, single white women. Some performed unskilled labor in textile, food-processing, and garment factories. Those with a high school education found skilled positions such as telephone operators, typists, department store clerks, nurses, and teachers. Meanwhile, many immigrant women did unskilled factory labor. Opportunities for African American women consisted mainly of working as domestic cooks or housekeepers.

New appliances made available through mass production changed the lives of many middle-class and upper-class women. Washing machines, gas stoves, carpet sweepers, and other conveniences made housework easier. For some women, however, these appliances also gave rise to new homemaking expectations. Gas stoves, for example, were far easier to use than wood stoves. But as they became available, cookbooks began to feature more time-consuming recipes. Nonetheless, the new appliances helped many women find more time for social causes and charitable activities outside the home.

Some women had the chance to attend college, too. A number of women's colleges, like Vassar, Wellesley, and Bryn Mawr, had opened after the Civil War. By 1890, nearly half of all American colleges accepted women. But the number of women in college was still fairly small compared with the number training for such occupations as teaching and nursing.

As the 20th century began, most American women did not have the right to vote. Although a few western states had granted voting rights to women, there was still no women's suffrage at the national level. Women known as suffragists actively pursued voting rights.

Challenges for the American Family

The American family also faced challenges at the turn of the century, most notably around the issue of child labor. By 1900, roughly one out of every five children between the ages of 10 and 15 was a wage worker. About 1.7 million children toiled in factories, sweatshops, and mines or worked in other nonfarm jobs such as shining shoes and selling newspapers. "Breaker boys" in coal mines often worked 14 to 16 hours a day separating slate rock from coal. Grueling workweeks could stretch to 72 hours, leaving child workers little time for anything else.

Lack of education was another problem. Although public education expanded in the late 1800s, working for wages kept many children out of school. By and large, African Americans had even fewer educational opportunities than whites. In the segregated South, schools for blacks were often of inferior quality. Some African Americans, however, gained useful vocational training at all-black colleges such as Alabama's Tuskegee Institute.

Many people saw alcohol as another obstacle to improving family life and society as a whole. Since the early 1800s, there had been calls for temperance, or moderation in drinking habits. By the late 1800s, the temperance movement had grown significantly. While some reformers emphasized moderation in drinking, a growing number wanted to ban alcohol altogether. Men who did not drink, they argued, were more likely to keep their jobs and to work hard to support their families. Many reformers believed that making alcohol illegal would help lift poor families out of poverty and improve social conditions in the cities.

In addition, many parents worried that city life was corrupting the morals of their children. They believed that urban entertainments such as vaudeville theaters, dance halls, and amusement parks contributed to immoral behavior by bringing young people together in questionable surroundings, unsupervised by adults. Many parents hoped that strong bonds within families and neighborhoods might protect children from the temptations of city life.

Summary

Americans faced social, political, and environmental problems at the turn of the century. Many of these problems were the result of rapid changes brought on by industrialization, urbanization, and immigration.

Industrialization The rapid growth of industry resulted in poor working conditions for many workers. Monopolies took over industries, squeezing out competition. Some companies also made unsafe products. Muckraking journalists like Upton Sinclair, author of *The Jungle*, worked to expose these problems.

Urbanization Cities grew rapidly with the rise of industry and increased immigration. The infrastructure in many cities could not meet the demands of a growing population. Many immigrants were crammed into poor ethnic neighborhoods, such as New York's Lower East Side, where they had few services.

Environmental damage Industry and urbanization produced air and water pollution. Ranching, logging, and extractive industries also damaged the natural environment.

Political corruption Political machines, like New York's Tammany Hall, fueled corruption in city government. Big businesses influenced state and national governments. Congress passed the Pendleton Act to clean up the federal government by creating a professional civil service.

Tensions in society A growing gap between rich and poor fueled social tensions. African Americans suffered racism and mob violence, while women also faced discrimination. The temperance movement tried to limit or even ban alcohol consumption. Social changes strained American families, and many people feared the loss of traditional family bonds.

Chapter 17 — The Progressives Respond

Who were the progressives, and how did they address the problems they saw?

17.1 – Introduction

Garbage was a big problem in American cities at the start of the 20th century. Most cities did not have decent garbage collection, so trash just piled up. One historian described the garbage problem in a poor neighborhood in Chicago called the 19th Ward:

In some of its alleys putrefying rubbish was piled a story and more high; its rotting wooden streets were clogged with manure, decaying garbage, and the bloated corpses of dogs and horses; and its plank-board sidewalks were lined with large uncovered garbage boxes filled to overflowing because of erratic pickup service by city-licensed scavengers.

—Donald Miller, *City of the Century*, 1996

Jane Addams, a social worker and cofounder of Hull House, the city's first settlement house, lived in the 19th Ward. Addams knew that rats bred in the trash and that children played there. Garbage heaps, she wrote, "were the first objects that the toddling children learned to climb." She worried that these conditions promoted the spread of disease in Chicago's poor neighborhoods.

Addams decided to take action. She badgered Chicago's leaders about the trash problem. When she got no response, she applied for the job of garbage collector for her ward. Instead, she was appointed garbage inspector. In that position, Addams made sure that garbage collectors did their job.

Addams was one of many social and political reformers of the early 1900s. These reformers called themselves progressives because they were committed to improving conditions in American life. Cleaning up city streets was just one of the reforms that progressives supported.

In this chapter, you will learn who the progressives were and what they believed. You will read about their efforts to improve urban life, eliminate government corruption, and expand American democracy.

17.2 – The Origins of Progressivism

By 1900, industrialization, urbanization, and immigration were contributing to great changes in American life. These changes brought new opportunities but also created new problems, particularly in cities. The progressives took action in response to these problems. They wanted to improve society by promoting social welfare, protecting the environment, and making government more efficient and democratic. The progressives had great faith in the future and a strong belief in the nation's founding ideals. They

wanted to put those ideals into practice. President Woodrow Wilson described these goals in a speech in 1913:

We have been refreshed by a new insight into our own life . . . We have made up our minds to square every process of our national life again with the standards we so proudly set up at the beginning and have always carried at our hearts. Our work is a work of restoration.

—Woodrow Wilson, inaugural address of 1913

Progressives See Problems and Seek Solutions

Progressives worried about the growing problems they saw in society and were determined to solve them. Until then, responsibility for addressing such issues did not lie with the government. Taking a new approach, the progressives became activists who were prepared to use political action to achieve reforms. They wanted government to solve society's problems.

Most progressives were urban, middle class, and college educated. The great majority were white, and many were women. The progressives included people with many different ideas about what to reform, how to reform it, and how far reforms should go. They represented many smaller reform movements rather than joining together as a single movement. But they all shared a commitment to progress and the belief that they could improve society.

The Political and Religious Roots of Progressivism

The progressives were inspired by two reform movements of the late 1800s. One was the political movement called populism. The other was the religious movement called the Social Gospel.

Progressivism and populism had much in common, though their social origins were different. Populism was primarily a rural movement, whereas progressivism was born mainly among the urban middle class. Despite this difference, progressives embraced many populist goals. They wanted to improve conditions for farmers and industrial workers. They wanted to curb the power of big business and make government more accessible to average citizens. They also sought to expand economic opportunity and make American society more democratic.

Many progressives were also inspired by the religious ideals of the Social Gospel movement. This movement was based on the idea that social reform and Christianity went hand in hand. Followers of the Social Gospel applied Christian teachings to social and economic problems. They believed, for example, that the single-minded pursuit of wealth had taken some Americans down the wrong moral path. Walter Rauschenbusch, a Social Gospel minister, described the problem this way:

If a man sacrifices his human dignity and self-respect to increase his income . . . he is . . . denying God. Likewise if he uses up and injures the life of his fellow-

men to make money for himself, he . . . denies God. But our industrial order . . . makes property the end, and man the means to produce it.

—Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, 1907

Followers of the Social Gospel believed that society must take responsibility for those who are less fortunate. Many progressives embraced this ideal and infused their reform efforts with a strong emphasis on Christian morality.

The Progressive Challenge to Social Darwinism

Progressives strongly opposed social Darwinism, the social theory based loosely on Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection. Darwin had written that in nature only the fittest survive. Social Darwinists believed that in human society the fittest individuals—and corporations—would thrive, while others would fall behind. They asserted that the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of business owners and monopolies reflected the natural order.

In rejecting social Darwinism, progressives argued that domination by the rich and powerful was a distortion of democracy. They declared that most Americans were harmed when monopolies controlled the economy and corrupted politics. Progressives believed that government should play an active role in defending the political and economic rights of average citizens against the power of big business. They also wanted government to promote social reforms to clean up the cities and help those in need.

Although progressives criticized big business, most were not radicals. Unlike many socialists, they believed in private enterprise. They thought that government should balance the interests of business owners and workers, while promoting order and efficiency. They favored helping the needy but also believed that aid should go to those willing to help themselves. Although some radical reformers worked with the progressives, the progressives generally pursued moderate political goals.

17.3 – Progressives Fight for Social Reforms

In 1904, social worker Robert Hunter wrote a book about the poverty that trapped millions of city dwellers. He described the plight of urban workers: "In the main, they live miserably, they know not why. They work sore, yet gain nothing. They know the meaning of hunger and the dread of want." Along with other progressives, Hunter worked to improve conditions for the poor.

Improving Living Conditions in Cities

Living conditions for the urban poor were terrible during the early 1900s. Many city dwellers were jammed into tenements and lived in unsanitary conditions. The streets were often filled with garbage, as Jane Addams knew well.

Progressives took on the challenge of making cities cleaner and more livable. Under pressure from progressives, the state of New York passed the Tenement House Act in 1901. This law required each new tenement to be built with a central courtyard and to have a bathroom in each apartment.

Progressives like Addams also wanted the government to take responsibility for getting rid of trash. In New York, the Department of Street Cleaning took charge of garbage collection. Their collectors were called the White Wings because they wore clean, white uniforms. Muckraker Jacob Riis wrote that because of the White Wings, "Streets that had been dirty were swept. The ash barrels which had befouled the sidewalks disappeared." By cleaning up unhealthy conditions, Riis said, the White Wings "saved more lives in the crowded tenements than a squad of doctors."

Fighting to Keep Children out of Factories and in School

Progressives also addressed the problem of child labor. Since many children worked in factories and sweatshops to help support their families, they could not attend school. In 1890, only 4 percent of American teenagers went to school.

Progressives pushed for laws to restrict or ban child labor. Florence Kelley, a colleague of Addams at Hull House, persuaded the Illinois state legislature to outlaw child labor in 1893. In 1904, she helped found the National Child Labor Committee. Addams also served as a board member of this organization. By 1912, the committee had convinced 39 states to pass child labor laws. These laws prohibited children under age 14 from working. Some also limited the number of hours that older children could work.

The decline in child labor meant that more children could get an education, thus creating a demand for more schools. In 1870, there were only 500 high schools throughout the nation. By 1910, that number had grown to 10,000. By 1930, almost half of all high-school-aged youth were attending school.

Progressives wanted children not only to be educated but also to be "Americanized." They believed in pressuring immigrant schoolchildren to give up their cultural traditions and become assimilated into American society.

Progressives also protested the treatment of children by the criminal justice system. In many places, the law required juvenile offenders to be sentenced to reform school, but accused children did not always get a trial. Even if the children were not convicted, they might be sent away for rehabilitation. In addition, destitute children living on the streets were often treated as juvenile offenders.

A number of progressives tried to identify and address the causes of juvenile delinquency. One of these reformers was Judge Ben Lindsey of Denver, Colorado. Like many progressives, Lindsey believed that juvenile offenders were basically good but that their surroundings led them astray. If their living environment were improved, he argued, the delinquency would disappear. Lindsey also thought that promoting good

relationships between troubled youths and fair-minded judges would help young delinquents.

Lindsey and other progressives advocated creating a separate court system for juveniles. In 1905, only about 10 states had juvenile courts. By 1915, all but two states had them.

Improving Conditions in the Workplace

Progressives had mixed success in helping adult workers. A law passed in New York to limit the number of hours bakers could work in a week was struck down by the Supreme Court in 1905. In *Lochner v. New York*, the Court ruled that such laws interfere with freedoms protected by the Fourteenth Amendment. "The right to purchase or to sell labor is part of the liberty protected by this amendment," wrote Justice Rufus Peckham, "unless there are circumstances which exclude the right."

Efforts to protect women fared better, perhaps because most men believed the "weaker sex" needed special protection. In 1908, the Supreme Court ruled in *Muller v. Oregon* that states could limit work hours for women. "As healthy mothers are essential to vigorous offspring," the Court ruled, "the physical well-being of woman is an object of public interest . . . [and] does not conflict with the due process or equal protection clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment."

Reformers also pushed for legislation to provide benefits to workers who were injured on the job. By 1916, almost two thirds of the states had workers' compensation laws. Under these laws, workers who were hurt at work still received some pay, even if their injuries prevented them from working.

17.4 – Progressives Push for Political Reforms

Journalist Lincoln Steffens was among the muckrakers who exposed urban corruption at the turn of the century. Like many progressives, he did more than just expose and criticize. He proposed a solution. He said that citizens could improve city government by making demands on local politicians. He wrote, "If our political leaders are to be always a lot of political merchants, they will supply any demand we may create. All we have to do is to establish a steady demand for good government."

Fighting for Honest, Effective Local Government

At the start of the 20th century, corrupt political machines ran many local governments. Bribery was commonplace. Businesses paid politicians to cast votes that favored their interests, and people who wanted public service jobs often had to buy their way in. Getting a job as a teacher in Philadelphia, for example, was costly. New teachers had to pay the political machine \$120 of the first \$141 they earned.

With the goal of improving democracy, progressives took aim at corruption in city governments. One strategy was to elect progressive mayors who would support reform. In Toledo, Ohio, Mayor Samuel M. Jones reformed the police department, set a

minimum wage for city workers, and improved city services. In Cleveland, Ohio, Mayor Tom Johnson reduced streetcar fares, set up public baths, and increased the number of parks and playgrounds.

Progressives also wanted to reform the structure of local governments. In the early 1900s, a typical city was run by an elected mayor, and elected city councilors represented each of the city's wards, or districts. The system made it easy for political machines to control local government.

A devastating hurricane in Galveston, Texas, in 1900 set the stage for one type of reform. Unable to solve the problems of rebuilding, Galveston's government handed control to a five-person city commission appointed by the governor. Each commissioner was an expert in a field, such as finance or public safety. The positions later became elected offices. The Galveston city commission's work was so successful that by 1913 more than 350 American cities had adopted a city commission form of government.

Other cities set up a city manager form of government, in which an elected city council hired a professional city manager. This official was selected based on skills and experience rather than party loyalty. Some progressives saw this system as limiting the power of political machines and making city governments more competent. However, others worried that efficiency came at the expense of democracy because voters did not elect the city manager.

Reforming State Government

Progressives also fought corruption at the state level. In many states, big business controlled government, leaving average citizens little influence. To return power to the people, progressives advocated various election reforms.

One of these reforms was the secret ballot. In the early 1900s, each party usually printed ballots in its own color, which meant voters' choices were apparent for all to see. With the secret ballot, citizens voted in a private booth and used an official ballot. Over time, secret voting was used in most elections.

Another reform was the direct primary, in which voters hold elections to choose candidates from each party to run for office in general elections. Direct primaries replaced a system in which party leaders picked the candidates.

A third reform was the recall, the process by which voters can remove an elected official before his or her term expires. For a recall to be placed on the ballot, enough voters must sign a petition to demand a special election.

A fourth reform was the direct initiative. This is a lawmaking reform that enables citizens to propose and pass a law directly without involving the state legislature. Enough voters must first sign a petition to place the proposal on the ballot. It then becomes law if voters approve it on election day. This reform was more common in western states, where many progressives inherited a populist distrust of state legislatures.

Another lawmaking reform favored in western states was the referendum. In this process, a law passed by a state legislature is placed on the ballot for approval or rejection by the voters. The referendum is similar to the initiative, but less commonly used.

In addition to pressing for election reforms, progressives elected reform-minded governors. One famous progressive was Robert La Follette, governor of Wisconsin from 1900 to 1906. Under his guidance, the state passed laws to limit lobbying, conserve forests and other natural resources, and support workers.

Known as "Battling Bob," La Follette took a strong stand against the railroads, which controlled the distribution of many products, including meat and grain. By charging favored customers lower rates for carrying freight, the railroads made it hard for other businesses to compete. With reduced competition, consumers paid more for many products. La Follette responded by forming a commission to regulate railroad rates. He also convinced the legislature to increase taxes on the railroads.

Governor Hiram Johnson of California also promoted progressive reforms. Like La Follette, he wanted to limit the power of the railroads. His campaign slogan was "Kick the Southern Pacific Railroad Out of Politics." Johnson also regulated utilities, limited child labor, and signed into law an eight-hour workday for women.

17.5 – Progressives Confront Social Inequality

Although progressives faced issues of poverty, workers' rights, and corrupt government, many did not address the inequality confronting women and African Americans. However, progressive activism prompted many women and African Americans to struggle for their rights.

Women Fight for the Right to Vote

Many progressive women saw themselves as "social housekeepers." They defined their public work as an extension of the work they did at home. If they could clean up their homes, they believed, they could clean up society, too. But without the right to vote, their chances for success were limited. After the Triangle Shirtwaist fire, for example, a journalist asked a New York machine politician why women factory workers had no fire protection. "That's easy," he replied. "They ain't got no votes!"

Women had demanded the right to vote as early as 1848, when a group of 300 women and men met at Seneca Falls, New York, to discuss women's rights. At the Seneca Falls Convention, Elizabeth Cady Stanton argued that "the power to make laws was the right through which all other rights could be secured." Progress toward that goal, however, was painfully slow. Women continued to agitate for women's suffrage throughout the late 1800s. During this period, leading suffragists joined together to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association, or NAWSA, with Stanton as its first president.

This group helped organize the suffrage movement into a powerful political force at the state and national levels.

The first victories in the struggle for women's suffrage came at the state level. By 1898, four western states had granted women the right to vote. By 1918, women had voting rights in 15 states. As a result, they began to influence elections. In Montana, they helped elect Jeannette Rankin to the House of Representatives in 1916, four years before women had the right to vote nationwide. Rankin was the first woman to serve in Congress.

African Americans Struggle for Equality

African Americans faced an even tougher battle for their rights. In the early 1900s, four fifths of African Americans lived in the South. Most struggled to make a living as farmers and were subjected to strict segregation. Southern blacks were also disenfranchised, as literacy tests, poll taxes, and other methods denied them the right to vote. Nevertheless, many African Americans were inspired by progressive ideals and worked to improve their conditions.

One leading proponent of advancement was Booker T. Washington, an African American educator. Washington founded the Tuskegee Institute, a vocational college for African Americans in Alabama. He encouraged blacks to gain respect and status by working their way up in society.

Some progressives favored confronting racism. In 1909, one group formed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People or NAACP. The NAACP fought through the courts to end segregation. It also tried to ensure that African American men could exercise voting rights under the Fifteenth Amendment.

One of the founding members of the NAACP was W. E. B. Du Bois, a distinguished African American scholar and activist. Between 1910 and 1934, he edited *The Crisis*, an NAACP journal that focused on issues important to African Americans.

In addition to its legal work, the NAACP protested lynching and other racist violence. Between 1894 and 1898, about 550 African Americans were lynched. Among the progressives who spoke out against this violence was Ida B. Wells-Barnett, a cofounder of the NAACP. In 1892, Wells-Barnett protested the lynching of three African American grocers in Memphis, Tennessee. She expressed her outrage in *The Memphis Free Speech*, a newspaper she co-owned and edited. She also urged African Americans to leave Memphis. In response, a mob ransacked her offices.

Based on systematic research, Wells-Barnett concluded that lynching had an economic motive. She argued that whites used lynching "to get rid of Negroes who were acquiring wealth and property." Despite the efforts of Wells-Barnett and other progressives, the federal government did not pass any laws against lynching.

17.6 – Differing Viewpoints: Confronting Racism

During the Progressive Era, African Americans used different strategies to combat racism and improve their status in society. The strategy championed by educator Booker T. Washington called for gradual economic advancement. The strategy favored by scholar W. E. B. Du Bois advocated the more radical path of political activism.

Booker T. Washington: Economic Advancement

Booker T. Washington believed that the best way for African Americans to get ahead was to work hard and improve their economic condition. He urged blacks to "cast down your bucket where you are"—to be patient and take advantage of current opportunities rather than agitating for quicker or more radical solutions. Because Washington called on blacks to adapt themselves to the limits imposed by white society, his strategy was sometimes called accommodation. He expressed his ideas in a speech in 1895:

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 . . . 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 labor, and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life . . . 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.

The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremist 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 . . . 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.

—Booker T. Washington, "Atlanta Compromise" address, 1895

W. E. B. Du Bois: Political Activism

Du Bois disagreed with Washington's approach. His strategy was to push hard for civil rights through political action. He believed that African Americans should protest unfair treatment and fight for equality. In a book published in 1903, Du Bois criticized Washington's perspective:

The black men of America have a duty to perform, a duty stern and delicate . . . So far as Mr. Washington preaches Thrift, Patience, and Industrial Training for the masses, we must hold up his hands and strive with him . . . 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 [gladly] 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."

—W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 1903

Summary

In the early 1900s, progressives worked to reform American society. Inspired by reform movements like populism and the Social Gospel, progressives tackled a variety of problems. They tried to improve living and working conditions in cities, clean up state and local government, and advance the rights of women and minorities.

Urban living conditions Progressives like Jane Addams, the cofounder of Hull House, worked to fix up poor city neighborhoods. They tried to improve tenement housing, sanitation, and garbage collection.

Worker protection Progressives fought to improve working conditions. They promoted laws limiting work hours and guaranteeing workers' compensation. They formed the National Child Labor Committee to campaign against child labor and get more children into school.

Clean, responsive government Progressives sought to end government corruption at the local level. They worked to curb the power of political machines and restructure local government. They also worked to expand democracy at the state level. They supported reform governors like Robert La Follette and passed electoral reforms like the secret ballot, direct primary, recall, initiative, and referendum.

Struggle for equal rights Women and African Americans sought to advance their rights. Reform goals included voting rights for women and an end to lynching and segregation. NAWSA led the struggle for women's suffrage, while the NAACP tried to secure equality for African Americans.

Chapter 18 — Progressivism on the National Stage

How well did President Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson promote progressive goals in national policies?

18.1 – Introduction

On February 22, 1902, the rich financier J. P. Morgan went to the White House to see President Theodore Roosevelt. Morgan had a dispute to resolve with the president. Roosevelt had recently ordered the Justice Department to file a lawsuit against Northern Securities Company, of which Morgan was part owner, for antitrust violations.

Northern Securities was a holding company, a business that controls other companies by buying up a majority of their stock. Morgan and other businessmen had created this holding company to control the long-distance railroad lines from Chicago to California. By the time the Roosevelt administration filed suit against him, Morgan held a monopoly on rail service in the Northwest.

Morgan believed it would be easy for the two men to settle their differences. "If we have done anything wrong, send your man to my man and they can fix it up," he told Roosevelt. But Roosevelt disagreed. He didn't like it when big business treated government as an equal, or worse, as its servant. "That can't be done," he told Morgan. Two years later, in 1904, the Supreme Court ruled against Northern Securities.

"Trustbusting" was one of a number of progressive reforms enacted at the national level in the early 1900s. In addition to local and state issues, progressives were also concerned about problems in the country as a whole. Many of them believed that the national government no longer served the interests of all Americans. In an age when big business seemed all-powerful, many reformers felt the United States was abandoning its promise of freedom and opportunity for all. They wanted the government to play a stronger role in promoting democracy and solving national problems.

Three presidents—Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson—worked to advance the progressive reforms. Their efforts helped change how Americans thought, and continue to think, about the role of government.

18.2 – Three Progressive Presidents

The framers of the Constitution wanted the president to have prestige but not too much power. Many feared what might happen if the chief executive became too powerful. As the presidency evolved during the Progressive Era, Americans began to change not only their ideas about what the national government should do, but also their views about how strong the president should be.

The three presidents of the Progressive Era—Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson— held office between 1901 and 1921. Although differing in many ways, they shared a commitment to

reform. They challenged the economic and political power of the industrial giants and worked to end government corruption. In the process, all three of these leaders expanded the power of the presidency.

Theodore Roosevelt Promises a Square Deal

Theodore Roosevelt was vice president under President William McKinley and became president after McKinley was assassinated in 1901. At the age of 42, he was the youngest president in American history. Also known as Teddy or TR, he was a colorful character. He was short and stout with big teeth, and he had a passion for physical fitness. As a member of New York's state assembly in the 1890s, he was known for being impulsive, but he was a shrewd politician who knew how to get things done. Roosevelt believed that businesses, workers, and consumers should all receive a "square deal"—fair and honest treatment. His program of reform, which became known as the Square Deal, focused on regulating big business and protecting workers and consumers.

Roosevelt believed the country needed a strong president. "I believe in power," he once said. But he thought that presidential power should be used to benefit all Americans. Describing himself as "the steward [caretaker] of public welfare," he asserted that a president should take any actions necessary for the common good, as long as the Constitution did not forbid them.

Taft Continues Reforms

After Roosevelt served two terms, he supported William Howard Taft, a member of his cabinet and a former judge from Ohio, to succeed him in 1908. Roosevelt was confident that Taft would continue his reform program.

The two men could not have been more different. Roosevelt was outspoken and loved the limelight, while Taft was quiet and reserved. Whereas Roosevelt took bold actions, Taft was cautious. In short, Taft was a reluctant, lackluster campaigner. Nevertheless, Roosevelt's support helped him sail to victory.

As president, Taft continued reform efforts. He fought to limit the power of big corporations and added land to the national forest system. However, on other issues Taft parted company with progressive reformers. Progressives wanted lower tariffs on imported goods. Lower tariffs would make foreign products less expensive for American consumers. They would also increase competition, so that American producers would have to lower prices. Big business favored high tariffs. Taft had campaigned for president on a low-tariff platform, but in 1909 he agreed to sign the Payne-Aldrich Bill, which raised tariffs. This action tarnished Taft's record as a progressive.

The Election of 1912

The presidential campaign of 1912 centered on progressive reform. Roosevelt believed that Taft had betrayed progressive ideals. For that reason, he decided to run for president again in 1912. When the Republicans chose Taft as their candidate, Roosevelt decided to run as the candidate of a third party, a political party outside the

two-party system. Roosevelt's party was called the Progressive Party but was nicknamed the Bull Moose Party after he declared his readiness by exclaiming, "I feel as fit as a bull moose."

The 1912 election also featured two other candidates. Woodrow Wilson, a man of strong progressive ideals, represented the Democratic Party. Labor leader Eugene V. Debs, running on the socialist ticket, advocated more radical change, calling on voters to make "the working class the ruling class."

The split between Taft and Roosevelt helped Wilson win the 1912 election. Wilson received 42 percent of the popular vote. Roosevelt had 27.5 percent, and Taft had 23 percent. Debs was a distant fourth with 6 percent but received almost a million votes, a strong showing for the Socialist Party.

Wilson Promises New Freedom

As governor of New Jersey, Wilson had supported progressive reforms to regulate big business and clean up machine politics. As president, this idealist and scholar set out to implement a national reform program that he called New Freedom. Wilson wanted to eliminate all trusts because he believed they were denying economic freedom to small businesses and ordinary citizens. He was unable to remove the trusts, but he did further limit their power.

Wilson pushed through other progressive reforms to give a greater voice to the average citizen, restrict corporate influence, and reduce corruption in the federal government. Among his most notable achievements were laws on banking and tariff reform and the creation of the Federal Trade Commission.

Wilson was the first president since George Washington to speak before Congress, introducing and lobbying for legislation. Like Roosevelt, he also tried to influence, and utilize, public opinion to further his reform goals.

18.3 – Addressing the Effects of Industrialization

Rapid industrialization gave rise to a number of problems in American society, including unsafe products, environmental damage, and corruption in public life. The three progressives in the White House—Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson—sought to correct these negative effects. As Roosevelt put it, "The man who holds that every human right is secondary to his profit must now give way to the advocate of human welfare." The progressive presidents worked to reduce the harmful effects of industrialization, starting with the power of the trusts.

Busting Trusts

Roosevelt began the progressive trustbusting movement. To regulate monopolies, he used the Sherman Antitrust Act. This law made illegal "every contract, combination in the form of trust or otherwise, or conspiracy, in restraint of trade or commerce." The law

had been passed in 1890 but had been ineffective. Its language was vague, and enforcement was weak.

Roosevelt believed that government should regulate monopolies to make sure they operated for the good of the nation. Sometimes he had to break up trusts rather than regulate them. Such actions gained him a reputation as a trustbuster. However, he was not opposed to big business. "We do not wish to destroy corporations," he said, "but we do wish to make them subserve the public good."

In addition to breaking up J. P. Morgan's Northern Securities Company, Roosevelt limited the power of railroads to set rates and stifle business competition. In 1906, he signed the Hepburn Act, which gave the federal government the authority to set maximum rail shipping rates.

Under Taft, the Justice Department brought 90 lawsuits against trusts—more than twice the number under Roosevelt. Taft supported a stricter interpretation of the Sherman Act. Roosevelt distinguished between good and bad trusts, trying to break up only trusts created specifically to squash competition. In contrast, Taft did not think a court could determine a trust's motives, so he prosecuted any trusts that had the effect of limiting trade, regardless of intent.

Wilson took even stronger action by helping to push the Clayton Antitrust Act through Congress. Passed in 1914, the Clayton Act extended the power of the Sherman Act by laying out rules that made it harder for trusts to form and to squeeze out competition. For example, the law made it illegal for a company to lower prices in one market but not others to try to force out local competitors.

The Clayton Act also protected labor unions from antitrust regulation. Courts had ruled that unions could be prosecuted for restraining commerce under the Sherman Act, but the Clayton Act made unions exempt from antitrust laws. Congress also created the Federal Trade Commission in 1914 to enforce the Clayton Act's provisions.

Progressives who wanted to eliminate trusts were displeased that the antitrust reforms left many trusts intact. Meanwhile, pro-business conservatives thought that the government should not have interfered at all with businesses. Nevertheless, the moderate reforms that were typical of progressivism produced real benefits for society.

Protecting Consumers and Workers

In addition to busting trusts, the progressive presidents tried to protect consumers. Two key laws were passed in 1906 during Roosevelt's presidency: the Meat Inspection Act and the Pure Food and Drug Act.

The Meat Inspection Act required the Department of Agriculture to inspect packaged meat. This law was a response to muckraker accounts of unsanitary meatpacking plants. For example, one passage in Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle* described how rats often became part of the ground meat: "The packers would put poisoned bread out

for them; they would die, and then rats, bread, and meat would go into the hoppers together." Sinclair later said of reaction to his book, "I aimed at the nation's heart, but hit it in the stomach."

The Pure Food and Drug Act established a new agency, the Food and Drug Administration, to test and approve drugs before they went on the market. This law addressed the calls for the regulation of patent medicines. These nonprescription medicines often promised magical cures, but many contained little more than alcohol or opium.

Roosevelt also helped improve working conditions for coal miners. In 1902, he pressured coal mine owners and the striking United Mine Workers to submit to arbitration, a legal process in which a neutral outside party helps resolve a dispute. A government commission decided that the miners should have higher wages and shorter hours. However, it also declared that the owners did not have to recognize the union or hire only union workers. This arbitration pleased Roosevelt and many other progressives, who believed that government should be impartial in labor disputes and stronger than either big business or unions.

Taft and Wilson expanded worker protection. Under Taft, the Department of Labor established the Children's Bureau to "investigate and report upon all matters pertaining to the welfare of children." Wilson went further to push for a ban on child labor. In 1916, he signed the Keating-Owen Child Labor Act, which prohibited companies involved in interstate commerce from hiring workers under 14 years of age. Although the law protected fewer than 10 percent of children in the labor force, it set minimum protections and a precedent for future action.

Taft and Wilson also supported an eight-hour workday—at least for some workers. For years, companies had resisted this demand by unions. Under Taft, the eight-hour day became the rule for government employees. Wilson later helped secure the same benefit for railroad workers.

Protecting the Environment

Progressives also wanted to protect the natural environment. They saw how industry and urban growth had polluted the air and water and devastated the landscape. They believed that government should remedy these problems, but they sometimes disagreed on the solutions.

Some progressives supported preservation, the protection of wilderness lands from all forms of development. John Muir, a preservationist who co-founded the Sierra Club in 1892, believed that the government must preserve the environment. "Any fool can destroy trees," he wrote. "God . . . cannot save them from fools—only Uncle Sam can do that."

Other progressives supported conservation, the limited use of resources. Conservationists believed that government should take a middle position between

preservation and exploitation. They wanted to preserve some wilderness while also allowing some use of natural resources.

The progressive presidents, especially Roosevelt, were sympathetic to the preservationist view. Roosevelt, a great outdoorsman, once commented, "We are prone to think of the resources of this country as inexhaustible. This is not so." In practice, however, the government tended to favor the more moderate conservationist approach.

In 1905, Roosevelt backed the creation of the U.S. Forest Service. Its mission was to protect forests and other natural areas from excessive development. Roosevelt appointed Gifford Pinchot, a noted conservationist, to head the Forest Service. Like Roosevelt, Pinchot advocated a "wise use" policy of balancing the demands of economic development with the need to conserve the natural environment. Under Roosevelt, the federal government set aside nearly 150 million acres of national forests.

Taft added 2.7 million acres to the National Wildlife Refuge System. However, he angered Roosevelt and many conservationists by firing Pinchot for criticizing the government's sale of some wilderness areas in Wyoming, Montana, and Alaska.

In 1916, Wilson supported the creation of the National Park Service (NPS). Congress had founded the first national park, Yellowstone, in 1872. Later, more lands were set aside for national parks. The NPS was created to manage all these parks for preservation and public use. This mandate reflected a shift in preservationist thinking. Preservationists no longer argued that all wilderness areas should be left untouched. Instead, they accepted the idea that tourism, and thus economic development, could help protect the natural landscape.

18.4 – Reforming the National Government

Progressives also sought to reform the federal government and its policies. They favored a range of financial reforms that would improve government funding and the banking system. They also worked for constitutional reforms, including the direct election of senators, a ban on alcohol, and women's suffrage.

Reforming the Banking System

Progressives wanted government to stabilize the banking system. Since the early 1800s, the nation had been shaken by financial panics, periods when people withdrew their money from banks after losing confidence in the economy. Panics caused banks and businesses to collapse and sometimes triggered economic depressions.

Taft urged Congress to reform the banking system, but Americans differed over the proper solution. Progressives wanted government control over the system, while business leaders favored private control. In 1913, Wilson backed a proposal for a government-controlled but decentralized banking system. Congress responded by passing the Federal Reserve Act in 1913.

The Federal Reserve Act divides the country into 12 regions, each with a Federal Reserve Bank. Together, these banks and their operating rules make up the Federal Reserve System, or central bank of the United States. Under this system, private banks remain independent but agree to operate under the rules of the Federal Reserve System, which is also called the Federal Reserve or "the Fed." The Fed offers a safety net to private banks by lending them money if they are short of funds. It also sets monetary policy to regulate the amount of money in circulation, including setting interest rates and regulating how much banks can lend. The Fed has made the financial system much more stable.

Reforming Taxes and Tariffs

As the role of the federal government expanded, its need for revenue to fund its programs increased. Big business favored raising tariffs, but progressives wanted to raise taxes. Tariffs on imports had long been used to boost government revenue. However, progressives believed that they were unfair to consumers. By raising the cost of imported goods, tariffs increased the cost of living for average Americans. A national income tax could be imposed more fairly on all citizens.

Under strong pressure from progressives, and with some support from Taft, Congress proposed the Sixteenth Amendment, which would allow the federal government to impose an income tax. After the amendment was ratified in 1913, during Wilson's presidency, Congress made the tax a graduated income tax, requiring people with higher incomes to pay a larger percentage of their earnings than those with lower incomes. Progressives were pleased because a graduated income tax placed a higher burden on those who had more money. Meanwhile, Wilson pressured Congress to reduce tariffs. Congress put both measures—the graduated income tax and reduced tariffs—into a single bill, the Underwood Tariff Act. Wilson signed it in 1913.

Electing Senators Directly

For progressives, reform also meant giving citizens a greater say in their government. One key issue was the election of U.S. senators. The Constitution required that senators be elected by state legislatures. However, state lawmakers and the senators they elected often had close ties to large corporations.

Progressives wanted senators to respond to the will of the people, not the power of big business. Therefore, they pushed Congress to propose the Seventeenth Amendment. Proposed in 1912 and ratified in 1913, the amendment required the direct election of senators by popular vote. This procedure gave average citizens more influence in the Senate.

Legislating Morals: Prohibition

The widespread public support for prohibition—a ban on the production and sale of alcoholic beverages—was rooted in the temperance movement dating from the early 1800s. Most advocates were women, and the largest organization had been the Women's Christian Temperance Union. The WCTU was founded in 1874. It had reached

its peak in 1890, boasting more than 150,000 members. The WCTU argued that drinking alcohol made men unable to support their wives and children.

The WCTU remained influential. However, the leading organization advocating prohibition during the Progressive Era was the Anti-Saloon League, run mainly by men. Founded in 1893 and supported mostly by Protestant churches, it became a national organization in 1895. Its motto was "The Saloon Must Go."

The prohibition movement gained momentum without help from Roosevelt or Taft. Wilson finally supported a constitutional amendment on prohibition after the nation entered World War I in 1917. Proponents had argued that grain was better used for food for the war effort than for making alcohol. The Eighteenth Amendment was ratified in 1919. It declared that the prohibition of "the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors" would take effect one year after ratification.

Establishing Women's Suffrage

Women had been trying to win the right to vote since before the Civil War. Many temperance activists also supported women's suffrage. They argued that women were more moral than men and that women's involvement would help cleanse the corrupt world of politics.

Like prohibition, the struggle for women's suffrage was a grassroots effort that succeeded without much presidential support. Roosevelt was sympathetic but did not push for the cause until his 1912 campaign. After the nation entered World War I, leading suffragists such as Carrie Chapman Catt emphasized that giving women the right to vote would help them carry out their duties on the home front. Wilson eventually accepted their arguments. He urged Congress to propose an amendment to give women the right to vote as "a vitally necessary war measure." Meanwhile, 26 states had petitioned Congress to propose it.

In 1919, Congress proposed the amendment by decisive votes in both the House and Senate. The Nineteenth Amendment was ratified in 1920. It declared that "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."

Summary

Three progressive presidents—Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson—held office from 1901 to 1921, during the Progressive Era. Their goals and styles of leadership differed, but they all worked to bring about reforms on the national level.

Three distinct leaders Despite their varying leadership styles, the progressive presidents believed in using government to improve society. In carrying out reform programs, such as Roosevelt's Square Deal and Wilson's New Freedom, they increased the power of the presidency.

Addressing the effects of industrialization Reformers passed laws to break up monopolies and help workers. They tried to protect consumers through such laws as the Pure Food and Drug Act. They also tried to preserve the environment by conserving resources.

Sixteenth Amendment This amendment established a federal income tax, which progressives favored as a means to fund government programs. Congress made the tax a graduated income tax, which placed a heavier tax burden on the wealthy.

Seventeenth Amendment This amendment established the direct election of U.S. senators, another progressive goal. It replaced the election of senators by state legislatures.

Federal Reserve System Congress set up the Federal Reserve to bring stability to the banking system and prevent financial panics. The Fed, which consists of 12 federal banks, lends money to private banks and sets policies that govern interest rates and the amount of money in circulation.

Eighteenth Amendment This amendment established prohibition, or a ban on alcohol. Many progressives believed that alcohol consumption was a serious social ill.

Nineteenth Amendment This amendment guaranteed women the right to vote. This was an important progressive goal designed to advance democratic rights.

Chapter 19 — Foreign Policy: Setting a Course of Expansionism

Was American foreign policy during the 1800s motivated more by realism or idealism?

19.1 – Introduction

On July 8, 1853, Commodore Matthew Perry led a small fleet of American warships into Edo Bay, in Japan. Edo is now called Tokyo. Perry had come to open up Japan to American shipping and trade.

For over 200 years, Japan had been almost a closed country. Fearing that foreign influence would threaten its power, the government had restricted trade to a few Chinese and Dutch merchants. As a result, most Japanese knew nothing of the Industrial Revolution. For example, they had never seen a train or steamship. So they were astonished when the black-hulled American warships steamed into Edo Bay, bristling with cannons and belching smoke. The vessels, which the Japanese called "black ships," posed a threat to Japan's isolation.

The United States had tried, but failed, to open up Japan before. This time, however, the United States had sent one of its top naval officers, Commodore Perry, with a letter from President Millard Fillmore addressed to the Japanese emperor. The letter was an offer of peace and friendship, but the warships were a sign that the United States might be willing to use force in the future. The letter asked that shipwrecked American sailors be protected and that American ships be allowed to stop for water, fuel, and other supplies. It also proposed the opening of trade between the United States and Japan.

The Japanese government promised to consider the president's letter. Perry returned with a larger fleet in 1854 to negotiate a treaty. The Japanese did not agree to trade, but they did agree to the other requests. This treaty paved the way for an 1858 treaty that opened Japan to trade with the United States.

These treaties with Japan were part of a broader effort to advance American interests in Asia. They were key victories for American foreign policy. Foreign policy is the set of goals, principles, and practices that guide a nation in its relations with other countries. In this chapter, you will learn how both realists and idealists shaped American foreign policy during the 1800s.

19.2 – Early Developments in U.S. Foreign Policy

In 1796, late in his second term as president, George Washington presented his final message to the nation. Although known as Washington's Farewell Address, it was not delivered as a speech but instead appeared in newspapers. While Washington focused mainly on domestic issues, he ended with a discussion of foreign affairs. "It is our true policy," he said, "to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." These words would shape American foreign policy for more than a century to come.

Fundamentals of U.S. Foreign Policy

From Washington's time to the present, the president has led the way in formulating the nation's foreign policy. The State Department, led by the secretary of state, advises the president and carries out the details of U.S. policy. Congress also plays a role by debating and voting on foreign policy issues. A treaty with another nation does not become legally binding unless the Senate approves it by a two-thirds vote.

Presidents have a variety of tools to use in pursuing foreign policy goals. One is diplomacy, the art of conducting negotiations with other nations. Diplomacy may lead to informal agreements as well as treaties. A second tool is financial aid in the form of grants or loans. Such aid can be used to support friendly nations or influence their policies. A third tool is the threat or the use of armed force.

Over the past two centuries, two schools of thought, known as realism and idealism, have shaped U.S. foreign policy. Realism is based on the belief that relations with other countries should be guided by national self-interest. From this perspective, foreign policy should pursue practical objectives that benefit the American people. Such objectives might include national security, increased trade with other nations, and access to overseas resources.

Idealism in foreign policy is based on the belief that values and ideals should influence how countries relate to one another. From this point of view, foreign policy should be used to promote America's founding ideals—particularly democracy, liberty, and rights—to ensure a better world not just for Americans, but for all people.

At any given time, realism or idealism may dominate this country's relations with other nations. But most of the time, U.S. foreign policy reflects a blend of the two schools of thought.

Washington Advocates Neutrality and Unilateralism

George Washington established two key principles of U.S. foreign policy. The first, neutrality, was a response to the outbreak of war between France and Great Britain in 1793. Neutrality is the policy of refusing to take sides among warring nations.

Idealists were eager to side with France, pointing out that the United States and France had signed a treaty of alliance during the War of Independence. It was now time, they argued, for the United States to stand by its ally. They were also enthralled by the French Revolution. In 1789, French leaders had issued a statement of revolutionary ideals known as the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. Two years later, they had abolished France's monarchy and established a republic. Many Americans were eager to support the French in their struggle for liberty.

Realists argued against taking sides. They warned that with a tiny army, the United States was ill prepared for war. Moreover, a British blockade of its ports would cripple an already wobbly economy. Convinced that war would be disastrous for the young nation, Washington issued a proclamation of neutrality. It stated that the policy of the United

States was to "pursue a conduct friendly and impartial toward the belligerent [warring] powers."

In his Farewell Address, Washington took neutrality a step further. "The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is," he advised, ". . . to have with them as little political connection as possible." This advice was translated by the presidents who followed Washington into a policy of unilateralism. Under this policy, the United States "went it alone" in its relations with other countries. It did not seek either military or political alliances with foreign powers.

Defending Neutrality: The War of 1812

As a neutral nation, the United States had both rights and duties. It could not give aid to either side in a conflict. Nor could it allow a warring nation to use its harbors or territories as a base of operations. In return, the United States also claimed certain rights. One was the right of its citizens to live in peace without fear of attack. A second was the right to trade freely with other nations, including those at war.

The seemingly endless war in Europe tested Americans' commitment to neutrality. Both France and Britain seized U.S. ships to prevent goods from reaching the other's ports. Even more alarming, the British began kidnapping American sailors from U.S. ships, claiming they were deserters from the British navy. Both the ship seizures and the kidnappings violated what Americans saw as their rights as citizens of a neutral nation.

Presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson used every foreign policy tool short of war to defend the right of American ships to trade freely without being attacked. Neither had much success.

In 1809, President James Madison took up the challenge of defending neutrality. For a time, he seemed to be making some progress with France. When the British still refused to end attacks on neutral ships, Madison asked Congress for a declaration of war.

The senators and representatives who voted for war did so for a mix of reasons. Those motivated more by idealism cast their votes to defend "free trade and sailors' rights." Those motivated mainly by realism believed that a war with Great Britain would give the United States the opportunity to expand its borders into Canada.

The War of 1812 lasted more than two years. With no victory in sight, peace talks began in Ghent, Belgium, in mid-1814.

The Treaty of Ghent called for "a firm and universal Peace between His Britannic Majesty and the United States." But it left the issues that caused the war unresolved. Still, the young nation had stood up to Britain. "Not one inch of territory ceded or lost" boasted Americans as the war drew to a close.

The Monroe Doctrine Bans Colonization

When James Monroe took office as president in 1817, he faced new challenges. One came from Russia, which already controlled Alaska. In 1821, Russia issued a decree extending its colony south into territory claimed jointly by the United States and Great Britain.

Meanwhile, revolutions were sweeping across Latin America. Americans cheered as one colony after another freed itself from Spain, but rumors soon emerged that Spain meant to recolonize the region. Britain then invited the United States to join it in warning European leaders against taking such action.

Monroe chose a more unilateral approach. In a speech to Congress in 1823, he warned that "the American continents" were closed to "future colonization by any European powers." He also stated that the United States would consider European interference in the new Latin American republics "as dangerous to our peace and safety." These twin policies of non-colonization and non-interference in the Western Hemisphere became known as the Monroe Doctrine.

The United States invoked the Monroe Doctrine only a few times during the 1800s. One of those occasions came about when Venezuela asked for help in settling a long-standing dispute with Britain over its border with British Guiana, a British colony in South America. Venezuela appealed to the United States in the name of the "immortal Monroe" to intervene. Siding with the Venezuelans, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts warned,

If Great Britain is to be permitted to . . . take the territory of Venezuela, there is nothing to prevent her taking the whole of Venezuela or any other South American state . . . The supremacy of the Monroe Doctrine should be established and at once—peacefully if we can, forcibly if we must.

—Henry Cabot Lodge, *North American Review*, 1895

Britain agreed to negotiate with Venezuela, but only after deciding that it was not worth going to war with the United States over a few thousand square miles of mosquito-infested jungle. Still, Americans saw the settlement of the Venezuelan boundary dispute as a victory for the Monroe Doctrine. "Never again," crowed the *Chicago Journal*, "will a European nation put forth claims to American territory without consulting the government of the United States."

19.3 – The U.S. Pursues a Policy of Territorial Expansion

In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson arranged for American diplomats to attempt to buy New Orleans, a port city at the mouth of the Mississippi River. At the time, New Orleans was part of the French colony of Louisiana. Jefferson feared that French control of the port would pose a threat to American trade flowing down the Mississippi.

Much to Jefferson's surprise, the French offered to sell all of Louisiana. For the price of \$15 million, less than 3 cents an acre, the United States could double its territory. Jefferson agreed to the offer. Senate approval of the Louisiana Purchase Treaty late that year signaled a new goal for U.S. foreign policy: expansionism.

Expansion Through Diplomacy

The new policy of territorial expansion was motivated by both idealism and realism. Idealists were inspired by the idea of manifest destiny—the belief that the United States was meant to spread its founding ideals and democratic way of life across the continent and beyond. Realists believed that expansion made the nation more secure by removing foreign threats on its borders. Adding new lands also gave the new nation growing room. If possible, expansionists hoped growth could come about through diplomacy. Louisiana, after all, had been acquired through diplomatic means.

Diplomacy worked well in some cases. In 1819, U.S. diplomats persuaded Spain to cede Florida to the United States. Expansionists then looked west to Oregon, an area that included what is now known as the Pacific Northwest. Oregon, however, was also claimed by Great Britain. The two nations had jointly occupied Oregon since 1818, and Britain had repeatedly refused U.S. attempts to extend the boundary to the 54th parallel.

Tensions increased in 1845 when President James K. Polk declared that the United States had a "clear and unquestionable" claim to the entire area. Some expansionists even called for war if Britain refused to leave. Their rallying cry of "Fifty-four forty or fight" referred to the latitude 54°40', the northern limit of the region. Unwilling to go to war over Oregon, Britain signed a treaty in 1846 dividing the region at the 49th parallel. The United States now stretched to the Pacific Ocean.

Diplomacy also brought about the purchase of Alaska in 1867. Faced with the choice of pouring money into Alaska to defend it or of making money by selling it, Russia decided to offer this huge region to the United States. Secretary of State William Seward jumped at the chance, negotiating a price of \$7.2 million and signing a treaty early the next day. Many Americans made fun of "Seward's Icebox," but later it became clear that Alaska had vast natural resources, including gold.

The Annexation of Texas

Diplomacy did not work as smoothly when Americans looked south to Texas. In 1821, a businessman named Moses Austin received permission from Spain to found a colony in Texas, which at that time was part of Mexico. When Austin died suddenly, his son Stephen took over the enterprise. Stephen Austin arrived in Texas just as Mexico declared its independence from Spain. Mexican officials agreed to let Austin begin his colony, but only if the settlers he attracted consented to learn Spanish, become Mexican citizens, and join the Catholic Church.

By 1830, there were about 25,000 Americans living in Texas. As their numbers grew, tensions between the Americans and the Mexican government began to rise. The Americans disliked taking orders from Mexican officials. They resented having to deal

with official documents in Spanish, a language most of them were unwilling to learn. Those who had brought slaves with them to Texas were upset when Mexico ended slavery in 1829. American slaveholders in Texas ignored the law and kept their slaves in bondage.

Hoping to reduce these tensions, Stephen Austin traveled to Mexico City in 1833. Instead of negotiating with Austin, General Santa Anna, the dictator of Mexico, threw him in jail. Santa Anna also amended Mexico's constitution to increase the power of the central government. Faced with the prospect of losing the right to run their own affairs, the Texans revolted. Early in 1836, they declared Texas to be an independent country and named Sam Houston as their commander in chief.

Determined to crush the Texas Revolution, Santa Anna marched north with an army of several thousand troops. On reaching San Antonio, Texas, he found a band of Texas volunteers defending an old mission called the Alamo. The defenders included the famous frontiersman Davy Crockett, crack rifleman Jim Bowie, and a group of Texas freedom fighters led by William Travis. Santa Anna raised a black flag that meant, "Expect no mercy." Travis answered with a defiant cannon shot. After a 13-day siege, the Mexicans overran the Alamo and executed all of the defenders who had survived the assault.

Two weeks later, a force of three or four hundred Texan volunteers led by James Fannin was captured by Mexican troops near Goliad. Badly outnumbered, the Texans surrendered. On orders from Santa Anna, hundreds of prisoners of war were executed. Their bodies were stacked in piles and burned.

A few weeks later, the Texans had their revenge. After luring Santa Anna deep into Texas, Sam Houston sprang a trap beside the San Jacinto River.

Shouting, "Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!" as their war cry, the Texas volunteers overran the Mexican army. To win his freedom, Santa Anna signed two treaties agreeing to an independent Texas with the Rio Grande as its southern border. On his return to Mexico, however, the general declared that his country was not bound by any agreement on Texas.

Now an independent country, Texas became known as the Lone Star Republic because of the single star on its flag. Most Texans and many Americans wanted Texas to become part of the United States. The issue was complicated, however, by the fact that Texas allowed slavery. Whenever the question of annexing Texas came up in the Senate, Northerners who opposed slavery voted no. Not until 1845 was Texas finally admitted to the Union as a slave state.

Polk Provokes a War with Mexico

The annexation of Texas by the United States angered Mexico, which had never accepted the loss of this territory. The two nations also disagreed on where to draw the Texas-Mexico border. The United States recognized the Rio Grande as the dividing line.

Mexico put the border much farther north. President Polk sent a diplomat to Mexico City to try to settle the border dispute. He also instructed the diplomat to offer to buy New Mexico and California. The Mexican government refused to negotiate.

Polk then decided to provoke a clash with Mexico. In 1846, he sent troops to occupy the north bank of the Rio Grande, deep inside what Mexico considered its territory. As Polk expected, the Mexican army attacked. He then called for war, claiming that Mexico had "invaded our territory and shed American blood." Congress declared war two days later.

The Mexican army fought bravely, but it had little success. Aided by superior weapons and leadership, U.S. troops moved quickly through northern Mexico. At the same time, other U.S. forces seized New Mexico and California. The Mexican War finally ended after Americans captured Mexico City in 1847.

In 1848, the United States and Mexico signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Mexico formally recognized the annexation of Texas, with the Rio Grande as its border. It also ceded a huge region stretching from Texas to California to the United States. In return for the Mexican Cession, the United States paid Mexico \$15 million. While idealists worried that the war had been an unjust land grab, realists cheered the results. The United States had increased its territory by about one third. Mexico, in contrast, had lost half of its territory.

The Beginnings of Imperialism

The acquisition of California from Mexico and Oregon from Britain gave the United States a new window on the Pacific Ocean. Business leaders were eager to open up new markets for American goods across the Pacific in China and Japan. The question was how best to do this. Many European nations, they observed, were expanding their overseas markets by acquiring colonies in Africa and Asia. This new wave of colonization was inspired by a policy known as imperialism, or empire building. The colonies acquired by the imperialist powers supplied resources for their industries and served as markets for their manufactured goods.

While some Americans were reluctant to join this rush for empire, many were happy to acquire islands that could serve as supply stations for U.S. ships in the Pacific. In 1867, the United States claimed the uninhabited Midway Islands. It was hoped that these tiny islands, located northwest of the Hawaiian Islands, could serve as a coaling station for steamships.

The Samoan Islands were even more attractive as a way station for U.S. ships. This island group lies about halfway between Hawaii and Australia. In the 1870s, the United States, Germany, and Britain signed treaties with the Samoan king giving them access to the islands. Later the three countries made Samoa a protectorate—a nation protected and controlled by a stronger nation. Later Britain gave up its claim to Samoa. In 1899, the islands were divided between Germany and the United States. American Samoa provided U.S. ships with an excellent harbor at the port of Pago Pago and also became an important military post. It has remained a territory of the United States to this day.

19.4 – Differing Viewpoints: Should the U.S. Become an Imperialist Power?

As the United States approached the end of the 1800s, Americans began to debate whether or not the country should continue to expand overseas. Some argued that acquiring an overseas empire would enable the United States to play a stronger role in world affairs. Others opposed becoming an imperialist power for both moral and pragmatic reasons.

Henry Cabot Lodge: The U.S. Must Expand to Compete

Pointing to the European scramble for colonies, some Americans argued that from a practical perspective, the United States must expand to compete economically. Their arguments often reflected a social Darwinist emphasis on "survival of the fittest." Henry Cabot Lodge, a powerful member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, strongly urged the country to join the imperialist club:

Small states are of the past and have no future. The modern movement is all toward the concentration of people and territory into great nations and large dominions. The great nations are rapidly absorbing for their future expansion and their present defense all the waste places of the earth. It is a movement which makes for civilization and advancement of the race. As one of the great nations of the world, the United States must not fall out of the line of march.

—Henry Cabot Lodge, "The Business World vs. the Politicians," 1895

Carl Schurz: The U.S. Should Become a Power for Peace

Others saw imperialism as fundamentally un-American. They wondered how the United States could spread its democratic ideals abroad if it did not respect the rights of other nations. Anti-imperialist politician and reformer Carl Schurz acknowledged that the nation should defend its interests. But he also believed that U.S. foreign policy should promote peace, not conquest:

In its dealings with other nations [the United States] should have scrupulous regard, not only for their rights, but also for their self-respect. With all its . . . resources for war, it should be the great peace power of the world . . . It should seek to influence mankind, not by heavy artillery, but by good example and wise counsel. It should see its highest glory, not in battles won, but in wars prevented. It should be so invariably just and fair, so trustworthy . . . that other nations would instinctively turn to it as . . . the greatest preserver of the world's peace.

—Carl Schurz, from a speech to the New York Chamber of Commerce, 1896

Josiah Strong: The U.S. Should Spread "Anglo-Saxon Civilization"

Still other Americans supported imperialism from a moral rather than an economic perspective. They saw much of the world as living in darkness. It was the duty of the

United States, in their view, to bring the light of freedom and Christianity to those dark places. Josiah Strong, a Christian missionary leader, was a leader of this group.

In his influential book *Our Country*, Strong wrote that the United States had a "divine mission" to spread its "Anglo-Saxon civilization" around the world. When he used the term Anglo-Saxons, Strong was referring to white English-speaking peoples. In his view, Anglo-Saxon civilization was superior to all others because it was founded on the twin ideas of civil liberty and Christianity. "To be a Christian and an Anglo-Saxon and an American," he wrote, "is to stand at the very mountain top of privilege." While such views seem racist today, they were widely accepted a century ago. Strong wrote,

It seems to me that God, with infinite wisdom and skill, is training the Anglo-Saxon race for an hour sure to come in the world's future . . . Then this race of unequalled energy . . . the representative, let us hope, of the largest liberty, the purest Christianity, the highest civilization . . . will spread itself over the earth . . . This powerful race will move down upon Mexico, down upon Central and South America, out upon the islands of the sea, over upon Africa and beyond . . . Is there room for reasonable doubt that this race . . . is destined to dispossess many weaker races, assimilate others, and mold the remainder, until, in a very true and important sense, it has Anglo-Saxonized mankind?
—Josiah Strong, *Our Country*, 1885

Alfred T. Mahan: The U.S. Must Become a Great Sea Power

Other supporters of imperialism were more concerned with national power than the spread of civilization. This was true of naval officer and military historian Alfred T. Mahan. In an important book titled *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, Mahan argued that sea power was key to national greatness. The time had come, he believed, for Americans to pay more attention to becoming a major world power. "Whether they will or no, Americans must now begin to look outward," Mahan wrote in an article summarizing his views. "The growing production of the country demands it. An increasing volume of public sentiment demands it."

To Mahan and his supporters, becoming a world power meant building a strong navy. This would require not only ships, but also well-protected harbors. It would also require naval repair facilities and coaling stations overseas in U.S.-controlled territories like American Samoa. Mahan wrote that influence in world affairs

requires underlying military readiness, like the proverbial iron hand under the velvet glove. To provide this, three things are needful: First, protection of the [nation's] chief harbors by fortifications and coast-defence ships, which gives defensive strength . . . Secondly, naval force, the arm of offensive power, which alone enables a country to extend its influence outward. Thirdly, it should be an inviolable [unbreakable] resolution of our national policy, that no foreign state should henceforth acquire a coaling position [station] within three thousand miles

of San Francisco . . . For fuel is the life of modern naval war; it is the food of the ship; without it the modern monsters of the deep die.

—Alfred Thayer Mahan, "The United States Looking Outward," *Atlantic Monthly*, 1890

Summary

During the 1800s, U.S. foreign policy was guided by two goals. The first was to keep the United States free of foreign alliances and out of foreign conflicts. The second was to expand the United States across the North American continent. As Americans began to look outward in the late 1800s, they debated the nation's proper role in world affairs.

Realism and idealism U.S. foreign policy is generally a blend of realism and idealism. With realism, the focus is on practical concerns and national self-interest. With idealism, the focus is on moral values and the spread of American ideals.

Neutrality and unilateralism Following the advice given by Washington in his Farewell Address, the United States tried to stay neutral in foreign wars and avoid alliances with other countries. The War of 1812 was fought in part to defend American rights as a neutral nation.

The Monroe Doctrine The Monroe Doctrine warned European powers that the United States would view efforts to establish colonies in the Americas or interfere with new Latin American republics as hostile to its interests.

Continental expansion Following a policy of expansion through diplomacy, the United States acquired the Louisiana Territory, Florida, Oregon Territory, and Alaska. By winning the Mexican War, it gained vast lands in the Southwest.

Overseas expansion In the late 1800s, the United States began to look overseas for new territory and influence. At the same time, Americans began to debate the role and value of overseas expansion.

Chapter 20 — The Spanish-American War

Why did the United States go to war against Spain in 1898, and why was the outcome significant?

20.1 – Introduction

In the late 1800s, one of the best-known New Yorkers was not a person at all. He was the Yellow Kid, a character in a wildly popular newspaper comic. For a time, the Yellow Kid appeared in two newspapers at once, the New York World and the New York Journal, which competed to own the comic.

The struggle over the Yellow Kid was part of a larger "newspaper war" in New York City during the 1890s. Joseph Pulitzer, the publisher of the World, faced off against William Randolph Hearst, the publisher of the Journal, in a battle to dominate the city's newspaper market. Their struggle over newspaper sales helped to provoke a real war, the Spanish-American War.

The artist who created the Yellow Kid, R. F. Outcalt, first sold his comic in 1895 to Pulitzer's World. The comic was set in New York's poor, rough-and-tumble ethnic neighborhoods and featured a bald-headed street urchin dressed in a bright yellow nightshirt. The Yellow Kid was an instant success. Newspaper comics were new at the time, and Pulitzer's World enjoyed a huge jump in sales.

Not to be outdone, Hearst lured Outcalt to the Journal by promising him more money. In response, Pulitzer hired another cartoonist to draw his own version of the cartoon. Before long, the two newspapers were flooded with images of the Yellow Kid and became known as the "Yellow Kid Papers" or "Yellow Papers."

The rivalry between the World and the Journal extended beyond the Yellow Kid cartoons. In their struggle to attract readers, the two "Yellow Papers" developed an exaggerated style of reporting. Their sensational news stories soon became known as yellow journalism. Among these stories were news reports about other countries. One favorite subject was the brutal suppression of a rebellion in Cuba against Spanish rule. Yellow journalism helped inflame public support for going to war against Spain. In this chapter, you will learn why the United States went to war against Spain and why this conflict was a significant event in American foreign relations.

20.2 – Trouble Brewing in Cuba

The island of Cuba lies just 90 miles off the coast of Florida, in the Caribbean Sea. It was founded as a Spanish colony by Christopher Columbus in 1492 and later became one of the world's leading sugar producers. Hundreds of thousands of slaves worked on its plantations. For over three centuries, Cuba was part of Spain's vast empire. But by the late 1800s, there were just two Spanish colonies in the Americas: the islands of

Puerto Rico and Cuba. A growing independence movement was threatening Spanish rule in Cuba.

Cubans Struggle for Independence

During the 1800s, many Cubans had voiced a desire for self-rule. In 1868, a revolutionary group largely made up of poor whites, free blacks, and slaves demanded independence from Spain, the establishment of a republic, and the end of slavery. When Spain rejected these demands, bitter fighting followed. Spain eventually crushed the revolt but then tried to ease tensions by agreeing to limited reforms. It gave Cubans some representation in the government, and it abolished slavery in 1886.

Meanwhile, Cuba was coming under the economic influence of the United States. American business interests saw it as a good place to trade and invest. By the mid-1890s, American investment in Cuba's sugar plantations had reached many millions of dollars. American investors were therefore nervous about the island's political instability.

Despite some reforms, the political situation did not improve significantly. In 1895, Cubans again rebelled. This second struggle for independence was led by José Martí, a Cuban poet, journalist, and statesman. Forced to leave Cuba because of his revolutionary activities, Martí lived in the United States from 1881 to 1895. Even while he was living abroad, Martí inspired his fellow Cubans with calls for liberty. He wrote, "Like bones to the human body . . . so is liberty the essence of life. Whatever is done without it is imperfect." Martí sailed to Cuba in 1895 to lead the revolt but was soon killed in combat. Nevertheless, the rebellion continued.

The Cuban rebels engaged in guerrilla warfare, launching surprise attacks against Spanish forces and fading back into the countryside. In 1896, Spain sent a new commander, General Valeriano Weyler, to put down the uprising. To eliminate support for the rebels, Weyler forced tens of thousands of Cubans into reconcentration camps. These overcrowded, unsanitary prison camps provided little food or shelter, causing thousands of deaths from disease and starvation.

Many Americans sympathized with the rebellion, seeing it as a struggle for freedom, like the American Revolution. Meanwhile, American investors feared that the political unrest was putting their Cuban investments and property at risk. Despite public calls for the United States to intervene in Cuba, President Grover Cleveland followed a policy of strict neutrality. When William McKinley was elected president in 1896, he hoped to maintain neutrality. But that would become more difficult as the public increasingly called for the United States to help the rebels.

American Newspapers React

Most Americans learned about the events in Cuba through newspapers and magazines. At that time, these were the only forms of mass media—methods of communicating to a mass audience.

Newspapers were very popular in the late 1800s. With the yellow journalism of the time, however, many papers were not as careful in their reporting as they are today. To sell newspapers, publishers like Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst sensationalized the news. Both the New York World and the New York Journal saw reporting on the Cuban rebellion as a good way to gain new readers. Reporters and artists were encouraged to stretch the truth about the bravery of Cuban rebels and the horrors of Spanish rule, especially "Butcher" Weyler's brutality. Many readers were shocked by these reports. Some demanded that the United States help Cuba win independence. In this way, yellow journalism helped stir public support for U.S. intervention to aid the rebels.

20.3 – Americans Call for War with Spain

In 1897, the Spanish government promised greater self-rule in Cuba. It also removed General Weyler from his post and ordered him to return to Spain. As a result, the Cuban crisis cooled down. In February 1898, however, two events aroused American anger and led to increasing calls for war.

The de Lôme Letter Incites the Public

On February 9, 1898, Hearst's New York Journal published a letter written by Enrique Dupuy de Lôme, the Spanish ambassador to Washington. The de Lôme letter was addressed to a friend in Cuba but was somehow stolen from the mail and sent to the Journal for publication.

In the letter, de Lôme called President McKinley "weak and catering to the rabble and, besides, a low politician." Americans were offended by this criticism of their president. De Lôme offered his resignation, but the damage was done. The publishing of this letter intensified anti-Spanish feelings in the United States and underscored the power of the press to inflame public opinion.

Newspapers Decry the Maine Incident

Not long after the de Lôme affair, a much more alarming incident occurred: the sinking of the battleship USS Maine in Havana harbor. Newspapers around the country responded with calls for vengeance.

The Maine had sailed to Cuba in January after riots broke out in the streets of Havana. Spaniards who opposed government reforms in Cuba led the riots. Fearing harm to American citizens and property, President McKinley had sent the Maine to Cuba to protect American interests.

For two weeks, the Maine sat in Havana harbor. Then, on the night of February 15, a tremendous explosion rocked the battleship. The captain reported hearing "a bursting, rending, and crashing roar of immense volume." Then the ship began to sink. More than 260 sailors died from the blast.

An official navy investigation began immediately, but the Journal and other newspapers immediately blamed Spain. The Hearst paper published bellicose articles under such headlines as "The Maine Was Destroyed by Treachery" and "The Whole Country Thrills with War Fever!" Across the country, "Remember the Maine" became a rallying cry for war.

The United States Responds

In March, the navy issued its report on the sinking of the Maine. Though the evidence was sketchy, navy investigators concluded that the explosion was caused by an underwater mine. Their report did not suggest who was responsible. In 1976, navy researchers who studied the incident again concluded that heat from a fire in a coal bin exploded a nearby supply of ammunition.

Four days before the report was completed, Senator Redfield Proctor of Vermont gave a compelling speech on the Senate floor. Proctor had just returned from Cuba and described the appalling conditions there. Although General Weyler was no longer in charge, the reconcentration camps were still in operation, and the Cuban people were still suffering. Proctor concluded,

To me the strongest appeal is not the barbarity practiced by Weyler nor the loss of the Maine . . . but the spectacle of a million and a half of people, the entire native population of Cuba, struggling for freedom and deliverance from the worst misgovernment of which I ever had knowledge.

—Redfield Proctor, speech before the Senate, March 17, 1898

The Maine report and Proctor's speech helped turn opinion in Congress and the public toward war. But President McKinley, still hoping to avoid conflict, gave Spain one last chance. He called for an armistice, a cessation of hostilities, until a permanent peace could be discussed. He also called on Spain to close the reconcentration camps and to take steps to grant Cuba its independence. Spain agreed to an armistice and to closing the camps, but was unwilling to give up control of Cuba.

Under great public pressure, McKinley asked Congress to declare war on Spain. Congress passed a resolution, a formal statement about a course of action, recognizing Cuban independence and authorizing military force, if necessary, to liberate Cuba. Congress also passed the Teller Amendment, which said that after Cuba was liberated and peace was restored, the United States would "leave the government and control of the Island to its people." Spain then passed a declaration of war against the United States. On April 25, Congress formally declared war on Spain.

20.4 – A "Splendid Little War" with Spain

The Spanish-American War lasted only a few months, but it had dramatic results. The United States won the conflict convincingly, demonstrating military power in overseas combat, with few American battle casualties. John Hay, who served as U.S.

ambassador to Britain and later as secretary of state, described it as "a splendid little war, begun with the highest motives, carried on with magnificent intelligence and spirit, favored by that Fortune which loves the brave."

Fighting Begins in the Philippines

Even though the war was sparked by problems in Cuba, the first battle took place much farther away, in the Philippines. A large group of islands southeast of China, the Philippines were Spain's largest remaining colony. As in Cuba, a revolt against Spain had been brewing. Emilio Aguinaldo, a young Filipino, led this resistance. When the Spanish-American War began, he was living in exile in Hong Kong.

At least two months before war was declared, the United States began preparing for battle in the Philippines. If war broke out, it wanted to strike a quick blow against the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay. Theodore Roosevelt, the assistant secretary of the navy at the time, instructed the commander of the Pacific squadron, Commodore George Dewey, to sail to Hong Kong and await further orders.

On May 1, just days after the declaration of war, Dewey's squadron steamed into Manila Bay and opened fire on the Spanish fleet. Taken by surprise, the fleet was entirely destroyed. Dewey did not lose a single ship and suffered only a few battle casualties.

Dewey had scored a stunning victory but did not have sufficient troops to land in Manila and take the city. In the meantime, Aguinaldo returned to the Philippines with his rebel forces to fight the Spanish on his own. American reinforcements finally arrived near the end of July. On August 13, the Philippines fell to a combined force of American soldiers and Filipino rebels.

Fighting Moves to Cuba

Meanwhile, fighting had begun in Cuba. The U.S. Navy quickly set up a blockade of Havana and the north coast of Cuba. At the eastern end of the island, however, a Spanish squadron slipped into the harbor at Santiago de Cuba. President McKinley ordered troops to sail for Santiago. The plan was to join the navy there and engage the Spanish. The American troops, led by General William Shafter, arrived outside Santiago on June 20.

The U.S. Army in Cuba consisted of various forces. Among them were four regiments of African American soldiers, many of whom had fought in the Indian Wars in the American West. The army also relied on volunteer regiments, including one led by Theodore Roosevelt. When the war began, Roosevelt quit his post as assistant secretary of the navy so that he could join the fighting. Together with Colonel Leonard Wood, he helped form the First U.S. Volunteer Cavalry, better known as the Rough Riders. Handpicked by Roosevelt, this regiment was a mix of college athletes and western cowboys.

On July 1, General Shafter launched his assault on Santiago, moving against Spanish troops dug in along a ridge. Roosevelt and the Rough Riders charged up Kettle Hill,

while other U.S. forces fought the even tougher battle for San Juan Hill. By nightfall, the U.S. Army had taken the ridge.

The rest of the war went quickly. The American navy destroyed the Spanish squadron as it tried to leave Santiago harbor, and on July 17, Santiago surrendered. The following week, the United States captured Puerto Rico. With no prospect of success, Spain agreed to a peace settlement on August 12. Four months after the start of the conflict, the war was over.

Despite their quick victory, not everything went well for the U.S. forces. About 5,500 Americans died in the war, mostly from tropical diseases like malaria and yellow fever. As regiments were formed on short notice, many soldiers lacked proper equipment and supplies. Most had heavy wool uniforms, a severe liability in Cuba's tropical heat, and food was often of poor quality. Despite these difficulties, the United States had won a major victory in its first overseas war.

20.5 – A New Power on the World Stage

With its victory in the Spanish-American War, the United States emerged as a new world power. It had defeated a European nation and won control of overseas territories. In the peace treaty, the United States solidified its new position in world affairs.

The Treaty of Paris

The war ended on August 12, 1898, with the signing of a peace protocol, a first draft of a treaty to be submitted for ratification. In October, Spanish and American officials met in Paris to finalize the terms.

On December 10, the United States and Spain signed the Treaty of Paris. Spain agreed to three main points. First, it granted independence to Cuba. Second, it ceded Puerto Rico and the Pacific island of Guam to the United States. And third, it ceded the Philippines to the United States in exchange for a payment of \$20 million. Under the treaty, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines became American possessions. The United States was now a colonial empire.

The Senate Debate over the Treaty

For the treaty to take effect, the Senate would have to ratify it by a two-thirds vote. This vote prompted a fierce debate over imperialism. While some Americans supported creating an American empire, others were strongly opposed. The debate over the treaty raged not only in the Senate but also across the entire country.

Leading opponents were the members of the Anti-Imperialist League, an organization formed during the war to oppose the establishment of U.S. colonies. Its membership was diverse, ranging from union leader Samuel Gompers to millionaire industrialist Andrew Carnegie. Social worker Jane Addams joined, as did author Mark Twain. Although the motives and political views of league members varied widely, they all believed that imperialism violated the country's founding principles of freedom and

democracy. As the league's platform stated, "We hold that the policy known as imperialism is hostile to liberty . . . We insist that the subjugation of any people is 'criminal aggression' and open disloyalty to the distinctive principles of our Government."

Supporters of the treaty included many prominent political leaders, such as President William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge. During the Senate debate, Lodge argued that forming an empire was critical to the nation's future. He declared that the United States needed to compete equally with other great nations. In a letter to Theodore Roosevelt, Lodge wrote that rejection of the treaty would be a "humiliation of the whole country in the eyes of the world" and would "show we are unfit to enter into great questions of foreign policy."

The Senate debate raged for a month. In the end, the supporters of empire won out. By a vote of 57 to 27, a two-thirds majority by the narrow margin of two votes, the Senate ratified the Treaty of Paris on February 6, 1899. The United States now had its empire. But the debate over imperialism would continue into the 20th century.

The United States Stays in Cuba

Cuba also remained an issue in American foreign policy. Although the Treaty of Paris granted Cuba independence, the island was in ruins. President McKinley decided that the United States should remain in Cuba to restore order and assist in the island's recovery.

For four years, the United States ruled Cuba under a military government. This government improved sanitation and built schools and roads. But many Cubans resented American control. They believed that the occupation violated the spirit of the Treaty of Paris and the Teller Amendment, which had pledged that the United States would leave the island after the war was over.

The United States finally withdrew its troops in 1902, but only after Cuba added provisions to its constitution to protect American interests. These provisions, called the Platt Amendment, allowed the United States to intervene in Cuban affairs and to buy or lease land for naval bases. In the years to come, U.S. troops reoccupied Cuba on several occasions. The United States finally agreed in 1934 to repeal the Platt Amendment. However, a U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay, on Cuba's southeastern coast, still operates under a permanent lease.

American companies also gained significant control over the Cuban economy. By 1913, American investment on the island had quadrupled from prewar levels to \$220 million. U.S. business interests owned 60 percent of Cuba's rural lands and controlled many of the island's industries.

Summary

As a result of its victory in the Spanish-American War, the United States became a world power with overseas possessions. In the eyes of many, the United States had become an imperialist nation.

Cuban revolt Cubans rose up against Spanish rule in the late 1800s, and many were imprisoned in reconcentration camps. Many Americans sympathized with the Cubans' plight.

Role of the press American newspapers exaggerated stories about the Cuban revolt to play on American sympathies and sell papers. Yellow journalism helped push the country toward war.

The de Lôme Letter and the USS Maine Two incidents increased tensions between the United States and Spain. A letter from the Spanish ambassador criticizing President McKinley, followed by the sinking of the USS Maine in Havana harbor, incited American anger.

A "splendid little war" After negotiations failed, Congress declared war on Spain. The war, which lasted just four months, began in the Philippines and ended in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Many volunteers fought with the U.S. forces, including Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders. The most important battle of the war took place on San Juan Hill, outside Santiago.

Arguing over imperialism The Treaty of Paris recognized the U.S. victory and left the United States in possession of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. Members of the Anti-Imperialist League spoke out against the treaty, but it was eventually ratified by the Senate.

Cuba and the Platt Amendment Although the Treaty of Paris granted independence to Cuba, the United States maintained control over the island. The Platt Amendment allowed the United States to intervene in Cuban affairs and establish military bases in Cuba.

Chapter 21 — Acquiring and Managing Global Power

Were U.S. interventions abroad between 1890 and 1917 motivated more by realism or idealism?

21.1 – Introduction

On May 1, 1901, the Pan-American Exposition opened in Buffalo, New York. The exposition was designed to highlight the achievements of the nations of the Western Hemisphere. But coming just three years after the Spanish-American War, it also heralded the emergence of the United States as a great power. A Triumphal Bridge served as the entrance to the fair and a symbol of American triumph.

The exposition presented a glowing demonstration of progress at the dawn of the 20th century. It showcased new developments in transportation, agriculture, and industry. It also featured performances of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, which reminded spectators of the vanishing "western frontier." The main attraction was the Electric Tower. Nearly 400 feet high, it was built to celebrate the relatively new invention of electricity. Visitors thrilled when the tower's many thousands of light bulbs blinked on every night, creating a magical atmosphere.

Most of the exhibits focused on advances in the United States. Latin American countries were not as well represented. Nevertheless, the exposition was meant to promote a spirit of cooperation and goodwill between the United States and the other nations of the hemisphere. The fair's logo symbolized this spirit. It showed two young women in the forms of North and South America. Their arms were extended in friendly embrace across Central America.

The exposition did not end on a positive note. On September 5, 1901, President William McKinley visited the fair and gave a speech. The following day, a young anarchist approached the president and shot him twice at point-blank range. McKinley died a week later, and Vice President Theodore Roosevelt assumed office. Under Roosevelt and the next two presidents, William Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson, the United States embarked on a new era in foreign policy marked by increased intervention in Latin America and other parts of the world.

21.2 – Three Presidents, Three Foreign Policies

By going to war with Spain and acquiring overseas possessions, President McKinley had set the stage for a more aggressive foreign policy. The next three presidents—Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson—pursued their own policies. But all three gave the United States an even greater role in world affairs.

Although their foreign policies differed, each president intervened abroad to pursue American goals. Some goals were realist, such as controlling access to foreign resources. Other goals were idealist, such as promoting democracy. In developing

foreign policy, the guiding principle for all three presidents was to serve the national interest. This is the set of goals—political, economic, military, and cultural—that a nation considers important. Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson carried out foreign policies they believed would advance American interests.

Roosevelt Expands U.S. Involvement Overseas

Theodore Roosevelt applied an energetic spirit to foreign policy. He wanted to make the United States a great power that could exert influence around the world. He believed that the country must meet any challenge to its national interest abroad.

Roosevelt once wrote, "I have always been fond of the West African proverb: 'Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far.'" He believed in working quietly and patiently to achieve goals overseas but using force if necessary. Roosevelt's strong-arm approach to foreign affairs became known as the Big Stick Policy.

In 1904, Roosevelt formalized this policy in a major address to Congress. He reminded his audience that the Monroe Doctrine was designed to prevent European meddling in the Americas. Yet he noted that nearly a century later many countries in the hemisphere were still too weak to defend themselves. He asserted that the United States therefore must use "international police power" to preserve peace and order in the hemisphere and protect American interests. He claimed that this power would help protect weak nations and was a direct extension of the Monroe Doctrine. For that reason, his statement became known as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. A corollary is a proposition that is a logical extension of a principle.

Over the next several decades, the United States intervened repeatedly in Latin America and the Caribbean. It sent troops to suppress unrest and prop up rulers who supported U.S. interests. Roosevelt and his successors claimed that these actions were necessary to promote stability in the region, but many critics saw them as an exercise of imperial power.

Roosevelt also used diplomacy to help bring peace to a foreign region. In 1905, he mediated a conflict between Japan and Russia, which were fighting to control Korea and Manchuria. For his efforts in ending the war, he won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1906. However, the treaty left both Japan and Russia dissatisfied and resentful of the United States.

Taft Advances U.S. Economic Interests

After becoming president in 1909, William Howard Taft continued the main thrust of Roosevelt's foreign policy but shifted to economic goals. His policy, which became known as Dollar Diplomacy, was to encourage and protect American trade and investment in Latin America and Asia. Taft believed that a strong economic presence abroad would advance American interests.

Taft claimed that Dollar Diplomacy would limit the use of force overseas. But the United States continued to intervene militarily. In Nicaragua, for example, it supported a revolt

that brought a pro-U.S. leader into power in 1911. American banks then provided loans to the new government. The government was corrupt and unpopular, however, and a new revolt broke out in 1912. Taft sent marines to put it down and to protect American business interests. The United States kept troops in Nicaragua almost continuously until 1933.

Wilson Champions Democracy Around the Globe

When Woodrow Wilson became president in 1913, he tried to take a moral approach to foreign relations. He called this policy Moral Diplomacy. It was based on democratic ideals, rather than on economic investment or the use of force. The United States should use its power to aid "the development of constitutional liberty in the world," Wilson said, by basing its foreign policy on "human rights, national integrity, and opportunity, as against national interests."

Wilson also introduced a concept called self-determination into American foreign policy. By this he meant the right of other peoples to determine their own government, free of outside influence.

In dealing with the countries of Latin America, Wilson said, "We must prove ourselves their friends and champions upon terms of equality and honor . . . whether it squares with our own interest or not." His principles were tested by more turmoil in Latin America. In 1915, a revolt in Haiti prompted him to send marines to protect American lives and investments. It was not until 1934 that the United States withdrew its troops from Haiti. In 1916, Wilson sent troops to the Dominican Republic, where they stayed for 12 years. Wilson eventually intervened more than either Taft or Roosevelt.

21.3 – U.S. Involvement in Latin America

In the early 1900s, Latin America and the Caribbean were a special focus of U.S. foreign policy. The United States viewed this region as its own "backyard" and therefore a good place to exert its power and influence. In addition to Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, the United States intervened in other Latin American countries, notably Panama, Mexico, and Puerto Rico.

The U.S. Helps Panama Overthrow Colombian Rule

The United States became interested in Panama in the mid-1800s. Various nations wanted to build a canal across Central America as a shortcut between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Such a canal would have enormous commercial and military value. During the Spanish-American War, the battleship USS Oregon had to travel almost 14,000 miles around the tip of South America to get from California to Cuba. A canal would shorten the journey to just under 5,000 miles.

The narrow Isthmus of Panama was part of Colombia. The Roosevelt administration tried to lease land in Panama for a canal, but the Colombian government turned down the offer. In 1903, the United States encouraged a revolt in Panama. Roosevelt sent

warships to prevent Colombian troops from intervening. The revolt succeeded, and the United States quickly recognized Panama as an independent nation.

The Panama Canal: An Engineering Feat

The new government soon signed a treaty allowing the United States to build the Panama Canal. The 51-mile canal was a marvel of engineering. At least 40,000 workers carved the "Big Ditch" through mountains, rainforests, and swamps. Thousands of workers fell prey to tropical diseases such as malaria and yellow fever. One worker complained that the mosquitoes were so thick "you get a mouthful with every breath."

After 10 years of construction, the canal opened to great fanfare on August 15, 1914. Roosevelt called it "the most important action I took in foreign affairs."

Although the canal helped to improve international trade, Roosevelt's actions in Panama angered many Latin Americans. In 1921, the United States tried to undo some of this damage by paying Colombia \$25 million. Colombia's government also had special access to the canal. For most of the 1900s, however, the United States treated the canal as its own property. Not until 1999 did it return control of the canal to Panama.

U.S. Businesses Invest Heavily in Mexico

The United States also played a strong role in Mexico in the early 1900s. Since 1884, the dictator Porfirio Díaz had ruled the country with a heavy hand. Most Mexicans remained poor, while a handful of landowners, businesspeople, and foreign investors grew very rich. Americans were among the chief investors. By 1910, U.S. businesses had invested around \$2 billion in Mexico, buying up land, banks, mines, and other properties.

Revolution was brewing, though. In 1910, Francisco Madero attempted to lead a revolt. Madero failed to gain enough support, but another uprising ousted Díaz in 1911. Madero took power but could not control the country. One of his generals, Victoriano Huerta, overthrew him and had him killed. Other countries then recognized the Huerta government. American business interests wanted President Wilson to do the same. They believed that Huerta would stabilize the country and protect their investments.

Wilson was horrified by Madero's murder, however. He wanted to promote democracy in Mexico and refused to recognize what he called "a government of butchers." Instead, he backed Huerta's chief opponent, General Venustiano Carranza, who he hoped would support democratic reform.

The U.S. Nearly Goes to War with Mexico

Tensions between Wilson and the Huerta government almost led to war. In 1914, Wilson sent troops to Veracruz, a port on the Gulf of Mexico, to keep weapons from reaching Huerta's army. In the battle with Huerta's soldiers in the streets of Veracruz, about 90 Americans and at least 300 Mexicans were killed or wounded. Much to Wilson's surprise, most Mexicans—including Carranza—opposed the U.S. action. Other Latin American countries also criticized the intervention. Wilson hastily pulled the forces out,

saying that he was only trying to help Mexico. Several months later, Huerta resigned and Carranza gained power.

But the Mexican Revolution continued. Two rebel leaders, Emiliano Zapata and Francisco "Pancho" Villa, rose up against Carranza. Villa, in particular, aroused American concern. Hoping to force a U.S. intervention, he ordered attacks on American citizens in Mexico and the United States. In one cross-border raid in 1916, Villa was responsible for the killing of 17 Americans in New Mexico. Wilson sent troops to capture him, but Villa eluded the American forces, drawing them deeper into Mexico. This military action alarmed the Mexican people, who feared a U.S. invasion. Carranza insisted that the American troops leave. At that point, the United States was nearing entry into World War I. Recognizing the failure of the intervention, Wilson withdrew from Mexico.

Puerto Rico Remains a U.S. Possession

The United States also became deeply involved in Puerto Rico. After the Spanish-American War, it instituted a military government that began to develop Puerto Rico's infrastructure. It set up schools and a postal service. It also built roads and improved sanitation. In 1900, the United States established a civilian government led by an American governor. Puerto Ricans formed political parties and organized a legislature. But the island remained an American possession.

Over the next two decades, Puerto Ricans grew increasingly frustrated with American rule. They were neither U.S. citizens nor an independent nation. The United States recognized Puerto Rico's strategic value in the Caribbean, however, and wanted to maintain control over the island.

In 1917, President Wilson signed the Jones Act, making Puerto Rico a U.S. territory. Puerto Ricans became citizens but were not granted all the rights of citizenship. They could not elect their own governor or vote in U.S. elections.

Puerto Rico's Status Evolves

Over time, Puerto Rico became more integrated into the U.S. economy. At first, American investors poured money into sugar production, which became the island's main economic activity. The sugar industry produced great wealth for a small minority but left most Puerto Ricans in poverty. In 1930, the average annual income was just \$122, one fifth of the U.S. average. Later on, Americans would make large investments in manufacturing plants. Still, many Puerto Ricans migrated to the United States. Many moved to the East Coast, seeking opportunity in New York and other cities.

A series of reforms brought political change. In 1948, Puerto Ricans elected their governor for the first time. In 1952, the island became a U.S. commonwealth. This status gave Puerto Rico control over its own laws and finances but left decisions on defense and tariffs in U.S. hands. Although most Puerto Ricans welcomed this change, some wanted more control over their affairs. They argued that the island would be better off as either a U.S. state or an independent nation. In several elections held after 1967, however, voters chose to remain a commonwealth.

21.4 – U.S. Involvement in Asia and the Pacific

After the Spanish-American War, the United States became a colonial power in Asia. Less than 500 miles of open sea separated the American-controlled Philippines from China, the largest country in Asia. By holding on to the Philippines, the United States would have greater access to Chinese trade and more influence in Chinese affairs. The United States wanted to ensure free trade in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Philippines Fight for Independence from the U.S.

During the Spanish-American War, the United States captured the Philippines with the help of Filipino leader Emilio Aguinaldo. After the war, Aguinaldo called for independence. He claimed that the United States had promised freedom for the islands.

The United States decided not to grant independence, however. President McKinley believed that the Filipinos were not ready for self-government. He said that he wanted to "uplift and civilize and Christianize" the Filipino people. He also wanted to maintain American control over the islands to prevent another nation from seizing power.

Still, the Filipinos moved ahead with their plans for independence by writing a constitution and electing Aguinaldo president. But the United States refused to recognize the new government. In February 1899, fighting broke out between Filipino and American forces. The United States sent hundreds of thousands of soldiers to the Philippines to put down the revolt. In battle after battle, the Filipino army was defeated.

Aguinaldo then switched to guerrilla tactics, launching quick strikes on American troops. The United States responded with brutal force, destroying villages and herding civilians into prison camps. Mark Twain, one of many Americans who opposed the U.S. policy toward the Philippines, wrote bitterly, "We have pacified . . . the islanders and buried them; destroyed their fields; burned their villages; and turned their widows and orphans out-of-doors . . . And so . . . we are a World Power."

In 1901, the United States finally captured Aguinaldo. A year later, the fighting was over. The war had lasted more than three years, at great human cost. More than 200,000 Filipinos and about 5,000 Americans had died.

After the war, the United States set up a central government for the islands. The United States built schools and made improvements to Philippine harbors. It also established local governments and encouraged Filipinos to participate in them. The United States controlled the Philippines for the next half-century, finally granting independence on July 4, 1946.

U.S. Businesses Prosper in Hawaii

The Hawaiian Islands had been a focus of American interest long before the Spanish-American War. Known as the "Crossroads of the Pacific," Hawaii was an important stop

for ships crossing the Pacific Ocean. In 1820, Protestant missionaries arrived in Hawaii. Within decades most Hawaiians had converted to Christianity.

By the late 1800s, the United States regarded Hawaii as an economic asset. The economy of the islands centered on the export of tropical crops, especially sugarcane and pineapple. White American planters controlled the industry, shipping most of their crops to the United States and becoming wealthy and powerful in the process.

At the time, Hawaii was still a kingdom ruled by a constitutional monarch. In 1891, Liliuokalani became queen of Hawaii. She was a strong leader who resented the dominance of the wealthy white minority on the islands. She established a new constitution that gave more power to native Hawaiians. But a small group of white planters refused to accept the constitution and called on the American government for help. In 1893, U.S. military forces landed and helped the planters overthrow the queen.

The U.S. Annexes the Hawaiian Islands

After the revolt, the white planters controlled the government. They applied to Congress for annexation, hoping to make Hawaii part of the United States. President Benjamin Harrison agreed to the islands' annexation. Then a new president, Grover Cleveland, assumed office. After discovering the circumstances of the revolt, Cleveland withdrew the annexation treaty and called on the planters to return Queen Liliuokalani to her throne. The planters refused and instead proclaimed Hawaii an independent republic.

Throughout the 1890s, Americans continued to debate the question of annexing Hawaii. Those in favor stressed the importance of Hawaii's location and the value of controlling the islands. They also hoped to continue spreading Christianity and the American way of life in Hawaii. Those opposed to annexation pointed out that colonization often caused problems. Some feared the introduction of new races and cultures into the United States. Others thought it was un-American to deprive a people of their sovereignty.

The American intervention in Hawaii produced deep resentment among native Hawaiians. Nevertheless, during the Spanish-American War in 1898, Hawaii was annexed as Congress recognized its importance as a port for the navy. Hawaii became a U.S. territory two years later. In 1959, it became a state, the only one that is not part of North America.

U.S. Interest in China

In the late 1800s, the United States also focused its attention on China. This huge nation was rich in resources and offered a potentially large market for American goods.

In the 1890s, the United States and other foreign powers watched with interest as China and Japan engaged in a war over Korea. This war revealed that China was neither strong nor stable. Russia, France, and Germany supported China at the war's end and demanded favors in return. These powers, along with Britain and Japan, began to carve out spheres of influence from Chinese territory. These were areas in which a single

nation controlled trading rights. In some cases, the foreign powers also demanded land for military bases. As a result, much of China was soon carved into pieces of foreign-dominated territory.

The United States wanted to prevent foreign colonization of China in order to maintain its own access to Chinese markets. With this goal in mind, Secretary of State John Hay issued several foreign policy statements, which became known collectively as the Open Door Policy. The first statement, in 1899, called on foreign nations to allow free trade in China. Although some foreign powers gave vague replies, Hay boldly announced that the Open Door Policy was "final and definitive."

The U.S. Fights to Keep an Open Door to China

The Chinese were deeply ashamed of their nation's weakness. They were proud of their ancient heritage and furious with other countries for controlling China and undermining Chinese traditions. Some Chinese tried to persuade their government to implement reforms so that China could compete in the modern world and resist western influence.

One Chinese group eventually took up arms in an effort to restore national control. This group, called the Righteous and Harmonious Fists, was commonly known as the Boxers. In 1900, the Boxers led an insurrection, rising up to try to expel the "foreign devils" from China. The Boxers killed hundreds of foreigners, including Christian missionaries, along with thousands of Chinese Christians. Within a few months, however, the United States, Japan, and European powers had banded together to crush the uprising.

Secretary of State Hay feared that foreign powers would attempt to use the Boxer Rebellion as an excuse to take stronger control over China. He therefore issued a firmer statement of the Open Door Policy, insisting that foreign nations not only allow free trade, but also respect Chinese independence. The other nations did not object, mainly because they did not want to fight each other over China. As a result, China remained open to American trade and influence.

Summary

At the start of the 20th century, the United States was an imperialist nation with overseas possessions. Three presidents—Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson—developed foreign policies designed to expand American power and protect American interests.

Roosevelt Corollary President Roosevelt followed the Big Stick Policy in foreign affairs. In 1904, he issued the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. This policy called on the United States to use "international police power" to promote order and security in the Western Hemisphere. The use of force became a key element of foreign policy.

Dollar Diplomacy President Taft's Dollar Diplomacy focused on economic goals overseas. He emphasized the spread of American influence through economic activity. But he also sent troops to protect American interests.

Moral Diplomacy President Wilson favored a moral approach to foreign policy. He wanted to spread democratic ideals overseas. Yet he also used force to uphold American interests.

Latin America The United States became deeply involved in Latin America in the early 1900s. It helped Panama gain independence and built the Panama Canal. It intervened in Mexico. It made Puerto Rico a U.S. possession.

Asia and the Pacific The Philippines became a U.S. possession, and the United States put down an independence movement there. It annexed Hawaii after white planters overthrew the native monarchy. In China, it applied its Open Door Policy to limit foreign control and maintain access to Chinese markets.

Chapter 22 — From Neutrality to War

Was it in the national interest of the United States to stay neutral or declare war in 1917?

22.1 – Introduction

In the spring of 1914, President Woodrow Wilson sent "Colonel" Edward House, his trusted adviser, to Europe. House's task was to learn more about the growing strains among the European powers. After meeting with government officials, House sent Wilson an eerily accurate assessment of conditions there. "Everybody's nerves are tense," he wrote. "It needs only a spark to set the whole thing off."

That spark was not long in coming. On June 28, 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Sophie, made an official visit to Sarajevo, the capital of Austria-Hungary's province of Bosnia. Ferdinand was heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A few years earlier, Bosnia had been taken over by Austria-Hungary, a move that angered many Bosnians who wanted closer ties to nearby Serbia and other Slavic ethnic groups. On the day of the visit, several terrorists, trained and armed by a Serbian group, waited in the crowd.

Early in the day, as the royal couple rode through the city in an open car, a terrorist hurled a bomb at their car. The bomb bounced off the hood and exploded nearby. Unharmful, the couple continued their visit. Another terrorist, Gavrilo Princip, was waiting farther down the route. When the car came into view, Princip fired several shots into the car, killing the royal couple.

Their murders set off a chain reaction. Within weeks, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. When the Russian foreign minister learned that Austrian soldiers had begun shelling the Serbian capital of Belgrade, the stunned diplomat warned the Austrian ambassador, "This means a European war. You are setting Europe alight." He was right. A local quarrel in the Balkans quickly became far more dangerous. Russia sided with Serbia and declared war on Austria-Hungary. To help Austria-Hungary, Germany declared war on Russia and its ally France. Britain came to France's defense and declared war on Germany. Dozens of countries took sides.

22.2 – The United States Tries to Stay Neutral

For most Americans, the war was a distant conflict that did not concern them. Few felt alarmed by its outbreak. In September 1914, Theodore Roosevelt smugly observed that the United States was lucky to be almost "alone among the great civilized powers in being unshaken by the present worldwide war."

Europe: A Powder Keg Waiting to Ignite

How did the murder of the archduke in little-known Bosnia turn into a global conflict? The interaction of many factors led to war. One cause was the system of alliances that linked the European nations to each other. This system required member nations to come to one another's aid in case of attack. When the conflict started, these ties led to the division of Europe into two camps. Germany sided with Austria-Hungary, and they headed the Central powers. They were later joined by the Ottoman Empire. France, Britain, and Russia led the Allied powers.

In Europe, nationalism also created tensions. Nationalism is a strong feeling of pride in and loyalty to a nation or ethnic group. Nationalism led some European powers to put national interests first, regardless of the consequences for other countries. For example, pride in Germany's rapid growth and military power led Kaiser Wilhelm II to seek an overseas empire for his country. He wanted Germany to be a world leader. Smaller ethnic groups expressed their nationalism by seeking independence from rule by foreign countries. For example, Serbs in Bosnia who resented Austro-Hungarian rule wanted to unite with other Slavic peoples in Serbia.

Another key factor was militarism, a policy of glorifying military power and values. When Germany modernized its army and added to its navy, Britain felt it had to do the same. Other major powers followed their lead. Soon the nations of Europe were in a full-scale military buildup.

Imperialism added more fuel to the fire. By the 1880s, Britain and France had colonies in Africa and Asia that provided raw materials and markets for their products. Germany wanted its own colonies and a share of this lucrative trade. The only way for Germany to get the territory it wanted was to take it from someone else. Competition for trade and colonies further strained relations.

Wilson Adopts a Policy of Neutrality

Soon after the war began, Woodrow Wilson declared a policy of neutrality. The United States would not take sides in the conflict. It would offer loans and sell weapons and supplies to both sides. In a message to Congress on August 19, 1914, Wilson urged Americans to remain "impartial in thought, as well as action." The European war, he said, is one "with which we have nothing to do, whose causes cannot touch us."

Wilson's decision to stay out of the war pleased many Americans. Ever since George Washington had warned the nation to avoid "entangling alliances," American presidents had tried to steer clear of European infighting. A Mississippi senator asserted, "There is no necessity for war with Germany—there is no necessity for war with any of the belligerent [warring] powers. Three thousand miles of water make it impossible for us to be drawn into that vortex of blood and passion and woe." As a neutral nation, the United States could make loans and sell supplies to both sides. U.S. leaders were also happy to have a way of helping American bankers, farmers, and businesses recover from a painful economic slowdown. Finally, members of the peace movement, who spoke out strongly against war, were in favor of this policy of neutrality.

Yet the situation was more complicated than America's neutrality policy expressed. In 1914, more than 32 million Americans—a full one third of the population—were either foreign born or the children of foreign-born parents. Many of these Americans had strong emotional ties to their homelands and found it hard to remain neutral. Germans and Austrian Americans were sympathetic to the Central powers. Irish Americans also sided with the Central powers out of their long-standing hatred of the British. The majority of Americans, however, favored the Allies. Many felt connected by ancestry, language, culture, and democratic values. Still others had economic ties to Britain or France.

While Americans debated neutrality, the war raged on two fronts in Europe. On the eastern front, Russia quickly advanced into Germany and Austria-Hungary. A German counterattack, however, stopped the Russian advance. In two key battles, the number of Russian casualties—soldiers killed, captured, wounded, or missing—totaled about 250,000.

On the western front, German troops easily rolled across Belgium and into France. Intense fighting by British, French, and Belgian armies finally stopped the German advance, but not until German troops were within 30 miles of Paris. By the end of 1914, the war on the western front had turned into a long and bloody stalemate, or deadlock. Neither side was able to knock out its enemies, and yet neither side was willing to sue for peace.

22.3 – Challenges to the U.S. Policy of Neutrality

As the land war dragged on, both sides sought to break the stalemate. Unable to defeat their enemy on land, both Britain and Germany looked for ways to starve their enemies into submission. To do this, they needed to win control of the seas.

Britain Stops U.S. Ships Heading for Germany

The war at sea started with a British blockade of ships headed for Germany. British ships turned back any vessels carrying weapons, food, and other vital supplies to the Central powers—even ships from neutral nations such as the United States.

President Wilson complained to the British about the policy of stopping neutral ships, but he did not threaten to take action. His hesitancy came in part from the strong economic ties between Britain and the United States. Trade with Britain had given a boost to the sagging American economy, and U.S. banks and businesses were earning millions of dollars from loans and exports to the Allies. These same banks and businesses made fewer loans and sold fewer supplies and weapons to the Central powers. Moreover, many businesspeople in the United States openly supported the Allies. An officer at the Morgan bank recalled, "Our firm had never for one moment been neutral . . . We did everything we could to contribute to the cause of the Allies."

U-Boat Attacks Increase Tensions with Germany

In February 1915, Germany found a way to challenge the British blockade: submarine attacks. Their deadly new weapon was the U-boat, short for Unterseeboot ("undersea boat"). The German navy hoped this new weapon would break the British blockade and at the same time stop vital supplies from reaching the Allies.

Early in 1915, Germany declared the waters around Britain a war zone. Within this zone, German U-boats could sink enemy ships without warning. Because British ships sometimes disguised themselves by flying the flags of neutral nations, neutral ships going into this zone were also at risk.

By international law and custom, warships had the right to stop and search merchant ships that they suspected of breaking a naval blockade. Such vessels could even be sunk, but only if the passengers and crew were removed first. This practice worked for warships, which could take on extra passengers, but not for submarines, which were small and cramped. In theory, a U-boat could allow the ship's crew and passengers to launch lifeboats before sinking the ship. But in practice, this strategy made no sense. A U-boat that surfaced to warn a merchant ship of an attack would become an easy target, foiling its surprise attack.

Wilson protested that sinking merchant ships without protecting the lives of passengers and crews violated international law. He warned that the United States would hold Germany to "strict accountability" for any American casualties in such attacks.

The policy of "strict accountability" was soon put to a test. On May 7, 1915, a U-boat sank the British liner Lusitania without warning. Among the 1,198 dead were 128 Americans. Germany tried to absolve itself from blame by arguing that the ship was armed and was carrying weapons and ammunition. The second charge was true. Nonetheless, former president Theodore Roosevelt denounced Germany's actions as "murder on the high seas."

Within the State Department, a debate raged about how to respond to the sinking of the Lusitania. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan believed Americans had a "higher mission" than helping "one European monarch fight out his quarrels with another." He argued that the United States should accept the reality of submarine warfare and warn its citizens that they traveled on British ships at their own risk. State Department lawyer Robert Lansing opposed this view. He argued not only that Americans had a right to travel on British ships, but also that the United States should vigorously protect that right.

Wilson sided with Lansing and sent Germany a series of notes demanding that it stop unrestricted submarine warfare. Afraid that the notes violated neutrality and might involve the United States in war, Bryan resigned. Wilson chose Lansing to replace Bryan as Secretary of State. Lansing was anything but neutral. "The Allies must not be beaten," he wrote. "War cannot come too soon to suit me."

Four months later, in August 1915, Germany sank a second British ship, the *Arabic*, killing two Americans. Wilson sent another, more sharply worded protest to Germany. German officials promised that Germany would sink no more passenger ships without warning. In March 1916, they broke that promise by sinking the French liner *Sussex*, an attack that left several Americans injured. Wilson threatened to break off diplomatic relations with Germany if it did not stop surprise attacks. In an agreement called the *Sussex* pledge, Germany promised to spare all lives in any future U-boat attacks on merchant ships. But it attached a condition: The United States must force Britain to end its illegal blockade. Wilson accepted the pledge but would not accept the condition.

Preparedness, Promises, and Propaganda

Concern over President Wilson's handling of the war fueled a growing preparedness movement. This movement was led by former president Theodore Roosevelt, who pointed out that the United States was ill-prepared for war should it need to fight. In 1915, the army had only 80,000 men and lacked equipment.

At the outbreak of the war, Roosevelt had not sided with either the Allies or the Central powers. Even so, he was not impressed by Wilson's policy of neutrality. He was even more put off by Wilson's statement after the sinking of the *Lusitania* that "there is such a thing as a man being too proud to fight." Roosevelt had long believed preparedness for war, not talk of neutrality, was the best guarantor of peace. As he toured the country promoting preparedness, many newspapers took up his cause. Advocates of preparedness called for an army of a million trained men and a navy larger than Great Britain's.

For a time, Wilson resisted calls to strengthen the military, but the submarine menace persuaded him that he had to increase the nation's readiness for war. With an election coming up, he launched his own nationwide tour, talking about preparedness and promising a "navy second to none." Back in the capital, he pressed Congress to allocate money to double the size of the army and begin construction of the world's largest navy. Enough Americans saw Wilson's efforts as preparedness for peace, not war, to elect him to a second term. He won reelection by a paper-thin majority on the slogan, "He kept us out of war."

While Wilson tried hard to keep the nation out of war, both the Allies and the Central powers launched propaganda campaigns designed to whip up support for their side. Propaganda is information or rumor spread by a group or government to promote its own cause or ideas or to damage an opposing cause or idea. The information in the propaganda may or may not be accurate. Either way, the intention of propaganda is not to inform, but rather to persuade others to adopt the view or to take the action supported by the propagandist.

The Allies waged the most successful campaign. Early in the war, the British circulated stories about alleged atrocities committed by German soldiers in Belgium. The British government appointed a special commission headed by Lord James Bryce, a well-respected historian, to investigate these "outrages." Published just days after the attack

of the Lusitania, the Bryce commission's report was filled with stories of German soldiers torturing innocent women and children and using civilians as "human shields" during combat.

The German government angrily denied these stories, as did American reporters traveling with the German army. Later study proved many of the stories to be exaggerated or invented. Nonetheless, the British government made sure the Bryce report was sent to nearly every newspaper in the United States. The more horrible the story, the more likely it was to be reprinted in the American press. As a result, neutrality "in thought" gave way to anti-German feeling in the minds of many Americans.

22.4 – The United States Declares a "War to End All Wars"

In a speech to the Senate on January 22, 1917, Wilson declared that he wanted to find a way to end the stalemated war in Europe. He called on the warring powers to accept a "peace without victory." He also spoke of forming a "league of honor" to help nations settle conflicts peacefully. Germany's response to Wilson's peace efforts was to launch an all-out effort to win the war, including a return to unrestricted submarine warfare. Keeping to his Sussex pledge, Wilson broke off diplomatic relations with Germany.

The Zimmermann Note Stirs Up Anti-German Feelings

Wilson had hoped the Germans would back down, but his hopes were dashed in late February 1917. Britain had gotten hold of a note sent in code by the German foreign minister, Arthur Zimmermann, to the German minister in Mexico. Zimmermann suggested that if the United States entered the war, Mexico and Germany should become allies. Germany would then help Mexico regain "lost territory in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona." The Zimmermann note created a sensation in the United States and stirred anti-German feeling across the nation.

Events in Russia removed another barrier to the United States joining the Allies. In March 1917, a revolution toppled the autocratic Czar Nicholas II and replaced him with a democratic government. At the start of the war, Wilson had not wanted to be allied to a dictator. With the hope of democracy in sight, the United States could now see Russia as "a fit partner" in a war against German aggression.

The United States Enters the War

On April 2, 1917, Wilson spoke to a special session of Congress. He reminded lawmakers of the loss of life caused by German U-boats and how these attacks hurt the nation's ability to trade freely with other countries. Then he turned to his main theme:

Neutrality is no longer feasible [practical] . . . where the peace of the world is involved . . . The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty . . . The right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments.

—Woodrow Wilson's War Message, address to Congress, 1917

When Wilson finished, lawmakers cheered. Later Wilson said sadly, "Think what it was they were applauding. My message today was a message of death for our young men."

Critics reacted strongly to Wilson's war message. Nebraska Senator George Norris argued that the United States was going to war for economic reasons only. "We have loaned many hundreds of millions of dollars to the Allies," he said. He saw American involvement in the war as a way of "making . . . payment of every debt certain and sure." Wisconsin Senator Robert LaFollette argued that the nation had gotten itself into the war by failing to treat the "belligerent nations of Europe alike." He urged the government to remain neutral and "enforce our rights against Great Britain as we have enforced our rights against Germany."

In spite of such protests, on April 4, 1917, the Senate voted 82 to 6 to declare war on Germany. The House followed on April 6 by a vote of 373 to 50. The United States was going to war.

Summary

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand sparked the outbreak of World War I. However, the war had many underlying causes, including the European alliance system and the growth of nationalism and imperialism, which led to military buildups. The United States remained neutral until events in 1917 convinced Americans to fight on the side of the Allies.

The Allied and Central powers When World War I began, the nations of Europe divided into two alliances—the Allied powers and the Central powers.

U-boats The war at sea started with a British blockade of German ports. Germany fought back by introducing a new weapon called a U-boat, or submarine. German U-boats sank both neutral and enemy vessels, often without warning.

Lusitania The German sinking of the British ship the Lusitania killed 128 Americans. The United States strongly protested U-boat attacks on merchant ships carrying American passengers.

Sussex pledge Germany agreed in the Sussex pledge to stop sinking merchant ships without warning but attached the condition that the United States help end the illegal British blockade. Wilson rejected that condition, and Germany did not keep the pledge.

Preparedness movement As anger over American deaths at sea grew, some Americans called for the country to prepare for war. Although Wilson won reelection on the slogan "He kept us out of war," he was already preparing the country to fight by building up the army and navy.

Unrestricted submarine warfare In a desperate bid to end the conflict, Germany announced early in 1917 that it would resume unrestricted submarine warfare.

Zimmermann note The disclosure of the Zimmermann note, calling for cooperation between Mexico and Germany to take back U.S. territory, outraged Americans. Soon after its publication, the United States declared war on Germany.

Chapter 23 — The Course and Conduct of World War I

How was World War I different from previous wars?

23.1 – Introduction

In 1917, many Americans viewed the nation's entry into World War I as the commencement of a great adventure. Others saw it as a noble or heroic cause that would give the country a chance to demonstrate its courage. President Woodrow Wilson's call to help make the world safe for democracy appealed to Americans' sense of idealism. Many shared the president's belief that this would be "the war to end all wars."

A young recruit named William Langer enlisted to fight in the war because, as he described it, "Here was our one great chance for excitement and risk. We could not afford to pass it up." Henry Villard felt the same. He eagerly followed incidents on the battlefields of Europe, reading newspapers and discussing events with friends. "There were posters everywhere," he recalled. "'I want you,' . . . 'Join the Marines,' 'Join the Army.' And there was an irresistible feeling that one should do something . . . I said to myself, if there's never going to be another war, this is the only opportunity to see it."

In 1917, Villard got his chance when a Red Cross official visited his college looking for volunteers to drive ambulances in Italy. Many of Villard's friends signed up. Although he knew his family would protest, Villard said, "I couldn't just stand by and let my friends depart." After securing his family's reluctant consent, Villard enlisted and soon headed out for combat duty.

Very soon after arriving in Italy, Villard discovered how little he knew about war. "The first person that I put into my ambulance was a man who had just had a grenade explode in his hands." Bomb fragments had severed both of the soldier's legs. As Villard sped from the front lines to the hospital, the wounded soldier kept asking him to drive more slowly. By the time the ambulance reached the hospital, the young man was dead. "This was a kind of cold water treatment for me, to realize all of a sudden what war was like," explained Villard. "And it changed me—I grew up very quickly . . . It was the real world."

23.2 – A War of Firsts for the United States

For the United States, World War I was a war of firsts. To start, it was the first time the government had agreed to commit large numbers of American soldiers to a distant war across the sea. In fact, when Congress first declared war, many Americans thought the nation would provide money, food, and equipment to the war effort—but not troops. Learning that military officials planned to expand the army, Virginia Senator Thomas Martin cried out in surprise, "Good Lord! You're not going to send soldiers over there, are you?"

That was indeed Wilson's plan. Still, with Germany preparing for a final assault, many Americans wondered whether the United States could set up military camps, train large numbers of troops, and transport these soldiers to Europe quickly enough to make a difference.

The Nation's First Selective Service System

Prior to American entry into the war, the United States had a volunteer army of about 200,000 soldiers. These forces received low pay and lacked equipment. Few soldiers had ever seen combat. To enter the war, the military would need tens of thousands more soldiers—and quickly. In May 1917, Congress passed the Selective Service Act, which created a national draft. The act required all men ages 21 to 30 to register for military service at local polling stations. This was the first time the U.S. government had established a draft before entering a war.

To encourage Americans to comply with the draft, the government launched a major propaganda campaign. Secretary of War Newton Baker hoped tens of thousands would register on the assigned day. He urged mayors, governors, and other local leaders to make the day a "festival and [a] patriotic occasion." These efforts paid off. Nearly 10 million young men registered. Across the nation, many towns held parades and celebrations honoring their draftees.

Within months, officers at camps around the country were training more than 500,000 draftees. While the new soldiers marched and drilled, the Allies grew more anxious. In a message to U.S. officials, British prime minister David Lloyd George stressed the Allies' urgent need for troops. He asked that American troops "be poured into France as soon as possible." In his view, "the difference of even a week in the date of arrival may be absolutely vital."

The First Americans Reach French Soil

American troops first landed in France in June 1917. Their official name was the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), but they were nicknamed "the doughboys." The AEF fought under the command of General John J. Pershing, and most were infantry—soldiers who fight on foot. Although few in number, the American infantry bolstered the Allies' morale.

By the time the Americans reached France, the war was going badly for the Allies. Their armies had suffered several major defeats and lost many men. Even victories were deadly. The battle at Passchendaele in November 1917 cost the Allies 300,000 soldiers. For all that bloodshed, the Allied forces had regained control of barely 5 miles of German-held territory.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 added to the Allies' woes. Until then, Russian troops had kept the Central powers busy with fighting on the eastern front. As soon as Russia's new revolutionary leaders took control of the government, they began making plans to withdraw Russia from the war.

Early in 1918, Russian peacemakers met with German and Austrian officials to hammer out the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. For Russia, the terms were very harsh. The treaty forced Russia to give up large amounts of territory, including Finland, Poland, Ukraine, as well as the Baltic States—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The Central powers gained not only territory but, more important, an end to the fighting on the eastern front. Germany was free to throw all its troops into the war on the western front.

To counter the increase in German troops on the western front, the Allies asked General Pershing to assign American soldiers to Allied units to replace men killed or wounded in action. With Wilson's backing, Pershing resisted this request, insisting that most of his soldiers remain in the AEF. Pershing had two main reasons for doing so. First, he disagreed with Allied military strategy. He did not think the Allies could end the stalemate by fighting a defensive war from the trenches. Instead, he advocated tactics that were more forceful and offensive. Second, both Wilson and Pershing felt that if the AEF did well as a separate army, the United States could demand a greater role in the peacemaking process after the war. Pershing got his way. By war's end, some 2 million Americans had served overseas as part of the AEF.

The First African American Officer Training Camp

During the course of the war, nearly 400,000 African Americans joined the armed forces. The military strictly segregated black and white troops in training camps and overseas. At first, it did not allow black soldiers to become officers. However, people across the country held mass meetings to push for officer training for African Americans. In 1917, the military set up a separate camp to train black soldiers as officers. Later that year, the camp graduated its first class, including 106 captains, 329 first lieutenants, and 204 second lieutenants.

Most black soldiers served under white officers in labor or supply units in France or the United States. The all-black 369th Regiment had a different experience. As an exception to Pershing's rule about American soldiers not fighting in Allied units, the 369th operated under French command. They took part in active combat, for which they earned high praise. The soldiers of the 369th fought so fiercely, Germans called them the "Hell Fighters." After the war, France awarded the 369th the country's highest military honors.

23.3 – New Technologies Change the Way War is Fought

World War I proved to be unlike previous wars in many ways. For example, for centuries, opposing forces had conducted combat face-to-face and hand-to-hand. During the American Civil War, combatants—those physically fighting the war—had faced off against their enemies with handguns or rifles, supported by cannons. Troops fired only at targets they could see clearly. New technology made World War I a more impersonal war, as well as a far deadlier one.

Combatants Introduce More Effective Killing Machines

Weapons such as the machine gun, an improved flamethrower, and large cannons known as howitzers changed how and where war was fought. Unlike rifles and pistols,

the machine gun was a rapid-firing weapon—the first truly automatic gun. A soldier using a machine gun, which spit out 600 bullets per minute, did not have to stop as often to reload. In time, military commanders realized that machine guns could make a greater effect when grouped together. In fact, the Germans created separate machine gun companies to support the infantry.

The invention of the machine gun had a major impact on military strategy. Armies accustomed to taking the offensive and attacking head-on were now at a disadvantage. A group of well-placed machine gunners could stop the advance of a much larger force. German forces learned this lesson quickly, but the British and French did not. Allied armies charged across open fields toward enemy lines, only to be mowed down by machine gun fire, leading to thousands of casualties. In September 1915, British infantry units, each comprising about 10,000 men, charged a well-protected German position. In four hours, more than 8,000 men were killed, almost all by machine gun fire.

At first, machine guns were used mostly for defense, because soldiers found them too heavy and bulky to carry in an offensive attack. Over time, both sides found ways to mount these weapons on aircraft and to use them on warships.

Unlike the machine gun, the flamethrower was an old weapon. In the days of the Roman Empire, soldiers had hurled these tubes filled with burning fuel at one another. During World War I, Germany developed a small, lightweight flamethrower that a single person could carry. It sprayed burning fuel on the victims. This weapon was effective in attacks on nearby trenches but could not be fired long distances.

For long-range bombings, both sides used large, heavy artillery, or "big guns." Before firing these weapons, gunners loaded them with shells that often contained dozens of small lead balls. Soldiers also used big guns to deliver poison gas. A new type of loading, firing, and recoil mechanism made these guns very useful. Gunners used them to blast through barbed wire, knock out enemy machine gun nests, and lob poison gas shells at enemy trenches.

The best known of these powerful guns were Germany's Big Berthas. Each weighed about 75 tons and could fire a 2,100-pound shell a distance of more than 9 miles. Big Berthas were the largest mobile guns ever used on the battlefield. At the beginning of the war, Big Berthas helped Germany sweep through Belgium on its drive west toward France. Unable to withstand the assault of these guns, concrete Belgian forts crumbled. In total, heavy artillery inflicted more than half of all battle casualties in World War I.

Despite such technological advances, the rifle remained the most widely used weapon on the battlefield. Soldiers found rifles to be lighter and easier to carry than bigger guns when advancing toward the enemy. Soldiers with good aim trained to be sharpshooters, who are specialists at hitting an exact target, or snipers, who fire from a concealed position. Both played a key role in a new type of combat called trench warfare.

Both Armies Seek Safety in Trenches

The introduction of new weapons such as rapid-firing machine guns and powerful, long-range big guns made the old style of ground attack far too dangerous. Soldiers could no longer charge each other across an open field. If they did, they could be killed instantly. Instead, both sides dug trenches in the ground for protection. The result was a new kind of defensive war known as trench warfare.

Each side dug multiple lines of trenches, often in zigzag patterns to make it hard for enemy sharpshooters to hit soldiers. Closest to the enemy's trenches lay the frontline trenches. From opposing frontline trenches, soldiers hurled grenades and fired machine guns at one another. Behind the frontline trenches, soldiers dug a line of supply trenches. These held ammunition, other supplies, and communication equipment. In a third line of reserve trenches, weary soldiers rested before returning to the front lines. In the course of trench duty, soldiers rotated through the frontline, supply, and reserve trenches.

Large barriers of barbed wire circled each side's front line and extended into the open area between the opposing trenches. This area, called no-man's land, was typically about 250 yards wide, but crossing its short distance was usually lethal. Soldiers venturing into no-man's land risked being shot or blown up. In this treeless space, any moving object was an easy target for sharpshooters and machine gunners. Water-filled craters made by bombs and artillery shells soon speckled no-man's land. Because neither side could find a way to get its troops safely across no-man's land, the war ground to a stalemate.

Conditions in the trenches were horrible. The muddy trenches smelled of rotting bodies, sweat, and overflowing latrines. Soldiers often caught fevers or suffered from painful foot infections called trench foot, which resulted from standing in the mud and cold water that pooled in the bottom of the trenches. In addition, lice, frogs, and rats surrounded the men. An Allied soldier recalled:

One got used to many things, but I never overcame my horror of the rats. They abounded in some parts, great loathsome beasts gorged with flesh . . . About the same time every night the dug-out was invaded by swarms of rats. They gnawed holes in our haversacks [backpacks] and devoured our . . . rations.

—Harold Saunders, quoted in *Everyman at War*, 1930

One of the most terrifying threats soldiers faced was the use of chemical weapons, which utilize toxic agents such as poison gas to kill or harm many people. Germany was the first to use poison gas in World War I. In time, the British and French did as well. The deadliest chemical used was odorless mustard gas. This caused huge, painful blisters, blindness, and lethal damage to the lungs. Those who survived a mustard gas attack often had lifelong injuries.

Early on, soldiers simply released mustard gas from cylinders and relied on the wind to carry it across no-man's land to the enemy. However, shifting winds often blew the gas

back on the sender's trenches. Both sides eventually found ways to put poison gas into the shells they fired at each other. In time, both sides developed gas masks to protect their troops from these attacks.

Another new weapon, the tank, finally helped end the stalemate in the trenches. Soldiers could drive tanks over barbed wire and crush the otherwise treacherous material. They could also steer the tanks up steep embankments and across ditches to attack enemy trenches. Unsure of how effective this weapon would be, Germany was slow to develop tanks of its own. The Allies were more proactive with their use of this new technology. During the final Allied advance in the summer of 1918, tanks rolled across no-man's land ahead of Allied troops, protecting them from enemy gunfire and weakening enemy defenses.

The Sky Is the New Battlefield

Improvements to airplanes brought war into the sky. The top speed for early airplanes was about 40 miles per hour. But by 1917, powerful motors allowed airplanes to travel more than three times that fast. Planes also became easier to fly and could travel farther than ever before.

From the start of the war, both sides used airplanes to scout enemy territory. But the war challenged inventors to create airplanes for more specialized uses, such as fighting and bombing. At first, pilots would lean out of the cockpit and shoot at enemy pilots with a pistol or drop bombs by hand over the side of the plane. Then Dutch inventor Anthony Fokker, working for Germany, built a device that timed the firing of a machine gun with the rotation of a plane's propeller. This allowed a pilot to safely fire a machine gun mounted on the front of his aircraft. Fokker's invention made in-air combat a serious new threat.

The Germans also created high-flying, gas-filled airships called zeppelins. These cigar-shaped aircraft were first used for scouting enemy positions. In 1915, German pilots used zeppelins in bombing raids over London. Although the German airships terrified British civilians and alarmed the Allies, they often missed their targets.

By 1916, the British had found a way to counter the airship threat. They built fighter planes that could fly as high as a zeppelin and developed bullets sharp enough to pierce the airship's outer skin, causing it to explode. The various roles of the airplane in World War I showed its usefulness and versatility. Indeed, it would play an even greater role in later conflicts.

Waging a Savage War at Sea

When World War I started, most naval experts had already predicted that the greatest sea battles would take place between heavily armed and armored battleships. In 1906, Britain had introduced the world's first modern battleship, the HMS Dreadnought. It was larger, more powerfully armed, and more heavily armored than earlier warships. Faced with this threat, the major naval powers had scrapped their old fleets and began replacing them with similar battleships. In 1916, the German and British navies fought a

major naval battle with their battleships. Each side sank many ships, but neither side won a clear victory.

After that battle, Germany changed its approach to naval warfare. Its new strategy resulted from Germany's development of armed submarines, or U-boats. Moving silently under the sea, U-boats went undetected until it was too late to stop their torpedoes from reaching their targets. In the first four months of 1917, German U-boats sank more than 1,000 ships carrying supplies and weapons to Allied ports. British Admiral John Jellicoe warned, "It is impossible to go on with the war if losses like this continue."

The effectiveness of U-boat attacks was greatly reduced by the development of the convoy system. Under this system, Allied warships protected merchant ships by escorting groups of them across the Atlantic Ocean. The number of Allied shipping losses quickly decreased. From April 1917 to November of that year, the material lost to U-boat attacks dropped from more than 850,000 tons to just over 200,000 tons. In 1918, the Allies further reduced the submarine menace by laying an underwater barrier of mines across the North Sea and the English Channel.

23.4 – The War Comes to a Close

As 1918 began, the Allies knew Germany would soon launch a final offensive to end the war in the west. Every day, more troops arrived on the front lines as the Germans raced to defeat the war-weary Allies before the Americans arrived. "We should strike," General Erich Ludendorff told Kaiser Wilhelm II, the German emperor, "before the Americans can throw strong forces into the scale."

The Meuse-Argonne Offensive Leads to an Armistice

In early spring 1918, the Germans began their final push. Their troops advanced rapidly to within 50 miles of Paris. By this time, however, American forces were arriving in Europe at the rate of 300,000 soldiers per month. This was enough to make a difference in the war's outcome.

Between July 15 and August 5, 1918, American forces joined French and British forces in the Second Battle of the Marne. Soon after the Allied forces counterattacked, the German troops fell back. "August 8 was the black day of the German army," General Ludendorff reported to the Kaiser. "It put the decline of our fighting power beyond all doubt . . . The war must be ended."

In late September, the Allies launched the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. The AEF's goal was to break through the German line to reach the Sedan railroad in northern France. This rail line was the German army's main line of supply and communication with Germany. More than 1 million U.S. troops took part in this final assault. After six weeks of hard fighting through the Argonne Forest, the Americans achieved their objective. On November 11, 1918, Germany agreed to an armistice—a truce. By then, the other Central powers had also surrendered. The long war was finally over.

Counting the Costs and Casualties

For all involved, the costs of the war in human life and suffering were immense. More than 8 million soldiers had died. Another 21 million were injured, and many would never fully recover or be able to work. An English veteran and poet named Siegfried Sassoon wrote bitterly of their sacrifice:

Does it matter?—losing your legs? . . .
For people will always be kind,
And you need not show that you mind
When the others come in after hunting
To gobble their muffins and eggs.

Does it matter?—losing your sight? . . .
There's such splendid work for the blind;
And people will always be kind,
As you sit on the terrace remembering
And turning your face to the light.

—Siegfried Sassoon, "Does It Matter?", 1918

In addition, millions of civilians throughout Europe died from starvation, disease, and other war-related causes. The United States suffered far fewer casualties, with about 116,000 soldiers killed and twice that many wounded or missing.

The war had also caused horrific damage to farms, forests, factories, towns, and homes throughout Europe. An Allied soldier described the villages he saw:

They are utterly destroyed, so that there are not even skeletons of buildings left—nothing but a churned mass of debris, with bricks, stones and . . . bodies pounded to nothing. And forests! There are not even tree trunks left—not a leaf or a twig. All is buried and churned up again and buried again.

—John Raws, letter to a friend, August 4, 1916

The war had also destroyed roads, bridges, railroad lines, and other transportation facilities. Countries already severely burdened by the financial cost of war withered under the weight of these additional losses. For Europe, economic recovery would come very slowly in the years ahead.

Another cost of the war was hard to measure but very real—damage to the human spirit. Many men and women who had eagerly joined the war effort now felt deeply disillusioned by what they had experienced. They questioned long-held beliefs about the glories of Western civilization and the nobility of war. American poet Ezra Pound spoke for war-weary populations in both the United States and Europe when he wrote of the "myriad," or vast number, who had died "for a botched civilization."

Summary

World War I was the world's first truly modern war. New inventions and technological advances affected how the war was fought and how it ended. The United States provided soldiers, equipment, and finances, which contributed to the Allied victory.

Selective Service Act Before the United States could join the Allies, tens of thousands of troops had to be recruited and trained. As part of this process, Congress passed the Selective Service Act to create a national draft.

369th Regiment Hundreds of thousands of African Americans served in segregated military units during World War I. The all-black 369th Regiment received France's highest military honors for its service in Europe.

American Expeditionary Force President Woodrow Wilson and General John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Force, insisted that most American troops fight as a force separate from the Allied army. Two million Americans fought in the AEF during the war.

The land war New weapons made land warfare much deadlier than ever before. The result was trench warfare, a new kind of defensive war.

The air war Both sides first used airplanes and airships for observation. Technological improvements allowed them to make specialized planes for bombing and fighting.

The sea war Early in the war, ocean combat took place between battleships. The Germans then used U-boats to sink large numbers of ships. To protect merchant ships, the Allies developed a convoy system. Later, the Allies laid a mine barrier across the North Sea and English Channel.

Meuse-Argonne Offensive In 1918, close to 1 million U.S. soldiers took part in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Their success helped bring about an armistice with Germany.

Chapter 24 — The Home Front

How did Americans on the home front support or oppose World War I?

24.1 – Introduction

As "doughboys" left for France, Americans at home mobilized—organized the nation's resources—for war. Years after the war ended, popular stage and film star Elsie Janis recalled this time as the most exciting of her life. "The war," said Janis, "was my high spot, and I think there is only one real peak in each life."

Along with many other movie stars, Janis eagerly volunteered for war work. She had a beautiful singing voice and a gift for impersonating other actors. She used both talents to raise money for the war. Janis later went overseas to become one of the first American performers to entertain U.S. troops. She gave more than 600 performances over 15 months, sometimes performing as many as nine shows a day. Before her arrival in Europe, no other woman entertainer had been permitted to work so close to the front lines.

While only a few women like Janis helped the war effort publicly, thousands found more prosaic but just as useful ways to do their part. Many women joined the workforce. With so many men overseas, a serious labor shortage developed. Eager for workers, employers across the nation put large-print "Women Wanted" notices in newspapers. In the final months of the war, a Connecticut ammunition factory was so frantic for workers that its owners hired airplanes to drop leaflets over the city of Bridgeport listing their openings.

Although the number of women in the workforce stayed about the same throughout the war, the number of occupations in which they worked rose sharply. Many who were already in the workforce took new jobs in offices, shops, and factories. They became typists, cashiers, salesclerks, and telephone operators. Women worked in plants, assembling explosives, electrical appliances, airplanes, and cars. Many took jobs in the iron and steel industry—jobs once open only to men. Most had to give up these jobs when the war ended, but they had shown the public just how capable they were.

24.2 – Mobilizing Public Opinion in Favor of War

When President Woodrow Wilson called the nation to war, he knew that not all Americans would respond with enthusiasm. Opposition to the war had surfaced almost as soon as the first shots were fired. In the fall of 1914, automaker Henry Ford had financed the sailing of a "peace ship" to Europe. The passengers were pacifists, people who for political, moral, or religious reasons oppose all wars. They hoped to get leaders of neutral countries like Sweden to act as peacemakers. Although their trip did little good, Ford and his fellow passengers came back determined to let the American public know their views.

Peace Groups and Pacifists Oppose Entry into the War

As the war raged in Europe, pacifists, progressives, and other activists joined forces to keep the United States out of the conflict. Some were simply opposed to all wars. This was true of Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin of Montana, the first woman to serve as a member of Congress. A lifelong pacifist, Rankin wanted the United States to set an example by refusing to fight. Other opponents claimed they were willing to fight to defend the United States but were opposed to getting involved in what they saw as a European conflict.

In January 1915, a group of women led by Jane Addams held a peace conference in Washington, D.C. They called for limitation of arms and mediation of the European conflict rather than combat. They believed that progressive social reforms would help eliminate the economic causes of war, and they feared that U.S. entry into the war would diminish support for their reform efforts. Conference leaders formed the Woman's Peace Party, which grew quickly but broke into smaller factions after the United States entered the war.

Pacifists also protested the war in other ways. Some young men acted on their beliefs by declaring themselves conscientious objectors. A conscientious objector is someone who opposes war for religious or moral reasons and therefore refuses to serve in the armed forces. Despite the objections of these men, military officials drafted many pacifists into the armed forces. Those who refused to serve risked going to prison.

The Government Uses Propaganda to "Sell" the War

Although pacifists and peace groups represented a minority of Americans, government officials feared those groups could become a serious obstacle to a united war effort. "It is not an army that we must shape and train for the war," said Wilson. "It is a nation."

To help the government "sell" the war to the public, the president created a government propaganda agency known as the Committee on Public Information (CPI). He chose reporter George Creel to head the CPI. Creel saw the CPI's work as a way of fighting war critics and preserving "American ideals."

Creel hired reporters, artists, movie directors, writers, and historians to create a massive propaganda campaign. The CPI churned out press releases supporting the war effort. It also produced films with such titles as *The Kaiser, Beast of Berlin*, and *Claws of the Hun*. These movies showed Germans as evil savages out to take over the world. Posters urged Americans to join the army and buy bonds. CPI printing presses also produced leaflets and books on topics such as German war practices. Many CPI books were printed in foreign languages, so immigrants could read *How the War Came to America* in Polish, German, Swedish, or Spanish, for example.

One of the CPI's most successful propaganda campaigns was carried out by its "Four-Minute Men." In cities and towns across the country, CPI officials recruited 75,000 men to make short, four-minute speeches at civic and social clubs, movie theaters, churches, farmhouses, and country stores. Written by CPI writers in Washington, these patriotic speeches addressed such topics as why the United States was fighting or the need to

conserve fuel. About every 10 days, new speeches arrived. In places with large numbers of immigrants, speakers gave their talks in Italian, Yiddish, Serbian, and other languages.

Patriotic Fervor Sweeps the Country

In small towns and large, people of all ages found ways to show their support for the war effort. At loyalty parades, families waved flags and wore patriotic costumes. Marchers shouted slogans like "Keep the flag flying" and "Down with the Kaiser."

In schools, children saved tin cans, paper, and old toothpaste tubes for recycling into war materials. Families collected peach and apricot pits for use in making gas masks. Women met in homes or at churches to knit blankets and socks for soldiers. Many people joined local Red Cross chapters, where they rolled bandages and packed supplies to send overseas.

Propaganda and patriotism sometimes had the unfortunate effect of stirring up anti-German hysteria. Almost all German American communities supported the war effort once the United States entered the conflict. However, they often suffered as the result of the suspicions of others. Employers in war industries fired German American workers, fearing they might sabotage machinery or report plans to the enemy. Karl Muck, the German-born conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, was arrested as an enemy alien after refusing to conduct the "Star Spangled Banner" and protesting the wartime ban on German music.

For many Americans, all things German became associated with disloyalty. Symphonies stopped playing music by German composers. Libraries removed books by German authors. Many schools proscribed the teaching of German as a foreign language. German foods were given more patriotic names—sauerkraut became "liberty cabbage" and liverwurst, "liberty sausage."

24.3 – Transforming the Economy for the War Effort

Like Elsie Janis, movie idol Douglas Fairbanks was a top fundraiser for the war effort. At a New York rally, thousands cheered as he fought a mock boxing match against the German Kaiser. Fairbanks wore boxing gloves labeled "Victory" on one hand and "Liberty Bonds" on the other. He followed his knockout punch to the Kaiser with a rousing speech, urging the crowd to back the war effort.

Americans Buy Liberty Bonds to Fund the War

World War I cost the United States about \$35.5 billion. About one fourth of that cost came from taxes, which increased drastically during the war. In October 1917, Congress passed the War Revenue Act, which raised income tax rates and taxes on excess profits. It also reduced the level of taxable income to \$1,000. As a result, the number of Americans paying income tax increased from 437,000 in 1916 to 4.4 million in 1918.

The government raised the rest of the money through the sale of bonds. A bond is a certificate issued by a government or company that promises to pay back the money borrowed at a fixed rate of interest on a specific date. Throughout the war, the government held rallies to promote the sale of Liberty Bonds. In big cities, movie stars and sports heroes urged people to buy bonds, quoting slogans such as "Come across or the Kaiser will!" and "A bond slacker is a Kaiser backer." Composer John Philip Sousa even wrote the "Liberty Bond March."

Thousands of ordinary citizens worked tirelessly selling war bonds in their hometowns. Employers gave workers time off to attend local bond rallies. In some places, those who were reluctant to buy bonds faced pressure from self-appointed patriot groups. Many foreign-born citizens felt they had to buy bonds—even if they were poor—or risk being thought un-American.

New Government Agencies Organize Industry for War

As the nation geared up for war, industries began to shift from consumer goods to war production. In the past, the government had left businesses alone to make this transition. World War I was different. For the first time, government officials worked closely with industries to make sure they met the military's needs.

In July 1917, Woodrow Wilson created the War Industries Board (WIB) to direct industrial production. The WIB, headed by stockbroker Bernard Baruch, coordinated the work of government agencies and industry groups to make sure supplies and equipment were produced and delivered to the military. Baruch had the authority to tell factories what goods to produce and how much to make.

Some WIB decisions affected women's fashion. After being told to use less material in clothes, fashion designers began making shorter skirts. Women's corsets, with their metal hooks and stays, also came under scrutiny. To reduce the use of metal, women were urged to give up wearing corsets. Many were glad to comply, donating these tight-fitting undergarments to scrap drives.

The government also worked to ensure the cooperation of unions in the war effort, and labor leaders readily agreed. The National War Labor Board worked to settle any labor disputes. The War Policies Board set standards for wages, hours, and working conditions in war industries. As a result, labor unrest subsided for the duration of the war. The booming wartime economy created many jobs, and union membership rose rapidly.

Food and Fuel Help Win the War

The United States faced the huge responsibility of feeding the armed forces, as well as Allied troops and civilians. To meet the challenge, Wilson set up the Food Administration to oversee production and distribution of food and fuel. To head the effort, Wilson chose Herbert Hoover, an engineer who had led relief efforts in Belgium. Hoover raised crop prices to encourage farmers to produce more food and began a campaign that urged Americans to conserve food and reduce waste.

Although he could punish people for hoarding food, Hoover relied on Americans' voluntary "spirit of self-sacrifice." Using the slogan "Food will win the war," he urged families to participate in Meatless Mondays and Wheatless Wednesdays. Hoover also called on Americans to increase the food supply by planting "victory gardens." Across the country, schoolyards, vacant lots, and public parks sprouted seeds. The Wilsons set an example by having a victory garden planted on the White House lawn.

The Fuel Administration met the nation's energy needs through a combination of increased production and conservation. To conserve energy, Americans turned down their heaters and wore sweaters on "heatless Mondays." On "gasless Sundays," they went for walks instead of driving their cars. The Fuel Administration also introduced daylight savings time. By adding an extra hour of daylight at day's end, households used less electricity for lighting.

With all of these new boards and agencies, the size of the federal government grew rapidly during the war years. The number of federal employees more than doubled between 1916 and 1918.

24.4 – Fighting for Democracy on the Home Front

President Wilson asked Americans to help make the world "safe for democracy," but many African Americans wondered more about democracy at home. With lynchings, Jim Crow laws, and segregated army units, some were not sure what they should be fighting for.

African American Leaders Have a Mixed Response to the War

Although most African Americans supported the war, black leaders disagreed about how they should respond to the war effort. W. E. B. Du Bois urged blacks to serve in the military to show their loyalty and help gain greater equality. In the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) journal *The Crisis*, Du Bois wrote, "Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy."

The outspoken black newspaper editor William Monroe Trotter disagreed. He argued that the federal government should be working to end discrimination at home before fighting for democracy overseas. Trotter did not believe serving in the armed forces would lead to better treatment for African Americans.

African Americans Migrate North for New Opportunities

On the home front, the war had a major impact on African Americans in the South. As production of war materials rose, thousands of new jobs opened up in the North at the nation's steel and auto factories. The mining and meatpacking industries also needed more workers. At the same time, the flood of new immigrants from Europe had stopped,

contributing to a growing labor shortage. Employers in northern cities desperately needed workers.

Black newspapers urged southern blacks to leave home and take advantage of these opportunities in the North. Many southern blacks packed up and headed north. Once settled, they wrote letters home filled with glowing reports of their new lives:

I just begin to feel like a man. It's a great pleasure in knowing that you have got some privilege. My children are going to the same school as whites and I don't have to umble to no one. I have registered—Will vote the next election and there isn't any "yes sir" and "no sir."

—Author unknown, from Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916–1918

What began as a trickle soon turned into a mass movement of African Americans known as the Great Migration. Chicago, New York City, Cleveland, and other cities saw an explosion of black residents. Whites suddenly found themselves competing with blacks for jobs and housing. In some places, racial tensions sparked riots. During the "red summer" of 1919, blood flowed in many cities, including the nation's capital. One of the worst race riots broke out in East St. Louis, Illinois, after a factory owner brought in black workers to break a strike. At least 39 African Americans and 9 whites died before peace could be restored. Unlike in the past, blacks surprised their attackers by fighting back. "The Washington riot gave me the thrill that comes once in a life time," wrote a black woman. "At last our men had stood like men, [and] struck back."

24.5 – Enforcing Loyalty Among All Americans

Early on the morning of July 30, 1916, a huge fire destroyed the Black Tom pier on the New Jersey waterfront. Most windows within 25 miles of the pier blew out. Warehouses filled with weapons and explosives awaiting shipment to the Allies in Europe went up in flames. In time, officials figured out that the fire had been set by German agents. Such incidents were few in number, but they fed the fears of a nervous public that German spies threatened the nation.

Immigrants Face Forced "Americanization"

Most immigrants, like most Americans, supported the war. They wanted a chance to show their loyalty to their adopted country. They bought war bonds, participated in conservation efforts, and worked in wartime industries.

Nevertheless, rumors of enemy agents sparked anti-immigrant sentiments. Recent immigrants became targets of self-appointed patriot groups like the American Protective League. These groups tried to enforce what they called "100 percent Americanism." Their members sometimes walked around immigrant neighborhoods looking for signs of disloyalty. They also sent the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) names of people they suspected of disloyalty. Many of those people named belonged to political and labor groups.

Intolerance also led to attacks on German Americans. In April 1918, Robert Prager, a German-born citizen, was lynched by a mob near St. Louis, Missouri. His only crime was being born in Germany. Prager had tried to enlist, but officials had turned him down for medical reasons. Immigrants were not the only victims of unwarranted attacks by patriot groups. Anyone who spoke out against the war became a target. For instance, a mob whipped an Ohio minister for giving what was considered to be an antiwar speech.

The Government Cracks Down on Dissent

Fear of espionage, or spying, motivated Congress to pass the Espionage Act in 1917. This law made it a crime to try to interfere with the military draft. It also set severe penalties for spying, sabotage, and vaguely defined "obstruction of the war effort." The Espionage Act also gave the postmaster general broad powers to refuse mail delivery of any materials that might encourage disloyalty.

Americans soon felt the impact of the Espionage Act. Postmaster General Albert Burleson used his new power to ban Socialist newspapers and magazines from the mail. Popular magazines began asking readers to spy on their neighbors and coworkers. The Literary Digest invited readers to send in news items they thought "treasonable." The CPI ran magazine ads warning people not to "wait until you catch someone putting a bomb under a factory. Report the man who spreads pessimistic stories . . . cries for peace, or belittles our efforts to win the war."

In 1918, Congress further cracked down on dissent by enacting the Sedition Act. This act made it a crime to say anything that was "disloyal, profane, scurrilous, or abusive" about the government. Hundreds of people were arrested for offenses such as criticizing the draft or wartime taxes. California Senator Hiram Johnson complained that the law meant "You shall not criticize anything or anybody in the government any longer or you shall go to jail."

Socialists and Wobblies Speak Out Against the War

When the war began, many members of the Socialist Party spoke out strongly against it. They viewed the war as a fight among capitalists for wealth and power. As Eugene V. Debs, head of the Socialist Party, told his followers,

Wars throughout history have been waged for conquest and plunder . . . that is war in a nutshell. The master class has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles. The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose, while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose—especially their lives.

—Eugene Debs, "The Canton, Ohio, Speech," June 16, 1918

Members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), better known as Wobblies, also spoke out against the war. "Capitalists of America, we will fight against you, not for you," declared the Industrial Worker, the IWW newspaper, in 1917. "There is not a power in

the world that can make the working class fight if they refuse." The Wobblies' antiwar views gave their enemies a chance to attack them as disloyal. In Montana, a mob hanged an IWW organizer. In September 1917, federal agents raided 48 IWW meeting halls, seizing letters and publications. Later that month, 165 IWW leaders were arrested.

In all, the government arrested and tried more than 1,500 people under the Espionage and Sedition acts. Approximately 1,000 were convicted, including Debs, who was sentenced to a 10-year prison term for urging young men to refuse to serve in the military. More than 100 Wobblies were also sent to prison, a blow from which the IWW never recovered.

The Espionage and Sedition acts made many Americans uneasy. In 1919, *Schenck v. United States*, a case involving the Espionage Act, reached the Supreme Court. Charles Schenck, a socialist, was charged with distributing leaflets to recent draftees, urging them to resist the military draft. He was convicted of interfering with recruitment. His lawyer appealed Schenck's conviction on the grounds that his right to free speech had been denied.

In a unanimous opinion, written by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., the Court held that Schenck's conviction was constitutional. "The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theatre and causing a panic," Holmes wrote. Schenck's publications created "a clear and present danger" to a nation engaged in war. "When a nation is at war," wrote Holmes, "things that might be said in time of peace . . . will not be endured so long as men fight."

24.6 – Current Connections: Defining the Limits of Free Speech

In the years since *Schenck v. United States*, the Supreme Court has expanded its definition of free speech. Today, the Court recognizes three types of protected speech. The first is pure speech, or the spoken word. This is the speech you hear at public meetings or in debates. The second type is known as speech-plus. This is speech combined with action, such as a protest march or picketing during a strike. The speech part of speech-plus is protected by the First Amendment. The action part, however, may be regulated. For example, a protest march may need to secure a permit from the city in which the march is to be held.

The third type of protected speech is symbolic speech. Symbolic speech is conduct that conveys a message without spoken words. Just which kinds of conduct should be protected as free speech is less clear. The Court has ruled, "We cannot accept the view that an apparently limitless variety of conduct can be labeled 'speech' whenever the person engaging in that conduct intends thereby to express an idea."

Burning Draft Cards: *United States v. O'Brien*

One such test of symbolic speech came in the 1960s, when Americans were deeply divided over the Vietnam War. Some antiwar activists protested the war by publicly

burning their draft cards, despite a law that required young men to carry their cards at all times. In response, Congress passed a law that made it a crime to burn draft cards.

On March 31, 1966, David Paul O'Brien was convicted of breaking the new law. In time, *United States v. O'Brien* reached the Supreme Court. The Court ruled that although O'Brien's actions were a form of symbolic speech, a person does not have a First Amendment right to break a law in which the government has a "substantial" interest. The government needed to have young men carry their draft cards to make the Selective Service System work properly. Thus, it could punish protesters like O'Brien who destroyed their cards on purpose.

Flag Burning: Texas v. Johnson

In the summer of 1984, the Supreme Court took up another free speech issue involving symbolic speech. At the Republican National Convention in Dallas, Texas, Gregory Lee Johnson protested the Reagan administration's policies by setting an American flag on fire. A Texas court convicted him of breaking a state law that made it a crime to intentionally damage a national flag. Johnson appealed his conviction on the grounds that his conduct was protected symbolic speech.

In *Texas v. Johnson*, the Supreme Court ruled that flag burning was protected symbolic speech. The government of Texas, the Court argued, could not prohibit someone from expressing an opinion by burning the flag, even if it found such conduct offensive. The Texas flag law was thus unconstitutional.

Congress reacted to this decision by passing the Flag Protection Act of 1989. This law made it a federal crime to knowingly burn or mutilate an American flag. The new law was soon challenged in the courts. In *United States v. Eichman*, the Supreme Court ruled that the government can encourage patriotism by persuasion and example, but it cannot do so by making symbolic speech a crime. The Flag Protection Act was declared unconstitutional.

Since 1990, a constitutional amendment making flag burning a crime has been introduced several times in Congress. The proposed amendment reads, "The Congress and the states shall have the power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States." Year after year, the amendment has failed to receive the required two-thirds vote in Congress needed to send it to the states for ratification. That such an amendment will be approved in the future seems doubtful.

The flag-burning issue illustrates the difficulty of deciding what speech should be protected. Almost all Americans are offended by the mistreatment of an American flag. Yet many are troubled by the idea of making the expression of opinions by such conduct a crime.

After World War I, Justice Holmes was equally troubled by the idea of punishing people for expressing an opinion. After siding with the government in the *Schenck* decision, Holmes took the opposite view when another Espionage Act case came before the

Court. In *Abrams et al. v. United States*, he wrote that only an emergency "warrants making any exception to the sweeping command, 'Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech.'"

Summary

During World War I, the federal government worked to mobilize the country for war. At the same time, tensions arose as the need for national unity was weighed against the rights of Americans to express their opposition to the war.

Woman's Peace Party For religious or political reasons, some Americans opposed the war. Among the leading peace activists were members of the Woman's Peace Party.

Committee on Public Information During the war, the government created this propaganda agency to build support for the war. Although CPI propaganda helped Americans rally around the war effort, it also contributed to increased distrust of foreign-born citizens and immigrants.

Liberty Bonds The purchase of Liberty Bonds by the American public provided needed funding for the war and gave Americans a way to participate in the war effort.

Great Migration During the war, hundreds of thousands of African Americans migrated out of the South. They were attracted to northern cities by job opportunities and hopes for a better life.

Espionage and Sedition acts The Espionage and Sedition acts allowed the federal government to suppress antiwar sentiment. The laws made it illegal to express opposition to the war.

Socialists and Wobblies Socialists and Wobblies who opposed the war became the targets of both patriot groups and the government for their antiwar positions. Many were jailed under the Espionage and Sedition acts.

Schenck v. United States The Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Espionage Act in this 1918 case. It ruled that the government could restrict freedom of speech in times of "clear and present danger."

Chapter 25 — The Treaty of Versailles: To Ratify or Reject?

Should the United States have ratified or rejected the Treaty of Versailles?

25.1 – Introduction

On December 13, 1918, President Woodrow Wilson's ship, the *George Washington*, slipped into the dock at Brest, France. The war was over. The Allies and the Central powers had put down their guns and signed an armistice. Wilson was going to France to participate in writing the peace treaty that he believed would "make the world safe for democracy."

As the ship made its way to the pier, its passengers could hear the sounds of warships firing their guns in Wilson's honor. On the dock, bands played the "Star Spangled Banner" as French soldiers and civilians cheered. It was a stirring beginning to the president's visit.

Once on shore, Wilson made his way through cheering throngs to the railway station. There he and the other members of the American peace delegation boarded a private train bound for Paris. In the French capital, a crowd of 2 million people greeted the Americans. They clapped and shouted their thanks to the man hailed as "Wilson the Just." One newspaper observed, "Never has a king, never has an emperor received such a welcome."

Many Europeans shared in the excitement of Wilson's arrival. They were grateful for the help Americans had given in the last months of the war. Moreover, they believed Wilson sincerely wanted to help them build a new and better world. Wherever Wilson went, people turned out to welcome him. Everyone wanted to see the man newspapers called the "Savior of Humanity" and the "Moses from across the Atlantic." Throughout Allied Europe, wall posters declared, "We want a Wilson peace."

President Wilson arrived in Europe with high hopes of creating a just and lasting peace. The warm welcome he received could only have raised his hopes still higher. Few watching these events, including Wilson himself, could have anticipated just how hard it would be to get leaders in both Europe and the United States to share his vision.

25.2 – Wilson's Vision for World Peace

On January 8, 1918, Wilson went before Congress to explain his war aims. Although the war was still raging, he boldly stated an ambitious program to make the world "fit and safe to live in." He called his blueprint for peace the Fourteen Points. It was designed to protect "every peace-loving nation" and peoples from "force and selfish aggression."

Fourteen Points to End All Wars

The first goal of Wilson's peace plan was to eliminate the causes of wars. He called for an end to secret agreements and the web of alliances that had drawn the nations of Europe into war. Recalling the deadly submarine warfare that brought the United States

into the war, he wanted freedom of the seas. By this, he meant the right of merchant ships to travel freely in international waters in times of peace and war. He also wanted European countries to reduce their armaments, or weapons of war, instead of competing to make their military forces bigger and better.

A second key goal was to ensure the right to self-determination for ethnic groups so they could control their own political future. With the defeat of the Central powers, the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires were falling apart. Many different ethnic groups lived within these lands. Wilson hoped to see these groups living in newly formed nations under governments of their choosing.

For Wilson, the last of his Fourteen Points was the most important. It called for setting up an international organization called the League of Nations to ensure world peace. Member nations would agree to protect one another's independence and territorial integrity. Under the principle of territorial integrity, nations respect one another's borders and do not try to gain another country's territory by force. Working together, League members would resolve conflicts before those conflicts escalated into wars.

Wilson's Unusual Decisions

As the end of the war approached, President Wilson made an unusual decision. Up to that time, no president had traveled outside the United States while in office. Wilson broke with tradition by deciding to lead the American delegation to the peace conference in France. He wanted to make sure his goal of a lasting peace became a reality.

As Wilson prepared for his trip, Democrats and Republicans were getting ready for the 1918 midterm elections. At that time, Democrats controlled both houses of Congress. Wilson called on the American public to show their support for his peace plan by keeping the Democrats in power. But his appeal did not work. The Republicans won a majority in both the Senate and the House. The voters' repudiation of Wilson's appeal weakened his position just as he was about to seek the support of European leaders for his peace plans.

Wilson made matters worse by his choice of other American delegates to the peace conference. Although they were competent diplomats, only one was a Republican. Upon reading the names, former president William Taft griped that Wilson wanted to "hog the whole show." Moreover, not one of the delegates had the confidence of key Republican leaders in the Senate. Because the Senate would have to ratify whatever treaty came out of the negotiations, this oversight would come back to haunt the president.

25.3 – Ideals Versus Self-Interest at Versailles

The Paris peace conference opened with great ceremony at the Palace of Versailles. The leaders of the four largest victorious nations made almost all the decisions. This group, known as the Big Four, included President Wilson and three prime ministers—David Lloyd George of Great Britain, Georges Clemenceau of France, and Vittorio

Orlando of Italy. Representatives of Germany and the other defeated nations took no part in the talks. Russia, which had made a separate peace with Germany after its revolution, did not attend.

Peace Without Victory Gives Way to War Guilt and Reparations

Wilson came to the talks eager to share his Fourteen Points with other world leaders. His hopes for easy acceptance of his goals were quickly dashed. Although the other leaders liked Wilson's vision of a peaceful world, they were more interested in protecting the interests of their own countries.

First among Clemenceau's concerns was French security. He hoped to weaken Germany to the point that it could never threaten France again. He insisted that the German army be reduced to 100,000 men. He further insisted that Germany be stripped of its coal-rich Saar Valley.

Lloyd George, who had recently won reelection on the slogan "Hang the Kaiser," insisted that Germany accept responsibility for starting the war. The inclusion of a war-guilt clause in the treaty demolished Wilson's earlier hope for "peace without victory." In addition, the treaty required Germany to pay \$33 billion in reparations to the Allies. Reparations are payments demanded of a defeated nation by the victor in a war to offset the cost of the war. Germans resented both the war-guilt clause and the reparations, rightly fearing that the payments would cripple their economic recovery from the war.

Wilson tried to restrain these efforts at punishing Germany. The other leaders, however, would not back down. Their countries had lost many lives and property, and they expected compensation. They also argued that although the United States was not to receive reparations, it would benefit from them. The Allies had borrowed huge sums from American banks to finance the war. They hoped to repay these debts with reparations from Germany. Wilson reluctantly agreed to the harsh treatment of Germany in order to gain support for what he saw as most important: the League of Nations.

Self-Determination Survives, but Only in Europe

Wilson also clashed with the other Allied leaders over territorial claims. In the Fourteen Points, he had called for self-determination for the peoples of Europe. The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire had left unclear the fate of many ethnic groups. Wilson wanted these peoples to be free to determine their own political futures.

Wilson's commitment to self-determination helped some ethnic groups form their own nations. Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the former Russian states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania all gained independence. However, other territorial decisions went against Wilson's views. For example, parts of Germany were given to France, Poland, Denmark, and Belgium, with little thought about the desires of the people living there. Italy gained territory that was home to Austrians.

In other areas, the Allies ignored self-determination. Britain, France, Italy, and Japan grabbed German colonies in China, the Pacific, and Africa. Britain and France took over areas in Southwest Asia that had once been controlled by the collapsing Ottoman Empire. They were to govern these areas as mandates, or territories controlled by the League of Nations, until each mandate was ready for self-rule. These mandates included Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, as well as some former German colonies in Africa and the Pacific Islands.

Wilson Pins His Peace Hopes on the League of Nations

President Wilson had not been able to preserve all of his goals. He did, however, get the other leaders to include a charter for the League of Nations in the final agreement. Wilson hoped that, in time, the League would be able to correct the peace treaty's many flaws. More important, he believed the League would maintain peace by providing collective security for its members. Collective security is a commitment by many countries to join together to deal with a nation that threatens peace.

The Big Four formally signed the Treaty of Versailles on June 18, 1919. But Wilson's fight for the treaty was just beginning.

25.4 – The Great Debate About Ratification

Two days after President Wilson returned home, he called on the Senate to ratify the Treaty of Versailles with U.S. membership in the League of Nations. Wilson had strong public support. More than 30 state legislatures and governors endorsed League membership. Still, Wilson had yet to win the necessary two-thirds vote of the Senate needed to ratify a treaty. The question was whether he could get enough Republican votes in the Senate to reach that magic number.

Reservationists Seek Changes Before Approving Treaty

Many Republicans in the Senate were reluctant to approve the treaty as it was written. Known as reservationists, they said they would vote yes, but only with a number of reservations, or changes, added to it.

The reservationists were mostly concerned with Article 10 of the League's charter. This article focused on collective security. It required member nations to work together—and even supply troops—to keep the peace. Reservationists feared this would draw the United States into wars without approval from Congress. They demanded that Article 10 be changed to read, "The United States assumes no obligation to preserve the territorial integrity or political independence of any other country . . . unless . . . Congress shall . . . so provide."

Republican Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts was the leader of the reservationists. In a speech outlining his views, he warned,

The United States is the world's best hope, but if you fetter her in the interests and quarrels of other nations, if you tangle her in the intrigues of Europe, you will

destroy her power for good and endanger her very existence . . . Strong, generous, and confident, she has nobly served mankind. Beware how you trifle with your marvellous inheritance, this great land of ordered liberty, for if we stumble and fall freedom and civilization everywhere will go down in ruin.

—Henry Cabot Lodge, "*On the League of Nations*," August 12, 1919

Lodge had both personal and political reasons for opposing the Treaty of Versailles. He and Wilson had long been bitter foes. "I never expected to hate anyone in politics with the hatred I feel toward Wilson," Lodge once confessed. He was also angry that Wilson had snubbed Republicans when choosing delegates to the peace conference. The ratification debate gave Lodge and his fellow Republicans an opportunity to embarrass the president and weaken the Democratic Party.

As head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Lodge found ways to delay action on the treaty. When the treaty came to his committee for study, he spent two weeks reading aloud every word of the nearly 300 pages. Next, he held six weeks of public hearings, during which opponents of the treaty were given ample time to speak out against it.

Irreconcilables Reject the Treaty in Any Form

A group of 16 Senate Republicans firmly opposed the Treaty of Versailles. Known as irreconcilables, their "no" vote was certain. They were completely opposed to any treaty that included an international organization that might draw the nation into war.

Republican Senator William Borah of Idaho was one of the more outspoken irreconcilables. The world, he declared, could "get along better without our intervention." He scoffed at the reservationists' position. Recalling George Washington's Farewell Address, he asked, "Where is the reservation . . . which protects us against entangling alliances with Europe?"

Internationalists Support the Treaty of Versailles

Most Senate Democrats strongly supported the treaty. This group, known as internationalists, believed that greater cooperation among nations could work for the benefit of all. They argued that the United States had already become a major world power. As such, it should take its rightful place in the world community by becoming a member of the League of Nations. Rather than worry about the United States being dragged into another war by the League, the internationalists focused on the League's role in keeping the peace.

President Wilson Takes His Case to the People

As the ratification hearings dragged on, the public began to lose interest. Upset by Lodge's delaying tactics, Wilson decided to go directly to the public for support. On learning the president was planning a speaking tour of the country, his doctor warned that it could damage his already failing health. Wilson is reported to have replied,

[My] own health is not to be considered when the future peace and security of the world are at stake. If the Treaty is not ratified by the Senate, the War will have been fought in vain, and the world will be thrown into chaos. I promised our soldiers, when I asked them to take up arms, that it was a war to end wars.

—Woodrow Wilson, August 27, 1919

The president embarked on a grueling, 8,000-mile speaking tour of the West. He spoke up to four times a day, giving about 40 speeches in 29 cities. Two irreconcilables, Borah and California Senator Hiram Johnson, followed Wilson on their own tour. Despite their attacks, the campaign for the treaty seemed to be picking up speed when disaster struck. On September 25, 1919, the president collapsed with a severe headache in Pueblo, Colorado. His doctor stopped the tour, and Wilson's train sped back to Washington.

25.5 – A Divided Senate Decides the Treaty's Fate

A few days after returning to the White House, Wilson had a major stroke that left him partly paralyzed. For months, the president remained very ill. Hoping to restore his health, his wife, Edith Galt Wilson, became a gatekeeper. She decided what news he would hear and chose his few visitors.

At first, the public had no idea just how sick Wilson was. When the extent of his illness became clear, Wilson's critics accused Edith of making decisions for the country. Some called her the "assistant president." In her own account of this time, she said she had "never made a single decision regarding . . . public affairs." Still, in her role as caregiver, Edith Wilson became caught up in the nasty political fighting that marked the debate on the Versailles Treaty.

Partisanship Defeats the Treaty

From the start, bitter partisanship, or rivalry between political parties, marked the treaty ratification process. During the months of debate, senators on both sides put loyalty to their party above all else.

By the time the treaty came to the Senate for a vote late in 1919, the reservationists had added 14 amendments to it. Most of the changes had little impact on the League of Nations. Despite this, Wilson rejected them all. He refused to accept any agreement that did not have the precise language he had agreed to in Paris. When Nebraska Senator Gilbert Hitchcock advised Wilson to work with Republicans, Wilson barked, "Let Lodge compromise!" The president called on his supporters to vote down the amendments and then pass the treaty in its original form.

The plan backfired. On the first vote, Democrats loyal to Wilson joined the irreconcilables to defeat the amended treaty. When the Senate voted on the unamended treaty, Democrats voted yes, but reservationists and irreconcilables joined forces to defeat it.

Under strong public pressure to try again, the Senate reconsidered the treaty four months later. Once again, Wilson opposed any changes. "Either we should enter the League . . . not fearing the role of leadership which we now enjoy," he told his supporters, "or we should retire . . . from the great concert of powers by which the world was saved."

Not all Senate Democrats agreed with this point of view. Fearing that the nation might be left with no treaty at all, 21 Democrats voted to accept the 14 amendments. But even with their support, the final count fell seven votes short of the two thirds needed for treaty ratification.

The 1920 Election Becomes a Referendum on the Treaty

As the 1920 presidential election heated up, Wilson struggled to save the treaty. The Democratic candidate for president, Governor James M. Cox of Ohio, declared himself firmly in favor of the League of Nations. His running mate, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, supported it as well. "If you want . . . another war against civilization," Roosevelt warned, "then let us go back to the conditions of 1914. If you want the possibility of sending once more our troops and navies to foreign lands, then stay out of the League." The Republican Party straddled the issue, favoring "an international association" to prevent war but opposing the League. Its candidate, Warren G. Harding, lacked conviction either way.

Wilson called for the election to be a "great and solemn referendum" on the League of Nations. By this time, however, Americans were losing interest in the partisan debate over ratification. Issues closer to home, such as inflation and unemployment, appeared more pressing. Most people seemed to think, observed Secretary of State Robert Lansing, that Americans should "attend to our own affairs and let the rest of the nations go to the devil if they want to."

When the votes were in, Cox received just 9.1 million votes, compared with Harding's 16.1 million. "It was not a landslide," said Wilson's private secretary, Joseph Tumulty, of the Democratic defeat. "It was an earthquake." The great referendum on the treaty had gone terribly wrong.

In October 1921, the United States, which had fought separately from the Allies, signed a separate peace treaty with Germany. The League of Nations had begun operations by that time, but the nation whose president had created it was not a member.

Two decades would pass before Americans would rethink the idea of collective security. By then, the nation was engaged in a second global war. Looking back, people could not help but wonder: Could that next war have been avoided if the United States had joined the League of Nations?

Summary

After World War I, President Woodrow Wilson hoped to create a lasting peace. He insisted that the treaty ending the war should include a peacekeeping organization called the League of Nations. Many Americans feared that membership in the League could involve the United States in future wars.

The Fourteen Points Wilson outlined his goals for lasting peace in his Fourteen Points. Key issues included an end to secret agreements, freedom of the seas, reduction of armaments, self-determination for ethnic groups, and collective security through creation of an international peacekeeping organization.

The Big Four When the heads of the four major Allies—France, Great Britain, Italy, and the United States—met in Paris for peace talks, they were more focused on self-interest than on Wilson's plan.

Treaty of Versailles The treaty negotiated in Paris redrew the map of Europe, granting self-determination to some groups. Some Allies sought revenge on Germany, insisting on a war-guilt clause and reparations from Germany.

League of Nations Wilson hoped that including the League of Nations in the final treaty would make up for his compromises on other issues. He believed that by providing collective security and a framework for peaceful talks, the League would fix many problems the treaty had created.

The ratification debate The treaty ratification debate divided the Senate into three groups. Reservationists would not accept the treaty unless certain changes were made. Irreconcilables rejected the treaty in any form. Internationalists supported the treaty and the League.

Rejection of the treaty Partisan politics and Wilson's refusal to compromise led to the treaty's rejection and ended Wilson's hopes for U.S. membership in the League of Nations.

Chapter 26 — Understanding Postwar Tensions

What effects did postwar tensions have on America's founding ideals?

26.1 – Introduction

In the summer of 1927, Alvan Fuller, the governor of Massachusetts, held the lives of two men in his hands. Six years earlier, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti had been found guilty of committing a double murder and robbery and were condemned to die. Fuller appointed Abbott Lawrence Lowell, president of Harvard University, to investigate whether the men deserved clemency, or a lessening of their penalty.

The Lowell Committee began by asking, Had the Sacco and Vanzetti trial been fair? Sacco and Vanzetti were Italian immigrants in a time of great prejudice against foreigners. In addition, both men had fled to Mexico in 1917 rather than serve in the army. The prosecutor's first question to Vanzetti in the trial was, "When this country was at war, you ran away so you would not have to fight as a soldier?" This question may have turned trial judge Webster Thayer and the jury against the defendants.

Defense attorney Fred Moore argued that there was no clear evidence tying his clients to the murders. Sacco's gun fired the type of bullets used to kill the two men, but tests could not prove the bullets came from his weapon. A cap at the scene was said to be Sacco's, but it did not fit him. There was even less evidence tying Vanzetti to the crime. Moore claimed the two men were being tried because they were immigrants who had radical political beliefs.

When the jury returned a guilty verdict, many people questioned the decision. During the next six years, concern over the verdict spread as Judge Thayer rejected all legal appeals on Sacco and Vanzetti's behalf. There were demonstrations in London, Buenos Aires, and other world capitals.

The Sacco and Vanzetti trial raised fundamental questions about America's founding ideals of equality and rights under the law. In this chapter, you will see how Americans grappled with such questions in the years following World War I.

26.2 – Emerging Economic Tensions

After coming to the United States, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti struggled to make a living. Sacco worked for a construction company as a water boy and a "pick-and-shoveler." He made as little as \$1.15 a day for backbreaking labor. After 12-hour shifts at work, he spent three nights a week studying English. Eventually, he found a job as a shoemaker, which paid better. At the Milford Shoe Company, he earned between \$30 and \$40 a week.

Vanzetti had a harder life than Sacco. Over the years, he worked as a dishwasher, a bricklayer, a cook, and a factory hand in an iron mill. At the time of his arrest, he was selling fish from a cart that he pushed through the streets. None of his jobs ever paid

enough for him to buy a home, wear nice clothes, or marry. Still, Sacco and Vanzetti did have jobs. In the years just after World War I, many other American workers did not.

Demobilization Causes Massive Unemployment

World War I had created great economic prosperity in the United States. The federal government had signed billions of dollars' worth of contracts for war-related materials. It had also centralized the management of transportation, manufacturing, and agriculture under the War Industries Board. The results of this government planning were impressive. During the war years, steel production had doubled and agricultural exports tripled.

Nonetheless, the government was ill prepared for conversion to a postwar economy. When the fighting ended sooner than expected, the federal government had no plans for demobilization, the transition from wartime to peacetime. The day after the armistice was signed, telephone lines in Washington, D.C., were so clogged by government officials canceling contracts that ordinary citizens had trouble making long-distance calls. This sudden cancellation of government contracts made wide ripples in the economy. Hundreds of factories that had produced war materials closed. Crop prices fell as overseas demand for farm products dropped. Millions of Americans were suddenly thrown out of work.

The employment situation grew even worse when the army discharged nearly 4 million soldiers, giving each of them just \$60 and a one-way ticket home. By 1920, more than 5 million Americans were jobless.

Economic Upheaval Results in Inflation and Recession

By the end of 1920, the economy reflected the longer-term effects of demobilization. Immediately after the war, Americans had gone on a spending spree, buying goods with money they had saved during the war. The result was a spike in inflation. As prices went up, the value of the dollar shrank by more than 15 percent a year. Average Americans in 1920 paid twice as much for clothing or for foods such as bread, butter, and bacon as they had in 1913. All but the richest Americans saw their standard of living drop as prices rose.

The combination of high inflation and rising unemployment led to a sharp recession—a decline in economic activity and prosperity. Between 1920 and 1921, some 100,000 businesses went bankrupt. In those same years, 453,000 farmers lost their land. People got by as best they could, in some cases turning to crime to survive.

The robbery-murder involving Sacco and Vanzetti was just one of many violent incidents in a growing crime wave. The robbery took place on April 15, 1920, in South Braintree, Massachusetts. At 3:00 in the afternoon, two payroll masters for the Slater and Morrill shoe factory were carrying lockboxes containing \$16,000 from the payroll office to the factory. On the way, they were stopped by two armed bandits. Despite the fact that the two payroll masters dropped their boxes without a struggle, they were shot and left to

bleed to death on the street. One of the gunmen fired a shot into the air, signaling their getaway car. From start to finish, the robbery took less than a minute.

The South Braintree crime was similar to another robbery four months earlier in nearby Bridgewater, Massachusetts. As historian Frederick Lewis Allen later noted, crimes like this had become so commonplace, they received little newspaper coverage:

There had taken place at South Braintree, Massachusetts, a crime so unimportant that it was not even mentioned in the New York Times of the following day—or, for that matter, of the whole following year. It was the sort of crime which was taking place constantly all over the country.

—Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday*, 1931

26.3 – Rising Labor Tensions

Like many workers after World War I, Sacco and Vanzetti were union men. Sacco and his wife, Rosina, acted in plays to raise money for striking workers. Vanzetti helped organize a strike at the Plymouth Cordage Company, where he worked as a rope maker. He urged immigrant groups to support labor unions. The dedication of the two men to the union movement was one reason working-class communities later raised money for their legal defense.

Businesses Return to Prewar Labor Practices

After World War I, workers struggled to keep the gains they had made during the war years. As the war had raged, the federal government had encouraged business and labor to cooperate. The National War Labor Board had settled labor disputes on generous terms to keep factories humming. Wages went up as the number of unemployed workers decreased and unions gained more clout.

After the war, however, the government stepped aside, and the struggle between business and labor over wages and working conditions resumed. Corporations fought unionization. They reduced wages and paid less attention to employee safety. Some businesses tried to increase the workday to 12 hours, whereas eight hours had been typical during the war.

Workers Respond by Organizing and Striking

Working-class Americans reacted to deteriorating working conditions in several ways. Many joined unions for the first time. At this time, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) dominated the union movement. The AFL was a group of unions representing skilled workers, such as machinists or mechanics, organized by their craft. The AFL was best known for "bread and butter" unionism. It concentrated on improving wages and working conditions for its union members.

In contrast, the more radical Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), whose members were known as Wobblies, saw socialism as the solution to workers' problems. According

to the preamble of the IWW constitution, "There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life." The goal of the IWW, proclaimed its leader, Bill Haywood, was to put the working class "in control of the machinery of production and distribution, without regard to the capitalist masters."

In 1919, unions staged more than 3,600 strikes across the country, creating the greatest wave of labor unrest in the nation's history. One out of every 10 workers walked off the job at some point during that year. The most dramatic strike took place in Seattle, Washington. When 35,000 shipyard workers were refused a wage increase, the Seattle Central Labor Council called on all city workers to walk off their jobs. Approximately 100,000 people joined Seattle's general strike—a strike by workers in all industries in a region. The strike paralyzed the city. Nearly all economic activity came to a sudden halt. Mayor Ole Hanson condemned the walkout as "an attempted revolution" and called in federal troops to take control of the city. As fears of chaos mounted, Seattle's middle class turned against the workers. After five days, the unions were forced to call off their strike.

The most controversial strike of 1919 involved the Boston police force. The police walked off the job after city officials cut their wages and refused to negotiate with their union. At first, Boston's citizens felt sympathy for the police. But that sympathy vanished as the city lapsed into anarchy. Residents set up citizen patrols to fight rising crime. Governor Calvin Coolidge called in National Guard troops to keep order. In his view, "There is no right to strike against the public safety by anybody, anywhere, any time." He fired the striking policemen and hired new ones. His firm stand made Coolidge a national hero. The next year, the Republican Party nominated him as its candidate for vice president.

Unions Lose Public Support and Membership

As the strikes persisted, middle-class Americans began to view unionism as a threat to their way of life. Strike-related violence added to fears that radical union activity could lead to anarchy. Public hostility was one reason that overall union membership declined in the 1920s. A second was the failure of many strikes to achieve workers' goals. A third reason was the exclusive politics of many unions. The AFL, for example, limited its membership by refusing to organize unskilled employees. It also excluded women, African Americans, and most immigrants. In response, African Americans organized their own unions. The best known, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, was a union of black railroad workers led by A. Philip Randolph.

In addition, a number of Supreme Court decisions weakened unions. First, the Court restricted unions' right to boycott a business that fought unionization. Then, in 1922, the Court declared unconstitutional a federal child labor law. A year later, the Court rejected a Washington, D.C., law that established a minimum wage for women workers. These decisions hurt labor unions by making it easier for companies to hire children and women at low wages.

The diminishing power of unions had a negative effect on workers. Even after the postwar recession ended, many working-class Americans gained little economic ground. Their average income remained well below \$1,500 per year at a time when families needed more than that to get by.

26.4 – Growing Political Tensions

Nicola Sacco became an anarchist while working in a shoe factory. Bartolomeo Vanzetti learned about anarchism while working at a rope factory. The two met in 1917, when they fled to Mexico to escape the military draft. When they returned to Massachusetts, they joined an East Boston anarchists' group. Vanzetti later boasted, "Both Nick and I are anarchists—the radical of the radical." On the night of their arrest, both were carrying guns. Sacco also had a pamphlet advertising an anarchist rally at which Vanzetti would speak. After their trial, many came to believe that Sacco and Vanzetti had been convicted because of their radical politics.

A Bomb Scare Fuels Fear of Radical Groups

On April 28, 1919, a mysterious package arrived in Seattle mayor Ole Hanson's office. The package contained a bomb. The next day, a similar package sent to former Georgia Senator Thomas Hardwick exploded, injuring his maid. Acting on a tip from a New York City postal worker, the post office found 34 more bombs. The addressees included capitalists like John D. Rockefeller and political figures like Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. No one ever learned who mailed the bombs.

Many Americans saw the bomb scare as another sign that radicalism was threatening public order. Radicalism is a point of view favoring extreme change, especially in social or economic structures. At this time, it referred to the ideas of socialist, communist, and anarchist groups. Socialists called for public ownership of the means of production, including land and factories. They believed such changes could be brought about through peaceful reforms.

Communists followed the economic theories of the German philosopher Karl Marx (1818–1883). Similar to socialism, communism called for public ownership of the means of production. The result would be a classless society in which all people shared equally in the wealth produced by their labor. Communists, however, believed such change could only be brought about through a revolution by the working class.

American communists drew inspiration from the Russian Revolution of 1917. During that time of unrest, a small group of communists called Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, had seized control of the country. The Bolsheviks hoped their success would spark communist revolutions in other countries. When that did not happen, Lenin established the Comintern (Communist International). The Comintern united radical groups throughout the world who accepted Lenin's views on the need for revolution to create a communist state.

Anarchists opposed all systems of government. They wanted a society based on freedom, mutual respect, and cooperation. Most anarchists were peaceful, but they had been associated with violence since the Chicago Haymarket Square bombing of 1886. In that incident, seven policemen were killed as they broke up an anarchist rally. None of these radical groups was very large. Combined, their membership came to less than 1 percent of the adult population. Nor were they very effective. They argued constantly among themselves. Still, many Americans viewed them with suspicion and alarm. This postwar fear of radicals became known as the Red Scare. Red was slang for communist.

The Red Scare Leads to Raids on "Subversives"

On June 2, 1919, the intensity of the Red Scare increased. Eight bombs exploded in eight cities at the same time. One target was Attorney General Mitchell Palmer's house in Washington, D.C. In response, Palmer launched a campaign against subversives, or people who sought to overthrow the government.

Palmer and his assistant, J. Edgar Hoover, conducted raids on homes, businesses, and meeting places of people they thought might be subversives. The Palmer Raids sought weapons, explosives, and other evidence of violent activity. Officials entered buildings without warrants and seized records without permission. With little or no cause, they arrested 6,000 suspected radicals. Foreign-born suspects were deported, many without a court hearing. The only evidence of violent activity they found was three pistols.

Civil Liberties Suffer

Palmer's tactics trampled civil liberties, basic rights guaranteed by law. Newspaper editor Walter Lippmann wrote of the abuses: "It is forever incredible that an administration announcing the most spacious ideals in our history should have done more to endanger fundamental American liberties than any group of men for a hundred years."

Yet for some Americans, the fear of radicalism overshadowed concerns about abuses of civil liberties. Some 30 states passed sedition laws, which made stirring up opposition to the government a crime. Books considered subversive were removed from public libraries. A mob broke into the offices of a socialist newspaper in New York City and beat up the staff. Another mob seized a Wobbly out of a jail in Washington, hanged him from a bridge, and used his body for target practice.

Palmer had hoped to ride the wave of public alarm about radicals all the way to the White House. But he went too far when he announced that a plot to overthrow the government would begin in New York City on May 1, 1920. As that day drew near, the city's police force was put on 24-hour duty. Politicians were given armed guards for protection. When nothing happened, Palmer's political ambitions were shattered.

After this false alarm, the country worried less about subversion. Most of the people arrested in the Palmer Raids were released without being accused of a crime. Still, the campaign had crippled the nation's radical movements.

26.5 – Increasing Social Tensions

The police investigating the South Braintree robbery had little to go on except eyewitness accounts of two bandits who "looked Italian." Three weeks later, the police arrested Sacco and Vanzetti. When searched, the suspects were found to be carrying pistols and ammunition. When questioned, they lied about where they had been and how they had obtained their guns. Their behavior made them look suspicious to the police and, later, to a jury. But during this troubled time, some native-born Americans eyed many immigrants—especially those who were poor and spoke little English—with suspicion.

Increased Immigration Causes a Revival of Nativism

Between 1905 and 1914, a million people a year immigrated to the United States. Most came from southern and eastern Europe. Immigration dipped sharply during World War I and then picked up again afterward. In 1920, about 430,000 foreigners entered the country. A year later, that number almost doubled.

The rising tide of immigrants triggered a resurgence of nativism along with calls for immigration restriction. Many nativists feared that the latest immigrants would never become "100 percent American." As one nativist warned, "There are vast communities in the nation thinking today not in terms of America, but in terms of Old World prejudices, theories, and animosities." Others argued that reducing immigration would relieve urban crowding and reduce ethnic conflicts. Union members favored restrictions because they worried that immigrants were taking jobs from union workers. Even some large employers supported immigration restriction. For this group, fear of immigrant radicalism had come to outweigh their desire for cheap immigrant labor.

New Laws Close the Nation's "Open Door" to Immigrants

Congress responded to anti-immigrant pressure by passing the Emergency Immigration Act of 1921. This new law capped the number of people allowed into the country each year at 375,000. It also introduced a quota system to limit the number of immigrants from each country. The quota, or maximum number, was set at 3 percent of a country's residents in the United States in 1910. The quota system was intended to be a temporary measure until Congress could study immigration more closely.

Three years later, Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1924. This law reduced the number of immigrants allowed into the country each year to 164,000. It also cut quotas to 2 percent of a country's residents in the United States in 1890. That had been a time when most immigrants came from northern Europe. By moving the date back, the law severely reduced immigration from southern and eastern Europe. The new law also banned all immigration from Asia. When the Japanese government heard this news, it declared a national day of mourning.

By the end of the decade, immigration was more than one quarter of what it had been in 1921. But even that was not enough of a reduction for many nativists. In 1929, they persuaded Congress to lower the number of immigrants each year to 150,000.

A Revived Ku Klux Klan Targets "Alien" Influences

Anti-immigrant feelings played a role in the revival of the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan was reborn in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1915 after the lynching of Leo Frank, a Jewish factory manager. Frank had been condemned to death for killing a young girl named Mary Phagan. Convinced that Frank was innocent, the governor of Georgia reduced Frank's sentence to life imprisonment. At that point, armed men, calling themselves the Knights of Mary Phagan, broke Frank out of jail and hanged him. The Knights then reformed themselves as the new invisible order of the Ku Klux Klan.

The revived Ku Klux Klan portrayed itself as a defender of American values. It restricted membership to native-born white Protestants and set itself against African Americans, immigrants, Catholics, and Jews. "The Klan is intolerant," bragged its Imperial Wizard, Hiram Wesley Evans, "of the people who are trying to destroy our traditional Americanism . . . aliens who are constantly trying to change our civilization into something that will suit themselves better."

In the early 1920s, the Klan swelled to between 3 and 4 million members and gained considerable political power throughout the country. Lawmakers supported by the Klan won control of state legislatures in Oregon, Oklahoma, Texas, and Indiana. To demonstrate their power, Klan members held massive marches in Washington, D.C., and other major cities. Yet the Klan's violence and intimidation remained secretive. They often struck at night, wearing hoods that concealed their faces and using whippings, kidnappings, cross burnings, arson, and murder to terrorize entire communities.

The American Civil Liberties Union Defends Unpopular Views

The views of nativists and the Klan did not go unchallenged. In 1920, a group of pacifists and social activists founded the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to protect freedom of speech. The ACLU specialized in the defense of unpopular individuals and groups, including Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti.

In the first year of the ACLU, its lawyers fought to protect immigrants who had been rounded up in the Palmer Raids for their radical beliefs from being deported. The ACLU also defended the right of trade unions to hold meetings and organize workers. ACLU lawyers helped win the release of hundreds of Wobblies and other pacifists who had been jailed during the war for expressing antiwar sentiments. The ACLU opposed censorship by fighting efforts by the Customs Office and the Post Office to ban certain books from the mail. As you will read in Chapter 29, the ACLU would later play a leading role in one of the most controversial trials of the 1920s.

26.6 – Enduring Racial and Religious Tensions

On July 27, 1927, six years after Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted of murder, the Lowell Committee concluded that the trial of the two men had been fair. On August 23, 1927, the two men were executed. Decades after their executions, doubts remain about their guilt. Modern analysis of the evidence has confirmed that the gun found on Sacco at the time of his arrest was one of the murder weapons. This suggests that Sacco was guilty of the crime. But no one has found proof to link Vanzetti to the murders. "I have suffered because I was an Italian," Vanzetti wrote from prison.

Asians and African Americans Face Discrimination

Italians were not the only victims of such prejudice. Asian immigrants also faced severe legal discrimination. Asians were barred from becoming citizens and, in several states, from owning land. Many states also banned marriages between whites and Asians.

African Americans faced continuing discrimination as well. At the end of World War I, returning black soldiers had high hopes that their service to the country would lessen prejudice. These hopes proved illusory. Black veterans had problems finding jobs. In some places, lynching made an ugly comeback. More than 70 blacks were murdered by lynch mobs in 1919.

In the summer of 1919, tensions between whites and blacks erupted into race riots. The most serious riot occurred in Chicago when whites killed a black swimmer who had strayed into the white section of a Lake Michigan beach. Some 38 people were killed and 500 injured in the riots that followed. The African American poet Claude McKay wrote of the summer of 1919:

If we must die, let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die, O let us nobly die, . . .
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

—Claude McKay, "If We Must Die," 1919

In this climate of violence, many African Americans responded to the message of a leader named Marcus Garvey. The Jamaican-born Garvey believed blacks would never be treated fairly in a white-dominated country. "Our success educationally, industrially, and politically is based upon the protection of a nation founded by ourselves," he argued. "And the nation can be nowhere else but in Africa."

Garvey's Back-to-Africa movement attracted up to 2 million followers. He also collected enough money to start several businesses, including a steamship line intended to transport his followers to Africa. In 1925, however, Garvey was imprisoned for mail fraud connected with the sale of stock in one of his businesses. After that, his Back-to-Africa

movement faded away. Yet Garvey had raised a critical issue: Should African Americans create a separate society or work for an integrated one?

Jews and Catholics Battle Religious Prejudice

The influx of 2.4 million Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe stirred up anti-Semitism—prejudice against Jews. In some communities, landlords refused to rent apartments to Jewish tenants. Colleges limited the number of Jewish students they accepted. Many ads for jobs stated "Christians only."

The Leo Frank case, which gave birth to the new Ku Klux Klan, also led to the founding of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in 1913. The organization's immediate goal was "to stop the defamation [false accusation] of the Jewish people." Its longer-term mission was "to secure justice and fair treatment to all citizens alike." Throughout the 1920s, the ADL battled discrimination against Jews in all areas of life.

Catholics were also targets of religious prejudice. In 1928, the Democratic Party nominated New York Governor Al Smith, a Catholic, for president. Soon, rumors swept the country that if Smith were elected, the Catholic pope would run the United States. Smith spent most of the campaign trying to persuade voters that his religious beliefs did not present a threat to the nation.

Smith was not convincing enough to overcome strong anti-Catholic sentiment in many parts of the country. For the first time since the end of Reconstruction, the Republican Party carried several states in the South. More than 30 years would pass before another Catholic candidate would be nominated for the nation's highest office.

Summary

Rising economic, political, and social tensions marked the years just after World War I. This tense atmosphere affected the murder trial of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. Both men were sentenced to death, despite weak evidence. Some Americans saw Sacco and Vanzetti as victims of prejudice against immigrants and radicals.

Recession A poorly planned demobilization resulted in an economic recession after World War I. As unemployment rose, living standards for all but the richest Americans declined.

Labor unrest Unions staged thousands of strikes for better wages and working conditions. Despite these efforts, unions began to lose strength, and their membership declined.

Red Scare Fear of socialists, communists, and anarchists fueled the Red Scare. Attorney General Mitchell Palmer led raids against suspected subversives, often violating their civil liberties.

Immigration restriction Congress responded to anti-immigrant pressure by restricting immigration. A quota system also limited the number of immigrants from each country.

Back-to-Africa movement African Americans were disappointed that their service to the country in World War I did not reduce racial prejudice. Marcus Garvey's Back-to-Africa movement appealed to blacks who had given up hope for equality in the United States.

Discrimination Nativism surged in the postwar years. A revived Ku Klux Klan targeted blacks, immigrants, Jews, and Catholics as un-American. The Anti-Defamation League began in response to anti-Semitism. The American Civil Liberties Union formed to protect freedom of speech.

Chapter 27 — The Politics of Normalcy

Did the Republican Era of the 1920s bring peace and prosperity to all Americans?

27.1 – Introduction

Between 1917 and 1920, the United States experienced war, strikes, recession, and race riots. Ohio Senator Warren G. Harding knew what most Americans wanted next: peace and quiet. In May 1920, he told a Boston audience,

America's present need is not heroics, but healing; not nostrums [ineffective remedies], but normalcy; . . . not agitation, but adjustment; not surgery, but serenity; not the dramatic, but the dispassionate [calm]; not experiment, but equipoise [balance]; not submergence in internationality, but sustainment in triumphant nationality.

—Senator Warren G. Harding, speech in Boston, 1920

It was a typical Harding speech in the puffed-up, pompous style he called "bloviating." Pennsylvania Senator Boies Penrose jokingly warned Republican leaders, "Keep Warren at home. Don't let him make any speeches. If he goes out on a tour, somebody's sure to ask him questions, and Warren's just the sort of . . . fool that'll try to answer them."

For all of its wordiness, Harding's speech captured the public mood perfectly. Later that year, he was nominated to be the Republican candidate for president. Taking Penrose's advice, Harding campaigned from his front porch and gave short speeches, promising to bring America "back to normalcy." That promise won him more than 60 percent of the vote.

For Harding, normalcy meant a return to life as it was in prewar America. Wilson's concentration on world affairs would be replaced by a focus on prosperity at home. In his inaugural address, Harding declared, "We want less government in business and more business in government." Afterward, a woman in the audience observed, "We have had Wilson for eight years, and I have not understood him. I understand Harding already." Harding's inauguration began the Republican Era, which lasted through the 1920s.

27.2 – A Republican Era Begins

The contrast between the aged, sickly Woodrow Wilson and the robust Warren Harding was proof enough that a new era had arrived. But there was more. Harding was the first president to have his inauguration speech amplified through loudspeakers. After speaking, he walked to the Senate to personally nominate his cabinet members. No president had done that since George Washington. On entering the White House, he opened the front gates, raised the blinds, and welcomed the public. Ordinary Americans had not been allowed on the White House grounds since the beginning of World War I.

Harding Cuts Taxes and Spending

Before going into politics, Harding had owned a small newspaper in his hometown of Marion, Ohio. "He looks like a president," thought Harry Daugherty when he first met Harding in 1899. For the next 21 years, Daugherty managed Harding's political career all the way to the White House.

By his own admission, Harding was "a man of limited talents from a small town." But his cheerful, gregarious nature kept him popular with the public. So did his commitment to the free enterprise system. Such an economic system is characterized by private ownership of property, including land and resources. It relies on competition for profits and the forces of supply and demand to determine what goods and services should be produced and at what price.

With the support of a Republican Congress, Harding set to work to end the postwar recession. He repealed taxes that had been raised under Wilson to fund the war effort. Harding also reduced federal spending. His budget director, Chicago banker Charles Dawes, made the government operate in a more efficient way. Dawes's efforts were believed to have saved at least a billion tax dollars annually at a time when the federal government's yearly spending came to less than \$5 billion. The resulting surplus was used to pay down the national debt.

Harding's fiscal policy, or approach to taxes and government spending, brought renewed prosperity. Prices plunged in 1921, so Americans could afford more goods and services. Unemployment dropped from nearly 12 percent when Harding took office to just above 2 percent in 1923.

Harding's Friends Betray Him: The Teapot Dome Scandal

A loyal friend, Harding filled several government positions with old pals from Ohio. The leading member of this "Ohio Gang" was Harding's former campaign manager and now attorney general, Harry Daugherty. Another old friend, New Mexico Senator Albert Fall, became Harding's secretary of the interior.

But the Ohio Gang betrayed Harding's trust. Daugherty, for example, took bribes from suspects accused of crimes. The worst instance of corruption was the Teapot Dome Scandal, which began when Secretary of the Interior Fall persuaded Harding to give him control over national oil reserves in Elk Hills, California, and Teapot Dome, Wyoming. Fall then leased the oil reserves to two companies that had paid him \$360,000 in bribes. When the bribes became public, Fall resigned. But the scandal left the public wondering whether any other national properties had been offered up for sale.

Harding stood by his friends, saying, "If Albert Fall isn't an honest man, I am not fit to be president of the United States." In fact, Harding was not all that physically fit. While on a "bloviating" tour of the West, Harding suffered a heart attack in San Francisco. He died on August 2, 1923.

Calvin Coolidge Promotes Business

On August 3, 1923, Vice President Calvin Coolidge took the oath of office in a Vermont farmhouse. Nicknamed "Silent Cal," Coolidge was a small man of few words. Americans saw in him the quiet virtues of small-town New England: integrity, hard work, and thriftiness.

Like Harding, Coolidge believed "the chief business of the American people is business." But for Coolidge, business was more than a way to make a living. It was a worthy calling. "The man who builds a factory builds a temple," he wrote. "And the man who works there worships there."

Coolidge coasted to an easy victory in the election of 1924. Working closely with Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon, Coolidge worked to cut taxes and eliminate unnecessary spending. He pushed for reductions in corporate taxes, income taxes, and inheritance taxes—taxes on assets received from people who have died. Coolidge even cut his own White House budget, economizing in little ways, such as reducing the number of towels in the bathrooms.

Under Coolidge, the nation continued to prosper. Americans assumed he would run for reelection in 1928. But in August 1927, while on vacation, he shocked reporters by handing them a statement that simply said, "I do not choose to run for president in 1928." Silent Cal had spoken.

Herbert Hoover Promises to "End Poverty as We Know It"

In 1928, the Republican Party turned to Herbert Hoover as its presidential nominee. Hoover was an American success story. Born in West Branch, Iowa, in 1874, he was orphaned at a young age. Despite this, he worked his way through college and became a very wealthy mining engineer. Hoover's success, along with his Quaker upbringing, inspired him to write a book titled *American Individualism*. In it, he wrote of his "abiding faith in the intelligence, the initiative, the character, the courage, and the divine touch in the individual."

At the age of 40, Hoover decided to leave engineering and devote his life to public service. During World War I, he headed President Woodrow Wilson's Food Administration. When the war ended, Hoover gained fame by setting up programs to feed the hungry in Europe. In 1921, President Harding made Hoover his secretary of commerce.

Like Harding and Coolidge, Hoover believed in promoting business. He encouraged what he called "associationalism." This involved bringing industry leaders together to improve economic efficiency. Hoover hoped that as businesses flourished, poverty would disappear. In accepting the Republican nomination for president in 1928, he said,

We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land. The poor-house is vanishing from among us. We have not yet reached the goal, but given a chance to go forward with the policies of the

last eight years, we shall soon with the help of God be in sight of the day when poverty will be banished from this nation.

—Herbert Hoover, speech accepting the Republican nomination, 1928

27.3 – Engaging the World in an Era of Isolationism

The horrors of World War I had left many Americans yearning for a withdrawal from international affairs, a policy that became known as isolationism. Isolationist attitudes had been strong in the Senate when it had voted down the Treaty of Versailles. At heart, however, Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover were not isolationists. They recognized that foreign trade connected American farmers and businesspeople to the rest of the world.

Avoiding Involvement in Europe

Isolationist feeling was strongest toward Europe. Although in his campaign, Harding had favored entry into the League of Nations, upon taking office, he declared, "We seek no part in directing the destinies of the Old World." During his presidency, the State Department did not even open mail from the League.

American distrust of the League of Nations softened with time. The United States sent delegates to several League conferences in the 1920s. Presidents Harding and Coolidge also supported U.S. membership in an international court of justice known as the World Court. Established by the League in 1921, the World Court's purpose was to settle international disputes before they turned into wars. By the time the Senate approved membership in 1926, it had attached so many reservations that the other member nations refused to approve U.S. membership.

Promoting Peace Through Disarmament

Although public opinion leaned toward isolationism, Americans also longed for world peace. President Harding responded by inviting representatives of Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan to Washington to discuss naval disarmament, or weapons reduction. When the Washington Naval Conference opened in 1921, Secretary of State Charles Evan Hughes shocked the delegates by offering to scrap 30 U.S. warships. The other nations soon agreed to limit the size of their navies as well.

Supporters of the naval disarmament agreement hoped it would discourage future wars. Naysayers, however, feared that military ambitions would not be so easily contained. They were right. The Washington Naval Conference did limit the construction of large warships, but it did not affect smaller ships and submarines. Soon Japan, Great Britain, and the United States were adding cruisers and other small ships to their fleets.

Using Diplomacy to Outlaw War

Efforts to negotiate an end to warfare peaked in 1928, when the United States signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact. This treaty began with an agreement between the United States and France to outlaw war between their countries. Eventually 62 nations signed the pact, which rejected war as "an instrument of national policy."

Americans cheered the Kellogg-Briand Pact as an important step toward world peace. "It is a thing to rejoice over," gushed the Boston Herald. More practical-minded realists sneered that this "international kiss" was not worth much, because it still permitted defensive wars. But the Senate approved the treaty by a vote of 85 to 1.

Settling Europe's War Debts

In addition to worrying about the next war, the Republican presidents worked to clean up debts from the last one. At the end of World War I, Great Britain and France owed U.S. lenders \$11 billion. With their economies in shambles, these countries relied on reparations from Germany to make their loan payments. The German economy, however, was in even worse shape. By 1923, Germany had stopped making reparation payments.

Charles Dawes, a banker who had served as Harding's budget director, came up with a solution to the debt crisis. American banks would loan money to Germany. Germany would use that money to pay reparations to Great Britain and France. Great Britain and France would then repay what they owed American lenders. The circular flow of money in the Dawes Plan worked for a while. But it also increased the amount of money Germany owed the United States, an issue that would cause problems later.

Reducing Involvement in Latin America

Isolationist sentiment also had an impact on U.S. policy toward Latin America. When Harding took office in 1921, U.S. troops were stationed in Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti. Harding and Coolidge both tried to reduce such entanglements. In 1921, Harding settled a long dispute with Colombia over the Panama Canal. Three years later, Coolidge withdrew troops from the Dominican Republic. Still, business ties and American investments continued to pull the United States into Latin American affairs. After withdrawing the marines from Nicaragua in 1925, Coolidge sent them back in 1927 to counter a revolution.

Hoover, however, embraced a policy of nonintervention. Immediately after his election in 1928, he embarked on a goodwill tour of Latin America. In 1930, he signaled his rejection of the Roosevelt Corollary by announcing that the United States did not have the right to intervene militarily in Latin America. Even when revolutions shook Panama, Cuba, and Honduras in 1931, Hoover did not send troops. "I have no desire," he said, "for representation of the American government abroad through our military forces."

27.4 – The Republican Boom Years

Under the economic policies of the Republican presidents, the post–World War I recession faded away. Businesses began to expand. Productivity increased dramatically. Unemployment dropped and wages rose to double what they had been before the war. By 1929, the United States was producing 40 percent of the world's manufactured goods. "Big business in America," reported muckraking journalist Lincoln Steffens, "is providing what the socialists held up as their goal—food, shelter, clothing for all."

Henry Ford Pioneers a New Age of Mass Production

The automobile industry led this new age of productivity. In 1910, U.S. automakers built fewer than 200,000 cars a year at prices that only the wealthy could afford. By 1929, at least half of all American families owned a car. The credit for this transformation of the car from luxury item to consumer good goes to Detroit automaker Henry Ford.

Ford's goal was to mass-produce cars in order to lower their prices. "The public should always be wondering how it is possible to give so much for the money," he wrote. He accomplished his goal by designing a revolutionary moving assembly line that cut production time from 14 to six hours. He then could cut the price of his cars from \$950 in 1908 to under \$290 in 1926.

When he unveiled his assembly line in 1914, Ford made a stunning announcement. He was more than doubling his workers' pay from the \$2.40 per nine-hour day common in his industry to \$5.00 per eight-hour day. The public loved him for it. Business leaders hated him, saying that he was ruining the labor market. Looking back, historian Frederick Lewis Allen observed,

What Ford had actually done—in his manufacturing techniques, his deliberate price cutting, and his deliberate wage raising—was to demonstrate . . . one of the great principles of modern industrialism . . . This is the principle that the more goods you produce, the less it costs to produce them; and the more people are well off, the more they can buy, thus making this lavish and economical production possible.

—Frederick Lewis Allen, *The Big Change*, 1952

Ford sold so many cars that by the mid-1920s his Detroit, Michigan, factory complex had 19 buildings covering two square miles. A new car rolled off his assembly lines every 10 seconds. By 1930, Ford had produced 20 million cars.

Innovations Give Birth to New Industries

The automobile industry's rapid expansion fueled growth in other industries, such as steel, rubber, and oil. Highway construction boomed. Restaurants and hotels sprang up along new roads to meet the needs of motorists. The popularity of cars also created new service industries, such as gas stations and repair shops. By the mid-1920s, one of every eight American workers had a job related to the auto industry.

The airplane industry also boomed. During World War I, airplanes had become weapons. In 1927, the Boeing Airplane Company won the U.S. Post Office contract to fly mail and passengers from Chicago to San Francisco and back. By 1930, there were 38 domestic and five international airlines operating in the United States. The airplane had been transformed from novelty to vehicle.

A "plastics craze" also changed American life in the 1920s. Synthetic fibers like rayon revolutionized the clothing industry. See-through cellophane became the first fully flexible, waterproof wrapping material. Bakelite, the first plastic that would not burn, boil, melt, or dissolve in any common solvent, was vital to the production of radios. Radio had first been used for wireless communication among ships at sea. By 1920, radio stations had sprouted up in many U.S. cities. Radio production soared as a result. By 1929, radios were a big business, with Americans spending \$850 million on sets and parts that year alone.

Big Businesses Get Even Bigger

Businesses were not only prospering but also getting bigger due to a wave of consolidation. Consolidation is the merging, or combining, of two businesses. During the Progressive Era, antitrust laws had slowed business consolidation. Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover, in contrast, chose to ignore antitrust laws. The Republican presidents defended consolidation on the grounds that it made the economy more efficient.

Consolidation came early to the automobile industry. Before 1910, there were hundreds of companies building cars in the United States. By 1929, three automakers—Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler—built almost 90 percent of the cars on the market. General Motors was the brainchild of an entrepreneur named William Durant. Unlike Ford, who made just one car model, Durant offered several models at different price levels. By the end of the decade, General Motors had become the nation's leading automaker.

The story was similar in other industries. In the 1920s, a handful of holding companies bought up nearly 5,000 small utility companies. A holding company is a corporation that owns or controls other companies by buying up their stock. By 1929, about two thirds of American homes were wired for electricity, and consolidation led to a decline in the cost of electricity.

Consolidation also revolutionized the grocery business, as the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company (A&P) launched the first grocery store chain. Mom-and-pop grocery shops were driven out of business as A&P's chain grew from fewer than 5,000 stores in 1920 to more than 15,000 by 1929. Not everyone viewed this triumph of big business as positive. An anti-chain store movement swept through a number of states and cities.

Speculators Aim to Get Rich Quick

As the good times rolled on, some Americans got caught up in get-rich-quick schemes, such as Ponzi Scheme and the Florida Land Boom. In this Florida scheme, shady real estate developers sold lots along the Florida coast to eager speculators in other parts of the country. A speculator is someone who takes the risk of buying something in the hope of selling it for a higher price later. As long as prices were going up, no one cared that some of the lots were under water. Prices collapsed, however, after a hurricane devastated the Florida coast. Many speculators were left with nothing but near-worthless land.

Others saw the stock market as the road to riches. In the past, only wealthy people had owned stock. During the 1920s, stock ownership had spread to the middle class. John Raskob, a General Motors executive, encouraged stock buying in a Ladies' Home Journal article titled "Everybody Ought to Be Rich." Raskob told his readers that if they invested a mere \$15 a month in the stock market, they could expect a massive payoff of \$80,000 in 20 years.

Many Americans took his advice. Housewives invested their pocket money in stocks. Barbers, cab drivers, and elevator operators bought stocks on "hot tips" they had overheard while working. As money poured into the market, stock prices soared. The Dow Jones Industrial Average, a measure of stock prices still used today, doubled between May 1928 and September 1929.

Left Out of the Boom: Enduring Poverty

Between 1921 and 1929, the gross national product (GNP) of the United States rose by 40 percent. The GNP is a measure of the total value of goods and services produced within a country in a year. However, not all Americans shared in the prosperity. In 1929, a family of four needed \$2,500 a year to live decently. More than half the families filing tax returns that year earned \$1,500 or less.

The 1920s were hard times for farmers, many of whom were deeply in debt after the war. Surplus crops also caused farm prices to collapse. Hard times for farmers meant even harder times for farmworkers. Mexican, Mexican American, Asian, and Asian American workers earned the lowest wages and endured the worst working and living conditions.

Unskilled workers also fared poorly in the 1920s. Workers in old industries struggled to stay employed. Coal miners were laid off by the thousands as gasoline, natural gas, and electricity became more popular sources of energy. The textile industry faced heavy competition from new synthetic fabrics. Among the hardest hit were African Americans, who were often the last to be hired and the first to be fired. They were usually paid less than their white counterparts and were also barred from most unions.

Summary

The election of 1920 launched a decade-long Republican Era in national politics. During that time, three Republican presidents—Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover—worked to return the nation to "normalcy," or peace and prosperity.

Isolationism After World War I, many Americans favored a policy of isolationism, or withdrawal from international affairs.

Free enterprise system The Republican presidents supported individual enterprise and the free enterprise system by adopting business-friendly fiscal policies. The government cut taxes and spending.

Teapot Dome Scandal The Harding administration was marred by corruption. Harding's distress over the Teapot Dome Scandal contributed to his declining health. He died in office in 1923.

Washington Naval Conference The Republican presidents turned to diplomacy to prevent another world war. The Washington Naval Conference attempted to reduce military competition by limiting the size of the world's most powerful navies.

Kellogg-Briand Pact Sixty-two nations signed this treaty, in which they agreed to outlaw war.

Dawes Plan The United States set up the Dawes Plan to help European nations pay their war debts to American lenders.

Dow Jones Industrial Average Americans hoping to "get rich quick" engaged in speculation in land and stocks. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose as money flowed into the stock market.

Economic boom The economy prospered as businesses boomed. Business consolidation led to the domination of most major industries by just a few companies. However, poverty persisted, and many farmers and workers were left out of the boom.

Chapter 28 — Popular Culture in the Roaring Twenties

What social trends and innovations shaped popular culture during the 1920s?

28.1 – Introduction

Bee Jackson, a New York City dancer, was looking for a chance to become famous. But she was only part of a Broadway musical chorus line, so no one really knew her. Then one night in 1923, Jackson went to see *Runnin' Wild*, the new African American musical everyone was talking about. The dancers began doing a dance she had never seen before called the Charleston. "I hadn't been watching it three minutes," Jackson later recalled, "before I recognized it as old Mrs. Opportunity herself shouting, 'Hey! Hey!'"

The Charleston began as an African American folk dance in the South. It got its name from the South Carolina city of Charleston. The dance migrated north to Harlem, an African American neighborhood in New York City. There, Elida Webb, the dance mistress for *Runnin' Wild*, saw it and adapted the dance for the musical. After seeing the Charleston onstage, Jackson asked Webb to teach it to her.

Jackson created a dance act for herself featuring the Charleston. A booking agent took one look at the act and said, "That dance is a hit. You can't keep quiet when you are watching it." He booked Jackson into a New York City nightclub known as the Silver Slipper. From there, she took her dance act on the road to other clubs around the country and then to London and Paris. As the dance craze spread, Jackson gained the fame she had always wanted.

Young people loved the Charleston. Its fast-paced music and swinging moves were a perfect fit for a time known as the Roaring Twenties. "The first impression made by the Charleston was extraordinary," wrote one observer. "You felt a new rhythm, you saw new postures, you heard a new frenzy in the shout of the chorus." Older Americans, however, were often shocked by the dance. At Smith College, students were not allowed to practice it in their dorm rooms. This conflict over a dance was a sign that American culture was changing, sometimes far faster than many people could or would accept.

28.2 – Americans Buy into a Consumer Culture

"How's your breath today?" Listerine ads from the 1920s often asked. "Don't fool yourself . . . Halitosis makes you unpopular." The ad might show a sophisticated couple gliding across the dance floor, face-to-face. Bad breath does not seem to be a problem for them. Be like them, the ad seems to say. "Halitosis doesn't announce itself. You are seldom aware you have it . . . Nice people end any chance of offending by . . . rinsing . . . with Listerine. Every morning. Every night."

In 1914, Listerine was introduced as the nation's first over-the-counter mouthwash. Until then, bad breath was something few people thought much about. Listerine advertisements changed that. Suddenly people began to worry about "halitosis"—an

obscure medical term for bad breath that Listerine's makers popularized. "Halitosis spares no one," ads warned. "The insidious [quietly harmful] thing about it is that you yourself may never realize when you have it." Listerine sales skyrocketed. In just seven years, the product's sales revenues rose into the millions—all thanks to the power of advertising.

New Products Promise to Make Life Easier

At the root of the Listerine ad was a promise. Use Listerine every day, and your life will get better. In the 1920s, the makers of other new products repeated such promises in radio and print advertisements. In the process, they helped create a new consumer culture. This is a culture that views the consumption of large quantities of goods as beneficial to the economy and a source of personal happiness.

The ideas for some new products emerged from brilliant minds. George Washington Carver, for example, pioneered the creation of new goods based on agricultural products. Carver made more than 300 products from peanuts, including a face powder, printer's ink, and soap. He also created more than 75 products from pecans and more than 100 products from sweet potatoes, such as flour, shoe polish, and candy. "Anything will give up its secrets if you love it enough," Carver said of his work with humble plants.

In 1919, Charles Strite invented the pop-up toaster because he was tired of being served burnt toast in a company cafeteria. The appliance was a huge success. Clarence Birdseye, with an investment of \$7 in an electric fan, buckets of saltwater, and cakes of ice, invented a system of flash-freezing fresh food in 1923.

The electrification of homes spurred the introduction of a host of new household appliances. Electric vacuum cleaners made cleaning easier. Electric-powered washing machines and irons revolutionized laundry day. Food preparation became easier with electric refrigerators and stoves.

Advertising Builds Consumer Demand

New kinds of advertisements created demand for these new products. No longer was it enough to say what the product was and why it was good. Now advertisers used psychologists to tailor their ads to people's desires and behaviors. In 1925, economist Stuart Chase observed,

Advertising does give a certain illusion, a certain sense of escape in a machine age. It creates a dream world: smiling faces, shining teeth, school girl complexions, cornless feet, perfect fitting union suits, distinguished collars, wrinkleless pants, odorless breaths, . . . charging motors, punctureless tires, . . . self-washing dishes.

—Stuart Chase, "The Tragedy of Waste," *The Atlantic Monthly*, 1925

Businesses found that by changing styles frequently, they could induce consumers to buy their goods more often. Women had already accepted the ups and downs of

hemlines. Now the practice of introducing new models every year was extended to goods that were supposed to last a long time, including cars, furniture, and household appliances. Advertisers worked hand-in-hand with businesses to convince consumers of the value of staying up-to-date. Buying the latest model, even if you didn't need it, became a sign of prestige.

Bruce Barton was the most famous adman of the time. In 1925, he published a book titled *The Man Nobody Knows*. In it, he praised Jesus as the founder of a successful business, saying, "He picked up twelve men from the bottom ranks of business and forged them into an organization that conquered the world." In Barton's view, "Jesus was a real executive . . . a great advertising man. The parables are the greatest advertisements of all time." Barton's "irreverent" and controversial book topped the nonfiction best-seller list in 1925, selling more than 750,000 copies by 1928.

Americans Begin to Buy Now, Pay Later

In the 1920s, Americans achieved the highest standard of living in the world. Still, many consumers could not afford all the goods they wanted and thought they needed. One reason was that the new products often cost far more than the older ones they were replacing. An electric washing machine cost much more than an old-fashioned washboard. The same was true of an electric shaver compared with a safety razor.

The expansion of credit made it possible for consumers to buy what they wanted, even when they lacked enough cash. Credit is an arrangement for buying something now with borrowed money and then paying off the loan over time. In the past, most Americans had thought it shameful to borrow money to buy consumer goods. Thrifty people saved the money they needed and paid cash. By the 1920s, however, such thrift began to seem old-fashioned.

The growth of installment buying made it possible for Americans to buy goods on credit. In installment buying, a buyer makes a down payment on the product. The seller loans the remainder of the purchase price to the buyer. The buyer then pays back the loan in monthly installments. If the buyer stops making payments before the loan is repaid, the seller can reclaim the product.

By the end of the 1920s, about 15 percent of all retail sales were on installment plans. This included about three out of every four radios and six out of every ten cars. Buying on credit was so easy that many Americans began to think the good times would go on forever.

28.3 – Americans Take to the Air and Roads

On May 20, 1927, a little-known airmail pilot from Minnesota took off on an extraordinary journey. Charles Lindbergh was competing for the Orteig Prize—\$25,000 for the first nonstop flight from New York City to Paris. He packed sandwiches, two canteens of water, and 451 gallons of gas. Lindbergh hit storm clouds and thick fog over

the Atlantic that forced him at times to barely skim the ocean waves. The sun set as he drew near France. He later wrote,

I first saw the lights of Paris a little before 10 P.M...and a few minutes later I was circling the Eiffel Tower at an altitude of about four thousand feet...The lights of Le Bourget [airfield] were plainly visible...I could make out long lines of hangers, and the roads appeared to be jammed with cars.

—Charles Lindbergh, *The Spirit of St. Louis*, 1953

When Lindbergh landed, 100,000 people were waiting to greet him. Overnight, he had become the biggest celebrity of the decade. That "Lucky Lindy" did not seem to care about such adulation only endeared him more to the public.

Airplanes Give Americans Wings

Airplanes had proven their usefulness during World War I. After the war, the U.S. government offered thousands of surplus warplanes for sale at bargain prices. Made of wood and canvas, these planes were not all that safe. Still, many wartime pilots bought the planes and used them for an exciting but dangerous style of flying called barnstorming.

Barnstormers toured the country, putting on daring air shows at county fairs and other events. They wowed audiences by flying planes in great loops and spirals. "Wing walkers" risked death by walking from wingtip to wingtip of a plane while it was in flight. Others leaped from the wing of one flying plane to another. Many of the planes crashed, and a number of barnstormers were killed. Lindbergh was one of the lucky barnstormers to live to old age.

The U.S. Post Office also bought surplus military planes to fly mail between a few large cities. The first transcontinental airmail route was opened between New York and San Francisco in 1920. Airmail greatly aided the growth of commercial aviation. Meanwhile, engineers were working to design safer, more powerful transport planes. By 1926, Henry Ford was producing an all-metal airplane powered by three engines rather than one. The Ford Tri-Motor could carry 10 passengers at speeds of 100 miles per hour.

In the early days of flight, pilots became celebrities. Adoring fans welcomed Lindbergh back from France with a ticker-tape parade in New York City, showering him with 1,800 tons of stockbrokers' ticker tape and confetti. In 1932, Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. Congress awarded her the Distinguished Flying Cross. At the medal ceremony, she said her flight had proven that men and women were equal in "jobs requiring intelligence, coordination, speed, coolness, and willpower."

Automobiles Reshape American Life

By making cars affordable, automaker Henry Ford had changed the way Americans lived. Cars quickly became more than just another means of transportation. A car gave women and teenagers a new sense of freedom. It ended the isolation of farmers. It

made travel to far-away places enjoyable. By the late 1920s, Americans owned more cars than bathtubs. As one woman explained, "You can't drive to town in a bathtub."

The automobile changed where Americans lived. Urban workers no longer had to live within walking distance of their workplace or near a streetcar line to get to work. Suburbs began to spread farther around cities as people found it easier to travel to and from work by car. In the 1920s, for the first time in the nation's history, suburbs grew more quickly than cities.

Before cars became popular, most roads were dirt tracks. When it rained, automobiles sometimes sank to their hubcaps in mud. Motorists often had to wait days for mud to dry before they could move on. The Federal Highway Act of 1916 encouraged states to create highway departments to address this problem. Congress passed another highway act in 1921 to support road building.

As highways crept across the continent, new businesses took root beside them. Gas stations, diners, campgrounds, and motels sprang up to serve the needs of the car traveler. Advertising billboards became common sights on roadsides. At the same time, death tolls from accidents rose. The number of people killed in automobile accidents each year increased from fewer than 5,000 before the 1920s to more than 30,000 by the 1930s. Historian Frederick Lewis Allen noted yet another change brought about by the car:

The automobile age brought a parking problem that was forever being solved and then unsolving itself again. During the early nineteen-twenties the commuters who left their cars at the suburban railway stations at first parked them at the edge of the station drive; then they needed a special parking lot, and pretty soon an extended parking lot, and in due course, a still bigger one—and the larger the lot grew, the more people wanted to use it.

—Frederick Lewis Allen, *The Big Change*, 1952

28.4 – Mass Media Shape American Popular Culture

Adoring fans worshipped movie star Rudolph Valentino as the "Great Lover." When he died suddenly at the age of 31, more than 100,000 people lined New York City streets to witness his funeral. It was an astonishing send-off for an Italian immigrant who had come to New York as a teenager in 1913. It was also a sign that Valentino had become an important part of his adopted country's popular culture. Popular culture is the culture of ordinary people and includes their music, art, literature, and entertainment. Popular culture is shaped by industries that spread information and ideas, especially the mass media.

Print Media Bring Popular Culture to a National Audience

Newspapers and magazines had long been sources of information for Americans. During the 1920s, the amount of printed material available expanded enormously. By

1929, Americans were buying more than 200 million copies a year of popular national magazines, such as the Saturday Evening Post, Ladies' Home Journal, Reader's Digest, and Time.

As newspaper and magazine circulation increased, more and more people read the same stories, learned of the same events, and saw the same ideas and fashions. As a result, a popular culture common to all regions of the United States began to take shape. At the same time, regional differences that had once divided Americans began to fade in importance.

Radio Gives Popular Culture a Voice

Radio burst onto the American scene in the 1920s. Like newspapers and magazines, radio was a mass medium that could reach very large audiences. Suddenly, popular culture had a voice.

Radio station KDKA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is thought to be the first commercial radio station. When it broadcast the results of the 1920 presidential election, people began to have an inkling of what this new medium could do. As a result, radio sales took off.

Radio pioneer David Sarnoff had a huge impact on the development of broadcast radio. Sarnoff, a Jewish immigrant from Russia, began working for the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company in 1906. Radio was first called the "wireless," because it received signals through the air rather than over wires, as the telephone did. On April 14, 1912, Sarnoff picked up a message relayed to New York City by ships at sea. It read, "Titanic ran into iceberg, sinking fast." For the next 72 hours, he stayed at his post, relaying the names of survivors to anxious relatives as the disaster at sea unfolded.

In 1919, Radio Corporation of America (RCA), a company that built radios, bought Marconi Wireless. Sarnoff saw that for RCA to sell many radios, it had to invest in programming that people would want to hear. But this idea was not easy to promote. "The wireless music box has no imaginable commercial value," others argued. "Who would pay for a message sent to nobody in particular?" To prove them wrong, Sarnoff arranged the broadcast of the Dempsey-Carpentier boxing match in 1921. Public response to this event confirmed the power of radio broadcasting to reach large numbers of people.

Sarnoff then proposed that RCA form a nationwide broadcasting network. He saw this network as a collection of radio stations across the country that would share programming. His proposal led to the formation of the National Broadcasting Company, or NBC. Much later, Sarnoff applied his vision to another medium—television. In 1941, NBC made the first commercial television broadcast. By then, Sarnoff was president of NBC, where he was known to all as "the General."

People soon came to expect radio stations to broadcast national news, such as elections. Many stations also brought play-by-play accounts of sports events to their

listeners. In addition, stations began to broadcast regular programs of music, comedy, and drama. A situation comedy called Amos 'n Andy became so popular that many people would not answer their phones during its weekly broadcast.

Motion Pictures Create Movie Stars and Fans

The movies, too, became a big business in the 1920s. Motion pictures were first developed in the 1890s. At that time, movies were silent. After World War I, people flocked to movie theaters, eager to escape the problems of the postwar recession. They drank in melodramatic love scenes, were thrilled by exciting fight scenes, and laughed at silly situations. Income from ticket sales rose from \$301 million in 1921 to \$721 million in 1929. Weekly attendance climbed from 50 million in 1920 to 90 million in 1929.

The discovery of how to add sound to movies revolutionized the motion picture industry. In 1927, *The Jazz Singer* became the first feature-length "talkie." It was an overnight hit. Dialogue became an important part of films, expanding the job of writers. While some silent-film stars adjusted to the new medium, a whole new group of stars were born.

Like radio, the movies changed popular culture in powerful ways. Movie stars became national celebrities. Fans worshipped stars such as Valentino. Actress Mary Pickford was called "America's Sweetheart." Motion pictures exposed Americans to new fashions, new hairstyles, and a loosening of the rules of social behavior. As one historian wrote, "Radio told the masses what to do, and movies showed them how to do it."

28.5 – Women Move Toward Greater Equality

Some of the most significant social changes of the 1920s occurred in the lives of women. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment granted women the right to vote. That same year, women voted on a nationwide basis in a presidential election for the first time. For suffragists, this was a dream come true. Many had hoped that because women had worked for the vote as a group, they would also vote as a group. The "woman's vote," they argued, could bring an end to war, crime, and corruption in politics. But that did not happen. Once women won the right to cast ballots, they tended to make the same choices as their male relatives made.

Women Organize and Enter Politics

Many of the women who had worked so hard to gain the vote continued to be active in politics. Some formed a grassroots organization known as the League of Women Voters. A grassroots organization is created and run by its members, as opposed to a strong central leader. Members of the League of Women Voters worked to educate themselves and all voters on public issues.

Carrie Chapman Catt, a leader of the suffrage movement, saw that the vote alone would not gain women political power. The decisions that mattered most, she observed, were made behind a "locked door" by men. "You will have a long hard fight before you get

behind that door," she warned, "for there is the engine that moves the wheels of your party machinery . . . If you really want women's votes to count, make your way there."

A few women did manage to get behind that door to run for public office. In 1917, Jeannette Rankin of Montana became the first woman elected to the House of Representatives. Two women—Nellie Tayloe Ross of Wyoming and Miriam Amanda Ferguson of Texas—became governors of their states in 1924. A year later, Representative Mae Ella Norton became the first woman to chair a congressional committee.

Women Lobby for Health Care and Equal Rights

Women's groups also lobbied lawmakers to enact legislation of special interest to women. One of their concerns was the high death rate among new mothers and their infant children. In 1921, women persuaded Congress to pass the Sheppard-Towner Act. This act distributed federal funds to states to create health services for pregnant women, new mothers, and infant children. Despite fierce opposition, Congress enacted this law, in part because lawmakers wanted to appeal to new women voters.

Women's groups were less successful in other areas. In 1923, Alice Paul, representing the National Women's Party, persuaded two congressmen to introduce the equal rights amendment (ERA) to Congress. The intention of the ERA was to guarantee equal rights for all Americans, regardless of gender. It said simply, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."

Despite vigorous lobbying efforts, Congress did not approve the ERA that year. The amendment was reintroduced to Congress many times, always failing to win passage. Critics argued that the Constitution already guarantees equality under the law and that the amendment would abolish certain state and local laws concerning women. In 1972, Congress finally approved the ERA and sent it to the states for ratification. Over the next decade, however, not enough states gave their approval to add the ERA to the Constitution. Despite this setback, Paul's amendment has been reintroduced to Congress every term since 1982.

Women Seek New Opportunities and Freedom

The 1920s brought expanded educational and job opportunities for women, in addition to their greater political rights. The number of women completing high school doubled during the decade. By the 1920s, one out of every four college faculty members was a woman. Women were entering many professions once open only to men. The number of women professionals rose by 50 percent by the end of the decade.

With wider opportunities and greater incomes, women, especially young women, rebelled against old customs. They cut their hair into short "bobs," a hairstyle easier to care for than the long hair of their mothers' generation. They also wore makeup. Lipstick, rouge, and eye shadow were no longer signs of an "immoral" woman. Women also began to wear shorter dresses. In 1919, skirts hovered 6 inches above the ground. By 1927, skirts no longer covered the knees.

Women's social behavior changed as their hemlines rose. Drinking alcohol and smoking in public were no longer socially unacceptable. In fact, they were signs of a "modern" woman. Family patterns also changed. Between 1914 and 1929, the number of divorces per year more than doubled.

The decline in birth rates was due in part to the pioneering work of Margaret Sanger. As a nurse caring for poor women in New York City, Sanger saw a link between family size and human misery. "Everywhere we look," she wrote, "we see poverty and large families going hand in hand." She also came to believe that women would never achieve equality with men unless they could choose when and if to bear children. "No woman can call herself free who does not own and control her body," she said. "No woman can call herself free until she can choose consciously whether she will or will not be a mother."

In 1916, Sanger opened the country's first family planning clinic, only to be arrested and jailed. At the time, distributing birth control information was illegal in every state. Sanger dedicated her life to altering those laws. She also founded what became the nation's leading family planning organization—the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

28.6 – African American Musicians Launch the Jazz Age

When Louis Armstrong arrived in New York City in 1924 to join Fletcher Henderson's band, the band members were not impressed. They took one look at Armstrong's long underwear and big clumpy boots and wondered if this was really the famed cornet player. On the first night that Armstrong played a solo with the band at the Roseland Ballroom, he was nervous as well. A fellow horn player encouraged him to "close your eyes and play what you feel . . . Just let it go . . . Be yourself . . . Forget about all the people." Armstrong did as he was told, and his music soared. The audience stopped dancing to gather around him. For months afterward, the Roseland was packed with people who couldn't get enough of Armstrong's playing.

Armstrong was a master of a new kind of music called jazz. Unlike more formal types of music, jazz was hard to define. As Armstrong once said, "If you have to ask what jazz is, you'll never know." This new music became so popular in the 1920s that this decade is often called the Jazz Age.

Jazz Grows Out of Blues and Ragtime

Jazz is a distinctly American musical form. It grew from a combination of influences, including African rhythms, European harmonies, African American folk music, and 19th-century American band music and instruments. At the turn of the 20th century, these forms began to mix and grew into blues and ragtime. The blues sprang from African American work songs, with elements of gospel and folk music. Many blues songs are about loneliness or sorrow, but others declare a humorous reaction to life's troubles. Ragtime used a syncopated, or irregularly accented, beat that gave the music a snappy, lilting feel.

Jazz combined the syncopation of ragtime with the deep feelings of the blues. To this already rich mix, jazz musicians added improvisation. This is a process by which musicians make up music as they play rather than relying solely on printed scores. So, to some degree, the jazz musician is his or her own composer.

Jazz was born in New Orleans. There, African American musicians were in demand to play at funeral parades, in minstrel shows, and as part of riverboat orchestras. Many gifted but untrained black musicians did not know how to read music. They began to make up melodies and expand on familiar tunes. Eventually, the improvised solo became an integral element of jazz. The jazz pianist Duke Ellington said of improvisation, "It's like an act of murder; you play with intent to commit something."

As boats and then railroads traveled away from New Orleans, they carried the new music with them. Soon jazz caught fire in Kansas City, St. Louis, Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York City. Bandleader Paul Williams remembered,

One moment, jazz was unknown, obscure—a low noise in a low dive. The next it had become a serious pastime of a hundred million people, the diversion of princes and millionaires . . . The time was ripe . . . The whole tempo of the country was speeded up . . . Americans . . . lived harder, faster than ever before. They could not go without some new outlet . . . the great American noise, jazz.

—Paul Williams, quoted in *Jazz: A History of America's Music*, 2000

Night Clubs and Radio Bring Jazz to New Audiences

In the 1920s, the black population in New York City more than doubled as a result of migration from the South. The black migrants brought their love of jazz with them to the city, and the African American neighborhood of Harlem became a magnet for jazz lovers.

The number of nightclubs and jazz clubs in Harlem in the 1920s is estimated at anywhere from 500 to several thousand. Nearly all the great jazz musicians played there at some point. Harlem's most famous jazz club was the Cotton Club. The floorshow featured dancers in lavish costumes. The dancers and musicians were African American, but most of the patrons were white.

Although people could hear jazz at nightclubs in the cities, many first heard the new music on records. The first recordings of jazz were made in the 1910s. As the style gained popularity, many artists made records featuring their own work. Radio also helped spread jazz. In the late 1920s, the music of Duke Ellington and his band was broadcast nationwide from the Cotton Club. Benny Goodman, a white clarinetist, also had a popular band there. By 1929, a survey of radio stations showed that two thirds of airtime was devoted to jazz.

Jazz Becomes America's Music

By then it was clear that jazz was here to stay. Jelly Roll Morton became the first musician to write the new music down. Bandleader Duke Ellington composed jazz standards that are still played widely today. George Gershwin blended jazz with classical musical pieces like *Rhapsody in Blue*, which were written for full orchestras.

Young people, in particular, loved dancing to the new music. The Charleston and other dances swept the country. Unlike earlier forms of dancing, the new dances, with their kicks, twists, and turns, seemed wild and reckless. Many older Americans were shocked by jazz. They felt that its fast rhythms and improvisations were contributing to a loosening of moral standards. The *Ladies' Home Journal* even launched an anti-jazz crusade. Jazz, however, became the first uniquely American music to be played and loved around the world.

28.7 – Writers and Artists in the 1920s

Young Langston Hughes had been living in Mexico with his father the year before he entered Columbia University. When he arrived in New York in 1921, his first stop was not his new college. Instead, Hughes headed to 135th Street, the heart of Harlem. He wrote of his arrival:

I came out on the platform with two heavy bags and looked around . . . Hundreds of colored people. I hadn't seen any colored people for so long . . . I went up the steps and out into the bright September sunlight. Harlem! I stood there, dropped my bags, took a deep breath and felt happy again.

—Langston Hughes, *The Big Sea*, 1940

For African American writers in the 1920s, Harlem was the place to be.

African Americans Create a "Harlem Renaissance"

The word renaissance means a "revival" or "rebirth." It usually describes a literary or artistic movement. The Harlem Renaissance was the outpouring of creativity among African American writers, artists, and musicians who gathered in Harlem during the 1920s. They shared their work and encouraged each other.

Many African American writers who were part of this movement explored what it meant to be black in the United States. Langston Hughes wrote poetry, plays, and fiction that captured the anguish of African Americans' longing for equality. He composed one of his best-known poems while traveling to New York at the age of 17.

I've known rivers:

I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.

I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.

I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to
New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset.
I've known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.
My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

—Langston Hughes, "*The Negro Speaks of Rivers*," 1920

James Weldon Johnson broke new ground with his best-known book, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. The novel describes an attempt by an African American to escape racial discrimination while exploring black culture in early 1900s. He also wrote the lyrics for "Lift Every Voice and Sing," which is sometimes called the Negro national anthem.

Zora Neale Hurston began her career as an anthropologist. She traveled through the South and the Caribbean, collecting the folklore of black people. She later transformed these into novels, short stories, and essays. Hurston's best-known novel is *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. It tells the story of an African American woman living in the black town of Eaton, Florida. Hurston lets her characters, both men and women, speak in their own dialect and voices.

Literature and Art Reflect American Life

White writers were also critical of American ideas and values. Sickened by the slaughter of war, some even moved to Europe, especially Paris. There they gathered at the apartment of writer Gertrude Stein, who called these young people the Lost Generation. They included E. E. Cummings, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos, and Sherwood Anderson. These writers developed themes and writing styles that still define modern literature.

The poet E. E. Cummings brought fresh ideas to his poetry. He used no capitalization and did not follow the usual way of presenting verse on a page. Ernest Hemingway used a direct, taut style in his novels. His first book, *The Sun Also Rises*, describes the rootless feelings of many young people after the war.

F. Scott Fitzgerald was the leading writer of the Jazz Age. His novel *The Great Gatsby* critiques the moral emptiness of upper-class American society. This passage from another Fitzgerald novel reveals the impact of the World War on the Lost Generation.

This land here cost twenty lives a foot that summer . . . See that little stream—we could walk to it in two minutes. It took the British a month to walk it—a whole empire walking very slowly . . . leaving the dead like a million bloody rugs. No Europeans will ever do that again in this generation.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Tender Is the Night*, 1933

Writers in the United States also found fault with American life. Sinclair Lewis's novel *Main Street* looked at the tedium and narrowness of life in small-town America. Playwright Eugene O'Neill wove dark, poetic tragedies out of everyday life. Both O'Neill and Lewis won the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Artists also used their work to portray modern life. Edward Hopper's paintings of New York City and New England towns express a sense of loneliness and isolation. Rockwell Kent, one of the most popular artists of this period, used tonal contrasts to create moody scenes of nature.

Georgia O'Keeffe also found inspiration in nature. She is famous for her paintings of huge flowers and, later, desert landscapes. O'Keeffe once said of her paintings, "Nobody sees a flower—really—it is so small it takes time—we haven't time—and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time."

Exploring Culture Becomes a Popular Pastime

Americans responded to this explosion of culture with enthusiasm. Art museums displayed the works of new artists such as Hopper and O'Keeffe. Magazines also showcased popular art of the time.

The American public developed a growing interest in literature as well. Magazines and newspapers helped introduce new writers to a range of readers. In addition, two publishing innovations made books more available to readers. One was the paperback book, less expensive than hardback, clothbound books. The other was the book club. Founded in 1926, the Book of the Month Club distributed books by writers such as Hemingway to members by mail. The Book of the Month Club exposed millions of Americans to new books.

28.8 – Sports Heroes Create a Country of Fans

The year was 1926. No woman had ever swum across the English Channel. Many people doubted that a woman could, but Gertrude Ederle, an American swimmer, was about to try. Ederle had already won Olympic medals in 1924. She had also already tried to swim the channel but had failed. In this attempt, she succeeded. Ederle not only swam across the 35-mile channel. She also beat the men's record by nearly two hours. Upon her return to the United States, Americans greeted Ederle with a ticker-tape parade through New York City.

Spectator Sports Become Big Business in the 1920s

By the 1920s, the eight-hour workday, five-day workweek had become the rule in many industries. More leisure time freed Americans to pursue interests beyond work. Economist Stuart Chase estimated that Americans spent one fourth of the national income on play and recreation. Some of this money went toward spectator sports, or sports that attract large numbers of fans who attend games.

Sports became a big business. Professional baseball and football teams attracted legions of loyal fans. Boxing and wrestling matches also attracted crowds. The promoter of the 1921 boxing match between U.S. heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey and French challenger Georges Carpentier built a 60,000-seat stadium for the event. Ticket sales hit \$1.8 million, more than any previous boxing match. When Dempsey fought to regain his title from Gene Tunney in 1927, more than 100,000 people bought tickets worth \$2,658,660—a record at that time.

The mass media helped raise the public interest in sports. Millions of Americans listened to radio broadcasts of popular sporting events. One entrepreneur even figured out a way to add "live action" to a radio broadcast. He had a blow-by-blow radio broadcast of the 1927 Dempsey-Tunney match piped into a large hall while two local boxers reenacted the fight for the audience.

Sports Stars Become National Celebrities

Before the 1920s, the light of publicity had never shone so brightly on sports figures. Now Americans wanted to know everything about their favorites. The media gladly fed this passion.

The most famous sports celebrity of this era was baseball slugger Babe Ruth, the legendary "Sultan of Swat." In the 1927 season, Ruth hit 60 home runs, a record that would remain unbroken for 34 years. Ruth attracted so many fans that Yankee Stadium, which opened in 1923, was nicknamed "the House That Ruth Built."

Jim Thorpe, an American Indian, was one of the greatest all-around athletes. He began his sports career as an outstanding college football player. He won fame as an Olympic track and field champion, and then went on to play professional baseball and football. In 1920, Thorpe became the first president of the group that was to become the National Football League (NFL).

Women also made their mark on sports. Gertrude Ederle broke national and world swimming records on a regular basis. Tennis star Helen Wills won many tennis championships in the United States and Europe. She was known for her ability to hit the ball harder than any woman she faced and for a calm manner that earned her the nickname "Little Miss Poker Face."

Summary

New ideas and prosperity brought change to American popular culture in the Roaring Twenties. The creative energy of writers, artists, filmmakers, and musicians, as well as innovations by businesspeople and inventors, all contributed to new directions in American life.

Consumer culture New products and advertising encouraged a buying spree. Credit and installment buying allowed people to buy now and pay later.

Mass media National magazines, radio, and motion pictures brought news, information, and entertainment to millions of Americans. Regional differences began to fade as a new national popular culture became part of daily life.

Women voters All women gained the vote in 1920. The League of Women Voters encouraged all voters to become informed about public issues. Congress considered, but rejected, the first version of the equal rights amendment.

The Jazz Age **Jazz**, a new form of music, expressed the mood of the decade. Introduced by African American musicians, jazz became popular throughout the country and the world.

Harlem Renaissance Musicians and writers centered in Harlem gave voice to the experiences of African Americans in song, poetry, and novels.

Lost Generation Disillusioned by World War I and the nation's growing consumer culture, some artists and writers fled to Paris. This "Lost Generation" produced books and poetry that are still read and enjoyed today.

Spectator sports More leisure time allowed Americans to attend sporting events. Spectator sports became a big business, and athletes became national celebrities.

Chapter 29 — The Clash Between Traditionalism and Modernism

How did social, economic, and religious tensions divide Americans during the Roaring Twenties?

29.1 – Introduction

Norman Rockwell was born in New York City in 1894. A talented artist, he studied at a number of the city's art schools. For many young painters in the 1920s, it would have been natural to draw all the new and strange sights the city offered. But Rockwell's works had nothing to do with New York. Instead, they depicted a more traditional America, one that could be found on farms and in small towns.

In 1916, the *Saturday Evening Post*, one of the country's most popular weekly magazines, started putting Rockwell's charming pictures on its covers. By 1925, Rockwell was nationally famous. "Without thinking too much about it in specific terms," Rockwell said of his work, "I was showing the America I knew and observed to others who might not have noticed."

Most of the trends and changes that made the 1920s roar emerged in the nation's cities. Although rural life was changing as well, Rockwell's paintings appealed to a longing for the reassurance of the simple life. Some people who lived in rural areas did not approve of the changes they had witnessed since the end of World War I. They were traditionalists, or people who had deep respect for long-held cultural and religious values. For them, these values were anchors that provided order and stability to society.

For other Americans, particularly those in urban areas, there was no going back to the old ways. They were modernists, or people who embraced new ideas, styles, and social trends. For them, traditional values were chains that restricted both individual freedom and the pursuit of happiness.

As these groups clashed in the 1920s, American society became deeply divided. Many rural dwellers lined up against urbanites. Defenders of traditional morality bemoaned the behavior of "flaming youth." Teetotalers opposed drinkers. Old-time religion faced off against modern science. The result was a kind of "culture war" that in some ways is still being fought today.

29.2 – The Growing Traditionalist-Modernist Divide

As the war ended and the doughboys began to come home from France, the title of a popular song asked a question that was troubling many rural families: "How ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm (after they've seen Paree)?" After seeing the bright lights of cities, many returning soldiers decided to leave behind the small towns they came from. The 1920 census revealed a startling statistic: for the first time ever, the United States was more than 50 percent urban. This population shift set the stage for the growing divide between traditionalists and modernists.

Urban Attractions: Economic Opportunity and Personal Freedom

During the 1920s, some 19 million people would move from farms to cities, largely in search of economic opportunities. Urban areas, with their factories and office buildings, were hubs of economic growth. As the economy boomed, the demand for workers increased. Wages rose as well. Between 1920 and 1929, the average per capita income rose 37 percent. At the same time, the consumer price index, a measure of the cost of basic necessities such as food and housing, remained steady. As a result, urban wage earners saw their standard of living improve.

Cities also offered freedom to explore new ways of thinking and living. City dwellers could meet people from different cultures, go to movies, visit museums, and attend concerts. They could buy and read an endless variety of magazines and newspapers. They could drink, gamble, or go on casual dates without being judged as immoral.

Rural Problems: Falling Crop Prices and Failing Farms

The personal freedom people experienced in cities stood in strong contrast to small-town life. In rural areas, most people lived in quiet communities, where they watched out for one another. New ideas and ways of behaving were often viewed with suspicion.

In addition to losing their younger generation to cities, rural communities faced other problems during the 1920s. Farmers had prospered during the war, producing food crops for the Allies and the home front. Enterprising farmers had taken out loans to buy new machines or extra land in hopes of increasing their output and profits. After the war, however, European demand for U.S. farm products dropped sharply, as did crop prices. With their incomes shrinking, large numbers of farmers could not repay their loans. Hundreds of thousands of farmers lost their farms in the early 1920s alone. For the rest of the decade, farmers' share of the national income dropped steadily. By 1929, per capita income for farmers was less than half the national average.

Congressmen from rural states tried to reverse this downward slide with farm-friendly legislation. The most ambitious of these measures, the McNary-Haugen Bill, was first introduced in 1924. This legislation called on the federal government to raise the price of some farm products by selling surplus crops overseas. Congress passed the bill twice, in 1927 and then in 1928, but President Calvin Coolidge vetoed it both times. A strong opponent of the government's interference in markets, the president dismissed the McNary-Haugen Bill as "preposterous."

Changing Values Lead to Mutual Resentment

The divide between urban modernists and rural traditionalists was not just economic. Modernists tended to view rural Americans as behind the times. Sinclair Lewis, the first American writer to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, mocked small-town values. In one of his novels, he described the residents of a small Midwestern town as

a savorless people, gulping tasteless food, and sitting afterward, coatless and thoughtless, in rocking-chairs prickly with inane decorations, listening to

mechanical music, saying mechanical things about the excellence of Ford automobiles, and viewing themselves as the greatest race in the world.

—Sinclair Lewis, *Main Street*, 1920

Rural traditionalists, not surprisingly, resented such attacks on their behavior and values. In their eyes, they were defending all that was good in American life. They saw the culture of the cities as money-grubbing, materialistic, and immoral. At the same time, however, many rural people could not help but envy the comfort and excitement city life seemed to offer.

The defenders of traditional values often looked to their faith and the Bible for support in their struggle against modernism. As a result, the 1920s saw a rise in religious fundamentalism—the idea that religious texts and beliefs should be taken literally and treated as the authority on appropriate behavior.

Billy Sunday, a former major league baseball player, emerged as the most prominent fundamentalist preacher in the nation. His dramatic preaching style drew huge crowds. He was said to have preached to more than 100 million people in his lifetime. Sunday's largest following was in rural areas, including the South. "There is ten times more respect for God and the Bible and the Christian religion in the South," he said, "than in any other part of the United States."

Still, times were changing. A growing number of young modernists were rejecting long-accepted American values. Rural areas were losing population to the cities, and agriculture was no longer the backbone of the American economy. In addition, with improvements in mass media, country people themselves were being exposed to new ideas, music, and social values.

29.3 – Generations Clash over the New Youth Culture

Before World War I, if a young man were interested in courting a young woman, he would visit her at home and meet her parents. If things went well at this first meeting, the boy would visit again. If he invited the girl to a dance or concert, an older adult would go with them as a chaperone. Eventually, the girl's parents might trust the young couple enough to let them sit by themselves on the front porch. In traditional families, these courtship patterns continued after the war. In more modern families, however, courtship changed dramatically, often confusing, if not upsetting, the older generation. Courtship was one example of how the older and younger generations clashed in the 1920s.

The Youth Perspective: The Old Ways Are Repressive

During the 1920s, a growing drive for public education sent a majority of teenagers to high school for the first time in U.S. history. College enrollment also grew rapidly. As young people spent more time than ever before outside the home or workplace, a new

youth culture emerged. This culture revolved around school, clubs, sports, music, dances, dating, movies, and crazy fads.

The fads young people followed were, for the most part, ephemeral. In one fad, young couples entered marathon dance competitions. The last couple left standing after many hours of dancing won a prize. Flagpole sitting, in which a participant would spend days perched atop a flagpole, was another short-lived fad. One fad from the 1920s that remains popular today is the crossword puzzle.

The most daring young women broke with the past by turning themselves into "flappers." They colored their hair and cut it short. Their skimpy dresses—worn without restrictive corsets—barely covered their knees. They rolled their stockings below their knees and wore unfastened rain boots that flapped around their ankles. Flappers wore makeup, which until that time had been associated with "loose" women of doubtful morals. Draped with beads and bracelets and carrying cigarette holders, they went to jazz clubs and danced the night away.

In a magazine article on the flapper, Zelda Fitzgerald wrote,

She flirted because it was fun to flirt and wore a one-piece bathing suit because she had a good figure, she covered her face with paint and powder because she didn't need it and she refused to be bored because she wasn't boring . . . Mothers disapproved of their sons taking the Flapper to dances, to teas, to swim and most of all to heart.

—Zelda Fitzgerald, "Eulogy on the Flapper," 1922

Modern young couples traded old-fashioned courtship for dating. Whereas the purpose of courtship had been marriage, the main point of dating was to have fun away from the watchful eyes of parents. Sedate tea parties or chaperoned dances gave way to unsupervised parties.

Older people fretted about the younger generation's "wild" ways. Many young people, however, felt free to ignore their elders. After witnessing the war's waste of life, they decided that the adults who had sent young men into battle did not deserve respect. As one young person said, "The older generation had certainly pretty well ruined this world before passing it on to us."

Easy access to cars and the mass media helped fuel the youth rebellion. Cars gave young people a means to escape the supervision of their elders. Magazines and movies, in the meantime, spread images of a good life that was often very different from the way their parents had grown up.

Writers Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote about youth of the time in books with such titles as *The Beautiful and Damned*. Perhaps no one better captured the feelings of rebellious youth than poet Edna St. Vincent Millay when she wrote,

My candle burns at both ends;
It will not last the night;
But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends—
It gives a lovely light.

—Edna St. Vincent Millay, "A Few Figs from Thistles," 1920

The Adult Perspective: Young People Have Lost Their Way

Many adults considered the behavior of young people reckless and immoral. They tried to restore the old morality in a number of ways. One was censorship. Traditionalists pulled books they saw as immoral off library shelves. They also pressured filmmakers for less sexually suggestive scenes in movies. The Hays Office, named for former Postmaster General Will Hays, issued a movie code that banned long kisses and positive portrayals of casual sex. In bedroom scenes, movie couples had to follow a "two feet on the floor" rule.

Some states tried to legislate more conservative behavior. They passed laws to discourage women from wearing short skirts and skimpy swimsuits. Police with yardsticks patrolled beaches looking for offenders.

Mostly, however, the older generation restricted itself to expressing loud disapproval. When nagging did not work, many parents crossed their fingers and hoped for the best. More often than not, they were not disappointed. Most young people, even the most rebellious flappers, usually ended their dating days by getting married and raising the next generation of rebellious youth.

29.4 – Wets and Dries Clash over Prohibition

On February 14, 1929, men dressed in police uniforms raided the headquarters of Chicago's Moran gang. When the officers ordered the gangsters to raise their hands and line up against the wall, the gang members thought nothing of it. The police were always annoying them. These "police officers," however, were members of Al "Scarface" Capone's rival gang in disguise. Capone's men whipped out their guns and blasted away. Seven members of the Moran gang died in what soon became known as the Saint Valentine's Day Massacre. This bloodbath was one of many unexpected consequences of what Herbert Hoover called "an experiment noble in purpose"—prohibition.

The "Dry" Perspective: Prohibition Improves Society

Traditionalists and progressive reformers saw passage of the Eighteenth Amendment, which prohibited the manufacture, sale, or transport of alcoholic beverages, as a great victory. They pointed to evidence that alcoholism caused crime, violence, and the breakup of families. "Drys," as backers of prohibition were known, believed that stopping people from drinking would result in a healthier, happier society.

Drys also saw prohibition as a way of taming city life. Support for prohibition centered mainly in rural areas, and many drys saw the Eighteenth Amendment as a triumph of rural over urban Americans. As one dry put it, prohibition allowed the "pure stream of country sentiment and township morals to flush out the cesspools of cities." In addition, many traditionalists were suspicious of foreigners. They associated beer drinking with immigrants of German descent and wine drinking with Italian immigrants. To them, prohibition was a way to curb such "foreign" influences.

At first, prohibition seemed to the drys to deliver its expected benefits. The national consumption of alcohol did decline, from an annual average of 2.6 gallons per capita before the war to less than 1 gallon by the 1930s. Fewer workers spent their wages at saloons, to the benefit of their families. The greatest decline in drinking probably occurred in the groups that resented prohibition the most—poor and working-class ethnic groups. In their view, prohibition was just another example of nativist prejudice toward immigrants.

The "Wet" Perspective: Prohibition Restricts Freedom and Breeds Crime

Opponents of prohibition, called "wets," were small in number at first. But as the law went into effect, their numbers grew. Opposition centered mainly in large cities and immigrant communities.

Many modernists attacked prohibition as an attempt by the federal government to legislate morality. Journalist H. L. Mencken, a champion of modernism, called drys "ignorant bumpkins of the cow states who resented the fact that they had to swill raw corn liquor while city slickers got good wine and whiskey." Another modernist, Massachusetts Senator David Walsh, rejected traditionalist arguments that drinking was sinful. He reminded drys that the first miracle performed by Jesus had been to turn water into wine. Were Jesus to perform this miracle in prohibition-era America, Walsh observed, "he would be jailed and possibly crucified again."

Prohibition seemed doomed from the start. In October 1919, Congress passed the Volstead Act to enforce the Eighteenth Amendment. But the federal government never gave the enforcement agency, called the Prohibition Bureau, sufficient personnel, money, or supplies. The bureau's agents were simply outnumbered by the millions of Americans who wanted to drink. Hoover later estimated that the government would need 250,000 agents to make prohibition work.

As a result, prohibition led to an increase in illegal behavior by normally law-abiding citizens. Millions of Americans simply refused to abstain from drinking. Some learned how to brew their own "bathtub gin." Others bought "bootleg" alcohol that was distilled illegally or smuggled into the United States from Canada. As thousands of bars and pubs were forced to close, they were replaced by nearly twice as many secret drinking clubs, called speakeasies. The term speakeasy came from the practice of speaking quietly about illegal saloons so as not to alert police. A 1929 issue of New York City's *Variety* boldly reported, "five out of every seven cigar stores, lunchrooms, and beauty parlors are 'speaks' selling gin." The number of speakeasies in New York City alone was

estimated at 32,000. The widespread availability of illegal alcohol led the humorist Will Rodgers to quip, "Prohibition is better than no liquor at all."

The growing demand for liquor created a golden opportunity for crooks like Al Capone. Bootlegging—the production, transport, and sale of illegal alcohol—was a multibillion dollar business by the mid-1920s. Chicago bootlegger Capone exhibited his wealth by driving around in a \$30,000 Cadillac while flashing an 11 1/2-carat diamond ring. To keep his profits flowing without government interference, he bribed politicians, judges, and police officers. He also eliminated rival bootleggers. His thousand-member gang was blamed for hundreds of murders. In 1931, Capone finally went to jail—not for bootlegging or murder, but for tax evasion.

As lawlessness, violence, and corruption increased, support for prohibition dwindled. By the late 1920s, many Americans believed that prohibition had caused more harm than good. In 1933, the states ratified the Twenty-First Amendment, which repealed prohibition.

29.5 – Modernists and Traditionalists Clash over Evolution

In 1925, Dayton, Tennessee, was a sleepy town of almost 2,000 people, plus a freethinking New York transplant named George Rappelyea. That year, the state legislature passed a law making it illegal for a public school "to teach any theory that denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible."

While chatting with friends one day, Rappelyea mentioned an offer by the American Civil Liberties Union to defend any teacher who would test the law. Why not find one right here, he suggested. A trial would show how foolish the law was. It would also attract national attention to Dayton. One of his friends knew just the man for the job—a young science teacher named John Scopes, who would be willing to teach a lesson on evolution. And so the stage was set for a dramatic contest between modernists and traditionalists over the place of science and religion in public schools.

The Modernist Perspective: Science Shows How Nature Works

Like many modernists, Rappelyea looked to science, not the Bible, to explain how the physical world worked. Scientists accepted as true only facts and theories that could be tested and supported with evidence drawn from nature. By the 1920s, people could see the wonders of modern science every time they turned on an electric light, listened to the radio, or visited their doctors.

One of the most controversial scientific ideas of that time was British naturalist Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Darwin theorized that all plants and animals, including humans, had evolved from simpler forms of life. The evolution of one species from another took place over thousands or millions of years. It worked through a process he called "natural selection." Others called it "survival of the fittest." In this process, species that make favorable adaptations to their environment are more likely to survive than

those that do not. As favorable adaptations pile up, new species evolve from old ones. In such a way, Darwin argued, human beings had evolved from apes.

Modernists embraced the concepts of evolution and natural selection. Rather than choosing between science and religion, they believed that both ways of looking at the world could coexist. "The day is past," declared a New York City preacher, "when you can ask thoughtful men to hold religion in one compartment of their minds and their modern world view in another." By the 1920s, the theory of evolution was regularly taught in schools.

The Traditionalist Perspective: The Bible Is the Word of God

Traditionalists were more likely to see science and religion in conflict. This was especially true of Christian fundamentalists, who believed the Bible was the literal word of God. They rejected the theory of evolution because it conflicted with creationism, the belief that God created the universe as described in the Bible.

During the early 1920s, fundamentalists vigorously campaigned to ban the teaching of evolution in public schools. They found a champion in William Jennings Bryan. A spellbinding speaker, Bryan had played a major role in American politics for 30 years. He had run for president three times and served as secretary of state under President Woodrow Wilson. Bryan toured the country, charging that modernists had "taken the Lord away from the schools."

Bryan had two reasons for taking up the creationist cause. The first was his deeply held Christian faith. The second was his fear that teaching evolution could lead young people to accept social Darwinism. This is the belief that as in nature, only the fittest members of a society will survive. Social Darwinism had been used to justify imperialism on the grounds that the fittest, or most powerful, peoples should rule the less powerful. It had also been used to promote eugenics, or the idea that the human species should be improved by forbidding people with characteristics judged undesirable to reproduce. Bryan saw such views as a threat to the poor and weak. He worried that widespread acceptance of social Darwinism and eugenics "would weaken the cause of democracy and strengthen class pride and power of wealth."

Creationism Versus Evolution in Tennessee

Tennessee became the first state to enact a law banning the teaching of evolution in public schools. The law might not have caused a nationwide stir if Rappelyea had not decided to contest it. He sent a student to pull Scopes off a tennis court and said, "John, we've been arguing, and I said that nobody could teach biology without teaching evolution." Scopes not only agreed but also volunteered to teach a lesson on evolution the next day. Rappelyea then asked the American Civil Liberties Union to defend the young science teacher before going to the police and having Scopes arrested.

The Scopes trial, which began on July 10, 1925, brought far more attention to Dayton than Rappelyea had hoped. Bryan offered to represent the state of Tennessee. Scope's supporters added high-powered lawyer Clarence Darrow to the defense team. Although

Darrow had supported Bryan for president, he disagreed with him about religion and agreed to defend Scopes for free. Some 200 reporters arrived in Dayton as the trial opened, along with tourists and hawkers selling toy monkeys. The whole country was following this contest between creationism and evolution.

In their opening statements, the opposing lawyers recognized that the issue to be decided was much more than whether Scopes had broken the law. "If evolution wins," Bryan had warned, "Christianity goes." Darrow argued, "Scopes isn't on trial; civilization is on trial." To make his point, Darrow had brought a variety of experts to Dayton to testify against the Tennessee law. After hearing one of them, the judge refused to let the rest testify because what they had to say was not relevant to the guilt or innocence of the science teacher.

For a moment, it looked like Darrow had no defense. Then he surprised everyone by calling Bryan to the stand as an expert on the Bible. "Do you claim that everything in the Bible should be literally interpreted?" Darrow asked. Bryan answered, "I believe everything in the Bible should be accepted as it is given there." However, when asked if Earth had been created in six days, Bryan answered, "I do not think it means necessarily a twenty-four-hour day." Creation, he added, "might have continued for millions of years." Darrow had tricked Bryan, the fundamentalist champion, into admitting that he himself did not always interpret each and every word in the Bible as the literal truth.

When the trial ended, it took the jury fewer than 10 minutes to find Scopes guilty, whereupon the judge fined him \$100. A year later, the Tennessee Supreme Court overturned the conviction because the judge, not the jury, had imposed the fine.

29.6 – Current Connections: Evolution, Creationism, and Intelligent Design

The Scopes trial did not end the debate over teaching evolution in public schools. The law used to convict John Scopes remained on the books. Other states adopted similar laws. In the 1960s, an Arkansas science teacher named Susan Epperson came up against such a law when her district adopted a biology textbook containing evolution. She could use the book and violate an Arkansas law making it illegal to teach that humankind came from lower animals. Or she could refuse to use the book and risk her job. Epperson chose to resolve her dilemma by challenging the Arkansas law in court.

The Supreme Court Bans Creationism in the Classroom

Epperson v. Arkansas was the first of several cases involving religion in public schools to come before the Supreme Court. The question to be decided was whether the Arkansas law violated the First Amendment's ban of any "law respecting an establishment of religion." The Court ruled that it did, saying,

Government in our democracy, state and national, must be neutral in matters of religious theory, doctrine, and practice. It may not be hostile to any religion or to

the advocacy of no-religion; and it may not aid, foster, or promote one religion or religious theory against another.

—Justice Abe Fortas, *Epperson v. Arkansas*, 1968

Three years later, in *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, the Supreme Court issued a ruling that still affects the debate over evolution. In this case, the Court established a three-point Lemon test to determine when and whether a government action violates the First Amendment. To be constitutional, a government action must

- have a secular, or nonreligious, purpose.
- neither help nor hurt religion.
- not result in an "excessive entanglement" of the government and religion.

In 1987, the Supreme Court applied the Lemon test to a case brought against Louisiana's Creationism Act. This act required that evolution and creationism be taught together. In *Edwards v. Aguillard*, a group of teachers, parents, and religious leaders challenged the Louisiana law as a violation of the First Amendment. The Supreme Court agreed that the Creationism Act did not have a secular purpose and, therefore, failed the Lemon test.

The Debate on Intelligent Design

The *Epperson* and *Edwards* decisions made it clear that the courts would not allow the biblical story of creation into biology classes. In the meantime, critics of evolution were developing a new theory of creation called intelligent design. The intelligent design theory is not based on any specific teachings in the Bible. Instead, it argues that some features of the natural world are too complex to have evolved by means of natural selection. Such complexity must have been designed by an intelligent agent. Just who or what this intelligent designer might be is not stated.

"Darwin's theory is a great idea," says William Dembski, a mathematician and philosopher who supports intelligent design research. "It fundamentally changed our conception of history. And yet it's not the whole story." While the theory of evolution helps explain small changes in organisms over time, "it has difficulty explaining large-scale changes." Dembski argues that the study of evolution should be supplemented by "the study of patterns in nature that are best explained as the result of intelligence."

In October 2004, the Dover, Pennsylvania, school board became the first in the nation to require that students be told about intelligent design theory in their biology classes. The board passed a resolution saying, "Students will be made aware of the gaps/problems in Darwin's theory and of other theories of evolution including, but not limited to, intelligent design." Several parents took the school board to court. In December 2005, Judge John Jones ruled that the theory of intelligent design had no place in the public school science curriculum. Jones wrote that intelligent design "is a religious view, a mere relabeling of creationism, and not a scientific theory." If the past is any guide,

however, Judge Jones's decision is unlikely to be the last word in the debate over whether and how evolution is taught in public schools.

Summary

Culturally, the United States became a deeply divided nation during the Roaring Twenties. Tensions arose between traditionalists, with their deep respect for long-held cultural and religious values, and modernists, who embraced new ideas, styles, and social trends.

Urban versus rural By 1920, the United States was becoming more urban than rural. Urban areas prospered as business and industry boomed. Rural areas declined economically and in population.

Youth versus adults Suspicious of the older generation after the war, many young people rejected traditional values and embraced a new youth culture. Chaperoned courting gave way to unsupervised dating. Flappers scandalized the older generation with their style of dress, drinking, and smoking.

Wets versus dries The Eighteenth Amendment launched the social experiment known as prohibition. The Volstead Act, which outlawed the sale of alcohol, was supported by dries and ignored by wets. The Twenty-First Amendment repealed prohibition in 1933.

Religion versus science Religious fundamentalists worked to keep the scientific theory of evolution out of public schools. The Scopes trial, testing Tennessee's anti-evolution law, was a legal victory for fundamentalists but a defeat in the court of public opinion. The issue of teaching creationism in biology classes is still current today.

Chapter 30 — The Causes of the Great Depression

What caused the most severe economic crisis in American history?

30.1 – Introduction

The door to the hotel room burst open. Groucho Marx, a wealthy, famous actor, and quite likely the funniest man in America, was breathless. He had just received a hot stock tip: shares of Union Carbide were a sure bet to go up in price.

From the doorway, Groucho shouted the news to his sleepy-eyed brother Harpo. They had to act fast, he said, before others heard the same tip. Harpo, still in his bathrobe, asked his brother to wait while he got dressed. "Are you crazy?" Groucho growled. "If we wait until you get your clothes on, the stock may jump 10 points." That day, Harpo Marx bought stock in his bathrobe.

The Marx brothers were not alone in their enthusiasm for buying stocks. In the late 1920s, many people were investing. As more and more people put money in the stock market, prices of shares kept rising. By the fall of 1929, Groucho was rich but nervous. Just how long would the good times last?

Unfortunately, Groucho's world, and that of every other American, was about to change significantly. On Tuesday, October 29, 1929, a day still remembered as Black Tuesday, stock prices plunged. Stocks lost their value because, all at once, many people wanted to sell their shares but very few people wanted to buy. Groucho saw his fortune evaporate that day. So did many other Americans. Suddenly the good times were over.

The 1920s were not supposed to end this way. Just the year before, President Herbert Hoover had boasted that the nation was "nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land." That triumph never happened. Instead, the nation slid into the longest economic slump Americans had ever experienced—the Great Depression.

The stock market crash was a key cause of the Great Depression, but it was not the only cause. Other factors contributed, too. In this chapter, you will learn how conditions of the 1920s and choices made after the stock market crash combined to bring about the worst economic crisis in American history.

30.2 – A Shaky Stock Market Triggers a Banking Crisis

The purpose of the stock market is to provide businesses with the capital they need to grow. Business owners sell portions, or shares, of their companies to investors. By buying shares, investors supply money for businesses to expand. When all is well, the stock market is a useful tool in a capitalist economy. But all was not well in the 1920s.

A Speculative Boom Leads to a Spectacular Crash

The stock market boom began innocently enough. Businesses thrived in the 1920s. Manufacturers were making products that consumers were eager to buy. As Americans saw business profits growing, many thought they could make a lot of money by buying shares in successful companies. The promise of financial gain drew new investors to the stock market. The result was a bull market, or a steady rise in stock prices over a long period of time.

But investing is not a rational science. In the late 1920s, a lot of people were swept up in the wave of speculative enthusiasm for the stock market. Like Groucho Marx, these investors believed that if prices were high today, they would go even higher tomorrow. So they bought the maximum number of shares they could afford and began counting their paper profits as the price of most stocks went up. It seemed to many Americans that there was no limit to how high the bull market could go. Investor optimism was so intense that not only did people put their savings in the stock market, but a growing number actually borrowed money to invest in stocks.

Borrowing money was easy to do in the 1920s. A buyer might pay as little as 10 percent of a stock's price and borrow the other 90 percent from a broker, a person who sells stock. The result was that someone with just \$1,000 could borrow \$9,000 and buy \$10,000 worth of shares. This is called buying on margin. When the market was rising, brokers were happy to lend money to almost anyone.

Easy borrowing encouraged speculation, or the making of risky investments in the hope of earning large profits. Stock speculators do not necessarily buy stock to own a part of a company they believe will do well. They buy stock to make as much money as they can as quickly as possible. In a speculative market, a company's stock price does not go up because the company is growing. Prices rise because speculators want to buy a stock today and sell it for a quick profit tomorrow. As speculation drives up the price of a company's stock, the total value of the stock may become worth far more than the company itself.

Rising stock prices created a high-flying bull market without a solid foundation. When the market turned down, this borrowed money house of cards collapsed. As prices dropped, creditors who had loaned money for buying stock on margin demanded that those loans be repaid. Unfortunately, because of falling prices, most investors could not make enough selling their stocks to repay their loans. Many had to sell their homes, cars, and furniture to pay their debts. Even businesses were affected. Many companies that had invested their profits in the stock market lost everything and had to close their doors.

Stock market prices peaked on September 3, 1929. After that, prices began dropping, sometimes in small increments, sometimes in tumbles like the huge drop on Black Tuesday in October. By then it was clear to many investors that a bear market, in which prices decrease steadily, had begun. Fearful of losing everything, investors rushed to sell their stocks, pushing prices down still further. By the end of the year, investors had

lost more than \$30 billion—an amount that exceeded the money spent by the United States to fight World War I.

A Banking Crisis Wipes Out People's Savings

The stock market crash also hurt banks, triggering a crisis that unfolded over the next three years. To understand how stock losses affected banks, think about how banks operate. When people are prospering, they deposit money they do not need for day-to-day expenses in banks. The money they deposit does not just sit in the bank vault. Banks lend it out to businesses or other borrowers to earn interest. Interest is the charge made by a bank for the use of their money. Bank loans help people start businesses, buy homes, and plant crops.

In the 1920s, banks caught the same stock market fever that gripped the nation as a whole. Usually bankers lend money to businesses or farmers. But in the 1920s, they increasingly loaned money to stockbrokers, who in turn loaned that borrowed money to individual investors. When the stock market took a nosedive in October 1929, many investors could not repay the money borrowed from their brokers. In turn, brokers who had borrowed money from banks could not repay their loans. With bad loans piling up, banks stopped looking like a safe place to keep one's money.

People who had trusted their money to banks had good reason to worry. Even before the Depression, it was not unheard of for banks to go out of business, wiping out the savings of their depositors. During the "good times" between 1923 and 1929, banks folded at the rate of about two per day. Most of these failures were small rural banks. The stock market crash made this bad situation much worse.

As the economy continued to falter in 1930 and 1931, large numbers of depositors lost confidence in their local banks. The result was a rash of bank runs. In a typical bank run, panicked depositors lined up around the block to try to withdraw their money. Those first in line got their money out. But once the bank ran out of cash, it closed its doors. An appalling 3,800 banks failed in 1931 and 1932. By 1933, one fifth of the banks that were in business in the United States in 1930 had gone out of business, and millions of people had seen their savings vanish.

30.3 – Too Much for Sale, Too Little to Spend

Industry had thrived in the 1920s because manufacturers were able to make a lot of merchandise very quickly. The ability to mass-produce a wide range of consumer goods started the stock boom. However, for mass production to succeed, people had to buy the goods being churned out of factories. By the late 1920s, demand for consumer goods could not keep up with production. People simply could not afford to buy all that was being produced. The resulting glut of goods in the market, combined with the stock market crash and the bank crisis, caused the economy to collapse.

Overproduction Puts Too Many Goods in Stores

By 1920, most American factories were using the assembly-line method of mass production. As a result, they were able to make more goods more quickly than ever before. Between 1923 and 1929, the output per worker-hour in manufacturing increased an astounding 32 percent. Farm output, too, increased throughout the 1920s. New machines and new farming techniques expanded farm production even while demand for farm products was falling.

In general, companies welcome increased production because it means increased income. A company that makes appliances, for example, wants to produce as many refrigerators as possible because the more refrigerators it makes, the more it can sell. The more refrigerators the company sells, the more money it earns. If making refrigerators costs less than it did before, so much the better.

Trouble arises when there are not enough consumers to buy all those products rolling off the assembly lines and arriving from the farms. Economists call such a predicament overproduction. The term refers to a situation in which more products are being created than people can afford to buy. As the 1920s came to an end, overproduction overwhelmed the American economy.

A Widening Wealth Gap Leads to Rising Debt

Greater productivity led to greater profits for businesses. Some of the profits went to workers, whose wages rose steadily in the 1920s. But workers' wages did not go up nearly enough for them to consume as much as manufacturers were producing.

Most business profits went to a relatively small number of people. A wide gap separated the rich from the working class. On one side of the gap, the wealthiest 5 percent of American families received about a third of all the money earned in the country. That was more than the 60 percent of all families at the bottom on the income scale earned. Moreover, an estimated 40 percent of all Americans lived in poverty.

For a time, Americans made up for the unequal distribution of wealth by using credit to buy the radios, cars, and household appliances that flooded the market. The growing advertising industry also helped persuade people that thrift was an old-fashioned value. The more modern approach was to borrow money to buy the latest products right away. Between 1921 and 1929, personal debt more than doubled, from \$3.1 billion to \$6.9 billion.

Underconsumption Causes Farm Failures, Bankruptcies, and Layoffs

By 1929, the buying spree was coming to an end. Many Americans found themselves deep in debt and were unwilling or unable to borrow more. Even the wealthy, who could afford to buy whatever they wanted, were buying less because they had all the goods they needed. One historian remarked that by 1929, everyone who could buy a car or radio probably already had one. The economy was showing signs of underconsumption. This means that people were not buying as much as the economy was producing. It is the flip side of overproduction.

Farmers were the first to experience the pain of underconsumption. Their financial difficulties began after World War I, a full decade before industry began to suffer. During the war, farmers had prospered by supplying food for American soldiers and the people of war-torn Europe. When the war ended, those markets disappeared. Consumption of farm products decreased, causing prices to drop.

Underconsumption affected farms in another way. It caused them to go further into debt. Farm incomes were falling. But farmers still wanted to buy goods made by industry, such as cars, tractors, and appliances. Like everyone else, farmers borrowed money and paid for their goods in installments. As agricultural prices continued to decline, more and more farmers had difficulty making their payments. Some farmers lost everything they owned when banks seized their farms as payment for their debts. As a result, for the first time in the nation's history, the number of farms and farmers began to decline.

By the late 1920s, the problem of underconsumption had spread to industry. Responding to the glut of products on the market, many manufacturers cut back production. In the auto and steel industries, for example, production declined by as much as 38 percent by the end of 1930. Some companies lost so much business that they were forced to declare bankruptcy and close down altogether.

Whether businesses decreased production or went bankrupt, the result was the same for workers: unemployment. As industry declined, companies laid off many workers. Those who lost their jobs also lost the ability to buy the products that industry produced. A vicious downward spiral—consisting of layoffs, reduced consumption, and then more layoffs—was set in motion. Between 1929 and 1933, the unemployment rate rose from 3 percent of the American workforce to 25 percent. Millions of Americans found themselves out of work and, as the Depression wore on, out of hope.

30.4 – Government Actions Make a Bad Situation Worse

By early 1931, the economy was a shambles. Stock prices had plunged. Bank closings were widespread. Manufacturers could not sell their products. And farmers were entering their second decade of financial distress. The federal government, under the leadership of President Herbert Hoover, took steps to improve the situation. Unfortunately, instead of minimizing the damage, many of the government's actions made things worse.

A Tight Money Supply Hobbles the Economy

Many economists blame the Federal Reserve System, known as "the Fed," for further weakening the economy in 1930 and 1931. The Fed manages the nation's money supply. It decides how much money will be available to circulate among investors, producers, and consumers. One way it adjusts the money supply is by setting the discount rate. This is the rate of interest at which banks that belong to the system can borrow money from Federal Reserve banks. Member banks use the discount rate to determine the interest rates they will charge borrowers.

Before the stock market crash, the Fed had kept interest rates low. Low interest rates made borrowing easier. Easy borrowing kept money circulating. In fact, low interest rates had supported the excessive borrowing of the 1920s.

Following the crash, Federal Reserve officials kept rates low for a time. Then, in 1931, it began raising the discount rate. The immediate effect of this action was to decrease the amount of money moving through the economy. The timing of this action could not have been worse. Many people had already stopped spending, and producers had slowed production. Higher interest rates further damaged the economy by depriving businesses of the capital they needed to survive. As the amount of money dwindled, the economy slowed down, like an animal going into hibernation.

If Federal Reserve officials had concentrated on expanding the money supply after the crash, things might have gotten better. More money in circulation would have stimulated the economy to grow by making loans less expensive. Companies would have found it easier to borrow the money they needed to stay in business. This would have reduced their need to lay off so many workers. Consumers would have had more money in their pockets to spend. This would have kept factories humming. Instead, the Fed allowed the money supply to drop by a third between 1929 and 1933. This decline helped turn a nasty recession into an economic calamity.

Tariffs Cause Trade Troubles

Economists also blame Congress for making decisions that further hurt the economy. To understand why, one needs to look beyond the United States. Financial problems overseas, especially in Europe, also contributed to the onset of the Great Depression.

World War I had left much of Europe in economic shambles. The Allies were having trouble paying back money borrowed from U.S. banks to finance the war. Germany was in even worse shape. The Germans were able to make their reparation payments to the Allies only by borrowing the money needed from the United States. In order to earn the dollars required to pay off these debts, these nations desperately needed to sell large amounts of goods in the United States. After the war, however, Congress enacted tariffs on many imported goods that made such sales difficult.

In 1930, Congress made a bad situation worse by passing the Hawley-Smoot Tariff Act. Congress meant for this law to protect American businesses from foreign competition by raising tariffs still higher. Instead, it triggered a trade war as European countries raised their tariffs on goods imported from the United States. As a result, U.S. farmers and businesses were not able to cope with overproduction by selling their excess goods to other countries.

The record-high tariffs on both sides of the Atlantic stifled international trade. This, in turn, caused a slump in the world economy. Gradually, the Great Depression spread around the globe.

30.5 – Current Connections: Speculative Bubbles: Past, Present and Future

The Great Depression was the worst economic slump in American history. But it was not the only one. The country had experienced depressions before, often when the economy became "overheated" and then collapsed. Historians and economists warn that this "boom-and-bust" cycle could happen again. As in 1929, the trigger for the next economic crisis could be the "popping" of a speculative bubble. A speculative bubble is an unrealistic or unfounded rise in economic values.

Bubbles can develop around a particular product—like baseball cards, for example. Or they can affect a whole sector of the economy, such as real estate. In this chapter, you read about the rampant speculation in stocks that helped provoke the stock market crash of 1929. The rise of stock values at the time was a speculative bubble, and Black Tuesday was an example of the popping of a bubble.

Speculative bubbles have occurred many times throughout history. In the 1600s, for example, many investors in Holland got carried away by a rising market in tulip bulbs. It seems strange now, but for a time, tulip bulbs—the bulbs that produce tulip flowers—became as valuable as gold. As "tulipmania" gripped Holland, people sold their homes, businesses, and family jewels to invest in tulips. One bill of sale shows that someone traded a single bulb for 12 sheep, 8 hogs, 4 oxen, 1,000 pounds of cheese, 6 loads of grain, 4 barrels of beer, 2 hogshead of wine, 2 barrels of butter, a marriage bed, and a wagon large enough to haul it all away. When the market came to its senses, the bubble popped and many investors lost vast fortunes.

A similar bubble occurred in the United States in the late 1990s. This was known as the dot-com bubble. During this period, investors poured money into the stocks of brand-new Internet companies—known as dot-coms—hoping to take advantage of the commercial possibilities of the World Wide Web. Many of these new companies had very little actual worth. They didn't make any products or own any assets to speak of. What they offered was a service, or in some cases, just an idea. Investors were entranced. They poured billions of dollars into dot-com stocks. Some investors made out well. But when the bubble burst in 2000, many others lost all their money.

A more recent bubble involved real estate. In some parts of the country, home prices doubled between 2000 and 2005. By then, analysts were warning that housing prices couldn't keep rising forever. The real estate bubble had to burst. In 2006, prices dropped sharply. "It's just like someone flipped a switch," reported a real estate auctioneer as the bubble appeared to burst.

Could the bursting of a speculative bubble today trigger another major depression? No one knows for sure. But the fact is, investors, and people in general, are drawn to making a profit in the capitalist economy. There are likely to be speculative bubbles again, in stocks, real estate, art, or something else yet unknown. And if the history of bubbles is any clue, the market will eventually take a tumble, sending a ripple effect throughout the economy. Some investors will make out just fine, but many will not. The lessons of history are not always easily learned.

Summary

The Great Depression was triggered by the stock market crash of 1929, but many other causes contributed to what became the worst economic crisis in U.S. history.

The stock market crash The stock market crash cost investors millions of dollars and contributed to bank failures and industry bankruptcies.

The financial crisis Banks made risky loans and investments in the 1920s. Some banks had to shut down when the economy collapsed, and many depositors lost their savings.

An unequal distribution of wealth The concentration of money in the hands of a few left most wage earners unable to buy all of the goods businesses were producing.

Underconsumption For a time, many consumers used credit, rather than cash, to buy such goods as cars and radios. When their level of debt grew too high, people stopped buying new products. The result was underconsumption of factory goods.

Overproduction American businesses produced more goods than people wanted or could afford. Eventually, factories had to close and workers lost their jobs.

Tight money supply After the stock market crash, Federal Reserve officials allowed the money supply to shrink. As the amount of money in circulation fell, economic activity decreased. This made it more difficult for businesses to produce and consumers to spend.

Rising interest rates After the stock market crash, Federal Reserve officials raised interest rates, making loans more expensive and limiting the amount of money in circulation. This made it more difficult for businesses to produce and consumers to spend.

Decline of international trade High import tariffs and collapsing European economies restricted international trade and deepened the Depression.

Chapter 31 — The Response to the Economic Collapse

How did the federal government respond to the economic collapse that began in 1929?

31.1 – Introduction

By 1932, Americans all across the country were feeling the pain of the economic collapse triggered by the stock market crash. Desperate job seekers wandered from town to town in a fruitless quest for work. Others sold apples or shined shoes to earn whatever they could. In Portland, Oregon, an unemployed veteran of World War I named Walter Waters decided it was time to take action. He persuaded a group of former soldiers to launch a protest march—all the way to Washington, D.C. There, Waters hoped to persuade Congress to accelerate payment of a long-promised bonus to World War I veterans.

The promise of a bonus for veterans dated back to 1924. Congress had voted to pay former soldiers a dollar for every day they had served during the war, plus an extra 25 cents for every day spent overseas. There was a catch, however. The government would not pay the bonus until 1945—the money was to be a retirement benefit. Veterans argued that they needed the money sooner to help them through the hard times. Members of Congress sympathetic to the cause crafted a bill that would pay the bonus right away.

In May 1932, Waters and about 250 other veterans boarded a freight train in Portland and headed east. They rode in empty boxcars and cattle cars, switching trains in various towns. Waters insisted on keeping military order: “No panhandling, no liquor, no radical talk,” he told his men. The group’s numbers swelled as other unemployed veterans joined this Bonus Army. Supportive townspeople provided them food, while some local officials, fearing violence, hurried them on their way.

At the end of May, Waters’s group reached the nation’s capital. By then newspapers had picked up the story, convincing veterans throughout the country to join the cause. District police set up camp for the veterans in the fields along the Anacostia River, a few blocks from the Capitol building. The veterans vowed to remain in the capital until the bonus bill was passed.

31.2 – Ideological Responses to the Economic Crisis

Members of the Bonus Army continued to pour into Washington for weeks. By early summer, more than 12,000 had arrived. The scraggly veterans, many with families, gave a human face to the nation’s hard times. Many Americans wondered how the government would respond—not only to the frustrated veterans, but also to the economic crisis they represented.

Politicians and other public figures proposed various ways to deal with the country’s economic problems. People’s ideologies shaped their suggestions. An ideology is a set of basic ideas, beliefs, and values that form the basis of a social, economic, or political

philosophy or program. While running for president in 1932, Franklin Roosevelt used a metaphor to explain three ideological responses to the Depression. “Say that civilization is a tree which, as it grows, continually produces rot and dead wood,” he began. “The radical says: ‘Cut it down.’ The conservative says: ‘Don’t touch it.’ The liberal compromises: ‘Let’s prune, so that we lose neither the old trunk nor the new branches.’”

The Conservative Response: Let the Economy Stabilize

A conservative is someone who cherishes and seeks to preserve traditional customs and values. For conservatives in the 1930s, these values included self-reliance, individual responsibility, and personal liberty. Conservatives tend to prefer the status quo, or current conditions, to abrupt changes. They accept change, but only in moderation. Depression-era conservatives opposed large governmental efforts to effect change, which they felt challenged their values.

As the Depression worsened, conservatives resisted calls for radical changes to the free enterprise system. Left alone, they argued, the economy would soon stabilize and then begin to improve.

Some economists supported conservatives’ hands-off approach. They insisted that economic downturns and periods of low economic activity—known as panics—were normal. They were part of the business cycle, a pattern in which economic growth is followed by decline, panic, and finally recovery. These lows were natural in a capitalist economy, economists argued. They noted that good times followed even the severe panics of the 1870s and 1890s. The economy would also recover from this severe period.

At the start of the Depression, many Americans shared this outlook. Most preferred to suffer in silence rather than admit they needed help. But as the Depression progressed, people ran short of food and fuel. Many had no choice but to seek aid. Conservatives insisted that charities take on the growing task of providing basic necessities to the needy. If government had to step in, they argued, it should be local governments’ responsibility to care for their own.

The Liberal Response: The Government Must Help

A liberal is someone who is committed to the expansion of liberty. In the 1800s, liberals had focused on protecting individual liberty from the heavy hand of government. They favored limited government that left individuals free to exercise their rights and pursue happiness in their own way. To liberals, the government that governed the least governed the best.

With the rise of big business, liberals’ views began to change. They realized that limited government could offer individuals little protection from dangerous working conditions, price-fixing monopolies, or unsafe food and drugs. By the start of the Progressive Era, many liberals believed that the government should play a role in regulating economic affairs. As the Depression set in, liberals looked to the government to expand its powers

once again to protect individual liberty. However, now they defined liberty as freedom from hunger and poverty.

Liberals proposed several responses to the economic crisis. First, they called for increased spending on public works. These government-funded construction projects provide for such local needs as roads, bridges, and dams. They would, liberals argued, create jobs for the unemployed. Next, liberals suggested placing new taxes on corporations and the wealthy to raise money for social welfare programs. Such programs provide aid to those in need. They effectively redistributed money from the “haves” in a society to the “have-nots.” Finally, liberals called on the government to work closely with businesses to aid in their recovery. In short, they urged the government to take on an active role within the framework of the capitalist system.

The Radical Response: Capitalism Must Go

A radical is someone who wants to make sweeping social, political, or economic changes in a society. Radicals often have little patience for the status quo. They may seek change by democratic means or through revolution.

By the 1930s, both socialists and communists were attracting supporters with their calls for radical change. Communists, for example, proposed doing away with the market economy altogether. They wanted to replace capitalism with communism. Under that system, economic decisions would move out of the marketplace and into the hands of government planners. A totally planned economy would take the place of free markets. Wealth would be distributed to people according to their need.

Radicals viewed events like the Bonus Army protest as opportunities to spread their ideas. They encouraged working-class people to rise up against the “greedy capitalists.” As the Depression wore on, such ideas began to appeal to a growing number of disillusioned Americans.

31.3 – Hoover's Conservative Response to Hard Times

President Herbert Hoover strongly believed in self-reliance, rugged individualism, and hard work. His own life reflected these conservative principles. Orphaned at age nine, Hoover became a millionaire and a respected public official through his own talents and determination. Hoover was not oblivious to people’s suffering. But like most conservatives, he did not believe that the federal government should give aid to the needy. Federal relief, he worried, would undermine self-reliance and encourage people to become dependent on government handouts. Instead, he supported “mutual self-help through voluntary giving.”

A Cautious Approach: Limited Government Intervention

Like many economists, Hoover viewed the American economy as basically sound. He felt that his job was to generate optimism and restore confidence. Optimistic business owners, he believed, would expand production. Confident consumers would spend more money. The economy would then bounce back without direct government

involvement. Meanwhile, Hoover looked to local communities, mainly through churches and private charities, to take care of their citizens.

Hoover's conservative approach made sense at first. In time, however, even he could see that this depression was different from past ones. For example, unemployment continued to increase. So did the number of Hoovervilles—shantytowns that homeless Americans in many cities built out of crude cardboard and tarpaper. While people in cities went hungry, desperate farmers tried to boost crop prices by causing food shortages. However, it was the sharp increase in bank failures that finally caused Hoover to rethink the government's role in an economic crisis.

To deal with failing banks, Hoover at first tried his standard approach of voluntary cooperation. He prodded the owners of healthy banks to loan money to banks that were suffering. When this cooperative venture did not work, Hoover reluctantly modified his policy. In 1932, he supported the creation of a government agency to save failing banks and businesses. That agency, called the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), issued government loans to banks, railroads, and other big businesses.

Hoover hoped RFC loans would stimulate economic growth. Once companies began hiring again, he believed, prosperity would trickle down through the economy to those most in need. To his credit, the number of bank failures declined greatly that year. Still, conservatives criticized Hoover for putting the government in the business of saving banks. At the same time, liberals criticized what they called his trickle-down theory of helping the needy. The poor, they argued, could not wait for money to seep down to them from expanding businesses. They needed direct relief right away.

With a presidential election coming in the fall, Hoover knew he had to do more. In July 1932, he supported a bill authorizing the RFC to loan money to states that no longer had enough resources to help the needy. The bill also allowed the RFC to finance a variety of public works projects. This legislation stopped just short of offering direct federal relief to those in need, but it was a giant step in that direction. Hoover signed the bill into law just as the issue of the Bonus Army was about to boil over.

Hoover Battles the Bonus Army

When the Bonus Army veterans first arrived in Washington, D.C., President Hoover had chosen to ignore them, hoping they would go away. They did not. However, on June 17, 1932, Congress defeated the bill that called for paying the bonuses immediately. At that point, a few thousand weary veterans gave up and headed home. But close to 10,000 Bonus Army marchers refused to leave. Walter Waters vowed to continue his protest until 1945 if necessary.

Fearful that the remaining veterans might become violent, Hoover ordered their removal. On July 28, troops used tear gas and tanks to push the veterans out of Washington. The next day, Hoover told reporters, "A challenge to the authority of the United States Government has been met, swiftly and firmly." However, reports of tanks chasing unarmed veterans out of the capital appalled many Americans.

Roosevelt Calls for a New Deal: The Election of 1932

That summer, Democrats nominated New York governor Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) to be their presidential candidate. Like his distant cousin Theodore Roosevelt, FDR had a charming, magnetic personality. As he campaigned across the country, he radiated confidence in his ability to take charge of the economic crisis and lead the country to better times.

In accepting the Democratic nomination, Roosevelt promised “a new deal for the American people.” While he did not yet make the details clear, FDR pledged, with this New Deal, to do whatever was needed to help the needy and promote recovery. “The country needs bold, persistent experimentation,” he said. “It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something.”

A gloomy Hoover warned Americans that a Roosevelt presidency could bring disaster. Federal meddling in the economy, he claimed, would stifle free enterprise. Despite Hoover’s dire warnings, Roosevelt won a landslide victory. He tallied 472 electoral votes to Hoover’s 59, with a margin of victory of more than 7 million popular votes.

31.4 – FDR Launches the New Deal's First Hundred Days

Franklin D. Roosevelt took office as president in March 1933. In his inaugural speech, he told Americans,

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.

FDR presented Congress with a broad array of measures focusing on relief, recovery, and reform. Lawmakers dispensed with their usual lengthy debates to enact a record number of bills in just over three months. For that reason, this session of Congress became known as the First Hundred Days.

The relief measures that Congress passed during this remarkable session were intended to help the unemployed. For example, the Civilian Conservation Corps put young jobless men to work maintaining forests and planting trees. The recovery measures were designed to reverse the downward slide of the economy. One such law, the Agricultural Adjustment Act, tried to make farming profitable again by reducing overproduction and raising crop prices. The reform legislation passed in this session focused mainly on the financial sector. The Truth-in-Securities Act, for instance, required companies issuing stock to provide full and accurate information to investors.

As Congress finished its work, no one could say how well the new laws would work. Still, the whirlwind of activity that launched FDR’s New Deal brought fresh hope to a worried nation.

Summary

Americans were anything but united in their responses to the Great Depression. Each group's political ideology shaped its approach. The election of 1932 presented voters with a choice between Republican president Herbert Hoover's conservative approach and Democratic challenger Franklin Roosevelt's promise of a New Deal.

The conservative response Conservatives thought the government should leave the economy alone. They believed that the economy would eventually stabilize itself.

The liberal response Liberals thought the government should play a more active role in the economy. They also believed the government should step in to help those in need.

The radical response Radicals advocated abolishing the free enterprise system. They believed that the government should plan economic activity and distribute wealth according to need.

Herbert Hoover At first, President Hoover relied on voluntary cooperation to ease the Depression's effects. As conditions worsened, Hoover gave government a limited role in the economy. His Reconstruction Finance Corporation, however, failed to revive the economy.

Franklin D. Roosevelt After his landslide victory in 1932, Roosevelt presented Congress with a variety of New Deal measures. During the First Hundred Days of his administration, Congress enacted many programs to provide relief, promote recovery, and enact reforms.

Chapter 32 — The Human Impact of the Great Depression

How did ordinary Americans endure the hardships of the Great Depression?

32.1 – Introduction

In 1933, Harry Hopkins, director of the newly formed Federal Emergency Relief Administration, hired a journalist named Lorena Hickok to travel around the country as his eyes and ears. He instructed her,

Go talk with the preachers and teachers, businessmen, workers, farmers. Go talk with the unemployed, those who are on relief and those who aren't. And when you talk with them don't ever forget that but for the grace of God you, I or any of our friends might be in their shoes. Tell me what you see and hear. All of it.

—Harry Hopkins, quoted in *One Third of a Nation: Lorena Hickok Reports on the Great Depression*, 1981

Hopkins had studied lots of statistical data. He knew what percentage of the workforce was unemployed, how much the gross national product had fallen, and how many people had lost their homes. What he could not learn from these numbers was how such realities had changed people's lives. After the 1932 election, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt suggested that Hopkins hire Hickok—a seasoned reporter who had covered Mrs. Roosevelt as her husband Franklin campaigned for the presidency—to study this question as a roving investigator.

Once hired, Hickok traveled from West Virginia coal mines to North Dakota wheat farms, from Georgia cotton fields to western mining camps. Wherever she went, she reported to Hopkins about the hardships she observed—and there were plenty. The Depression had left many Americans hungry and homeless, and it had forced others to give up school, postpone marriage, or put off parenthood.

In this chapter, you will discover how the economic collapse of the 1930s affected workers, farmers, and families. You will consider how natural disasters intensified the suffering of many Americans. Finally, you will see how some managed to survive despite the hard times.

32.2 – A Country in Economic Distress

Living in New York City during the Depression, songwriter E. Y. Harburg saw the effects of unemployment all around him. He later recalled, “The prevailing greeting at that time, on every block you passed, by some poor guy coming up, was: ‘Can you spare a dime?’” Harburg turned this observation into a song titled “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?” It told of the sense of betrayal felt by many hardworking people who had suddenly become poor. As Harburg explained,

This is the man who says: “I built the railroads. I built that tower. I fought your wars. I was the kid with the drum. Why . . . should I be standing in line [for a handout] now? What happened to all this wealth I created?”

Y. Harburg, quoted in Studs Turkel, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression*, 1970

Rising Unemployment Affects Millions of Americans

From 1929 to 1933, almost one in every seven businesses failed. In 1933, when Lorena Hickok began her travels, 13 million Americans were out of work. That number amounted to about 25 percent of the workforce. In comparison, only about 3.1 percent of the population had been jobless before the stock market crash in 1929.

Most unemployed Americans wanted to work. Losing their jobs was a crushing blow to people who were accustomed to providing for their families and who believed in the American ideal of opportunity for all. Those who did manage to keep their jobs often found their hours—and their pay—reduced.

When companies had to lay people off, they first let go of very young, elderly, and minority workers. African American unemployment rose as high as 50 percent in some cities during the Depression. When the New Deal began in 1933, about 20 percent of people listed on government relief rolls were African Americans, even though they made up only about 10 percent of the population.

At first, the economic collapse struck men harder than women. Men tended to work in heavy industries like automobile assembly and steelmaking, which were badly hit by the downturn. Sectors of the economy in which women tended to work declined less. Female secretaries, waitresses, maids, and telephone operators often kept their jobs, at least at first. As the Depression wore on, employers began firing women to give the jobs to men with families to support. Many states refused to hire women for government jobs if their husbands earned a living wage, or a wage high enough to provide an acceptable standard of living.

Unemployment had a cascading effect. The unemployed had little to spend, so many businesses lost customers and had to close—increasing unemployment. In addition to losing their jobs, many people lost their savings and their homes.

Farmers Lose Their Farms

Farmers had faced economic troubles even before the Depression began. But as unemployment reduced consumers' buying power, many farmers could no longer sell their crops. As a result, they could not make mortgage payments to banks that had loaned them money. In desperation, some farmers tried to sell their farms—only to find that their property values had sunk along with the economy. Property value tells what a piece of real estate is worth on the market. During the Depression, many farms lost more than half their value.

Farmers who could find buyers often received far less for their land than they had paid for it. Those who could not sell their farms lost them to foreclosure, a legal process that allows a lender to take over the property it has helped a borrower buy. Farm families that went through foreclosure lost their homes, their livelihoods, and all the money they had invested.

Tenant farmers and sharecroppers in the South suffered the most, for these farmers, both black and white, could not afford to buy land. Instead they rented it, borrowing money from the owner to purchase seeds and other supplies. Typically, they did not earn enough selling their crops to cover their debts and rent. To make matters worse, in Mississippi the average annual income per person fell from a meager \$239 in 1929 to a pathetic \$117 by 1933. When tenant farmers and sharecroppers could no longer pay rent, some landowners forced them to leave.

Financial Woes Stress American Families

Families suffered not only financial but also psychological stress when breadwinners lost their jobs. Many jobless men and women felt ashamed of being unemployed, believing they had brought it on themselves. Men also often felt that they lost status and authority within their families when they lost their jobs. One unemployed man put it this way: "During the depression, I lost something. Maybe you call it self-respect, but in losing it I also lost the respect of my children, and I am afraid that I am losing my wife." For some Americans, these strains were too much to take. The suicide rate reached an all-time high during the Depression.

Families struggled to stay together during the lean years. Those who could not afford rent sometimes squeezed in with relatives or friends. But when costs rose too high, thousands of people, many of them teenagers, left home. One man recalled that when he turned 16, his father told him, "Go fend for yourself. I cannot afford to have you around any longer."

The Depression affected family life in other ways as well. The marriage rate declined 22 percent from 1929 to 1933, and the birth rate also dropped. Couples were postponing getting married until their finances improved. The divorce rate also fell, since many couples could not afford to live separately or to pay the legal fees involved in a divorce.

32.3 – "Ill-Housed, Ill-Clad, Ill-Nourished"

In 1937, as Franklin Roosevelt began his second term as president and addressed the nation, he told of improvements made over the previous four years. But he also called attention to the many Americans still suffering from the Depression:

I see millions of families trying to live on incomes so meager that the pall of family disaster hangs over them day by day . . . I see millions denied education, recreation, and the opportunity to better their lot and the lot of their children. I see millions lacking the means to buy the products of farm and factory and by their

poverty denying work and productiveness to many other millions. I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.

—Franklin Roosevelt, second inaugural address, January 20, 1937

While the Depression affected all Americans in some way, this one third of the nation suffered the most.

Evictions Force People Out of Their Homes

Without a steady income—or sometimes any income at all—many people could not pay their rent. When they failed to pay, their landlords would evict them. Eviction is a legal process that landlords use to remove tenants from their property. Similarly, if homeowners could not make their monthly mortgage payments, banks would foreclose on their homes, forcing families to find shelter elsewhere.

Those who became homeless did their best to get by. Some crowded into apartments with other families, huddling together against the cold when they could not afford fuel for heat. Others slept on park benches, in doorways, or, as one young homeless man reported, in haystacks, tobacco warehouses, a YMCA, a Salvation Army shelter, and jails. Once he even pried open a church window, climbed in, and pulled two seats together to make a bed.

As an increasing number of people lost their homes, Hoovervilles sprang up around many cities. Seattle's Hooverville consisted of more than 200 shacks made of tarpaper, old crates, and other scrap materials. City officials tried twice to get rid of the makeshift village by burning the shacks to the ground. When that did not work, they agreed to leave the residents alone.

Although divorce rates dropped during the 1930s, desertion rates rose. Some men, finding themselves unable to support their families, left home to live on the streets. "These are dead men," one writer observed. "They are ghosts that walk the streets by day. They are ghosts sleeping with yesterday's newspapers thrown around them for covers at night."

Teenagers also left home, often to ride the railroads in search of work. Hopping on and off moving freight trains, however, carried its own set of dangers. "I nearly was killed on my first train ride," one man who left home at 16 later recalled. "All I could think of was I shouldn't have got on this train. And if I lose my grip I'm gonna die. And what would my mother think?"

Millions Face Hunger and Starvation

In addition to homelessness, loss of work often led to hunger. For many, going hungry was a new experience. One teenager who left home to find work later recalled, "I was hungry all the time, and I wasn't used to hunger. I'd never been hungry before, dreadfully hungry." In a letter to Eleanor Roosevelt, another teenager reported, "My

brother and I some times even went to bed with out supper because we understand that the others [in our family] need it more than we do.”

Hunger led to malnutrition—a physical condition that results from not getting an adequate diet of healthy food—among the poor. According to surveys conducted in the 1930s, as many as one in five children in New York endured malnutrition at the peak of the Depression. In coal-mining areas, childhood malnutrition rates may have risen as high as 90 percent.

Lack of proper nutrition left people vulnerable to diseases. One study reported that the illness rate among families of the unemployed soared to 66 percent higher than that of families with a full-time wage earner. Not surprisingly, the poor could rarely afford the medical care their sicknesses required.

People did their best to feed themselves and their families. Some picked through garbage cans looking for scraps, some stole, and still others begged. Families were known to subsist on potatoes, crackers, or dandelions. Lorena Hickok witnessed desperate mothers in South Dakota feeding their children a soup made of Russian thistle, a plant Hickok likened to barbed wire. Reporter Louis Adamic described being at home one morning when his doorbell rang. He looked out expecting to see the postman. Instead, he saw

a girl, as we learned afterward, of ten and a boy of eight. Not very adequate for the season and weather, their clothing was patched but clean. They carried school books. “Excuse me, Mister,” said the girl in a voice that sounded older than she looked, “but we have no eats in our house and my mother said I should take my brother before we go to school and ring a doorbell in some house”—she swallowed heavily and took a deep breath—“and ask you for something to eat.”

—Louis Adamic, *My America*, 1938

To feed the hungry, soup kitchens sprang up across the country. Soup was easy to prepare and could be increased in order to feed more people by adding water. Breadlines—long lines of people waiting for their bowl of soup and piece of bread—became a common sight in most cities. For many, that soup kitchen meal was the only food they would eat all day. At one point, New York City had 82 soup kitchens, which provided the needy with 85,000 meals a day.

32.4 – Natural Disasters Intensify the Suffering

As the year 1931 began, most farmers on the Great Plains were feeling optimistic. Wheat prices were holding up despite the Depression, and prospects for a record-breaking crop looked good. That summer, however, the rains abruptly stopped, and crops began to wither; then strong winds began to blow across the plains. As one wheat farmer recalled, “The winds unleashed their fury with a force beyond my wildest imagination. It blew continuously for a hundred hours and it seemed as if the whole

surface of the earth would be blown away.” The farmer was hardly exaggerating—he was describing the beginning of one of the worst natural disasters in the nation’s history. Over the course of the next decade, drought, dust storms, and floods would add to the human misery already brought on by the hard times of the Great Depression.

Black Blizzards Plague the Great Plains

At first, farmers on the Great Plains viewed the disastrous summer of 1931 as a freak of nature. The following year, they once again planted their fields and waited for the rain needed to nourish their crops. However, that rain never came—not that summer, nor the summers that followed. The prolonged drought devastated farmers, who could not get their land to produce anything but dust.

As disruptive as the drought was, the dust storms proved to be worse. Winds whipping across the plains picked up the dried-out topsoil and formed ominous black clouds. The blowing dust became so thick that people called the storms black blizzards. As one eyewitness recalled decades later,

The wind kept blowing harder and harder. It kept getting darker and darker. And the old house is just a-vibratin’ like it was gonna blow away. And I started trying to see my hand. And I kept bringing my hand up closer and closer and closer and closer. And I finally touched the end of my nose and I still couldn’t see my hand. That’s how black it was.

People tried to protect themselves by covering their faces with pieces of cloth and tacking sheets over doorways, but these efforts did little good. By the time a storm ended, one housewife reported, “Everything was full of dust.”

The prolonged drought affected 100 million acres of farmland in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, and Kansas. A journalist traveling through the region at the time described it as a Dust Bowl—a name that stuck.

The Natural Impact of the Drought: Desertification

In 1932, the weather bureau reported the occurrence of 14 dust storms. Within a year, the number nearly tripled, reaching 38. The Great Plains was experiencing desertification, a process in which land becomes increasingly dry and desertlike.

Several factors contributed to the desertification of the Great Plains. Drought, of course, was one, since without rain nothing would grow in farmers’ fields. Decades of poor farming practices worsened the situation. During World War I, the federal government had encouraged farmers on the Great Plains to raise as much wheat as possible. After the war, as crop prices dropped, farmers had tried to increase their harvests even more to make up the difference. To do this, they had plowed and planted every tract of land they owned. By 1930, Great Plains farmers were harvesting far more wheat than they had been 10 years earlier, and they were also grazing more cattle. Such intensive use of the land depleted the soil of nutrients and left it stripped of its native drought-resistant vegetation. Once the drought came, there was no plant covering to hold the soil in place. The wind easily picked it up and blew it away.

In 1935, the federal government responded to the loss of so much valuable topsoil by establishing the Soil Conservation Service. The service promoted new farming methods designed to reduce soil erosion. It planted about 18,000 miles of trees to act as windbreaks, reducing the force of winds blowing across the plains.

The Human Impact of the Drought: Depopulation

Although the federal government geared up to combat the drought, it took action too late for many farmers. During the 1930s, a quarter of the people living in the Dust Bowl left the region. Some had no option but to depart after banks foreclosed on their farms. Others moved away because breathing in the dust was making their families sick. Still others simply gave up, loading their possessions into a car or truck and driving away.

As the dry years piled up, depopulation, or the loss of residents from an area, took a heavy toll on the region. With their customers moving away, banks and business failed. Since few students arrived to fill classrooms, schools closed. Even churches shut their doors, as few people remained to come together in prayer on Sundays. Once-bustling farming communities turned into ghost towns.

Some of the Dust Bowl refugees headed for nearby cities in hopes of finding work. However, with the unemployment rate still high, jobs were scarce, so many more people left the region entirely. Like the fictional Joad family in John Steinbeck's novel about Dust Bowl migrants, *The Grapes of Wrath*, those who left often followed U.S. Route 66 to California. California appealed to migrants for its promise of farmwork in the fertile Central Valley. Californians nicknamed the newcomers Okies because many of them came from Oklahoma.

During the 1930s, more than 300,000 people migrated from Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri to California. Once they arrived, however, their travels were not always over. Many trekked along a migrant-farmworker circuit that followed the ripening of crops up and down the state. Starting near the Mexican border in the spring they picked peas and later moved north to pick strawberries. Then they headed farther north until they reached the San Joaquin Valley, where cotton was blooming. All summer long, they followed ripening fruit up and down the Central Valley, moving from one farm labor camp to the next as the crops required. In time, however, most of the migrants would find steadier work and put down roots.

From Drought to Deluge: The Great Flood of 1936

While the Great Plains suffered from drought, a different natural disaster—the Great Flood of 1936—struck the Northeast. In March 1936, a series of heavy storms pounded the region. The rain, combined with heavy melting snow, caused rivers to spill over their banks. Floodwaters inundated cities, towns, farms, and mines. The *New York Times* wrote of the disaster: “From New England to the Potomac scores of communities stand under water as their inhabitants row in boats past homes submerged to the eaves.”

The Great Flood of 1936 hit Pennsylvania the hardest of all states in the region. Across the state, the flood caused the deaths of 84 people and the destruction of more than 82,000 buildings. The disaster paralyzed Pittsburgh, a leading industrial city in the western part of the state. Floodwaters knocked out the city's electricity and telephone service. Fires burned unchecked because fire trucks could not travel through flooded streets. Without power, the city's water system shut down. On March 20, 1936, the Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph reported to its readers,

Water famine hit devastated Pittsburgh today. The specter [ghost] of thirst and pestilence [infectious disease] joined the twin horror of fire and flood. Squirrel Hill was the first to feel the blow. Water faucets trickled dry early today. In other sections of the city supplies will be exhausted within a few hours.

The rising rivers called the government's attention to a new concern: the safety of the nation's capital. As Congress debated the creation of a national flood-control program, members of the Civilian Conservation Corps labored feverishly to build a sandbag levy around the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument, which were located not far from the Potomac. In the past, lawmakers had offered only weak support for flood-control measures. However, after the floods of 1936, Business Week reported, flood-control legislation "has tremendous support in Congress." Within weeks, President Roosevelt signed a national flood program into law.

32.5 – Coping with Hard Times

Americans found many ways to deal with the grim realities of the Depression years. A Cleveland teenager named Jerry Siegel coped by escaping into a world of fantasy and adventure. In particular, tales of men with superhuman strength tickled his imagination. While tossing in bed one night, he envisioned something new: a character like "all the strong men I ever heard of rolled into one. Only more so." The next morning he explained his idea to a friend who could draw well. Within hours, the two Cleveland teenagers had created the first in a long line of superheroes: Superman, the man of steel. Average Americans were not as strong as Superman, but, using their wits, they did manage to endure.

Struggling to Get By

People who lost their jobs did whatever they could think of to survive. Those who owned land often grew food, both to eat and to trade for other necessities. In cities, some people sold apples on the street, from which they might make \$1.15 on a good day. Others sold anything they could to earn a little money for food. One young artist traveled around the country painting and selling portraits on the street for 25 cents each. Another man described his "racket" this way: "I go around to the houses and ask if they've any tight windows or bureau drawers they would like to have loosened."

Scraping by to meet basic needs, many Americans made sacrifices in all realms of life. The financial crisis forced some 80,000 college students to drop out of school during the 1932–33 school year. Most would never return to complete their education. Middle-class

men traded in their white collars for overalls in order to bring home a paycheck. The work might not be what they had once hoped for, but they preferred it to going on government relief.

Looking for Help

Despite people's efforts, the day often came when even the proudest family had to look for relief. However, as Lorena Hickok heard repeatedly on her travels, many found it difficult to admit they needed help. Before he could seek relief, "I simply had to murder my pride," an engineer explained to her. Similarly, an unemployed insurance agent confessed, "We'd lived on bread and water three weeks before I could make myself do it."

Before Franklin Roosevelt launched his New Deal in 1933, there were few places the poor and unemployed could turn for help. Herbert Hoover had believed that private charities could cope with the economic crisis, as they had with earlier downturns, and he had encouraged Americans to rely on them to do so. Many wealthy Americans generously supported charities to help the less fortunate. In New York City, charitable donations for the needy increased from \$4.5 million in 1930 to \$21 million in 1932.

At times, charity also came from unexpected sources. For example, the notorious gangster Al Capone and his gang established the first soup kitchen in Chicago in 1930. Capone hoped that this act of charity would help clean up his shady image and keep him out of jail. It did not—he was tried and convicted of income tax evasion the following year.

Local and state governments also attempted to aid people who were out of work. They offered public assistance —support in the form of money, goods, or services provided to those in need. However, local and state relief agencies soon drained their funds. There were simply too many people in need of help. "I have seen thousands of these defeated, discouraged, hopeless men and women, cringing and fawning as they come to ask for public aid," reported the mayor of Toledo, Ohio. "It is a spectacle of national degeneration."

Harry Hopkins, the man who had hired Hickok, agreed with the mayor's sentiment. In his first few months as director of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, an agency established to grant money to states for relief projects, he had come to understand that doling out his limited funds would not adequately deal with the crisis. He knew that putting people back to work—and soon—was imperative. When his critics argued that doing more would cost too much, Hopkins responded bluntly, "Hunger is not debatable. People don't eat in the long run—they eat every day."

Summary

The Great Depression inflicted terrible hardships on millions of Americans. As unemployment rates skyrocketed to 25 percent, American families shouldered the burdens of financial and emotional stress, while many farmers, unable to pay

their bills, lost their farms. Still, resourceful Americans found ways to endure during the hard times.

Homelessness Without steady incomes, many people faced eviction from their homes. Some hit the road. Others moved into cramped apartments with family or friends. Still others lived on the streets or in shantytowns called Hoovervilles.

Hunger The poor and unemployed often found food to be scarce. Children suffered the most from the effects of hunger and malnutrition. In many cities, soup kitchens offered free meals to the needy, who might not eat anywhere else.

The Dust Bowl Years with no rain on the Great Plains created a disaster area known as the Dust Bowl. Hundreds of thousands of people left the drought-stricken region to find work in California.

The Great Flood of 1936 Floods in the Northeast caused millions of dollars of damage and put more people out of work. As a result, Congress finally created a national flood-control program.

Charity and public assistance Private charities and state and local relief agencies attempted to relieve the human suffering of the Great Depression. However, by 1933, more needed to be done—and soon.

Chapter 33 — The New Deal and Its Legacy

How did the expansion of government during the New Deal affect the nation?

33.1 – Introduction

Franklin D. Roosevelt came from a wealthy New York family. He grew up on a large estate overlooking the Hudson River and attended exclusive private schools, including Harvard College. During his youth, Franklin had little contact with working-class Americans, except perhaps his parents' servants.

When Franklin fell in love with Eleanor Roosevelt, a distant cousin, she broadened his awareness. Eleanor had been taught that the wealthy have a duty to help the poor. She acted on this duty by working to improve conditions in factories and sweatshops and teaching immigrants at a settlement house in New York City. One day in 1903, while Franklin was still a college student, Eleanor took him to the home of one of her young pupils. The girl lived in a tenement in a poor neighborhood, and the dark, crowded home shocked Franklin. He declared that he “could not believe human beings lived that way.” That day, Franklin Roosevelt opened his eyes to the harsh reality of life for the poorest Americans.

In the following years, Roosevelt became a skillful politician. Serving as assistant secretary of the navy and as governor of New York, he earned a reputation for being someone who could “get the job done.” Spurred on by his memory of how the poor lived, he pushed for social and economic reforms. In the 1932 presidential election, Roosevelt stormed to victory in part because he promised to help the working men and women whose labor energized the American economy. He vowed to defeat the Great Depression by relying on plans “that build from the bottom up and not from the top down, that put their faith once more in the forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid.”

FDR was elected to four terms as president. During the first two terms, his New Deal programs gave hope to millions of Americans. He worked to find jobs for the unemployed and urged Congress to do more for those in need. In the process, he changed the role of government in American life.

33.2 – The First New Deal

In 1933, some 13 million Americans—nearly one fourth of the workforce—were unemployed. FDR recognized that getting people back to work was his primary task as president. But he also understood that businesses needed help. Since 1930, thousands of banks and other companies had closed their doors. The production of goods had fallen by more than half.

FDR also knew that he must calm people's fears. To do this, he gave a series of radio addresses called “fireside chats.” In these brief broadcasts, the president explained his plans and asked Americans for their support. FDR's soothing voice and upbeat tone

greatly appealed to people, and he quickly gained the public's trust. They in turn backed the New Deal programs of the First Hundred Days, often called the First New Deal.

Restructuring the Financial Sector

President Roosevelt first attacked problems in the financial sector—the areas of money, banking, and investment. On March 6, 1933, he ordered all banks to close temporarily. This banking holiday stopped the steady withdrawal of funds from financial institutions. Over the next few days, officials put together the Emergency Banking Act, and Congress quickly passed it into law. This law reformed the banking system and gave the federal government more power to supervise bank activities.

On March 12, with many banks set to reopen the next day, FDR gave his first fireside chat. He hoped to restore confidence in the banking system. About 60 million radio listeners tuned in to the broadcast to hear the president explain the government's efforts to halt the banking crisis. He called on Americans to do their part as well. "I can assure you," he said, "that it is safer to keep your money in a reopened bank than under the mattress." The following day, deposits began to flow back into the nation's banks.

A month later, Congress passed the Banking Act of 1933. This law created the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), which guaranteed individual bank deposits up to \$5,000. This guarantee helped restore public confidence in banks and stabilize the banking system. The law also limited the freedom of banks to trade in stocks and bonds. Before the stock market crash, banks had used depositors' savings for risky, speculative investments.

Speculation in stocks had helped cause the 1929 crash. Part of the problem was ignorance. Many investors lacked reliable information about investments. Together, FDR and Congress set out to reform the stock market. A key step was the creation of the Securities and Exchange Commission in 1934. The SEC required companies to publish the important facts about their business. It also regulated the activities of stockbrokers and others in the investment business.

Shoring Up the Free Enterprise System

During the Great Depression, some people thought the free enterprise system had failed. They wanted to do away with it, but FDR differed—he wanted to help the system recover. As with the New Deal in general, the president did not have a master plan for economic recovery. He preferred to experiment, even though he knew that some programs would succeed and others would fail. One of his grandest experiments was the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) of 1933.

The NIRA was the centerpiece of the New Deal's efforts to breathe life into the economy. It was designed to increase production while boosting wages and prices. Its goals were to make more goods available and to give consumers more money with which to buy them. The NIRA targeted the needs of three groups: business, labor unions, and the unemployed.

To help business, the law set up the National Recovery Administration (NRA). This government agency worked with business leaders to create codes of fair competition in various industries. Each industry followed its own code, which required companies in that industry to standardize products, set minimum prices, and announce any expected price increases. With the NRA, the New Deal increased government regulation and economic planning and moved away from the laissez-faire policies of the past.

To help labor unions, the NIRA guaranteed workers the right to organize and bargain collectively. It also authorized the NRA to propose codes for establishing minimum wages and maximum hours in various industries. These measures represented a new level of government support for organized labor.

To help the unemployed, the NIRA allotted \$3.3 billion for various public works. It established the Public Works Administration (PWA) to oversee these construction projects. FDR hoped not only to create jobs but also to restart the economy with a large infusion of government cash. Unfortunately, the PWA spent its money so slowly that it had little effect on jobs or the economy.

Paying Farmers Not to Plant

Another piece of recovery legislation created the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA). This agency tried to aid farmers by reducing crop production and raising prices. Farmers had long suffered from low market prices for their products, which eroded their purchasing power—their ability to buy farm machinery and other goods. Many farmers also lost their farms because they were unable to pay their mortgages.

The aim of the AAA was to raise crop prices to reach parity. This is the price that gives farmers the same purchasing power they had during an earlier, more prosperous time. To raise prices, the AAA paid farmers to plant fewer crops. In theory, this would reduce crop supplies and increase market demand, thereby boosting prices. The AAA also provided loans to farmers so they could pay their mortgages and stay on their land rather than join the jobless in cities.

Promoting Economic Development and Homeownership

Another New Deal program worked to promote economic development in one of the poorest regions of the country, the Tennessee River valley. In 1933, at the urging of the Roosevelt administration, Congress passed a bill creating the Tennessee Valley Authority. The TVA, an independent government agency, built a series of dams on the Tennessee River and its tributaries. These dams provided flood control and hydroelectric power to seven southern states. The TVA also battled erosion and deforestation, both processes that posed serious problems in the Tennessee Valley. In addition, this far-reaching program brought badly needed jobs to the region and encouraged businesses to invest there.

The New Deal also created two new federal agencies that would deal with housing issues. Like farmers, many homeowners had lost their homes because they could not pay their debts. One agency, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, provided loans to

help people meet their mortgage payments. The other agency, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), gave a boost to the banking and construction industries by insuring mortgage loans up to 80 percent of a home's value.

Remembering the “Forgotten Man”

After FDR's inauguration, more than 450,000 Americans wrote letters to the new president. Many of them pleaded for help. During his campaign, FDR had promised to remember the “forgotten man.” Now, under the First New Deal, he carried out that promise by providing relief programs designed to help ordinary Americans as they struggled to survive the Depression.

One important work-relief program was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which gave young men jobs planting trees and working on other conservation projects. A much larger program, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), took an approach different from providing people with work. Instead, it sent funds to state governments, which then distributed the cash to the needy. For the first time in American history, a federal agency provided direct relief to the unemployed. State and local agencies also pitched in with supplies of food and clothing to help the poor.

33.3 – Protests and Political Challenges

The flurry of activity during the First Hundred Days caught most Americans by surprise. Few would have predicted that so much could be done so quickly. However, while Roosevelt managed to instill hope in desperate Americans, he had not yet beaten the Depression. Unemployment remained high, and the economy remained flat. Gradually, discontent with FDR's policies surfaced.

Critics Attack the New Deal

When the early New Deal failed to restore economic prosperity, critics began to question FDR's approach. Many of these critics had ideological differences with FDR. Some came from the right wing, those on the conservative side of the political spectrum. Others came from the left wing, those on the liberal side. At the two extremes existed the people with the most radical views. In the center stood the political moderates. When asked whether he was “left or right politically,” FDR claimed to be part of the mainstream near the center of the spectrum. “I am going down the whole line a little left of center,” he said.

Right-wing critics generally thought the New Deal had gone too far in expanding the role of the federal government. These critics included a mix of conservative politicians, wealthy industrialists, bankers, and religious leaders. Some of these critics joined forces in 1934 to form the American Liberty League. This organization attacked FDR as a leftist radical and called New Deal legislation socialist and unconstitutional. One of the league's founders was Al Smith, a former New York governor and the Democratic candidate for president in 1928. In 1936, Smith bitterly attacked the New Deal as a betrayal of Progressive ideas about good government and threw his support to the Republican candidate for president.

Left-wing critics of the New Deal generally thought the New Deal should give greater aid to the needy. Robert La Follette, a progressive Republican senator, favored larger public works programs. Dr. Francis Townsend devised a plan calling for a monthly payment of \$200 to everyone over the age of 60. Recipients would promise to retire and spend the money in the same month it was issued. Townsend claimed his plan would free up jobs for younger workers and boost the economy.

Socialists offered more critical views from the left. Norman Thomas, leader of the Socialist Party, found little to praise in the New Deal, except for the TVA. He likened this program to “a beautiful flower in a garden of weeds.” Another socialist, the muckraker Upton Sinclair, called for a more radical New Deal. He urged California’s state government to buy, rent, or seize unused land and factories and give them to jobless workers to use to produce their own food and goods. He called his program End Poverty in California (EPIC). Sinclair ran for governor of California in 1934 on the EPIC platform but was soundly defeated.

Demagogues Turn Up the Heat

At the extremes of the political spectrum, demagogues also denounced the New Deal. A demagogue is a political leader who appeals to people’s emotions and prejudices. Charles Coughlin, a Roman Catholic priest, attracted millions of listeners to his radio broadcasts. With his dynamic voice, the “radio priest” stirred up hatred against Wall Street bankers and greedy capitalists. He grew increasingly critical of Roosevelt for not doing enough to help the poor, saying that FDR had “out-Hoovered Hoover.”

Huey Long, regarded by his supporters as a champion of the poor, seemed to his opponents a wild-eyed demagogue. A Louisiana senator with Populist appeal, Long colorfully portrayed himself as the hero of the common man in the fight against big business. In 1934 he launched his Share Our Wealth program with the slogan “Every Man a King.” Long wanted to take money from the rich and give every American family a grant of \$5,000, a guaranteed job, and an income of at least \$2,500 per year. He explained the idea behind his program this way:

It is our estimate that 4 percent of the American people own 85 percent of the wealth of America . . . Any man with a thimble-full of sense ought to know that if you take 85 percent off of that table and give it to one man that you are bound to have two thirds of the people starving because they haven’t got enough to eat. 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? The only way to be able to feed the balance of the people is to make that man come back and bring back some of that grub that he ain’t got no business with!
—Huey Long, “Share our wealth” speech, 1934

33.4 – The Second New Deal

To meet challenges from the right and the left, Franklin Roosevelt took to the airwaves once again. In a June 1934 fireside chat, he asked Americans to judge the New Deal's progress by "the plain facts of your individual situation. Are you better off than you were last year?" The response of most Americans was loud and clear. In the November 1934 congressional elections, Democrats gained a large number of seats in both the House and the Senate.

The huge Democratic victory encouraged FDR. In 1935, he began introducing another flurry of legislation. In part to counter the demagogues, FDR shifted his focus away from recovery and toward social and economic reforms. He aimed to provide Americans with relief, stability, and security. Many historians call this round of programs the Second New Deal.

Energizing the Country with Electricity and Jobs

In the spring of 1935, Congress passed FDR's Emergency Relief Appropriation Bill. FDR called it the Big Bill because it created several new agencies and called for nearly \$5 billion in new spending, an unprecedented increase.

One of the new agencies was the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). In 1935, fewer than 20 percent of American farms had electricity. The REA established hundreds of publicly owned electrical cooperatives, built generating plants, and strung power lines. When it completed its work, about 90 percent of the country's farms had access to cheap power.

The Big Bill also spawned a huge agency called the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The WPA, a work-relief organization, put more than 3 million Americans to work in its first year. They built hundreds of thousands of bridges, public buildings, and parks. At the urging of Eleanor Roosevelt, the WPA also established arts projects. It hired unemployed artists to paint murals in public buildings. Musicians combed the American backcountry to find and record folk music. Writers created guidebooks to the states.

The WPA generated a lot of controversy. Many conservatives denounced the program's cost, while labor unions attacked it for depressing wage rates. Despite the criticisms, the program continually expanded. By 1936, the WPA employed 7 percent of the American workforce.

The Supreme Court Attacks the New Deal

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court had begun weighing in on key New Deal programs. In 1935, in the case *Schechter Poultry Corp. v. United States*, it struck down the National Industrial Recovery Act. The court ruled that the act violated the constitutional separation of powers by giving the president, rather than Congress, the power to issue "codes of fair competition" to businesses.

The next year, the Court killed the Agricultural Adjustment Act on the grounds that a law "to regulate and control agricultural production [was] a matter beyond the powers delegated to the federal government." It also struck down a New York law setting a

minimum wage for workers. Roosevelt fumed that the Court had created a “no-man’s land” where no government, state or federal, could act effectively.

A Bill of Rights for Workers

Despite the Court’s rulings, FDR continued to push for reform legislation. A month after the Supreme Court declared the NIRA unconstitutional, Congress passed a new bill to protect workers. The National Labor Relations Act, also called the Wagner Act for the senator who sponsored it, came to be seen as a bill of rights for organized labor.

The Wagner Act guaranteed workers “the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations, [and] to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing.” To protect these rights, the act created the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). This board had the power to supervise union elections to ensure that they were free and democratic. It could also penalize employers for “unfair labor practices,” such as attempting to discourage workers from joining or forming a union.

Congress passed a related bill in 1938. The Fair Labor Standards Act regulated conditions in the workplace. It also set a minimum wage of 25 cents an hour and a maximum 44-hour workweek for most workers. In addition, the act banned “oppressive child labor.” Together, the Wagner Act and the Fair Labor Standards Act met many of the longstanding demands of American workers and promised to make their lives more secure.

Economic Security for Americans

FDR also addressed the long-term problems of the aged and unemployed. “Among our objectives,” he told Congress in January 1935, “I place the security of the men, women, and children of the nation first.” Later that month, FDR revealed his landmark Social Security Act. Congress passed the bill in June, and in August the president signed it into law. At the signing ceremony, FDR said,

We can never insure one hundred percent of the population against one hundred percent of the hazards and vicissitudes [unexpected changes] of life, but we have tried to frame a law which will give some measure of protection to the average citizen and to his family against the loss of a job and against poverty-ridden old age.

—Franklin Roosevelt, August 14, 1935

The Social Security Act created a social insurance program that provides two main types of benefits: retirement and disability. Retirement benefits are cash payments made to retired workers sometime after they reach the age of 62. This is the program most often associated with Social Security today. The government finances these payments by taxing current workers and their employers. Disability benefits are payments made to workers who have become too disabled to continue working, regardless of their age. Severely disabled children are eligible for Social Security disability benefits as well.

The Social Security Act also set up an unemployment insurance program for workers. This program makes payments to people who have lost their jobs and are seeking new work. Its funding comes from taxes on employers. Usually, unemployment benefits last for up to six months. However, Congress has sometimes extended benefits for longer periods during economic recessions.

Battling the Supreme Court

In 1936, FDR won a second term as president with a landslide victory. He viewed this victory as a mandate—a grant of authority—to extend the New Deal further. But FDR feared that the Supreme Court would continue to block his efforts. By then, several Court decisions had threatened his attempts to give government a greater role in stabilizing the economy and society. FDR's frustration led him to take a controversial step.

In 1937, FDR presented Congress with legislation to redesign the Supreme Court. The bill called for adding a new justice for every sitting justice over age 70. FDR claimed that the Court was behind in its work, partly because aging justices could not keep up. But his real intention was clear. He wanted to pack the Supreme Court with liberal justices who would favor New Deal programs. Republicans and Democrats alike expressed outrage at FDR's court-packing plan. So did the American people. Congress rejected the bill.

Around this time, the Supreme Court shifted course, becoming more accepting of government regulation of the economy. In 1937, the Court upheld both the Social Security Act and the Wagner Act. In these decisions, the Court redefined its understanding of liberty. Conservatives, backed by the Court, had long equated liberty with the freedom of private enterprise to act without government interference. Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes observed that there was no constitutional basis for this narrow definition. In fact, he said, the Constitution supported a broader definition of liberty that included “the protection of law against the evils which menace the health, safety, morals, and welfare of the people.” That is, government could promote liberty by using its powers to ensure fair treatment of all Americans.

33.5 – Social and Political Impacts

The New Deal was a bold attempt to resolve the worst economic crisis in American history. President Roosevelt wanted to use the vast power of the federal government to end the Depression. But he also wanted to create a more just society. The United States, he said, should become “a country in which no one is left out.” The New Deal's sweeping reforms aimed, in part, to meet this social objective. Workers, women, and members of minorities all felt the impact of the New Deal, though some got a better deal than others.

A Good Deal for Workers

The New Deal helped many workers by strengthening the labor movement. First the NIRA and then the Wagner Act guaranteed the right of workers to form unions and to bargain collectively. This change in government policy boosted the power of labor unions. They now stood on a more equal footing with employers.

As unions became stronger, they also began to grow. This growth presented a challenge to the American Federation of Labor (AFL), a large and powerful alliance of unions. From its birth in the late 1800s, the AFL had organized skilled workers according to their craft, such as welding or printing. It had left less-skilled workers to fend for themselves. During the 1930s, activists within the AFL began demanding that it organize workers not by craft but by industry. That way, all workers in an industry would belong to the same union.

John L. Lewis, head of the United Mine Workers union, became one of the strongest supporters of this idea. In 1935, Lewis helped form a group within the AFL to organize workers in mass-production industries. This group later took the name Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). The AFL suspended Lewis's group in response to its industry-wide organizing. In 1938, the CIO formed an independent federation.

The CIO grew quickly, accepting African American workers and other laborers shunned by the AFL. It organized unions in the automobile, rubber, and steel industries. The CIO's success, aided by New Deal laws supporting labor, helped swell union membership. Less than 14 percent of workers belonged to unions in 1935. By 1940, union membership would climb to almost 28 percent of the total labor force.

A Mixed Deal for Women

Women also made some advances during the New Deal. Much of this progress stemmed from the influence of Eleanor Roosevelt. The first lady played a key role in the FDR administration. Her experience working with the poor gave her insight into the needs of factory workers, tenant farmers, and others hit hard by the Depression. She traveled the country, meeting people, assessing their needs, and reporting back to the president. She pushed him to be more daring in advancing his social agenda. She especially encouraged him to place more women in government positions.

Under FDR, the government hired an unprecedented number of women—more than in any previous administration. Talented women, such as Frances Perkins, reached high positions in government for the first time. Perkins, FDR's secretary of labor, proved to be an outstanding adviser to the president. The first female member of the cabinet, she worked tirelessly to shape and administer such programs as Social Security and the Fair Labor Standards Act. Another prominent figure, Mary McLeod Bethune, served as a special adviser to the president on minority affairs. She also worked in the National Youth Administration (NYA), where she fought to increase opportunities for young African Americans.

Not all women fared as well, however. As the Depression deepened, women were pressured to leave the workforce to free up jobs for men with families to support. The

Economy Act of 1932 prohibited a husband and wife from both working for the federal government. State and local governments banned the hiring of a woman whose husband earned “a living wage.” Other employers simply refused to hire married women at all. Labor unions often supported the exclusion of women from the workforce. “The working wife whose husband is employed,” argued one union leader, “should be barred from industry.”

A Disappointing Deal for African Americans

The New Deal offered some hope for black Americans, a group hit especially hard by the Depression. Competition for jobs, along with discrimination in hiring, pushed the unemployment rate for blacks well above that for white Americans. Direct government relief as well as work-relief programs such as the CCC and the WPA helped many poor African Americans survive. At the same time, more educated African Americans got jobs in government. A lawyer named William Hastie rose from a position as an adviser to the president on race relations to become the first African American to serve as a federal judge.

Still, African Americans continued to suffer from oppression. Even New Deal agencies practiced racial segregation, especially in the South. FDR himself failed to confront the evil of lynching, which claimed the lives of some 60 blacks between 1930 and 1934. In 1935, a federal antilynching bill came before Congress, but FDR declined supporting it for fear of offending powerful southerners in Congress.

Eleanor Roosevelt took a more courageous stand on civil rights. In 1939, the Daughters of the American Revolution refused to allow a renowned black singer, Marian Anderson, to perform at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. Roosevelt arranged for her to sing outdoors, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. A crowd of 75,000 people, including many members of Congress, attended Anderson’s performance.

A Better Deal for American Indians

For American Indians, the New Deal had some positive results. Even before the Depression, many Indians lived in grinding poverty. Federal efforts to assimilate them into mainstream America had trampled on their cultures and traditions. FDR’s commissioner of Indian affairs, John Collier, hoped to repair some of the damage with an Indian New Deal.

Collier ended the policy of forced assimilation, replacing government-run boarding schools with public schools on reservations. He also encouraged greater cultural awareness about American Indians and improved health care for them. As well, he tried to give Indian tribes more control over policies that affected their lives. Under the terms of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, Indian communities received the right to set up their own tribal governments.

The Indian New Deal did not lift Indians out of poverty or bring back traditional Indian ways. But it did reverse some harmful federal policies and restore some pride and hope to Indian communities.

A Tough Deal for Mexican Americans

Like other ethnic minorities, Mexican Americans faced poverty and unemployment during the Depression. As the economy shrank, jobs dried up in the Southwest, where most Mexican Americans lived. Failing farms and businesses could not afford to hire laborers. The AAA, which paid farmers to cut back on planting, led to even more unemployment among farmworkers. Some jobless Mexican Americans resettled in cities. Others relied on work-relief programs for their survival.

Mexican laborers who were not American citizens could not enroll in work relief. More than a third returned to Mexico, many with their American-born children. Most went willingly, but the government deported others.

The Emergence of a New Deal Coalition in Politics

Although the New Deal failed to bring concrete gains for many women and minorities, for most Americans its benefits outweighed its shortcomings. The belief that government could make a difference in voters' lives inspired many people to become more involved in politics. When they did, they often supported Democratic candidates. For example, in the 1936 election, over 70 percent of African American voters cast their ballots for Roosevelt. This marked a major shift for the black population, which had traditionally supported Republicans as the party of Lincoln and Emancipation.

The 1936 election signaled the emergence of a new political partnership known as the New Deal Coalition. Besides women and minority groups, the coalition included industrial workers, farmers, immigrants, reformers, southern whites, and city dwellers. What held these unlikely partners together was their loyalty to the Democratic Party and its leader, Franklin Roosevelt. For all their differences, they trusted FDR when he said, "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

33.6 – Legacy of the New Deal

New Deal policies did not end the Depression. The economy continued to struggle into the 1940s. But the New Deal did help millions of Americans cope with hard times. It also had a lasting impact on American government and society, leaving a legacy that affects all Americans today.

Unalienable Rights: Life, Liberty, and Economic Security

One major legacy of the New Deal is the idea that Americans have a right to economic security. Franklin Roosevelt, who began an unprecedented fourth term as president in 1944, explained this idea in his State of the Union address that year:

This Republic had its beginning, and grew to its present strength, under the protection of certain inalienable political rights—among them the right of free speech, free press, free worship, trial by jury, freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures . . . As our Nation has grown in size and stature, however

—as our industrial economy expanded—these political rights proved inadequate to assure us equality in the pursuit of happiness. We have come to a clear realization of the fact that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence.

—Franklin Roosevelt, January 11, 1944

FDR went on to list a number of rights that emerged from the New Deal, including the right to a job, adequate wages, a decent home, medical care, and a good education. Today we take many of these rights for granted. We also accept that the government is responsible for guaranteeing these rights.

Before the New Deal, private charities bore the burden of caring for the needy. But the severity of the Depression changed popular notions of charity. The crisis was so severe that it could be tackled only by using the enormous resources of the federal government. Americans began to accept the idea that many people could not survive without public assistance.

Most New Deal programs offered short-term relief to cope with the immediate effects of the Depression. The Social Security Act did something different, however. This milestone legislation established long-term assistance for those in need. By doing so, it laid the foundation for the modern welfare state. A welfare state is a social system in which the government takes responsibility for the economic well-being of its citizens.

Critics at the time grumbled that government assistance undermined the American principles of self-reliance and individualism. Nevertheless, government assistance continues today in various forms. It now includes a wide array of programs, from health insurance for older Americans to food stamps for the poor and parity price supports for farmers. These are known as entitlement programs, as people who meet eligibility requirements are entitled to receive certain benefits from them. All these programs owe their existence to the New Deal.

A Larger Role for Uncle Sam in People's Everyday Lives

Another notable legacy of the New Deal is the expanded role of government. Traditionally, Americans have distrusted government power. A limited government, the founders said, protects against tyranny. However, to battle the Depression, FDR actively involved the federal government in the economy. He also used it to advance his agenda of social justice. As a result, the government grew. Each federal program required a new agency to administer it, which enlarged the government bureaucracy. The cost was enormous. To meet the expense, FDR reluctantly resorted to deficit spending, or spending more than the government receives in revenues. He financed the deficit by borrowing money.

Conservatives reacted strongly to this growth in the size and power of government. In 1936, one critic wrote that FDR had transformed government “into a highly complex, bungling agency for throttling [strangling] business and bedeviling the private lives of

free people. It is no exaggeration to say that he took the government when it was a small racket and made a large racket out of it.” Today, that “large racket” is known as “big government.” Conservatives complain that big government leads to burdensome regulations, higher taxes, and less local control. Liberals, however, defend the expanded role of the federal government as essential to creating a good and just society.

Government today is not just bigger as a result of the New Deal. It also continues to play a more direct role in people’s lives. Americans buy power from government-built dams. They deposit money in bank accounts insured by the FDIC. They are protected from fraud by government agencies such as the SEC. They receive Social Security payments when they retire. These and many more benefits of big government are all legacies of the New Deal.

Summary

Franklin D. Roosevelt promoted his New Deal policies to end the Great Depression and help needy Americans. The early programs of the First New Deal emphasized economic recovery and financial reform. The Second New Deal focused more on economic relief and social reform. These programs greatly expanded the role of the federal government in American life.

National Industrial Recovery Act The NIRA was aimed at shoring up the free enterprise system by helping businesses, workers, and the needy.

Agricultural Adjustment Administration The AAA sought to boost agricultural prices by paying farmers to plant fewer crops, thus reducing supply and increasing demand.

Wagner Act This law strengthened the labor movement by supporting the right of workers to organize and join unions.

Works Progress Administration The WPA organized and funded public works projects that provided jobs and wages to unemployed workers.

Social Security Act Social Security was designed to provide economic security to unemployed and retired Americans. It is a key legacy of the New Deal.

New Deal Coalition A diverse group of Americans came together to support FDR and the New Deal. This coalition helped insure FDR’s reelection and the continuation of his programs.

Chapter 34 — Origins of World War II

Could World War II have been prevented?

34.1 – Introduction

The Great Depression in the United States led to a worldwide depression. This depression and the effects of World War I had left the German economy in tatters. In the 1930s, a German dictator, Adolf Hitler, took advantage of Germany's troubles to stir up German nationalism. He rearmed the country, violating the Treaty of Versailles, and began to threaten his neighbors.

In 1936, German troops occupied the Rhineland, a German region on the border with France. Although the Versailles Treaty banned military activities in this region, the League of Nations did nothing in response. Two years later, Hitler demanded that the Sudetenland, a German-speaking region of Czechoslovakia, be turned over to Germany. At this point, many Europeans feared that Hitler was pushing Europe toward war.

France and Great Britain still bore the scars of World War I and would go to great lengths to prevent another conflict. In September 1938, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain flew to Germany to talk with Hitler. At the meeting, Chamberlain asked Hitler if he would be satisfied with the Sudetenland and leave the rest of Czechoslovakia alone. Hitler convinced Chamberlain that his aims were peaceful and that he had no desire to control other countries.

France and Britain distrusted Hitler. Yet they had already decided on a policy of appeasement—yielding to an enemy's demands in order to maintain peace. Germany would get the Sudetenland, despite Czechoslovakia's objections. Chamberlain told the British people that it did not make sense to go to war over such a small territory. "If we have to fight, it must be on larger issues than that," he said. Chamberlain and Hitler then worked out the details of what became known as the Munich Pact. Together with the leaders of France and Italy, they signed the agreement in Munich, Germany, on September 29, 1938. Chamberlain flew home with doubts about the pact. But he also had hope.

34.2 – Dictators and Militarists Rise to Power

Hitler's violation of the Treaty of Versailles boosted his popularity in Germany. Germans hated paying war reparations, as the treaty required. They also objected to the war-guilt clause, which blamed them for World War I. The nationalistic feelings aroused by the treaty allowed Hitler to seize control and turn Germany into a dictatorship. Nationalism also helped strong leaders take power in Italy and Japan. In the Soviet Union, however, dictatorship emerged from a different source—communism.

Stalin Creates a Totalitarian Dictatorship in the Soviet Union

In 1917, the Russian Revolution overthrew Czar Nicholas II. Soon afterward, the Communist Party, led by Vladimir Lenin, established itself as the sole authority in the country. In 1922, the communists formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), commonly known as the Soviet Union. After Lenin's death in 1924, Joseph Stalin plotted his way to power. By the early 1930s, Stalin had established a totalitarian dictatorship. Totalitarianism is a system in which the government totally controls all aspects of a society, including the economy.

Stalin set two main economic goals for the Soviet Union. He wanted to raise agricultural production and to modernize industry. The two goals were linked, in that increased exports of food would bring in cash to finance industrialization.

In 1928, Stalin established a Five-Year Plan to reach his goals. This plan called for taking private land from farmers and forcing them to move onto huge collective farms. Many farmers did not want to resettle on these cooperative, state-owned farms. But those who resisted were shot or forced to do hard labor in prisonlike concentration camps. Millions of others died in the famine that followed the shift to collective farms. Stalin could have diverted food to starving farmers, but instead he sold it abroad to earn cash. The industrial part of Stalin's plan was a success. By the early 1930s, modernized factories were churning out machinery, iron and steel, and consumer goods.

Stalin also used brutal methods to strengthen his control of the Communist Party. In 1934, he started to purge party officials by having them arrested, put on trial, and executed. By 1936, the Soviet secret police were rounding up and killing enormous numbers of party leaders, military officers, industrial managers, and others. This Great Purge, which claimed millions of lives, ensured that remaining officials would be loyal to Stalin.

Mussolini Establishes a Fascist Dictatorship in Italy

Serious problems plagued Italy after the First World War. Inflation and labor strikes hurt the Italian economy, and communists threatened to take over the democratic government. In addition, Italians felt insulted by the Versailles Treaty, because its grant of territory to Italy fell far short of their expectations. Benito Mussolini, a veteran of the war, took advantage of conditions in Italy to emerge as a national figure and eventually form a dictatorship.

In 1919, Mussolini founded the first fascist political movement. Fascism is based on an extreme nationalism in which the state comes first and individual liberty is secondary. Fascists are strongly opposed to communism and democracy. They favor military values, the use of violence, and a leader who is strong and ruthless. One fascist slogan in Italy called on youth to "believe, obey, fight." Another claimed, "A minute on the battlefield is worth a lifetime of peace." Fascism often arises during a time of crisis, promising to revive an earlier era of glory. In Italy's case, that era was ancient Rome.

Mussolini used his extraordinary skill at public speaking to promote fascism. He did not speak with the calm, soothing voice of Franklin Roosevelt in a fireside chat. Instead,

Mussolini agitated crowds with emotional outbursts and dramatic gestures. At these rallies, tough young men wearing black shirts provided security. These supporters also formed violent Blackshirt squads that broke up political meetings and labor strikes, assaulted socialists and communists, and terrorized local populations.

By 1922, fascists dominated several areas of Italy, and Mussolini prepared to take control of the whole country. In October, he and thousands of Blackshirts threatened to march on Rome. Influential business and army leaders persuaded Italy's king, Emmanuel III, that Mussolini might be able to solve the nation's problems. The king asked Mussolini to form a government. As prime minister, Mussolini quickly took charge, taking the name Il Duce, Italian for "the leader." Within a few years, he turned Italy into a fascist dictatorship. He banned labor unions, outlawed opposing political parties, and censored the press. He also employed spies and secret police to keep an eye on the people.

Mussolini wanted to build Italy's economy, and his industrial development and public works programs had some success. He also hoped to turn Italy into a great European power, using the Roman Empire as a model. Like the ancient Romans, he sought glory through military conquest.

Hitler Leads the Rise of Nazism in Germany

Like Italy, Germany also turned to fascism after World War I. In 1919, Adolf Hitler—Germany's future leader—joined a small political party that later became known as the Nazi Party. Under his leadership, this party would direct a mass movement based on a form of fascism known as Nazism. Nazis believed that Germans and other Nordic peoples—Hitler called them Aryans—were physically and morally superior to other races. Nazis wanted to purify Germany by removing other races, especially Jews.

Hitler laid out the Nazi philosophy in his book *Mein Kampf*, or "My Struggle." He started the book in 1924, while spending a year in prison for trying to overthrow the government of the German state of Bavaria. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler said that the superior Aryan race was locked in a struggle with other races. He introduced the idea of *Lebensraum*, or "living space," declaring that Germany needed land on which Aryan settlers could raise large families. Those families, in turn, would conquer more territory, expanding the German empire. Eventually, Germany and the Aryan race would rule the world.

Germany's economic depression gave Hitler the opportunity to spread his ideas. The country's parliamentary government could not cope with the crisis. Hungry, unemployed Germans began looking for a leader who could save the nation from ruin. Hitler addressed large crowds, blaming the Jews for nearly every German problem, from the world war to the depression. He promised to restore Germany's economy and empire. At these Nazi rallies, bodyguards protected Hitler.

Hitler's extreme nationalism appealed to many voters. In the 1932 elections, the Nazi Party won more seats in the parliament than any other political party in Germany. As a

result, Hitler was named chancellor, or prime minister. He moved quickly to dissolve the republic, replacing German democracy with a totalitarian government.

The Nazis called this government the Third Reich—the successor to two earlier German empires. They passed new laws targeting Jews, barring them from certain jobs and exposing them to persecution. Jews and other “undesirables” were shipped off to concentration camps. Hitler also centralized the government, placing Nazis in the main positions of authority. In 1934, he became both president and chancellor, giving himself the title *der Führer*, or “the leader.” Hitler now had complete command of Germany. He set about building Germany’s military into a powerful war machine.

The Military Takes Control of the Government in Japan

Like Germany, Japan had a mixed history of military rule and democracy. Before World War I, Japan had begun to industrialize. Lacking raw materials for industry, it relied on a strong military to obtain natural resources from other countries. After the war, however, Japan became less aggressive. It helped form the League of Nations in 1920. It also signed the Kellogg-Briand Pact, joining 14 other nations in a pledge to resolve disagreements peacefully. Civilians gained more power in the government, although Japan’s emperor continued to play a strong role.

In the 1930s, however, the worldwide economic depression undermined civilian rule and caused Japan to move toward a policy of militarism. The Japanese military began to increase its power and to play a greater role in politics.

Japan’s growing militarism was combined with an extreme form of nationalism. Many Japanese turned away from Western influences and embraced traditional values and culture. Radical nationalists also called for more aggressive military action abroad to acquire territory and raw materials. Like Hitler, they wanted to expand Japan’s “living space” and acquire oil and other vital resources.

Some nationalists joined with a group of army officers in efforts to overthrow the civilian government. In 1932, they assassinated the prime minister. More assassinations and upheaval followed in 1936. The government put down these rebellions and executed the rebels. Nevertheless, civilian politicians, fearing for their lives, gave up more power to the military.

Japanese militarism got another boost in 1941, when General Hideki Tojo became prime minister, replacing a civilian leader. Tojo, an aggressive militarist, continued to develop the military and prepare the nation for war.

34.3 – Military Aggression Meets a Weak Response

During the early 1930s, Americans still strongly favored isolationism. With the bitter memory of the first world war and the challenge of economic problems at home, they did not want the nation to become entangled in another war. For this reason, President Franklin Roosevelt took no direct action against aggressive dictators in Asia and

Europe. He did, however, speak out against aggression in principle. In his 1933 inaugural address, Roosevelt vowed that the United States would be a “good neighbor” who “respects the rights of others.” This pledge was meant to send a message to aggressor nations. But it also reflected his desire to end U.S. intervention in Latin America and improve relations with that region.

At a conference later in the year, 21 nations in the Western Hemisphere signed on to Roosevelt’s “Good Neighbor Policy.” They declared, “No state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another.” Over the next few years, the United States would encourage Japan, Germany, and Italy to abide by this principle, but it still would not back up its words with action.

Militarists Expand Japan’s Empire

One of the first examples of blatant aggression came in 1931, when Japan seized a portion of China. Japan and other imperialist powers had previously established spheres of influence in China, where they exploited the country’s land and resources. Japan’s sphere of influence was Manchuria, a region in northeastern China. When China’s nationalist government threatened to expel foreign powers, the Japanese army invaded Manchuria and took control of the region.

The takeover of Manchuria had several major consequences. It gave Japan a large piece of territory that was rich in resources. In addition, it began an era in which the military dominated the Japanese government. It also isolated Japan from most other nations. In 1932, the League of Nations ordered Japan to withdraw its army from the region. Japan refused, choosing to withdraw from the League instead.

More aggression followed in 1937. In July, the Japanese army clashed with Chinese forces outside Beijing, China’s capital. The clash soon became a full-fledged war. The Chinese army pulled back, but the Japanese caught up with them at the city of Nanjing. After capturing the city, Japanese soldiers went on a six-week rampage known as the Rape of Nanjing. They massacred as many as 300,000 Chinese civilians and brutally raped about 20,000 Chinese women. The war did not stop there. By the end of the year, Japan’s military occupied China’s main cities and much of its fertile land.

Jolted by Japan’s aggression, Roosevelt called on “peace-loving nations” to end the “epidemic of world lawlessness.” He spoke of the need to quarantine aggressor nations. In international relations, a quarantine is a blockade or boycott. Roosevelt’s “quarantine” speech did nothing to stop Japan. By 1941, Japan had added French Indochina to its Asian empire to go along with Formosa (now called Taiwan), Korea, large areas of China, and several small Pacific islands.

Europe’s Dictators Test the League of Nations

Japan’s aggression tested the League of Nations. The League was intended to serve as an instrument of international law. In theory, it could impose boycotts and other economic sanctions or use the combined military force of its members to keep unruly nations in line. In practice, however, it was a weak organization, partly because the

United States was not a member. The League failed to respond effectively to Japan's challenge. Throughout the 1930s, Germany and Italy would also test the League's will.

Like Japan, Germany pulled out of the League of Nations in 1933. At the same time, Hitler began rebuilding the German military. In 1935, he announced the formation of an air force and the start of compulsory military service. Both actions went against the Treaty of Versailles. The League of Nations lodged a formal protest, but it refused to consider sanctions against Germany. The next year, Hitler openly challenged France by sending troops into the Rhineland. This was another test of the League's resolve to stand up to aggression.

Meanwhile, Mussolini began his quest to build a New Roman Empire. In October 1935, the Italian army invaded the African nation of Ethiopia. The poorly equipped Ethiopian forces could not stop the invaders. Ethiopia appealed to the League of Nations, which voted to impose economic sanctions on the aggressor. The sanctions were mild, and few League members seriously applied them. In May 1936, Italy officially annexed Ethiopia. Hitler heartily approved of the invasion. In October, he and Mussolini joined in a treaty of friendship that forged an alliance, known as the Rome–Berlin axis, between their countries.

Events in Spain also aided the growth of fascism. In July 1936, a military rebellion started the Spanish Civil War. Led by General Francisco Franco, the Spanish military and its right-wing allies, known as the Nationalists, sought to overthrow Spain's democratic republic. Italy and Germany backed the rebels with supplies, weapons, and troops. Various left-wing groups, known as the Republicans, battled to save the republic, with aid from the Soviet Union and volunteer fighters from other countries. Although some 3,000 Americans volunteered, the U.S. government stayed out of the conflict. At least half a million people died in the three-year war. In the end, Franco and the Nationalists won and established a right-wing dictatorship.

Great Britain and France Seek to Appease Hitler

Encouraged by events in Italy and Spain, and by his own successful occupation of the Rhineland, Hitler continued his campaign of expansion. During this time, Britain and France did little to stop him, choosing instead to follow a policy of appeasement.

Hitler next set his sights on neighboring Austria, the country of his birth. At the time, Austria had an unstable government with fascist elements. Hitler pressured its leaders to join the Third Reich. Finally, in 1938, a member of the Austrian Nazi Party took over as chancellor of Austria. On March 12 of that year, Hitler's army crossed the border into Austria without opposition. The following day he proclaimed Anschluss, or "political union," with Austria. Britain and France remained passive spectators to this German expansion.

Hitler next wanted to take over Czechoslovakia. By signing the Munich Pact in September 1938, he acquired the Czech region of the Sudetenland. Hitler told Chamberlain that this would be his "last territorial demand." Chamberlain chose to

believe Hitler, declaring that he had achieved “peace with honor” and adding, “I believe it is peace in our time.” Another member of Parliament, Winston Churchill, disagreed. He wrote, “By this time next year we shall know whether the policy of appeasement has appeased, or whether it has only stimulated a more ferocious appetite.”

The U.S. Congress Legislates Neutrality

During this period, the United States did little to thwart aggression. When Mussolini invaded Ethiopia, for example, the League of Nations considered establishing an oil embargo, or suspension of trade, against Italy. Italy’s offensive would grind to a halt without oil. The League asked the United States, a major oil supplier, if it would join the embargo. Roosevelt said no, pointing out that he had just signed the Neutrality Act of 1935. This act prevented the United States from supplying “arms, ammunition, or implements of war” to nations in conflict. Because the law said nothing about oil, Roosevelt chose not to block oil shipments to Italy.

Congress passed additional neutrality acts in 1936 and 1937, all designed to keep the country out of conflicts brewing in Europe, such as the Spanish Civil War. Americans passionately supported this isolationism. Like Europeans, they recalled the horrors of World War I and wanted to avoid getting drawn into a new conflict. Roosevelt did, however, devote enormous energy to preserving peace. He wrote letters to the aggressors and to League members, urging them to settle their differences through negotiation.

34.4 – Hitler Plunges Europe into War

Great Britain and France chose to avoid war with Germany by allowing Hitler to behave as he pleased. But Hitler had no interest in avoiding war and grew bolder with every aggressive step he took. In March 1939, he broke the Munich Pact by invading Czechoslovakia and seizing control of Prague, the Czech capital. As Churchill suspected, appeasement only made Hitler more eager to conquer new territory. The takeover of Czechoslovakia finally caused Britain and France to draw a line in the sand. They declared that if Germany made any further attacks on small states, then they would declare war.

Hitler Signs a Nonaggression Pact with Stalin

Part of Hitler’s plans for war involved Stalin, the communist leader of the Soviet Union. Communists and Nazis despised each other and had little reason to cooperate. Yet Hitler sought an agreement with Stalin to keep the Soviet Union neutral in the coming war. Hitler offered Stalin a nonaggression treaty, and Stalin accepted it.

The German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact, signed in August 1939, served the interests of both leaders. Hitler planned to attack Poland, an action that was likely to ignite a broader war in Europe. The geography of that war concerned him. The Soviet Union lay to the east. Britain and France lay to the west. Hitler could not afford to fight a war on two fronts, east and west, at the same time. For that reason, Soviet neutrality was vital. The pact helped Stalin, too. The Soviet dictator wanted more power and secure

borders. As part of the pact, Hitler secretly promised to give Stalin part of Poland and grant him a sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.

But Hitler already had plans to attack the Soviet Union, which had vast, fertile farmlands that were a key to fulfilling the quest for Lebensraum. Hitler also understood that Nazi Germany could not coexist for long with the communist USSR to its east.

German Armies Roll Across Europe

With the Soviet Union neutralized, Hitler sprang into action. On September 1, 1939, the German army marched east into Poland. Two days later, France and Britain—the Allied powers—declared war on Germany. World War II had begun.

In Poland, the German armed forces relied on a strategy of blitzkrieg, or “lightning war.” Without any warning, German bombers launched attacks on railroads, airfields, communications networks, military bases, and other strategic sites. These attacks helped prevent Polish mobilization, the assembling of troops and equipment for war. Meanwhile, waves of infantry, supported by tanks and artillery, pushed toward key cities. Germany’s method was to outflank, surround, and destroy. Motorized units quickly swept around and encircled the Polish army. Warplanes rained bombs and bullets on the enemy. Then the foot soldiers moved in to finish the job.

Ill-equipped and overwhelmed, the Polish forces quickly collapsed. On September 17, the Soviet army invaded Poland from the east. By the first of October, Germany and the USSR had complete control of the country.

Hitler now switched his focus to the west. He moved soldiers to Germany’s border with France and the Low Countries—Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. France relied for its main defense on the Maginot Line, a string of heavily armed fortresses along the German border. Most French troops massed here, while others gathered along the border with Belgium. British forces crossed the English Channel, prepared to aid France and the Low Countries. For the next few months, not much happened on the western front. American newspapers began referring to this as the “Phony War.”

Then suddenly, in a series of lightning actions, the Germans struck. In April 1940, they launched a surprise attack on Denmark and Norway. Within a few weeks, Germany had conquered these two Scandinavian countries. Next, on May 10, the Germans invaded the Low Countries. In just 18 days, these three countries would fall into German hands.

Using blitzkrieg tactics, the main German force burst through Luxembourg and southern Belgium into France in just four days. Then it began a dramatic drive toward the French coast. Skirting the Maginot Line, the Germans sped westward, encircling defenders. Hundreds of thousands of French and British troops found themselves trapped in a shrinking pocket of French countryside. They retreated toward the port of Dunkirk on the northwest coast of France. Britain sent every boat it could find across the English Channel to evacuate the soldiers. The daring rescue saved some 338,000 men.

Meanwhile, Paris was about to fall to the Germans. Mussolini took this opportunity to declare war on Britain and France. Italy and Germany became known as the Axis powers. On June 22, France surrendered to Germany. Under the terms of the armistice, Germany would occupy three fifths of the country. The southeast would become a puppet government known as Vichy France. A puppet government is one that is run by citizens of a conquered country who carry out the policies of the conqueror.

Britain Fights on Alone

Britain, now led by Prime Minister Winston Churchill, stood alone against the Axis powers. After the evacuation from Dunkirk, Churchill had vowed to fight Germany and defend Britain with every resource at his disposal. In a speech to Parliament, he declared,

We shall not flag [tire] nor fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight . . . on the seas and oceans; we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air. We shall defend our island whatever the cost may be; we shall fight on the beaches, landing grounds, in fields, in streets and on the hills. We shall never surrender.

—Speech before the House of Commons, June 4, 1940

Hitler wanted to conquer Britain, but he knew that the large and powerful British navy could keep his army from crossing the English Channel. To defeat that navy, he had to establish dominance in the air. He set up air bases in conquered lands from France to Norway and moved in some 2,800 bombers and fighter planes.

German planes flew raids throughout the summer of 1940 and into the fall. They attacked British ships, ports, airfields, radar stations, and industrial centers. To counter this onslaught, the British sent up the fighter pilots of the Royal Air Force (RAF) in an engagement known as the Battle of Britain. The RAF pilots, flying their Spitfires and Hurricanes, proved effective against the German air campaign. By late August, they had downed more than 600 German aircraft, at a cost of 260 British planes.

In September 1940, Britain launched its first bombing raid on Berlin. Germany shifted its targets to British cities. For the next several months, bombing attacks devastated sections of London and other large cities. Londoners called this campaign the Blitz, a shortening of blitzkrieg. By the spring of 1941, the number of raids dwindled. The British had successfully defended their homeland. That victory gave the Allies reason to believe that Hitler could be stopped.

34.5 – The United States Enters World War II

After war broke out in Europe, isolationism lost some of its appeal for Americans. Most now openly supported the Allies. Hoping to keep the United States out of the war, Hitler sought to expand his alliance. In September 1940, Germany, Italy, and Japan signed the Tripartite Pact, making Japan a member of the Axis powers. The three nations agreed to

provide mutual support in the event of an attack by a country not yet in the war. The attacker they had in mind was the United States. If the United States entered the war, it would have to fight on two fronts—Asia and Europe. Hitler hoped that the threat of a two-front war would ensure American neutrality for a while longer.

Roosevelt Inches Away from Neutrality

The start of war put the United States in a risky position. Americans feared getting drawn into the fighting, but they wanted to help the Allies. France and Great Britain needed weapons. Yet the neutrality acts banned the sale of arms to belligerent nations. In November 1939, Roosevelt pushed a bill through Congress that repealed the arms embargo. This Neutrality Act of 1939 included a “cash-and-carry” provision. Nations had to pay cash for materials and carry them away in their own ships.

After the fall of France, the United States finally began rearming itself in earnest. In September 1940, Congress enacted the first peacetime military draft in U.S. history. A month later, the Selective Training and Service Act had enrolled 16 million men. Yet during the 1940 election campaign, Roosevelt assured Americans, “Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars.” In November, he won an unprecedented third term as president.

In December 1940, the Battle of Britain was raging. Churchill declared that his country was nearly bankrupt. Roosevelt was determined to provide Britain “all aid short of war” and urged Congress to adopt a plan to lend, not sell, arms to Britain. This legislation, the Lend-Lease Act, passed in March 1941, but only after heated public and congressional debate.

In June 1941, Hitler broke the Nonaggression Pact by attacking the Soviet Union. Great Britain announced its support for the USSR, and the United States began sending supplies to the besieged country under the Lend-Lease Act.

In August, Churchill and Roosevelt met in secret aboard a warship in Canadian waters of the North Atlantic. There they prepared a declaration of common principles known as the Atlantic Charter. They promised not to use the war to expand their own territory, and they asserted the right of all peoples to self-government. Three months later, Congress voted to allow American merchant ships to arm themselves and sail to Britain.

Japan Attacks the United States

From 1940 to 1941, Japan continued seeking raw materials through conquest. It occupied French Indochina, in Southeast Asia, and set its sights on the Dutch East Indies. Its goal was to push Western powers out and establish a “new order in East Asia,” with Japan at the center. The United States tried to undercut Japan’s aggression in several ways. It sent loans and other aid to Japan’s enemy, China, and froze Japanese assets in American banks. It also blocked the export of vital resources, including oil, to Japan. Relations between the two nations steadily worsened.

By 1941, American intelligence officers had managed to intercept and decode secret messages from Japan to its foreign offices. Late in the year, officers learned of a coming attack on American territory in the Pacific Ocean. They thought the attack might target an American base in the Philippines. Instead it was aimed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii—the home of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

On December 7, 1941, Japanese aircraft carriers approached Hawaii. From the carriers, more than 300 bombers and fighter planes launched the attack on Pearl Harbor. In a little more than two hours, the Japanese sank or damaged 18 American ships. At nearby airfields, Japanese warplanes damaged or destroyed about 300 military aircraft. In all, the raid left more than 2,400 Americans dead and nearly 1,200 wounded. The Japanese lost just 29 planes in the attack.

The next day, Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on Japan. “Hostilities exist,” he said. “Our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger.” Three days later, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States. Americans began to prepare for a conflict that would test the nation’s strength and courage.

Summary

By the 1930s, extreme nationalists had gained power in Italy, Germany, and Japan, which became known as the Axis powers. By seeking to expand through military conquest, these countries began World War II. In 1941, the United States entered the war as one of the Allied powers.

Totalitarianism In 1924, Joseph Stalin became the dictator of the communist Soviet Union. Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler gained power by promising to restore German strength. He built up the German military and began a campaign of expansion. Similar actions took place in Italy under dictator Benito Mussolini and in Japan under Japanese militarists.

Munich Pact Great Britain and France tried to appease Hitler. In the Munich Pact, they agreed to give him part of Czechoslovakia in return for peace. But Hitler continued with territorial expansion. Germany’s invasion of Poland in 1939 triggered World War II.

Neutrality Acts A series of neutrality acts in the 1930s kept the United States from being drawn into European conflicts, including the Spanish Civil War. As World War II began, however, Franklin Roosevelt and Congress revised the acts to allow arms trading with the Allies.

Lend-Lease Act Germany quickly occupied most of Europe and threatened to invade Great Britain. As German bombers ravaged British cities, the United States decided to help Britain by passing the Lend-Lease Act. This law allowed the United States to lend arms to Britain and, later, to the Soviet Union.

Attack on Pearl Harbor On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor. This attack caused the United States to declare war on Japan and enter World War II.

Chapter 35 — The Impact of World War II on Americans

What kinds of opportunities and hardships did the war create for Americans at home and abroad?

35.1 – Introduction

After the shock of the Pearl Harbor attack, many Americans wondered what would happen next. Would waves of Japanese bombers attack the West Coast? For months, rumors of an enemy invasion haunted the region. In time, the fears faded, but coastal communities remained wary.

As it turned out, the United States was not immediately endangered by an enemy invasion. Yet, as President Franklin Roosevelt warned, the threat was real. If the Allies failed to stop the Axis powers, then one day Americans could personally experience the horrors of war in their own land.

Roosevelt knew the war effort would require the enthusiastic backing of the American people in order to succeed. Millions of Americans would be needed to serve in the armed forces. Many others would help on the home front by working to expand the output of war materials. Everyone would have to make sacrifices in support of the armed forces. They would have to accept rationing—a system for limiting the distribution of food, gasoline, and other goods—so the military could have the weapons, equipment, and supplies it needed. As a result, life in the United States would change dramatically.

These changes were evident in many ways, even in clothing styles. The armed forces needed fabric for uniforms. In March 1942, the government announced rules aimed at saving more than 40 million pounds of wool a year. Men's suits could no longer be sold with a vest or an extra pair of pants. Cuffs were eliminated, as were patch pockets and wide lapels. The new rules also restricted the type and amount of fabric in women's clothes. Designers cooperated by using more synthetics, such as rayon, and by making skirts shorter and dresses simpler.

During the war, the entire country would endure hardships, many extending far beyond being forced to wear plainer clothes. Yet the war would also offer new opportunities to countless Americans.

35.2 – Organizing the American Economy for War

The job of organizing the wartime economy fell to the War Production Board (WPB). The WPB sought to meet Roosevelt's goal of making the United States the "arsenal of democracy." As with the War Industries Board of World War I, the WPB's main task was to manage the conversion of industries to military production. Some of these makeovers seemed natural. Automobile manufacturers, for example, switched from making car engines to making airplane and tank engines. Other conversions called for more dramatic changes. For example, a soft drink company might retool its machinery and

retrain its workers to pack artillery shells with explosives. A maker of model trains would begin producing bomb fuses. All across the country, businesses mobilized their resources to serve the needs of the military.

A Wartime Production Boom Ends the Depression

The huge demand for military supplies revived the economy. Businesses expanded and hired more workers. Farmers prospered as crop prices and farm incomes rose. The Depression ended, and a period of vigorous economic growth began.

As the economy moved into high gear, the gross domestic product (GDP) rose rapidly. GDP is the total value of goods and services produced in a country in a year. From 1940 to 1944, this basic measure of national output increased by 116 percent. During the same four years, the total personal income of American workers rose by more than 110 percent. Business income grew even faster, increasing by nearly 130 percent.

During the New Deal, the government had taken an active role in stimulating the economy. To meet wartime needs, it expanded that role. The WPB successfully mobilized businesses behind the war effort, leading to closer relationships between the government and large corporations. As also happened during World War I, a National War Labor Board (NWLB) was set up to mobilize labor.

The main task of the NWLB was to settle labor disputes before they disrupted the production of war goods. Immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor, union leaders agreed to a no-strike pledge. Eight months later, the NWLB imposed limits on wage increases. The wage limits and no-strike pledge left labor leaders with very little bargaining power. In exchange, the NWLB guaranteed unions that all new employees at companies with union contracts would automatically become union members. This policy boosted union membership.

Financing the War Effort with Taxes and Bonds

During the war, government spending rose to new levels. More than \$175 billion worth of defense contracts went out to businesses from 1940 to 1944. The government met these costs the same way it had during World War I—through taxes and borrowing.

Taxes provided about 45 percent of the revenue needed to pay for the war. The Revenue Act of 1942 increased individual and corporate income tax rates and more than tripled the number of individuals required to pay income tax. To make tax collection easier, Congress devised a system of withholding. Employers held back a certain amount from every paycheck and sent it directly to the government. This system of payroll taxes is still in place today.

Borrowing provided much of the rest of the money to finance the war. The government borrowed from banks and other financial institutions. It also borrowed from the American people through the sale of war savings bonds. As during World War I, war bonds not only provided the government with cash but also gave people a way to show their support for the war effort. Government agencies and private companies once again

produced advertisements urging Americans to buy war bonds. Campaigns to sell bonds involved a variety of Americans, from schoolchildren to glamorous celebrities.

Government Attempts to Curb Inflation and Consumption

Inflation became a serious problem during the war. Americans had money to spend, but the focus on military production meant that few consumer goods were available. In a fireside chat, Roosevelt explained the supply-and-demand problem: “You do not have to be a professor of mathematics or economics to see that if people with plenty of cash start bidding against each other for scarce goods, the price of those goods goes up.”

Congress gave the job of curbing inflation to the Office of Price Administration. The OPA instituted price controls—a system of legal restrictions on the prices charged for goods. These controls seemed to work. From 1940 to 1945, consumer prices rose only 35 percent, instead of doubling or tripling as some officials had feared.

The OPA also rationed about 20 basic consumer products, including gasoline, tires, sugar, meats, and processed foods. Each month, consumers received books of coupons that they turned in to the grocer when they bought rationed foods. When they ran out of coupons, they could buy no more until they received a new book the next month. Drivers used a different ration book to purchase gasoline. Americans grumbled about rationing, but most complied. This program succeeded in reducing the overconsumption of scarce goods and ensured that everyone would have fairly equal access to those goods.

Americans also aided the war effort in other ways. They formed car pools or rode bicycles to work. They recycled metals, paper, rubber, and other materials. One old shovel, Americans were told, contained enough iron to make four hand grenades. Children collected much of the scrap material. They also peeled the foil off cigarette packages and gum wrappers and rolled them into balls for recycling. Families also planted victory gardens to grow food. In 1943, more than 20 million gardens yielded one third of all the vegetables eaten in the country that year. Victory gardens and recycling campaigns not only boosted war production but also raised the morale of Americans on the home front. People understood they were making an important contribution to the war effort.

35.3 – American GIs Go to War

Many young Americans left the comforts of home to join the military. While they were in the service, the government provided all of their food and supplies. Those items were often labeled “government issue,” or GI. Soldiers had GI soap, GI socks, a GI helmet, and a GI rifle. For that reason, they began referring to themselves as GI soldiers, or simply GIs. The name stuck, and fighting men in all the armed forces used it proudly.

Assembling a Fighting Force

In 1940, more than 16 million men between the ages of 21 and 35 had registered for the draft. Later registrations expanded the age limits to include men from 18 to 44. Most

drafttees ended up in the army. By the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, they had swelled the army's ranks from 300,000 to a fighting force of more than 1.5 million troops.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, volunteers swamped military recruiting stations throughout the nation. They represented a broad range of American society, from miners and mill workers to professors and politicians. By the end of the war, nearly 6 million had enlisted, mainly in the navy or the army air corps.

For drafttees and volunteers alike, the war offered an opportunity to show their patriotism by fighting for their country. Most willingly packed their bags and boarded buses and trains, not knowing whether they would ever return. Immigrants and ethnic minorities saw joining the military as an opportunity to show that they were truly Americans.

Preparing the Troops to Fight

Drafttees and recruits reported first to an army reception center within a huge complex, such as at Fort Dix, New Jersey, or Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Here they had their first taste of military life. They slept in barracks with no privacy and traded their civilian clothes for uniforms. They listened to lectures and submitted to medical exams. The main goal of the reception center, however, was to determine where each recruit should go for training. Various aptitude tests helped decide this.

After a couple weeks, most new soldiers were sent off to one of the many army training camps scattered across the country. Most of these young men had little experience with life outside their hometowns. Suddenly they found themselves thrown into an unfamiliar environment with fellow soldiers from all over the country. One GI from the Midwest recalled, "The first time I ever heard a New England accent was at Fort Benning . . . [and] the southerner was an exotic creature to me."

The trainers, or drill instructors, had as little as eight weeks to prepare men for combat. The job of the trainers was to turn soft civilians into rugged fighting men. Trainees followed a strict routine. They got up at 6 A.M., washed, dressed, ate, and made the long march to the training site by 8 A.M. For the next nine hours or so, they worked at becoming a soldier.

Instruction included tent pitching, map reading, guard duty, sanitation, weapons care, and endless physical training. Later, trainees took part in parachute jumping and live-ammunition exercises, which called for soldiers to crawl through the dirt while real machine gun bullets whizzed above their heads. They marched back to camp in the evening, exhausted. One draftee wrote home to his parents in May 1943: "I don't know whether I can stand to do what we have to do or not. I have to try it though." Near the end of his basic training, he wrote again: "It was 106 today and when we are out drilling we really do get hot, but I will tell you the truth, I have got so that I can stand it just as good as the next one. I sweat a lot but I go on like I was cool." The draftee had become a GI.

The GI's War: Hardships and Opportunities

Training could only do so much to prepare a GI for combat. Few were ever truly ready for the intensity of the battlefield. The deafening blasts of artillery or grenades, the squeal and clatter of tanks on the move, and the billowing clouds of smoke all combined to create a surreal atmosphere.

Then there was the fear. Soldiers knew they could die at any time, especially if they were crossing an open field or storming a beach under heavy enemy fire. New soldiers, especially, tended to freeze at the first sign of danger—and they saw danger everywhere. Experienced soldiers learned to distinguish the real dangers, such as the sound of an enemy tank or incoming artillery fire, from the din of war. Yet even battle-hardened veterans often felt a heart-pounding sense of doom in the battle zone, where uncertainty ruled.

Between battles, boredom sometimes became the enemy. Soldiers with free time often felt homesick and lonely. Many men fought these feelings by writing letters. At night, they would try to put their thoughts and experiences down on paper for girlfriends, wives, or parents. A letter from home was a major event.

Under the stress of war, soldiers developed strong bonds of friendship. “The reason you storm the beaches is not patriotism or bravery,” one rifleman recalled. “It’s that sense of not wanting to fail your buddies.”

Those who survived the war often found their lives significantly changed. Many returned physically, mentally, or emotionally wounded by their combat experiences. Amid the horrors of war, though, many gained a greater appreciation for such American ideals as liberty and came home with a new sense of pride in themselves and in their country.

35.4 – The Internment of Japanese Americans

When the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred, there were about 150,000 Japanese Americans living in the Hawaiian Islands. Some people questioned their loyalty, even accusing them of helping plan the surprise attack. Fearing sabotage, the War Department recommended the mass evacuation of Japanese Americans from Hawaii. But the American military governor of Hawaii urged everyone to stay calm. Businesses on the islands opposed evacuation. They noted that losing so many workers would ruin the islands’ economy. The press backed this position and worked hard to keep false rumors from circulating. In the end, nearly all of the Japanese Americans in Hawaii stayed there.

Dealing with the Fear of Potential Collaborators

On the mainland, concerns about disloyalty extended to people of German or Italian ancestry. They were seen as potential collaborators—people who work with an enemy to undermine a nation’s security. Shortly after the Pearl Harbor attack, President Roosevelt signed proclamations declaring all German, Italian, and Japanese nationals, or non-U.S. citizens, to be “enemy aliens.” These orders affected more than 314,000

people of German ancestry, 690,000 people of Italian ancestry, and 47,000 people of Japanese ancestry.

All “enemy aliens” had to register with the government and carry special identification cards. They had to turn in all firearms and cameras, as well as shortwave radios, which might be used to send information to the enemy. They also needed a travel permit to go more than 5 miles from their homes.

Government officials considered putting all “enemy aliens” into camps. However, the task of relocating all the German and Italian aliens posed huge problems. Also, politically influential groups of German Americans and Italian Americans resisted such a measure. The government did round up several thousand German and Italian aliens and sent them to internment camps in the middle of the country. An internment camp is a center for confining people who have been relocated for reasons of national security.

Roosevelt Authorizes the Removal of Japanese Americans

The people of Japanese ancestry, in contrast, were a much smaller group with much less political power. They faced more racial discrimination than did people of German or Italian ancestry because they were of nonwhite, non-European ancestry. Their social isolation also worked against them. They had not assimilated into American culture as well as other immigrant groups had. They kept largely to themselves, in ethnic communities outside the American mainstream. In addition, they lived mainly on the West Coast, where fear of a Japanese invasion was strongest. Unlike in Hawaii, the mainland press whipped up that fear by accusing Japanese Americans of spying or of being more loyal to Japan than to the United States.

All these factors made it easier for the government to act against people of Japanese ancestry. In February 1942, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066. This order declared that large military zones could be set up to exclude current residents who were believed to be a threat to security. In March 1942, the military used this executive order to launch a mass evacuation of people of Japanese ancestry from the Pacific Coast. Evacuees had just a few weeks to sell their homes and possessions.

The order to “move out and stay out” applied not only to Japanese “enemy aliens” but also to Japanese American citizens. Of the 127,000 people of Japanese ancestry living in the mainland United States, 80,000 were native-born American citizens. As such, they were entitled to the same constitutional rights as all citizens. This was the main argument made by a Japanese American named Fred Korematsu, who did not obey the order because it would mean leaving his non-Japanese girlfriend. After two months, Korematsu was arrested and convicted with remaining in a restricted military area.

Korematsu appealed the verdict all the way to the Supreme Court. In the case *Korematsu v. United States*, the Court upheld his conviction on the grounds that a group’s civil rights can be set aside in a time of war. Three of the nine justices dissented from this opinion, including Justice Robert H. Jackson. He expressed his fear that “the

Court for all time has validated the principle of racial discrimination in criminal procedure and of transplanting American citizens.”

Life in the Internment Camps

More than 100,000 Japanese “enemy aliens” and Japanese American citizens were forced to evacuate. Families collected their belongings in a few pieces of luggage and left their homes. First they gathered at assembly centers. Then, in the summer of 1942, they boarded trains for internment camps scattered throughout the western states. They had no idea where they were headed. The typical camp, officially known as a relocation center, was in a desert region far from any town. “No houses were in sight,” one internee recalled. “No trees or anything green—only scrubby sagebrush and an occasional low cactus, and mostly dry, baked earth.” In this setting, internees endured extreme heat in the summer and cold in the winter.

The camps had been constructed in a hurry. They consisted of “row after row of barracks,” as one surprised visitor recalled, with “high barbed wire fences” and “machine gun towers all around.” The single-story, wooden barracks contained several one-room apartments. Each came with cots, blankets, and a bare light bulb. Here, an entire family tried to make a home. They shared toilets with others in the barracks and used common bathing and dining facilities. The crowded conditions meant that sanitation was often a problem.

Despite these hardships, most of the internees worked to make camp life more bearable. They built chairs and tables from scrap lumber. They grew vegetables. They set up schools, libraries, hospitals, and newspaper offices.

As early as 1942, while the camps were still filling up, the government realized that the threat of a West Coast invasion had passed. Officials began allowing certain groups of Japanese Americans to leave the camps. These included about 10,000 farm workers and 4,300 college students. Starting in 1943, thousands of young men left the camps to join the army. Most of them served in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. This all-volunteer Japanese American unit became famous for its bravery in battle. In fact, it earned more medals than any other unit of its size in American history. In 1944, the government began letting the remaining internees return to the West Coast. Within the next year, all were free to leave the camps.

35.5 – Women at War

In early 1942, a popular song called “Rosie the Riveter” captured the spirit of the home front:

All the day long,
Whether rain or shine,
She’s a part of the assembly line.
She’s making history,

Working for victory,
Rosie the Riveter.

—“Rosie the Riveter,” by Redd Evans and John Jacob Loeb, 1942

One of the country’s most popular artists, Norman Rockwell, put his own version of Rosie on the cover of a national magazine, *The Saturday Evening Post*. Two films about Rosie followed. The fictional Rosie the Riveter came to represent all the real women who worked to support the war effort.

New Opportunities for Women in the Workforce

The demand for workers skyrocketed during the war, as men left their jobs to serve in the armed forces. At first, industry hired unemployed men to fill those jobs. But as war production soared, businesses and the government started recruiting women, using slogans such as, “The more women at work, the sooner we win!” About 18 million women took jobs outside the home during the war, up from 12 million before the war.

Most women continued to work in occupations that were traditionally female, such as service, clerical, and sales work. Many women, however, took positions held traditionally by men. They became welders, mechanics, and lumberjacks, as well as lawyers, physicists, and architects.

Nearly 2 million women worked in shipyards and other heavy industries. Many toiled as riveters on the thousands of airplanes built during the war. Riveters operated in pairs. One woman used a heavy mechanical gun to shoot a rivet through a pair of metal sheets. The other woman stood on the opposite side to buck, or flatten, the rivet. The rivets held the metal sheets and the plane together. Tough physical labor like this increased women’s self-confidence and independence, as well as their income. As one riveter explained,

“The war years had a tremendous impact on women. I know for myself it was the first time I had a chance to get out of the kitchen and work in industry and make a few bucks . . . You came out to California, put on your pants, and took your lunch pail to a man’s job . . . This was the beginning of women’s feeling that they could do something more.”

—Sybil Lewis, quoted in *The Homefront: America During World War II*, 1984

Hardships on the Job and at Home

Not everything about the workplace pleased women, though. They often faced hostility on the job, especially in male-dominated industries. African American women faced the added stress of racial hostility. Another issue was that women’s wages did not increase as much as men’s pay. In 1942, the NWLB ruled that women should get equal pay for “work of the same quality and quantity.” However, businesses often ignored this rule. Even labor unions, whose female membership soared during the war, rarely challenged unfair wage rates.

During the war, most working women were married and were expected to keep up with their family responsibilities. Many husbands had gone off to war. As a result, women often faced the hardship of working a “double shift.” They spent a full day at the plant or office and another full day cooking, cleaning, and performing other domestic duties.

By the end of the war, the typical working woman was over the age of 35. Relatively few of these women had young children at home. Those who did usually arranged for their children to stay with relatives or friends during the day. But older children were often left to fend for themselves. As a result, rates of juvenile delinquency and school truancy increased. Many teenage boys dropped out of school, lured by high-paying war-production jobs.

New Opportunities for Women in the Military

Soon after the war started, military leaders realized that women could do much of the clerical and secretarial work done by male soldiers, freeing up the men for combat duty. Congress agreed. In 1942, it passed legislation creating a civilian support unit for the army known as the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps.

On the first day of registration, more than 13,000 women volunteered to serve in this unit. The following year, the unit was granted military status and was renamed the Women’s Army Corps (WAC). Women in the WAC became members of the military and underwent rigorous army training. “If the guys can take it,” one volunteer remarked, “so can I.”

In 1942, the navy and the coast guard also established their own branches for women. Navy women were called WAVES and coast guard women were SPARs. Women in all the armed forces quickly moved beyond clerical work into jobs such as truck driver, mechanic, radio operator, air traffic controller, and parachute rigger. A select few became pilots, mainly to ferry aircraft from factories to bases. Only WACs, however, served on the battlefield, working behind the lines in various support roles, including nursing. More than 200 American women died overseas as a result of enemy action.

35.6 – African Americans Fight for Two Victories

The United States was fighting in the name of democracy against Nazi Germany, which embraced an extreme form of racism based on the idea of Aryan supremacy. Yet racism was still a powerful force in American society. No one was more keenly aware of this contradiction than African Americans. After all, their participation in World War I had not helped their struggle against racism at home. As one black newspaper, the *Chicago Defender*, asked, “Why die for democracy for some foreign country when we don’t even have it here?”

Other black leaders called for a battle against racism on two fronts. They wanted all citizens to join in the fight for a “double victory”—a victory for democracy both at home

and abroad. This Double V campaign forced many white Americans to rethink their attitudes toward black Americans.

Confronting Segregation in the Military

With the establishment of the draft in 1940, thousands of African Americans lined up to join the armed forces. By war's end, more than a million had served. They faced many hardships, beginning with their segregation in training camp. They ate in separate mess halls from the white troops and slept in separate barracks. Camps that had a single movie theater even made black trainees sit together in the last row.

In the early buildup to war, the marines and army air corps refused to take any African Americans. The navy limited African American duties to cooking, cleaning rooms, and shining shoes. One such "mess man" aboard the USS Philadelphia sent a letter to a newspaper hoping to discourage other black men from joining the navy. "All they would become," he wrote, "is seagoing bellhops, chambermaids, and dishwashers." The army accepted black GIs, but it excluded them from combat. The GIs served in segregated units led by white officers, often working in construction, supply, or other service groups.

Black leaders pressed the government to end military discrimination. In time, the armed services gave more black soldiers the opportunity to engage in combat and to become officers. The army air corps established its first black combat unit in 1941. Known as the Tuskegee Airmen, these pilots and their support crews showed that African Americans could handle the most demanding assignments. They served mainly as bomber escorts, engaging in direct combat with German fighter planes. The Tuskegee Airmen gained a reputation for skill and courage, shooting some 400 German attackers out of the sky. They were the only fighter group never to lose a bomber to enemy planes.

Seeking Opportunity and Equality on the Home Front

Black leaders were also working to improve conditions at home. In June 1941, A. Philip Randolph, head of a powerful all-black railroad union, met with President Roosevelt at the White House. The government had done little to end discrimination in defense-related jobs. One steelmaker expressed the attitude of many in the defense industry when he said, "We have not had a Negro worker in twenty-five years, and do not plan to start now." Roosevelt sympathized with black Americans, but the war in Europe had kept him from paying much attention to civil rights—until Randolph's visit.

Randolph focused Roosevelt's attention by threatening to lead a massive march on Washington to protest discrimination. He promised that unless Roosevelt acted, tens of thousands of African Americans would swarm into the nation's capital on July 1. The threat worked. On June 25, 1941, Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802, outlawing discrimination by defense contractors.

This executive order helped pave the way for nearly a million African Americans to work for defense industries during the war. It also triggered a migration of African Americans out of the rural South and into the industrial cities of the North and the West. From 1940 to 1945, some 500,000 black Americans, attracted by higher-paying jobs, left the South.

In the process, they escaped the Jim Crow laws that legalized segregation and kept many of them from voting. In the cities, however, black Americans faced other hardships, including a lack of housing and social services, as well as ongoing racial discrimination.

They also faced a white backlash. Race riots broke out in many cities across the country as black migrants competed with white residents for housing and jobs. One of the worst riots occurred in Detroit, Michigan, in the summer of 1943. A fistfight and other minor incidents ballooned into a widespread conflict. Mobs of rioters burned automobiles, looted stores, and engaged in bloody battles in the streets. The riots resulted in the deaths of 25 blacks and 9 whites.

Challenging Racism at Home

The Double V campaign's call for an end to racism and segregation received support from several African American organizations. One group, the National Urban League, had been helping black migrants since its founding in 1910. It opposed discrimination in defense plants, fought to integrate labor unions, and pushed federal officials to ensure equal opportunity for African Americans in housing and employment. Another group, the NAACP, had been fighting for equality since 1909. It focused on seeking racial justice through the courts. During the war, its membership soared.

The National Urban League and the NAACP did not want to undermine the war effort, so they avoided making strident demands. Another organization, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), took a tougher stance. Founded in 1942, CORE believed in confronting discrimination through nonviolent protest. Its efforts, along with the work of the NAACP and the National Urban League, helped set the stage for the postwar civil rights movement.

35.7 – Jewish Americans and the War

The war brought special hardships for Jewish Americans. They not only made sacrifices like other Americans did, but they also suffered from knowing that millions of Jews were being imprisoned and murdered in Europe. Furthermore, they could do nothing to stop the slaughter.

Growing Alarm at Nazi Persecution of Jews

American Jews started hearing reports of Nazi persecution in Germany shortly after Hitler took power in 1933. That year, the Nazi Party organized a nationwide boycott of Jewish businesses. Two years later, the German parliament stripped Jews of their citizenship. It also forced them to sell their property to non-Jews. Shortly after taking over Austria in March 1938, Hitler began persecuting Austrian Jews. Tens of thousands fled.

Then, on November 9, 1938, the Nazis instigated a night of anti-Jewish rioting known as Kristallnacht, or the "night of broken glass." Mobs smashed the windows of thousands of Jewish-owned shops, burned nearly every Jewish synagogue in Germany, and killed

more than 90 Jews. Some 30,000 Jewish men were arrested and sent to concentration camps. These events received detailed coverage in the American press.

After Kristallnacht, thousands of Jews wanted to flee to the United States. But the 1924 National Origins Act placed severe limits on the number of immigrants from any one nation. Besides, very few Americans wanted to open the country to a flood of immigrants, especially during the Depression.

These factors, combined with widespread anti-Semitism, led to incidents such as the voyage of the steamship St. Louis. In 1939, the St. Louis carried 930 Jews from Germany across the Atlantic Ocean to Cuba. But Cuba refused to accept the refugees. The St. Louis next steamed north along the Florida coast. Roosevelt ignored pleas for help from the ship's passengers, however. With food and water running low, the captain decided to return to Europe. A number of passengers ended up in France and the Low Countries or back in Germany. Many would later die in concentration camps.

During the war, reports trickled out of Europe about mass killings of Jews by the Nazis. Accounts from Poland told of concentration camps that had gas chambers for killing Jews. Few American news sources passed this information along to the public, however. When they did, the stories did not make headlines. Editors failed to tie these stories together or explain that they represented a Nazi campaign to exterminate European Jews.

Jewish Americans Urge the Government to Help Jews in Europe

Jewish Americans, however, were painfully aware of the mass murder of European Jews. Many had relatives and friends in Europe but felt helpless to save them. Others took action, such as boycotting German products, raising money for refugees, and holding public demonstrations. In July 1942, about 20,000 people gathered at Madison Square Garden in New York City to protest Nazi brutality. Similar rallies took place in Chicago, Los Angeles, and other cities. Jews urged officials to send food packages to concentration camps and to set up prisoner exchanges to free Jews. Jewish groups pleaded with legislators and the president to change immigration laws.

Several factors kept the government from offering refuge to victims of the Nazis. Polls showed that most Americans, their views colored by anti-Semitism, were unwilling to admit large numbers of European Jews. Even many American Jews worried that massive immigration might intensify anti-Semitic feelings. Roosevelt also feared espionage and sabotage. Advisors insisted that any stream of Jewish refugees into the United States would include Nazi agents.

By the end of 1942, the government knew that Hitler was slaughtering Jews in a systematic way. Still, it was not until 1944 that Roosevelt issued an executive order creating the War Refugee Board. This agency arranged for Jewish refugees to stay at centers in Italy and North Africa, as well as in former army camps in the United States. Henry Morgenthau Jr., the only Jew in Roosevelt's cabinet, later recalled the mission of the War Refugee Board. "The stake was the Jewish population of Nazi-controlled

Europe,” he said. “The threat was their total obliteration. The hope was to get a few of them out.”

Jewish American GIs Go to War

Like other Americans, Jews did what they could to support the war effort. More than 500,000 Jewish Americans went to war, including half of all Jewish men aged 18 to 44.

The opportunity to serve in the armed forces transformed the lives of many Jewish American soldiers. Many had previously been unaware of life outside their urban neighborhoods. As GIs, they often trained in the rural South and then journeyed overseas. Both experiences opened their eyes to unfamiliar cultures.

In the armed forces, Jewish American GIs often felt the sting of prejudice. A frustrated corporal, after two years in the marines, sent a letter to the editor of a Jewish magazine. “I am the only Jewish boy in this detachment,” he wrote. “I am confronted with anti-Semitism on all sides.”

Other Jewish soldiers had a different experience, however, that affirmed their faith in their country and its ideals. In 1944, GI and future novelist Leon Uris wrote a letter to his father noting that he “fought beside Catholics, Protestants, and Mormons, Indians, Irish, Italians, Poles.” Uris’s experience convinced him that “it’s not the religion we look at, but the man himself.”

35.8 – Mexican Americans Leave the Fields for War Work

During the war, many Mexican Americans faced discrimination in their daily lives. Like African Americans, some wondered whether joining the armed forces made sense. “Why fight for America,” one soldier asked, “when you have not been treated as an American?” Despite such doubts, many Mexican Americans enlisted in the armed forces, while others left their traditional farm jobs or segregated urban neighborhoods to join the industrial workforce. These changes opened up new opportunities for Mexican Americans.

Mexican Americans and Mexicans Join the War Effort

About half a million Mexican Americans served in the armed forces during World War II. One of their slogans was “Americans All.” As this suggests, many saw the war as an opportunity to prove their loyalty and become part of the mainstream.

A higher proportion of Mexican Americans fought in combat units than any other ethnic group. In addition, Mexican American soldiers suffered heavy casualties in comparison with other ethnic groups. They also received many combat awards. Fourteen Texans received the Congressional Medal of Honor for heroism in the war. Of those, five were Mexican Americans. One Mexican American leader summed up the social effects of the war this way:

“This war . . . has shown those ‘across the tracks’ that we all share the same problems. It has shown them what the Mexican American will do, what responsibility he will take, and what leadership qualities he will demonstrate. After this struggle, the status of the Mexican Americans will be different.”

—Manuel de la Raza, quoted in Carlos Muñoz Jr., *Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement*, 1989

Before the war, discrimination had barred most Mexican Americans from many high-paying industrial jobs. The war, with its labor shortages, changed that. Thousands of Mexican Americans left their rural, agricultural lives behind and migrated to industrial centers to work in the defense industry.

To replace Mexican American farm labor, the government looked south of the border. In August 1942, the United States and Mexico devised the Bracero Program. Bracero is the Spanish term for “manual laborer.” Under the program, Mexican citizens received short-term contracts to come to the United States to work. By 1944, about 120,000 Mexican braceros were performing farm labor in 21 states. Other Mexicans did maintenance work on railroads in the West.

Prejudice Against Mexican Americans Erupts in Zoot Suit Riots

Mexican Americans in major cities lived apart from whites. Their barrios, or neighborhoods, were nearly self-sufficient, with their own shops, churches, and schools. Like many immigrant communities, barrios tended to develop in poor, run-down parts of cities, where crime rates were often high. The barrio of East Los Angeles during the war was no different. Mexican Americans there had little regular contact with white Americans. Relations between the two groups were hostile. In 1943, a full-scale riot erupted in the barrio. Part of the focus of the riot was a fashion fad known as the “zoot suit.”

A zoot suit consists of a flat, broad-brimmed felt hat, a long suit coat with large shoulder pads, and baggy pants that flared at the knee. Many Mexican American teenagers, or pachucos, in East Los Angeles began dressing in this flashy style and wearing their hair long in the back, in the ducktail fashion. White Americans tended to associate the zoot suit with Mexican American street gangs, many of whom also adopted the style. Thus, many people saw the outlandish zoot suit as a symbol of lawlessness.

Pachucos and servicemen from the local navy base occasionally clashed. Those small-scale clashes escalated in June 1943 into the Zoot Suit Riots. For several nights, mobs of sailors and marines roamed the streets of the barrio, attacking not just gang members but also anyone wearing a zoot suit. They beat hundreds of pachucos and ripped off their suits.

The Los Angeles police did little to stop the servicemen. Instead, they arrested the victims and hauled them off to jail. Meanwhile, newspapers whipped up the mobs with headlines such as “Zoot Suiters Learn Lesson in Fights with Servicemen.” Military police

finally stepped in to end the violence. Later, an investigating committee found that the main causes of the Zoot Suit Riots were racial prejudice, police discrimination, and inflammatory articles in the press.

Summary

World War II had a great impact on Americans. Some aided the war effort by joining the armed forces. Others produced military equipment and supplies. Many tended victory gardens, recycled goods, and used ration coupons. Minority groups struggled for equal treatment.

Opportunities to serve For many young Americans, World War II provided an opportunity to fight for their country and its ideals. Members of minority groups also saw the war as an opportunity to show that they deserved the respect of white Americans.

New job opportunities Millions of workers left their jobs to join the military. The resulting labor shortage opened the doors of industry to many who had once been shut out. Women, African Americans, and Mexican Americans all found jobs in war-related industries.

Broader worldviews The war sent soldiers far from home and many to foreign lands. They came back with a broader view of the world and a new perspective on what it meant to be an American. Many civilians moved to industrial centers, where they lived and worked with different groups of people.

Hardships of war Most Americans knew little about the real hardships of war. GIs, however, faced those hardships every day as they risked their lives in battle.

Continued prejudice Racial and ethnic prejudice continued to plague American society. African Americans and Mexican Americans faced harassment at home and in the service. Japanese Americans lost their civil rights because of their ancestry. American Jews struggled against anti-Semitism that limited efforts to save European Jews from Nazi extermination.

Hardships at home Women often worked “double shifts” at a paying job and domestic jobs at home. All Americans learned to live with rationing and price controls.

Chapter 36 — Fighting World War II

What military strategies did the United States and its allies pursue to defeat the Axis powers in World War II?

36.1 – Introduction

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States began mobilizing troops for war. Some of these soldiers would end up in Europe, fighting the German army. First, though, they had to cross the Atlantic Ocean on troop ships, braving attacks by Germany's deadly U-boat fleet.

Since the start of the war, in 1939, German U-boats had been working to disrupt and destroy Allied shipping in the Atlantic. During this phase of the war, known as the Battle of the Atlantic, U-boats sank thousands of ships carrying vital war supplies.

When the United States entered the war, its Atlantic coastal waters were relatively unprotected. Freighters and oil tankers sailed along the coast without military escort. U-boats began to prowl the area, sinking ships on the East Coast and in the Gulf of Mexico. The United States was not prepared to respond to these attacks. It did not have enough naval vessels. Nor, at this point, did it require coastal cities to observe nighttime blackouts. The city lights made it possible for U-boats to spot ships as they entered or left American ports, thus making them easy prey for German torpedoes.

During the first several months of 1942, U-boats sank dozens of American ships off the Atlantic Coast. At night, coastal residents could hear the hum of U-boats just off shore. They could even see ships burning at sea. Oil spills and debris from wrecked ships washed up on beaches all along the East Coast.

These losses would not continue, however. As in World War I, the Allies reduced their losses by using the convoy system. Destroyers and other naval vessels would surround and protect unarmed ships. In addition, the United States began a feverish period of shipbuilding. By 1943, it was churning out enough ships to replace lost vessels and to defend against U-boat attacks. This new U.S. fleet would play a key role in naval battles and in supporting ground and air forces during World War II.

36.2 – Preparing for War in Europe

In late December 1941, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill met in Washington, D.C. Their purpose was to devise a strategy to help the Allies defeat the Axis powers. They knew they could not afford to fight an offensive war on two fronts—Europe and the Pacific—at the same time. So, at this early date, they decided on a strategy of “Europe First.” They would concentrate most of their forces on winning back Europe, while initially fighting a defensive war against Japan in the Pacific.

Axis Powers Roll Across Europe into North Africa

By the time the United States entered World War II, the Axis powers controlled most of Europe. Great Britain had saved itself by fighting off an intense German air attack during the Battle of Britain. But the country was running out of money and resources. On the eastern front, the Nazis had invaded the Soviet Union, using blitzkrieg tactics to overcome Soviet troops massed at the border. One large German force nearly reached Moscow before the onset of winter froze it in its tracks. Another force marched toward the Soviet Union's oil-rich Caucasus region.

Oil played a key role in Axis strategy. Hitler already controlled oil fields in Romania, but he sought more oil to keep his war machine running. He also hoped to cut off Allied oil from the Middle East. But first he had to secure North Africa by pushing the British out of Egypt. In 1941, Hitler sent Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and his Afrika Korps, a tank-based German army division, to join the Italian army already in North Africa. By June 1942, Rommel's force had taken much of the region and had driven deep into Egypt.

Europeans Suffer Under German Occupation

In German-occupied Europe, many people were suffering. Some lived under puppet governments, like Vichy France. Others endured harsh military rule. The SS, a brutal military unit within the Nazi Party, forced millions of Europeans to work in the German arms industry. The SS treated Russians, Poles, and other Slavs with special contempt, partly because Hitler claimed the Slavs were subhuman. The Nazis worked them to death and killed large groups of them outright.

No group suffered more than the Jews. Hitler had long been obsessed with the "Jewish question"—how to rid Germany of Jews. He had stripped Jews of their civil rights, had them beaten or killed, and confined them to concentration camps. As Germany expanded, more Jews came under Nazi control. Thus, the "Jewish question" grew more critical. Hitler forced Jews from all over Europe into overcrowded ghettos, small sections of cities that could be walled off and guarded. The largest ghetto established by the Nazis was the Warsaw Ghetto in Poland. Thousands of people died in the ghettos from starvation and disease.

Gradually, the Nazis decided on what they called the "final solution." As part of this plan, they would systematically exterminate the Jews. The slaughter began in the Soviet Union, shortly after the invasion in 1941. Mobile killing squads rounded up and murdered thousands of Soviet Jews at a time. In early 1942, the Nazis built the first of six death camps in Poland. Jews, many from ghettos, were shipped to these camps by rail, often packed into cattle cars.

Unlike regular concentration camps, these death camps were equipped with gas chambers. Camp operators sealed groups of Jews and other prisoners inside these rooms and turned on the poison gas, usually carbon monoxide. Pregnant women, young children, the elderly, and the sick were killed soon after they arrived. Able-bodied prisoners were kept alive as long as they could work, often at a nearby factory. Each death camp could kill tens of thousands of people each month. In addition to Jews, the

Nazis also gassed homosexuals, disabled people, captured Soviet soldiers, and Gypsies, among others.

Allied Leaders Debate War Strategies

When Roosevelt and Churchill met in Washington in 1941, they knew nothing about the Nazis' "final solution." Their goal was to figure out how to win the war in Europe. To do this, they had to choose from a number of possible strategies.

At the time, the Allies had limited resources. For a few months at least, while the United States gathered troops and war materials, the Allies would have to focus on defending territory against the Axis powers. After that, they would go on the attack, but they had to decide where.

They had several choices. Occupied France was a possibility, because the French people would support such an invasion. Also, nearby Britain could serve as a staging area for the massing of troops and resources before the assault. But the German army had a strong presence in France that would make such an invasion extremely difficult.

Some thought a direct attack on Italy made more sense. The Italian army was fairly weak, and Italy would provide a good base for securing the rest of Europe. Sailing through the U-boat-infested waters of the Mediterranean, however, would be dangerous.

Others wanted to launch the Allied offensive in North Africa, which was not as well defended and could serve as a gateway to Europe. But it was also far from the ultimate target, Germany, so it would test the Allies' ability to transport and maintain their forces.

Another plan called for moving troops into the Soviet Union to help the Soviet Red Army push back the Germans. The USSR, now one of the Allies, greatly needed its partners' help. But transporting and supplying forces so far from home would require a massive effort.

36.3 – War in Europe, 1942-1945

Britain's choice of strategy in early 1942 was clear. Already caught up in the battle against Rommel's forces, Churchill wanted the Allies to strike North Africa first. In contrast, the Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin, wanted an invasion of France to take pressure off his weakened army. Roosevelt's top military advisor, General George C. Marshall, also supported this option. But this plan had two problems. First, the U.S. Army did not have enough trained combat forces. That meant the exhausted British army would have to do most of the fighting. Second, German U-boats were sinking ships at an alarming pace in the North Atlantic. Transporting masses of soldiers and supplies to a staging area in Britain would be a dangerous, perhaps disastrous, process. In June, Roosevelt made his decision. U.S. forces would invade North Africa, starting in the fall.

Allies Invade North Africa and Italy

In November 1942, Allied forces made sea landings in Morocco and Algeria. Led by the American general Dwight D. Eisenhower, they swept east into Tunisia. The Germans quickly sent reinforcements across the Mediterranean. Meanwhile, British forces stopped Rommel and forced him out of Egypt. Rommel's Afrika Korps retreated west toward Tunisia, with the British in hot pursuit.

American soldiers did their first fighting of the war in a series of battles in the winter of 1942–1943. The U.S. II Corps, which saw much of the action in North Africa, benefited from the leadership of two generals—first George Patton and then Omar Bradley. They helped the combined Allied armies launch a final offensive in May 1943. Axis resistance in the region collapsed, leaving about 250,000 German and Italian soldiers in the hands of the Allies.

Using North Africa as a staging area, the Allies crossed the Mediterranean into Sicily, a large island in southern Italy. The massive Allied assault in July 1943 met little opposition at first. The success of the invasion put a scare into Italy's political leaders. Mussolini's North Africa campaign and several other failures had caused them to lose faith in Il Duce. The Fascist Grand Council met on July 24 and voted to restore the king and parliament. Mussolini resigned the next day. Italy soon surrendered to the Allies. Its government signed an armistice in September and declared war on Germany the next month.

German forces were still in Italy, however. As the Allies marched north, the Germans battled them every inch of the way. By October, the Allied army had taken about a third of the Italian peninsula, but they did not get much farther that year. A solid German defensive line completely stopped the Allies about 60 miles south of Rome, the Italian capital.

Soviets Fight Alone at Stalingrad

The decision to invade North Africa had left the Soviets on their own. Hitler now had the chance to crush the USSR with a new summer offensive. Starting in June 1942, Axis troops thrust farther into Soviet territory. Hitler split his forces so they could seize the rest of the Caucasus and also take Stalingrad, a large city on the Volga River. At Stalingrad, German firebombs set most of the city on fire, but Stalin forbade his soldiers to retreat. "Not a step back!" he ordered. By mid-September, Axis troops had a large Soviet force trapped in a strip of the city along the Volga.

Fierce street-by-street fighting followed for two months. Then, in November, the Soviet Red Army began a counteroffensive, launching its defensive forces against the Nazi assault. In a few days, the Soviets had encircled the German troops. Hitler insisted that his soldiers fight to the death, which most of them did. In January 1943, the remains of the German force, starving and frozen, surrendered to the Soviets.

The Battle of Stalingrad cost Germany more than 200,000 troops, while more than a million Soviet soldiers died. Nevertheless, the USSR had forced the Germans to retreat, giving up all they had gained after June 1942, including the Caucasus.

Taking the War to the Germans by Air

With the loss of the Caucasus, Hitler had only one major source of oil—Romania. The Romanian oil fields became a prime target of Allied strategic bombing. Strategic bombing involves hitting vital targets to destroy the enemy's war-making capacity.

American pilots in B-24 Liberator and B-17 Flying Fortress bombers typically launched daytime raids. They favored precision bombing of specific targets. Flying at high altitude to avoid anti-aircraft fire, they dropped bombs on oil refineries, rail yards, factories, and U-boat bases. By the end of the war, Germany's infrastructure and economy were in ruins.

British pilots relied mainly on saturation bombing—the rapid release of a large number of bombs over a wide area. They usually flew nighttime raids over enemy cities. The strategy behind the bombing of cities, with its appalling loss of life, was to destroy civilian morale and force a surrender. This strategy turned German cities like Dresden and Hamburg into rubble-strewn graveyards, but it did not bring an early end to the war.

In August 1944, American planes dropped more than a thousand bombs on an oil-production facility in Poland. Five miles to the west stood Auschwitz, the largest Nazi death camp. Jewish organizations, the War Refugee Board, and others urged the government to bomb Auschwitz. If the gas chambers or nearby rail lines were destroyed, they said, thousands of lives could be saved.

American military officials opposed bombing Auschwitz. They said they could not afford to divert resources from military targets. They also claimed that such bombing might kill many prisoners. Elie Wiesel, who had been a prisoner at Auschwitz, said he would have welcomed the bombs anyway. "We were no longer afraid of death; at any rate, not of that death," he recalled. "Every bomb filled us with joy and gave us new confidence in life."

Operation Overlord Opens a New Front in France

In the end, the Allies decided not to bomb Auschwitz because doing so would not hasten the end of the war. To meet that objective, the military focused most of its efforts in 1944 on the invasion of France. They code-named this mission Operation Overlord.

General Eisenhower directed the invasion. At his command were about 1,200 warships, 800 transport ships, 4,000 landing craft, 10,000 airplanes, and hundreds of tanks. Troops would cross the English Channel by ship and land on the beaches of Normandy, in northern France. D-Day—the day the invasion began—was June 6, 1944. Eisenhower sent off his first wave of 156,000 troops with a message of hope: "You will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny

over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world.” He knew that many of these men would not return.

The landing craft unloaded Allied troops on Normandy’s five beaches, while warships provided covering gunfire from offshore. German gun batteries took aim at the mass of invading soldiers, who by now were wading ashore, crawling along the sand, and climbing the dunes and cliffs. One soldier later described his arrival at Omaha Beach, scene of the bloodiest fighting:

It seemed like the whole world exploded. There was gunfire from battleships, destroyers, and cruisers. The bombers were still hitting the beaches. As we went in, we could see small craft from the 116th Infantry that had gone in ahead, sunk. There were bodies bobbing in the water, even out three or four miles.

—Lt. Robert Edlin, from Gerald Astor, June 6, 1944: *The Voices of D-Day*

After the chaos of the landing, the soldiers regrouped. By the end of the first day, the Allies held the entire 59-mile section of the Normandy coast. In July, the American army, under General Bradley, and the British army, under General Bernard Montgomery, began a rapid sweep across France. In August, the Allies liberated Paris. In September, the first American GIs crossed the German border.

Allies Liberate Nazi Concentration Camps

As the Americans carried out the invasion of France, the Red Army chased a retreating German force out of the Soviet Union and into Poland. SS officials frantically tried to hide evidence of concentration camps in Poland. They cleared out many of the forced-labor camps, marching prisoners westward and shooting any who fell behind. They also tried to dismantle some of the death camps, quickly killing the remaining prisoners. With the Red Army closing in on Auschwitz, the Nazis crowded about 60,000 Jews and others onto freight trains and shipped them west into Germany. The survivors ended up in camps such as Buchenwald and Dachau.

Allied soldiers fighting their way through Germany stumbled upon concentration camps. These camps, though not as grim as the death camps of Poland, shocked the soldiers. The camps held thousands of slave laborers, starved to near death. Many of these “living skeletons,” too sick to even eat, died in the weeks after they were liberated. At Dachau, the smell of rotting flesh led GIs to 28 railway cars packed with dead bodies. They also uncovered evidence of medical research. SS doctors at the camp had carried out inhumane experiments on more than 3,500 prisoners.

The Nazis had committed crimes so reprehensible that no word existed to describe them. In 1944, a Polish Jew coined the term genocide to refer to the systematic killing of a racial, political, or cultural group. The Nazis killed some 6 million Jews, or about 40 percent of the world’s Jewish population. An existing word that meant “sacrifice by fire”—holocaust—was capitalized and applied to this massive slaughter. The Holocaust

was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of Jews and other minority groups by the Nazis.

The War in Europe Ends with Germany's Surrender

When the Allies crossed from France into Germany, they met fierce resistance. By December 1944, their offensive had stalled. Hitler made plans to burst through the Allied lines in the wooded Ardennes region of Belgium, where the American forces were weakest. He launched his counteroffensive on December 16. Eight German armored divisions smashed into the surprised Americans, creating a huge bulge in the American line. Allied air support and quick action by Patton's Third Army forced the Germans to withdraw by mid-January. The Battle of the Bulge was the last German offensive on the western front.

By April 1945, the Red Army had fought its way through Poland and into Germany to the outskirts of Berlin. On April 30, with advancing Soviet soldiers just half a mile from his Berlin bunker, Hitler killed himself. German forces quickly began surrendering, and at midnight on May 8, the war in Europe officially ended. President Roosevelt did not live to celebrate Victory in Europe Day, or V-E Day. He had died on April 12. The new president, Harry S. Truman, dedicated the victory to Franklin Roosevelt.

36.4 – Preparing for War in the Pacific

World War II took a very different course in Asia and the Pacific. After the shock of the Pearl Harbor attack, American forces in the Pacific needed several months to regroup. During this time, Japan took control of much of the region's natural resources, including oil and rubber. Through conquest, Japan formed what it called the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. The "Co-Prosperity" in the title had nothing to do with sharing the wealth. Instead, Japan's goal was its own economic self-sufficiency, along with expanded political influence.

The Japanese Advance in Asia and the Pacific

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor was just the first in a series of strikes against Allied territory in the Pacific. By the end of March 1942, the Japanese had captured British Hong Kong and Singapore, the American islands of Guam and Wake, and the oil-rich Dutch East Indies. Japan had also invaded several larger possessions of the Allies, including the American-held Philippine Islands and the British colony of Burma.

In the Philippines, Americans and Filipinos under General Douglas MacArthur resisted a fierce Japanese onslaught. Disease and malnutrition killed many of the defenders. In March, Roosevelt ordered MacArthur to leave the islands. Upon his departure, the general promised, "I shall return." Two months later, Japan completed its conquest of the Philippines. On the largest island, the Japanese rounded up 70,000 starving, exhausted American and Filipino prisoners and marched them up the Bataan Peninsula near Manila to a prison camp. During the brutal 63-mile march, Japanese soldiers beat and bayoneted many of the prisoners. More than 7,000 died on the infamous Bataan Death March.

The fall of the British colony of Burma, in May 1942, had serious consequences for China. Japan already controlled most of coastal China, including the main ports. No supplies could reach the Chinese army by sea. China relied on British and American supplies carried in from India over the Burma Road. Now Japan had cut this lifeline. If Japan defeated China, hundreds of thousands of Japanese soldiers would be free to fight elsewhere. To help China keep fighting, the Allies set up an airborne supply route over the Himalayas.

The Pacific War Begins in the Air and at Sea

Japan's string of victories in the Pacific hurt American confidence. To boost morale, Roosevelt urged his military chiefs to strike directly at the Japanese home islands. They came up with a plan to fly B-25 bombers off an aircraft carrier. The B-25 could make a short takeoff and also had the range to presumably reach Japan and then land at Allied airfields in China.

On April 18, 1942, 16 bombers took off from the carrier *Hornet*, which had sailed to within 650 miles of Japan. Led by pilot Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle, the bombers hit Tokyo and other Japanese cities. Although the bombs did little damage, this surprise attack thrilled Americans as much as it shocked the Japanese. Japan reacted by putting more precious resources into defending the home islands. It also decided to try to destroy the remaining American fleet, a plan that would prove disastrous.

During Doolittle's raid, American code breakers got news of enemy activity far to the south in the Coral Sea. Japan was moving into position to isolate Australia, a key American ally. To stop the Japanese, Admiral Chester Nimitz sent two aircraft carriers, several cruisers, and a few destroyers—all he could spare at the time. They would face a larger Japanese force that included three carriers.

The resulting Battle of the Coral Sea, in early May 1942, was fought entirely by carrier-based aircraft. It was the first naval battle in history in which the enemies' warships never came within sight of each other. Japanese aircraft sank the carrier *Lexington* and damaged the *Yorktown*. American planes sank one Japanese carrier and damaged the other two. Despite fairly even losses, the Americans gained a strategic victory. They blocked Japanese expansion to the south, and they learned a valuable lesson—the Japanese navy could be beaten.

Military Leaders Consider Their Options in the Pacific

The "Europe First" strategy put Pacific commanders at a disadvantage. Because they had fewer ships, planes, and soldiers than the Japanese, a defensive strategy made sense. American naval forces would try to contain the Japanese, stopping their expansion in the Central and South Pacific. Critics in the navy pointed out that this strategy allowed the Japanese to strengthen their hold on newly won territories, making those lands harder to win back later. As part of the defensive strategy, these critics advised keeping the Japanese off balance with occasional attacks.

Some navy officials wanted to go on the offensive, and they debated different strategies. One idea was to build air bases in the Aleutian Islands, the part of Alaska that extends westward toward Japan. But pilots and their crews would have had to deal with the snow, wind, and fog that afflicted this region. Also, all supplies would have had to be shipped in from the U.S. mainland.

Another idea was to build bases in China. China's coast would have made an ideal staging area for an air assault on nearby Japan. However, the fuel, bombs, and parts needed to keep bombers in the air could best be delivered by sea, and the Japanese controlled China's ports. Inland air bases might have worked, but they would have had to be supplied by planes flying over the Himalayas from India.

A third offensive option called for liberating Japanese-held territory in the Pacific. By first freeing islands far from Japan, American forces could gradually move closer to get within B-29 striking distance. This would take time, though, and Japanese resistance would stiffen the closer the Americans got to Japan. Many of the islands were well fortified, so American casualties would be high.

36.5 – War in the Pacific, 1942-1945

The Americans led the Allied forces in the Pacific and did most of the fighting. When they went on the offensive, they chose a strategy of liberating Japanese-held islands in the Pacific and using them as stepping-stones. Each captured island served as a base for assaults on other islands as the Allied forces moved closer to Japan.

One of the keys to Allied success in the Pacific was the use of secret codes. The United States trained a special group of Navajo Indian "code talkers" for this task. Because Navajo is not a written language and is understood by very few people, it made an excellent basis for a code to transmit vital information. The Navajo code talkers played a key role in the Pacific campaign.

The Japanese Offensive Ends at the Battle of Midway

Before the Allies could go on the offensive, they had to stop Japanese expansion. They achieved this goal at the Battle of Midway, in June 1942. The Americans intercepted a Japanese message telling of plans for a major offensive. They figured out that the target was the U.S. base at Midway, a pair of islands about 1,200 miles northwest of Pearl Harbor. With this knowledge, the navy sat in wait for the Japanese fleet.

At Midway, Japanese naval strategists hoped to destroy the U.S. Pacific Fleet, which had been their plan since Doolittle's raid on Tokyo. Instead, the U.S. Navy won a resounding victory. American planes from Midway and from three aircraft carriers demolished the enemy force, destroying all four Japanese carriers, a cruiser, and about 300 aircraft. Japan never recovered from the loss of the carriers and so many experienced pilots. The Battle of Midway was Japan's last offensive action. From then on, Japan would focus on defense.

Liberating the Pacific Islands Proves Costly

A strategy known as leapfrogging enabled the Americans to go on the offensive with limited resources. They would often leapfrog, or bypass, a heavily defended island and then capture a nearby island that was not well defended. The captured island was then used as an airbase to bomb the Japanese-held island and prevent ships from resupplying it. Cut off from reinforcements and supplies, the Japanese forces would be left to wither. General MacArthur described this leapfrogging approach as “hit ’em where they ain’t—let ’em die on the vine.”

Despite the success of leapfrogging, many of the island invasions came at a terrible cost. Thousands of soldiers died in the jungles of Guadalcanal, New Guinea, Tarawa, and Saipan. But they kept pushing the Japanese back, closer and closer to the home islands. In October 1944, MacArthur made his triumphant return to the Philippines, where his forces would battle the Japanese until the end of the war. In August 1944, the marines finished retaking the Mariana Islands. The Marianas campaign was a landmark victory. It gave the Allied Pacific force secure bases from which long-range B-29s could make strategic bombing raids on Japan.

The Final Push Toward Japan Brings Heavy Losses

The Allied push through the Pacific steadily shrank the defensive perimeter that Japan had established around the home islands. That perimeter would all but disappear if the Allies could capture the key islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Iwo Jima’s airfields would offer a place for B-29s to land in an emergency. They would also serve as a base for fighter planes escorting bombers over Japan. Control of Okinawa, just 310 miles south of Japan, would give Americans a prime staging area for the invasion of Japan. To meet these threats, Japanese military leaders moved their best army units from Japan and China to defend the two strategic islands.

On the small volcanic island of Iwo Jima, the defenders dug caves, tunnels, and concrete-lined bunkers. Three months of Allied bombardment before the February 1945 invasion did little to soften the defense. The month-long Battle of Iwo Jima was among the bloodiest of the war. Nearly all of the 22,000 Japanese troops followed their commander’s orders to fight to the death. To win the island, more than 6,800 American troops died. Admiral Nimitz noted that on Iwo Jima, “uncommon valor was a common virtue.”

To take the much larger island of Okinawa, the Allies mounted a huge amphibious, or sea-to-land, invasion in April 1945. More than 1,200 American and British ships, including 40 aircraft carriers, supported a combined army-marine force of 182,000. As on Iwo Jima, the 120,000 troops defending Okinawa strongly resisted the American invaders. The bloody combat at the Battle of Okinawa, much of it hand-to-hand, continued for two months. It claimed the lives of some 12,000 American soldiers and more than 100,000 Japanese soldiers.

Meanwhile, another kind of combat was taking place in the surrounding waters. Earlier in the Pacific war, the Japanese had introduced a new weapon—kamikaze pilots.

Hundreds of men flew their bomb-filled planes directly into the vessels of the Allied fleet. Kamikaze attacks sank or damaged hundreds of ships. But they failed to sink any aircraft carriers, which were their main targets.

The Manhattan Project Develops a Top Secret Weapon

The stage was now set for an invasion of Japan. But the United States had its scientists working on another option. In 1939, German American scientist Albert Einstein had written to President Roosevelt explaining that scientists might soon be able to turn uranium into a new form of energy. That energy, he said, could be harnessed to build “extremely powerful bombs.” Einstein expressed his fear that Germany was already engaged in experiments to create such an atomic bomb. The power of this explosive weapon comes from the energy suddenly released by splitting the nuclei of uranium or plutonium atoms.

Three years after Einstein sent his letter, the government established the Manhattan Project, a top-secret program to develop an atomic weapon. A team of scientists, many of whom had fled fascist nations in Europe, carried on the research and development. Much of the work took place at a lab in Los Alamos, New Mexico. By the summer of 1945, their efforts had produced the first atomic bomb. On July 16, that test bomb was exploded on a remote air base in the New Mexico desert. Physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer witnessed the blinding flash of light, intense heat, and violent shock wave that the bomb produced. He later said the blast reminded him of a line from Hindu scripture: “I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.”

Truman Faces a Decision to Drop the Bomb

After the successful test of the atomic bomb, or A-bomb, President Truman had to decide whether to drop the bomb on Japan or to launch an invasion. After Iwo Jima and Okinawa, Truman knew an invasion would produce enormous casualties. The number of Allies killed and wounded might reach half a million, he was told.

Truman faced a stubborn enemy. American B-29s were already destroying Japan with conventional bombs, including incendiaries. These firebombs killed hundreds of thousands of people and turned large areas of major Japanese cities, with their masses of wooden buildings, into cinders. At the same time, a naval blockade cut off the supply of raw materials to Japan. The bombing and blockade had left many Japanese starving, and many of the country’s leaders realized that Japan could not possibly win the war. Yet the Japanese refused to accept the unconditional surrender Truman demanded. In fact, they seemed ready to fight to the last man, woman, and child, in the spirit of the kamikaze. Oppenheimer and others believed only the shock of an atomic bomb would end the Japanese resistance.

Some officials objected to dropping the A-bomb. General Curtis LeMay insisted that his B-29 bombing campaign would soon bring Japan’s surrender. General Eisenhower agreed. “It was my belief,” Eisenhower wrote later, “that Japan was, at that very moment, seeking some way to surrender with a minimum loss of ‘face’ [honor].” Others

maintained that the Japanese would give up if Truman would agree to let them keep their beloved emperor.

The United States Bombs Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Truman stuck to his demand for an unconditional surrender. He told Japan that the alternative was “prompt and utter destruction.” On August 6, 1945, a B-29 named the Enola Gay dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, a city of 300,000 people. Within seconds of the explosion, up to 80,000 people died. The blast’s shock wave toppled nearly 60,000 structures, and hundreds of fires consumed the rest of the city. Three days later, the United States dropped a second atomic bomb. This one obliterated the city of Nagasaki, killing some 40,000 people instantly. As many as 250,000 Japanese may have died from the two atomic bombs, either directly or as the result of burns, radiation poisoning, or cancer.

Truman had no regrets. “Let there be no mistake about it,” he said later. “I regarded the bomb as a military weapon and never had any doubt that it should be used.” The destruction of Nagasaki brought a Japanese surrender. Truman received this informal surrender on August 14, Victory over Japan Day, or V-J Day. The terms of the surrender allowed the emperor to keep his office but only in a ceremonial role. The Allies officially accepted the surrender aboard the American battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

Millions celebrated V-J Day, which marked the end of the Second World War. But they also mourned the loss of lives. About 55 million died—30 million of them civilians. The Soviet Union paid the highest human cost, with more than 20 million of its people killed. Some 400,000 Americans, nearly all in the military, gave their lives. Most Americans believed strongly that those soldiers, sailors, airmen, and others had died for a noble cause.

Summary

World War II lasted from 1939 to 1945. The United States played a major role in both main fronts of the war—Europe and the Pacific. To retake Europe, the Allies invaded North Africa, Italy, and France, and then moved on to Germany. To retake the Pacific, they fought island by island, until they closed in on Japan.

Allies versus Axis powers The Allies’ strategy of “Europe First” set the United States, Britain, and the USSR against the Axis countries of Germany and Italy. In the Pacific, the United States and China battled Japan.

Battle of Stalingrad Hitler’s effort to conquer the USSR ended at Stalingrad, where the Red Army forced the Nazis to retreat. The Soviets then pushed westward to Germany.

D-Day The Allies invaded France on June 6, 1944. Then they swept into Germany and took Berlin. Hitler committed suicide, and Germany surrendered.

Holocaust Moving through Poland and Germany, Allied forces liberated Jews and others from Nazi concentration camps and began to uncover the horrors of the Holocaust.

Battle of Midway The United States stopped Japanese expansion in the Pacific at the Battle of Midway. It then went on the offensive, using tactics like leapfrogging to overcome Japanese resistance.

Battle of Okinawa After the Battle of Okinawa, the Allies were poised for an invasion of Japan. Given the losses at Okinawa, however, they knew it would be a long and costly struggle.

Manhattan Project Scientists with the Manhattan Project developed an atomic bomb and tested it in July 1945. A month later, the United States dropped two bombs on Japanese cities, forcing Japan's surrender and bringing an end to World War II.

Chapter 37 — The Aftermath of World War II

Did the United States learn from past mistakes at the end of World War II?

37.1 – Introduction

On V-J Day, when Japan announced its surrender to the Allies, newspaper headlines in the United States screamed out the news. Factories and offices shut down, and Americans poured into the streets to celebrate. With hugs and smiles and joyful cheers, they expressed their relief that World War II had finally ended. All across the Pacific, from Pearl Harbor to Okinawa, soldiers shouted, “It’s over!”

The war’s end brought jubilation in the United States, but it also ushered in a period of uncertainty for the nation. One writer noted at the time that some Americans even seemed to fear “the coming of peace.” Wartime productivity had lifted the country out of the Depression. Americans wondered what would happen to the economy now. When the government stopped handing out huge military contracts, would the Depression start up again? Many people recalled that after World War I, the economy had collapsed. Along with inflation and unemployment, crime and social tensions had increased. Americans now feared being hit by another wave of problems.

Foreign policy created even greater concerns. Victory brought with it the responsibility for maintaining peace. After World War I, the Senate had refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles, and therefore the United States did not join the League of Nations. Other victorious nations had used the Treaty of Versailles to punish Germany, a course that helped lead to World War II. Would the United States now take a leading role in world affairs? If so, how would it choose to treat the defeated nations, particularly Germany and Japan?

President Franklin Roosevelt had realized the importance of these questions as early as 1943. In January of that year, he declared, “Victory in this war is the first and greatest goal before us. Victory in the peace is the next.” Roosevelt did not live to see either victory, but his hard work and realistic vision of the world helped prepare the United States to meet its postwar obligations.

37.2 – The End of Isolationism

In 1918, when President Woodrow Wilson proposed the League of Nations, Franklin Roosevelt—who was then assistant secretary of the navy—had high hopes for its success. If the Senate had ratified the Treaty of Versailles and the United States had become a member of the League of Nations, perhaps the League might have stood up to Germany and helped prevent the actions that led to another world war. Now that World War II had ended, would the United States slip back into isolationism, or would it take a strong part in world affairs?

The United States Leads the Creation of New World Organizations

In the years leading up to World War II, Roosevelt had quietly fought against isolationism. After Pearl Harbor, more and more Americans realized the United States could no longer stand alone in the world. To be secure, the nation had to work with others to maintain peace. This shift in attitude allowed Roosevelt to move toward a policy of internationalism. Late in the war, he pushed for the creation of new worldwide organizations to help prevent future wars by promoting stronger economic and diplomatic ties between nations.

In July 1944, representatives of the United States and 43 other nations met at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. Together, they founded the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, or the World Bank. The bank was designed to provide loans to help countries recover from the war and develop their economies. Much of the bank's funding came from the United States.

The same group of nations also created the International Monetary Fund. The IMF's goal was to stabilize the world monetary system and establish uniform exchange rates for foreign currency. Making exchange rates more predictable would help international banking and trade. Three years later, 23 nations took another step to encourage trade by signing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Member nations of GATT agreed to lower tariffs and to eliminate barriers to international trade.

The United States also worked closely with its allies to design a replacement for the League of Nations. In the fall of 1944, representatives of the United States, Great Britain, China, and the Soviet Union gathered at Dumbarton Oaks, an estate in Washington, D.C. U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull opened the meeting: "It is our task here to help lay the foundations upon which, after victory, peace, freedom, and a growing prosperity may be built for generations to come." The product of this conference was a draft charter for a new organization called the United Nations (UN). In June 1945, 50 nations signed the UN Charter.

In seeking approval for the League of Nations, President Wilson had worked hard to win public support and thought he did not need the support of Republicans in the Senate. In seeking support for the United Nations, Roosevelt did not make the same mistake. He not only spoke to the public about the need for nations to "learn to work together" for peace and security but also worked to persuade Republican senators. His efforts paid off, although he did not live to see the results. In July 1945, three months after Roosevelt's death, the Senate ratified U.S. membership in the United Nations by a vote of 89–2.

The United Nations Gets Organized

The United States played a leading role in founding the United Nations. Its influence is evident in the UN Charter, which proclaims what Roosevelt called "four essential human freedoms." He had first identified those Four Freedoms in a speech in January 1941. In that speech, he depicted a world in which all people would have freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. "The world order which we seek," he said, "is the cooperation of free countries, working together in

a friendly, civilized society.” In August 1941, Roosevelt and Winston Churchill had incorporated the Four Freedoms into the Atlantic Charter, which was a major expression of the Allies’ postwar goals.

Four years later, the framers of the UN Charter looked to the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms when devising the framework for the United Nations. The preamble to the UN Charter states that members seek to “reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.”

To reinforce these principles, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. This document affirms basic human rights, including the rights to life, liberty, and equality before the law, as well as to freedom of religion, expression, and assembly. Eleanor Roosevelt, who was the chair of the committee that drafted the declaration, compared it with the U.S. Bill of Rights and other similar documents.

In addition to listing principles, the UN Charter lays out the structure of the United Nations. The General Assembly is the main body of the United Nations and consists of all member states. The Security Council, a much smaller but more powerful body, consists of just 15 member states. Five of these members are permanent—the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China. Each permanent member can veto any Security Council resolution. The Security Council focuses on peace and security issues, and it can use military power to enforce its decisions.

In 1947, the United Nations faced one of its first challenges. It was drawn into a crisis in Palestine, a region on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea. Jews, many of whom had migrated to the area to escape the Nazis, wanted to establish their own nation. Arabs in the region rejected that idea, and violent clashes followed. The United Nations decided to partition Palestine, dividing it into Arab and Jewish territories. In 1948, the Jews proclaimed the state of Israel. The first of several Arab-Israeli wars followed, and tensions continue in the region to this day.

37.3 – Dealing with the Defeated Axis Powers

Even before World War II ended, the Allies began to face important decisions about the future of the defeated Axis powers. A generation earlier, the victors in World I had imposed a harsh peace on Germany. The Treaty of Versailles, with its war-guilt clause and excessive reparations, had caused bitter resentment among Germans. Adolf Hitler had used that resentment to help fuel his rise to power. Looking back at the mistakes made after World War I, Roosevelt was determined not to let history repeat itself.

War Crimes Trials

Allied demands at the end of World War II were much less harsh than those in the Versailles Treaty. Germany and Japan did have to disarm and give up the territory they had taken. They also had to pay reparations. But the Allies did not demand a great deal

of money. Instead, reparations took the form of industrial equipment and other goods and services.

Roosevelt had explained this approach in his last address to Congress, in March 1945. “By compelling reparations in kind—in plants, in machinery, in rolling stock [railroad cars], and in raw materials,” he said, “we shall avoid the mistake that we and other nations made after the last war.” After World War II, Allied leaders did not want to punish the people of Germany and Japan. They wanted to leave those countries enough resources to remain independent. They sought only to punish the German and Japanese leaders who had committed war crimes. A war crime is a violation of internationally accepted practices related to waging war.

Roosevelt made his statement shortly after returning from Yalta, a Soviet city on the Black Sea, where he had met with Churchill and Joseph Stalin. At Yalta, the Allies began discussing punishment for war criminals. Five months later, at a meeting near Potsdam, Germany, the new president, Harry Truman, agreed with the other Allies on a plan. They would give Nazi war criminals fair and open trials.

The trials took place at Nuremberg, Germany, in front of an international military tribunal. The judges and chief prosecutors of this tribunal or court, came from the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France. The American prosecutor, Robert H. Jackson, presented the opening statement of the trial:

The wrongs which we seek to condemn and punish have been so calculated, so malignant, and so devastating that civilization cannot tolerate their being ignored, because it cannot survive their being repeated. That four great nations, flushed with victory and stung with injury, stay [stop] the hand of vengeance and voluntarily submit their captive enemies to the judgment of the law is one of the most significant tributes that power has ever paid to reason.

—Robert H. Jackson, opening remarks, November 21, 1945

The 22 defendants at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials included leaders of the Nazi Party, the military, the SS, and the Gestapo. The SS were the elite Nazi Party corps, most infamous for running the concentration camps. The Gestapo were the secret police. These leaders were charged not only with war crimes but also with crimes against humanity, such as persecution and extermination. They all pleaded not guilty. On October 1, 1946, twelve defendants were condemned to death by hanging, seven received prison terms, and three were acquitted. Other trials followed. Those convicted of war crimes included officials who ran concentration camps and doctors who carried out gruesome medical experiments on inmates.

A separate tribunal met in Tokyo in 1946 to try Japanese war criminals. The trial lasted more than two years and found 25 defendants guilty. Sixteen received life sentences, and two received lesser sentences. Seven were sentenced to death by hanging, including Hideki Tojo, Japan’s leader for much of the war.

From Enemies to Allies: Rebuilding Germany and Japan

The Allies also set out to restructure Germany and Japan after the war. At Yalta, they had decided to divide Germany into four military occupation zones, one each for the United States, the USSR, France, and Britain. Although Berlin lay entirely within the Soviet zone, it also was divided in four parts—one for each occupying power.

During the war, Allied bombers had destroyed many German cities. As a result, many Germans continued to suffer from famine and disease. At first, the United States did little to help rebuild Germany. It was more concerned with dismantling German factories to eliminate any war-making capacity. Only later would American policy focus on restoring Germany's economic health.

The Allies took a different approach to postwar Japan. They put an American general, Douglas MacArthur, in charge of the country. Allied soldiers occupied Japan, but they did not control the country directly as they did in Germany. Instead, the Japanese government carried out the political reforms that MacArthur and his staff prescribed.

After dissolving Japan's empire and disbanding its military, the Allies worked to bring democracy to Japan. Officials under MacArthur prepared a new constitution. It set up a parliamentary government, based on the British model, with a strong legislature and an independent judiciary. The emperor would only have ceremonial powers. Women as well as men could elect representatives to the parliament, and a lengthy bill of rights ensured civil and political liberties. The constitution also stated that "the Japanese people forever renounce war . . . and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes."

At first, as in Germany, the United States sought to weaken Japan's industrial economy. By 1948, however, U.S. officials had decided to promote economic growth. Japan began the difficult task of rebuilding its ruined cities. In 1951, Japan, the United States, and 47 other countries signed a peace treaty. The treaty restored Japan to full sovereignty, or independent authority.

37.4 – Americans Adjust to Postwar Life

After World War I, the mass cancellation of government contracts had thrown many Americans out of work. Demobilization of millions of soldiers made the unemployment problem even worse. After World War II, American leaders took steps to try to ease the difficult transition from a wartime economy to a peacetime economy.

From Soldiers to Civilians: The Impact of the GI Bill

In September 1942, three years before the end of the war, President Roosevelt was already planning for the peace. In a radio broadcast heard by American soldiers abroad, Roosevelt spoke of the economic crisis that followed World War I. He promised, "When you come home, we do not propose to involve you, as last time, in a domestic economic mess of our own making."

One year later, Roosevelt asked Congress to pass the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, better known as the GI Bill of Rights. This bill provided federal funds to help returning GIs make the transition to civilian life. Those funds would make it easier for many war veterans to continue their education and to buy a home. Congress passed the GI Bill by unanimous vote in the spring of 1944.

Five months after the war ended, the armed services had released 8.5 million men and women from duty. Several million more came home in the next year. Many veterans took advantage of the GI Bill to enhance their prospects in civilian life. With the bill's help, some 2.3 million veterans attended college and 7 million received vocational or on-the-job training. The middle class expanded, as veterans became doctors, lawyers, teachers, and other professionals.

Veterans also took advantage of low-interest federal loans to buy homes. By 1955, the government had granted 4.3 million home loans through the GI Bill. These loans enabled millions of Americans to move out of central cities into outlying neighborhoods. Instead of being renters, they became homeowners.

The GI Bill had other benefits. Returning veterans could receive unemployment compensation. They could also take out cheap federal loans to start farms or businesses. The effect of this legislation was not limited to the individuals it helped. As one veteran pointed out, the GI Bill also helped transform society:

"I'm not sure whether I could ever have gone to college without the GI Bill . . . It set a whole new standard of improved education for a large number of people, a whole new standard of improved housing . . . I think the GI Bill gave the whole country an upward boost economically and in every other way."

—Ex-GI Don Condren, quoted in an interview in *The Homefront: America During World War II*, 1984

African Americans Seek New Opportunities

The GI Bill raised the expectations of all GIs, including African Americans. Shortly after the bill became law, the National Urban League predicted that returning black GIs would want "jobs, opportunities to complete their education, a chance to go into business, and the privilege of sharing completely in the future development and prosperity of the nation."

Not all African American GIs were able to make full use of the GI Bill. Discrimination often prevented African American veterans from buying a home, even if they had the money. Segregation kept them out of many colleges. Still, in the years following the war, many African Americans did become homeowners through the GI Bill. Thousands more received a college education, mainly by attending historically black institutions.

The end of the war did not stop the migration of African Americans from the South. Returning veterans seemed especially eager to leave. By 1947, some 75,000 black GIs

had left the South in search of jobs and a better life. A total of 2.5 million black Americans migrated from the region in the 1940s and 1950s.

In general, the lives of African Americans did improve in the postwar years. From 1947 to 1952, the median income, or average pay, for nonwhite families rose 45 percent. Politically, though, the picture was more mixed. In national elections, most African Americans backed Truman, who in turn supported progress in the area of civil rights. In the South, however, discriminatory state regulations kept many African Americans from voting.

The Demobilization of Women: From Factory Jobs to the Service Sector

By 1947, nearly all war industries had been shut down. The women who had stepped forward to work in shipyards, aircraft plants, and other war-related jobs had received their last paychecks. At the same time, millions of GIs had returned from the war. This set up a potential conflict, pitting men and women against each other for the same jobs.

In the postwar period, most female workers felt a duty to step aside for men. They had been told throughout the war that their jobs were temporary. Yet many women enjoyed the independence and self-esteem that came from holding a paying job, and they wanted to keep working. "They are the women," a reporter commented, "who feel that if they are good enough to serve in a crisis they deserve a chance to earn a living in peacetime."

They did earn a living, but not in heavy industry. Those jobs went mainly to men. Instead, many women moved into jobs in the booming service sector, the segment of the economy that does not produce goods. They became teachers, nurses, librarians, bank tellers, and social workers. At these jobs, they earned, on average, just over half of what men earned. For the most part, though, women accepted their new roles and economic status.

37.5 – Current Connections: Holding Leaders Accountable for Their Actions

In August 1945, Allied officials met in London to discuss how to bring war criminals to justice. There they drafted the Nuremberg Charter, which spelled out three categories of crime in international law. The first, crimes against peace, included planning and waging a war of aggression. The second, war crimes, involved violating the traditional laws of war. The third, crimes against humanity, included persecution, enslavement, and mass murder. At the Nuremberg Trials, Nazi leaders faced all three sets of charges. The Allies' goal was to hold individual leaders accountable, in a court of law, for their nation's actions. These trials paved the way for today's ongoing prosecution of war criminals.

Defining War Crimes: The Geneva Conventions

The Nuremberg Charter was not the first attempt to define war crimes. In 1864, the first in a series of conventions, or international agreements, was signed in Geneva, Switzerland. Called for by the Red Cross, the first of the Geneva Conventions set rules

for proper conduct toward sick and wounded enemy soldiers and the civilians who took care of them. Two more Geneva Conventions were issued in 1906 and 1929.

In 1949, a fourth conference was held at Geneva. Here, delegates reformulated the rules of war in four conventions. The first three deal with wounded and sick soldiers and sailors, along with prisoners of war, all of whom are to receive humane treatment. The fourth convention protects civilians during wartime. The United States and nearly every other nation in the world have signed the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

By defining war crimes, the Geneva Conventions are meant to prevent people from committing those crimes. But this does not always work. For five years in the 1970s, the communist dictator Pol Pot controlled Cambodia. Under his harsh rule, some 1.7 million Cambodians died. Many were beaten or worked to death on collective farms. Others died from starvation or disease. Another dictator, Idi Amin of Uganda, also committed war crimes during a period of civil unrest in the 1970s. To hold on to power, he ordered soldiers to execute anyone who criticized him or opposed his rule. Between 300,000 and 500,000 Ugandans were killed under Amin's brutal dictatorship.

Prosecuting War Crimes: The UN International Criminal Tribunal

Pol Pot and Idi Amin never faced an international war crimes tribunal. For decades after the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials, no such organization existed. Finally, in 1993, civil war in the former Yugoslavia prompted the United Nations to form an International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The Yugoslav conflict had left about 250,000 people dead.

The ICTY prosecuted more than 50 people for various war crimes, including the use of rape as "an instrument of terror." The tribunal set a precedent by trying an active head of state, Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. It accused him of carrying out a "campaign of terror and violence" against civilians. It also charged him with genocide and ethnic cleansing, or the forced removal of an ethnic group from an area. Milosevic died in his jail cell in 2006, before the ICTY could pass judgment on him.

Another civil war leading to genocide occurred in Rwanda in 1994. Up to a million people died, most of them ethnic Tutsis, who were killed by rival Hutus in a massive murder spree. The United Nations set up a second court, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), in 1996. Ten years later, it had tried 27 people for genocide-related crimes, such as extermination and murder. Of those, the ICTR found 24 guilty, including Rwanda's former prime minister, Jean Kambanda. Kambanda was the first head of government convicted of genocide. The court imposed a sentence of life in prison.

The ICTY and ICTR are temporary tribunals. In 1998, 120 nations established a permanent tribunal, the International Criminal Court (ICC). The ICC has the power to try individuals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression. More than half the nations of the world have joined the ICC, but not the United States, China, Russia, or Japan. American officials have voiced fears that the

ICC might undermine U.S. national sovereignty by claiming the right to try American citizens. They also worry that ICC prosecutions might be “politically motivated.” One U.S. official said that the United States might “be accused of war crimes for legitimate but controversial uses of force to protect world peace.”

Summary

At the end of World War II, the United States vowed not to repeat the mistakes of World War I. With the other Allies, it worked to establish ways of avoiding future conflicts and dealing with war crimes. At home, Congress passed legislation to help returning veterans rejoin postwar society.

Four Freedoms In 1941, Franklin Roosevelt expressed the wish that all people should have freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. These Four Freedoms became part of the charter of the United Nations.

United Nations Before the war was over, 50 nations cooperated to form the United Nations. The United States played a strong role in founding this international organization. The goals of the United Nations include world peace, security, and respect for human rights.

Nuremberg War Crimes Trials Instead of punishing all Germans, the Allies held Nazi leaders responsible at the Nuremberg Trials. A similar set of trials brought Japanese leaders to justice. Later, temporary international tribunals, as well as a permanent International Criminal Court, were formed to deal with war criminals.

Geneva Conventions To catalog war crimes, many nations of the world met at Geneva, Switzerland, in 1949. The Geneva Conventions prescribed the proper treatment of the wounded, prisoners of war, and civilians.

GI Bill of Rights The United States sought to prevent economic and social problems at home after the war. One measure designed to accomplish this goal was the GI Bill of Rights, which provided unemployment benefits, college funds, and housing loans to veterans.

Chapter 38 — Origins of the Cold War

How did the United States and the Soviet Union become Cold War adversaries?

38.1 – Introduction

In spring 1945, as World War II wound down in Europe, a historic encounter took place between U.S. and Soviet troops in Germany. Up until that time, the Americans and Soviets had been allies in the war but had not actually fought together. Now the two forces prepared to meet as they moved into Germany, pressing in on the Nazis from both west and east.

As the U.S. Army advanced eastward, it sent small patrols ahead of the main force to search for Soviet troops. Lieutenant Albert L. Kotzebue, a 21-year-old officer from Texas, led one such patrol. On April 25, as his men approached the Elbe River near the German city of Torgau, they spotted a Soviet patrol on the opposite bank. Shouting and waving their arms, they caught the Soviet soldiers' attention. The men on the other side screamed, "Americanski, Americanski," pointing and waving back. Lieutenant Kotzebue found a small boat near the shore and made his way across the river. The Soviet and U.S. soldiers greeted each other warmly.

Several such meetings took place along the Elbe. Later, the senior commanders of the two armies exchanged more formal visits. Photographers recorded the historic occasion, capturing an image of a GI and a Soviet soldier shaking hands. Working together, the Allies would soon bring an end to the war in Europe. That would be an event, noted President Harry Truman, "for which all the American people, all the British people and all the Soviet people have toiled and prayed so long." Furthermore, the friendly meetings on the Elbe suggested that an ongoing partnership between the United States and the Soviet Union was possible.

However, the days of U.S. and Soviet soldiers hugging and shaking hands would not last. Before long, the United States and the Soviet Union would engage in a grim struggle for world power known as the Cold War. As one momentous global conflict ended, another was about to begin. The two countries would soon become bitter enemies.

38.2 – Forming an Uneasy Peace

During the war, the United States and the USSR formed an alliance based on mutual interest. Although they had differences, the two nations set these aside to focus on the shared goal of defeating Germany. The differences resurfaced, however, as the war ended and the Allies began to plan for the postwar era.

A Wartime Alliance Begins to Erode

In February 1945, Franklin Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin, and Winston Churchill met in the Soviet city of Yalta for the Yalta Conference. In mostly amicable talks, they agreed to collaborate in shaping postwar Europe. They decided to divide Germany into four

occupation zones, each controlled by a different Allied country. They also declared their support for self-government and free elections in Eastern Europe. Roosevelt returned from Yalta with hope that the wartime allies could maintain friendly relations. Soon, however, that relationship began to weaken.

In July, with Germany defeated, the Allied leaders met again in Potsdam, near Berlin. Harry S. Truman now represented the United States, having become president after FDR's death three months earlier. Churchill, later replaced by new prime minister Clement Attlee, and Stalin also attended. At the Potsdam Conference, the Allies finalized their postwar plans for Germany, including the division of Berlin into occupation zones.

The mood at Potsdam was tense. During the conference, Truman learned that the United States had tested its first atomic bomb. He hinted to Stalin that the United States had a powerful new weapon, but he did not name it. This fueled Stalin's distrust of the United States. Truman also felt wary of Stalin. The Soviet army still occupied much of Eastern Europe, and Truman was suspicious of Soviet intentions. The Soviet leader had promised to allow free elections in Eastern Europe but had not yet fulfilled that promise. In fact, in Poland the Soviets had helped rig elections to ensure a communist win.

Truman and Stalin clearly held very different visions of postwar Europe. Security concerns drove many of Stalin's decisions. Germany had attacked the Soviet Union in two world wars, using Poland as its invasion route. Stalin wanted to create a buffer zone of friendly communist states to protect the USSR. Viewing control of Eastern Europe as critical to his nation's security, he claimed the region as a Soviet sphere of influence. Truman, on the other hand, wanted to allow Eastern European nations to determine their own form of government. He believed that given free choice, they would pick democracy.

The U.S. and the USSR Count Up the Costs of War

The United States and the USSR viewed Europe's future differently in part because of their very different experiences in World War II. The USSR had suffered enormous casualties. As many as 20 million Soviet citizens died in the war, including at least 7 million soldiers. Many were killed or died of disease in German labor camps. Others starved when Nazi invasion forces stripped the Soviet countryside of crops, farm animals, and equipment and torched farms and villages. In addition, the Nazis leveled several Soviet cities, including Stalingrad and Kiev. Flying into the USSR in 1945, General Dwight D. Eisenhower noted, "I did not see a house standing between the western borders of the country and . . . Moscow."

In contrast, the United States suffered far less from the war. Approximately 290,000 U.S. soldiers died, but civilian casualties were limited to those killed or wounded at Pearl Harbor. Other than that attack, no fighting took place on U.S. soil. No cities were bombed, and no farms or factories were destroyed. In fact, the U.S. economy boomed during the war. By 1945, the United States was producing more than half of the world's total industrial output. The United States had spent at least \$320 billion financing the

war, but most Americans felt the money was well spent. President Truman called it “an investment in world freedom and world peace.”

Like the rest of Europe, the Soviet Union hoped for aid to rebuild after the war. It asked the United States for a loan, but Truman, angered by Stalin’s broken promises and disregard of the Yalta agreements, decided on a “get tough” policy toward the Soviets. Shortly after Germany fell, Truman stopped all lend-lease shipments to the Soviet Union. Even American ships already traveling to the Soviet Union returned home. Stalin called this action “brutal.”

Differing Ideologies Shape the U.S. and the USSR

The differences between the United States and the Soviet Union resulted from more than just wartime experiences. They also represented sharp differences in ideology, or the set of beliefs that form the basis of a political and economic system.

The U.S. system centered on a belief in democratic government and capitalist economics. In capitalism, individuals and private businesses make most of the economic decisions. Business owners decide what to produce and consumers decide what to buy. Most property, factories, and equipment are privately owned. The United States hoped to see capitalist democracy spread throughout Europe.

The USSR also hoped European countries would accept its system, which was communism. Communists regard capitalism as an unjust system that produces great social inequalities and denies the proletariat, or working class, a fair share of society’s wealth. Communism revolves around single-party rule of politics and government control of the economy. The state owns and runs most businesses and decides what goods will be produced. Such a system is also known as a command or centrally planned economy. In this type of system, small farms are often joined together in collectives, which the state and the farmers own together. This economic arrangement is known as collectivism.

38.3 – Adjusting to a Postwar World

By 1946, the balance of power in the world was shifting. Two global wars and the destruction of economic infrastructure had greatly weakened formerly strong countries such as Britain, France, and Germany. The United States and the Soviet Union now stood alone as leading powers in the world. Their size, economic strength, and military prowess enabled them to dominate global affairs. They became known as superpowers—nations that influence or control less powerful states. Most nations chose or were forced to align with one superpower or the other. The world was dividing into two power blocs.

Tensions Rise Between Two Superpowers

In February 1946, Stalin gave a speech attacking capitalism. He declared that peace was impossible as long as capitalism existed. He said that capitalist nations would always compete with one another for raw materials and markets for their products and that such conflicts would always be settled by “armed force.” War, he said, was

inevitable “under the present capitalist conditions of world economic development.” He seemed to suggest that communism should replace capitalism.

George Kennan, a U.S. diplomat at the American Embassy in Moscow, studied Stalin’s speech and sent a long reply to the U.S. secretary of state. This “Long Telegram,” as it became known, helped shape U.S. foreign policy for decades to come. In it, Kennan described the Soviets as being “committed fanatically” to the belief that the U.S. system and way of life must be destroyed “if Soviet power is to be secure.” To prevent this outcome, he said, the Soviet Union must be “contained” within its present borders. After he returned to the United States, Kennan expanded on this notion in an article for a foreign policy journal. In that article, he wrote, “It is clear that . . . any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.”

Kennan later pointed out that he viewed the policy of containment—the restriction of Soviet expansion—as a political strategy, not a military one. He did not want war. He felt that in time, containment would lead to either communism’s collapse or its transformation into a milder, less hostile system.

By the time Kennan wrote his famous telegram, U.S. leaders had grown very uneasy. They feared that the USSR planned to spread communism beyond Eastern Europe to other parts of the world. These concerns deepened in March 1946, when the Soviets refused to withdraw troops from northern Iran. During the war, Britain and the Soviet Union had shared control of Iran. In refusing to leave, the Soviets ignored a 1942 agreement with Britain stating that both countries would withdraw within six months of the war’s end. This action generated the first major postwar crisis. It ended peacefully after the USSR gave in to U.S. pressure and withdrew. Tensions, however, were clearly rising.

New Nuclear Technologies Raise the Stakes for Both Sides

Conflicts between nations have always prompted fears of war. In the new age of the atomic bomb, the possible effects of a superpower conflict became even more frightening. The threat of a nuclear attack compelled both countries to show restraint in their use of force, but it also fueled the race to develop nuclear weapons.

After World War II, the United States continued to test and improve its nuclear capability. In the summer of 1946, American scientists conducted tests of two atomic bombs at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands of the Pacific Ocean. Scientists studied the impact of atomic bombs on naval vessels, using a fleet of more than 90 battleships and aircraft carriers as targets. Many battleships were old; some were captured enemy ships. Nuclear testing on Bikini Atoll continued into the 1950s. For three years, the United States was the only country with an atomic bomb. But Soviet scientists were working hard to develop their own atomic weapon.

Turning to the United Nations to Mediate Conflicts

Truman and his advisers knew the damage an atomic bomb could do, and they sought ways to control this powerful new weapon. They asked the United Nations to help limit the development and use of atomic energy, the power released by a nuclear reaction.

In June 1946, Truman sent a key adviser, Bernard Baruch, to the United Nations to explain U.S. goals to the UN Atomic Energy Commission. He told the panel that the United States wanted the United Nations to enact strict controls on raw materials used in bomb making and a ban on the making of any future bombs. Baruch's proposal, known as the Baruch Plan, would allow the United States to retain its small nuclear stockpile for the time being. However, it would deny the Soviet Union and other nations the right to build bombs. The plan called for UN inspections of nuclear plants and stiff sanctions on nations found making such weapons. Under the plan, UN Security Council members would not be allowed to use their veto power to prevent UN sanctions.

The Baruch Plan prompted strong opposition from the Soviet Union. Soviet delegate Andrei Gromyko asked why the United States should be allowed to keep its atomic bombs while denying the Soviet Union the right to develop its own weapons. He declared that further talks on international control of atomic weapons could take place only after the United States destroyed all of its atomic weapons. Until then, he refused to discuss the terms of the Baruch Plan. He also declared that the Soviet Union would not give up its veto power in the Security Council. Because neither side would budge, this early effort at nuclear arms control came to an end.

38.4 – Confronting the Communist Threat

On March 5, 1946, Winston Churchill warned of the growing Soviet threat in a speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. As British prime minister, Churchill had earned the loyalty and respect of the Allies by standing up to Nazi aggression and holding his nation together during World War II. Having known Stalin for years, he worried about the Soviet dictator's plans for Eastern Europe. In his speech, Churchill cautioned that Stalin was cutting the region off from the rest of Europe. "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic," the prime minister declared, "an iron curtain has descended across the continent." The term Iron Curtain came to symbolize this growing barrier between East and West.

The Iron Curtain Divides Europe

By the time Churchill gave his speech, Stalin was already setting up Soviet-controlled governments in Poland and other countries of Eastern Europe. The Soviet Union's hegemony in the region had begun. Hegemony is a dominating influence of one country over others.

In Romania, for example, the Soviets forced the king to appoint a pro-communist government. Once in power, Communist Party leaders used the secret police to silence all opposition. When the United States and Britain protested, the Romanian government promised early elections. But its officials manipulated the electoral process to make sure it won a majority. Bulgaria followed a similar pattern. Backed by the Soviets, local

communists used threats or violence to get rid of political leaders who opposed them. Police charged the opposition party leader with plotting to overthrow the government. A few months later, officials arrested and executed him. A similar pattern of communist takeovers occurred later in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Nine days after Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech, Stalin responded. He defended the communist takeovers, explaining that his country needed loyal governments nearby "to ensure its security." He questioned how one could see "these peaceful aspirations of the Soviet Union as 'expansionist tendencies.'"

Growing Prospects of Communism in Greece and Turkey

Concerns about communist expansion were not limited to Eastern Europe. After the war, both Greece and Turkey also faced potential communist takeovers. In the fall of 1946, civil war began in Greece when communist rebels tried to overtake the Greek government. Yugoslavia, a communist country to the north, backed the rebels. Britain sent troops and money to support government forces.

Britain also tried to help Turkey, which faced growing pressure from the Soviet Union. The USSR sought control of a vital Turkish shipping channel, the Dardanelles, which linked Soviet ports on the Black Sea with the Mediterranean. In 1947, while facing severe economic problems of its own, Britain told the United States that it could no longer afford to help Turkey or Greece.

Truman Advocates the Containment of Communism

Not long after receiving the British message, Truman addressed Congress. In that speech, he outlined a policy that became known as the Truman Doctrine. "It must be the policy of the United States," he declared, "to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation [conquest] by armed minorities or by outside pressures." He then asked lawmakers for \$400 million to use to provide aid to Greece and Turkey. He explained the importance of helping these countries resist communism:

The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died. We must keep that hope alive.

—Harry S. Truman, from a speech to Congress on March 12, 1947

Congress granted Truman's request. With U.S. aid and military equipment, the Greek government defeated the communist rebels. Turkey also resisted pressure from the Soviet Union and maintained control of the Dardanelles.

The Truman Doctrine committed the United States to a foreign policy based on Kennan's strategy of containment. Truman hoped to stop the spread of communism, limiting the system to countries in which it already existed. Underlying his policy was the assumption that the Soviet Union sought world domination. The United States believed it had to fight this effort, with aid as needed and with force if necessary.

Scholars still debate how well each side understood the aims and motives of the other. U.S. leaders viewed communist takeovers in Eastern Europe as brutal efforts to suppress democracy. They saw their own attempts to control nuclear weapons through the United Nations as a noble effort to keep the peace. The Soviets, on the other hand, saw the United States and its allies as hostile powers committed to destroying communism and threatening Soviet security. They viewed efforts to restrict nuclear weapons as a way to maintain a U.S. monopoly on atomic energy. Each side talked past the other, and as one superpower acted, the other reacted.

In 1947, Truman asked Congress to reorganize the government's security agencies in light of the Soviet threat. In response, Congress passed the National Security Act. This law created two new agencies, the National Security Council (NSC) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The NSC advises the president on national security issues and oversees the actions of the CIA. The CIA collects and analyzes intelligence gathered, in part, by agents operating in foreign countries.

38.5 – Rebuilding European Economies

On both sides of the Iron Curtain, Europe was in terrible shape after the war. One reporter described Warsaw, Poland, as “rows of roofless, doorless, windowless walls” that looked like they had been “dug out of the earth by an army of archaeologists.” Times were hard in Britain, too, which was nearly bankrupt after the war. Conditions worsened during the frigid winter of 1946–47, when Britons faced grave shortages of food, fuel, and electricity. In Italy, France, and many other European countries, conditions were even worse.

European Nations Face Widespread Devastation

The challenge of rebuilding war-torn Europe was enormous. Across the continent, governments and economies barely functioned. Warfare had devastated numerous cities, leaving many of the inhabitants homeless and unemployed. It had destroyed schools, hospitals, churches, and factories, knocked out communications systems, and ruined ports. It left many roads, bridges, and railroad lines heavily damaged. Without a usable transportation system, carrying raw materials to factories and crops and goods to market was impossible. In the hardest-hit areas, deadly diseases like tuberculosis spread rapidly.

U.S. leaders feared that conditions in Europe would give rise to political and social unrest. In some countries, workers staged strikes and demonstrations to protest the hardships of daily life. Some poor and jobless people began to look to communist ideology for answers to their problems. Many recalled how local communist groups had resisted the Nazis' rise to power. In these stressful and difficult times, communism quickly gained appeal in Italy and France.

The U.S. Provides Aid Through the Marshall Plan

As with Greece and Turkey, Truman reasoned that rebuilding shattered economies and supporting freely elected governments would be the best way to stop communism from spreading. Truman also knew that, as the strongest economic power in the world, the United States had the money and resources to help Europe rebuild. With these factors in mind, Truman and his advisers developed a plan for European recovery. In June 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall announced the plan in a speech at Harvard University. There, he described the plan as both high-minded and practical:

It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace. Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine, but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos.

—George Marshall, June 5, 1947

This recovery plan became known as the Marshall Plan. It offered all European nations, including the Soviet Union, generous funding to rebuild their economies as long as the money was spent on goods made in the United States. The plan appealed to many U.S. leaders. Those who supported it hoped to promote democracy in Europe and oppose the spread of communism, thus reinforcing the Truman Doctrine and the policy of containment. They also wanted to open markets for American goods and further boost the economy of the United States.

Some Republicans in Congress did initially oppose what they called a “New Deal” for Europe. However, the Marshall Plan gained wide support in the spring of 1948 after lawmakers learned that the Communist Party had taken control of Czechoslovakia. That year, Congress approved over \$13 billion in aid, to be spent over a four-year period, from 1948 to 1952. This aid would play a crucial role in stimulating economic growth and prosperity in Western Europe.

The USSR Responds with the Molotov Plan

Although the United States painted the Marshall Plan as a generous effort to aid European recovery, Soviet leaders questioned its motives. They believed that its real purpose was to create a U.S. sphere of influence in Western Europe. Stalin viewed the Marshall Plan as an attempt to interfere in Soviet internal affairs. The Soviets knew that to receive aid, they would have to share information about their economy and resources with the United States and even allow U.S. inspectors into the country to see how the aid was being used. Stalin also felt that his government, in accepting American aid, would have to cede some control over economic planning and decision making. For these reasons, the Soviet Union chose not to take part.

Czechoslovakia, however, was eager to join the Marshall Plan. Czech leaders met with Stalin in Moscow to get his approval. They explained that two thirds of the raw materials Czechoslovakia needed for manufacturing came from Western countries. But Stalin denied their request, saying that they could not “cooperate in an action aimed at

isolating the Soviet Union.” In the end, at the urging of the Soviets, no Eastern European nations took part in the Marshall Plan.

To compete with its rival, in 1949 the Soviet Union created the Molotov Plan, named after Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov. This plan was designed to aid economic recovery in Eastern Europe. To do this, it established a new organization, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. Initially, COMECON’s main task was to create two-way trade agreements between the Soviet Union and other COMECON members. In the 1950s, COMECON attempted more ambitious projects. It worked to integrate Eastern European economies by encouraging member states to specialize in goods and services not produced in other states.

A Cold War Has Begun

By 1949, the wartime alliance of the United States and the Soviet Union had turned into a relationship of mutual distrust and suspicion. Each side held a different vision for the world. The United States wanted to promote the growth of independent, capitalist democracies, while the Soviet Union wanted to surround itself with communist states that followed its lead. The two superpowers had clashed over communist takeovers in Eastern Europe. They had confronted each other over Iran and, less directly, in Greece and Turkey. They had argued over atomic energy and plans for postwar economic recovery in Europe.

Although the hostility between the two superpowers and their allies often heated up, it never led to armed conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. It was for that reason that this postwar struggle became known as the Cold War.

During the Cold War, Europe and much of the world divided into two hostile camps. The United States and the Soviet Union waged a war of words, using propaganda, diplomacy, economic and military aid, and espionage as weapons. Each superpower viewed its own motives and actions as right and good, while it cast its rival’s behavior in a bad light. As the conflict grew, compromise and cooperation became greater challenges. These problems worsened with the development of atomic weapons, which in turn raised fears of a deadly arms race. Both sides knew that if the Cold War turned hot, it could result in another world war, potentially the most destructive in human history.

Summary

In the postwar period, clear differences between the United States and the Soviet Union soon emerged. Communist ideology and the creation of Soviet-backed states in Eastern Europe alarmed the U.S. government. The United States responded with efforts to support European democracy and limit Soviet expansion. As the rivalry intensified, Europe divided into communist-controlled Eastern Europe and mostly democratic Western Europe.

Yalta and Potsdam Conferences At Yalta, the Allied leaders met to shape postwar Europe. They divided Germany and Berlin into four occupation zones each and declared their support for self-government and free elections in Eastern Europe. At Potsdam, the leaders finalized their postwar plans for Germany. However, the relationship among the superpowers began to weaken.

Iron Curtain In a 1946 speech, Winston Churchill accused the Soviet Union of dividing Europe into East and West and drawing an “iron curtain,” or barrier, across the continent.

UN Atomic Energy Commission At the United Nations, the United States offered a plan to limit the development of atomic weapons. The Soviet Union, working on its own atomic bomb, rejected U.S. efforts to retain a monopoly on atomic energy.

Truman Doctrine President Truman adopted a policy of containment as part of the Truman Doctrine. The doctrine aimed to limit the spread of communism and support democracy.

Marshall Plan This aid program reflected the Truman Doctrine’s goals. It provided aid to European nations to help them recover from the war, promote stability, and limit the appeal of communism. The Soviets responded with the Molotov Plan for Eastern Europe.

Cold War The postwar struggle for power between the United States and the Soviet Union became known as the Cold War. Although this was largely a war of words and influence, it threatened to heat up and produce armed conflict between the superpowers.

Chapter 39 — The Cold War Expands

Were the methods used by the United States to contain communism justified?

39.1 – Introduction

By the late 1950s, the United States and the Soviet Union were deeply involved in the Cold War. A key weapon in the struggle between the superpowers was espionage. Both sides used spies and secret agents—along with hidden cameras, listening devices, and other spy gear—to gather information about the enemy.

On May 1, 1960, the Soviets shot down a U.S. spy plane flying over the USSR. The plane was a U-2, a high-altitude, black aircraft known as the Black Lady of Espionage. Special cameras aboard the U-2 could photograph Soviet military installations from heights of 60,000 feet or more. By the time of the U-2's downing, U.S. pilots working for the CIA had been flying deep into Soviet airspace for nearly five years. They had taken photographs of Soviet missile bases, airfields, rocket-engine factories, and other military facilities.

On that May Day, Francis Gary Powers was flying the U-2. Like all U-2 pilots, he carried a deadly poison that he could take if the enemy captured him. After the Soviets hit his plane, Powers parachuted to safety. However, before he could drink the poison, Soviet troops grabbed him. Soviet officials later put Powers on trial in Moscow. They sentenced him to 10 years in prison.

Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev reacted to the U-2 incident with outrage, accusing the United States of conducting a vicious spying campaign against the Soviet Union. President Dwight D. Eisenhower first denied the charge, but later admitted that Powers had been on an intelligence-gathering mission. The president declared espionage a “distasteful necessity.”

The spy plane incident set back efforts to improve U.S.-Soviet relations. It occurred just weeks before Eisenhower and Khrushchev planned to meet in Paris. At that meeting, Khrushchev demanded that the United States stop its U-2 flights and asked the United States to apologize for them. Eisenhower agreed to end the flights but insisted on the United States' right to defend its interests. The talks ended almost as soon as they began, and the Cold War intensified.

39.2 – Europe Feels the Heat of the Cold War

The U-2 incident came at the end of a decade marked by increasingly tense U.S.-Soviet relations. Like players in a chess game, leaders on each side studied the other's moves. Each was alert to threats to its national security and stood ready to respond to such challenges. During this period, Europe was the Cold War's main battleground. The Soviet Union tried to consolidate its control of Eastern Europe, while the United States tried to contain the USSR and limit its power.

The USSR Protests the Unification of West Germany

One of the main issues causing Cold War tensions was the status of Germany. After the war, the Allies had divided Germany and its capital, Berlin, into four occupation zones. But they did not decide when and how the zones would be reunited. When three of the Allies took a step toward reunification, it prompted a Cold War crisis.

In March 1948, the United States, Great Britain, and France announced plans to merge their occupation zones to form a new country, the Federal Republic of Germany. The three Allies agreed that this reunited Germany would have a democratic government and a capitalist economy. Their decision angered the Soviets, who controlled both eastern Germany and access to the former German capital Berlin, which lay within the Soviet occupation zone.

On June 24, the Soviet Union imposed a blockade on Berlin, halting all land travel into the city from the Allied occupation zones. The Soviets believed that the Berlin Blockade would force the Allies to give up either Berlin or their plans for a West German state.

The United States did not respond as the Soviet Union expected. Instead, General Lucius Clay, the commander of U.S. forces in Germany, called for resistance to the Soviet blockade. "If we mean . . . to hold Europe against communism, we must not budge," he said. "The future of democracy requires us to stay." President Harry Truman agreed, fearing that the loss of Berlin would cause the fall of Germany to the communists. He ordered a massive airlift of food, fuel, and other vital supplies to defeat the Berlin Blockade.

Over the next ten and a half months, pilots made more than 270,000 flights into West Berlin, carrying nearly 2.5 million tons of supplies. The Berlin Airlift kept the hopes of the city's 2 million residents alive and became a symbol of the West's commitment to resisting communist expansion. By the spring of 1949, the Soviets saw that their policy had failed. They ended the blockade, and Germany officially became two countries: communist East Germany and democratic West Germany. Berlin also remained divided into East and West.

The Iron Curtain Falls on Czechoslovakia

By the time of the Berlin crisis, the Soviet Union controlled most of Eastern Europe. Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary had all established pro-Soviet communist governments. Just weeks before the Berlin crisis, Czechoslovakia became the last major country to fall.

After World War II, the Czechs had formed an elected government dominated by communists but also including noncommunist parties. In February 1948, Joseph Stalin amassed Soviet troops on the Czech border and demanded the formation of an all-communist government. Shortly afterward, communists seized control, ending the Czech experiment in postwar democracy.

This sudden government takeover, or coup d'état, alarmed Truman. It showed that Stalin would not accept a government in which power was shared with noncommunists and that he was prepared to use force to achieve his ends.

The Czech coup d'état brought drastic changes to the country's political and economic life. Czechoslovakia was now a one-party state, and communist leaders arrested, tried, and jailed all those who opposed them. They suppressed basic rights, including freedom of the press and free speech, as well. They also forced farmers to give up their land and work on state-owned collective farms.

Europe Is Divided: NATO Versus the Warsaw Pact

Czechoslovakia was not the only country to feel Soviet pressure. In the late 1940s, the USSR tightened its grip on all its satellite nations, or countries under one nation's control.

As divisions increased in Europe, the superpowers also formed new military alliances. In 1949, the United States, Canada, and 10 countries of Western Europe formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The founding European members of NATO were France, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands, Iceland, Italy, Britain, Denmark, Norway, and Portugal. Greece and Turkey joined NATO in 1952, and West Germany followed in 1955.

NATO members agreed to a plan for collective security. They pledged to consider an attack on any member as an attack on all and formed a standing army to defend Western Europe in the event of a Soviet invasion. The United States played a key role in NATO, providing money, troops, and leadership. By joining this alliance, the United States took another step away from isolationism.

The creation of NATO prompted the Soviet Union to form its own security alliance in 1955. Under the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Union, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania joined forces for mutual defense. NATO and Warsaw Pact members began to see each other as enemies. Europe was now formally divided into two armed camps.

Hungary Tests the Limits of Containment

Not long after the signing of the Warsaw Pact, upheaval in Hungary tested the West's anticommunist resolve. In October 1956, thousands of Hungarians took part in a brief revolt against the communist government. The protesters marched through the streets of Hungary's capital, Budapest, waving flags and calling for democracy.

The leaders of the revolt formed a government led by Imre Nagy, a reform-minded communist. He aimed to free Hungary from Soviet domination. He boldly declared that Hungary would withdraw from the Warsaw Pact and become a neutral country, and he appealed to Western nations to help stave off Soviet aggression. In a speech to the Hungarian people, he said,

This fight is the fight for freedom . . . against the Russian intervention and it is possible that I shall only be able to stay at my post for one or two hours. The whole world will see how the Russian armed forces, contrary to all treaties and conventions, are crushing the resistance of the Hungarian people . . . Today it is Hungary and tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, it will be the turn of other countries because the imperialism of Moscow does not know borders.

—Imre Nagy, November 4, 1956

Soviet leaders moved quickly to crush the revolt by sending tanks and Red Army troops into Budapest. After killing thousands of protesters, the troops put Soviet-backed leaders back into power in Hungary. Nagy stood trial before the country's communist leaders, who then put him to death.

Hungarians had counted on help from the United States. Before the revolt, many had listened faithfully to U.S.-sponsored radio broadcasts beamed into the country from Europe. There they heard speakers urging them to resist the spread of communism. Through these programs, Hungarians learned of the Eisenhower administration's goal of freeing "captive peoples."

Many Hungarians believed that the United States would support its bid for independence by sending troops and weapons to aid them in their fight against the Soviet Union. They were shocked when American forces failed to come. One Hungarian resident recalled, "People had been watching from rooftops hoping to see U.S. planes arriving." Eisenhower, however, was unwilling to risk war with the Soviet Union to free one of its satellites.

39.3 – Choosing Sides: The Cold War Turns Hot in Asia

The superpowers did not confine their rivalry to Europe. Before long, Cold War conflicts erupted around the globe. Asia was one of the first affected regions. By the 1950s, both China and Korea had become arenas in the Cold War struggle.

The "Fall of China" to Communism

During World War II, Chinese communists led by Mao Zedong and the Nationalists led by Chiang Kai-shek had joined forces to fight Japan. With Japan's surrender in 1945, however, the two groups turned on each other and waged a civil war for control of China. The United States backed the Nationalists, even though Chiang was not a popular leader. At times, both allies and adversaries saw him as corrupt or ineffective. In 1949, the communists defeated the Nationalists. Chiang and his followers fled to Formosa, an island off the coast of China, which they renamed Taiwan. There, Chiang led a small Nationalist holdout against communism.

The fall of China to the communists ended U.S. hopes that the country would become a powerful, noncommunist ally in Asia. Some Americans reacted to the event with anger and looked for a scapegoat. In public speeches and on the floor of Congress, they

asked bitterly, "Who lost China?" Some Republican leaders pointed accusing fingers at President Truman.

U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson denied that the administration held responsibility for China's acceptance of communism. "Nothing this country did or could have done within the reasonable limits of its capabilities," he said, "could have changed the result." Many China scholars agreed, noting the unpopularity of Chiang and the broad public support for Mao Zedong.

Many U.S. leaders feared that China and the Soviet Union would form an alliance and pose an even greater threat to U.S. interests around the world. Most Americans viewed communist China as similar to the Soviet Union both in its attitude toward the West and its desire to spread communism around the world. Nevertheless, although China remained a key ally of the Soviet Union for years, it pursued its own interests and rejected Soviet control.

The communist takeover of China prompted the United States to seek a new ally in Asia, and Japan was the logical choice. The United States gradually lifted restrictions on industrial and economic growth imposed on Japan after World War II. Eventually, Japan became an economic powerhouse and a strong U.S. partner in the region.

Containment by Isolation: The U.S. Ends Relations with China

Meanwhile, the United States adopted a stern policy toward China. When Mao formed the People's Republic of China in 1949, the United States refused to recognize the new state. Instead, it continued to refer to the Nationalists in Taiwan as China's legitimate government. The United States also cut off all trade with China and opposed its admission to the United Nations. The U.S. government meant for these steps to contain China by isolating it from the world community.

Not all American officials favored this tough policy, however. Some felt that improving U.S. relations with China might weaken China's ties to the Soviet Union. But U.S. officials faced strong pressure from Congress and the public to treat China as an enemy. Many Americans felt that Mao and Stalin were equally reprehensible. Forging a better relationship with either one seemed unthinkable.

Until the 1970s, the United States continued to recognize Taiwan and bar China from the UN. The United States did not resume formal relations with China until 1979.

Containment by Armed Force: The Korean War

Like China, Korea was freed from Japanese control when World War II ended. At that time, Soviet troops occupied the Korean Peninsula north of the 38th parallel, while U.S. troops held the area to the south. In the north, the Soviet Union put a pro-Soviet communist government in power. In the south, U.S. officials supported the existing anticommunist government. However, this arrangement masked deep tensions, which erupted in June 1950 in the Korean War.

The war began when North Korean troops armed with Soviet weapons invaded South Korea. Their aim was to unite all of Korea under communist rule. Truman, viewing the invasion as a test of American will, ordered U.S. forces to help South Korea repel the invaders.

Truman turned to the United Nations for support. A UN resolution condemned the North Korean invasion and called on member states to aid South Korea. Troops from 15 nations joined the UN force, with the vast majority of the soldiers coming from the United States. According to another UN resolution, the purpose of this joint force was to create a “unified, independent and democratic Korea.” Officials selected American general Douglas MacArthur to lead the troops. Under his command, the army invaded North Korea and fought its way northward, nearly reaching the Chinese border along the Yalu River.

Alarmed by the approach of UN forces, China sent tens of thousands of soldiers streaming over the border into North Korea. An army of more than 400,000 Chinese and North Korean troops forced the UN army back to the 38th parallel. MacArthur then called for an expansion of the conflict. He wanted to blockade China’s ports and bomb major Chinese industrial centers.

President Truman rejected MacArthur’s plan, however. In fact, once China entered the conflict, the president began looking for a way out of it. He feared the onset of another global war. But MacArthur would not back down. In an angry letter to a friend, he wrote, “I believe we should defend every place from communism . . . I don’t admit that we can’t hold communism wherever it shows its head.” When MacArthur publicly questioned the president’s decision, Truman fired him.

The final two years of the war became a stalemate, with most of the fighting taking place near the 38th parallel. Finally, in 1953 the two sides signed an armistice ending hostilities. The agreement left the Korean Peninsula divided along the 38th parallel and created a buffer zone, called the demilitarized zone (DMZ), between the two countries. No military forces from either North Korea or South Korea were allowed to enter the DMZ.

The war left all of Korea ailing. It destroyed homes, factories, roads, hospitals, and schools throughout the peninsula. About 3.5 million North Korean and South Korean soldiers died or suffered injuries. As many as 2 million Korean civilians may have lost their lives. More than 54,000 American soldiers also died in the war.

After the war’s end, North Korea turned inward, becoming increasingly isolated from the rest of the world. South Korea, in contrast, continued to develop strong economic and political ties with the United States. In time, South Korea’s economy flourished. As the economic gap between the two Koreas widened, hopes for a “unified, independent and democratic Korea” faded away.

39.4 – Fighting the Cold War in Other Parts of the World

By the mid-1950s, the Cold War had effectively divided the world into three groups of nations. One group, known as the First World, included the developed, capitalist countries, also known as the West: the United States, Canada, the nations of Western Europe, and Japan. Another group, the Second World, or the East, consisted of communist countries: the Soviet Union, the nations of Eastern Europe, and China. Poor, developing nations in Latin America, Africa, and Asia made up the final group, called the Third World. Many Third World nations had recently gained freedom from colonial rule. The United States and the Soviet Union competed to win their support. Some of the countries aligned themselves with one of the superpowers. Others, such as India, remained independent and nonaligned.

United States Information Agency: Influencing Hearts and Minds

In the Cold War, nations used words and persuasion as weapons. Both superpowers utilized propaganda to exert influence over their allies and to persuade others to join their side. The United States designed its propaganda to raise fears of communism and highlight the benefits of capitalist democracy. This propaganda took many forms, from books and news articles to films and radio broadcasts. To carry out this war of words, the government created the United States Information Agency, or USIA, in 1953.

One of the USIA's main jobs was to beam radio broadcasts into the Soviet bloc. It used three networks to carry out this task: Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, and Radio Liberty. The CIA funded these last two services. Radio Free Europe broadcast to Eastern Europe in Czech, Polish, and other local languages. Radio Liberty broadcast to the Soviet Union in Russian. Many of the staff members of these services had fled Eastern Europe to escape communist rule. The families they left behind often faced harsh treatment from communist governments due to their relatives' ties to the radio networks.

Soviet and Eastern European leaders tried to isolate their citizens from Western news and ideas by banning radio programs from the West. They disrupted the broadcasts by jamming the signals and filling the airwaves with mechanical shrieks, howls, and other loud noises.

Foreign Aid: Supporting Friendly Governments

Nations also used foreign aid as a Cold War weapon. Both the United States and the Soviet Union gave money and assistance to other countries to gain new allies. In a message to Congress in 1949, President Truman explained why foreign aid was a crucial part of the Cold War struggle:

The grinding poverty and the lack of economic opportunity for many millions of people in . . . Africa, the Near and Far East, and certain regions of Central and South America, constitute one of the greatest challenges of the world today . . . If [the people] are frustrated and disappointed, they may turn to false doctrines which hold that the way of progress lies through tyranny.

—Harry S. Truman, from a speech on June 24, 1949

Some U.S. aid helped the poor by providing funds for agriculture, health care, and other social and economic programs. However, much of it took the form of military assistance to friendly Third World governments. Pro-American states such as Turkey, Pakistan, and South Korea received help, while more independent nations often did not. In some countries, such as Nicaragua and Haiti, the United States gave support to anticommunist dictators. These leaders used the aid to tighten their grip on power—often at the expense of their people. Many citizens in those countries bitterly resented the aid, which seemed to contradict the U.S. goal of promoting democracy.

At times, the United States withheld aid to punish nations that failed to support its policies. In the 1950s, Egyptian leader Gamal Abdul Nasser began building trade ties with communist nations. In 1956, Egypt bought tanks and other weapons from communist Czechoslovakia, in defiance of U.S. wishes. In response, the United States and Britain withdrew their offers to help Egypt finance the building of the much-needed Aswan Dam on the Nile River. Nasser reacted by seizing control of the Suez Canal from Britain. This led Britain, France, and Israel to invade Egypt, hoping to regain control of the canal. The Soviet Union then threatened to back up Egypt with military force. To prevent war, the United States stepped in, persuading all sides to withdraw and thus ending the crisis.

The CIA: Containing Communism Through Covert Action

In the 1950s, the CIA played a growing part in the Cold War. During this period, it expanded its role from intelligence gathering to covert action. A covert action is a secret political, economic, or military operation that supports foreign policy. Agents try to shape events or influence affairs in foreign countries while hiding their role in those events.

During the Cold War, both superpowers used spies, satellite photography, wiretapping, and other covert methods to gather information about or influence events in other countries. Francis Gary Powers's U-2 flight was a covert CIA operation. At times, CIA agents also bribed foreign leaders, supported political parties, or funded supposedly independent radio stations.

The United States often used covert action to overthrow unfriendly or leftist governments. For example, in 1953 it helped topple Mohammed Mossadegh, Iran's premier. Mossadegh had nationalized a British oil company, establishing government control over the formerly private company. He also hinted that he might seek Soviet aid. CIA agents worked with Iran's military leaders to overthrow Mossadegh and reinstate the Iranian monarch, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. As absolute ruler with close ties to the United States, the shah ruled Iran for almost 30 years.

In Central America, the United States also relied on covert action to achieve its goals. In 1954 in Guatemala, for example, CIA agents helped overthrow the elected president, Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán. Both U.S. economic interests and Cold War concerns motivated this action. The United Fruit Company, a U.S. firm with operations in

Guatemala, opposed certain social reforms laid out by the Guatemalan government. In particular, United Fruit objected to a government plan to hand over thousands of acres of company land to the country's landless peasants. Concerned that Guatemala might turn communist, the United States ordered the CIA to support a military coup. Arbenz was overthrown, and a military government took charge. It returned United Fruit lands, shelved other reforms, and jailed many of its critics. The U.S. role in Guatemala caused many Latin Americans to view the United States as an enemy of social reform.

Sometimes the United States intervened more aggressively. In 1962, voters in the Dominican Republic elected a noncommunist reformer, Juan Bosch, as president. Seven months after he had taken office, a military coup toppled Bosch. In 1965, his supporters started a civil war to return him to power. Fearing that many of his supporters were communists, the United States sent troops to crush the revolt and keep Bosch from regaining power.

39.5 – An Arms Race Threatens Global Destruction

On September 23, 1949, President Truman made a grim announcement. "We have evidence," he said, "that within recent weeks an atomic explosion occurred in the USSR." The statement alarmed Americans. Previously, only the United States had possessed an atomic bomb. Now that the Soviets had one as well, the United States felt the need to develop weapons with even greater destructive force. Soon the two superpowers were locked in a deadly arms race, or a competition to achieve weapons superiority.

The Race to Develop Weapons of Mass Destruction

Shortly after the Soviet atomic test, American scientists began discussing plans for a new type of bomb. It would be based not on splitting atoms—the technology used in the atomic bomb—but on fusing them. Known as a hydrogen bomb, or H-bomb, this weapon would be far more powerful than an atomic bomb. Some scientists, including J. Robert Oppenheimer, argued against it. In a report to the Atomic Energy Commission, they warned that the H-bomb was "not a weapon which can be used exclusively" for military purposes, since it would have a far greater effect on civilian populations than an atomic bomb would.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the nation's top military leaders, disagreed. "The United States," they said, "would be in an intolerable position if a possible enemy possessed the bomb and the United States did not." When other scientists and Truman's advisers sided with the generals, Truman gave the green light for producing the hydrogen bomb.

In 1952, the United States tested its first H-bomb. It was smaller than the atomic bombs dropped on Japan during World War II but 500 times more powerful. A year later, the Soviet Union tested its own H-bomb. A witness at the Soviet test recalled how "the earth trembled beneath us, and our faces were struck like the lash of a whip . . . From the jolt of the shock wave it was difficult to stand on one's feet . . . Day was replaced by night."

By 1960, the arms race had also led to the development of nuclear missiles and submarines. First, the United States and the Soviet Union built long-range, intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs, which could deliver nuclear warheads to distant continents. Next, the United States developed nuclear-powered submarines that could launch up to 16 nuclear missiles from the water. The Soviet Union soon followed with its own nuclear submarines. With these new weapons, citizens of both nations faced the frightening prospect of enemy warheads raining down on their cities from far away.

Brinkmanship: Using the Threat of War to Contain Communism

The threat of nuclear war carried with it the prospect of utter annihilation, a threat the United States tried to use to its advantage. In the 1950s, the government developed a foreign policy known as brinkmanship—a willingness to go to the edge, or brink, of war. Brinkmanship was based on a simple, if dangerous, idea. According to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the Soviets had to believe that the United States would use its nuclear weapons if pushed too far. In a speech, Dulles declared, “You have to take chances for peace, just as you have to take chances in war. The ability to get to the verge without getting into the war is the necessary art . . . If you are scared to go to the brink, you are lost.”

To its critics, brinkmanship seemed foolhardy. It implied that the Soviets only understood force and assumed that they would back down if faced with the prospect of nuclear war. But Dulles believed that the United States had to be ready to go to war to keep the peace.

A growing conflict in Asia soon tested this policy. In China, both communists on the mainland and Nationalists in Taiwan claimed to be the nation’s legitimate rulers. In 1954, Mao decided to assert China’s claim to Taiwan and ordered his troops to fire on the nearby islands of Quemoy and Matsu. The Nationalist government claimed these islands and feared that their loss to the communists would prompt an invasion of Taiwan.

Eisenhower saw the shelling of Quemoy and Matsu as a challenge to American influence in Asia. As a result, the United States signed a treaty with the Nationalist government promising to protect Taiwan in case of attack. Three years later, China resumed its assault. This time the United States threatened to launch a nuclear attack on China, causing China to back off. In the eyes of the United States, this result was a victory for brinkmanship.

Deterring Attack by Threatening Mutual Assured Destruction

As the threat of nuclear war continued, Dulles developed a new strategy to reinforce brinkmanship and ensure American nuclear superiority. The strategy, called deterrence, revolved around developing a weapons arsenal so deadly that the Soviet Union would not dare to attack. Dulles also believed that warning the Soviets that any attack on the United States would be met with an even deadlier counterattack would reduce the threat of war.

The combination of deterrence and the willingness to use nuclear weapons came to be known as Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). It meant that either side would respond to a nuclear attack by launching its own missiles, with devastating results for both sides. Fear of a nuclear conflict made the United States and the Soviet Union more likely to step back from all-out war. However, while MAD may have helped prevent the Cold War from turning hot, it also kept the world in a state of heightened anxiety.

39.6 – Current Connections: Looking at MAD Today

When Dulles first discussed MAD in the 1950s, tensions between the superpowers were very high. In the United States, schools prepared for possible nuclear attacks by holding classroom air-raid drills. Some families built backyard bomb shelters and stocked them with supplies. Eventually, however, fears of an attack diminished as both sides sought more productive ways to resolve Cold War conflicts.

The Superpowers Step Down from MAD

Starting in the 1960s, the United States and the Soviet Union took steps to slow down the arms race. In 1963, they signed the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, prohibiting aboveground testing of nuclear weapons. Later they worked to limit the weapons in their nuclear stockpiles. In 1972 and 1979, after negotiations known as the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), the two sides signed treaties setting limits on the numbers of nuclear missiles and missile-launching sites. These treaties marked the start of nuclear disarmament, or the reduction of weapons.

During the 1980s, U.S. leaders began to look for alternatives to MAD as the only response to a nuclear attack. President Ronald Reagan called on the military to build a missile defense system that would keep enemy missiles from ever reaching the United States. Nicknamed Star Wars, his plan called for a network of land- and space-based missiles that would intercept and destroy incoming missiles while still in flight. Reagan's plan never got off the ground, but work on a more limited missile defense system was begun under the administration of President George W. Bush.

In 1987, in Washington, D.C., the superpowers took another step away from MAD by signing the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Under the INF Treaty, both sides agreed to reduce the total number of nuclear arms in their arsenals. By the early 1990s, the Soviet Union had collapsed and the Cold War was over. Facing economic and political problems, the new Russian state agreed to further reductions in nuclear weapons.

Defending Against Nuclear Attack in an Age of Terrorism

Although the superpower arms race is over, today more than half a dozen countries have nuclear weapons or are in the process of developing them. The administration of President George W. Bush has referred to some of these countries, such as North Korea and Iran, as "rogue states." This term is meant to describe countries that have weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear and chemical weapons, and that sponsor

terrorism. Many analysts fear that these countries might sell bombs or nuclear technology to terrorist groups. Various events since 2001, including the attack on the World Trade Center in New York and the Iraq war, have heightened these fears.

Many political analysts doubt that the policy of Mutual Assured Destruction can deter nuclear terrorism. Nuclear threats may come from small terrorist groups that have no fixed location and that often move from place to place. In addition, such groups would be unlikely to stage a conventional military attack, using fighter bombers or long-range missiles. As columnist George Will noted, “A nuclear weapon is much less likely to come to America on a rogue nation’s ICBM—which would have a return address—than in a shipping container, truck, suitcase, [or] backpack.” Under these circumstances, Americans may be debating how to keep the United States safe from nuclear weapons for years to come.

Summary

During the Cold War, the superpower conflict that began in Europe expanded to China and other parts of the world. The nuclear arms race added to Cold War tensions.

Berlin Blockade In 1948, the Soviet Union set up a blockade around Berlin to force the Allies to either abandon the city or cancel plans for the creation of West Germany. The Allies launched an airlift to bring supplies into Berlin and break the blockade. In the end, Germany was split between east and west.

NATO and the Warsaw Pact In 1949, the Western powers formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as a military alliance to counter Soviet aggression. The Soviets responded by forming their own military alliance, the Warsaw Pact, with Eastern European countries.

Korean War After the fall of China to communism, Cold War tensions flared up in Korea. In 1950, North Korean communists invaded South Korea, prompting a war with U.S. and UN forces. The Korean War ended in 1953, but Korea remained divided.

Third World During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union tried to win friends and allies in the Third World—the developing nations of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. This battle for “hearts and minds” involved propaganda, aid, covert action, and military intervention.

Mutual Assured Destruction MAD The invention of the H-bomb fueled a deadly arms race. In response, the United States developed various policies, including brinkmanship and deterrence, to manage the nuclear threat. In the end, it relied on the policy of Mutual Assured Destruction to limit the chances of all-out war.

Chapter 40 — Fighting the Cold War at Home

How did the anxieties raised by the Cold War affect life in the United States?

40.1 – Introduction

Norman Finkelstein wore the “dog tag” that hung around his neck proudly. It was similar to the identification tags that members of the military wore—if soldiers were killed or injured, their dog tags revealed their name and which military outfit they belonged to. However, Finkelstein was no soldier. “I was in the fifth grade and had no intention at that time of joining the army,” he remembers.

In many towns and cities during the early Cold War years, children wore dog tags like Finkelstein’s, with their name and address imprinted on them. Some tags also carried their birth date, religion, and blood type. Authorities hoped the tags would help them deal with a nuclear attack if one took place. Finkelstein recalls, “In case of a nuclear attack, my body could be easily identified—that is, if the dog tag survived and there were others still alive to receive the information. It all seemed very strange at the time and even stranger today.”

Children growing up during the Cold War lived with the fear that Soviet bombers—and later guided missiles—armed with nuclear weapons could attack the United States at any moment. No one could predict when a nuclear attack would occur, so people tried to remain constantly prepared. In addition to wearing dog tags, children practiced duck-and-cover drills at school. During these drills, when their teachers gave a signal, students ducked under their desks and covered their heads with their hands. Historian Doris Kearns Goodwin confesses, “I could never figure out how my flimsy desk, with its worn inkwell and its years of name-scratching, could protect me from the atomic bomb.”

For Americans, the Cold War was a new and unfamiliar type of war. Like earlier conflicts, it caused fear and anxiety on the home front. It also raised concerns about how to keep the nation secure from external threats and unseen enemies within the country while also maintaining civil liberties. As in past wars, finding the right balance between freedom and security posed a challenge.

40.2 – Searching for Communists on the Home Front

In 1951, the federal government published a pamphlet that listed 100 questions and answers about communism in the United States. Here are three examples:

What is communism?

A system by which one small group seeks to rule the world.

What do communists want?

To rule your mind and your body from cradle to grave.

Where can a communist be found in everyday life?

Look for him in your school, your labor union, your church, or your civic club.

—“100 Things You Should Know About Communism in the U.S.A.,” 1951

This publication revealed that the United States fought the Cold War not only against communists in foreign countries—it also fought communism at home.

Communists Come Under Suspicion at Home

Not all Americans agreed with the government’s definition of communism. Some people believed that communism offered a much fairer way of organizing a society than capitalism did. Under communism, everyone would share equally in what society produced. Extremes of wealth and poverty would fade away. The result, supporters maintained, would be a great increase in human happiness.

During the Depression, this vision had attracted many followers in the United States. Some had joined the Communist Party. Others became communist sympathizers, or people who believed in communist ideology but did not join the party. By 1950, Communist Party membership in the United States was just 43,000. Still, as the Cold War heated up, so did fears of communist subversion, or plots to overthrow the government and replace it with a communist dictatorship.

To calm public anxiety, in 1947 President Truman established the Federal Employee Loyalty Program. It required government employers to take loyalty oaths, or pledges of loyalty to the United States. It also called for background investigations of employees who had possible connections to subversive groups. After 5 million investigations, hundreds of government workers lost their jobs for being “potentially” disloyal. Several thousand others were forced to resign.

HUAC Hunts for Communists in Hollywood and Beyond

Meanwhile, Congress began its own investigation. It was led by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), which had been formed in 1938 to investigate subversive organizations. In 1947, HUAC turned its attention to communist influence in the film industry. “Large numbers of moving pictures that come out of Hollywood,” charged one committee member, “carry the Communist line.” The committee called on writers, actors, and directors to testify about their political beliefs.

Ten witnesses refused to answer the committee’s questions. Called the Hollywood Ten, they argued that the Fifth Amendment gave them the right to refuse to answer on the grounds that their testimony might incriminate them, or cause them to look guilty. The committee disagreed and charged them with contempt of Congress, or willful failure to obey the authority of Congress. When the House of Representatives voted to convict the Hollywood Ten of that crime, the group issued a joint statement that warned, “The United States can keep its constitutional liberties, or it can keep the [HUAC]. It can’t keep both.”

The heads of Hollywood movie studios grew concerned about the impact the HUAC investigation would have on their industry. They stated that they would not hire anyone with communist sympathies. To carry out this pledge, they created a blacklist of people thought to be Communist Party members or communist sympathizers. Anyone whose name appeared on this blacklist could no longer find work making films.

From the film industry, HUAC moved on to other groups. In 1954, it called on labor organizer John Watkins to testify about communist influence in labor unions. When Watkins refused to answer certain questions, HUAC convicted him of contempt of Congress. Watkins appealed his conviction, arguing that the Constitution does not give Congress unlimited power to investigate the private lives of citizens. The Supreme Court agreed with him. Writing for the majority, Chief Justice Earl Warren ruled that Congress's power to investigate must be related to its business of making laws:

There is no general authority to expose the private affairs of individuals without justification in terms of the functions of the Congress . . . Investigations conducted solely for the personal aggrandizement [glorification] of the investigators or to "punish" those investigated are indefensible.

—Watkins v. United States, 1957

Spy Cases Raise New Fears

Public worries about subversion deepened with news that Americans in important government posts had been charged with working as spies for the Soviet Union. The Alger Hiss case involved a State Department official who had served as an adviser to President Roosevelt at the Yalta Conference. A former Communist named Whittaker Chambers accused Hiss of passing secrets to the Soviet Union. In 1950, a federal grand jury convicted Hiss of perjury, or lying under oath. Still, he continued to proclaim his innocence. However, secret documents made public in 1995 indicate that Hiss probably had spied for the Soviet Union.

Just as shocking were charges that Americans had helped the Soviet Union test its first atomic bomb in 1949. A year later, a German-born British physicist named Klaus Fuchs confessed that he had spied for the Soviet Union while he was working on the Manhattan Project for Britain during World War II. The information Fuchs passed along to Soviet scientists may well have helped to speed their development of atomic weapons. From Fuchs, a trail of espionage led investigators to Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, whom the United States charged with passing atomic secrets to the Soviet Union. The Rosenberg trial concluded with death sentences for both defendants. At the time, many people protested the verdict and sentences, arguing that the evidence against the suspects was inconclusive. Nonetheless, the Rosenbergs were executed in 1953, becoming the only American civilians to be put to death for spying during the Cold War.

The Rise and Fall of Joseph McCarthy

About two weeks after Fuchs confessed to spying, Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin was speaking in West Virginia. He asked his audience how communists had been so successful in taking over Eastern Europe and China. The answer, he said, could be found in “the traitorous actions” of Americans working in high government posts. Then he added, “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 policy in the State Department.”

McCarthy never produced this list of names. Nor did he offer evidence to back up his charges. Still, he launched a crusade against subversives that rapidly gained momentum. Widespread public support for his investigations helped the Republican Party win control of the Senate in 1952. As a result, McCarthy was named head of the Government Committee on Operations of the Senate.

Over the next two years, McCarthy used his newfound power to search for subversives. Although he never made a solid case against anyone, his accusations drove some people out of their jobs. For example, under hostile questioning by McCarthy’s chief lawyer, Roy Cohn, Army Signal Corps employee Carl Greenblum broke down and cried. As Greenblum collected himself, McCarthy announced, “the witness admits he was lying.” Greenblum had admitted no such thing, yet he was still fired. Such reckless persecution of innocent people became known as McCarthyism. Today, this term signifies the practice of publicly accusing someone of subversive activities without evidence to back up the charges.

McCarthyism made people even more fearful. Lawmakers refused to enact reforms that might be viewed as moving the country toward communism. Schools asked teachers to sign loyalty oaths, and those who objected to doing so lost their jobs. Citizens became reluctant to speak out about injustices for fear of being labeled subversive. This anxiety was often carried to extremes. When graduate students at a university circulated a petition asking for a vending machine in the physics department, some students refused to sign. They feared having their names on a list with other allegedly radical students.

Finally, McCarthy went too far. In 1954, he accused both the Army and President Dwight D. Eisenhower of being “soft on Communism.” In the nationally televised Army-McCarthy hearings, spellbound Americans watched as McCarthy’s brutal tactics were exposed for all to see. The climax of the hearings came when McCarthy attacked a young man who worked for Joseph Welch, the lawyer who represented the Army. An emotional Welch responded,

Little did I dream you could be so reckless and so cruel as to do an injury to that lad. It is, I regret to say, equally true that I fear he shall always bear a scar needlessly inflicted by you. If it were in my power to forgive you for your reckless cruelty, I would do so. I like to think I’m a gentle man, but your forgiveness will have to come from someone other than me.

—Joseph Welch, addressing Senator Joseph McCarthy, June 9, 1954

Public opinion quickly turned against McCarthy. Late in 1954, the Senate passed Resolution 301, which censured, or formally scolded, McCarthy for his destructive actions. His behavior, it stated, had “tended to bring the Senate into dishonor and disrepute.” McCarthy soon faded from the national scene.

40.3 – Living with Nuclear Anxiety

A stark white flash enveloped their world. Randy felt the heat on his neck. Peyton cried out and covered her face with her hands. In the southwest, in the direction of Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Sarasota, another unnatural sun was born, much larger and infinitely fiercer than the sun in the east . . . Peyton screamed, “I can’t see! I can’t see, Mommy. Mommy, where are you?”

—Pat Frank, *Alas, Babylon*, 1959

Like many novels written in the 1950s, Pat Frank’s *Alas, Babylon* portrayed a world engulfed in World War III—an imagined conflict fought with weapons powerful enough to destroy all life on Earth.

The Perils and Promise of the Atomic Age

Books like *Alas, Babylon* explored the perils of the Atomic Age. During these early Cold War years, the destruction caused by the atomic bombs dropped on Japan remained fresh in Americans’ minds. People were terrified to think of such bombs raining down on American cities—yet by 1949, such an attack seemed all too possible.

Despite such fears, the promise of atomic power also excited Americans. The media ran glowing stories predicting atomic-powered cars, ships, airplanes, and power plants. One newspaper reported,

Atoms in an amount of matter spread out the size of a fingernail, say the scientists, could supply sufficient energy to propel an ocean liner across the sea and back. An automobile, with a microscopic amount of matter from which atomic energy could be released, could be driven around for a lifetime if it didn’t wear out, never stopping at a gas station.

—Milwaukee Journal, August 7, 1945

Businesses jumped on the atomic bandwagon as well. The bar at the Washington Press Club marked the arrival of the Atomic Age with the “Atomic Cocktail.” Department stores advertised “Atomic Sales.” Musicians recorded songs with titles like “Atom Buster” and “Atom Polka.” A French fashion designer named his new two-piece bathing suit the “bikini” in honor of the testing of an atom bomb on Bikini Atoll in the Central Pacific.

In the 1950s, atomic bomb tests moved to the Nevada desert. In Las Vegas, the Chamber of Commerce promoted atomic tourism, publishing a schedule of tests and the best places to view them. Armed with “atomic box lunches,” tourists hoping to feel and

see an atomic bomb's power flocked as close to ground zero—the point of a bomb's impact—as the government allowed.

Creating a Civil Defense System

As the atomic arms race took off, the federal government began planning for civil defense—the organization and training of citizens to work with the armed forces and emergency services during a war or natural disaster. In 1951, Congress established the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA). The head of FCDA warned Americans that the “back yard may be the next front line.” The agency distributed millions of civil defense manuals to help people prepare for a nuclear attack. These publications made it clear that Americans could not rely on the military to protect them from a surprise attack. People would have to be prepared to protect themselves as best they could.

Civil defense preparedness soon became part of daily life. Many communities set up bomb shelters in public buildings. Stocked with emergency food and water supplies, these shelters offered people refuge during an attack. Across the country, tests of warning sirens and emergency radio stations were carried out every week. Civil defense workers called block wardens trained their neighbors on how to fight fires and provide first aid after an attack.

Children also took part in civil defense training. The FCDA developed a film and booklet featuring a character called Bert the Turtle, who taught children how to survive an atomic explosion. Bert led the children through duck-and-cover drills to prepare them for how to react if they ever heard an emergency siren.

Some families took preparedness a step further by burying an underground shelter in their backyard. Several companies sold prefabricated “fallout shelters” for single-family use. The shelters were designed to shield families not only from an atomic explosion, but also from the radioactive dust that “falls out” of the sky afterward. Authorities advised families to remain sealed in their fallout shelters for several weeks after an attack to let this toxic dust settle.

Preparedness Versus Peace

These early civil defense preparations were based on the expected impact of an atomic bomb attack. By the mid-1950s, the development of far more powerful H-bombs raised questions about the effectiveness of such methods. Faced with this new threat, the FCDA concluded that the only practical way to protect large numbers of people during an attack was to evacuate them from target cities. “It's much better to get people out, even if in the process you may kill some,” said a civil defense planner, “than to have millions of Americans just stay there and be killed.”

The FCDA created a large-scale civil defense drill called Operation Alert to test how quickly cities could be evacuated. On June 15, 1955, sirens began to wail across the country. The results were mixed. Some people ducked into bomb shelters. Others headed out of town. Many paid little or no attention to the drill. Had the attack been real,

observed the New York Times in an editorial, millions of people would have died. The editorial concluded that

This demonstration gives new emphasis to President Eisenhower's dictum [observation] that war no longer presents the possibility of victory or defeat, but only . . . varying degrees of destruction, and that there is no substitute for a just and lasting peace.

—New York Times, June 16, 1955

The FCDA repeated Operation Alert drills throughout the 1950s. However, for a growing number of Americans, the drills became an opportunity to speak out against the nuclear arms race. In 1960, a group of young mothers in New York City organized hundreds of protesters around this simple idea: "Peace is the only defense against nuclear war."

Summary

Like earlier wars, the Cold War created fright and anxiety on the home front. Fearful of attacks from within, the government sought to root out communist subversion. Faced with the threat of nuclear attack from the Soviet Union, it promoted civil defense and preparedness planning.

House Un-American Activities Committee HUAC investigated the loyalty of people in many areas of life. Its probe of the movie industry led movie studio heads to blacklist anyone thought to be a communist or communist sympathizer.

Spy trials Fears of subversion deepened with the Alger Hiss case and the Rosenberg trial. Hiss served a prison term, and the Rosenbergs were executed for selling atomic secrets to the USSR.

McCarthyism Senator Joseph McCarthy launched a well-publicized crusade against subversives in government. The term McCarthyism came to refer to personal attacks against innocent people with little or no evidence to support the charges.

Atomic Age Americans greeted the Atomic Age with a mixture of fear and excitement. Many people had high hopes for peaceful uses of atomic power.

Federal Civil Defense Administration Congress established the FCDA to help Americans survive a nuclear attack. The FCDA published civil defense manuals and promoted drills and other measures to protect Americans from harm. As the power of nuclear weapons increased, however, the usefulness of such precautions came into question.

Chapter 41 — Peace, Prosperity, and Progress

Why are the 1950s remembered as an age of affluence?

41.1 – Introduction

J. Waldie grew up in the 1950s in Lakewood, California, a community located 15 miles south of Los Angeles. In 1949, Lakewood was 3,500 acres of lima bean fields. A year later, houses were rising out of the farm fields at a rate of 50 homes a day. By 1953, some 90,000 people lived in Lakewood, making it the fastest-growing housing development in the world.

The Depression and World War II had greatly slowed home construction. Once the war ended, however, millions of soldiers returned home to marry and start families. The developers of Lakewood were betting that those families would soon be looking for a place to live. Still, Waldie later wrote, “No theorist or urban planner had the experience then to gauge how thirty thousand former GIs and their wives would take to frame and stucco houses on small, rectangular lots next to hog farms and dairies.”

Some local businesspeople predicted that Lakewood would be an instant slum—or worse, a ghost town. They could not have been more wrong. “Buyers did not require encouragement,” recalled Waldie.

When the sales office opened on a cloudless Palm Sunday in April 1950, twenty-five thousand people were waiting . . . Salesmen sold 30 to 50 houses a day, and more than 300 during one weekend, when the first unit of the subdivision opened. At one point, salesmen sold 107 houses in an hour.

D. J. Waldie, *Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir*, 1996

For these white, middle-class homebuyers, owning a house in Lakewood was a symbol of their new affluence, or prosperity. Aided by the GI Bill of Rights, veterans could buy a home with no money down. All they needed was a steady job and a promise to keep up with the house payments. As a Lakewood salesperson said of his job, “We sell happiness in homes.”

41.2 – Postwar Politics: Readjustments and Challenges

Harry Truman had never wanted to be president. The day after he learned of Franklin Roosevelt’s death on April 12, 1945, he told reporters,

Boys, if you ever pray, pray for me now. I don’t know whether you fellows ever had a load of hay fall on you, but when they told me yesterday what had happened, I felt like the moon, the stars, and all the planets had fallen on me.

—Harry Truman, 1945

Truman's first task was to bring the war to an end. Once that was done, he faced the enormous challenge of leading the country back to a peacetime economy.

A Rocky Transition to Peace

Truman welcomed the war's end by announcing a package of reforms that later came to be known as the Fair Deal. He called on Congress to increase the minimum wage, increase aid to agriculture and education, and enact a national health insurance program. Complaining that Truman was "out-New Dealing the New Deal," Republicans in Congress did their best to stall his reforms.

Meanwhile, the economy was going through a difficult period of adjustment. As the war came to a close, government officials canceled billions of dollars' worth of war contracts. As a result, millions of defense workers lost their jobs. In addition, once wartime price controls were lifted, prices skyrocketed.

As inflation soared, workers demanded wage increases. When employers refused to meet these demands, labor unions triggered the largest strike wave in U.S. history. In 1946, nearly 5 million workers walked off the job, many of them in such key industries as steel production, coal mining, and oil refining.

When railroad workers went on strike, Truman took action. In a speech to Congress, he warned, "Food, raw materials, fuel, shipping, housing, the public health, the public safety—all will be dangerously affected" if the strike were allowed to continue. Truman threatened to call out the armed forces to run the railroads. However, the strike was settled before he could carry out his threat.

Truman Battles a Republican Congress

The labor unrest was still fresh in voters' minds as the 1946 congressional elections drew near. Running under the slogan "Had Enough?" Republican candidates swept to victory. For the first time since the 1920s, Republicans gained control of both houses of Congress.

One of the first actions of the new Republican Congress was passage of the Twenty-second Amendment in 1947. This amendment limits a president to two terms of office. The Republican sponsors of the amendment did not want to see another liberal president like Franklin Roosevelt seek four terms as president. They argued that without term limits, a popular president might seek to become "president for life," much like a dictator. The amendment was overwhelmingly ratified by the states and was added to the Constitution in 1951.

Congress also took aim at the labor unions by passing the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947. This law placed many limits on the power of unions. Among other things, it outlawed the closed shop. A closed shop is a workplace in which the employer agrees to hire only members of a particular union. It banned sympathy strikes, in which workers of one union walk off their jobs to show their sympathy with another striking union. It also allowed the president to impose an 80-day "cooling off" period before a union could

strike in certain industries. This provision especially enraged union supporters, who called it “slave labor law.” President Truman vetoed the law, but Congress passed it over his veto.

Truman also battled with Congress over civil rights. Late in 1946, he established the President’s Committee on Civil Rights to investigate racial inequality in the United States. The committee issued a report calling for an end to segregation and discrimination in voting, housing, education, employment, and the military. Truman praised the report as “an American charter of human freedom.” Congress, however, refused to act on its recommendations. In 1948, Truman sidestepped Congress and desegregated the armed forces by executive order.

An Upset Victory in 1948

As the election of 1948 drew near, Democrats were filled with gloom. Truman, who had been unable to get any of his reforms passed by the Republican Congress, looked like a weak candidate. Worse yet, the Democratic Party had splintered into three factions.

Left-wing Democrats, led by former U.S. vice president Henry Wallace, pulled away to form the Progressive Party. Wallace was more liberal than Truman on domestic issues. But his main difference with the president was over foreign policy. Fearing that Truman’s hard-line containment policy could lead to World War III, he advocated friendlier relations with the Soviet Union.

Segregationist southern Democrats, known as Dixiecrats, left to form the States’ Rights Democratic Party. The Dixiecrats nominated Strom Thurmond, the governor of South Carolina, for the presidency. Thurmond ran on a platform of complete segregation of the races.

The Republicans nominated New York governor Thomas E. Dewey to run against Truman. Dewey was heavily favored to win, despite his lackluster campaign style. One newspaper ran this parody of the typical, bland Dewey speech: “Agriculture is important. Our rivers are full of fish. You cannot have freedom without liberty. Our future lies ahead.”

Truman decided to fight for the presidency. He launched an ambitious “whistle-stop” tour of the country. A whistle-stop is a small town where a train would stop only if signaled to do so by a whistle. During his tour, Truman made 356 stops to speak directly to voters. At every one, he lambasted the “do nothing” Republican Congress. His supporters cheered him on with the slogan, “Give ’em hell, Harry!”

On election eve, opinion polls predicted a Dewey landslide. Only Truman seemed to believe he could win. The voters proved Truman right. In one of the biggest electoral upsets in history, Truman narrowly won reelection.

For the next four years, Truman regularly presented his Fair Deal programs to Congress. However, a coalition of conservative southern Democrats and mid-western

Republicans blocked most of his reform efforts. Congress did agree to a modest expansion of Social Security benefits. It also agreed to increase the minimum wage and support slum clearance.

Ike Takes the Middle of the Road

During the 1952 election season, the Democratic Party came together again around Adlai Stevenson, the governor of Illinois. Stevenson was much admired for his elegant speaking style and wit.

The Republicans nominated the immensely popular war hero Dwight D. Eisenhower. Eisenhower had an impressive biography. After serving as supreme commander of the Allied forces in Europe during World War II, he had gone on to become head of NATO. Moreover, people loved Eisenhower's winning smile and agreeable manner. Building on his nickname, Ike, the Republican campaign featured posters and buttons saying, "I like Ike."

Richard Nixon, a young senator from California, was chosen to be Eisenhower's running mate. A strong anticommunist, Nixon had gained prominence as a member of the House Un-American Activities Committee. In the election, Eisenhower swept to victory in 39 of the 48 states. Four years later, he again defeated Stevenson to win a second term as president.

During his presidency, Eisenhower embraced a program he described as "modern Republicanism." He promised to be "conservative when it comes to money and liberal when it comes to human beings." He resisted calls by conservatives to roll back the New Deal. "Should any political party attempt to abolish Social Security, unemployment insurance, and eliminate labor laws and farm programs," he warned, "you would not hear of that party again in our political history." Eisenhower went further and expanded Social Security. By doing so, he ensured that this popular New Deal program would survive no matter which party controlled the White House.

At the same time, Eisenhower presided over a massive peacetime arms buildup. "Our arms," he stated, "must be mighty, ready for instant action." Still, he worried about the growing power of what he called the "military-industrial complex." In his last address as president, Eisenhower warned,

This conjunction [joining] of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry is new in the American experience . . . We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet . . . we must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes.

—Dwight D. Eisenhower, Farewell Address, 1961

41.3 – Economic Growth Creates an Age of Affluence

In 1940, Dick and Mac McDonald opened a drive-in restaurant in San Bernardino, California. The restaurant was popular, but customers sometimes had to wait as long as 20 minutes for their food. Dick McDonald later recalled,

The cars were jamming up the lot. Customers weren't demanding it, but our intuition told us they would like speed. Everything was moving faster. The supermarkets and dime stores had already converted to self-service, and it was obvious the future of drive-ins was self-service.

—Dick McDonald

So the brothers decided to streamline every aspect of their business. Instead of offering hamburgers, hot dogs, and sandwiches, they narrowed the menu to hamburgers. They replaced carhops with a self-service order counter. Instead of serving food on plates and glasses that needed washing, they used paper wrappers and cups. They set up the kitchen to run like an assembly line.

Their timing could not have been better. When they reopened their restaurant as McDonald's Famous Hamburgers in 1948, the country was entering one of the greatest economic booms in its history. By the end of the 1950s, middle-class families were enjoying a level of affluence beyond anything their Depression-era parents and grandparents could have imagined.

Consumer Demand Spurs Economic Growth

During World War II, Americans had saved billions of dollars. Flush with cash, they were ready to go on a spending spree as soon as factories could convert from war production to consumer goods. This surge in consumer demand encouraged businesses to expand production. By 1955, the United States, with only 6 percent of the world's population, was producing almost half of the world's goods.

As the economy grew, incomes rose. Real income is income measured by the amount of goods and services it will buy, regardless of inflation. By the mid-1950s, the average American family had twice as much real income to spend as the average family of the 1920s had. And spend it they did.

Not only were Americans spending more money than ever before, they were also spending it in different places. In the past, most people had bought their goods in stores lining the main street of town. By the mid-1950s, however, suburban shopping centers were luring consumers away from downtown shopping districts. Shopping centers offered customers easy parking and a wide array of shops to browse, often in air-conditioned comfort. By 1964, there were more than 7,600 shopping centers across the United States.

Businesses used methods pioneered during the 1920s to encourage consumers to keep on spending. One method was slick advertising campaigns. By 1955, businesses were spending \$8 billion a year on ads that encouraged consumption.

Another method was to offer consumers easier ways to buy now and pay later. Large stores issued charge cards that allowed their customers to charge goods to an account rather than pay cash. By 1960, Sears Roebuck had more than 10 million accounts, or one for every five families. In 1958, American Express launched the first all-purpose credit card that could be used in stores, hotels, restaurants, and gas stations.

A third method used to encourage consumption was called planned obsolescence. Brooks Stevens, the industrial designer who popularized this term, defined it as a way to create “the desire to own something a little newer, a little better, a little sooner than is necessary.” Businesses using this method looked for ways to make what a consumer bought today seem obsolete, or out-of-date, after a fixed period of time. Clothing companies did this by introducing new fashions every season. As they did so, last season’s garments, although still usable, looked dated. Automobile companies did the same thing by changing the styling of their cars every year.

The Economy Begins to Shift from Goods to Services

When the 1950s began, the U.S. economy was dominated by industries that produced such goods as steel, appliances, and cars. By the end of the decade, industries that provided services, rather than manufacturing goods, were growing in importance. The biggest and best-known manufacturing company was the automaker General Motors. In 1955, GM became the first U.S. corporation to earn more than \$1 billion a year. It accomplished this feat by producing and selling as many cars as all of its competitors produced combined.

An important factor in GM’s success was an improved relationship with its workers. In 1948, GM signed a historic agreement with the United Auto Workers union. The agreement guaranteed that GM workers would receive regular wage hikes tied to a cost-of-living index. A cost-of-living index measures differences in the price of goods and services over time. If inflation pushes prices up, the index measures by how much prices went up. Fortune magazine called the agreement “the treaty of Detroit.” It brought GM years of labor peace.

As the economic boom continued, new service industries began to compete for the consumer’s dollar. One was the fast-food service industry. In 1954, a go-getter named Ray Kroc visited McDonald’s Famous Hamburgers in San Bernardino. He was amazed by what he saw. An hour before lunch, there was already a long line of customers waiting to be served. Kroc asked people in line what they liked about the restaurant. They replied that it was clean, fast, and cheap. In addition, the burgers tasted good, and it was not necessary to tip anyone.

Kroc convinced the McDonald brothers to hire him as a franchising agent. A franchise is an agreement to operate a business that carries a company’s name and sells its products. The next year, he opened his own franchise restaurant in Des Plaines, Illinois. Like the original, Kroc’s McDonald’s was wildly successful. It was especially attractive to families with young children who did not feel comfortable in more formal restaurants.

Under Kroc's leadership, hundreds of McDonald's soon dotted the landscape. By 1963, the fast-food chain had sold more than 1 billion hamburgers.

Another new service industry, the motel chain, was inspired by a summer driving trip. In 1951, Kemmons Wilson, a homebuilder in Tennessee, took his family on a car trip to Washington, D.C. Day after day, he faced the problem of finding a decent place for his family to spend the night. Motels at that time were independent, mom-and-pop operations. Some were clean. Others were filthy. Some charged extra for children. Others did not. The only way to find out was to go from one motel to the next.

A frustrated Wilson finally turned to his wife and announced he was going into the motel business. She asked how many motels he planned to build. "Oh, about four hundred," he answered. "That ought to cover the country." His motels would be clean, affordable, easy to find, and family-friendly. "If I never do anything else worth remembering in my life," he added, "children are going to stay free at my motels."

Wilson returned home and built his first Holiday Inn. After franchising his chain, the number of Holiday Inns grew rapidly. Other chains, such as Best Western and Howard Johnson's, also began to expand. By the 1960s, the motel chain had become a fixture on America's highways.

The Workforce Shifts from Blue- to White-Collar Jobs

As the economy grew and changed, the kinds of work people did also changed. When the 1950s began, blue-collar workers made up the largest part of the workforce. Blue-collar workers are people who work in factories or at skilled trades, such as plumbing or auto repair. Most are paid by the hour. The name comes from the durable blue shirts that manual workers often wore to work.

By the end of the 1950s, the workforce looked different. For the first time in history, white-collar workers outnumbered blue-collar employees. White-collar workers include professionals such as doctors and lawyers, engineers, salespeople, managers, and office staff. Most receive a weekly or yearly salary rather than an hourly wage. Because white-collar employees worked in offices, they could wear white shirts to work without fear of getting them dirty.

Both groups prospered during the 1950s. As blue-collar workers moved up into the middle class, they began to dress, act, and consume like their white-collar neighbors. "During the war," observed a sociologist in Detroit, "you could sit on a streetcar and tell at a glance who were the [blue-collar] defense workers and who were the white collars . . . Today you just can't tell who's who."

41.4 – Marriage, Families, and a Baby Boom

The year 1946 was one second old when a navy machinist's wife gave birth to a baby girl in Philadelphia. In Chicago, seconds after the new year began, a son was born to the wife of an army trombone player in Chicago. For both sets of parents, these births may have been long-awaited and happy events. But for demographers who study the

growth of human populations, these births marked the beginning of the largest population boom in U.S. history.

A Marriage Boom Leads to a Baby Boom

During the Depression, marriage rates and birthrates had dropped as worries about the future caused people to postpone decisions that would change their lives. After World War II ended, the future looked brighter. In 1946, there were almost 2.3 million marriages in the United States, an increase of more than 600,000 from the year before. More people were marrying—and at younger ages—than during the war years. The average age of marriage in the 1950s was 20 for women and 22 for men.

Many of these newlyweds started families right away. Older couples who had delayed having children also began to start families. “It seems to me,” observed a visitor from Great Britain, “that every other young housewife I see is pregnant.” The result was a baby boom, a large increase in the number of babies born in proportion to the size of the population. At the peak of the baby boom, in 1957, 4.3 million births were recorded. By 1964, the last baby boom year, four Americans in ten were under the age of 20.

Economists and businesspeople were thrilled by the baby boom. Signs in New York City subway cars informed riders that

Your future is great in a growing America.
Every day 11,000 babies are born in America.
This means new business, new jobs, new opportunities.

The babies overflowing maternity wards boosted sales for diaper services and baby food bottlers. Home sales boomed as young families flocked to the suburbs in search of living space. Factories worked overtime to fill these new homes with furniture and appliances and to put a car in every garage.

Schools had trouble finding room for the millions of children reaching school age each year. During the 1950s, California opened new schools at the rate of one a week to make room for the baby boomers. Older schools added temporary buildings to create more classrooms. Other schools handled the flood by running two shifts of classes, one in the morning and another in the afternoon. Despite these efforts, large classes with two students to a desk were common during the 1950s.

Family Roles: Working Dads and Stay-at-Home Moms

The majority of baby boomers grew up in so-called traditional families, with dads who went to work each day and moms who stayed home. The importance of marriage and family was driven home in marriage manuals of the day. “Whether you are a man or a woman, the family is the unit to which you most genuinely belong,” wrote Dr. John Schindler in *The Woman’s Guide to Better Living 52 Weeks a Year*. “The family is the center of your living. If it isn’t, you’ve gone far astray.”

The belief that mothers should not work outside the home unless they had to for economic reasons was promoted by Dr. Benjamin Spock, the leading childcare expert of the day. First published in 1946, Spock's Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care was a best seller for many years. Spock advised mothers to devote themselves full-time to raising their children. Any distraction from that task, such as a job or hobby, he argued, could damage a young child.

The mass media reinforced traditional family roles. Magazines, movies, and advertisements portrayed the ideal family as one in which the husband was the breadwinner while the wife stayed home. The homemaker's role was expanded to include a number of jobs. A mom became a teacher, doctor, nurse, cook, adviser, decorator, housekeeper, manager, and chauffeur all in one.

A new medium called television brought this ideal family to life on screen. In *Leave It to Beaver*, June Cleaver was a stay-at-home mom who wore high heels and pearls while working in the kitchen. When asked what kind of girl her son Wally should marry, she answered, "Oh, some sensible girl from a nice family . . . who's a good cook and can keep a nice house and see that he's happy." Jim Anderson, the sensible dad in *Father Knows Best*, calmly solved his family's problems when he got home from work. In one episode, he advised his tomboy daughter Kathy to act helpless around boys. "The worst thing you can do," he told her, "is to try to beat a man at his own game."

Such television shows taught children the roles they would be expected to play as adults. Children got the message in other ways, too. Toy stores were filled with dolls and tea sets for girls and toy guns for boys. Girls were given miniature hope chests to encourage them to dream of one day getting married. Children's books reinforced traditional roles with sayings like this one, from *The Happy Family*, a Little Golden Book popular at the time: "The happiest time of the day is when Father comes home from work."

The strong emphasis on marriage led many young women to forgo a college education. College enrollment among women dropped sharply. And although some women pursued careers after college, many others dropped out early to get married or headed from graduation straight into marriage. A professor at Smith College complained of having to cancel a final class with female senior honors students because it conflicted with too many bridal showers.

41.5 – Population Shifts to Suburbs and Sunbelt States

In 1941, Bill and Alfred Levitt won a government contract to build thousands of homes for war workers in Norfolk, Virginia. At first, everything went wrong. Skilled workers were in short supply. The schedule was too tight. It looked like they would miss their deadlines and lose money. The Levitts decided to rethink how they built homes. They broke the construction process into 27 steps. Then they hired and trained 27 teams of workers, each of which specialized in just one step. By the time the project ended, they had revolutionized the process of building homes.

Middle-Class Families Move to the Suburbs

No industry had suffered more during the Depression and war years than the homebuilding industry. Housing starts had dropped from more than 1 million new homes a year to fewer than 100,000. By war's end, housing was in such short supply that 250 used trolley cars were sold as homes in Chicago. Returning veterans were eager to buy homes and start families. The GI Bill was ready to assist them with home loans at low interest rates. But there were few homes to buy.

The Levitt brothers knew exactly how to help those veterans use those loans. In 1947, they began work on Levittown, the first planned community in the nation. It was located on Long Island, about 20 miles from New York City. By 1951, the brothers had built 17,447 homes around Levittown. They would go on to build two more Levittowns, in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, by 1960.

To keep costs down, the Levitts built small, boxy, almost identical homes with two bedrooms and one bathroom. Different work crews moved from house to house doing only one job. There were tile crews and floor crews. One team specialized in white paint while another one only applied red paint. By mass-producing their homes in this way, the Levitts greatly sped up production. By 1948, the Levitts were building 36 houses a day. They also kept their prices under \$8,000.

The first Levittown in New York was a kind of suburb called a bedroom community. Most people who lived there commuted by car or public transportation to jobs in New York City. Although a commute could be tiring, countless young families jumped at the chance to live in a clean, safe, child-friendly suburb. Between 1950 and 1956, the number of Americans living in suburban communities increased by 46 percent.

As a group, these new suburbanites were overwhelmingly white and middle class. Many suburbs, including Levittown, did not sell to African Americans. Indeed, this homogeneity was part of the appeal of suburbs. "Everybody lives on the same side of the tracks," observed the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1954. "They have no slums to fret about, no families of conspicuous wealth to envy, no traditional upper crust to whet and thwart their social aspirations [ambitions]."

Weather and Wages Spur Migration to the Sunbelt

Americans were not only on the move from cities to suburbs. They were also moving from the northern half of the country to the Sunbelt. This "belt" of warm-weather states stretched across the southern third of the United States from Florida to California.

After World War II, manufacturers and other businesses began locating in the Sunbelt. They were attracted by low labor costs. In addition, unions were less entrenched in the Sunbelt states than in the older industrial regions of the North. The Sunbelt tourist industry also grew, as families flocked to sunny beaches and new attractions like Disneyland.

As businesses moved south, people followed. California felt the effects of this migration as much as any state. Between 1950 and 1960, California's population grew by 50 percent, from about 10.6 million to more than 15.7 million people. Other Sunbelt states experienced similar growth.

Two advances in technology made this large population shift possible. The first was the design and construction of massive water projects in the arid Southwest. These projects involved building dams on major rivers to capture precious water in huge reservoirs. This water was then distributed through a system of canals and aqueducts to fast-growing cities such as Phoenix, Arizona; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Los Angeles, California. The second key technology was the development of room air conditioners designed for home use. Air conditioning made summers bearable in Sunbelt states like Florida and Arizona. Annual sales of room air conditioners jumped from around 30,000 in 1946 to more than a million by 1953.

41.6 – The Triumph of the Automobile

On September 4, 1957, a new car called the Edsel appeared in Ford showrooms around the country. At first, consumers showed up at the dealerships in record numbers. Ford executives were thrilled. But then they realized people were looking, not buying. And most people did not like what they saw. The Edsel had been designed to be the biggest, flashiest, most luxurious Ford ever. Public response, however, was not enthusiastic. "One member of the media called it 'an Oldsmobile sucking a lemon,'" recalls a rare Edsel owner, "and another called it 'a Pontiac pushing a toilet seat.'" After three years of poor sales, Ford gave up on the Edsel. But such failures were rare in the 1950s. For most of the decade, automobile sales stayed strong as the growth of suburbs increased the demand for cars.

The Middle-Class Dream: Two Cars in Every Garage

Life in the suburbs depended on access to an automobile. Because most suburbs lacked public transportation, fathers commuted by car to their jobs in nearby cities. Mothers needed cars to drive to supermarkets and suburban shopping centers. After school, children depended on the family car to get to their music lessons or sports games. Suburban families began to find they needed not just one, but two cars in their garage.

Yet cars were more than a necessity in this booming consumer culture. They became a status symbol, or sign of wealth and prestige. Automakers encouraged car owners to trade in last year's models for new ones to keep up with their neighbors. Buyers were also urged to "move up" to ever-more-expensive cars to show that they had become a success in life. The Edsel was introduced as "the smart car for the young executive or professional family on the way up." A 1958 ad proclaimed, "They'll know you've arrived when you drive up in an Edsel." That same year an Oldsmobile ad gushed,

Obviously this is a car to attract attention. Its precedent-breaking beauty fully deserves all the applause owners are giving it. Men and women who have just recently moved up

to a '58 Oldsmobile from another make are the loudest in their praise . . . proudest of their new possessions.

Throughout the 1950s, car sales stayed mostly above 7 million a year. By 1958, more than 67 million cars were on the road. Close to 12 million families owned two or more cars. Two years later, the census reported that 65 percent of all working people drove cars to work.

Roads to Everywhere: The Interstate Highway System

As the majority of Americans came to depend on cars for transportation, they demanded more and better roads. State and federal lawmakers responded by funding new highway construction programs. The most ambitious was a program authorized by Congress in 1956 to construct a nationwide interstate highway system. The goal of this system was to connect major cities around the country by a network of super highways.

President Eisenhower strongly supported federal funding of the interstate highway system. He remembered how useful the four-lane autobahns, or high-speed highways built by Germany in the 1930s, had been for moving troops during World War II. With the United States engaged in the Cold War, a system of superhighways was seen as an important aid to the nation's defense. Both troops and weapons could be transported easily and quickly with such a network of high-speed highways in place.

By 1960, about 10,000 miles of interstate highway had been constructed. Today, the system has about 45,000 miles of highway, all built to the same high standards. Interstate highways are divided, with at least two lanes in either direction. Access is controlled by the use of on-ramps and off-ramps. The flow of traffic is not interrupted by traffic lights or railroad crossings. Curves are engineered to be safe at high speeds. Rest areas are spaced along the way for the comfort of travelers.

The interstate highway system benefited the country in many ways. It made travel by road over long distances both faster and safer. It created economic opportunities as new roadside businesses, such as gas stations, motels, and restaurants, sprang up at interstate exits. By improving access to all parts of the country, the system gave people more choices as to where to live, work, shop, and vacation. For better or worse, the highways also increased Americans' dependence on cars and trucks as their main form of transportation.

41.7 – Technological Advances Transform Everyday Life

In 1953, Charles Mee was a 14-year-old high school football player in Barrington, Illinois. One summer night, on the way to a dance, Mee fell ill. He was dizzy, unsteady on his feet, and chilled. Later that night, he could not stand up. His parents drove him to the nearest hospital. The head nurse took one look at Mee and pronounced, "This boy has polio." Mee knew that his life was changed forever.

Advances in Medicine Extend Life Expectancy

It would have been small comfort to Mee to know that he was not alone. Polio, or infantile paralysis, was one of the most feared diseases of the 20th century. The first polio epidemic in the United States, in 1916, left 27,000 people paralyzed and 9,000 dead. Over the next 40 years, polio epidemics struck every summer across the country. The worst year was 1952, when almost 60,000 new polio cases were reported.

President Franklin Roosevelt was perhaps the most famous victim of polio. In 1938, he established the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis to seek a cure for polio. Over the next 17 years, the foundation funded research to create a vaccine against polio. That research led to the development of the first polio vaccine by Dr. Jonas Salk. The vaccine was made up of very small parts of the polio virus. People who took the vaccine developed antibodies that protected them from infection by the actual polio virus. In 1954, some 2 million schoolchildren took part in trials of the vaccine. Statistics showed the vaccine to be as much as 90 percent effective in preventing polio. A dreaded disease had finally been conquered.

Surgical techniques advanced rapidly in the 1950s as well. The first open-heart surgery and the first kidney transplant were performed. The first pacemaker, a device designed to regulate the beating of a patient's heart, was developed. Medical researchers also began to experiment with heart transplants.

A number of diseases once viewed as killers were routinely cured in the 1950s through the use of antibiotic drugs. Penicillin, streptomycin, and other "wonder drugs" attacked bacteria that caused everything from earaches to pneumonia and tuberculosis. These advances in medicine contributed to a rise in life expectancy during the 1950s. A child born in 1950 could expect to live to the age of 68. By 1960, the average life expectancy had reached 69.7 years.

Peaceful Uses for Nuclear Energy

During the 1950s, scientists explored peaceful uses for nuclear energy. One of the most promising was the generation of electricity. "It is not too much to expect that our children will enjoy in their homes electrical energy too cheap to meter," predicted Lewis Strauss, chair of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, in 1954. Three years later, the first full-scale nuclear power plant opened in Shippingport, Pennsylvania.

Medical researchers were also finding new uses for nuclear energy. Radioactive isotopes were used in the diagnosis and treatment of disease. The use of X-rays as a diagnostic tool became a general practice in the 1950s. At the same time, specialists in nuclear medicine began to use radioactive iodine to treat thyroid cancer.

Computers Enter the Workplace

In 1946, two engineers from the University of Pennsylvania built one of the earliest electronic digital computers. Called ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer), it contained nearly 18,000 vacuum tubes and took up about 1,500 square feet of floor space—almost as much as two Levittown homes. It could perform 300 multiplications per second. Five years later, the same team introduced the first

commercially successful computer. Called the UNIVAC, it could do more than just crunch numbers. The UNIVAC could handle letters and words. In 1952, a UNIVAC proved its power by accurately predicting the election of Eisenhower just 45 minutes after the polls closed.

The invention of the transistor in 1947 led to dramatic improvements in computer design. A transistor is a small, low-powered electronic device. By 1959, transistors had replaced the bulky and unreliable vacuum tubes. As computers shrank in size, they began to appear in more and more workplaces. The new machines revolutionized the collection and storage of data. They sped up the work of record keepers, such as librarians and tax collectors. But as the decade ended, few people could foresee a time when there would be a personal computer on almost every desk.

Summary

The years following World War II were a time of prosperity in the United States. As the economy boomed, fears of a return to depression conditions faded. During the 1950s, millions of working-class families became affluent enough to move up into the middle class.

Fair Deal President Harry Truman guided the transition from a wartime to a peacetime economy. But he was unable to get his Fair Deal reform program approved by a Republican Congress.

Taft-Hartley Act Immediately after the war, a series of labor strikes threatened to cripple the economy. In response, Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act, which limited the power of unions.

Baby boom As the economy improved, Americans married and had children at record rates. The result was a baby boom that lasted from 1946 to 1964.

Levittown Suburbs like Levittown attracted homebuyers by offering inexpensive houses on small lots. Suburban life revolved around the so-called traditional family, with a working dad and stay-at-home mom.

Sunbelt Besides leaving cities for suburbs, Americans were also moving from northern states to the Sunbelt. California, Texas, and Florida all grew rapidly as a result.

Interstate highway system A federally funded network of high-speed roads linked the nation as never before. Better roads encouraged the growth of suburbs and suburban shopping centers.

Polio vaccine Medical advances such as antibiotics increased life expectancy in the 1950s. But no advance was more welcomed than the polio vaccine. This vaccine ended a decades-long battle with a much-dreaded disease that caused paralysis and death among its victims.

Chapter 42 — Rebelling Against Conformity

How did some Americans rebel against conformity in the 1950s?

42.1 – Introduction

Historian Doris Kearns Goodwin grew up in Rockville Center, a suburb of New York City. On weekdays, her father put on a three-piece suit and left for work. “From the window I watched him greet the other men on our block as they walked to the corner to catch the bus for the short ride to the train station.” On summer weekends, “he and almost all the fathers could be found outside in their shirtsleeves mowing the small patches of grass, rooting out the occasional weed, planting flowers along the margins of the driveways.”

Like most women in Rockville Center, Goodwin’s mother was a full-time homemaker. “She never wore shorts or even slacks,” Goodwin later recalled. “In the grip of the worst heat waves, she wore a girdle, a full slip, and a cotton or linen dress with a bib apron perpetually fixed to her shoulders. Such modesty was the norm in our neighborhood.”

Goodwin’s childhood was carefree. When she and her friends were not in school, they rode their bicycles or roller skates around the block, played hopscotch, and set up lemonade stands in front of their homes. They considered their little street “our playground, our park, our community.”

Life in Rockville Center seemed idyllic until Goodwin became a teenager. Then, like other teens in the 1950s, she began listening to the radio to a new kind of loud, fast music called rock ‘n’ roll. She read novels about romantic misfits. She went to movies that featured rebellious youth. She discovered that beyond her suburb lay a universe rather different from the safe and predictable world she had grown up in. Goodwin began to question the expectation in her social world that she should think and behave like everyone else.

The 1950s are widely viewed as an age of conformity—a time when everyone behaved and thought in socially expected ways. But for Doris Kearns Goodwin and many other young people coming of age in these years, it was also a time of rebellion against those same expectations.

42.2 – The Culture and Critics of Suburbia

During the 1950s, novelist and poet John Updike gained fame writing about life in suburbia—a term used to describe the nation’s suburbs and the people who lived there. In one poem, he wrote,

I drive my car to supermarket
The way I take is superhigh,
A superlot is where I park it,
And Super Suds are what I buy.

Supersalesmen sell me tonic—
Super-Tone-O for Relief.
The planes I ride are supersonic.
In trains, I like the Super Chief.

—Superman, 1954

Updike's mocking of the "super" suburbs did not discourage families from moving there. During the 1950s, suburbs grew twice as fast as the nation as a whole. By 1960, a third of all Americans were living in suburbia.

Critics Condemn Life in the Suburbs

Not everyone viewed this enormous population shift with enthusiasm. Critics saw suburbia as a wasteland of conformity and materialism, or preoccupation with the pursuit of wealth. In their eyes, little good could be said about the suburbs or the people who lived in them.

When social critic Lewis Mumford looked at a suburb, he saw only bland people in bland housing leading bland lives. He described the first Levittown built on Long Island, New York, as

a multitude of uniform, unidentifiable houses lined up inflexibly, at uniform distances, on uniform roads, in a treeless communal waste, inhabited by people of the same class, the same income, the same age group, witnessing the same television performances, eating the same tasteless prefabricated foods, from the same freezers, conforming in every outward and inward respect to a common mold.

—The City in History, 1961

In an influential book called *The Organization Man*, sociologist William Whyte offered a different view of suburbs. He saw them as “packaged villages that have become the dormitory of a new generation of organization men.” These “organization men” were employees of large corporations or government bureaucracies. Whyte wrote of them,

They are not the workers . . . in the usual . . . sense of the word. These people not only work for the Organization. The ones I am talking about belong to it as well. They are the ones of our middle class who have left home, spiritually as well as physically, to take the vows of organization life.

—The Organization Man, 1956

Whyte argued that these workers had given up their individual personalities and desires to conform to the demands of the organizations they worked for.

Sociologist David Riesman attacked suburbs for creating a culture of conformity. In his book *The Lonely Crowd*, he wrote that a middle-class suburban child “learns to conform to the group almost as soon as he learns anything.” Such children grow up valuing “fitting in” with their peers far above thinking for themselves or striving for individual achievement.

Few aspects of middle-class life drew more criticism than television. In the early 1950s, television brought high culture—works of art, such as plays and concerts, that are held in high esteem—into U.S. homes. By 1960, however, most shows were popular entertainment. Critics were dismayed by much of what they saw on the “idiot box.” They also worried about its isolating effects. Poet T. S. Eliot dismissed television as a “medium of entertainment which permits millions of people to listen to the same joke at the same time, and yet remain lonesome.”

In Defense of Suburbia

To many Americans, these attacks on suburban life seemed unfair. Where critics saw only conformity, people who actually lived in suburbs were often struck by their diversity. Although most suburbs excluded African Americans, they often had a broad mixture of religious and ethnic groups. A resident of Levittown, Pennsylvania, recalled, “From the beginning there has been this unusual mix of liberal and conservative, Bronx-born Jew and Nanticoke coal cracker.”

Many also objected to the view of suburbia as a wasteland of boring, look-alike boxes. As Doris Kearns Goodwin recalled,

For my parents . . . as for the other families on the block, the house on Southard Avenue was the realization of a dream . . . Here they would have a single-family home, a private world for themselves and their children, which they could make their own—furnish, repair, remodel—something which only a few years before had seemed the prerogative [privilege] of the impossibly affluent.

—Wait Till Next Year: A Memoir, 1997

"Postwar Americans were not more materialistic than earlier generations," agrees historian James Patterson, "just incomparably richer. They were able to buy and enjoy things that their parents could only dream about."

42.3 – Currents of Nonconformity

Beneath the surface of widespread conformity, there were many currents of nonconformity, or rebellion against conventional behavior, in the 1950s. No one knew this better than the writer Jack Kerouac. Kerouac embodied the era’s nonconformist streak. Kerouac wrote that he lived in

a world full of rucksack wanderers . . . refusing to . . . work for the privilege of consuming, all that [stuff] they didn’t really want anyway such as refrigerators, TV

sets, cars, . . . thousands or even millions of young Americans wandering around with rucksacks, going up to mountains to pray, making children laugh and old men glad . . . [who] by being kind and also by strange unexpected acts keep giving visions of eternal freedom to everybody and to all living creatures.

—The Dharma Bums, 1958

Beats Defy Convention in Poetry and Literature

Kerouac was part of a group of writers and poets who created the beat movement. The term “beat” had a double meaning. It could mean beaten down, but it was also short for “beatific,” or blissfully happy. The beat movement began in New York City’s Greenwich Village and then spread from there to San Francisco. Herb Caen, a San Francisco newspaper columnist, called members of the movement beatniks, and the name stuck.

Beatniks rejected all forms of convention, or customary ways of living. They shunned traditional nine-to-five jobs and the materialism of American life. In contrast to clean-cut suburbanites, many beats wore beards, berets, and dark clothes. They turned away from conventional Western faiths to study Eastern religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism. They grooved on African American music, especially a new form of jazz called bebop.

Beat writers made significant contributions to American literature. Their subject matter consisted primarily of their own feelings and adventures. They often used stream of consciousness, a writing technique in which thoughts are presented randomly, as if flowing directly from a character’s mind. Their vivid, image-filled sentences could go on for pages without stopping. The first period in Allen Ginsberg’s poem *Howl*, for instance, does not appear until line 221.

While many literary critics praised beat writings, more conventional readers were sometimes offended by it. In 1957, police raided a San Francisco bookstore on the grounds that *Howl* was obscene, or morally offensive. After reading the poem, the judge in the case ruled otherwise, saying,

The first part of “Howl” presents a picture of a nightmare world; the second part is an indictment of those elements of modern society destructive to the best qualities of human nature . . . materialism, conformity, and mechanization leading toward war . . . It ends in a plea for holy living.

—Superior Court Judge Clayton Horn, 1957

Rebellious Teens Create a Youth Culture

Teenagers growing up in the 1950s created another current of nonconformity: a new youth culture. Teens rebelled against the world of their parents in the music they listened to, the dances they danced, the movies they watched, and the slang they used. Two factors supported the growth of this youth culture. One was the sheer number of baby boomers entering adolescence. By 1956, there were 13 million teenagers in the

United States. The other was affluence. With cash earned from part-time jobs and allowances, teenagers had more money to spend than ever before.

The most enduring element of this new youth culture was a new style of music that drove many parents crazy. A Cleveland, Ohio, disc jockey named Alan Freed popularized this new sound. After hearing from a record store-owner that white teenagers were buying records by black rhythm and blues artists, Freed began to play black music on his popular radio show. Unlike traditional blues music, rhythm and blues uses amplified instruments, such as electric guitar. Before long, white musicians began blending rhythm and blues with country music and popular songs. The confluence of these musical styles resulted in a brash new sound called rock 'n' roll.

At one time, parents might have stopped their children from hearing this new sound by controlling the family radio and record collection. Technology, however, made that impossible. With the use of transistors in the 1950s, radios and record players became so cheap that teenagers could afford to buy their own. Despite, or perhaps in part because of, their parent's objections, young people embraced rock 'n' roll as the sound of their generation.

The most popular early rock 'n' roll performer was a young singer from Memphis, Tennessee, named Elvis Presley. White teenagers loved his distinctive sound and visual appearance. At a time when most teenage boys sported trim crew cuts, Presley wore his hair slicked back with long sideburns. He swivelled his hips in a sexually suggestive way, while his upper lip curled in a defiant sneer. Adults ridiculed him as "Elvis the Pelvis." But to teenagers, Presley represented a rebellion against the music and manners of their elders.

Teenagers often gathered at "sock hops" to dance to the latest hit records. Held in school gyms where street shoes were not allowed, sock hops were a place where teenagers could learn dances their parents had never heard of. Examples included the hand jive, the stroll, and the bop.

Hollywood catered to restless teenagers by creating movies featuring moody young people who were misunderstood by adults. In *Rebel Without a Cause*, James Dean played an intense, brooding young misfit. *The Wild One* featured Marlon Brando as a rebellious motorcycle gang leader. When a girl in the film asked what he was rebelling against, his answer was, "Whaddya got?"

Teenagers also developed their own language so that "big daddies" (older people) would not understand them. "Boss" meant great. "Threads" were clothes. A person who was "radioactive" was very popular. Phrases like "I'm on cloud nine," "cool it," and "don't have a cow" all started as 1950s' slang.

Comic Books Deviate from "the American Way"

Comic book artists in the 1950s also broke with convention. Comic books had been around since the 1930s. Their heroes tended to be wholesome crime-fighters like

Superman, who famously fought for “truth, justice, and the American way.” But in the 1950s, some comics veered into darker subject matter. New series like Crime Suspense Stories, Tales from the Crypt, and Frontline Combat were notable for their gruesome covers and violent storylines. A new comic called Mad poked fun at just about everything, from other comic books to popular television shows to foreign policy and espionage.

Many parents were horrified by the new comics. Their concerns were given voice by psychologist Fredric Wertham in a 1954 book called *Seduction of the Innocent*. Wertham complained that values such as “trust, loyalty, confidence, solidarity, sympathy, charity, [and] compassion are ridiculed” in comic books. He also argued that comics had become how-to books for future criminals. “If one were to set out to show children how to steal, rob, lie, cheat, assault, and break into houses, no better method could be devised,” he wrote.

In response to the fears raised by Wertham’s book, comic book publishers created the Comics Code Authority. This organization screened comics to make sure they complied with its Comic Code. The code prohibited depictions of gore, sexuality, and excessive violence. It also required that good must always win over evil. To escape the restrictions of the code, the creators of Mad converted their comic book into a magazine in 1955.

Artists Rebel with Paint

In the art world, rebellion against convention took other forms. Like beat writers, some painters were creating art that was vivid, unstructured, and not bound by any rules. Although their individual styles were very different, these painters formed a school of art known as abstract expressionism. The art was abstract because it seldom depicted recognizable objects. It was expressionistic because for both the artist and the viewer, an emotional response was more important than intellectual appreciation.

Abstract expressionists rebelled against highly realistic styles of painting. They drew much of their inspiration from psychology, believing that art could go beyond rational thought to reach deeper emotional truths. “The source of my painting is the unconscious,” said Jackson Pollock, the most famous abstract expressionist. “I am not much aware of what is taking place; it is only after that I see what I have done.”

Pollock developed a technique sometimes called “action painting.” He placed a blank canvas on the floor and dripped paint onto it from above. Pollock said of this method, “I can walk around it, work from the four sides, and literally be in the painting.”

Abstract expressionist works could perplex viewers. The paintings often had no coherent theme or central subject to focus on. Some paintings were so cluttered and detailed it was hard to make out what was in them. Others were so spare and simple that it seemed a child could have painted them. Nonetheless, abstract expressionism quickly gained acceptance from art lovers. Despite being dismissed as “Jack the Dripper,” Pollock lived to see his paintings displayed in art museums. In 2004, a Pollock painting sold for a staggering \$11.6 million.

Summary

The 1950s were widely viewed as an age of conformity. Some social critics worried that the suburbs had become wastelands of cultural conformity and materialism. However, many currents of nonconformity also swirled through this decade.

Suburbia Millions of Americans moved to suburbs during the 1950s. Critics like Lewis Mumford predicted that the sameness of suburban homes would lead to a social uniformity. But for many families, a move to the suburbs was the fulfillment of the American dream.

The Organization Man Sociologists William Whyte and David Riesman explored conformity in their widely read books. They argued that large corporations, suburbs, television, and peer pressure were robbing Americans of their individuality.

Beat movement A group of nonconformists called beats rejected all forms of convention. Beatniks rejected all forms of traditional society. Beat writers made major contributions to American literature.

Youth culture Teenagers created their own culture of nonconformity by embracing comic books, movies, music, and slang that annoyed or appalled their parents.

Rock 'n' roll This now-familiar form of music was born in the 1950s. It was rooted in African American rhythm and blues and featured simple melodies, basic chords, and a strong, danceable beat. Many parents hated rock 'n' roll, which made it even more attractive to teenagers.

Abstract expressionism Painters like Jackson Pollock broke with realism in art to create a new form known as abstract expressionism. Abstract expressionist paintings appealed to viewers' emotions rather than their rational thought.

Chapter 43 — Two Americas

Why did poverty persist in the United States in an age of affluence?

43.1 – Introduction

In September 1956, Vice President Richard Nixon gave a speech in which he predicted a prosperous next few years for the United States. In the “not too distant” future, he said, a four-day workweek would become the norm. The “remaining pockets of [economic] distress” would be wiped out. “These are not dreams or idle boasts,” he stated confidently. “Our hope is to double everyone’s standard of living in ten years.”

Nixon was not alone in his optimism. Booming economic growth since World War II had led many government officials and leading intellectuals to believe that poverty would soon be eradicated. Although some voiced concern that not all Americans shared in the general prosperity, most of the public ignored the existence of poverty in the United States. Time magazine went so far as to forecast “the elimination of poverty as a fact of human life.”

In 1962, a new book called *The Other America* jolted the nation out of its complacency. Written by social activist Michael Harrington, the book described two Americas—one affluent, the other impoverished:

There is a familiar America. It is celebrated in speeches and advertised on television and in the magazines. It has the highest mass standard of living the world has ever known. In the 1950s . . . the familiar America began to call itself “the affluent society” . . . [Meanwhile] there existed another America. In it dwelt somewhere between 40,000,000 and 50,000,000 citizens of this land. They were poor. They still are.

—Michael Harrington, *The Other America*, 1962

Harrington’s book shocked readers with the details of what he called the “enormous and intolerable fact of poverty in America.” It was a wake-up call for the American people. *The Other America* generated a national discussion about the responsibility of government to address gross inequalities in American society.

43.2 – The Persistence of Poverty in an Affluent Society

Greenwood, Mississippi, was one of countless towns in which the two Americas existed side by side. During the 1950s, playwright Endesha Ida Mae Holland grew up there, raised alongside her three siblings by a hardworking single mother. Holland later wrote a memoir about her childhood in which she described the contrast between poverty and prosperity in Greenwood. The well-to-do whites, she wrote, lived on quiet, shady boulevards in houses “with many big rooms and bright, soft rugs on the floors.” Each house had a neatly trimmed lawn, “with pretty flowers set in borders along the walkway.”

In these neighborhoods, “the streets were paved and no open window was without its screen.”

Holland herself lived in the “respectable” black section of town. Her home was a small, ramshackle house infested with cockroaches. The roof leaked, the walls were plastered with newspaper, and the packed earth showed through between the floorboards. Holland was poor, but others were poorer. She wrote that “the poorest black people lived” near the railroad tracks, where “in places the tracks were almost hidden by the smelly black mud that oozed from the ‘bayou,’ an open cesspool that held the waste from outhouses.”

Different Ways of Defining Poverty

Most people understand poverty as the lack of means—money, material goods, or other resources—to live decently. But what does it mean to live decently? There has never been a single standard for measuring economic deprivation. What people think of as poor depends on where and when they live.

For much of U.S. history, many Americans felt poverty to be as much a moral condition as an economic problem. They looked down on people, known as paupers, who did not work and who lived on public charity. Many viewed pauperism, or dependency on public assistance, as a moral failing. “Pauperism is the consequence of willful error,” wrote a leading clergyman in 1834, “of shameful indolence [laziness], of vicious habit.”

At the same time, society recognized that poverty could result from misfortune. People who could not work—such as the elderly, the disabled, and children—could not help being poor. Many Americans also realized that most poor people did work, but their wages were too low to lift them out of poverty. Known today as the working poor, these Americans were once referred to as “the poorer sort.” Although the working poor hold a more respectable place in society than did paupers, economically, there is little difference between the two.

In the late 1800s, social scientists began examining poverty more objectively, viewing it in economic rather than moral terms. For the first time, they defined poverty as a lack of income. They used the term poverty line to refer to the minimum amount of income one would need to meet basic needs. However, scholars disagreed about exactly where to draw the poverty line.

In 1949, the Subcommittee on Low-Income Families proposed a poverty line of \$2,000 per year for families of all sizes. This unofficial line was widely used until 1958, when the government began to adjust the amount based on family size. An official poverty line was not established until 1965. It was determined by calculating a minimal family food budget and then tripling that figure, because food typically made up about one third of a family’s total budget.

The Poor in Postwar America: An Invisible Class

By the end of the 1950s, about one in four Americans lived below the poverty line. According to *The Other America*, this meant that about 50 million people existed “at levels beneath those necessary for human decency.” Middle-class readers of Michael Harrington’s book were shocked to discover the extent of the country’s poverty. How could they not have noticed such widespread misery? They had not, wrote Harrington, because

The other America, the America of poverty, is hidden . . . Its millions are socially invisible to the rest of us . . . Poverty is often off the beaten track. It always has been. The ordinary tourist never left the main highway . . . The traveler comes to the Appalachians in the lovely season. He sees the hills, the streams, the foliage—but not the poor.

—Michael Harrington, *The Other America*, 1962

Harrington contended that the movement of middle-class families to the suburbs after World War II was one reason for the general lack of knowledge about America’s poor. Middle-class workers commuting to urban business districts seldom encountered the poor people left behind in old city neighborhoods. “Living out in the suburbs,” Harrington wrote, “it is easy to assume that ours is, indeed, an affluent society.” The availability of inexpensive clothing also helped hide the poor from view. He observed that “America has the best-dressed poverty the world has ever known.”

Age was another factor that made the poor hard to see. “A good number of them (over 8,000,000) are sixty-five years of age or better; an even larger number are under eighteen,” Harrington noted. Elderly poor people seldom strayed from their rented rooms or homes in older urban neighborhoods. “One of the worst aspects of poverty among the aged,” Harrington wrote, “is that these people are out of sight and out of mind, and alone. The young are somewhat more visible, yet they too stay close to their neighborhoods.”

In addition, the poor wielded no political power. This made it easy for others to ignore them. “The people of the other America do not, by far and large, belong to unions, to fraternal organizations,” Harrington wrote, “or to political parties. They are without lobbies of their own; they put forward no legislative program.” Without a political voice, the poor went unheard.

43.3 – The Landscape of Poverty in a "Land of Plenty"

The "other America," the land of the poor, had no geographic or cultural boundaries. It reached into cities and rural areas in every state. Its "inhabitants" belonged to every racial, ethnic, and age group in the country. In 1959, more than one fourth of the nation’s poor were children, and one third were elderly. In a decade marked by prosperity, how did so many get left behind?

Left Behind in the Inner Cities

As middle-class whites moved out of cities in the 1950s, poor people moved in. From 1945 to 1960, about 5 million African Americans left the South for northern cities. By 1955, nearly 700,000 Puerto Ricans migrated to the mainland, mostly to New York City. In the West, large numbers of Mexican immigrants moved to Los Angeles and other cities.

Many of the new arrivals came in search of manufacturing jobs. However, as industries relocated to the suburbs, the jobs disappeared. Housing discrimination limited where minorities could live and work. "When I went . . . to look for apartments," a Puerto Rican in Philadelphia recalled, "they throw the door in my face. They don't want no colored people, you know, my skin is dark." Black and Latino populations became concentrated in decaying, inner-city areas that were being abandoned by whites. These blighted neighborhoods turned into overcrowded slums with high rates of poverty and unemployment.

To rectify this problem, Congress passed the Housing Act of 1949. Its goal was to provide "a decent home . . . for every American family" by funding public housing and urban renewal programs. Under urban renewal, the government demolished many slums and replaced them with high-rise apartments, offices, and civic buildings. Despite its lofty-sounding goal, however, the Housing Act of 1949 made urban poverty worse. Hundreds of thousands of poor people lost homes when their neighborhoods were bulldozed. The government intended low-income public housing projects to provide an alternative, but not enough housing was built to accommodate all the displaced households. In many cities, the overcrowded and impoverished "projects" became the new slums.

Trying to Live Off the Land

American farmers also faced poverty. After World War II, new agricultural technology contributed to the growth of agribusiness—the industry of food production by large corporations or wealthy individuals. Agribusiness holdings were vast in size and produced huge quantities of food very efficiently by applying industrial production techniques to farming. Agribusiness was profitable, but its earnings accumulated at the expense of the rural poor. Small farmers could not compete with the giant corporate farms, and many sank into poverty. As a result, thousands of poor rural whites and blacks moved off the land and into cities in search of work.

On large corporate farms, migrant workers endured low pay and wretched living conditions. Many were Mexican braceros who came to the United States between 1942 and 1964. Other Mexicans came illegally. In 1954, the government organized Operation Wetback to expel undocumented Mexican immigrants. As a result, officials seized and deported several million Mexicans. Of the Mexican immigrants who remained in the United States in the 1950s, one in three lived below the poverty line.

Appalachia, a mountainous region in the South, was another rural outpost of poverty. Because of the steep terrain there, living off the land by farming was difficult. Coal mining, the region's once-dominant industry, declined after World War II, as the demand

for coal fell. The decrease in demand and the mechanization of mining led to job losses for miners. In the 1950s, more than 2 million impoverished people left Appalachia. Harrington described those who remained as "a beaten people, sunk in their poverty and deprived of hope."

America's Poorest Citizens

Perhaps the poorest U.S. citizens were American Indians. A 1949 study of conditions on American Indian reservations found "hopeless poverty and slum squalor." Indeed, those living on reservations seemed the most invisible poor of all, so much so that Michael Harrington omitted them—"quite wrongly" he later wrote—from *The Other America*.

In 1934, the Indian Reorganization Act had affirmed American Indians' right to govern themselves. It had also affirmed their status as wards of the federal government. This meant the government held responsibility for protecting their lands and providing them with economic aid and social services.

After World War II, the government wanted to end this relationship. As a practical matter, "getting out of the Indian business" would save money. Many people also thought that releasing American Indians from federal supervision would allow them to assimilate and become economically self-reliant. "Set the Indians free!" was their slogan. Others believed American Indians were not ready to be self-sufficient and would be vulnerable to exploitation. They feared that the tribes would be "freed" of the few assets—mainly land—they had left.

In 1953, Congress voted to terminate the government's responsibility for American Indians. The termination policy ended federal aid to tribes, withdrew federal land protection, and distributed tribal land among individuals. The Voluntary Relocation Program encouraged American Indians to move to cities. It provided transportation and initial help with finding housing and a job. By 1960, about 30 percent of American Indians lived in urban areas. However, many who relocated struggled to adapt to city life.

More than 100 Indian tribes and bands were eventually "terminated." Without economic aid, their poverty grew worse. Destitute tribes were forced to sell their land, resulting in the loss of more than 1 million acres of land. Termination eventually proved to be a failure, and in 1963, the policy was abandoned.

43.4 – Current Connections: The Changing Face of Poverty in America

More than 40 years have passed since *The Other America* drew attention to poverty in the United States. Despite decades of economic growth and government programs to help the poor, the "other America" has not disappeared. Over time, however, the face of poverty has changed. Today's poor are younger and more diverse than were the poor of the 1960s. Those who are homeless are also more visible and are readily seen in cities and suburbs across the country.

The graphs in this section show how poverty affects various U.S. populations today. But numbers alone do not answer certain age-old questions about poverty: Why are people poor? What should be done to end poverty? Who should take on the responsibility of ending it?

Poverty by the Numbers Since the publication of *The Other America*, the United States has made progress in reducing poverty. By 2000, the overall poverty rate, or percentage of people living in poverty, had decreased by almost half. But following a recession that began in 2001, the poverty rate began to inch upward again. From 2003 to 2004, the poverty rate rose from 12.5 to 12.7 percent. Two tenths of a percent may not sound like much, but that increase represents 1.1 million people who became impoverished that year. An estimated 37 million Americans lived in poverty in 2005—a figure not all that different from the number in 1960.

Poverty by Age and Education The age groups most likely to be poor have changed over the past half century. In 1960, at least three out of ten older Americans were poor. Thanks largely to rising Social Security payments, the poverty rate among the elderly dropped to less than one in ten by 2005. The poverty rate for children also decreased, but not as quickly.

Among working-age adults, the poverty rate has not changed dramatically since 1965. In this group, poverty decreases as level of education increases. In 2004, the poverty rate for adults aged 25 or older with college degrees was only 4 percent. The rate for those without high school diplomas was six times as high.

Poverty by Ethnic Group and Country of Origin As was true when Michael Harrington wrote *The Other America*, whites make up the largest group of poor Americans. Among all ethnic groups, African Americans have made the most dramatic gains since Harrington's time. In 1959, more than half of all blacks lived in poverty. By 2005, that figure had dropped to about one in four. Even so, African Americans' poverty rate is almost three times higher than that of whites.

Beginning in the late 1960s, immigration into the United States increased rapidly. By 2005, the poverty rate for all foreign-born people in the United States was somewhat higher than that for native-born Americans. Over time, however, immigrants' income levels tend to rise. In fact, naturalized citizens have a lower poverty rate than native-born Americans.

Summary

Michael Harrington's *The Other America* revealed that despite the general affluence of the 1950s, millions of "socially visible" Americans lived in poverty. Although people's views and understanding of poverty have changed over time, the problem persists.

Defining poverty Pauperism was once considered a moral failure. Today, poverty is defined in terms of income. People below the poverty line do not have enough income to live decently.

An invisible class In *The Other America*, Michael Harrington argued that the poor were “invisible” for many reasons. They lived apart from the middle class but looked much the same. They also played no role in politics.

Urban poverty Impoverished minorities became concentrated in decaying cities when the middle class moved out. The Housing Act of 1949 launched urban renewal programs to clear out slums and build new housing. However, many of these housing projects became slums.

Rural poverty The growth of agribusiness harmed many farmers. Migrant workers on corporate farms were not paid enough to lift them out of poverty. One of the poorest rural regions, Appalachia, suffered from poor farming conditions and a declining coal industry.

American Indian policy Efforts by the federal government to “terminate” its responsibility for Indian tribes led to increased poverty among Native Americans. The Voluntary Relocation Program helped Indians move to cities, but many had trouble adapting to urban life.

The “other America” today Despite government efforts, poverty is still a significant problem in the United States. About 37 million Americans lived in poverty in 2005. Today’s poor are younger and more diverse than those of the past. They are also more visible in society.

Chapter 44 — Segregation in the Post-World War II Period

How did segregation affect American life in the postwar period?

44.1 – Introduction

For as long as she could remember, Melba Pattillo had wanted to ride the merry-go-round at Fair Park in her hometown of Little Rock, Arkansas. But whenever she asked her mother or grandmother to take her, they said it was not possible. So one day, when Melba was five, she decided to ride on her own.

Melba and her family were at Fair Park on a picnic. It was the Fourth of July. While the grownups were setting up tables of food, Melba made her escape. She later recalled, “I had had my eye on one horse in particular, Prancer, the one I had dreamed about during all those months I saved up the five pennies I needed to ride him.”

Melba tried to give her money to the man working the ride. “There is no space for you here,” he told her coldly. When she pointed out that Prancer’s saddle was empty, the man got angry. He banged so hard on the counter that the pennies fell off. “You don’t belong here!” he yelled.

Melba’s knees shook. She noticed other angry faces glaring at her as though she had done something wrong. She ran back to her family. “I was so terrified,” she said, “that I didn’t even take the time to pick up my precious pennies. At five I learned that there was to be no space for me on that merry-go-round no matter how many saddles stood empty.”

Melba Pattillo was a black child in the segregated South. In the 1940s, when this event took place, African Americans throughout the South suffered under a harsh system of racial discrimination. Jim Crow segregation laws not only kept blacks out of amusement parks like Fair Park. They also separated blacks from whites in most public facilities, including schools, libraries, and hospitals.

In this chapter, you will learn what life was like for African Americans in the postwar years in the South and the rest of the country. You will also learn how things finally began to change for the better.

44.2 – A Nation Divided: Segregation in American Life

Racial segregation forced blacks to behave in certain ways. They were expected to accept their lesser status in society and act accordingly. W. E. B. Du Bois called this pattern of behavior “living behind the veil.” In private or among other blacks, they acted normally. But around whites, they put on a “mask,” hiding their true feelings and acting meek and inferior.

In practice, this meant that most blacks avoided looking white people in the eyes. When they spoke to whites, they looked at the ground. A black male could not look at a white

woman or touch her accidentally. If charged with inappropriate attention to white females, a black male might face a lynch mob in many states throughout the nation. Blacks had to accept white insults and degrading names such as “boy,” “girl,” “auntie,” or “uncle,” regardless of their age. This code of rules and behavior was the product of a long history of racial discrimination in the United States. It was most evident in the South, but it extended throughout American society.

Segregation in Public Accommodations

Segregation was common in public places, especially in the South. The segregation of public accommodations got a boost in 1896, when the Supreme Court ruled in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that railroad cars could be segregated as long as the accommodations were “separate but equal.” This ruling gave rise to many state laws legalizing segregation in public accommodations, including theaters, restaurants, libraries, parks, and transport services.

Jim Crow laws established separate facilities for whites and blacks across the South. In waiting rooms and rest rooms, train cars and buses, theaters and restaurants, and even on park benches, blacks and whites were kept apart. One state even passed a law requiring separate telephone booths.

Often there was simply no accommodation for blacks at all. Some restaurants refused to serve African Americans. And in some places there was a bathroom for whites but none for blacks. In other cases, the facility for blacks was notably inferior. That was often the case with schools.

Segregation in Schools

Jim Crow laws for schools began to appear shortly after the Civil War. By 1888, school segregation had been established in almost every southern state, along with some northern and western states.

Although the *Plessy* decision stated that separate accommodations for the races must be equal, the reality was often quite different. Southern states spent far more on white schools than on black schools. Teachers in black schools got lower salaries and worked under more difficult conditions. They often lacked books and supplies, and their school facilities were frequently substandard. In some schools, students had to gather firewood to heat their classrooms in the winter. Although white schools had bus systems, black students often had to walk miles to get to school.

Segregation in Housing

African Americans also experienced housing segregation. This came in two main forms. One was *de facto* segregation, which was established by practice and custom, rather than law. This form was found in all parts of the country. The other was *de jure* segregation, or segregation by law. *De jure* segregation occurred mostly in the South.

De facto segregation was common in many northern cities. When large numbers of African Americans began moving north in the 1900s, many white residents used

informal measures to keep blacks out of their neighborhoods. One practice was the restrictive covenant. This was an agreement among neighbors not to sell or rent to African Americans or other racial minorities. Restrictive covenants often forced blacks into poor neighborhoods that were farther from jobs, public transport, or good schools.

De jure segregation was accomplished through racial zoning. These local laws defined where the different races could live. In the 1930s and 1940s, the federal government supported racial zoning. In 1951, however, the Supreme Court declared racial zoning unconstitutional. Yet segregated neighborhoods remained the norm in many southern cities.

Segregation in Marriage

Between 1870 and 1884, eleven southern states passed laws against miscegenation, or interracial marriage. In the words of one historian, these were the “ultimate segregation laws.” They stated that blacks were inferior to whites and that any amount of racial mixing through marriage or childbirth threatened the “purity of the white race.”

Some states outside the South also banned interracial marriage. Many laws against miscegenation prohibited marriage not only between African Americans and whites but also between whites and Asians or whites and American Indians.

Segregation in the Workplace

Employment and working conditions reflected widespread segregation in American society. Few blacks held white-collar jobs, or jobs that do not involve manual labor. Those who did were usually teachers or ministers. Not many blacks were employed as skilled laborers, either. Most worked in agriculture or services. Their wages were much lower than those of whites. In 1940, for example, the median income level of black men was less than half that of white men.

Discrimination in employment was a direct result of racism, but it was also the product of poor schooling for African Americans. Illiteracy and a lack of education helped trap blacks in low-level jobs, especially in the South.

Segregation in Politics

Southern whites also found ways to disenfranchise, or deny voting rights to, African Americans. In the years after Reconstruction, poll taxes and literacy tests kept many blacks from voting. Many southern states also disenfranchised blacks through use of the white primary. This was a primary election in which only whites could participate. It was based on the domination of southern politics by the Democratic Party, which southern whites perceived as the opponent of radical Reconstruction and civil rights. The Democrats excluded blacks from party membership and thus denied them the right to vote in party primaries. As a result, the Democrats had no need to court black voters, and blacks had no political representation.

Texas was one state in which the white primary was used extensively. Between 1923 and 1944, Texas Democrats used it to limit black participation in politics. In 1944,

however, the Supreme Court declared white primaries unconstitutional. As a result, more African Americans began voting in Texas, and the number of registered black voters rose substantially.

Gerrymandering was another method used to discriminate against black voters and render their votes meaningless. Gerrymandering is the practice of redrawing the lines of a voting district to give one party or group of voters an advantage. If the majority of voters in a particular voting district are African Americans, they may be able to elect a candidate who represents their interests. But if the voting district lines are gerrymandered to break up that population and place African Americans in white-majority districts, the black vote gets diluted and becomes less effective. Through gerrymandering, black voters were often denied political influence.

These methods were unlike the violent methods used in the early years after Reconstruction, when blacks were sometimes forcibly prevented from voting. But they were equally effective in denying blacks voting rights and limiting black representation in government.

44.3 – Small Steps Toward Equality

Jackie Robinson would become one of the greatest baseball players in the history of the game. In 1944, however, he was a lieutenant in the army, stationed at Fort Hood, Texas. Leaving the base one day, he got on a military bus and took a seat up front. The driver ordered him to move to the back, but Robinson refused. When he got off at his stop, he was arrested. Robinson was nearly court-martialed for his actions that day. Later, he would achieve fame on the baseball diamond and become a role model for millions of Americans. Over the course of his life, Robinson came to represent both the struggles of African Americans and their gradual advances in white-dominated society.

Breaking the Color Line in Sports

Jackie Robinson began his baseball career in the Negro Leagues after World War II. At the time, baseball was divided by the color line, a barrier created by custom, law, and economic differences that separated whites from nonwhites.

In 1945, Robinson crossed the color line when Brooklyn Dodgers general manager Branch Rickey hired him. After briefly playing for a minor league team, Robinson took the field in a Dodgers uniform in 1947. Being the first black major league baseball player was not easy. Fans taunted him, and some of his own teammates resented playing with a black man. Players on opposing teams sometimes tried to “bean” him with the ball or spike him with their cleats. As he later recalled, “Plenty of times I wanted to haul off [and fight] when someone insulted me for the color of my skin, but I had to hold to myself. I knew I was kind of an experiment. The whole thing was bigger than me.” Robinson overcame these challenges and eventually led his team to six league championships and one World Series victory.

Around the same time, other professional sports began to open up to black athletes. Football became integrated in 1946, when four black players joined the professional leagues. Four years later, the National Basketball Association accepted its first African American players. By the 1950s, the color line in professional sports was gradually disappearing.

Desegregation of the Armed Forces

Another area of American life in which the color line would soon fall was the armed forces. But again, change did not come easily. Despite the valuable contributions of African American soldiers during World War II, the military remained segregated after the war.

Many GIs returning from combat continued to face segregation at home, especially in the Jim Crow South. In 1946, army veteran Isaac Woodard was traveling by bus from North Carolina to Georgia. At one stop, the driver threatened Woodard for taking too much time in the “colored” bathroom. The two men argued, and Woodard was arrested. Police officers then beat him so badly that he was permanently blinded. When President Truman learned of the incident, he was appalled and vowed to do something about segregation in the military. “I shall never approve of it,” he wrote. “I am going to try to remedy it.”

Truman knew that desegregation in the armed forces was necessary, not only on moral grounds but also for political reasons. Like many Americans, he recognized that it was hypocritical to fight Nazism and anti-Semitism abroad while maintaining a color line at home. Likewise, he saw that continued segregation in the United States could undermine efforts to promote freedom and democracy overseas as part of the Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union.

As the Cold War intensified in the late 1940s, political leaders began to discuss the need to rebuild the armed forces. Many African Americans said they would refuse to fight in a segregated army. Although many leaders in the armed forces opposed desegregation, Truman believed that discrimination in the military must end.

On July 26, 1948, Truman signed Executive Order 9981, which stated, “It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.” With this order, desegregation became official policy in the armed forces.

Civil Rights Organizations Challenge Discrimination

The fight to end segregation would never have succeeded without the determined efforts of civil rights activists. Many Americans worked tirelessly for various organizations dedicated to achieving equal rights.

One of these organizations was the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Founded in Chicago in 1942 by a group of students, CORE was committed to nonviolent direct

action as a means of change. Its first action—a peaceful protest at a segregated coffee shop in Chicago in 1943—gained national attention and helped CORE spread to other northern cities. It went on to assist in the desegregation of many public facilities in the North and then turned its attention to the South in the late 1950s.

Another key group, the National Urban League, formed in response to the Great Migration of blacks to northern cities in the early 1900s. The Urban League focused on helping African Americans achieve success in the North. It counseled newly arrived migrants and trained black social workers. It also promoted educational and employment opportunities for African Americans. During World War II, the Urban League helped integrate defense plants.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the oldest major civil rights organization, also remained active in the struggle for equal rights. Founded in 1909, the NAACP continued its efforts to promote civil rights legislation. In 1939, the group established a legal arm for civil rights actions, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. The following year, Thurgood Marshall became the head of this group.

The Legal Defense and Educational Fund focused on defeating segregation through the court system. Its main weapon was the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. This clause prohibits states from denying any person equal protection of the laws. Since the clause does not allow states to discriminate, it is crucial to the protection of civil rights.

44.4 – The Courts Begin to Dismantle Segregation

In 1951, getting to school every day was hard for Linda Brown, a seven-year-old in Topeka, Kansas. First she had to walk a mile, passing through a railroad yard on her way to the bus stop. Then she had to take a long bus ride to school. All of this made no sense to Linda because there was a good school only seven blocks from her house. But the schools in Topeka were segregated. The school near Linda was for whites only, and Linda was black. Her father, Oliver Brown, decided to do something about that. With the help of the court system, Brown and other civil rights activists began to dismantle segregation.

Early Court Decisions Make Big Strides

In the 1930s and 1940s, the Supreme Court began to strike down Jim Crow laws. In 1935, the Court ordered the University of Maryland to admit a black student. Later it declared white primaries unconstitutional and barred segregation on interstate transport. These were important steps in breaking down segregation.

In 1948, the Supreme Court tackled the issue of segregated housing. In *Shelley v. Kraemer*, the Court ruled that states could not enforce restrictive covenants. As a result, many city neighborhoods became desegregated. Over the next few years, for example,

thousands of black families in Chicago moved into areas that had previously been restricted to whites.

In 1950, the Court handed down strong rulings against discrimination in education. In two cases, the Court declared that segregation in graduate schools and law schools was unconstitutional. It began to look as if all “separate but equal” education was on the way out.

A Landmark Ruling: Brown v. Board of Education

Meanwhile in Topeka, Oliver Brown, Linda’s father, had contacted the NAACP, which in turn gathered 12 other parents to join in efforts to desegregate the city’s schools. First the parents tried to enroll their children in white schools, but all were denied admission. So in 1951 the NAACP sued the Topeka school district in court. A local court found “no willful discrimination.” The NAACP appealed the case, and it went all the way to the Supreme Court.

Brown v. Board of Education was actually a set of cases from Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, Delaware, and Washington, D.C., that had moved up through the court system at the same time. The Court decided to combine the cases because the plaintiffs were all looking for the same legal remedy. The Brown case was a class-action lawsuit, a lawsuit filed by people on behalf of themselves and a larger group who might benefit.

The NAACP’s lead attorney, Thurgood Marshall, argued the case. He supplied evidence showing how segregation harms African American children. The most famous piece of evidence was the “doll test.” In the test, 16 black children had been shown a white doll and a brown doll. Ten of the children chose the white doll as the “nice” doll. The children were also asked to identify the doll that looked “bad.” Eleven children selected the black doll. According to the psychologist who conducted the test, “the Negro child accepts as early as six, seven or eight the negative stereotypes about his own group.”

The Brown case stayed in the Supreme Court for a year and a half. During this time, a new chief justice, Earl Warren, was appointed to the Court. Warren was a firm opponent of segregation. Believing that a unanimous decision in the Brown case would carry more weight than a divided one, he worked hard to convince all the judges to rule in favor of the plaintiffs. Finally, in May 1954, he succeeded. On May 17, he announced the Supreme Court ruling in Brown v. Board of Education:

We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other “tangible” factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does . . . We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of “separate but equal” has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment.

—Brown v. Board of Education, 1954

The Brown decision dismantled the legal basis for segregation in schools and other public places. It was one of the most important judicial decisions in the nation's history. It was also one of many key rulings on civil rights made by the Court under Earl Warren, who served as chief justice from 1953 to 1969. In fact, the Warren Court became known for its activism on civil rights and free speech.

All Deliberate Speed? Much of the South Resists Change

A year after the Brown decision, the Supreme Court issued a second ruling, known as Brown II. This ruling instructed the states to begin desegregation "with all deliberate speed." The phrase was chosen carefully. The justices wanted desegregation to go forward as quickly as possible, but they also recognized that many obstacles stood in the way. They wanted to allow states some flexibility in desegregating their schools in accordance with Brown.

In some border states, desegregation took place without incident. But in parts of the South, there was greater resistance. For example, in 1955 a white citizens' council in Mississippi published a handbook called Black Monday, referring to the day the Supreme Court handed down the Brown decision. The handbook called for an end to the NAACP and public schools. It also advocated a separate state for African Americans.

Despite such opposition, the Brown decision inspired hopes that African Americans could achieve equal rights in American society. It served as a catalyst for the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, a time when many individuals and groups dedicated themselves to promoting equality, opportunity, and rights.

Summary

Segregation remained widespread in the United States after World War II, especially in the South. But there were also signs of change. In the 1940s and 1950s, desegregation began in sports and the military. Civil rights organizations grew stronger. The landmark Supreme Court ruling Brown v. Board of Education heralded the beginning of the modern civil rights movement.

Segregated society Segregation affected every aspect of life in the Jim Crow South. De jure segregation was defined by law, while de facto segregation was determined by custom. Blacks in the North and West also experienced de facto segregation, especially in housing.

Breaking the color line Professional sports began to be integrated in the late 1940s. Most notable was Jackie Robinson's entry into major league baseball. The integration of professional football and basketball soon followed.

Executive Order 981 President Truman was determined to integrate the armed forces. His executive order, issued in 1948, ended segregation in the military.

Civil rights groups Civil rights organizations gained strength in the postwar years. CORE was dedicated to civil rights reform through nonviolent action. The National Urban League tried to help African Americans who were living in northern cities. The NAACP began a legal branch and launched a campaign, led by Thurgood Marshall, to challenge the constitutionality of segregation.

Brown v. Board of Education The NAACP's legal campaign triumphed in 1954, when the Warren Court issued the Brown v. Board of Education decision. This ruling declared segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional and undermined the legal basis for segregation in other areas of American life.

Chapter 45 — The Civil Rights Revolution: "Like a Mighty Stream"

How did civil rights activists advance the ideals of liberty, equality, and opportunity for African Americans?

45.1 – Introduction

Four decades later, Cardell Gay still remembered the day—May 3, 1963—when hundreds of young people marched through the streets of Birmingham, Alabama, to protest segregation. “The police were there with their dogs and their hoses,” he recalled. “And . . . although they had instructed us to stop, we would not stop. We continued to move closer to them. What they did, they let it fly.”

What the police “let fly” was water from a high-pressure fire hose. “It knocked us on the ground,” Gay said. “The hoses were so strong . . . [the water] . . . would knock us all over the place, send you tumbling.” The force of the blast even rolled children down the street.

It was the second day of marches by young people in Birmingham that spring. Gay was 16 at the time. His high school teachers had influenced his decision to march. “In class, they’d say, ‘Don’t leave campus or you’ll be expelled,’” Gay explained years later. “But in private, they’d say, ‘Go on. I can’t do it, I’d lose my job. But do it up. Keep it up.’”

More than a thousand young people, some as young as five, marched on May 2, the first day of the protest. Hundreds were arrested for marching without a permit. The following day, an even larger force of young blacks turned out to march. Police Chief Bull Connor ordered them to be dispersed with fire hoses. As the youngsters fled, policemen chased them down with clubs and dogs.

The Birmingham protests showed that African Americans were not going to back down in their struggle for civil rights. They would persist until they reached their goal. “I’ll keep marching till I get freedom,” one 12-year-old protester declared.

In this chapter, you will learn about key events in the early years of the civil rights movement. The years from 1955 to 1965 witnessed efforts to desegregate buses, schools, lunch counters, and other public places. During these years, civil rights activists also worked to secure voting rights for African Americans.

45.2 – A Boycott in Montgomery Inspires a Movement

Although the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* outlawed segregation in public schools, segregation continued in much of the South. Law and custom still required blacks and whites to use separate facilities, like drinking fountains and waiting rooms, and to sit separately in restaurants and on buses. In 1955, however, a boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, began to shake up the Jim Crow South.

Protesting Unfair Bus Laws

In the 1950s, public buses in Montgomery were segregated, as they were throughout the South. African Americans had to sit at the back of the bus. If the bus was full, they were required to give up their seats to white riders. Furthermore, blacks could never share a row with whites.

That was about to change. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, a 43-year-old African American woman, refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white passenger. Parks, a seamstress, had been active in the Alabama chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Years later, Parks described her motives for remaining in her seat: "This is what I wanted to know: when and how would we ever determine our rights as human beings?"

Leaders of the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP had been looking for a test case to fight segregation. Parks, who was well-spoken and had a solid reputation in the community, seemed perfect. E. D. Nixon, a local activist, asked Parks if the NAACP could build a case around her arrest, and Parks agreed.

The following evening, a group of African American ministers met to plan a strategy. They decided to hold a one-day bus boycott on December 5. Black ministers announced the boycott at Sunday services, and activists distributed leaflets asking African Americans to take part.

On December 5, a sign at a Montgomery bus stop read, "People, don't ride the bus today. Don't ride it, for freedom." On that day, 90 percent of African Americans who usually rode the bus honored the boycott.

A Young Minister Becomes a Leader

The one-day boycott was so successful that the organizers, who called themselves the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), decided to extend it. To lead the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the MIA chose a 26-year-old minister, Martin Luther King Jr.

King was pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. Originally from Atlanta, King had come to Montgomery after completing a Ph.D. in theology at Boston University. He had been in town two years when the boycott began. King explained the purpose of the action in a speech to a mass meeting at Holt Street Baptist Church on the evening of December 5:

My friends, I want it to be known that we're going to work with grim and bold determination to gain justice on the buses in this city. And we are not wrong, we are not wrong in what we are doing. If we are wrong, the Supreme Court of this nation is wrong. If we are wrong, the Constitution of the United States is wrong. If we are wrong, God Almighty is wrong . . . If we are wrong, justice is a lie. And we are determined here in Montgomery to work and fight until justice runs down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream.

To make the boycott work, African Americans in Montgomery organized an elaborate carpool system to get around town. Several thousand people used the carpools daily. Others walked, rode bicycles, took taxis, or hitchhiked.

Many of Montgomery's white leaders did everything they could to stop the boycott and preserve segregation. Some business owners fired black protesters from their jobs. Other people took more drastic action. Some radical segregationists, including members of the Ku Klux Klan, attacked protesters and even set off bombs at the houses of boycott leaders. They also firebombed several churches that served the black community.

In November 1956, the Supreme Court upheld an Alabama court's ruling that segregation on buses was unconstitutional. About a month later, on December 20, the protesters voted to end the boycott, which had lasted 381 days. As a result of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Martin Luther King Jr. earned a national reputation as a civil rights leader.

African American Churches Support the Movement

After the boycott, King worked with other ministers and civil rights leaders to form the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957. With King as its president, the SCLC would play a major role in the civil rights movement.

The SCLC pledged to use nonviolent resistance to redeem "the soul of America." Nonviolent resistance is peaceful protest or noncooperation with authorities that is designed to achieve social or political goals. In a public statement on January 11, 1957, the SCLC explained the strategy:

Nonviolence is not a symbol of weakness or cowardice, but as Jesus demonstrated, nonviolent resistance transforms weakness into strength and breeds courage in the face of danger. We urge . . . [African Americans], no matter how great the provocation, to dedicate themselves to this motto: "Not one hair of one head of one white person shall be harmed."

—SCLC, "A Statement to the South and Nation," January 11, 1957

Supporters of the SCLC vowed that they would not resort to violence to achieve their ends but would remain peaceful and steadfast in their pursuit of justice. This would prove to be a powerful tactic in the struggle for civil rights.

45.3 – School Desegregation

After the Brown ruling, some districts and states in the South desegregated their schools quickly. Others, however, resisted the Supreme Court decision. Governors of several southern states staunchly maintained their opposition to integration. The governors of Arkansas and Mississippi, for example, aggressively intervened in an effort

to prevent blacks from attending all-white schools. The battle to integrate public schools proved to be long and difficult.

Nine Teenagers Integrate Central High School

In 1957, a federal judge ordered public schools in Little Rock, Arkansas, to begin desegregation. The Little Rock school superintendent, Virgil Blossom, hoped to postpone the change as long as possible. He set up a plan to integrate just one school, Central High School. Two thousand white students attended Central. In September 1957, nine black students were scheduled to join them. They would later be known as the Little Rock Nine.

Citing public opposition to integration in Arkansas, Governor Orval Faubus declared that he would not support desegregation in Little Rock. Faubus called out the Arkansas National Guard. On September 4, 1957, the day the nine students were to begin classes, the troops appeared at Central High as a show of force and to prevent the students from entering the building. One of the students, Elizabeth Eckford, recalled being surrounded by an angry white crowd outside the school:

They moved closer and closer . . . I tried to see a friendly face somewhere in the crowd—someone who maybe would help. I looked into the face of an old woman and it seemed a kind face, but when I looked again, she spat on me.

—Elizabeth Eckford, in an interview with NAACP official Daisy Bates

Another white woman later emerged from the crowd and helped to shield Eckford from harm. But Eckford and her fellow black students were kept out of school that day and for days afterward.

Finally, on September 23, the Little Rock Nine returned to Central High. Once again, an angry white mob surrounded the school. This time, though, the mayor of Little Rock sought help from President Eisenhower. Although Eisenhower did not believe that integration should be accomplished by force, he could not allow defiance of federal authority. The president issued Executive Order 10730, sending in federal troops to maintain order and enforce the integration of the school. Eisenhower also put the Arkansas National Guard under federal control. The students rode to school in a convoy led by army jeeps with guns mounted on their hoods. They also had military bodyguards to protect them—at least for part of the school year.

Despite this protection, the black students were subjected to insults and acts of violence from white students. As one of the nine, Minnijean Brown, said at the time, “They throw rocks, they spill ink on your clothes . . . they bother you every minute.” Melba Pattillo was another one of the students. Acid was thrown in her eyes, and only the quick action of her bodyguard saved her eyesight. The students and their families also received death threats.

Eight of the nine African American students finished out the year at Central High. The following year, however, Governor Faubus closed all the Little Rock schools rather than allow another year of integration. It was not until September 1959 that integration continued in Little Rock.

James Meredith Enrolls at the University of Mississippi

Public universities were also required to integrate. In 1961, James Meredith, an African American veteran of the Korean War, applied for admission as a transfer student to the University of Mississippi, commonly known as Ole Miss. The university had traditionally been all white, and Meredith knew he would be taking a stand to integrate it.

When his application was rejected, Meredith turned to the NAACP to help him take his case through the courts. At first, a district court ruled against him. On appeal, however, a higher court ruled that the university had to admit Meredith. Refusing him admission, the court said, amounted to the state of Mississippi maintaining segregation.

Mississippi governor Ross Barnett vowed that no black student would attend Ole Miss while he was in office. On September 20, Barnett, acting as university registrar, personally refused to enroll Meredith.

But President John F. Kennedy, also known as JFK, and Attorney General Robert Kennedy were determined to uphold the law as Brown had defined it. Although JFK was concerned about losing Democratic support in the South, he was sympathetic to the civil rights movement. In a nationally broadcast speech, he declared, "Americans are free to disagree with the law but not to disobey it."

On Sunday, September 30, 1962, James Meredith secretly arrived on campus. When the news got out that night, a riot erupted. Angry white students burned cars and destroyed property. Before the night was over, two men had been shot and killed.

President Kennedy sent armed federal marshals to protect Meredith so he could attend classes. Meredith survived verbal taunts and threats against his life and the lives of his parents. But he had always known what was at stake. Just days before entering Ole Miss, he had written, "The price of progress is indeed high, but the price of holding back is much higher." Meredith graduated from Ole Miss in the summer of 1963.

45.4 – Sit-Ins and Freedom Rides

The campaign to integrate public facilities in the South continued through the 1960s. During this time, a growing student movement influenced the direction of the civil rights struggle. Student protesters challenged segregation in various ways. They sat down in "whites-only" public places and refused to move, thereby causing the business to lose customers. This tactic is known as a sit-in. They also boycotted businesses that maintained segregation. And they rode interstate buses that many whites in the South tried to keep segregated.

Sitting Firm to Challenge Segregated Facilities

On February 1, 1960, four African American students from North Carolina's Agricultural and Technical College sat down at a lunch counter in the Woolworth's drugstore in Greensboro. They ordered food, but the waitress refused to serve them, saying that only white customers could eat at Woolworth's.

The four students stayed at the counter until the store closed. One of the four, Franklin McCain, explained later that the group did not like being denied "dignity and respect." They decided to return the next day, and about 20 other people joined them. They sat at the counter all day, but were not served.

During the 1960s, sit-ins like this one captured nationwide attention for the civil rights movement. As news of the Greensboro action spread, protesters began sit-ins in towns and cities across the South.

The Greensboro protests continued for months. In April, the city's blacks organized a boycott of Woolworth's and another local store with a segregated lunch counter. Eventually the local businesses gave in. On July 25, 1960, the first African American ate at the Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro.

Black students also mounted a large sit-in campaign in Nashville, Tennessee. As in Greensboro, Nashville's African American community followed up with a boycott of downtown businesses. And once again, local business owners and public officials gave in. On May 10, 1960, Nashville became the first major city in the South to begin integrating its public facilities.

Students Organize to Make a Difference

The sit-ins and boycotts began to transform the segregated South and change the civil rights movement. College students took the lead in the sit-ins, and many became activists in the movement.

In April 1960, Ella Baker, a leader with the SCLC, called a meeting of student civil rights activists in Raleigh, North Carolina. Although Baker herself was 55 years old and no longer a student, she believed it was important for students to organize and run their own organization.

Under Baker's guidance, the students formed the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), pronounced "snick." SNCC's Statement of Purpose, written in May 1960, affirmed the new organization's commitment to justice, peace, and nonviolence:

We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose . . . Through nonviolence, courage displaces fear; love transforms hate. Acceptance dissipates prejudice; hope ends despair. Peace dominates war; faith reconciles doubt. Mutual regard cancels enmity. Justice for all overthrows injustice.

SNCC trained students in civil disobedience, counseling them to deliberately break laws they considered unjust. SNCC leaders emphasized that protesters must not use violence, even if they were physically attacked. One SNCC training document explained, "You may choose to face physical assault without protecting yourself, hands at the sides, unclenched; or you may choose to protect yourself, making plain you do not intend to hit back."

SNCC members planned and participated in direct action throughout the South. Direct action refers to political acts, including protests of all types, designed to have an immediate impact. SNCC members played a major role in various campaigns of nonviolent direct action over the next several years.

Freedom Riders Face Violence

One direct action targeted the interstate bus system in the South. In 1960, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation in interstate transport was illegal. In the spring of 1961, the civil rights group Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) organized Freedom Rides to test whether southern states were complying with the ruling.

On May 4, 1961, seven blacks and six whites boarded two buses in Washington, D.C., and headed south. When the first bus reached Anniston, Alabama, on May 14, a white mob attacked the Freedom Riders. The mob followed the bus as it left town, threw a firebomb through the window, and then beat the passengers as they fled the bus. Passengers on the second bus were also beaten when they arrived in Alabama.

CORE abandoned the Freedom Rides, but SNCC continued them. Finally, Attorney General Robert Kennedy sent federal marshals to ensure safe passage for the riders to Jackson, Mississippi. When the Freedom Riders arrived, however, Jackson officials arrested them. They suffered physical abuse while in jail, but most became even more committed to ending segregation.

In late 1962, the Interstate Commerce Commission issued clear rules stating that buses and bus terminals involved in interstate travel must be integrated. CORE's leader, James Farmer, proclaimed victory for the Freedom Rides.

45.5 – A Campaign in Birmingham

In the early 1960s, Birmingham, Alabama, was a steel-mill town with a long history of bigotry. Martin Luther King Jr. called it the most segregated city in the country. As a result, the SCLC decided to focus its attention there in 1963.

Taking Aim at the Nation's Most Segregated City

Black residents of Birmingham experienced segregation in nearly every aspect of public life. Virtually no public facility in Birmingham allowed blacks and whites to mix.

Furthermore, Birmingham had a history of racist violence. Between 1956 and 1963, there were 18 unsolved bombings in black neighborhoods. The violence not only

targeted African Americans. In 1960, the New York Times reported attempts to explode dynamite at two Jewish synagogues as well.

The SCLC stepped directly into this violent climate in the spring of 1963. King and the SCLC joined forces with local Birmingham activists, led by Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth. Together they carefully planned a series of nonviolent actions against segregation.

King Advocates Nonviolence in “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

The protests began on April 3 with lunch-counter sit-ins followed by street demonstrations. Thirty protesters were arrested for marching at Birmingham City Hall without a permit. As leader of the Birmingham campaign, King decided the protests and arrests must continue. With little money to post bail, King realized that he would most likely go to jail and stay there for a while.

On April 12, King and 50 others demonstrated and were quickly arrested. While King was in jail, many members of Birmingham’s white clergy took out an ad in the local newspaper, criticizing King’s tactics: “We recognize the natural impatience of people who feel that their hopes are slow in being realized,” the ad said. “But we are convinced that these demonstrations are unwise and untimely.” Instead, the clergy urged African Americans to abide by the law and to negotiate with whites to achieve integration.

King disagreed. While he waited in jail, he wrote a response to the ad. In “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” King explained why African Americans were using civil disobedience and other forms of direct action to protest segregation. “The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust,” he wrote. “One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws.” Concerning the charge that protesters were being “impatient,” King wrote,

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct-action campaign that was “well-timed” in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word “Wait!” It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This “Wait!” has almost always meant “Never.” We must come to see . . . that “justice too long delayed is justice denied.”

—Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” April 16, 1963

The Nation Watches in Horror

By late April, Birmingham’s black leaders realized their protests were running out of steam. Few members of the black community were willing to carry out more direct action at the risk of going to jail. So the SCLC decided to turn to children. Although the decision was controversial, King argued that the children who took part in the demonstrations would develop “a sense of their own stake in freedom and justice.”

On May 2, 1963, more than 1,000 African American youths marched from Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church into the city center. The city's public safety commissioner, Bull Connor, had most of them arrested.

On May 3, more students gathered at the church, preparing to march again. This time, Connor ordered the police to barricade them in. When some students tried to leave, the police used attack dogs and high-pressure fire hoses on them.

News photographers captured scenes of peaceful protesters being knocked down by blasts of water or attacked by snarling dogs. The images in newspapers and on television shocked Americans, many of whom had never imagined that southerners would go to such brutal lengths to maintain segregation.

The protests and the national attention they attracted marked a turning point. At the urging of local business leaders, the city stepped back from confrontation, and on May 10 civil rights leaders announced a historic accord in Birmingham. Their agreement with the city called for a number of changes, including the desegregation of public facilities within 90 days. King called the deal "the most magnificent victory for justice we've seen in the Deep South."

A racist backlash soon followed, however. The Ku Klux Klan held a rally, and bombs later went off at a motel where black leaders had been staying. In response, President Kennedy sent federal troops to a nearby military base, promising to deploy them if necessary to keep the peace.

Birmingham remained calm for several months after that, but then another violent attack occurred. On September 15, during Sunday services, a bomb exploded at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, killing four African American girls. Reverend King later spoke at their funeral, calling them "the martyred heroines of a holy crusade for freedom and human dignity."

45.6 – Achieving Landmark Civil Rights Legislation

Despite the success of the Birmingham campaign, the city did not change overnight, nor did the events there bring immediate equality for African Americans. But the campaign did have important effects. It increased support for the civil rights movement around the country. More Americans came to identify with the movement's emphasis on rights, freedom, equality, and opportunity.

Following the spring protests in Birmingham, civil rights activists took their concerns to Washington, D.C. There they demonstrated for "jobs and freedom" and urged the passage of civil rights legislation.

Thousands March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom

The 1963 March on Washington was a long time coming. A. Philip Randolph, the head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, had proposed the march in 1941. His goal was to protest unequal treatment of African Americans in the war industries. He called off that rally, however, in deference to President Roosevelt's call for unity in the war effort.

In 1963, however, the time was ripe for the long-delayed march, which was organized by leaders of the country's major civil rights organizations. On August 28, more than 250,000 people marched in Washington. It was the largest political gathering ever held in the United States. The quarter of a million protesters included about 60,000 whites as well as union members, clergy, students, entertainers, and celebrities such as Rosa Parks and Jackie Robinson.

That day, marchers listened to African American performers, like opera great Marian Anderson, who sang "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands." They also held hands and joined in as folksinger Joan Baez sang "We Shall Overcome."

King Inspires the Nation with His Dream

The most notable event of the day was Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech, delivered from the Lincoln Memorial. In ringing tones, King spoke of his dream for a better America:

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal . . ." When we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

—Martin Luther King Jr., "I have a dream" speech, August 28, 1963

At the time of the march, a civil rights bill cautiously supported by President Kennedy was making its way through Congress. After Kennedy's assassination in November, President Lyndon B. Johnson continued to push for the bill. It stalled in the Senate, however, when senators opposed to the bill filibustered, speaking at great length to prevent legislative action. Nevertheless, the bill finally passed and was signed into law on July 2, 1964. The landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, or national origin—the most important civil rights law passed since Reconstruction.

45.7 – Regaining Voting Rights

In January 1964, the Twenty-fourth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified. It stated that no U.S. citizen could be denied the right to vote "by reason of failure to pay any poll

tax or other tax.” Some southern states had used poll taxes to prevent blacks from voting. The Twenty-fourth Amendment was a key victory in the African American struggle for voting rights. But there was more to be done to ensure that black citizens could actually vote.

Registering African American Voters in a Freedom Summer

In the spring of 1964, CORE and SNCC organized Freedom Summer, a campaign to register black voters in Mississippi. At the time, Mississippi was one of the most segregated states in the country, and voting rights for blacks were severely restricted. Although they made up nearly half of the state’s population, only a few African Americans were registered to vote, due in large part to restrictions imposed by state and local officials.

More than 900 people volunteered for Freedom Summer. Most were white college students from the North. They were given training in voter registration and were told to expect violent opposition to their efforts.

That prediction promptly came true. On June 21, three student activists disappeared in Neshoba County, Mississippi, after visiting the site of a burned black church. One of the activists, James Chaney, was black. The other two, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, were white. Six weeks later, the FBI discovered their bodies. They had been murdered.

Other violent acts marred Freedom Summer. There were numerous beatings, shootings, and bombings. At least three other activists suffered violent deaths. Most of these crimes went unpunished.

Marching for the Right to Vote

Undeterred by the violence of Freedom Summer, activists continued their registration campaign. Early the following year, the SCLC began to register black voters in Selma, Alabama. In Dallas County, where Selma is located, only 320 of more than 15,000 eligible black voters were registered to vote at the time. For weeks, civil rights protesters held daily marches at the Dallas County Courthouse. By February, more than 3,000 had been arrested, charged with crimes such as “unlawful assembly.” At that point, the SCLC called for a march from Selma to the state capital at Montgomery. The marchers planned to present the governor with a list of grievances.

On March 7, 1965, the protesters began their walk. Decades later, civil rights activist John Lewis recalled,

As we crossed the Pettus Bridge, we saw a line of lawmen. “We should kneel and pray,” I said . . . but we didn’t have time. “Troopers,” barked an officer, “advance!” They came at us like a human wave, a blur of blue uniforms, billy clubs, bullwhips and tear gas; one had a piece of rubber hose wrapped in barbed wire.

Once again, televised images of the violence that day outraged many Americans. The civil rights movement continued to gain support around the country.

In August, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The act outlawed literacy tests and other tactics used to deny African Americans the right to vote. The act also called for the federal government to supervise voter registration in areas where less than half of voting-age citizens were registered to vote. Federal intervention would ensure that eligible voters were not turned away.

Efforts to secure voting rights proved quite successful. In 1964, less than 7 percent of Mississippi's eligible black voters were registered to vote. By 1968, that number had risen to 59 percent. In Alabama, the numbers rose from about 20 percent to 57 percent during the same four-year period. Overall, the number of African American voters in the South increased from 1 million to 3.1 million between 1964 and 1968. The civil rights movement had made great strides in the years since the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Summary

Between 1955 and 1965, many key events took place in the civil rights movement. African Americans made great progress in their struggle for rights and equality.

Montgomery Bus Boycott In 1955, blacks in Montgomery, Alabama, began a lengthy boycott of the city's segregated bus system. As a result, Montgomery's buses were integrated.

SCLC and SNCC These two groups helped organize nonviolent civil rights actions. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference was led by Martin Luther King Jr. It played a major role in the Birmingham campaign and other events. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee organized sit-ins and engaged in other forms of civil disobedience.

Freedom Rides In 1961, black and white Freedom Riders rode buses through the South. They were testing southern compliance with laws outlawing segregation in interstate transport. The riders were subjected to violence and eventually received federal protection.

March on Washington A quarter of a million people marched in Washington, D.C., in August 1963 to demand jobs and freedom. The highlight of this event was Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech.

Freedom Summer In the summer of 1964, activists led voter registration drives in the South for African Americans.

Landmark legislation The Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned discrimination on the basis of race, sex, religion, or national origin. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 outlawed literacy tests, enabling many African Americans to vote.

Chapter 46 — Redefining Equality: From Black Power to Affirmative Action

How did civil rights activists change their strategies and goals in the 1960s and 1970s, and how successful were they in achieving racial equality?

46.1 – Introduction

In 1966, James Meredith, the first African American graduate of the University of Mississippi, began a campaign he called his March Against Fear. He planned to walk from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi. Along the way he hoped to encourage the African Americans he met to stand up for their rights by registering to vote. Only 30 miles out of Memphis, Meredith was shot by a sniper. He survived but was hospitalized.

A number of civil rights leaders stepped up to complete Meredith's march. Among them were Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Stokely Carmichael, the young leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). On their first day, an angry policeman knocked King down. Carmichael prepared to retaliate, only to be stopped by other marchers. Rather than thanking Carmichael, King scolded him for straying from the strategy of nonviolence. In Carmichael's view, this incident had little to do with nonviolence. "It was," he insisted, "about self-defense."

For days the marchers endured insults and threats from angry whites. When they reached Greenwood, South Carolina, Carmichael was arrested while trying to set up a tent for the night. "By the time I got out of jail," he recalled, "I was in no mood to compromise with racist arrogance." The night of his release, Carmichael addressed a rally in Greenwood. "It's time we stand up and take over," he said. "We been saying freedom for six years and we ain't got nothin'. What we gonna start saying now is black power." Again and again he asked the crowd, "What do you want?" Each time the crowd roared back, "Black power!"

Carmichael's speech and the crowd's response reflected a turning point in the civil rights movement. For more than 10 years, the movement's leaders had favored nonviolence as their main strategy and integration as their primary goal. With his talk of black power, Carmichael was signaling a change in what many blacks wanted and how they would achieve these new goals.

46.2 – The Nation's Black Ghettos Explode

In 1963, the African American writer James Baldwin published an essay on what it was like to be black in the United States. Baldwin reminded his readers that blacks had waited far too long for equality. If the United States did not live up to its ideals soon, he warned, the result could be an eruption of violence.

If we—and now I mean the relatively conscious whites and the relatively conscious blacks . . . do not falter in our duty now, we may be able, handful that

we are, to end the racial nightmare . . . If we do not now dare everything, the fulfillment of that prophecy, re-created from the Bible in song by a slave, is upon us:

God gave Noah the rainbow sign,
No more water, the fire next time!

—James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*, 1963

Fire did indeed erupt, as anger increased over the slow pace of progress and the federal government's weak support for civil rights. Beginning in 1964, African Americans lashed out in violent protests in cities across the country.

From Watts to Newark: Riots in the Streets

By the 1960s, almost 70 percent of African Americans lived in large cities. Urban blacks were often concentrated in ethnic ghettos. A ghetto is a part of a city where people belonging to a single ethnic group live. Sometimes people live in an ethnic ghetto because they want to be among people who share their culture. But often people live in such neighborhoods because social and economic conditions prevent them from moving elsewhere. This was true for African Americans. Because of job discrimination, many could not afford to live anywhere else. Even those with good jobs found it almost impossible to buy houses in white neighborhoods.

In August 1965, a race riot exploded in Watts, an African American ghetto in Los Angeles. The immediate cause of the riot was a charge of police brutality. The more long-term cause was African Americans' festering frustrations about poverty, prejudice, and police mistreatment.

The Watts riot lasted for six long days. During that time, 34 people died, almost 900 were injured, and nearly 4,000 were arrested. Rioters burned and looted whole neighborhoods, causing \$45 million of property damage. The rioting did not end until 14,000 members of the National Guard were sent to Watts to restore order.

Over the next few years, riots erupted in other cities as well. In 1967 alone, more than 100 cities experienced violent protests. In Detroit, Michigan, 43 people died and more than 1,000 were wounded in an urban upheaval. Eventually the army quelled the riots by sending in tanks and soldiers with machine guns. Riots in Newark, New Jersey, lasted six days and resulted in many deaths and injuries.

The Kerner Commission Report: Moving Toward Two Societies

It was not until 1967, in response to the rioting that summer, that President Lyndon Johnson, also known as LBJ, established the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders to examine what had caused the riots. The commission came to be known as the Kerner Commission after its leader, Illinois governor Otto Kerner. Its final report, issued in 1968, concluded that "Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal."

Looking deeper, the report found that riots were usually triggered by a specific event that touched off a “reservoir of underlying grievances”:

Social and economic conditions in the riot cities constituted a clear pattern of severe disadvantage for Negroes compared with whites . . . Negroes had completed fewer years of education and fewer had attended high school. Negroes were twice as likely to be unemployed . . . and were more than twice as likely to be living in poverty. Although housing cost Negroes relatively more, they had worse housing—three times as likely to be overcrowded and substandard.

—National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968

The report pointed to “unfulfilled expectations” raised by the civil rights movement. When these expectations were not met, some African Americans had concluded that violence was the only way to “move the system.”

The commission called on the country to address the inequalities that the riots had laid bare. “It is time now to turn with all the purpose at our command to the major unfinished business of this nation,” it urged. “It is time to make good the promises of American democracy to all citizens—urban and rural, white and black, Spanish-surname, American Indian, and every minority group.”

46.3 – The Rise of Black Power and Black Pride

After the Watts riot, Martin Luther King Jr. visited Los Angeles to find out what had happened and why. While touring Watts, King was booed by residents who had lost faith in his strategy and goals. Nonviolent resistance had eroded barriers to integration in the South. But these victories had taken 10 years, and many urban blacks were impatient for change. They were also not sure they wanted to be integrated into a white society that they viewed as racist and corrupt. As activism spread beyond the South, the civil rights movement was changing.

Malcolm X Advocates Black Nationalism

One of the leaders of this change was a former convict named Malcolm X. Born in 1925 as Malcolm Little, Malcolm X drifted into a life of crime during his teenage years. Eventually he was arrested and jailed. In prison, he was introduced to the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, the leader of a religious group known as the Nation of Islam, or Black Muslims. Muhammad taught that blacks were Earth’s first people but had been tricked out of their power and long oppressed by evil whites. Malcolm X later wrote of the appeal of Muhammad’s teachings to African American convicts:

Here is a black man caged behind bars, probably for years, put there by the white man . . . You let this caged up black man start thinking, the same way I did when I first heard Elijah Muhammad’s teachings: let him start thinking how, with better breaks when he was young and ambitious he might have been a lawyer, a

doctor, a scientist, anything . . . That's why black prisoners become Muslims so fast when Elijah Muhammad's teachings filter into their cages . . . "The white man is the devil" is a perfect echo of that black convict's lifelong experience.

—Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, 1964

After Malcolm Little left prison in 1952, he joined the Nation of Islam and changed his name to Malcolm X. He said Little was the name of a white slave-owner. He chose X as his new last name because "a Negro in America can never know his true family name, or even what tribe he was descended from." He quickly became the Nation of Islam's most effective preacher. In 1959, he was featured in a weeklong television special called *The Hate That Hate Produced*, which brought widespread attention to Malcolm and the Nation of Islam.

As a Black Muslim, Malcolm X rejected the goals of the early civil rights movement. Rather than seeking integration, the Nation of Islam promoted black nationalism, a doctrine that called for complete separation from white society. Black Muslims worked to become independent from whites by establishing their own businesses, schools, and communities.

Malcolm X also rejected nonviolence as a strategy to bring about change. Speaking to a group of black teenagers in New York City in 1964, he said,

If the leaders of the nonviolent movement can go to the white community and teach nonviolence, good. I'd go along with that. But as long as I see them teaching nonviolence only in the black community, we can't go along with that . . . If black people alone are going to be the ones who are nonviolent, then it's not fair. We throw ourselves off guard. In fact, we disarm ourselves and make ourselves defenseless.

By the time he made this speech, Malcolm X had split with the Nation of Islam. During a pilgrimage to the Muslim holy city of Mecca in 1964, he had met Muslims of all races, including "blonde-haired, blued-eyed men I could call my brothers." On his return home, Malcolm X converted to orthodox Islam and began to reach out to people of all races, making a broader call for human rights. His change of heart upset many Black Muslims. In 1965, three members of the Nation of Islam assassinated Malcolm X while he was speaking in New York City.

SNCC Stands Up for Black Power

A year after Malcolm X's death, SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael introduced the idea of black power to the civil rights movement. Black power had a variety of meanings, such as political power, economic power, and pride in being black. In a speech on black power, Carmichael observed that,

This country knows what power is. It knows it very well. And it knows what Black Power is 'cause it deprived black people of it for 400 years. So it knows what Black Power is . . .

We are on the move for our liberation . . . The question is, Will white people overcome their racism and allow for that to happen in this country? If that does not happen, brothers and sisters, we have no choice but to say very clearly, "Move over, or we're going to move on over you."

—Stokely Carmichael, speech in Berkeley, California, 1966

Carmichael went on to convert SNCC from an integrated organization to an all-black organization. "We cannot have white people working in the black community," he argued. "Black people must be seen in positions of power, doing and articulating [speaking] for themselves."

Black Panthers Work for Self-Determination

Among the many African Americans influenced by Malcolm X were Bobby Seale and Huey Newton. In 1966, they founded the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California. In choosing that name, the founders were sending the world a message. An early supporter explained, "The black panther was a vicious animal, who, if he was attacked, would not back up. It was a political symbol that we were here to stay and we were going to do whatever needed to be done to survive."

The Black Panther Party developed a 10-point platform setting out its goals. The first and last points dealt with self-determination. "We want freedom," the platform began. "We want power to determine the destiny of our Black Community." Other demands included jobs, decent housing, "education that teaches our true history," and "an immediate end to police brutality." Finally, the platform called on the United Nations to supervise a plebiscite among African Americans to determine "the will of black people as to their national destiny." A plebiscite is a vote on a question of importance.

The Black Panthers provided many services for blacks in their community, such as free breakfast programs for children, and medical clinics. But they were probably best known for their efforts to end police mistreatment of blacks. They sent observers onto the streets to watch interactions between police and black citizens. The observers carried a law book to provide information about people's rights, a tape recorder to document what was said, and a shotgun to show that they were prepared to defend themselves.

Because Black Panthers carried weapons and were willing to stand up to the police, they were viewed as dangerous radicals by law enforcement agencies. Local police and FBI agents often raided the Panthers' offices and homes. When confrontations with the police turned violent, the Panthers involved were arrested and jailed. By the mid-1970s, with its legal problems mounting, the Black Panther Party fell apart.

Black Power at the Polls Brings Political Gains

For many African Americans, black power meant the power to shape public policy through the political process. Supported by the Voting Rights Act of 1965, civil rights groups organized voter-registration drives across the South. Between 1964 and 1968, the number of southern blacks registered to vote rose from 1 to 3.1 million.

Across the nation, African American candidates successfully competed for both black and white votes. Edward Brooke of Massachusetts was elected to the Senate in 1966, becoming the first black senator since 1881. Two years later, Shirley Chisholm of New York became the first black woman to win election to the House of Representatives. In 1969, the African American members of the House of Representatives started the Congressional Black Caucus. Over the years, the caucus has worked to address legislative concerns of African American citizens.

Black politicians were also successful at winning state and local elections. In 1967, Carl Stokes of Cleveland, Ohio, became the first black mayor of a major U.S. city. Six years later, Tom Bradley became the first black mayor of Los Angeles. Bradley won by forging a powerful coalition that included inner-city blacks, the Jewish community, and business and labor leaders. "He built bridges to whites and to other groups," noted a political scientist, "without ever losing his commitment to the black community." Bradley was reelected four times, serving as mayor for 20 years.

African Americans also rose in the judicial branch of the government. Thurgood Marshall, who had argued the *Brown v. Board of Education* case as the NAACP's lead attorney, was named the first black Supreme Court justice in 1967.

Black Pride: The Growth of Afrocentrism

For many African Americans, black power meant taking pride in their African heritage. This focus on African history, African culture, and the achievements of African peoples and their descendants in the United States came to be known as Afrocentrism. Afrocentric scholars argued that the accounts of history taught in most schools ignored the many contributions of African peoples. In their view, Afrocentrism helped to balance the Eurocentric, or European-centered, view of the past that had long been presented to American schoolchildren, both black and white.

African Americans showed pride in their heritage in many ways. College students pushed for the establishment of African and African American studies classes. Museums began to show African American history and art. On a more day-to-day basis, many blacks began to dress in traditional African clothing, wear their hair in African styles called Afros, and exchange their Eurocentric names for Afrocentric ones. In 1966, a black scholar invented an Afrocentric holiday called Kwanzaa, which takes place each year between December 26 and January 1. During Kwanzaa, black Americans celebrate seven principles of African American culture, including faith, creativity, and unity.

Black writers also expanded Afrocentric culture as they wrote about their experiences. Poets like Nikki Giovanni and playwrights like Amiri Baraka and August Wilson brought

the struggles of African Americans into their poems and plays. Novelists like Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker wrote widely read novels about African American life, both past and present.

In 1977, a 12-hour television miniseries on African American life called *Roots* became one of the most highly rated shows in television history. Based on a historical novel by Alex Haley, *Roots* told the story of several generations of an enslaved black family. More than 250 colleges planned courses around the broadcasts, while more than 30 cities declared “*Roots*” weeks. Vernon Jordan, former president of the Urban League, called the miniseries “the single most spectacular educational experience in race relations in America.”

46.4 – The Federal Government Confronts Racism

On March 31, 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. preached at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. In his sermon, King spoke frankly about racism:

It is an unhappy truth that racism is a way of life for the vast majority of white Americans, spoken and unspoken, acknowledged and denied, subtle and sometimes not so subtle . . . Something positive must be done. Everyone must share in the guilt as individuals and as institutions . . . The hour has come for everybody, for all institutions of the public sector and the private sector to work to get rid of racism.

—Martin Luther King Jr., “Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution,” 1968

That hour never came for King. Four days later he was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, where he had gone to support a sanitation workers’ strike. Riots erupted in more than 100 cities, including Washington, D.C. As dawn broke on April 6, 1968, a thick pall of smoke hung over the nation’s capital. In the wake of these tragedies, the federal government increased its efforts to end racism and discrimination in public life.

Banning Racial Discrimination in Housing

Before his death, King had shifted his focus from integration to economic equality. As part of this campaign, he took on the issue of racial discrimination in housing. In many U.S. cities, landlords in white neighborhoods refused to rent to blacks. African Americans also found it difficult to buy houses in many neighborhoods. Even when African Americans found a home to buy, they discovered that banks were reluctant to make loans to black borrowers.

Under King’s leadership, the black community joined with realtors and bankers to encourage open housing in Chicago. But very little actually changed. Then, in 1968, only days after King’s assassination, Congress finally took action. Drawing on King’s efforts and on the national grief over his death, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1968. This law included a fair-housing component that banned discrimination in housing

sales and rentals. It also gave the federal government the authority to file lawsuits against those who violated the law.

Desegregating Public Schools

In 1954, the Supreme Court had ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that school segregation was unconstitutional. A year later, it had ordered schools to be desegregated “with all deliberate speed.” But a decade later, only 1.2 percent of black children in the South attended integrated schools.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 gave the federal government new powers to promote school desegregation. Government officials pushed school districts to integrate their schools by threatening to cut off federal funds if they did not. By 1968, the proportion of African American students in the South attending schools with whites had risen to 32 percent.

By this time, however, the Supreme Court was losing patience with school districts that were slow to act. In a 1969 case known as *Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education*, the Court took another look at “with all deliberate speed.” The case involved a segregated Mississippi school district that was trying to delay integration. In the Court’s decision, Justice Hugo Black wrote,

There are many places still in this country where the schools are either “white” or “Negro” and not just schools for all children as the Constitution requires. In my opinion there is no reason why such a wholesale deprivation of constitutional rights should be tolerated another minute. I fear that this long denial of constitutional rights is due in large part to the phrase “with all deliberate speed.” I would do away with that phrase completely.

—*Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education*, 1969

Three years later, the Supreme Court took another look at school segregation in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*. This case raised the question of whether de facto segregation caused by housing patterns was constitutional. This was the situation in North Carolina’s Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District. Because most children in the district lived in predominantly white or black neighborhoods, they also attended all-white or all-black schools. In 1970, a federal judge ordered the district to use busing to integrate its schools. Under the judge’s desegregation plan, some students, including very young ones, would be bused to schools outside their neighborhoods to create more racially balanced schools.

The school district appealed to the Supreme Court, arguing that the judge had gone too far. In a unanimous decision delivered in 1971, the Court supported the judge’s busing plan. “We find no basis for holding that the local school authorities may not be required to employ bus transportation as one tool of school desegregation,” wrote Chief Justice Warren Burger. “Desegregation plans cannot be limited to walk-in schools.”

Using Busing to Achieve Racial Balance in Schools

The Court's approval of busing to achieve racial balance in schools was controversial. Supporters argued that busing was useful for ending school segregation. They quoted studies showing that black children got higher test scores when attending integrated schools. However, many parents, both black and white, felt strongly that their children should attend schools close to home. They worried about the effects of long bus rides, especially on young children. They also feared for the safety of children bused into unfamiliar neighborhoods.

Nowhere was resistance to busing stronger than in the city of Boston, Massachusetts. In 1974, a judge ordered the busing of 17,000 Boston school children to desegregate the city's schools. Large numbers of white families opposed the judge's order. Resistance was especially strong in South Boston, a mostly white neighborhood.

When school began at South Boston High School that fall, 90 percent of its white students boycotted classes. Black students leaving the school to board buses back to their neighborhoods were pelted with rocks. Later that fall, a white student was stabbed in a racial confrontation at the school. In response, an angry white mob trapped 135 black students in the school building for four hours. A force of 500 police officers was assigned to South Boston High—which had only 400 students—to keep order.

Over the next two years, an estimated 20,000 white students left Boston's public schools to avoid busing. Some went to private schools. Others moved with their families to the suburbs. As a result, by 1976, blacks and Hispanics made up the majority of Boston's school population.

Despite public resistance, the courts continued to enforce the Brown decision. By 1976, almost half of black students in the South attended schools with a majority of white students. In the Northeast, only 27.5 percent of black students attended integrated schools.

Fighting Racism in the Workplace Through Affirmative Action

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 had outlawed discrimination in hiring based on race, religion, gender, or national origin. However, many argued that simply "leveling the playing field" in hiring was not enough. As President Lyndon Johnson observed in a speech to graduates of Howard University,

You do not take a person who for years has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line of a race and then say, "you're free to compete with all the others," and still justly believe that you have been completely fair. Thus it is not enough just to open the gates of opportunity. All our citizens must have the ability to walk through those gates.

—Lyndon Johnson, Howard University, 1965

Johnson argued that more needed to be done to counteract past discrimination that had denied minorities equal opportunities. One way to do this was through a policy known as affirmative action. This policy called on employers to actively seek to increase the number of minorities in their workforce.

Affirmative action was first introduced by President John F. Kennedy. In 1961, he issued an executive order that called on contractors doing business with the federal government to “take affirmative action” to hire minorities. President Johnson expanded Kennedy’s policy to include women. He also required contractors to have written affirmative action plans. “This is the next and more profound stage of the battle for civil rights,” Johnson said. “We seek . . . not just equality as a right and a theory, but equality as a fact and as a result.”

President Richard Nixon took affirmative action a giant step further. In an executive order, he required government contractors to develop “an acceptable affirmative action program” that included “goals and timetables.”

Equalizing Opportunities Through Preferential Treatment

Many Americans agree with the goals of affirmative action. However, the practices used to carry out this policy have been controversial. An affirmative action plan may set specific goals, such as numbers of minority or women workers to be hired. It may include a timetable with dates for achieving those goals. It may also prescribe preferential treatment for some groups. This means giving preference to a minority or female job applicant because of that person’s ethnicity or gender. To many people, preferential treatment looks like unfair discrimination against white males.

During the 1960s, many colleges and universities adopted affirmative action plans to attract more minority students. Members of minority groups were often given preferential treatment over white students who were equally qualified or more qualified. Such treatment was necessary, admissions officers argued, to open opportunities for minorities and to create a diverse student body.

In the late 1970s, a white male named Allan Bakke challenged preferential treatment in university admissions. Bakke had twice applied for admission to the University of California Davis Medical School. He was rejected both times. At the same time, minority candidates with lower grade point averages and test scores were admitted under a special admissions program. Bakke concluded that he had been refused admission because he was white, and he sued the school for reverse discrimination.

In 1977, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* reached the Supreme Court. After hearing arguments on both sides, the Court was left deeply divided. Four justices were firmly against any use of race in university admissions. Another four felt just as strongly that race should be used. The remaining justice, Lewis Powell, thought race could be used as a criterion in choosing students but opposed the system of preferential treatment used by the University of California. Writing for the majority, Powell cautioned,

“Racial and ethnic classifications of any sort are inherently suspect and call for the most exacting judicial scrutiny.”

The Court’s ruling narrowly upheld affirmative action by declaring that race could be used as one of the criteria in admissions decisions. However, it also said that racial quotas were unconstitutional—that race could not be used as the only criterion. Therefore, the Court ordered the university to admit Bakke to medical school. The ruling, however, did not end the debate over affirmative action and preferential treatment for women and minorities.

46.5 – Differing Viewpoints: Is Affirmative Action Still Necessary?

The Supreme Court narrowly approved affirmative action in the 1978 Bakke case. But it left many unanswered questions. Is affirmative action a form of reverse discrimination? Which groups should receive preferential treatment in hiring and school admissions? And for how long? In 1996, these questions were put before California voters in the form of Proposition 209, which stated,

The state shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting.

Proposition 209 was approved by 54 percent of the voters. In other states, however, the debate over affirmative action continues. Here are two contrasting perspectives on this issue.

Shelby Steele: Affirmative Action Hurts African Americans

African American scholar Shelby Steele has studied the benefits and drawbacks of affirmative action programs. Such programs, he notes, are motivated by good intentions. “Yet good intentions can blind us to the effects they generate when implemented.” In a 1990 article, he wrote,

I think one of the most troubling effects of racial preferences for blacks is a kind of demoralization [discouragement]. Under affirmative action, the quality that earns us preferential treatment is an implied inferiority. However this inferiority is explained—and it is easily enough explained by the myriad deprivations that grew out of our oppression—it is still inferiority . . . In integrated situations in which blacks must compete with whites who may be better prepared, these explanations may quickly wear thin.

Steele believes that affirmative action encourages blacks to focus on their past sufferings as victims of racism rather than their strengths:

Like implied inferiority, victimization is what justifies preference, so that to receive the benefits of preferential treatment one must, to some extent, become invested in the view of oneself as a victim. In this way, affirmative action nurtures a victim-

focused identity in blacks and sends us the message that there is more power in our past suffering than in our present achievements.

In addition, Steele argues that affirmative action fosters the illusion that helping blacks with preferential treatment can make up for past wrongs:

This logic overlooks a much harder . . . reality, that it is impossible to repay blacks living today for the historic suffering of the race. If all blacks were given a million dollars tomorrow it would not [compensate] . . . for three centuries of oppression that we still carry today . . . Suffering can be endured and overcome, it cannot be repaid. To think otherwise is to prolong the suffering.

—Shelby Steele, “A Negative Vote on Affirmative Action,” *The New York Times Magazine*, May 13, 1990

Coretta Scott King: Affirmative Action Promotes Justice

During the debate over Proposition 209, Coretta Scott King, the widow of Martin Luther King Jr., wrote an article opposing the measure. She began by explaining her husband’s support for affirmative action.

He did indeed dream of a day when his children would be judged by the content of their character, instead of the color of their skin. But he often said that programs and reforms were needed to hasten the day when his dream of genuine equality of opportunity—reflected in reality, not just theory—would be fulfilled.

King went on to explain why affirmative action was still needed, more than three decades after such programs began:

Those who say that affirmative action is no longer necessary rarely cite statistics to support their argument, for the evidence of continuing pervasive discrimination against minorities and women is overwhelming. Indeed, statistics . . . testify to how precarious our hold is on equal opportunity and how discrimination in our society persists.

Like my husband, I strongly believe that affirmative action has merit, not only for promoting justice, but also for healing and unifying society.

—Coretta Scott King, “Man of His Word,” *New York Times*, November 3, 1996

Summary

The civil rights movement changed course in the mid-1960s, moving beyond the South and expanding its goals. Some activists also abandoned the strategy of nonviolence.

Black power In 1966, civil rights activists began calling for black power. They wanted African Americans to have economic and political power, as well as pride in their African heritage.

Watts riot In the summer of 1965, the Watts section of Los Angeles exploded in violence. This event was followed by riots in black ghettos across the nation.

Kerner Commission This commission, established by Lyndon Johnson to study the riots, concluded that their fundamental cause was pent-up resentment over historic inequalities.

Nation of Islam Also called Black Muslims, the Nation of Islam advocated black nationalism. Its members believed that blacks should live apart from whites and control their own communities.

Black Panther Party The Black Panther Party demanded economic and political rights. Unlike nonviolent civil rights leaders, the Black Panthers were prepared to fight to realize their goals.

Civil Rights Act of 1968 The most important clause in this law bans discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing based on race, religion, national origin, or sex.

Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education In this decision, the Supreme Court ruled that busing is an acceptable way to achieve school integration.

Regents of the University of California v. Bakke In its first case on affirmative action, the Supreme Court ruled that race may be used as one, but not the only, factor in school admissions.

Chapter 47 — The Widening Struggle

Why and how did the civil rights movement expand?

47.1 – Introduction

As a schoolteacher in the 1950s, Dolores Huerta taught the children of farmworkers in California’s San Joaquin Valley. Huerta had grown up in the valley and knew about the hardships endured by farmworkers and their families.

Huerta liked teaching, but she wanted to do more to help the farmworkers. So she decided to give up her teaching job. “I couldn’t stand seeing kids come to class hungry and needing shoes,” she explained later. “I thought I could do more by organizing farm workers than by trying to teach their hungry children.”

Together with farm labor organizer Cesar Chavez, Huerta formed the National Farm Workers Association. As a small union for migrant farmworkers, the NFWA seemed powerless next to the large corporations that ran farming operations in the San Joaquin Valley. Nevertheless, in 1966 it won a major victory by negotiating a collective bargaining agreement with the Schenley Wine Company. It was the first time a farmworkers’ union had signed a contract with an agricultural corporation. Later that year, the NFWA merged with another group to become the United Farm Workers (UFW).

In the decades that followed, Huerta expanded her focus. Through her UFW work, she became an advocate for Latinos. In time she joined the struggle for women’s rights, too.

Many groups of Americans experienced discrimination in the 1950s and 1960s. Some of these, like farmworkers, were mounting their campaigns for equal rights while the black civil rights movement was growing in the South. That movement inspired many groups to carry on with their own struggles.

This chapter continues the story of the civil rights movement as it expanded to include more Americans. Following the example of African Americans, other groups—including women, Latinos, American Indians, and Asian Americans—fought for their rights. Disabled, gay, and older Americans began to organize for equal treatment, too.

47.2 – Women Demand Equality

Like Dolores Huerta, many women who fought for civil rights and workers’ rights later became active in the movement for women’s rights. More than a century before, in the 1830s and 1840s, many women abolitionists had followed a similar path. In fighting to end slavery, they had come to recognize their own status as second-class citizens. These early advocates of women’s rights held the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention and launched the women’s suffrage movement. In the same way, many women who were inspired by the black civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s went on to forge the women’s movement.

One Half of America

Although women make up half the American population, in the early 1960s many women felt they were being treated like a minority and denied their rights. They wanted equal opportunity and the same rights as men.

In 1963, author Betty Friedan exposed the unhappiness of many middle-class women in her book *The Feminine Mystique*. She described women who had the things they thought they wanted—marriage, home, family—but were still dissatisfied. As Friedan wrote, the typical housewife wanted something more:

As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover material, ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children, chauffeured Cub Scouts and Brownies, lay beside her husband at night—she was afraid to ask even of herself the silent question—“Is this all?”

—Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 1963

Many middle-class wives had attended college, but few had entered professions. Although the number of women in the workforce was rising, most held what were considered to be “women’s jobs.” They were secretaries or bank tellers, for example, while men might work as lawyers, doctors, or business executives. Because they held lower-status jobs, they earned less than men. In 1965, they made only about 60 cents for every dollar men earned. Even women in higher positions were paid less than male colleagues. Although the gap has narrowed, it remains significant. In 2004, women earned about 76 cents for every dollar men earned. Meanwhile, relatively few women have been promoted to upper management. The invisible barrier to women’s professional advancement has been called the glass ceiling. This term has also been applied to minorities.

Organizing for Action

In the early 1960s, Congress passed two laws banning sex discrimination, but neither had much impact. The first, the Equal Pay Act of 1963, outlawed “wage differentials based on sex” in industries that produced goods for commerce. This law only affected jobs that were nearly identical, however. Since women and men generally did different types of work, the law had little effect on women’s wages. The second law, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, also prohibited discrimination based on sex. This law set an important precedent, but it brought few immediate benefits for women.

To advance women’s rights, Betty Friedan and other activists formed the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966. This group pledged “to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society.” NOW was made up mostly of middle-aged, middle-class women. Like the more moderate organizations of the civil rights movement, NOW placed much of its focus on legal reforms and workforce discrimination, demanding equal opportunity for women.

On August 26, 1970, NOW organized the Women's Strike for Equality. The date marked the 50th anniversary of the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, which granted women the right to vote. The strikers urged women not to do their usual domestic tasks that day. Their slogan was, "Don't iron while the strike is hot." That day, 50,000 women marched in New York City. Altogether, more than 100,000 people around the country took part in the strike, making it the largest action for women's rights in American history.

A more radical branch of the women's movement arose in the late 1960s. It was made up of younger women who had worked in the civil rights movement. They coined the term sexism to describe oppression of women in the workplace and home. They used the term women's liberation to describe their goal. They wanted to emancipate women from customs and laws that kept them subordinate to men. Many of these ideas became part of the broader women's movement.

Despite the growing prominence of the women's movement, many Americans at the time opposed feminism, the movement for women's equality. They believed that feminism posed a threat to traditional values and would undermine marriage and weaken the American family. They claimed that traditional roles for women gave them a strong and respected place in society and argued that feminists wanted to make women more like men.

Working for Equal Rights

One of the main goals of the women's movement was to win passage of the equal rights amendment to the Constitution, or ERA, which stated that "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." The ERA had been submitted to every session of Congress since 1923. In 1972, for the first time, Congress passed the ERA and sent it to the states to be ratified.

At first it seemed certain that three fourths of the states would ratify the ERA and it would become law. But the amendment provoked a backlash. Some Americans feared that the ERA would devalue the roles of mother and homemaker. Some also believed it would lead to requiring women to serve in the military. As a result, the ERA failed to achieve ratification by the 1982 deadline set by Congress, falling 3 states short of the required 38 states.

Despite that loss, women's efforts to attain equal rights succeeded on many fronts. Some clear examples came in education. Between 1969 and 1973, the number of women law students nearly quadrupled, while the number of women medical students almost doubled. By 1997, women made up the majority of college students and earned the majority of master's degrees. Women's opportunities in education were enhanced by federal legislation. A law called Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex in any school program receiving federal funds, including school athletics.

The Fight over Birth Control and Abortion

The struggle for women's rights also focused on birth control and abortion. Many feminists believed that to control their lives, women must be able to control when, or if, they had children.

The development of the birth control pill was a major step in this direction. In 1960, the Food and Drug Administration approved the pill, and by 1965, five million women were using it. The pill had a tremendous impact on women's lives, and on society, by allowing women greater control over reproduction.

Some Americans disapproved of the pill. They favored abstinence as a form of birth control and argued that family-planning centers should not advise couples on other methods to avoid pregnancy. But in 1965, the Supreme Court ruled that married couples had a "right to privacy in marital relations" that included access to counseling on birth control, including use of the pill.

Several years later, the Supreme Court extended this right of privacy to the question of abortion. In 1973, the Court ruled in *Roe v. Wade* that the "right of privacy . . . is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy." Feminists considered this ruling a major advance in the struggle for women's civil rights, but the ruling has remained controversial. Opponents argue that life begins at conception and see abortion as murder. Supporters say women have the right to control their bodies and that abortion should remain legal.

47.3 – Latinos Organize to be Heard

In 1967, Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales published a poem called "Yo Soy Joaquin" ("I Am Joaquin"). The poem describes the difficulty of retaining a Mexican identity while living in American society. Part of the poem reads,

I am Joaquin . . .
lost in a world of confusion,
caught up in the whirl of a
gringo society, confused by the rules,
scorned by attitudes,
suppressed by manipulation,
and destroyed by modern society.

—Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales, "I Am Joaquin," 1967

For many Latinos, the poem struck a chord. They saw it as a cultural and political statement, and it became a rallying cry for Latino rights.

Gonzales was one of many Spanish-speaking Americans who cried out for equal rights in the 1960s. As the civil rights movement expanded around the country, Latinos also lent their voices to the struggle for equality.

Diverse People Speaking One Language

Latinos, or Hispanics, are a diverse group. They include Mexican Americans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and people with origins in Central and South America. Some were born in the United States while others migrated here. Despite their different backgrounds, however, most share some similar cultural traits, including the Spanish language.

In the 1960s, Latinos also faced similar issues. For example, they often experienced employment discrimination. Many had low-wage jobs with few benefits. Many also struggled with language problems in school, where most classes were taught in English.

At the same time, the various Latino groups had their own distinct concerns and perspectives. In the mid-1960s, many Mexican Americans began to identify themselves as Chicanos. This term had originally been used as an insult, but young Mexican Americans embraced the name as an expression of pride in their culture.

Cuban Americans in the 1960s differed in many ways from Mexican Americans. Most lived in Florida, and they tended to be better educated and more affluent than other Latino groups. Most had fled their homeland after the Cuban Revolution and were recent arrivals in the United States.

Puerto Ricans were already U.S. citizens when they came to the mainland because Puerto Rico is an American commonwealth, an unincorporated territory of the United States. However, they suffered some of the same injustices as other Spanish speakers. They sought better education and improved conditions in the cities where they lived. They also wanted to end discrimination.

Boycotting Grapes for Recognition

One of the most notable campaigns for Latino rights in the 1960s was the farmworker struggle in California. Cesar Chavez, a farmworker born in Arizona, was one of the principal leaders of this effort to improve the lives of migrant workers.

Chavez helped found the United Farm Workers, along with Dolores Huerta and other labor activists. The union was made up mostly of Mexican American migrant workers. In 1965, the union—then known as the National Farm Workers Association—joined a strike against grape growers. The strike, or “La Huelga,” lasted five years. During this time, Chavez organized a national boycott of table grapes that won widespread support. Finally, in 1970, grape growers agreed to a historic contract that granted most of the workers’ demands, including union recognition and higher wages and benefits.

Like Martin Luther King Jr., Chavez relied on nonviolence in the struggle for equal rights. Among other tactics, he used hunger strikes as a political tool. He fasted several times over the years to draw attention to the plight of farmworkers and to pressure employers to improve working conditions.

La Raza: A People United

In the late 1960s, young Chicanos also began to organize a political movement called La Raza Unida, or “The People United.” They used the term la raza, meaning “the people” or “the race,” to identify themselves and connect with their roots in ancient Mexico. They claimed this heritage, particularly their links to the Aztec people, as a common bond among Chicanos. La Raza Unida became a political party in 1970 and ran candidates in state and local elections across the Southwest.

A key issue for Chicano activists was bilingual education, or teaching in two languages. In 1968, President Johnson signed the Bilingual Education Act, legalizing instruction in languages other than English. The courts later ruled that schools must address the needs of non-English speakers, including teaching in students’ native languages. Spanish-speaking students continued to face discrimination, though. In 1968 and 1969, Chicano students throughout the Southwest boycotted classes to protest poor education in their schools.

During this time, the Brown Berets also fought for Chicano rights. Founded in East Los Angeles, this group modeled itself on the Black Panthers. It worked to improve housing and employment and instill pride in Chicano culture.

As Mexican Americans fought for civil rights, so, too, did other groups of Latinos. Gradually, Cuban Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other Latinos began to find greater opportunity in American society.

47.4 – American Indians Seek Justice

In 1968, 10 percent of the population of Minneapolis was American Indian. However, Indians made up 70 percent of the prisoners in the city’s jails. Local activists believed that this imbalance reflected police harassment of Indians. To fight for their rights, Indian activists formed the American Indian Movement (AIM). For much of 1968, they monitored police radios and responded to calls that involved Indians, often arriving at the scene before the police. As a result, AIM prevented the unfounded arrests of many Indians. According to AIM, the number of Indians in jail in Minneapolis decreased by 60 percent that year.

One People, Many Nations

Indians come from many tribes, which they often call nations. In the late 1960s, some Indian activists believed that the Indian nations had much in common, including a shared identity as native peoples. And although they lived in different ways and different places—some on reservations, others dispersed throughout society—they shared many of the same problems.

Most American Indians lived in poverty. They suffered greater economic hardship than any other ethnic group in the country. Unemployment was 10 times higher than the national average and was especially high on reservations. The average annual family income was \$1,000 less than for African Americans. Life expectancy was also much lower than the national average.

The federal government had tried to help American Indians, but with little success. In 1968, Congress passed the Indian Civil Rights Act. This law was designed to ensure equality for American Indians. It guaranteed Indians protection under the Constitution, while recognizing the authority of tribal laws. It had few concrete effects, though. In practice, American Indians still lacked equal rights and opportunity in American society, and many were losing patience.

Radicals Make the Cause Known

On November 20, 1969, eighty-nine Indians took over Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay, occupying the island's deserted prison. The group called themselves Indians of All Tribes. Their Alcatraz Proclamation declared, "We . . . reclaim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians by right of discovery." In addition to the land, the group demanded that the government fund cultural and educational centers.

The U.S. government rejected the demands. But for the Indian rights movement, also called Red Power, the occupation was a success. As one participant said, "We got back our worth, our pride, our dignity, our humanity." The Indians occupied Alcatraz for more than a year and a half.

American Indians took other actions in their struggle for equality. In 1972, AIM led an event called the Trail of Broken Treaties. A caravan of protesters left the West Coast and traveled to Washington, D.C., to draw attention to Indian concerns. They brought a 20-point proposal to present to the government. The proposal focused on restoring federal recognition of Indian tribes and Indian control on reservations. It also sought protection for Indian cultures and religions.

When the caravan arrived in Washington, some protesters occupied the offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. After six days, they agreed to leave, on the condition that no one be prosecuted and that the federal government agree to respond to the 20 points. After studying the AIM document, however, the Nixon administration rejected its demands.

Tensions increased in February 1973, when AIM protesters occupied the town of Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, the site of an 1890 massacre of American Indians. They called for changes in the governing of reservations. They also demanded that the U.S. government honor the Indian treaties it had signed over the years. After 70 days, the FBI stormed the site. Two Indians were killed, and one federal marshal was seriously injured.

In 1978, American Indian activists continued their actions with a five-month protest they called the Longest Walk. The walk started in San Francisco and ended in Washington, D.C. Its purpose was to bring attention to the many times American Indians had been forced off their land.

Courts and Legislation Bring Victories

Although the actions of groups like AIM failed to bring dramatic improvements in the lives of most American Indians, they did draw attention to Indian rights and help promote some reforms. In 1975, Congress passed the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. The law provided more federal money for Indian education. It gave Indians more control over reservations. It also placed more American Indians in jobs at the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Indian tribes also won some legal victories. The government returned control of Blue Lake in New Mexico to the Taos Pueblo tribe, which considers the site sacred. Congress also passed the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act in 1971. The law turned 40 million acres of land over to Alaska Natives. In 1980, Penobscot and Passamaquoddy Indians in Maine were awarded \$81.5 million in exchange for giving up claims to their land. They used some of the money to buy back 300,000 acres. These victories raised hopes for a better life for American Indians.

47.5 – Asian Americans Raise Their Voices

Asian Americans also joined the broad movement for civil rights in the 1960s. In fact, the farmworkers' strike against California grape growers was launched by Asian American activists. Larry Itliong, one of the leaders of a largely Filipino farmworkers' union, played a key role in this strike. He and other Filipino activists also helped form the United Farm Workers. They were part of a growing movement for Asian American rights.

The “Model Minority”

Like Latinos, Asian Americans are a diverse group. They have ties by birth or culture to the countries of eastern and southern Asia. Asian groups with a longstanding history in the United States include Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, and Koreans.

Starting in the 1870s, the U.S. government set limits on Asian immigration. The Immigration Act of 1965 removed those limits, and the number of Asian immigrants increased greatly. In recent decades, people from such countries as India, Vietnam, and Cambodia have added even more diversity to the Asian American population.

From the 1960s to the 1980s, many Asian Americans thrived in the United States. They were sometimes called the “model minority” because they were seen as working hard and succeeding without protesting or making demands. Some people even pointed to their progress as proof that ethnic differences were no barrier to success in American society. But these arguments, along with the “model minority” label, aroused resentment among other minorities, who sometimes felt that Asian Americans received favorable treatment.

The perceived success of Asian Americans was only partly true. Although data from 1980 show that many Asian Americans earned salaries higher than the national average, more than half lived in just three states: New York, California, and Hawaii.

These states have a very high cost of living, a measure that includes the price of food, housing, and other essentials. People had to earn more to live in those states. Also, many Asian American households include several adult wage earners, a fact that was reflected in higher family incomes.

Furthermore, although many Asian Americans had attended college and entered professions, others had not. Many Asian immigrants had low-paying jobs, limited English language skills, and little education. Like other minorities, they faced discrimination because they were not white.

College Students Unite to Be Heard

Asian American students began to call for equal rights in the 1960s. On some college campuses, student activists organized a political movement. Their stated aim was to end racial oppression “through the power of a consolidated yellow people.” Yellow Power became their slogan.

In 1968 and 1969, Asian American students at San Francisco State University and the University of California at Berkeley helped organize student strikes. They wanted more minority participation in university affairs. They also called for academic programs that focused on ethnic and racial issues. At the time, minority perspectives played little role in university education.

Their efforts succeeded. In 1969, San Francisco State started the country’s first school of ethnic studies. Between 1968 and 1973, many other colleges and universities also set up Asian American studies programs.

These new programs had a great impact on students. Helen Zia, a Chinese American, recalled, “In college, I learned that I was an Asian American. I learned that I didn’t have to call myself Oriental like a rug. It was like a light bulb going off.” What Zia and many others learned about their heritage gave them a new understanding of their identity and rights in American society.

Fighting for Internment Reparations

One key battle for Asian American rights focused on Japanese American internment during World War II. Executive Order 9066 had forced many into internment camps, and the Supreme Court’s 1944 ruling in *Korematsu v. United States* had upheld the order. Thirty years later, many people began to demand reparations for this historic injustice.

In the 1970s, a younger generation of Japanese Americans inspired by the Black Power movement spoke out against the discrimination their families had suffered. In 1978, a group in Seattle held the first Day of Remembrance. They shared family stories and discussed the hardships of internment. One organizer described the event as a “way to reclaim our past and make it our own.” The Day of Remembrance is now observed in other cities, too.

Meanwhile, the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), which was formed in 1929 to defend the rights of Japanese Americans, sought legal remedy. In 1978, it began to pursue compensation for the suffering in the internment camps. In 1988, Congress finally apologized for the internment. It also authorized payment of \$20,000 to each survivor. Although the sum was relatively small compared to individual losses, this official response helped to make up for a historic wrong.

47.6 – More Groups Seek Civil Rights

In 1962, the University of California at Berkeley reluctantly admitted Ed Roberts as a student. Roberts had a severe disability, an impairment that limited his daily activities. Polio had left him paralyzed, and he needed a respirator to breathe. California's vocational rehabilitation agency had told Roberts that he would be too disabled to work. But Roberts surprised everyone. He fulfilled his degree requirements and graduated from UC Berkeley.

As a disability-rights activist, Roberts changed the way many Americans viewed people with disabilities. He helped disabled people gain the right to participate in life at the university. His achievements encouraged other disability activists around the country.

Many disabled Americans were inspired by the African American civil rights movement. So, too, were other groups, including gay Americans and older Americans. Starting in the 1960s, these groups made their own claims for equal rights.

Disabled Americans Demand Equal Access to Opportunities

Disabilities can be both physical and mental. Physical disabilities include blindness, deafness, and impaired movement. Mental disabilities include illnesses like bipolar disorder. According to the 2000 census, nearly 20 percent of Americans over the age of five have some type of disability. But this large population has often been subject to discrimination.

The first groups of disabled Americans to fight for their rights were deaf and blind people. Decades before the civil rights movement, they set up organizations to provide education and other services to those who needed them. They also asserted that blind and deaf people had a right to use their own languages: Braille and American Sign Language.

In the early 1970s, after graduating from UC Berkeley, Ed Roberts started a program to make it easier for physically disabled students to attend the university. He and fellow activists pressed the school to improve accessibility on campus, making it easier for the physically disabled to enter university facilities. Ramps and curb cuts, for example, made the campus more accessible to people in wheelchairs.

In 1973, Congress passed the Rehabilitation Act, which some supporters compared to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. This law stated,

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability . . . shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

—Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The law granted disabled people the same access to federally funded programs as other Americans. It took four years, however, for government officials to decide how to enforce the law. They finally did so in 1977 after protesters, many in wheelchairs, took over the offices of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in Washington, D.C.

Equal access applied to children, too. In 1975, Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This law set a new standard for educating disabled children. It said that these students must be in “the least restrictive environment possible.” Wherever possible, students with disabilities were to be mainstreamed, or included in classrooms with non-disabled students.

The most important civil rights victory for disabled Americans came years later. In 1990, Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA called for better public access for people with disabilities. Changes included braille signs on elevators and accessible public transportation. The ADA has also improved education for disabled children. Equal access to employment remains a problem, however. About 30 percent of people with disabilities are unemployed.

Gay Americans Stand Up for Their Rights

Gay men and lesbians also began to demand equal rights in the 1960s. At the time, the police often harassed gay men and lesbians in public places. An employee could be fired for being gay or even for being perceived as gay. Many gays and lesbians felt they had to hide their sexual orientation to avoid discrimination.

A gay rights movement had begun to emerge in the late 1950s and early 1960s. By the late 1960s, gay rights activists in Philadelphia were holding an annual Fourth of July protest. Neatly dressed gays and lesbians gathered at Independence Hall, where the Constitution was signed. They pointed out to visitors that gay Americans did not enjoy many of the rights that most Americans took for granted.

It was not until the Stonewall riots, however, that the gay pride movement became highly visible. On June 27, 1969, New York City police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in the neighborhood of Greenwich Village. New York outlawed homosexuality at the time, and police raids were common. That night, however, the customers at the Stonewall fought back. Riots broke out and lasted for hours. The Stonewall riots marked the beginning of the gay rights movement. Since then, the anniversary of Stonewall has prompted annual gay pride events in cities around the world.

After Stonewall, more Americans began to join the gay rights movement. In March 1973, a group of parents with gay sons and daughters began meeting in New York. By 1980, the group—now known as Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, or PFLAG—had members around the country.

Another key event in the history of gay rights occurred in 1977, when Harvey Milk was elected to the board of supervisors in San Francisco. Milk was the first openly gay candidate to win office in a major American city. Eleven months later, however, Milk was assassinated by a former colleague.

Older Americans Promote Productive Aging

Older Americans also joined the civil rights struggle. In 1972, Maggie Kuhn and some fellow retirees in Philadelphia formed the Gray Panthers. This group spoke out against unfair treatment of older Americans. The Gray Panthers called this treatment ageism, or discrimination against people on the basis of age.

Other groups had formed earlier to advocate for older Americans. The largest was the American Association of Retired Persons, founded by Ethel Percy Andrus in 1958. Andrus formed AARP to help retirees get health insurance. At the time, many older Americans had no health coverage, either because it was too expensive or because private insurance companies would not insure them. They were considered too much of a risk because of their age and potential health problems.

AARP lobbied for government health insurance. In 1965, Congress responded by establishing Medicare. This program provided hospital insurance for people ages 65 and over. It also helped pay prescription drug costs and other medical expenses for seniors.

Older workers also complained about discrimination in the workplace. To remedy this problem, Congress passed the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967. This law made it illegal for employers to use age as a factor in hiring or promotion. In 1978, the Gray Panthers helped persuade Congress to push back the required retirement age from 65 to 70. Seniors could now work longer and continue to enjoy the benefits of employment.

Summary

The civil rights movement inspired many Americans to stand up for their rights. During the 1960s and 1970s, various groups sought equal treatment under the law and in society.

Women The National Organization for Women (NOW) and other feminist groups worked for women's rights. They wanted reforms to ensure greater equality and opportunity for women.

Latinos Various groups of Latinos struggled for their rights and identity in American society. The United Farm Workers (UFW) organized migrant farmworkers and helped increase their wages and benefits. The 1968 Bilingual Education Act required public schools to provide bilingual instruction.

American Indians The American Indian Movement (AIM) protested unfair treatment of American Indians. By the mid-1970s, some tribes had won payment for lost lands.

Asian Americans Asian American students asked for university programs in ethnic studies. The Japanese Americans Citizens League (JACL) sought compensation for internment during World War II.

Other groups Disabled Americans fought for equal access and won passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. After the Stonewall riots, gay Americans gained greater visibility in their fight for equal rights. Older Americans countered ageism by working through such groups as the Gray Panthers.

48.1 – Introduction

In 1961, when John F. Kennedy, the youngest man elected to the presidency, replaced Dwight Eisenhower, one of the oldest presidents, the atmosphere in the White House changed. The handsome, charming young president and his graceful wife, Jacqueline, made the house inviting and exciting to visit. On some evenings, famous musicians or opera singers performed. On others, noted actors read scenes from plays or ballet dancers performed classic works. These social events made the White House a showcase for arts and culture.

At the time of Kennedy's inauguration, a new musical called *Camelot* had recently begun its long run on Broadway. Its main character is the legendary King Arthur, who ruled Camelot, an enchanted kingdom. As the play unfolds, Arthur founds an order of knights called the Knights of the Round Table. Dedicated to doing noble deeds, the order attracts the best and bravest knights in the realm.

As Kennedy began his administration, fans of the ideals that were portrayed in *Camelot* hoped Kennedy would prove to be an equally gifted leader. Sadly, Kennedy's life ended before most people could decide whether he had lived up to expectations. In an interview after his death, Jacqueline Kennedy recalled the words of her husband's favorite song from the musical, sung by King Arthur:

Don't let it be forgot
That once there was a spot
For one brief shining moment
That was known as Camelot.

—Alan Jay Lerner, *Camelot*, 1961

Many Americans viewed Kennedy's time in office as just such a "brief shining moment." Others felt less sure that the young president had behaved with true greatness. In this chapter, you will learn how such differing opinions developed.

48.2 – President Kennedy's Domestic Record

On a chilly day in Washington, D.C., with fresh snow at their feet, a large crowd gathered in front of the Capitol to watch John F. Kennedy be sworn in as the 35th U.S. president. The new leader then laid out his vision of the road ahead:

Let the word go forth from this time and place . . . that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans—born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace . . . Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any

hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

—John F. Kennedy, inaugural address, January 20, 1961

The young president's dedication to the ideal of liberty touched the hearts and minds of many Americans. He closed with an appeal to his listeners' sense of idealism, urging them to make a personal commitment to public service. "And so, my fellow Americans," he said in words that would often be repeated, "ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

Kennedy Takes Office with a Narrow Election Victory

Kennedy's inaugural address and the dazzling festivities and balls that followed later that evening set the tone of elegance and youthful vigor that became known as the "Kennedy style." Even before Kennedy had won the race for president, people had started to talk about his charisma—a combination of charm and personal magnetism that caused others to like and support him. At campaign stops, young people had cheered him as if he were a movie star. One senator observed that Kennedy combined the "best qualities of Elvis Presley and Franklin D. Roosevelt."

During the campaign, Kennedy and his opponent, Richard Nixon, had expressed similar views on many issues. Both had vowed to get a sluggish economy moving again and to halt the spread of communism. Kennedy, however, had attacked the Eisenhower-Nixon administration for allowing a "missile gap" to open up between the United States and the Soviet Union. Unless something was done to restore American military superiority, he warned, "the periphery [edges] of the Free World will slowly be nibbled away."

The most obvious difference between the two candidates was their personal style. This contrast became clear on September 26, 1960, when they met in the first live, televised presidential debate in history. More than 70 million viewers tuned in, while others listened on the radio. For many Americans, this was their first close look at the candidates—especially Kennedy, who was less known.

Nixon, weakened by a serious knee injury and a bout of the flu, appeared nervous and uneasy. His face was pale, all the more so because he had refused to wear any stage makeup. Kennedy, in contrast, appeared relaxed and confident. Most of the people who watched the debate on television thought Kennedy had won. But those who listened on the radio thought Nixon was the winner.

On election day, Kennedy barely squeaked by Nixon in the closest election since 1888. As a result, Kennedy took office without a clear electoral mandate. This lack of a strong go-ahead from voters would put the new president at a severe disadvantage in his dealings with Congress.

An Administration of "the Best and the Brightest"

Like the legendary King Arthur, Kennedy set out to surround himself with “the best and the brightest” advisers he could find. Some, like National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy, had attended elite universities. Others, such as Secretary of Defense and former president of Ford Motor Company Robert McNamara, were top executives. To the surprise of many people, Kennedy selected his brother Robert, only 35 years old, to be attorney general. When people grumbled that Robert was too young for this position, the president joked, “I see nothing wrong with giving Robert some legal experience . . . before he goes out to practice law.”

Kennedy’s inaugural call to service attracted many talented young people to Washington. Those who joined his administration found public service to be exciting, even glamorous. Like their boss, they worked hard and played hard. Fueled with fresh idealism, they hoped to change the world.

Kennedy’s “New Frontier” Challenges the Nation

While running for president, Kennedy had already begun to lay out his vision for changing the world. In his speech accepting the Democratic presidential nomination, he had told Americans,

We stand today on the edge of a New Frontier—the frontier of the 1960s—a frontier of unknown opportunities and perils—a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats . . . Beyond that frontier are the uncharted areas of science and space, unsolved problems of peace and war, unconquered pockets of ignorance and prejudice, unanswered questions of poverty and surplus.

—John F. Kennedy, July 15, 1960

Once in office, Kennedy worked to translate his New Frontier rhetoric into a list of concrete goals. To expand opportunity, he called for an increase in aid to education, new programs to end poverty, and a tax cut to stimulate economic growth. To promote equality, he sought to raise the minimum wage, fund medical care for the elderly, and make cities more livable. To guarantee civil rights, he hoped to enact legislation banning racial discrimination. To protect liberty and democracy, he called for a large increase in defense spending.

Kennedy had trouble getting his legislative agenda, or list of programs to enact, through Congress, even though Democrats held a majority of seats. He did succeed in raising the minimum wage and enacting some urban development programs. However, a coalition of conservative southern Democrats and Republicans, who voted to block change, stalled much of Kennedy’s agenda. After several failures, Kennedy gave up on some of his programs. “There is no sense raising hell,” he observed, “and then not being successful.”

Reviving the Economy

Kennedy had mixed success in his effort to, as he put it, “get the economy moving again.” When he took office, the nation was in a mild recession. Kennedy laid out a two-

part approach to promoting economic recovery. The first part of his plan was to increase spending on defense. By this time, Kennedy knew that the “missile gap” he had referred to in his campaign was not real. In fact, the United States had far more weaponry than the Soviet Union had.

Nonetheless, Kennedy convinced Congress to boost the defense budget by nearly 20 percent in 1961. Over the next few years, the government pumped billions of dollars into the economy while increasing the nation’s stockpile of missiles and other high-tech weapons, such as nuclear submarines.

The second part of Kennedy’s plan was to pass a major tax cut, which he hoped would put more money in people’s pockets and stimulate economic growth. Here he was less successful. Conservatives in Congress opposed any tax cut that would lead to an unbalanced federal budget. Even some liberal Democrats opposed cutting taxes when so many of the nation’s needs were still unmet. As the liberal economist John Kenneth Galbraith observed,

“I am not quite sure I see what the advantage is in having a few more dollars to spend if the air is too dirty to breathe, the water too polluted to drink, the streets are filthy, and the schools so bad that the young, perhaps wisely, stay away.”

—in James T. Patterson, *America in the Twentieth Century*, 1976

Even without the tax cuts, the recession did end. By the close of 1961, the economy had begun a period of growth that would last throughout the decade.

A Cautious Approach to Civil Rights

On civil rights legislation, Kennedy had even less success with Congress. While campaigning, Kennedy had called for an end to racial discrimination. When authorities in Atlanta jailed Martin Luther King Jr., Kennedy had responded by asking his brother Robert to arrange King’s release. Widely reported in the press, news of the brothers’ work on King’s behalf had helped Kennedy win the African American vote.

Once in office, however, Kennedy became more cautious. Fearing that bold action on civil rights would split the Democratic Party between the North and South, he ordered his administration to vigorously enforce existing civil rights laws. But for his first two years in office, Kennedy did not propose new laws.

In the spring of 1963, televised violence against peaceful protesters in Birmingham, Alabama, horrified much of the nation. Sickened by what he saw, President Kennedy addressed the nation on the issue of civil rights:

We are confronted primarily with a moral issue. It is as old as the scriptures and is as clear as the American Constitution. The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities, whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated. If an American, because his skin is dark,

cannot eat lunch in a restaurant open to the public, if he cannot send his children to the best public school available, if he cannot vote for the public officials who will represent him, if, in short, he cannot enjoy the full and free life which all of us want, then who among us would . . . be content with the counsels of patience and delay?

A week later, the president submitted a broad civil rights bill to Congress. Once again, however, a coalition of Republican and conservative southern Democratic lawmakers blocked Kennedy's proposed legislation.

Kennedy Proposes Landing a Man on the Moon

Kennedy's most exciting New Frontier challenge—space exploration—developed out of a Cold War embarrassment. In 1957, the Soviet Union had surprised the world by launching the first artificial satellite into orbit around Earth. Called Sputnik, or “Little Traveler” in Russian, the unmanned satellite traveled at 18,000 miles per hour. A month later, the Russians launched Sputnik II with a dog onboard.

In contrast, delays and failed launches had plagued American efforts to send rockets into space. Around the world, newspapers ridiculed U.S. rockets as “flopniks” and “kaputniks.” When asked what Americans would find if they ever reached the moon, nuclear physicist Edward Teller quipped, “Russians.”

In 1958, President Eisenhower had responded to the Soviet challenge by creating the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). By the time Kennedy took office, NASA had launched its first communication and weather satellites into space. But on April 12, 1961, the Soviet Union stunned the world again by sending the first human, astronaut Yuri Gagarin, into space. Six weeks later, Kennedy made a dramatic announcement:

I believe that this nation should commit itself to . . . landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range exploration of space; and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish.

—Speech to a Joint Session of Congress, May 25, 1961

NASA moved rapidly to meet the challenge. In 1961, astronaut Alan Shepard made a short spaceflight. A year later, John Glenn was the first American to orbit Earth. On July 20, 1969, just eight years after Kennedy had set the goal of a moon landing, Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins, and Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin Jr. reached the moon as part of the Apollo space program. The world watched in awe as Armstrong stepped onto the moon's surface. “That's one small step for a man,” he said as he stepped onto the lunar soil, “one giant leap for mankind.”

48.3 – President Kennedy's Record in Foreign Affairs

As president, Kennedy's greatest triumphs—but also his most disastrous mistakes—were in foreign affairs. U.S. relations with Cuba proved to be especially troublesome for the president. A crisis over Soviet missile sites in Cuba brought the United States and the Soviet Union to the brink of nuclear war.

Fidel Castro Establishes a Communist Regime in Cuba

In 1959, communist revolutionaries, led by Fidel Castro, had ousted Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. As a result, the United States suddenly found that it had a communist regime, or government, for a neighbor, just 90 miles off the Florida coast.

Once in power, Castro established strong ties with the Soviet Union. The USSR sent advisers, weapons, and financial aid to Cuba. With this Soviet help, Castro transformed Cuba into a communist country with a planned economy. Government planners began to make almost all economic decisions. The government took control of U.S. oil refineries and farms on the island and seized private businesses and properties from wealthy Cubans.

Reluctant to live under a communist regime, many Cubans fled the island. Most of these exiles, or people who live outside their home country, settled in southern Florida. Shortly after taking office, Kennedy learned that the CIA had begun training some of these Cuban exiles in Florida and Guatemala as guerrilla fighters. The clandestine mission of these exiles was to return to Cuba and lead a popular uprising that would topple Castro and his regime.

The Bay of Pigs Fiasco Fails to Dislodge Castro

The CIA officials who briefed Kennedy on the invasion plan assured the new president that the invasion would inspire Cubans to rise up and rebel against Castro. CIA director Allen Dulles told Kennedy that if he wanted to stop Castro's growing influence in Latin America, the time to act was "now or never." Eager to show he was a strong Cold War president, Kennedy allowed the plan to move forward.

On April 17, 1961, a small army of Cuban exiles sailed into the Bay of Pigs in southern Cuba. The landing was a disaster. CIA trainers had told the exiles they would come ashore on an empty beach, but their boats ran aground on a coral reef. Once the exiles reached land, Cuban troops quickly killed or captured them. Meanwhile, the expected uprising never took place. A few officials tried to persuade Kennedy to send U.S. warplanes to back up the exiles, but Kennedy did not want to involve the United States further in this poorly executed fiasco.

After the Bay of Pigs invasion, people throughout Latin America criticized Kennedy for interfering in another country's affairs. Shouldering the blame, Kennedy remarked, "Victory has a thousand fathers, but defeat is an orphan."

Escalating Cold War Tensions in Berlin

In June 1961, not long after the Bay of Pigs disaster, Kennedy and Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev held a summit meeting in Vienna, Austria. Heads of state hold such

meetings to discuss important topics. In Vienna, one of the topics discussed was the future of Berlin.

Since the end of World War II, Berlin had been a divided city. East Berlin served as the capital of communist East Germany. West Berlin, although surrounded by East Germany, remained under the control of the wartime Allies.

In time, the border between Eastern and Western Europe was closed everywhere except in Berlin. As a result, Berlin became the only escape route for people trapped behind the Iron Curtain. Hundreds of thousands of East Germans took advantage of this opening to flee their country. By 1961, approximately 25,000 East German refugees were crossing into West Berlin each day. At that rate, East Germany would soon lose much of its workforce.

During the Vienna summit, Khrushchev warned Kennedy that he would not allow the flow of refugees into West Berlin to continue. Kennedy responded that he was prepared to defend West Berlin, even at the risk of war. At this point, Khrushchev decided that the only option left to East Germany was to wall itself off from West Berlin. On August 13, 1961, East German workers began building a barbed wire fence between East and West Berlin. Later, the government replaced the fence with tall concrete walls. The Berlin Wall made it all but impossible for East Germans to escape to freedom in West Berlin. The United States and other Western European nations reacted with outrage to the building of the Berlin Wall. To show American support for the people of West Berlin, Kennedy spoke in front of the wall:

There are many people in the world who really don't understand, or say they don't, what is the great issue between the free world and the Communist world. Let them come to Berlin. There are some who say that communism is the wave of the future. Let them come to Berlin . . . Freedom has many difficulties and democracy is not perfect, but we have never had to put a wall up to keep our people in . . . All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin. And, therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words "Ich bin ein Berliner."

—John F. Kennedy, June 26, 1963

Nonetheless, Kennedy was not willing to risk war to tear down the wall. Privately, he said, "A wall is a hell of a lot better than a war."

The Cuban Missile Crisis: 13 Days on the Brink of Nuclear War

A little more than a year after the Bay of Pigs fiasco, President Kennedy again focused his attention on Cuba. In October 1962, a U-2 spy plane flying over Cuba discovered that the Soviet Union was building missile-launching sites on the island. From these sites, missiles carrying nuclear warheads could easily reach most major cities in the United States.

To discuss ways to respond to this new threat, Kennedy brought together a group of his 12 most trusted advisers. Called the Executive Committee for National Security (later known as ExCom), its members all agreed that the United States must halt construction of the Soviet missile sites. Failure to remove this threat would endanger American cities. It would also make the United States look weak to its European allies and to anti-Castro forces in Latin America.

The ExCom did not, however, agree on how to deal with the Cuban missile crisis. Some advisers urged the president to bomb the missile sites before they could be completed. Others suggested blockading Cuban ports to prevent Soviet ships from bringing missiles to the island. They called the blockade a “quarantine,” because under international law, establishing a naval blockade is an act of war. Kennedy chose the quarantine plan.

On October 22, Kennedy announced to the nation the discovery of the missile sites and his decision to quarantine the island. He warned that the United States would view any nuclear missile launched from Cuba as an attack on the United States by the Soviet Union. He also demanded that the Soviets remove all offensive weapons from Cuba.

For the next two days, Soviet ships continued to move toward Cuba. Fearing that the nation could be on the brink of nuclear war, Kennedy put the U.S. military on high alert. “I guess this is the week I earn my salary,” he nervously joked. Then, on October 24, Khrushchev ordered Soviet ships approaching Cuba to slow down or turn around. With great relief, Secretary of State Dean Rusk commented, “We’re eyeball to eyeball, and I think the other fellow just blinked.”

A few days later, Khrushchev sent a note to Kennedy agreeing to remove Soviet missiles from Cuba. In exchange, he demanded that Kennedy end the Cuban blockade and promise not to invade Cuba. The next day, he sent a second note. In it, he proposed removing the Cuban missiles in exchange for the United States removing missiles it had placed in Turkey, which bordered the USSR.

Kennedy had already decided to remove the U.S. missiles from Turkey, because they were outdated. However, he did not want Khrushchev to think he was bowing to Soviet pressure. The ExCom advised him to pretend he did not receive the second note. Publicly, Kennedy accepted the first deal. Privately, he sent Robert Kennedy to the Soviet embassy to agree to the second deal as well. On October 28, Khrushchev agreed to remove all Soviet missiles from Cuba. About three months later, the United States removed its missiles from Turkey.

Easing Cold War Tensions

The Cuban missile crisis led Kennedy and his advisers to rethink the doctrine of “massive retaliation” adopted during the Eisenhower years. Instead, Kennedy began to talk about the need for a flexible response to local Cold War conflicts. When communists seemed on the verge of taking over Vietnam, a small country in Southeast Asia, the president tested this new approach. He sent money and military advisers to

Vietnam to build noncommunist forces in the country. By the end of 1962, more than 9,000 American military advisers were helping defend Vietnam from communism.

The missile crisis also left Kennedy and Khrushchev frightened by how close they had come to nuclear war. As a result, both men began looking for ways to ease tensions between the superpowers. As a first step, the two leaders established a hotline between them. This line of communication would be kept open at all times so they could contact each other instantly during a crisis. The hotline still exists today and has been tested once an hour since 1963.

Later the same year, the superpowers took another step in establishing more amicable relations. Along with Great Britain, they signed a Test Ban Treaty. This agreement banned nuclear testing in the atmosphere, while allowing underground nuclear weapons tests to continue. By signing, the United States and Soviet Union showed that they could cooperate on important issues.

Aiding Development in Foreign Countries

President Kennedy was deeply concerned about the spread of communism to developing countries. Such countries are poorer and less industrialized than the wealthy developed countries of North America, Western Europe, and parts of Asia. In a campaign speech in San Francisco, Kennedy spoke about his vision for helping the developing world. "There is not enough money in all America to relieve the misery of the underdeveloped world in a giant . . . soup kitchen," he said. "But there is enough know-how . . . to help those nations help themselves."

To spread this "know-how," Kennedy issued an executive order creating the Peace Corps. This new government agency sent thousands of men and women to developing nations to support local communities in such areas as education, farming, and health care. Before moving overseas, Peace Corps volunteers learned languages and skills they could use to build and help run schools and health clinics, teach farming methods, or plant crops.

Kennedy also launched an aid program for Latin America, called the Alliance for Progress. Its goal was to provide economic and technical aid to Latin American nations while encouraging democratic reforms. The program had little impact, however. Wealthy elites in Latin American nations resisted reform efforts. In time, most Alliance for Progress funds ended up in the pockets of anticommunist dictators for use in fighting communist rebels or others who opposed their rule.

48.4 – The Tragic and Controversial End to Camelot

In late November 1963, President Kennedy and the first lady traveled to Texas. Kennedy wanted to build support there for his reelection campaign, since the next presidential election was a year away. Just before noon on November 22, the Kennedys joined Texas governor John Connally and his wife in a motorcade that drove through downtown Dallas. It was a sunny day, and people eager to see the presidential couple

crowded the streets. Watching the cheering crowd, Mrs. Connally leaned over and told the president, "You can't say that Dallas isn't friendly to you today." Moments later, gunshots rang out.

A National Tragedy Unfolds in Dallas

The motorcade took the president's car past the Texas School Book Depository. Lee Harvey Oswald, a worker in the building, stood waiting on its sixth floor. As the cars came within range, Oswald fired three shots. One bullet missed the motorcade. Two bullets hit Kennedy in the neck and head. One of those bullets also struck Governor Connally. The driver rushed both men to the hospital, and Connally survived. Doctors frantically worked to revive Kennedy, but at 1:00 p.m., they declared him dead.

Two hours after the shooting, Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson met Jacqueline Kennedy and the president's coffin at the Dallas airport. Together they would return to Washington. Before the plane took flight, however, a local Texas judge swore Johnson in as the nation's 36th president. Jacqueline Kennedy stood beside Johnson as he took the oath of office.

Dallas police quickly captured Oswald and charged him with the president's murder. Authorities knew Oswald strongly supported Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolution and had lived in the Soviet Union for three years. However, before they could learn anything about his motives for assassinating Kennedy, Oswald too was killed. This second murder occurred as police moved the prisoner from one jail to another, more secure one. With scores of newspaper and television reporters looking on, a local nightclub owner named Jack Ruby jumped out of the crowd and fired at Oswald. Television viewers watched in horror as live news cameras beamed Oswald's murder into their homes.

On November 24, a horse-drawn carriage transported Kennedy's body from the White House to the Capitol building. There, hundreds of thousands of people walked past his casket to pay their final respects. The following day, as many as a million people lined the streets of Washington as the funeral procession carried the slain president to Arlington National Cemetery. There, Kennedy's brothers and wife lit an "eternal" gas flame on his grave.

Across the nation and around the world, people mourned Kennedy's death. To this day, most Americans old enough to remember it can recall exactly where they were when they heard the news of Kennedy's assassination. A poll taken at the time reported that almost two thirds of Americans felt the death of the president as "the loss of someone very close and dear."

Questions and Conspiracy Theories Surround the Assassination

Kennedy's assassination raised many unanswered questions: Had Oswald acted alone, or was he part of a larger conspiracy to murder the president? If he did not act alone, with whom was he working? And why did Ruby murder him? Eager to know the truth, President Johnson created a special commission to investigate the assassination.

Headed by Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren, it became known as the Warren Commission. After a year of pouring through thousands of pages of documents and listening to more than 550 witnesses, the Warren Commission reported the following in its 1964 report:

On the basis of the evidence before the Commission it concludes that Oswald acted alone. Therefore, to determine the motives for the assassination of President Kennedy, one must look to the assassin himself. Clues to Oswald's motives can be found in his family history, his education or lack of it, his acts, his writings, and the recollections of those who had close contacts with him throughout his life.

—Report of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy, 1964

Many Americans questioned the Warren Commission's findings. In the years since Kennedy's death, numerous conspiracy theories and assassination myths have emerged. Some involve plots by the CIA, the FBI, or organized crime groups. Others involve secret agents from Cuba, the Soviet Union, or other countries unfriendly to the United States at the time of Kennedy's death. However, because Oswald did not survive to speak for himself, the full story of the Kennedy assassination may never be known.

48.5 – Differing Viewpoints: What Makes a President Great?

Evaluating a president's place in history is always a challenge. In the case of John F. Kennedy, we can only imagine what he might have achieved if he had lived longer. Here, three historians evaluate the Kennedy presidency.

Ronald Steel: "Somehow Everything Went Wrong"

Writing a few years after the assassination, historian Ronald Steel was critical of the Kennedy presidency.

It is sometimes hard to remember what the Kennedy legend is all about . . . It got tarnished somewhere around the Bay of Pigs and never recaptured its former glow. That fiasco was followed by the failure of summit diplomacy at Vienna, the manipulation of public anxiety over Berlin, a dramatic jump in the arms race, the unnecessary trip to the brink [of war] during the Cuban missile crisis, timidity on civil rights, legislative stalemate in Congress, and the decision to send the first American troops to Vietnam.

Somehow everything went wrong, and increasingly the crusading knight gave way to the conventional politician who had no answers for us. John F. Kennedy's assassination came almost as a reprieve, forever enshrining him in history as the glamorous, heroic leader he wanted to be, rather than as the politician buffeted by events he could not control.

—“The Kennedy Fantasy,” New York Review of Books, 1970

William O’Neill: “His Administration Might Have Been Above Average”

While writing a history of the 1960s, William O’Neill tried to imagine what Kennedy might have accomplished in a second term as president.

Few Presidents now considered great would be so regarded had they died in the third year of their first term. If he had gotten a friendly Congress for his second term and somehow escaped disaster in Vietnam, his administration might have been above average. But he was killed before its mediocre record could be redeemed. Few important bills were passed and these accomplished little . . . The less said of his Cuban policy the better . . .

Yet one cannot evaluate the Kennedy years solely in these practical terms. No mere bookkeeper’s calculation can explain his hold on the world’s imagination . . . Critics often complained that his dazzling style obscured the thin substance of his government. But while true, that was beside the point . . . The President’s style created its own reality, his dash its own momentum. Little progress was made, yet the illusion of it persisted. And it was not all illusion. The test ban was real if misleading. So was the government’s commitment to civil rights.

—Coming Apart: An Informal History of America in the 1960s, 1971

Robert Dallek: “He Conveyed a Kind of Hope, a Kind of Promise”

In a recent biography of Kennedy, historian Robert Dallek analyzed the question of why many Americans still view Kennedy as having been a great president.

There seems to be a consistency in the public mind in regarding Kennedy as one of the great presidents in American history. There is something about him that continues to command the loyalty, the approval, of the public. Part of it was the fact that he was martyred, but that’s not sufficient to explain it . . . I think television is important here. It’s captured him on tape—he’s frozen in our minds at the age of 46 . . . what he came across as was so charismatic, charming, witty, engaging, smart—just an extraordinary personality . . . I think he conveyed a kind of hope, a kind of promise to the public, the expectation of a better future. And I don’t think that’s been lost.

—An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917–1963, 2003

Summary

During his brief time as president, John F. Kennedy faced many domestic and foreign challenges. His presidency began with great optimism and ended in tragedy, leaving many of his goals unfulfilled.

New Frontier Kennedy's New Frontier focused on reviving the economy, winning the space race, building the nation's defenses, and aiding developing countries.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration In 1961, Kennedy pledged to put an American on the moon by the end of the decade. In 1969, NASA achieved this bold goal.

Bay of Pigs invasion Kennedy's first foreign policy initiative, the Bay of Pigs invasion, was an attempt to remove Fidel Castro from power in Cuba. It failed miserably.

Berlin Wall In 1961, a concrete barrier dividing communist East Berlin from noncommunist West Berlin became a symbol of the deepening Cold War divide.

Cuban missile crisis One of the most frightening confrontations of the Cold War occurred when the United States discovered Soviet nuclear missile sites in Cuba. The crisis ended peacefully, partly due to Kennedy's measured response and a willingness to take the nation to the brink of war.

Test Ban Treaty Kennedy and Khrushchev, both determined to reduce Cold War tensions, signed a treaty banning nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere.

Peace Corps Kennedy's Peace Corps gave thousands of American volunteers the chance to help people in developing nations improve their lives.

Chapter 49 — The Great Society

What is the proper role of government in shaping American society?

49.1 – Introduction

On November 22, 1963, the day that John Kennedy was assassinated, Vice President Lyndon Johnson took over the presidency. Most Americans knew little about Johnson and doubted his ability to take Kennedy's place as president. However, Johnson handled the crisis masterfully. "A nation stunned, shaken to its very heart, had to be reassured that the government was not in a state of paralysis," he recalled later. "I had to convince everyone everywhere that the country would go forward."

In his first address as president, Johnson sought to put people's doubts to rest. He vowed to carry on the late president's dreams for the nation. Invoking the challenge Kennedy had laid out in his inaugural address, Johnson exclaimed,

On the 20th day of January, in 1961, John F. Kennedy told his countrymen that our national work would not be finished "in the first thousand days, nor in the life of this administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But," he said, "let us begin." Today, in this moment of new resolve, I would say to all my fellow Americans, let us continue.

—Lyndon B. Johnson, Joint Session of Congress, November 27, 1963

Johnson echoed his "let us continue" message the following year, when he ran for a full term as president. In his speech accepting the nomination, Johnson looked back to a long line of Democratic presidents: "I know what kind of a dream Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman and John F. Kennedy would dream if they were here tonight," he told the delegates at the nominating convention. "And I think I know what kind of dream you want to dream." Looking ahead to the challenge of turning that dream into a new political reality, Johnson ended with these words: "So as we conclude our labors. Let us tomorrow turn to our new task. Let us be on our way!"

49.2 – The 1964 Election: Debating the Role of Government

Lyndon Johnson was a man of enormous energy and big ideas. As president, he wanted to do far more than simply enact Kennedy's programs. Soon after taking office, he began developing an ambitious vision for his own presidency, should he win reelection the following year.

The Liberal View: Expanding Government to Promote Well-Being

Johnson unveiled his vision in a commencement speech at the University of Michigan. "In your time," he told the graduating class, "we have the opportunity to move not only toward the rich society and the powerful society, but upward to the Great Society." The president explained further,

The Great Society rests on abundance and liberty for all. It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice . . . But that is just the beginning.

The Great Society is a place where every child can find knowledge to enrich his mind and to enlarge his talents. It is a place where leisure is a welcome chance to build and reflect, not a feared cause of boredom and restlessness. It is a place where the city . . . serves not only . . . the demands of commerce but the desire for beauty and the hunger for community.

It is a place where man can renew contact with nature . . . a place where men are more concerned with the quality of their goals than the quantity of their goods.

But most of all, the Great Society is not . . . a finished work. It is a challenge constantly renewed, beckoning us toward a destiny where the meaning of our lives matches the marvelous products of our labor.

—Lyndon B. Johnson, May 22, 1964

As the election campaign continued, Democrats adopted the goals of the Great Society as their party platform. In their eyes, Johnson's vision continued a tradition of liberal reform that stretched back to Franklin Roosevelt and, before him, to the Progressive Era. Like Progressives, these liberal Democrats believed the power of government should be expanded to promote social well-being.

The Conservative View: Limiting Government to Preserve Liberty

Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, the Republican candidate for president, held a very different view on government. An outspoken conservative, he had rejected Eisenhower's modern Republicanism as "a dime-store New Deal"—that is, a cheap version of the Democrats' famous domestic program.

Goldwater believed that government's most important role was to "preserve and extend freedom." Regulating every aspect of people's lives was not its proper role. Yet, he observed, that was exactly what it had done since the time of the New Deal. "Our defenses against the accumulation of power in Washington are in poorer shape," he warned, "than our defenses against the aggressive designs of Moscow." Like many conservatives, Goldwater longed for a presidential candidate who had the courage to say what he had said himself:

I have little interest in streamlining government or in making it more efficient, for I mean to reduce its size. I do not undertake to promote welfare, for I propose to extend freedom. My aim is not to pass laws, but to repeal them. It is not to inaugurate new programs, but to cancel old ones that do violence to the Constitution, or that have failed in their purpose, or that impose on the people an unwarranted financial burden. I will not attempt to discover whether legislation is "needed" before I have first determined whether it is constitutionally permissible. And if I should later be attacked for neglecting my constituents' "interests," I shall

reply that I was informed their main interest is liberty and that in that cause I am doing the very best I can.

—Barry Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative*, 1960

In 1964, Goldwater got his chance to be that candidate. When more moderate Republicans warned that voters would reject Goldwater's views as extremism, or radicalism, he answered, "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. And . . . moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue."

Johnson Wins by a Landslide

The campaign quickly turned nasty. Opponents portrayed Goldwater as a reckless extremist who, if elected, would abolish Social Security and take his anticommunist aggression toward the Soviet Union so far as starting World War III. On September 7, the Johnson campaign aired "Daisy," a television advertisement that quickly became famous. It showed a young girl counting the petals of a daisy. Suddenly her voice was drowned out first by a nuclear countdown and then by a mushroom cloud. The ad announced, "Vote for President Johnson on November 3. The stakes are too high for you to stay home." "Daisy" ran only once, but that was enough to scare voters.

Johnson beat Goldwater in a landslide, winning 44 states to Goldwater's six. Johnson won 61 percent of the popular vote, the greatest margin received by any president to that point. Democrats also gained a large majority in Congress.

However, the election gave rise to two developments that would eventually challenge the Democrats' hold on power. One was the modern conservative movement, which grew out of Goldwater's ideas. The other was the political transformation of the South. In 1964, for the first time since Reconstruction, five southern states voted Republican. This shift marked the beginning of the transformation of the South from solidly Democratic to reliably Republican.

49.3 – Implementing Johnson's Great Society

Johnson took his decisive election victory as a mandate to move forward with his Great Society agenda. Long before the election, he had begun work on civil rights and antipoverty programs. Now he was ready to move forward with a broad range of proposals for improving life for all Americans.

The Johnson Treatment Gets Results in Congress

In contrast to Kennedy, who had trouble getting his legislative program through Congress, many of Johnson's bills passed. Having served in Congress for more than two decades, Johnson knew how to deal with legislators. He praised them publicly, sought their advice, returned their calls, and instructed his aides to do the same, "or else."

When all else failed, the president subjected lawmakers to “the treatment.” Two journalists described Johnson’s persuasive powers in this way:

Its tone could be supplication [pleading], accusation, cajolery [persuasion], exuberance, scorn, tears, complaint, the hint of threat . . . Johnson . . . moved in close, his face a scant millimeter from his target, his eyes widening and narrowing, his eyebrows rising and falling. From his pockets poured clippings, memos, statistics . . . The Treatment [was] an almost hypnotic experience and rendered the target stunned and helpless.

—Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, *Lyndon B. Johnson: The Exercise of Power*, 1966

The “treatment,” along with a Democrat-controlled Congress after 1965, helped Johnson compile an extraordinary legislative record. In the five years of his presidency, he shepherded more than 200 measures through Congress.

Ending Racial Injustice

Johnson envisioned a society free of racial injustice. One of his first priorities as president was passage of Kennedy’s civil rights legislation banning discrimination in public accommodations. “No memorial oration,” Johnson said, “could more eloquently honor President Kennedy’s memory than the earliest possible passage of the civil rights bill.” Several months later, Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law.

The new law was quickly tested in the courts. The case known as *Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States* arose when a motel owner refused to rent rooms to blacks. He argued that the Civil Rights Act overstepped the power given to Congress to control interstate commerce. He also claimed that it violated his rights under the Fifth and Thirteenth amendments by forcing him to use his property in ways he opposed. The Supreme Court rejected these claims. It noted that much of the motel’s business came from out-of-state guests. Hence, Congress had acted within its power to regulate interstate commerce.

Johnson continued to push Congress to end racial injustice. In 1965, he signed the Voting Rights Act, which guaranteed voting rights to African Americans. Three years later, he signed the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which prohibited housing discrimination. These laws helped move the country toward Johnson’s vision of a color-blind society.

Declaring War on Poverty

Another goal that both Kennedy and Johnson shared was the elimination of poverty. Spurred by Michael Harrington’s book *The Other America*, Kennedy had asked his advisers to develop strategies for attacking poverty. Johnson expanded these ideas into an ambitious antipoverty program called the War on Poverty.

The centerpiece of the War on Poverty was the Economic Opportunity Act. Passed by Congress in August 1964, the act created dozens of federal antipoverty programs and

an Office of Economic Opportunity to oversee them. One program, the Job Corps, worked to teach disadvantaged young people job skills. Project Head Start set up programs for low-income preschool children. Volunteers in Service to America, or VISTA, was modeled on the Peace Corps. VISTA volunteers lived and worked in poor communities within the United States, providing job training or educational services.

President Johnson also hoped to reverse the decline of America's cities. In 1965, he created the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to manage federal programs aimed at revitalizing blighted urban neighborhoods. Its head, Robert Weaver, was the first African American to join any president's cabinet.

Improving Access to Health Care

Also high on Johnson's list of Great Society goals was helping needy Americans gain access to health care. Liberals in Congress had tried for years to provide hospital insurance to retired workers as part of Social Security. Johnson made this measure a top priority.

In 1965, Congress established the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Medicare is a federal health insurance program that pays for hospital and nursing home services for citizens 65 years or older. Medicaid is a health insurance program jointly financed by federal and state governments. It covers low-income people as well as older Americans whose medical needs have exceeded their Medicare benefits. With the creation of these programs, many Americans no longer had to forgo medical care for lack of health insurance.

Supporting Lifelong Learning and Culture

Education, Johnson believed, was the key to a better life. He pushed several measures to improve the nation's educational system. One was the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which provided federal aid to school districts nationwide. Because the government allocated funds to needy students rather than to schools, the act helped finance both public and parochial, or faith-based, education.

That same year, Johnson signed an act creating the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). These organizations give grants to artists, musicians, writers, scholars, and researchers to promote a vibrant national culture. Johnson also spearheaded passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. "While we work every day to produce goods and create new wealth," he explained upon signing the act, "we want most of all to enrich man's spirit. That is the purpose of this act." The act established the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), which supports the development of public radio and television programs. One of the first CPB-funded shows was Sesame Street, which first aired on public television stations in 1969.

Opening Doors for Immigrants

Johnson also supported a major overhaul of the nation's immigration policy. Since the 1920s, the government had placed quotas on immigration from every part of the world

except Western Europe. Johnson, who believed this quota system was rooted in prejudice, wanted to end it.

The Immigration Act of 1965 eliminated the old quotas based on national origin. It made a person's skills and ties to family in the United States the key criteria for admission into the country. Johnson praised the act for repairing "a very deep and painful flaw in the fabric of American justice." He had no idea what an impact the law would have: in the years since its signing, immigration has quadrupled, with immigrants arriving from all over the world.

Preserving the Environment

In striving toward the Great Society, Johnson hoped to improve the quality of the environment for all. In 1962, the publication of the book *Silent Spring*, by Rachel Carson, had raised public interest in environmentalism, or protection of the environment. The book showed how uncontrolled pesticide use was poisoning the environment. "The air we breathe, our water, our soil and wildlife," Johnson warned, "are being blighted by poisons and chemicals which are the by-products of technology and industry."

Johnson worked with Congress to pass several environmental laws. The Clean Air Act of 1963 set emission standards for factories to reduce air pollution. Other laws focused on cleaning up waterways, preserving wilderness, protecting endangered species, and beautifying the landscape.

Protecting Consumers

Johnson also supported consumerism, or the protection of the rights of consumers. The Cigarette Labeling Act of 1965 required cigarette packages to carry labels warning that smoking could cause health problems. Other acts set standards for wholesome meat and poultry products, for truth in lending practices, and for honest labeling of food.

In 1965, the book *Unsafe at Any Speed*, written by Ralph Nader, focused public attention on auto safety. It showed how lax engineering standards in the automobile industry had put drivers at risk. The book spurred Congress to pass the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966. This law required automobile makers to install seat belts in all cars.

Debating the Great Society

By the early 1970s, the impact of Johnson's Great Society reforms could be seen in many areas of life. The poverty rate had fallen from 22.2 percent of Americans in 1960 to just 12.6 percent in 1970. High school graduation rates were rising. In 1962, only about 42 percent of black students and 69 percent of white students completed high school. By 1970, those rates had climbed to about 60 percent for blacks and 80 percent for whites. African American participation in politics was growing as well. By 1970, ten members of the House of Representatives and one Senator were black.

Despite these successes, the Great Society had its critics. The War on Poverty proved especially controversial. Left-wing opponents complained that its mix of programs was not the best approach to ending poverty. In their view, poverty resulted from social and economic forces beyond the control of the poor. The best way to help low-income people, they argued, was to give them money while trying to change the economy to create more jobs for them.

Critics on the right alleged that the War on Poverty was creating an underclass of people who were dependent on government welfare. In their view, poverty's main cause was a lack of individual responsibility on the part of the poor. The best approach to ending poverty, they argued, was to find ways to change the behaviors that kept poor people poor.

At the heart of the debate over Johnson's Great Society were age-old questions about the proper role of government in a democracy. Liberal supporters applauded the scheme's broad goals and multitude of programs aimed at improving American life. Their main concern was that many of the programs were not funded well enough to achieve those goals. Conservative critics, on the other hand, saw the Great Society as government run amok. The high cost of the many Great Society programs confirmed their belief that government should not try to solve all of society's problems.

Johnson's presidency proved to be a high point for the liberal view of government as society's problem solver. After he left office, world events caused liberals to lose ground to more conservative politicians. Still, the Great Society left a lasting imprint on American life. Few Americans today voice a desire to do away with Medicare, Sesame Street, or consumer protections. Many such products of the Great Society have become fixtures of American life.

49.4 – The Activist Warren Court

The Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Earl Warren, also played a role in reshaping American society during the 1960s. By reinterpreting much of what had been settled law, the Warren Court became known as an “activist” court.

Ensuring “One Person, One Vote”

The Warren Court decided two important cases that changed the political landscape. The first, *Baker v. Carr*, began when Charles Baker, a Republican citizen of Tennessee, sued Joe Carr, the secretary of state of Tennessee, because the state had not redrawn its legislative districts in five decades. During that time, many rural families had migrated to cities. As a result, Baker's urban district had many more residents than some rural districts, but the number of representatives did not reflect that increase. Baker claimed that this imbalance violated his Fourteenth Amendment right to “equal protection under the laws.”

The Supreme Court had treated reapportionment—redrawing voting district boundaries to reflect population changes—as a matter for state legislatures to decide. But in 1962,

after long deliberation, the Warren Court rejected that stance, ruling that reapportionment was a question for federal courts to consider.

The Court returned to reapportionment in the case of *Reynolds v. Sims*. In his majority opinion, Chief Justice Warren wrote,

A citizen, a qualified voter, is no more nor no less so because he lives in the city or on the farm. This is the clear and strong command of our Constitution's equal protection clause . . . This is at the heart of Lincoln's vision of "government of the people, by the people, [and] for the people." The equal protection clause demands no less than substantially equal state legislative representation for all citizens, of all places as well as of all races.

As a result, legislative districts across the country were redrawn following the principle of "one person, one vote." That is, each legislator would represent the roughly same number of people, allowing each person's vote to count equally.

Ruling on Prayer in Public Schools

In 1962, the Court considered the role of prayer in public schools. The case of *Engel v. Vitale* arose when state officials, including William Vitale, ordered New York schools to have students recite a morning prayer. Parents, led by Steven Engel, sued the state, claiming that the prayer violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment. This clause states, "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion."

The Supreme Court agreed with the parents. It found that state-sponsored prayer in school, even if voluntary, was unconstitutional because it was "wholly inconsistent with the establishment clause." This controversial decision sparked efforts to amend the Constitution to permit prayers in public schools.

Protecting the Rights of the Accused

Another series of Warren Court rulings reshaped the criminal justice system. The case of *Mapp v. Ohio* involved a woman, Dollree Mapp, who had been convicted of a crime based on evidence found during an illegal police search of her home. The Court ruled in 1961 that evidence obtained illegally may not be used in court.

In *Gideon v. Wainwright*, defendant Clarence Gideon had not had the money to hire a lawyer. Forced to defend himself, he had been found guilty and sent to prison. In 1964, the Court ruled that Gideon's Sixth Amendment right to an attorney had been violated. As a result, courts now provide public defenders to people who are accused of a crime but who cannot afford a lawyer.

In another 1964 case, *Escobedo v. Illinois*, police had denied a murder suspect, Danny Escobedo, an opportunity to speak to a lawyer during questioning. Escobedo eventually confessed to the crime and was convicted. The Court overturned the conviction because Escobedo's constitutional right to be represented by a lawyer after his arrest had been violated.

In a 1966 case, *Miranda v. Arizona*, the Court ruled that the police must inform suspects of their rights before questioning. A suspect must be told, wrote Warren, “that he has the right to remain silent, that any statement he does make may be used as evidence against him, and that he has a right to the presence of an attorney.” These protections are called Miranda rights, after the defendant.

Americans hotly debated these and other Warren Court rulings. Some critics called on Congress to impeach Chief Justice Warren. “Of all three branches of government,” argued Senator Barry Goldwater, “today’s Supreme Court is the least faithful to the constitutional tradition of limited government.” Others praised the Warren Court for doing what Congress had failed to do: protect the rights guaranteed to every citizen by the Constitution.

Summary

In 1964, voters elected liberal Democrat Lyndon Johnson by a wide margin. Johnson used this mandate to enact a broad program of reforms he called the Great Society. With his powers of persuasion, Johnson pushed more than 200 bills through Congress.

War on Poverty Johnson’s Great Society grew out of the liberal tradition of the Progressive and New Deal eras. Its centerpiece was an ambitious War on Poverty.

Economic Opportunity Act This act created a number of antipoverty measures, including the Job Corps, Project Head Start, and VISTA, which all helped cut poverty rates almost in half.

Medicare and Medicaid As part of the Great Society, Congress amended the Social Security Act to include medical health insurance for the elderly and disabled.

Immigration Act of 1965 This measure ended the national origins quota system begun in the 1920s. Entry to the United States was now based on criteria such as skills and family ties.

Silent Spring This influential book sparked a new interest in environmentalism. As a result, Congress passed several environmental laws.

“One person, one vote” The activist Warren Court changed the political landscape by insisting that states create legislative districts following the principle of “one person, one vote.”

Miranda rights In a series of controversial decisions, the Warren Court expanded the rights of the accused. It ensured that people placed under arrest be informed of their rights before questioning.

Chapter 50 — The Emergence of a Counterculture

What was the impact of the counterculture on American society?

50.1 – Introduction

Bob Dylan grew up listening to rock 'n' roll on the radio. As a teenager, he thought he wanted to become a rock star himself. However, while attending the University of Minnesota in 1959, he became passionate about traditional American folk music. Dylan dropped out of college, moved to New York City, and began performing as a folk singer in tiny Greenwich Village nightclubs.

Unlike many performers, Dylan was not showy or handsome, nor did he have a strong singing voice. Still, people paid attention to his music. Accompanying himself on guitar and harmonica, Dylan sang about racial injustice, nuclear war, and other serious issues that engaged people living in a time of social change. His lyrics held more in common with beat poetry than with the simple rhymes of teenage love songs. In one of his early hits, he warned of an emerging clash of values between parents and their baby boom children:

Come mothers and fathers throughout the land
And don't criticize what you can't understand.
Your sons and your daughters are beyond your command.
Your old road is rapidly agin'.
Please get out of the new one if you can't lend your hand,
For the times they are a-changin'.

—Bob Dylan, “The Times They Are A-Changin’,” 1964

In the 1960s, the themes of Dylan's lyrics resonated with millions of young people, as well as with many of their elders. They considered the racial discrimination, riots, poverty, and political assassinations occurring in the United States and concluded that society had to change. As some people experimented with new ways of living, they redefined old ideals, such as freedom and democracy, on their own terms. They created a counterculture—a group with ideas and behaviors very different from those of the mainstream culture.

50.2 – Baby Boomers Launch a Cultural Revolution

The postwar baby boom created the largest generation of children in American history. By the early 1960s, the oldest baby boomers were nearing their twenties. Most looked forward to futures full of opportunities. However, some baby boomers felt guilty about growing up with advantages denied to many Americans. They believed American society was deeply flawed—rife with materialism, racism, and inequality—but they also believed it could change.

Activists on College Campuses Form a New Left

Responding to the plight of the poor, small groups of student activists formed a movement called the New Left. Some members of the Depression-era “Old Left” had been radicals who supported a worldwide communist revolution. The students who made up the New Left rejected communism. Inspired by the civil rights movement, they were committed to more traditional American ideals, such as the democratic goal of allowing all people to take an active part in government.

The strongest voice in the New Left was a group called Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). In 1962, SDS founders met to craft their vision of a just society. “Freedom and equality for each individual, government of, by, and for the people—these American values we found good, principles by which we could live,” they declared. “We would replace power . . . rooted in possession, privilege, or circumstance by power and uniqueness rooted in love, reflectiveness, reason, and creativity. During the first year, SDS membership grew to more than 8,000 students—a small fraction of all college students.

In 1964, a student protest at the University of California at Berkeley radicalized large numbers of students across the country. The Free Speech Movement developed in response to a university rule banning groups like SDS from using a plaza on campus to spread their ideas. Freedom of expression, declared student activist Mario Savio, “represents the very dignity of what a human being is.” Comparing the university to a factory, he urged his fellow students to “put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels.” Thousands of students joined the Free Speech Movement, shutting down the campus for weeks. Eventually, the university lifted the ban.

The student uprising at Berkeley was the first of many protests at colleges across the country. Some protests revolved around local issues. Others were reactions to the growing U.S. military presence in Vietnam. Student activists called on college officials to ban military recruiters from campuses and to end weapons-related research. In 1965, SDS held a rally in Washington, D.C., against the Vietnam War, attracting nearly 25,000 people. You will read more about this war in Unit 15.

An Emerging Counterculture Rejects the Establishment

In another form of rebellion against social expectations, many young people dropped out of school and rejected the “rat race” of nine-to-five jobs. Known as hippies, they developed a counterculture seeking freedom of expression. Shunning conventions, hippies dressed in jeans, colorful tie-dyed T-shirts, sandals, and necklaces called love beads. They wore their hair long and gave up shaving or wearing makeup. Many lived on handouts from their parents, by begging, or by taking short-term jobs.

Although no organization united members of the counterculture, a number of beliefs did. One was distrust of the Establishment, their term for the people and institutions who, in their view, controlled society. Another was the sentiment embodied in the counterculture motto of “never trust anyone over 30.” Members of the counterculture also shared the belief that love was more important than money.

Many members of the counterculture rejected political activism in favor of “personal liberation.” As one hippie put it, “Human beings need total freedom. That’s where God is at. We need to shed hypocrisy, dishonesty, and phoniness and go back to the purity of our childhood values.” Hippies talked of creating a new age of peace and love in which everyone was free to “do your own thing.”

In the late 1960s, counterculture members of the Youth International Party, known as yippies, tried to combine their hippie lifestyle with New Left politics. Led by Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, the yippies attracted media attention by carrying out amusing pranks. In one of them, they poked fun at the Establishment’s love of money by throwing dollar bills off the balcony of the New York Stock Exchange. As the money floated down, the stock traders below dropped their work to scramble for free cash. Hoffman called such stunts “commercials for the revolution.”

A Generation Gap Opens Between Rebel Youth and Mainstream Parents

Hippies were a minority of 1960s youth. But media coverage made their values known to other young people, many of whom responded sympathetically. To their parents’ distress, these youth let their hair grow long, wore hippie clothes, and criticized the Establishment, especially the war in Vietnam. The result was a growing generation gap, or difference in attitudes and behaviors between youth and their parents.

Adults who had lived through the Depression and World War II often dismissed “long-haired hippies” as spoiled rich kids. They resented the counterculture’s focus on hedonism, or pursuit of pleasure, and its lack of concern for their future. The majority of young people, however, adhered to mainstream values. Like their parents, they wanted a good education, a decent job, a successful marriage, and their own home.

Peggy Noonan, a presidential speechwriter and newspaper columnist, was one of those mainstream youth. While hippies were dreaming of personal liberation, Noonan accepted the idea that “not everything is possible, you can’t have everything, and that’s not bad, that’s life.” Rather than chanting anti-Establishment slogans such as “Make love, not war,” her motto was “Show respect, love your country, stop complaining!”

50.3 – A Culture Clash

In San Francisco in January 1967, an event dubbed the “Human Be-In”—a fun-loving twist on a sit-in—drew together various counterculture factions. The festival attracted nearly 20,000 young people. News reports showed young men and women holding one another, using drugs, and dancing to the music of rock bands. For many young people, the gathering looked like an invitation to enjoy sex, drugs, and rock ’n’ roll. For parents, stories about the Human Be-In confirmed their worst fears of a society in moral decline.

Changing Views of Love and Marriage

The counterculture’s openness about sexual behavior took place amid rapidly changing views toward love and marriage. The sexual revolution was a by-product of the introduction of the birth control pill early in the decade. More couples were living

together outside of marriage, and more marriages were ending in divorce. Millions of Americans came to see a loveless marriage as worse than no marriage at all. As a result, many states eased divorce laws. Between 1960 and 1970, the annual divorce rate rose from fewer than 10 couples per 1,000 to almost 15. The number of children living in single-parent families rose along with the divorce rate.

While numbers of young people experimented with the freedom the sexual revolution brought, mainstream adults focused on problems it created. They worried that young people were being pressured to engage in sexual behavior. Adults also expressed alarm at the rapid rise in the number of children born out of wedlock. Just as shocking was an increase in sexually transmitted diseases.

Hippies Experiment with Freer Lifestyles

Many hippies created mini-societies in which they could live by their own values. Some congregated in crash pads, free and usually temporary places to stay. Others experimented with more permanent group-owned living arrangements, called communes. Members of communes shared responsibilities and decision making. During the 1960s, about 2,000 communes arose, most often in rural areas. Many mainstream parents reacted strongly to communal modes of living. Some parents felt that by choosing such unconventional lifestyles, their children may have been limiting their prospects for future success.

The counterculture also held changing views on the recreational use of drugs. At the 1967 Human Be-In, psychologist Timothy Leary urged the crowd to “turn on, tune in, and drop out.” The casual attitude of young people toward illegal mind-altering drugs appalled mainstream adults. They pointed out that some drug users experienced “bad trips” that led to panic attacks, depression, violence, and death. Government spending on antidrug programs increased from \$65 million in 1969 to \$730 million in 1973.

Rock 'n' Roll Gives Voice to the Counterculture

Hippies also embraced the changing music scene. Counterculture rock bands soon developed a new sound known as psychedelic rock. They experimented with free-flowing songs that used elements of jazz and Indian music, sound distortion, and light shows to create vivid musical experiences. Many mainstream adults worried this type of music promoted increased drug use.

The counterculture was at its height at Woodstock, a 1969 concert in rural upstate New York. About 400,000 people convened at the festival—far more than expected. Despite rain and food shortages, the gathering was peaceful.

Woodstock helped popularize a new generation of rock performers. It also drew media attention to the counterculture. In August 1969, Time magazine reported, “The festival . . . may well rank as one of the significant political and sociological events of the age.” However, just a few months after Woodstock, four people died at a rock festival staged by the Rolling Stones in Altamont, California. The mainstream culture pointed to this event as an example of the dangers of rock 'n' roll.

The Impact of the Counterculture on Mainstream Media

By the end of the 1960s, countercultural ideas and images appeared in mainstream magazines and movies and on television. Experimentation with new forms of expression spread to the visual arts, where abstract expressionism of the 1950s gave way to pop art, short for “popular art.” Pop art focused on everyday life, commenting on consumer culture by elevating mundane objects into high art.

Even musical theater was affected by counterculture ideas. The rock musical Hair opened in New York City in April 1968. “Aquarius,” a song from the play, described the kind of world the counterculture hoped to create:

Harmony and understanding, sympathy and trust abounding.
No more falsehoods or derisions, golden living dreams of visions.
Mystic crystal revelation and the mind’s true liberation.

Summary

Members of the counterculture valued individual freedom and expression over materialism. Their values created a generation gap between themselves and older, mainstream Americans.

The New Left Politically active college students formed a movement known as the New Left. In 1964, the Free Speech Movement challenged the University of California at Berkeley.

Hippies Members of the counterculture, known as hippies, believed in peace, love, and individual freedom. They shunned the Establishment and its materialistic values.

Sexual revolution As living together before marriage and getting divorced became more accepted in the 1960s, the divorce rate went up, as did the number of children living with a single parent.

Drug use Casual attitudes toward the use of illegal drugs shocked mainstream America.

Rock ’n’ roll Psychedelic rock combined musical styles with light shows to create vivid experiences. The music festival Woodstock drew media attention to the counterculture.

Impact of the counterculture The media introduced countercultural values to mainstream America through television and radio, as well as art, music, and theater.

Chapter 51 — The United States Gets Involved in Vietnam

Why did the United States increase its military involvement in Vietnam?

51.1 – Introduction

In Washington, D.C.'s Constitution Gardens, not far from the Lincoln Memorial, sits a long, sloping wall made of polished black granite. Etched into the wall are thousands of names. Visitors file past this stark monument at a funereal pace. Here and there, some stop to touch a familiar name. Many simply stand in contemplation or quiet prayer, while others shed tears. Some leave letters, flowers, or personal objects, including medals, at the base of the wall.

The official name of this monument is the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, but it is more commonly known as “the Wall.” The Wall lists the names of U.S. soldiers killed or missing in action in the Vietnam War. The first two men listed, Chester Ovnand and Dale Buis, were the first U.S. soldiers to die in Vietnam, according to official records. They were noncombat troops killed in a surprise attack on their camp in 1959. At the time, few Americans were paying any attention to this faraway conflict. Later, reporter Stanley Karnow, who had written a brief account of the soldiers’ deaths, mentioned their names at a congressional hearing. He said, “I could never have imagined that these were going to be at the head of more than 58,000 names on the Wall.”

Today many young people visit the Wall. Some of them wonder why a list of names carved in stone has such a strong impact on other, older visitors. They wonder why the remembrance of this war provokes not only tears but also anger. The answer is complicated. It has to do with painful memories of loss, with Cold War policies, and with social rebellion. It has to do with American GIs fighting and dying in a war far from home, for reasons many did not entirely understand.

Before the United States entered the war, politicians and their advisers argued about the wisdom of getting drawn into the conflict. During the war, Americans bitterly debated U.S. policy. The war divided the country more than any other issue since the Civil War. Today, many are still asking the question: Did the United States have good reasons for getting involved in Vietnam?

51.2 – Three Presidents Increase Involvement in Vietnam

From the 1880s up until World War II, Vietnam was part of French Indochina, a French colony in Southeast Asia that also included Cambodia and Laos. During World War II, Japanese troops occupied part of French Indochina. But Vietnam had a 2,000-year history of resisting foreign rule. In 1941, a Vietnamese communist, Ho Chi Minh, drew on that history to stir up nationalist feelings. In northern Vietnam, he helped found a group to oppose foreign occupation. Members of this independence movement became known as the Viet Minh.

On September 2, 1945, the same day that Japan formally surrendered to the Allies, Vietnam declared its independence. Ho Chi Minh made the announcement. In what seemed like a bid for U.S. backing, he began his speech with words from the Declaration of Independence. "All men are created equal," he said. "They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." Ho ended his speech with words that might have stirred the hearts of the original American patriots. "The entire Vietnamese people," he said, "are determined to mobilize all their physical and mental strength, to sacrifice their lives and property in order to safeguard their independence and liberty." Ho's followers would show their determination over the next three decades. First they fought France when it tried to reestablish colonial rule. Later they would fight the United States, which saw them as a communist enemy. In the early stages of the war, three presidents would set the pattern for deepening U.S. involvement.

Truman Chooses Sides in the First Indochina War

The Viet Minh called their country the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The northern city of Hanoi was their capital, and Ho Chi Minh was their president. France, however, refused to accept Vietnamese independence and set out to eliminate the Viet Minh. First, French troops drove the rebels out of the southern city of Saigon, the French colonial capital. Then the French launched attacks on Viet Minh strongholds in the north. In November 1946, French warships opened fire on the port city of Haiphong, killing some 6,000 Vietnamese civilians. The following month, the Viet Minh attacked French ground forces. These incidents marked the start of the First Indochina War. This war would continue for eight years.

Some American officials saw this conflict as a war between a colonial power and nationalists who aspired to govern themselves. They urged France to set a goal of complete independence for Vietnam. Others, including President Truman, held views of the conflict that were more colored by the Cold War. They believed that the Viet Minh intended to create a communist dictatorship. Although Truman suspected the French might be fighting to preserve their empire, he chose to see their efforts as a fight against communism.

For Truman, containing communism was more important than supporting a nationalist movement. By 1951, thousands of U.S. soldiers had already died in Korea trying to halt the spread of communism. Truman was determined to block any further communist advance in Asia. For this reason, he called for an increase in military aid to French Indochina. This aid rose from \$10 million in 1950 to more than \$100 million in 1951. By 1954, the United States was paying 80 percent of the cost of the war in Indochina.

Eisenhower Considers Increased American Involvement

Despite U.S. aid, the First Indochina War dragged on. The French controlled the cities in both northern and southern Vietnam, but the Viet Minh dominated the countryside. The Viet Minh took control of rural villages, often by assassinating local leaders with close ties to the French. They gained the support of Vietnam's peasants, who made up around 80 percent of the population, in part by giving them land taken from the wealthy.

The decisive battle of the war began in March 1954, when the Viet Minh launched a surprise attack on a large French military base at Dien Bien Phu, in the mountains of northern Vietnam. They soon had the base surrounded. By April, the more than 12,000 French soldiers at Dien Bien Phu appeared ready to give up. Now Truman's successor, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, faced a dilemma. A loss at Dien Bien Phu might knock the French out of the war. Eisenhower briefly considered sending B-29 aircraft to bomb Viet Minh positions, but he did not want to act alone. What he really wanted was a commitment from Britain and other allies to take unified military action to stop communist expansion in Vietnam and elsewhere in Indochina.

In a news conference on April 7, Eisenhower warned that if Vietnam fell to communism, the rest of Southeast Asia would topple like a "row of dominoes." Even Japan, he said, might be lost. In the years to come, this domino theory would provide a strong motive for U.S. intervention in Vietnam. But for now, just months after the Korean War had ended, neither the United States nor its allies were prepared to fight another ground war in Asia. Senator John F. Kennedy reflected the mood of Congress when he said, "To pour money, materiel, and men into the jungles of Indochina without at least a remote prospect of victory would be dangerously futile and self-destructive." Materiel is military equipment and supplies. Other policymakers feared that direct military intervention might even trigger a war with Vietnam's communist neighbor, China.

On May 7, 1954, the Viet Minh finally overran the French base, ending the Battle of Dien Bien Phu and shattering French morale. The French, lacking public support at home for the war, began pulling out of northern Vietnam. The final act of the First Indochina War would be played out at a peace conference in Geneva, Switzerland.

Geneva Peace Conference Splits Vietnam in Two

Representatives of France and the Viet Minh began talks in Geneva the day after the French loss at Dien Bien Phu. France wanted to maintain some control over southern Vietnam. The Viet Minh demanded that France leave the country completely and that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam be recognized as an independent nation.

As negotiations dragged on, China and the Soviet Union put pressure on the Viet Minh to compromise. They did not want to antagonize the United States, fearing it would intervene militarily. Finally, in July 1954 the French and Viet Minh signed the Geneva Accords. Under this agreement, the fighting stopped, and Vietnam was split temporarily along the 17th parallel. The Viet Minh moved north of that line, while the French withdrew to the south. Under the accords, national elections to reunify Vietnam were scheduled for 1956.

As France prepared to leave Vietnam, the United States began moving in. American officials believed they could form a strong noncommunist state in South Vietnam. In 1955, the United States used its influence to put an anticommunist South Vietnamese leader, Ngo Dinh Diem, in charge. Diem began building an army. To help shape this army, Eisenhower provided some 350 U.S. military advisers—noncombat specialists

who train and equip another nation's soldiers. Chester Ovnand and Dale Buis, the first U.S. soldiers killed in Vietnam, were military advisers.

As the election to unify north and south approached, Ho Chi Minh seemed likely to win. Diem, with U.S. approval, blocked the national vote, thus rejecting the Geneva Accords, and held elections only in the south. In October 1955, he declared himself president of South Vietnam. Diem began returning land to wealthy landlords and drafting young men from the countryside into his army. He ruthlessly attacked opponents and jailed thousands of people without putting them on trial or charging them with a crime.

Viet Minh communists still living in the south launched a guerrilla war against Diem's brutal government. Their strategy included terrorism and assassination. In 1960, the Viet Minh formed a group called the National Liberation Front and invited all opponents of Diem to join. Diem referred to the group as Viet Cong, slang for "Vietnamese communists," even though many of its members were non communists. By now, North Vietnam was supplying and supporting these rebels. The stage was set for the Second Indochina War, also known as the Vietnam War.

Kennedy Tries to Prop Up South Vietnam

The Viet Cong insurgency, or rebellion, threatened to overwhelm the South Vietnamese army. Many army officers, like many leaders of South Vietnam's government, were incompetent and corrupt. Some officers even sold weapons to the Viet Cong. When Kennedy became president in 1961, he sent an inspection team to South Vietnam to evaluate the situation.

Kennedy had originally opposed U.S. military intervention to help the French. As the years passed, however, his ideas about the strategic importance of Vietnam shifted. In 1956, he offered his own version of the domino theory. JFK called Vietnam "the cornerstone of the Free World in Southeast Asia, the keystone in the arch, the finger in the dike." As president, he continued to favor a policy of containing communism.

When Kennedy's inspection team returned from Vietnam, they told the president that South Vietnam was losing the war. They recommended more economic and military aid, including the use of U.S. combat troops. However, some political advisers urged him to pull out of Vietnam completely. JFK, unsure of the best course, opted to send more weapons and equipment and more technicians and military advisers. By mid-1962, the number of military advisers had soared to around 9,000. But JFK resisted calls to send U.S. soldiers into combat. This policy was designed, according to one policy memo, to help Diem's army "win its own war."

Diem was losing not only the war but also the respect of his people. Besides being corrupt and brutal, Diem discriminated against the Buddhist majority. In May 1963, at a Buddhist rally opposing Diem's policies, South Vietnamese police killed nine demonstrators. Several Buddhist monks protested by publicly setting themselves on fire. Kennedy realized that Diem had failed as a leader. In November, a group of South

Vietnamese generals staged a coup, with the tacit approval of U.S. officials. Diem was assassinated as he tried to flee Saigon.

51.3 – Johnson Inherits the Vietnam Problem

Three weeks after Diem's death, Kennedy was also assassinated. The growing problem in Vietnam thus fell into the lap of a new president, Lyndon B. Johnson. LBJ knew that Vietnam was a potential quagmire that could suck the United States into protracted conflict. But he also believed that the communists had to be stopped. In May 1964, he expressed his ambivalent feelings about Vietnam to an adviser. "I don't think it's worth fighting for," he said, "and I don't think we can get out."

LBJ was first and foremost a politician. He knew how to get things done in Congress and how to win elections. During the 1964 campaign, his opponent, Barry Goldwater, insisted that the United States should take a more active role in the war. Johnson responded, "We are not about to send American boys nine or ten thousand miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves." This moderate approach to Vietnam boosted LBJ's appeal to voters. Yet the president had already begun making plans to escalate, or increase, U.S. involvement in the war. In March 1964, he asked the military to begin planning for the bombing of North Vietnam.

Gulf of Tonkin Incident Riles the U.S.

For years, North Vietnam had been sending weapons and supplies south to the Viet Cong over the Ho Chi Minh Trail. This network of footpaths, roads, bridges, and tunnels passed through the mountainous terrain of eastern Laos and Cambodia. In mid-1964, regular units of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) began heading south along this route. Johnson knew that South Vietnam's weak and ineffective army would be hard-pressed to stop this new offensive. The United States had to do more, he believed, or risk losing Vietnam to communism.

In July 1964, Johnson approved covert attacks on radar stations along North Vietnam's coast. The CIA planned the operation, but South Vietnamese in speedboats carried out the raids. U.S. Navy warships used electronic surveillance, or close observation, to locate the radar sites. On August 2, in response to the raids, NVA patrol boats struck back. They fired machine guns and torpedoes at a U.S. destroyer in the Gulf of Tonkin, off the coast of North Vietnam. The ship was not damaged.

LBJ chose not to retaliate, but he sent a message to Hanoi warning the North Vietnamese government that further "unprovoked" attacks would bring "grave consequences." On the night of August 4, in stormy weather in the Gulf of Tonkin, American sailors thought their destroyer was again under attack. They fired back, although they never saw any enemy boats. In fact, no attack had taken place.

Back in Washington, D.C., officials quickly studied accounts of the incident. Based on erroneous evidence, these officials—and the president—concluded that a second attack had occurred. LBJ immediately ordered air strikes against naval bases in North

Vietnam. The next day, August 5, he asked Congress to approve those air strikes and to give him the power to deal with future threats.

Two days later, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. This resolution allowed the president “to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.” The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was not a legal declaration of war, but it did, in effect, give the president permission to expand the U.S. role in the conflict.

Only two members of Congress, both in the Senate, voted against the resolution. One of them, Ernest Gruening of Alaska, explained his opposition in a speech on the Senate floor:

[Authorizing this measure] means sending our American boys into combat in a war in which we have no business, which is not our war, into which we have been misguidedly drawn, which is steadily being escalated. This resolution is a further authorization for escalation unlimited.

—Senator Ernest Gruening, August 1964

The U.S. Reaches a Crisis Point in Vietnam

The escalation that Senator Gruening feared began on February 7, 1965, after the Viet Cong attacked a U.S. air base in the south. LBJ responded by ordering the bombing of barracks and military staging areas north of the 17th parallel. “We have kept our guns over the mantel and our shells in the cupboard for a long time now,” the president said of his decision. “I can’t ask our American soldiers out there to continue to fight with one hand behind their backs.”

The February bombing raid led to a series of massive air strikes called Operation Rolling Thunder. Most of the president’s advisers believed that this action was needed to give a boost to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) and to avoid the collapse of South Vietnam. The government, plagued by coups and corruption, was in turmoil. It had little support outside Saigon and other large cities. The military, too, was in rough shape. Units of the ARVN rarely had success against the enemy forces that roamed the countryside. ARVN soldiers deserted by the thousands each month.

Besides attacking staging areas, U.S. planes began intensive bombing of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, hoping to cut off supplies and soldiers streaming in from the north. But the flow of men and materiel from the north continued, as did the war. In light of these results, the Johnson administration decided to reexamine U.S. policy in Vietnam.

Johnson’s Advisers Debate Increased Involvement

President Johnson believed in a limited war to secure South Vietnam’s independence. His foreign policy team debated what actions were necessary to reach that objective.

Most of LBJ's political advisers were hawks, people who favored expanding U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. In their eyes, the defense of Vietnam was crucial in the wider struggle to contain communism. In policy debates, the hawks—a group that included Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and Secretary of State Dean Rusk, along with top military leaders—argued in favor of escalating the war by introducing U.S. ground troops. One of their arguments had been heard many times before: the domino theory. The fall of Vietnam, they asserted, would trigger the collapse of Cambodia, Laos, and the rest of Southeast Asia. Under this scenario, communism would spread across the entire region and beyond.

The hawks also argued against a policy of appeasement. They recalled the Munich Pact of 1938, which was intended to appease Hitler but allowed for the continued aggression that led to World War II. LBJ understood their point. “The central lesson of our time,” he said, “is that the appetite of aggression is never satisfied. To withdraw from one battlefield means only to prepare for the next.”

A third argument of the hawks stressed American credibility. They said that allies must be able to rely on the United States, the leader of the free world, to stand by them in times of crisis. Only then, the hawks claimed, could the United States count on allied support in the worldwide battle against communism. They also argued that the United States had to make clear to the communists that it would meet any challenge to its power. A related argument was purely political. During the Cold War, politicians were expected to take a hard line against the communist threat. LBJ could not afford to lose domestic support by being branded “soft on communism.”

Not all of LBJ's advisers took such a hard line. Some, such as Undersecretary of State George Ball, were doves—advocates of a peaceful solution in Vietnam through negotiation and compromise. Previously they had argued against widespread bombing. Now, in policy debates, they made the case against escalating the conflict further by sending in U.S. combat troops.

The doves contended that escalating the war would not guarantee victory, arguing that the war was unwinnable. They pointed to the case of Korea, where U.S. troops had fought a costly war for three years but achieved little. Fighting a guerrilla war in the unfamiliar jungle terrain of Vietnam, the doves predicted, would prove even more difficult and deadly. In addition, the expense of such a war would undermine LBJ's top priority, his Great Society programs.

The doves also argued that involvement in the war was not in the nation's interest. They said the United States had no business becoming entangled in someone else's civil war. In addition, they questioned the strategic value of Vietnam to the United States. The huge investment the United States was making in Southeast Asia, they argued, was diverting attention from more important problems both at home and abroad.

Furthermore, the doves pointed out that direct U.S. involvement in Vietnam might draw China or even the Soviet Union into the conflict. Both countries were supplying North

Vietnam with military aid, and China was building an air base just inside its border with North Vietnam. The doves feared that China might counter the entry of U.S. ground troops with combat forces of its own. Increased U.S. involvement, they claimed, would not reassure its allies but instead make them more anxious that a major war could erupt in the region.

51.4 – Johnson Americanizes the War

After weighing all the advice he received about American involvement in Vietnam, Johnson decided to send troops. On March 8, 1965, about 3,500 U.S. marines waded ashore at a beach near Da Nang, South Vietnam. This was the first time U.S. combat troops had set foot in Vietnam. The marines received a warm greeting from local officials. Several Vietnamese girls placed garlands of flowers around the soldiers' necks.

The marines knew this was no time to celebrate, though. They immediately began digging foxholes on the beach, preparing to defend against a Viet Cong attack. The next day, they continued bringing equipment and supplies ashore, including tanks equipped with flamethrowers. The marines' job was to defend the air base at Da Nang, the home base for bombers taking part in Operation Rolling Thunder. Soon their orders changed, however. They were sent on patrol to find and eliminate enemy forces. These search-and-destroy missions led to the first firefights with Viet Cong guerrillas. Until the following month, LBJ kept this shift to combat status a secret from the American people.

Johnson Dramatically Increases Troop Levels

By the end of April, President Johnson had approved the dispatch of 60,000 more combat troops to Vietnam. In July, after conferring with advisers, he publicly announced that he was boosting U.S. troop levels dramatically, to 125,000 men. "We cannot be defeated by force of arms," he said. "We will stand in Vietnam." LBJ's actions and words revealed that the United States was about to undertake a full-scale war. Yet the president did not officially declare war or ask Congress for permission to expand troop levels. He based his authority to act on the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

In the months that followed, the air war continued to intensify, and the pace of the ground war accelerated. The first major assault by U.S. ground troops, called Operation Starlite, took place in August 1965, against 1,500 Viet Cong who were preparing to attack a U.S. air base near the coast. The battle started with bomb and artillery attacks on Viet Cong positions. Helicopters flew many of the 5,500 marines to the battle site, and others came ashore from ships. Supported by tanks and fighter planes, the marines successfully smashed the enemy force. In this American victory, marines killed more than 600 Viet Cong, while 45 U.S. soldiers died.

This pattern of delivering troops by helicopter while battering the enemy with overwhelming firepower would continue throughout the war. So would the lopsided pattern of casualties. Although many U.S. and ARVN soldiers would die in Vietnam, four times as many enemy troops would perish. Despite huge losses, however, the Viet

Cong and North Vietnamese managed to produce enough new fighters to keep the war going.

The United States, too, relied on ever-increasing numbers of ground troops to sweep through jungles and rice paddies and root out the enemy. By the end of 1965, U.S. combat soldiers numbered more than 184,000. That figure more than doubled in 1966, to 385,000. By late 1967, nearly half a million Americans were serving in Vietnam, and more were streaming into the country.

An American War

Starting in 1965, with the landing of the first combat forces, the conflict in Vietnam changed. The United States took over the main responsibility for fighting the war, adopting a two-pronged strategy. First, U.S. marines would take key cities and other vital sites along the coast and transform them into modern military bases. They would then use those bases to launch search-and-destroy missions against the Viet Cong. From that time forward, the South Vietnamese would play only a supporting role.

This change in strategy represented the Americanization of the Vietnam War. As one of LBJ's advisers, Horace Busby, put it, "This is no longer South Vietnam's war. We are no longer advisers. The stakes are no longer South Vietnam's. The war is ours."

Summary

After World War II, nationalist and communist rebels in the French colony of Vietnam fought for their independence. A 1954 agreement ending this colonial war split the country into communist North Vietnam and democratic South Vietnam. When France pulled out the following year, the United States stepped in to prop up South Vietnam. Over the years, American involvement grew and eventually led to the introduction of U.S. ground forces.

First Indochina War In this first phase of fighting, which lasted from 1946 to 1954, Ho Chi Minh led Viet Minh insurgents in the struggle to end French rule in Vietnam.

Geneva Accords The First Indochina War ended with a 1954 agreement known as the Geneva Accords. The accords split Vietnam into north and south but called for elections to reunify the country. The United States backed South Vietnam financially and militarily.

Viet Cong Insurgents in the south, known as the Viet Cong, worked to overthrow the nominally democratic but corrupt government of South Vietnam. The Viet Cong received aid from communist North Vietnam.

Gulf of Tonkin Resolution An alleged attack on U.S. ships off the coast of North Vietnam led Congress to pass the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. This resolution gave President Johnson broad powers to expand the U.S. role in Vietnam. Massive air strikes against North Vietnam followed.

Ho Chi Minh Trail By 1965, North Vietnamese Army troops were moving south along the Ho Chi Minh Trail to help the Viet Cong. The United States feared that South Vietnam would fall without more direct support.

Americanization In March 1965, the United States began sending ground troops to fight the Vietnam War. The war quickly became an American conflict.

Chapter 52 — Facing Frustration in Vietnam

What made the Vietnam War difficult to win?

52.1 – Introduction

“We seem to have a sinkhole,” the new secretary of defense, Clark Clifford, told President Johnson in March 1968. “We put in more, they match it.” For three years, the United States had been putting more troops, weapons, and money into Vietnam but was more bogged down than ever. While Clifford described the conflict as a sinkhole, others called it a swamp, a quagmire, or a morass. The idea was the same: the United States was stuck in Vietnam with no easy way out.

Clifford was not the only policy adviser with a negative message. The war had turned several hawkish advisers into doves. They now counseled Johnson to cut back on the bombing, reduce troop levels, and pursue negotiations.

One of LBJ’s closest friends in Congress, Senator Mike Mansfield, gave him similar advice. When the president wanted to send 40,000 more troops to Vietnam, the senator objected. “You’re just getting us involved deeper,” he said. “You’ve got to offer the American people some hope . . . It’s costing too much in lives. And it’s going to cost you more if you don’t change your opinion.”

When Johnson became president in 1963, few Americans were paying much attention to the war because it did not involve U.S. combat troops. Two years later, however, the war had escalated and had become front-page news. Every day, the public learned more about U.S. soldiers fighting and dying in Vietnam. Yet most Americans still supported the president’s efforts to contain communism in Southeast Asia.

By 1968, however, many of those Americans were blaming Johnson for a war that was out of control. They called it “Johnson’s War.” For LBJ, the burden of responsibility was heavy. He had made great strides with his Great Society agenda for social reform. But with public opinion shifting against his war policy, he feared that he would also lose public support for his civil rights and antipoverty programs. The enormous pressures and frustrations of the Vietnam War were taking a toll on Johnson and his presidency.

52.2 – U.S. Troops Face Difficult Conditions

Initially, much of the pressure on LBJ came from hawks in Congress and from the military, who called for more troops in Vietnam. LBJ wanted to fight a limited war with a limited number of soldiers. The American public, he believed, would turn against him if he allowed troop levels—or casualties—to rise too high.

By 1968, most of the ground troops in Vietnam were not professional soldiers like the marines who first landed at Da Nang. As the war progressed, more and more of the fighting was done by men who had been drafted into the army. Many of them took a dim view of the war. In a letter home, one draftee summed up the feelings of many soldiers

when he wrote, “We are the unwilling working for the unqualified to do the unnecessary for the ungrateful.” This attitude toward the war reflected the difficult conditions that U.S. soldiers faced in Vietnam.

Fighting in Unfamiliar Territory

One set of difficulties had to do with the geography and climate of South Vietnam. Few American GIs had ever experienced such hot and humid conditions. In some areas, temperatures rose above 90°F much of the year, and heavy monsoon rains fell from May to October. One GI recalled his reaction upon landing in Vietnam, when the plane door first opened. “The air rushed in like poison, hot and choking . . . I was not prepared for the heat.” This uncomfortable tropical climate also gave rise to a host of insects and other pests, as well as diseases like malaria.

Perhaps the greatest geographic challenge for U.S. soldiers, however, was Vietnam’s rugged topography. Troops had to march through soggy, lowland rice paddies and swamps and over steep, jungle-clad mountains. The heavily forested terrain often made it difficult to locate the enemy. Unlike U.S. soldiers, the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) knew this land intimately and were skilled at concealing themselves in the dense tropical vegetation.

In an effort to deny the enemy its forest cover, the U.S. military sprayed chemical herbicides from the air. These herbicides stripped the foliage from plants and killed many trees. The favored herbicide was Agent Orange, named for the color of the barrels in which it was stored. The military sprayed Agent Orange along the Ho Chi Minh Trail and in many other areas. It also used herbicides to kill crops that might feed the enemy. However, this spraying had a limited effect on enemy operations because the forest cover in Vietnam was so extensive. It also contaminated the soil and water, destroyed civilian food sources, and exposed civilians and soldiers to toxins that posed long-term health risks.

Engaging an Elusive Enemy

As the United States escalated its commitment to the defense of South Vietnam in 1965, the Viet Cong and NVA realized that they could not match superior U.S. firepower. To win they had to engage in guerrilla warfare, relying on the element of surprise and their skill at disappearing into the landscape.

The ability of the insurgents to avoid detection frustrated U.S. commanders. Besides concealing themselves in the jungle, Viet Cong and NVA soldiers often hid from their American pursuers in underground tunnels. Some of these tunnels had several exits, which made escape easier. Others were even more elaborate, containing living areas, storage spaces, and even kitchens.

The Viet Cong also had the ability to “hide in plain sight.” A South Vietnamese peasant tilling the soil by day might be a guerrilla killing Americans by night. GIs passing through a small village could not tell friend from foe. They could trust no one, not even women or children.

To counter these guerrilla war tactics, the commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, General William Westmoreland, decided to fight a war of attrition—a military campaign designed to wear down the enemy’s strength. The United States hoped to eliminate so many enemy troops that the Viet Cong and NVA could no longer fight the war.

The chief tactic in this strategy was the search-and-destroy mission. Small units of soldiers, called platoons, would search out insurgents and draw them into a fight. Then they would call in an air strike by helicopter gunships or jet fighter-bombers to destroy the enemy force. This search-and-destroy tactic appeared effective when measured by the enemy body count—the number of soldiers killed. Communist deaths far exceeded American losses. For Westmoreland, the body count became the key measure of U.S. progress in the war.

Search-and-destroy missions, however, made U.S. combat soldiers clear targets for enemy attack. Insurgents frequently ambushed platoons as they marched through the jungle. Snipers, or sharpshooters, sometimes picked off U.S. soldiers from concealed locations. Soldiers also fell prey to land mines—explosive devices, buried just below ground, that blew up when stepped on. Men on patrol also had to watch for booby traps, such as tripwires connected to explosives and sharpened stakes coated with poison.

Many soldiers managed to overcome these challenging circumstances. They served with distinction and carried out their combat duties as required. Others, however, became severely demoralized. During their 12-month tour of duty in Vietnam, some soldiers focused solely on survival, avoiding combat when possible. Low morale also led to increased drug use.

The Limited War Proves Ineffective

The United States had reasons for pursuing a limited war. First, General Westmoreland believed that a war of attrition could achieve victory. The goal was to kill more enemy soldiers than North Vietnam or the Viet Cong could replace. If the strategy worked, the communists would have to give up eventually. Through limited war, Westmoreland thought, the United States could achieve its main goal of establishing a democratic South Vietnam.

Second, U.S. leaders saw grave dangers in pursuing a total war with no limits. Total war calls for the complete mobilization of a nation’s resources to achieve victory. This approach would have meant invading North Vietnam and forcing the communists to surrender. It would likely have led to an enormous American death toll. Also, China and the Soviet Union, which were providing military aid to North Vietnam, might be provoked to intervene directly, potentially resulting in a nuclear confrontation.

The limited war proved ineffective, however, because the strategy of attrition failed. There were simply too many enemy forces to eliminate. Ho Chi Minh had once warned the French, “You can kill ten of my men for every one I kill of yours. But even at those odds, you will lose and I will win.” The same held true a decade later. Some 200,000 North Vietnamese men reached draft age every year. Westmoreland’s annual body

counts never came close to that figure. The war continued, and antiwar sentiments began to grow in the United States. Most Americans could not tolerate a war, especially an undeclared war, that seemed to drag on endlessly at a growing cost in American lives.

Ultimately, Americans underestimated their enemy. The Viet Cong and North Vietnamese saw the United States as another colonial power that had to be expelled from their country. They were determined to fight on, no matter how long the war took or how deadly it became. The commitment of the United States to the war was much less certain.

52.3 – The War Divides the People of South Vietnam

The Vietnam War deeply divided the South Vietnamese people. Some, especially in the countryside, joined the Viet Cong or supported their cause. Others, mostly in the cities, backed the government of South Vietnam. A third group, perhaps even the majority, remained neutral in the conflict. They were often caught in the middle when fighting broke out. One of those in the middle made a plea to both sides:

Our people no longer want to take sides in this war that is gradually but inexorably destroying us. We have no desire to be called an “outpost of the Free World” or to be praised for being “the vanguard people in the world socialist revolution.” We simply want to be a people—the Vietnamese people.

—Ly Qui Chung, Saigon newspaper editor, 1970

Contending for the Loyalty of the Vietnamese People

American leaders knew that gaining the trust and support of people like Ly Qui Chung was a crucial element in defeating the insurgency. So, in addition to the “shooting war,” the United States mounted a separate campaign to win over the Vietnamese people and undermine support for the Viet Cong. The key to this “other war” was pacification—a policy designed to promote security and stability in South Vietnam.

Pacification involved two main programs, both run by the Saigon government but organized by the U.S. Army and the CIA and funded by the United States. The first aimed to bring economic development to rural South Vietnam. Rural development projects ranged from supplying villages with food and other goods to building schools and bridges. This program also spread propaganda designed to persuade the Vietnamese to support the government of South Vietnam. In this way, the United States hoped to “win the hearts and minds” of the Vietnamese people.

The second pacification program sought to undermine the communist insurgency by having the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) remove the Viet Cong and their sympathizers from villages. The goal was to cut off the flow of recruits to the enemy and make it safe for rural Vietnamese to support the Saigon government. As one CIA officer

put it, “If we were going to win the war, what we had to do was get in and eliminate the ability of the VC [Viet Cong] to control or influence the people.”

The pacification campaign had many problems, though. First, the ARVN lacked the leadership, skills, and dedication to effectively provide security for villages being pacified. Some ARVN units fought with distinction, but many lacked training or the will to fight. Second, the U.S. forces in Vietnam were too busy fighting the Viet Cong to pay much attention to “the other war” for villagers’ “hearts and minds.”

The lack of security, in turn, made it difficult for rural development teams to carry out their mission of building roads, schools, and other basic infrastructure. In some areas, they might make progress on a project only to see it disappear when a U.S. bomb destroyed their village. In other areas, development workers were targeted by the Viet Cong. Not surprisingly, some fled. Those who stayed on risked death. During a seven-month period in 1966, the number of rural development team workers killed or kidnapped reached 3,015.

The Viet Cong Maintain Popular Support

The Americanization of the war also undermined efforts to lure rural Vietnamese away from the Viet Cong. Search-and-destroy missions often created more enemies than friends among the peasants. One GI described a typical search for Viet Cong in a rural community:

We would go through a village before dawn, rousting everybody out of bed, and kicking down doors and dragging them out if they didn’t move fast enough. They all had underground bunkers inside their huts to protect themselves against bombing and shelling. But to us the bunkers were Viet Cong hiding places, and we’d blow them up with dynamite—and blow up the huts too . . . At the end of the day, the villagers would be turned loose. Their homes had been wrecked, their chickens killed, their rice confiscated—and if they weren’t pro-Viet Cong before we got there, they sure as hell were by the time we left.

—U.S. Marine William Ehrhart

Several other aspects of the U.S. war of attrition hurt the pacification cause. The “destroy” part of search and destroy often included air strikes. A village that had been secured by pacification workers might suddenly be bombed or shelled by U.S. forces trying to hit a Viet Cong target.

Missiles and bombs from U.S. planes leveled villages, killed thousands of civilians, and produced a steady stream of refugees. But a different kind of weapon, napalm, may have brought the greatest agony to the Vietnamese people. Napalm is jellied gasoline. It was dropped from planes as an incendiary bomb designed to burn forests and destroy enemy installations. When it hit the ground, it set fire to everything—and everyone—it touched.

The Viet Cong had significant popular support among Vietnamese nationalists. But the insurgents also used brutal means to ensure loyalty. By intimidating, kidnapping, or assassinating local leaders, including schoolteachers and religious figures, they eliminated voices of opposition. These ruthless tactics helped the Viet Cong gain control of much of South Vietnam.

52.4 – Growing Opposition to the War

Before 1966, vocal opposition to the Vietnam War came mainly from college students, pacifists, and a few radical groups. Most Americans considered those protesters unpatriotic. In 1966, however, criticism arose from within the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. In early February, the committee chairman, Arkansas Democrat J. William Fulbright, began public hearings on U.S. policy in Vietnam, seeking to answer the questions, “Why are we fighting in Vietnam, and how do we plan to win?”

The committee questioned several prominent witnesses, including former ambassador George Kennan, whose ideas in the late 1940s had inspired the containment doctrine. U.S. leaders used this doctrine to justify their policies in Vietnam. At the committee hearing, Kennan spoke against those policies. He said, “If we were not already involved as we are today in Vietnam, I would know of no reason why we should wish to become so involved, and I could think of several reasons why we should wish not to.”

The War Comes to America’s Living Rooms

Americans might have paid little attention to the Fulbright hearings if they had not been televised by the three major networks. Instead, millions of people across the country watched as Fulbright and other respected senators criticized Johnson administration policies. From then on, more Americans would feel free to oppose the war in Vietnam.

Television continued to play an important role in how Americans perceived the war. Night after night, news of the war was broadcast into their living rooms. At first, those news reports struck a positive note. They described U.S. successes and told upbeat stories about the courage and skill of American soldiers. As the war continued, however, television reports began to show more scenes of violence, suffering, and destruction—the human toll of the war.

Escalating Costs Raise Questions

The soaring costs of the war, both human and economic, began to trouble more Americans. In 1968, troop levels rose to over 500,000 and the number of GIs killed in action exceeded 1,200 per month. During the same year, the government spent \$30 billion on the war. This huge expense led to increased inflation and higher taxes for the American people.

As Americans began taking a closer look at the war, some began to question LBJ’s policies. They criticized the bombing of North Vietnam and the sending of combat troops without a declaration of war. A growing number began to echo Senator Fulbright’s question: “Why are we fighting in Vietnam?”

Television networks now focused most of their news coverage on the war. Viewers saw graphic images of combat and rows of body bags containing dead U.S. soldiers. In April 1968, General Westmoreland declared, "We have never been in a better relative position." Yet to many Americans, the administration's optimistic assessments of the war now seemed overblown and even deceitful. Television newscasts emphasized a credibility gap—the difference between the reality of the war and the Johnson administration's portrayal of it.

Hawks and Doves Divide the Nation

Public opinion polls showed that by 1967 the American public was about evenly divided on the war. The views of hawks and doves were pulling the nation in two directions. Hawks believed in the containment doctrine. They argued that the war was morally correct and could be won by giving the military a free hand to expand the fighting. Doves regarded U.S. actions as immoral and futile. In their view, the war was a civil conflict in which the United States had no right to interfere. They wanted LBJ to seek peace.

The peace movement, or antiwar movement, blossomed on college campuses. In March 1965, faculty members at the University of Michigan held a nightlong "teach-in" and debate on Vietnam and U.S. policy. Other teach-ins followed at campuses across the nation. Sit-ins, borrowed from the civil rights movement, also became a popular way to protest the war. In February 1967, students at the University of Wisconsin at Madison occupied a campus building to protest the arrival of recruiters from the Dow Chemical Company, the maker of napalm. When the students refused to leave, police officers dragged them out. Other sit-ins followed around the country, including at Columbia University in 1968.

Younger students also took action. Three students in Des Moines, Iowa, aged 13 to 16, wore black armbands to school to protest the war. When the school suspended them for breaking school rules, they sued the school district and later took their case to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1969, the Court ruled in *Tinker v. Des Moines* that students have a right to engage in symbolic speech—actions that express an opinion in a nonverbal manner.

Protesters also turned to civil disobedience. Some publicly burned their draft cards, while others took the more serious step of refusing induction into the armed forces. One such "draft dodger," world-champion boxer Muhammad Ali, echoed the sentiments of many when he said, "I ain't got no quarrel with no Viet Cong." Other young men between the ages of 18 and 21 complained that they could be sent off to fight even though they had no right to vote against the war. Congress took their complaint seriously. In 1971, it passed the Twenty-sixth Amendment to the Constitution, which lowered the voting age to 18. The states ratified the amendment just three months later.

Many young men took advantage of college deferment, a law that exempted college students from the draft. However, they could be drafted after graduation, which is partly

why many students opposed the war so strenuously. Still, the draft fell disproportionately on poor Americans and minorities who were unable to attend college. This led some critics to label Vietnam a “rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight.” Citing the large proportion of African Americans in Vietnam, Martin Luther King Jr. called it “a white man’s war, a black man’s fight.”

52.5 – 1968: A Year of Crisis

By 1967, antiwar protesters had turned on President Johnson. Demonstrators chanted, “Hey, hey, LBJ. How many kids did you kill today?” To counter growing opposition to the war, the Johnson administration tried to persuade Americans that there was “light at the end of the tunnel.” Officials presented statistics and reports to show that the United States was winning the war. They showed journalists’ captured enemy documents that implied the insurgency was failing. LBJ visited military bases, where he touted U.S. prospects in Vietnam.

LBJ’s campaign to restore confidence worked. American support for the war effort increased—at least for a few months. Then in January 1968, the Viet Cong and NVA started a campaign of their own, also aimed at influencing American public opinion.

Tet Offensive Changes Americans’ View of the War

In the summer of 1967, North Vietnamese military planners decided on a risky new strategy. They would launch attacks on cities in South Vietnam, while staging an uprising in the countryside. Communist leaders hoped this strategy would reveal the failure of pacification efforts and turn Americans even more against the war. They planned the attack to coincide with the Vietnamese holiday known as Tet. This holiday marked the lunar New Year, when many ARVN troops would be home on leave.

On January 31, 1968, the Tet Offensive began. Like a shockwave rolling through South Vietnam, some 85,000 Viet Cong and NVA soldiers attacked cities, villages, military bases, and airfields. In Saigon, North Vietnamese commandos blew a hole in the wall surrounding the U.S. embassy, but U.S. military police fought them off. The North Vietnamese succeeded in holding the city of Hue for nearly a month, but that was their only real military success. In battle after battle, South Vietnamese and U.S. forces pushed back the attackers. As many as 45,000 enemy soldiers, mostly Viet Cong, were killed. In the countryside, no uprising occurred. In fact, the brutality of the communist assault boosted rural support for the South Vietnamese government.

Although it was a military disaster for the communists, the Tet Offensive shocked the American people and became a psychological defeat for the United States. On their TV screens, Americans saw enemy soldiers inside the walls of the U.S. embassy. They saw U.S. bases under attack. They heard journalists’ startled reports about the enemy’s ability to penetrate American strongholds. No amount of positive analysis from the administration could persuade reporters or the public that this was a U.S. victory. Instead, many Americans saw these statements as another example of a widening credibility gap.

Johnson Decides Not to Run for Reelection

As public confidence in Johnson fell, the president suffered another sharp blow. This time it came from the nation's most respected television news anchor, Walter Cronkite. Cronkite, who had traveled to Vietnam to cover the Tet Offensive, delivered an on-camera editorial expressing his view that Johnson had misled the American people. In a solemn voice, he said, "It seems more certain than ever that the bloody experience of Vietnam is to end in a stalemate." Hearing this editorial, LBJ remarked, "That's it. If I've lost Cronkite, I've lost America."

After Tet, polls showed that only 26 percent of Americans approved of LBJ's conduct of the war. Two Democratic senators thought they could do better. Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota, a fierce critic of the war, had already entered the race for the Democratic presidential nomination. Now Robert Kennedy of New York, a favorite of civil rights and antiwar activists, announced he would also run against Johnson.

LBJ saw Tet as a political catastrophe. But General Westmoreland saw it as an opportunity to finish off the communists. He asked the president for 206,000 more troops. Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford told LBJ that even "double or triple that quantity" would not be enough to destroy the enemy forces. LBJ decided to reject the increase, leaving U.S. troop levels at around 500,000. He then removed Westmoreland as commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam. The president also considered Clifford's advice to try to open peace talks.

On March 31, 1968, Johnson stood before national television cameras to make a momentous announcement. The United States, he said, would try to "deescalate the conflict" by cutting back on the bombing of North Vietnam and by seeking a negotiated settlement of the war. An even bigger announcement followed. LBJ told Americans, "I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your president."

The Chaotic Election of 1968

The war had exhausted the president, and he seemed to think he had lost his political influence. Although LBJ might have won the nomination if he had chosen to run, he threw his weight behind his vice president, Hubert H. Humphrey. In June 1968, Humphrey became the likely nominee when his most experienced rival, Robert Kennedy, was assassinated on the campaign trail by a lone gunman.

1968 had already been one of the most turbulent years in recent American history. The country was reeling from the combined effects of the Vietnam War, antiwar protests and other social unrest, and the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. Now it was stunned by yet another assassination, this time of one of its leading political figures. And there was more upheaval to come.

In August, delegates gathered in Chicago for the Democratic National Convention. Many of them backed the antiwar views of McCarthy. Following a bitter debate,

however, the convention endorsed a campaign platform that supported President Johnson's Vietnam policy. Under pressure from LBJ, Humphrey approved the platform and won the Democratic nomination.

Meanwhile, thousands of antiwar protesters rallied in parks near the convention center. At times they confronted police and national guardsmen called in by Mayor Richard Daley. On August 28, the violence escalated. A clash occurred between Chicago police and a group of rowdy protesters trying to march into the convention center. Some protesters threw rocks and bottles at the police, and police fired tear gas and beat protesters and onlookers with batons and rifle butts. Americans watching the spectacle on television were appalled.

In contrast, the Republican National Convention was a tidy affair. Delegates chose Richard M. Nixon, Eisenhower's vice president, as their candidate for president. Nixon's speech accepting the nomination blasted LBJ and the Democrats:

When the strongest nation in the world can be tied up for four years in a war in Vietnam with no end in sight, when the richest nation in the world can't manage its own economy, when the nation with the greatest tradition of the rule of law is plagued by unprecedented lawlessness . . . then it's time for new leadership for the United States of America.

—Richard M. Nixon, August 8, 1968

Humphrey and the Democrats never quite recovered from their disastrous convention. Nixon connected with voters by promising to maintain "law and order" at home and secure "peace with honor" in Vietnam. In November 1968, Americans voted for change, electing Nixon as their new president.

Summary

The United States decided to wage a limited war in Vietnam, with limited troop strength. Fighting an elusive enemy on unfamiliar terrain frustrated U.S. soldiers. The South Vietnamese people themselves were unsure whom to support: the Saigon government or the communist-backed Viet Cong. As the war dragged on, American antiwar protests grew. Opposition to the war greatly affected the 1968 elections.

War of attrition The U.S. military waged a war of attrition, hoping to wear down the enemy by inflicting heavy losses. Increasing the enemy body count became a key military goal.

Opposing Vietnamese armies Regular troops of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) joined forces with Viet Cong insurgents. The United States trained the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) to defend South Vietnam.

New weapons of war The United States sprayed the herbicide Agent Orange to clear forest vegetation and expose the enemy. It dropped napalm firebombs that burned forests and buildings and caused widespread destruction. Both weapons had devastating effects on the Vietnamese population.

Credibility gap The Johnson administration's optimistic public assessments of the war did not match reality. This created a credibility gap, and many Americans lost faith in the president.

Protest movement Antiwar protesters on college campuses and elsewhere held demonstrations and carried out acts of civil disobedience. The protesters called for peace negotiations and an end to the war.

Tet Offensive Some 45,000 Viet Cong and NVA soldiers died after launching a major offensive in 1968. But the Tet Offensive also boosted U.S. opposition to the war and undermined the Johnson presidency, helping to pave the way for Richard Nixon's election in 1968.

Chapter 53 — Getting Out of Vietnam

What lessons for Americans emerged from the Vietnam War?

53.1 – Introduction

In 1968, Richard Nixon had promised to end the war in Vietnam. Seven years later, on April 29, 1975, all American personnel were ordered to leave South Vietnam immediately. U.S. combat troops had pulled out two years before, and since then the South Vietnamese army had lost ground to the North Vietnamese. By mid-April, most of South Vietnam had fallen to the communists, and the enemy was bearing down on Saigon.

The scene in Saigon that day was chaotic. The streets were filled with South Vietnamese trying to flee the invading communist army. Some climbed into small boats and headed out to sea, hoping to board U.S. ships. Others flocked to the U.S. embassy in the hope of getting a place on one of the helicopters ferrying American personnel to safety.

Several thousand Vietnamese were allowed to evacuate that day, but most were turned away for lack of space. Even for those who did manage to get out, the experience was often traumatic. One evacuee described the fate of her family:

When we got the signal that we could leave, my family divided into two. My four brothers went with my uncle's family. My three sisters and I went with my parents. We left by boat, my brothers and my uncle went by helicopter. We've never found them. My parents tried to find them through the American Red Cross. They looked everywhere but have never found them. My parents lost four sons. It was a very painful experience. We still aren't over it . . . and probably never will be.

—Anne Pham, in “Memories of the Fall of Saigon,” CBS News

President Nixon had hoped to arrange a peaceful end to the Vietnam War that would leave South Vietnam free and independent. Why did the United States fail to achieve that goal? This chapter examines the final years of the war and some views of lessons that emerged from the conflict.

53.2 – Nixon's Dilemma: Achieving "Peace with Honor"

President Nixon entered the White House with a mandate to change the course of the Vietnam War. To that end, he relied heavily on his national security adviser, Henry Kissinger. Nixon and Kissinger drew two basic conclusions about Vietnam. First, they agreed that the war was not winnable, at least in the conventional sense. U.S. forces could not fight their way into Hanoi the way the Allies had entered Berlin in World War II. The political costs, and the cost in American lives, would be too great. Second, they decided that the United States could not just “cut and run.” An abrupt withdrawal from

Vietnam would damage U.S. credibility by showing both friends and foes that the United States could not be trusted to stand by its allies.

Instead, Nixon sought to achieve “peace with honor.” He wanted to end the war in a way that left the reputation of the United States intact. Nixon decided on a carrot-and-stick approach—a tactic that combines actions that reward (the “carrot”) with actions that punish (the “stick”). Using this approach, he hoped to persuade the North Vietnamese to accept a negotiated end to the war.

The Carrot: Peace Talks and Vietnamization

Peace talks had begun in Paris in May 1968, but little progress had been made. In 1969, Nixon sent Kissinger to Paris to reopen talks with North Vietnamese diplomats. Kissinger proposed ending the bombing of the North—the “carrot”—in exchange for an agreement by both sides to withdraw their troops from South Vietnam. But he insisted that South Vietnam remain independent. The North Vietnamese rejected this offer as a “farce,” saying they were prepared to remain in Paris “until the chairs rot.”

When diplomacy failed to bring about “peace with honor,” Nixon decided to try another approach known as Vietnamization. South Vietnam, he said, would gradually take over conduct of the war, while American GIs would steadily be withdrawn. In this way, Nixon could offer the “carrot” of troop reductions to North Vietnam, while easing antiwar tensions at home.

Vietnamization was part of a broader Asian policy that called for each American ally to accept primary responsibility for providing soldiers for its own defense. The number of U.S. troops in Vietnam peaked in March 1969 at 543,000. By the end of the year, more than 60,000 of those soldiers would be withdrawn.

The plan for Vietnamization set three main goals for South Vietnam: self-government, self-development, and self-defense. According to this plan, political reforms, including local elections, would increase popular participation in government and provide for essential public services. Rural development would bring economic opportunity to the countryside, while pacification would create local self-defense forces to take charge of village security.

U.S. officials believed that strengthening South Vietnam’s military forces was key to making Vietnamization work. Training schools were expanded. Pay for soldiers in South Vietnam’s army (ARVN) was increased. Living conditions in military camps were improved. So many U.S. ships, planes, helicopters, and vehicles were shipped to Vietnam that one Congressman wondered whether the goal of Vietnamization was to “put every South Vietnamese soldier behind the wheel.”

The Stick: Widening the Air War and Invading Cambodia

Vietnamization would be a long process, and many American officials were pessimistic about its prospects. Meanwhile, negotiations in Paris were proving fruitless. The “carrot”

offered by the United States—U.S. troop withdrawals and an end to bombing—did not satisfy the North Vietnamese.

Nixon considered several military options to pressure North Vietnam to negotiate, including bombing its industrial areas, mining its harbors, and invading its territory. His strategy, which he called the “madman theory,” was to make North Vietnam’s leaders and their allies, the Soviet Union and China, believe that he would do anything to win the war. He even briefly put nuclear forces on alert as a bluff that he might use tactical nuclear weapons, small but highly destructive nuclear bombs.

Nixon had already shown a willingness to expand the war. In March 1969, he had secretly ordered B-52s to begin bombing Cambodia, a neutral nation on Vietnam’s western border. For the next four years, U.S. bombers would strike communist base camps and supply lines in Cambodia.

With Vietnamization, U.S. ground forces began focusing more on intercepting supplies from the north and less on fighting guerrillas in the south. Nixon also decided to give those ground forces another mission. In April 1970, he ordered U.S. troops to invade Cambodia. The military goal of the invading U.S. force was to destroy enemy “safe havens” from which North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Viet Cong forces could launch assaults into South Vietnam. The political goal, said Nixon, was to “show the enemy that we were still serious about our commitment in Vietnam.”

The invasion was a partial success. The GIs destroyed enemy bases and relieved pressure on ARVN forces fighting in the south. But the invasion did not help the peace process. The communists boycotted the Paris talks until U.S. troops left Cambodia three months later.

In February 1971, Nixon launched a similar invasion of Laos, another neighboring country, after years of bombing had failed to dislodge the communists. By now, the steady withdrawal of GIs had left fewer than 175,000 U.S. combat soldiers in Vietnam. ARVN troops carried out the ground fighting in Laos, with U.S. air support. However, a large, well-equipped NVA force easily defeated the ARVN, forcing them to retreat. So far, Vietnamization had failed to prove its worth on the battlefield.

53.3 – The Expanded War Sparks Increased Protest

Vietnamization dampened antiwar protests for a while. On November 12, 1969, journalist Seymour Hersh published an article describing a grisly killing spree at My Lai, a village in South Vietnam. The My Lai Massacre had taken place in March 1968 but had been covered up by the military. U.S. soldiers, believing My Lai to be a Viet Cong stronghold, had gone there on a search-and-destroy mission. To their surprise, they found no armed Viet Cong in the village, just women, children, and old men. Nevertheless, one morning the soldiers rounded up and executed about 500 of these civilians. Only a handful of villagers survived.

News of the massacre shocked Americans, though many doubted that such an atrocity could occur. Others believed the soldiers were just following orders or that their actions were justified. Enough Americans expressed outrage, though, that Nixon decided to accelerate the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam.

Demonstrations Increase on City Streets and College Campuses

The news of My Lai added fuel to an already growing antiwar movement. About a month before, on October 15, 1969, peace activists had staged the biggest antiwar demonstration in U.S. history: the nationwide Vietnam Moratorium Day. A moratorium is a suspension of activity. Organizers asked Americans to take the day off to reflect on the war. More than 2 million people—not only students but also older, middle-class Americans—responded in a day of dramatic and widespread protest. They took part in rallies and marches, attended church services, and engaged in discussions. About 250,000 demonstrators came to the nation's capital. In one of the protest activities, tens of thousands of them marched from the Washington Monument to the White House, where they held a candlelight vigil.

Nixon responded to this outpouring of antiwar sentiment with a televised speech on November 3. He reminded viewers of his Vietnamization policy and his plan for withdrawing U.S. troops. He ended with an appeal for support from “the great silent majority of my fellow Americans.” And he warned that “the more divided we are at home, the less likely the enemy is to negotiate at Paris.” Nixon's speech quieted the antiwar movement for a time.

The invasion of Cambodia in 1970, however, brought another upsurge in protests. Students held mass rallies and demonstrations, some of which turned violent. The Kent State shootings were the most shocking example. On May 4, students at Kent State University in Ohio were holding a peace rally after several days of violent unrest, which included the burning of the army's Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) building on campus. National Guard troops, called out to quell the protests, ordered the crowd to disperse. After some students began chanting slogans and throwing rocks, the troops opened fire. Four students were killed and nine were wounded.

Ten days later, a similar incident took place at Jackson State College in Mississippi. Protesters threw debris at police, and the officers responded with shotgun and machine-gun fire that left two students dead.

Reactions to these incidents varied. Many Americans were stunned, and protests erupted on college campuses and in cities across the nation. Vietnam veterans took part in some of these protests, as did several labor unions. Nevertheless, only a small percentage of Americans ever demonstrated publicly. In fact, many Americans rejected antiwar protests, seeing them as unpatriotic and disruptive. In May 1970, construction workers in New York City showed their disgust with antiwar demonstrators by holding marches in support of the war. Some soldiers also wrote home asking for public support. An army nurse wrote her parents, saying, “Display the flag, Mom and Dad . . .

And tell your friends to do the same. It means so much to us to know we're supported, to know not everyone feels we're making a mistake being here."

The Pentagon Papers Raise New Questions About the War

Nixon soon had other problems to contend with. In 1971, a former Department of Defense official, Daniel Ellsberg, leaked a top-secret study known as the Pentagon Papers to the New York Times. This study revealed how previous administrations had deceived Congress and the public about Vietnam. Nixon feared that release of this document might lead to questions about his own policies and the secret actions he was taking in Vietnam.

Government lawyers won a temporary restraining order to stop further publication of the Pentagon Papers. Their appeal for a permanent injunction went to the Supreme Court. On June 30, 1971, in the case *New York Times Co. v. United States*, the Court ruled 6–3 against the government and in favor of free speech. In their opinion, the government had not proved the need for prior restraint, the prevention of speech or expression before publication.

Congress Responds to Widening War

After the invasion of Cambodia, antiwar members of Congress intensified their efforts. By the end of 1970, they had repealed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which had allowed Johnson and Nixon to escalate the conflict without a formal declaration of war. In February 1971, Congress passed legislation forbidding U.S. troops from operating outside the borders of South Vietnam.

Two years later, when Congress learned that Nixon had secretly bombed Cambodia without congressional approval, it passed the War Powers Resolution. This law placed strict limits on a president's power to use the armed forces in hostilities without congressional authorization. By then, support in Congress for the war had greatly declined.

53.4 – American Involvement in the War Ends

By the time Nixon entered office in 1969, some 30,000 Americans had already died in Vietnam. During his first year as president, 11,500 more died and 55,000 were wounded. Over the next three years, however, Vietnamization drastically cut U.S. casualties, as more and more soldiers came home. Their ARVN replacements, though, had not yet shown they could stand up to an NVA assault. They got another chance in the spring of 1972.

On March 30, North Vietnamese troops backed by tanks and artillery invaded South Vietnam. They smashed through the ARVN defenders at the border. The U.S. military, with just 6,000 soldiers left in the country, provided airpower to counter the invasion. Then Nixon took a bolder step. In April, for the first time since 1969, he unleashed U.S. bombers on North Vietnam. He also ordered the mining of Haiphong and other North Vietnamese ports, where war supplies from the Soviet Union and China arrived. His

stated goal was to “destroy the enemy’s war-making capacity.” By mid-June, the North’s offensive had been shut down, and ARVN forces had begun pushing the invaders back. Nixon Declares “Peace Is at Hand”

North Vietnam’s failed invasion caused it to soften its stand at the secret Paris peace talks. North Vietnamese negotiators withdrew their demand that South Vietnam’s government share power with the Viet Cong. For its part, the United States stopped its bombing and agreed that some NVA forces could stay in the south. These compromises allowed Henry Kissinger to reach an agreement with Hanoi’s diplomats. At a news conference less than two weeks before the 1972 presidential election, Kissinger announced, “We believe that peace is at hand.” By that time, polls showed that Nixon already had a large lead over Democratic candidate George McGovern, an antiwar senator. Nixon went on to win a second term in a landslide.

But peace was not at hand. South Vietnam’s president, Nguyen Van Thieu, feared that the United States was abandoning his country to the communists. He insisted on dozens of changes to the Paris agreement. Learning of the changes, Hanoi’s leaders backed out, and the peace talks collapsed.

Frustrated by the failed talks, Nixon decided to punish the north. On December 14, he ordered a series of B-52 and fighter-bomber attacks on Hanoi and Haiphong. Known as the Christmas bombings, this aerial campaign reached an intensity not previously seen in the war. One NVA leader said it was “like living through a typhoon with trees crashing down and lightning transforming night into day.” Nixon hoped to destroy North Vietnam’s will to fight. He also wanted to show President Thieu that after peace came, the United States would use its might to enforce the terms of the treaty.

North Vietnam returned to the bargaining table, and South Vietnam agreed to the earlier proposals. By late January, the negotiators had a final treaty ready to sign. On January 27, 1973, representatives of the United States, South Vietnam, North Vietnam, and the Viet Cong signed the Paris Peace Accords. This treaty set the goal of “ending the war and restoring peace in Vietnam.” To that end, it established a cease-fire and kept the dividing line between North and South Vietnam at the 17th parallel. It also called for the withdrawal of all U.S. troops and the release of all U.S. prisoners of war.

Veterans and Prisoners of War Return Home

By March 29, 1973, the United States had withdrawn all combat forces from Vietnam. Arriving home, many soldiers were dismayed to find themselves the victims of their country’s bitter debate over the war. Unlike soldiers returning from World War II, most Vietnam veterans were not treated like heroes. Few communities welcomed their soldiers back with parades or celebrations. Instead, Vietnam veterans were often shunned or simply ignored by the general public. As a result, they did not receive the support and understanding they deserved for their service and sacrifices.

For combat veterans especially, the Vietnam War had been a harrowing experience. Many soldiers were haunted by their fears in battle and by the death and destruction

they had witnessed. They rarely talked about their combat experiences, except with other veterans. Of the 2.6 million Americans who served in Vietnam, nearly a half million suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder. Symptoms of this mental illness include anxiety, irritability, nightmares, and depression.

More than 760 Americans were taken prisoner by the North Vietnamese. Of these prisoners of war, or POWs, at least 110 died in captivity. The typical POW was a pilot whose plane had been shot down. POWs lived in miserable conditions, often in solitary confinement, and they faced regular interrogations and torture. One former POW described his experience in a Hanoi prison:

From the moment you enter a political prison, you are told and forced to act as though you are subhuman—a dreg of society. And there's every effort made . . . to remind you daily that they're looking at you: You're not to look at the sky. That's enough to give you a left hook to the jaw. You're to bow down. You have no rights. You have no name. You have no nationality. You are a criminal. You are a worm.

—Navy pilot James Stockdale, shot down in 1965

North Vietnam had released all POWs by April 1, 1973. Another 2,600 Americans were MIA, or missing in action. Some 1,800 MIAs are still unaccounted for today. Few, if any, are thought to be alive.

53.5 – The War in Vietnam Comes to an End

After the withdrawal of U.S. ground forces from Vietnam, President Thieu and the ARVN continued to depend on U.S. airpower. American bombers and fighter jets had played a critical part in the war, and the South Vietnamese relied on Nixon's promise to "respond with full force" if North Vietnam violated the cease-fire. "You can be sure," Nixon said to Thieu in April 1973, "that we stand with you as we continue to work together to build a lasting peace."

South Vietnam Falls to the Communist North

The cease-fire did not hold for long. In 1973 and 1974, fierce fighting between insurgents and the ARVN left some 50,000 ARVN soldiers dead. Meanwhile, North Vietnam readied a final invasion of the south by rebuilding its army and military apparatus. In March 1975, the NVA launched an all-out offensive.

As ARVN forces scattered in the face of the assault, Thieu pleaded with the United States for help. President Gerald Ford, who succeeded Nixon in 1974, urged Congress to boost military aid. But he did not demand that U.S. forces return to Vietnam. In a speech on April 23, 1975, Ford said, "America can regain the sense of pride that existed before Vietnam. But it cannot be achieved by refighting a war that is finished as far as America is concerned."

Four days after Ford's speech, the NVA had surrounded Saigon. As panic gripped the city, U.S. embassy personnel worked frantically to evacuate more than a thousand Americans and several thousand frantic South Vietnamese. Helicopters airlifted most of them from the embassy rooftop to U.S. ships waiting offshore.

Early on April 30, NVA tanks and troops entered Saigon unopposed. President Thieu had resigned and fled nine days earlier. His replacement, Duong Van Minh, surrendered unconditionally. "I declare that the Saigon government, from central to local level, has been completely dissolved," he said. The Vietnam War, and South Vietnam itself, had come to an end.

The Aftermath of the War in Southeast Asia

The end of the war did not bring an end to suffering in Vietnam. Nor did it end the suffering in Cambodia and Laos, where separate communist revolts had occurred. Local communist insurgents took over in both of those countries and worked to convert the people to communism.

In Vietnam, communists seized private property and nationalized businesses. Many anticommunists had feared a bloodbath, but instead the communists sent hundreds of thousands of people—including ARVN officers, government officials, scholars, and religious leaders—to "reeducation camps," where they were subjected to hard labor. They also relocated hundreds of thousands of city residents to rural "economic zones" to toil on collective farms. Faced with these circumstances, more than a million South Vietnamese have fled the country since 1975. Because many left by boat, they became known as the boat people. A great majority of these refugees eventually settled in the United States.

A similar period of turmoil followed the communist takeover in Laos. This social upheaval produced some 350,000 refugees. But Cambodians had the worst experience by far. The communist regime there, called the Khmer Rouge, immediately cleared out all urban areas, forcing about 3 million city dwellers to work at hard labor on farms. Nearly 1.7 million Cambodian officials, merchants, members of minority groups, and others were worked to death, starved to death, or killed outright.

The Aftermath of the War in the United States

The Vietnam War left the United States in a state of shock. More than 58,000 soldiers died in the war and another 300,000 were wounded, many of them losing limbs. To some Americans, the soldiers' sacrifices seemed pointless. The United States, after all, had lost the war—a war that could have been avoided. To others, failure to win the war suggested that the nation lacked the will to be a world leader.

For several years after the war, Americans tried to forget about Vietnam. The memories were too painful. Yet those memories also led to changes. The country reduced, for a while, its involvement in global conflicts. Also, because of the credibility gap fostered by government officials, Americans no longer automatically trusted what their leaders told them.

A monument erected in 1982 helped many Americans—especially Vietnam veterans—come to terms with the war. The Wall, part of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., encouraged Americans to reflect on the conflict and thus heal some of the war's wounds. Many veterans, after seeing the Wall, finally felt they had come home.

53.6 – Differing Viewpoints: What Lessons Emerged from the Vietnam War?

The effects of the Vietnam War linger in American society, especially in its foreign policy. Many Americans are still wary of launching new military ventures abroad. This reluctance to become involved in overseas conflicts for fear of getting stuck in another quagmire is called the Vietnam syndrome. For many Americans, a major lesson of the war was that the United States should avoid unwinnable conflicts. Here, three analysts offer lessons they took from the war.

Lessons Learned: Robert McNamara

As LBJ's defense secretary until 1968, Robert McNamara helped formulate U.S. policy, including the escalation of bombing and the introduction of combat troops. Twenty years after the war ended, however, McNamara reversed his position on the war. He published a book in which he said U.S. military intervention in Vietnam was “terribly wrong.” He pointed out several causes for “our disaster in Vietnam.” These included underestimating the power of nationalism as a motivating force and failing to openly discuss and debate policies and tactics with Congress and the American people. From these and other mistakes, McNamara drew several lessons he thought the United States should apply in the post–Cold War world:

Above all else, the criteria governing intervention should recognize that . . . military force has only a limited capacity to facilitate the process of nation building. Military force, by itself, cannot build a “failed state” . . .

At times U.S. military intervention will be justified . . . on the basis of national security. Clearly, if a direct threat to this nation emerges, we should and will act unilaterally . . . If the threat is less direct but still potentially serious . . . how should we respond? I strongly urge that we act only in a multilateral decision-making and burden-sharing context . . .

The wars we fight in the post–Cold War world are likely more often than not to be “limited wars,” like Vietnam . . . Certainly Vietnam taught us how immensely difficult it is to fight limited wars leading to U.S. casualties over long periods of time. But circumstances will arise where limited war is far preferable to unlimited war. Before engaging in such conflicts, the American people must understand the difficulties we will face; the American military must know and accept the constraints under which they will operate; and our leaders—and our people—must be prepared to cut our losses and withdraw if it appears our limited objectives cannot be achieved at acceptable risks or costs . . .

Finally, we must recognize that the consequences of large-scale military operations . . . are inherently difficult to predict and to control . . . They must be avoided, excepting only when our nation's security is clearly and directly threatened. These are the lessons of Vietnam. Pray God we learn them.

—Robert S. McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, 1995

Lessons Learned: William Westmoreland

General Westmoreland served as commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam under LBJ. His analysis of the war was simple. “Our nation blundered in Vietnam,” he said, “and hence betrayed a chosen ally.” Westmoreland blamed this “blunder” on several factors. He believed that American politicians should have listened more closely to the advice of military leaders. He thought antiwar forces hurt the American cause by encouraging the enemy to persevere and by undermining the morale of U.S. troops. He also thought the media swayed public opinion by heaping criticism on South Vietnam while failing to condemn the conduct of North Vietnam. In an essay, Westmoreland highlighted several lessons to be learned from the failure in Vietnam:

We overextended ourselves in the post–World War II period economically, militarily, psychologically, and politically. A day of reckoning was inevitable. Our foreign policy should be given a nonpartisan review at least every two years. We must develop a bipartisan foreign policy, free of politics as far as possible.

When there is a threat of war, our military leaders deserve a stronger voice in policymaking. When our political leaders commit us to war, the military voice should be given priority consideration.

It is unfair and fatal to send our troops to the battlefield if they are not going to be supported by the nation . . .

When our national reputation and men's lives are at stake, the news media must show a more convincing sense of responsibility. We must be leery as a nation of our adversaries manipulating again the vulnerability of our political system and our open society.

—William C. Westmoreland, *Military Review*, Vol. 50, 1979

Lessons Learned: David Horowitz

As a radical antiwar activist and intellectual in the 1960s, David Horowitz influenced many on the political left. During the war he wrote books and articles sharply critical of U.S. foreign policy and of “corporate capitalism.” He believed in the need for a socialist revolution. Like Robert McNamara, however, Horowitz had a fundamental change of heart years after the war ended. The atrocities committed by the communists in Southeast Asia gave him a new perspective on the war and on socialism. Horowitz came to regret the role of antiwar activists, including himself. In the process, he gained

a new respect for the ideals at the heart of the U.S. political system. He explained his conversion in a speech given in 1985:

Like today's young radicals, we 1960s activists had a double standard when it came to making moral and political judgments. We judged other countries and political movements—specifically socialist countries and revolutionary movements—by the futures we imagined they could have if only the United States and its allies would get out of their way. We judged America, however, by its actual performance, which we held up to a standard of high and even impossible ideals . . .

What happened to change my views and cause me to have second thoughts? As our opposition to the war grew more violent and our prophecies of impending fascism more intense, I had taken note of how we were actually being treated by the system we condemned. By the decade's end we had (deliberately) crossed the line of legitimate dissent and abused every First Amendment privilege and right granted us as Americans. While American boys were dying overseas, we spat on the flag, broke the law, denigrated and disrupted the institutions of government and education, gave comfort and aid (even revealing classified secrets) to the enemy. Some of us provided a protective propaganda shield for Hanoi's communist regime while it tortured American fliers; others engaged in violent sabotage against the war effort. All the time I thought to myself: if we did this in any other country, the very least of our punishments would be long prison terms and the pariah status of traitors. In any of the socialist countries we supported—from Cuba to North Vietnam—we would spend most of our lives in jail and, more probably, be shot.

And what actually happened to us in repressive capitalist America? Here and there our wrists were slapped (some of us went to trial, some spent months in jail), but basically the country tolerated us. And listened to us. We began as a peripheral minority, but as the war dragged on without an end in sight, people joined us: first in thousands and then in tens of thousands, swelling our ranks until finally we reached what can only be called the conscience of the nation. America itself became troubled about its presence in Vietnam, about the justice and morality of the war it had gone there to fight. And because the nation became so troubled, it lost its will to continue the war and withdrew . . .

America not only withdrew its forces from Vietnam, as we on the left said it could never do, but from Laos and Cambodia and, ultimately, from its role as guardian of the international status quo.

Far from increasing the freedom and wellbeing of Third World nations, as we in the left had predicted, however, America's withdrawal resulted in an international power vacuum that was quickly filled by the armies of Russia, Cuba, and the mass murderers of the Khmer Rouge . . .

The lesson I learned from Vietnam was not a lesson in theory but a lesson in practice. Observing this nation go through its worst historical hour from a vantage on the other side of the barricade, I came to understand that democratic values are easily lost and, from the evidence of the past, only rarely achieved, that America is a precious gift, a unique presence in the world of nations. Because it is the strongest of the handful of democratic societies that mankind has managed to create, it is also a fortress that stands between the free nations of the world and the dark, totalitarian forces that threaten to engulf them.

—David Horowitz, speech to a congressional seminar, 1985

Summary

In 1969, President Nixon began withdrawing U.S. troops from Vietnam, but the war continued throughout his time in office. He carried on peace talks with the North Vietnamese but also ordered massive bombing of North Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. He faced ongoing protests from the antiwar movement and criticism from Congress. In 1973, the last U.S. combat forces came home. North Vietnam swept to victory over the South in 1975.

Vietnamization Nixon's Vietnamization of the war allowed for the withdrawal of U.S. troops and prepared South Vietnam to take over responsibility for the war.

My Lai massacre In 1968, U.S. soldiers slaughtered hundreds of Vietnamese civilians in the village of My Lai. Reports of the massacre shocked Americans and increased antiwar protests.

Kent State shootings The invasion of Cambodia in April 1970 sparked an increase in antiwar protests. The most violent one occurred the following month at Kent State University in Ohio, where National Guard troops fired into an angry crowd, killing four students.

War Powers Resolution Congress reacted to Nixon's activities in Cambodia by passing the War Powers Resolution. This resolution limits a president's ability to send armed forces into combat.

Pentagon Papers In 1971, Daniel Ellsberg leaked to the press a top-secret study of the U.S. role in Indochina. This study, the Pentagon Papers, revealed secrecy and deceit on the part of U.S. presidents.

Boat people The North Vietnamese defeated South Vietnam and took control in 1975. This prompted an exodus of refugees from Indochina, many of whom fled by boat.

Chapter 54 — The Rise and Fall of Richard Nixon

What events influenced Richard Nixon's rise to and fall from power?

54.1 – Introduction

On September 23, 1952, California senator Richard Nixon reserved time on national television to make the most important speech of his career. He hoped to silence claims that he had accepted \$18,000 in illegal political contributions to help cover personal expenses. The Republicans had recently nominated Nixon to run for vice president, alongside Dwight D. Eisenhower. When the charges became public, Eisenhower remained noncommittal. He did not drop Nixon from the ticket, but he also did not come to the defense of his running mate.

In his speech, Nixon told Americans, “Not one cent of the \$18,000 or any other money of that type ever went to me for my personal use. Every penny of it was used to pay for political expenses that I did not think should be charged to the taxpayers of the United States.” He did, however, confess to having accepted one personal gift from a contributor:

A man down in Texas heard [my wife] Pat on the radio mention the fact that our two youngsters would like to have a dog. And, believe it or not, the day before we left on this campaign trip, we got a message from Union Station in Baltimore saying they had a package for us. We went down to get it. You know what it was. It was a little cocker spaniel dog in a crate he'd sent all the way from Texas. Black and white spotted. And our little girl—Tricia, the 6-year-old—named it Checkers. And you know, the kids, like all kids, love the dog, and I just want to say this right now, that regardless of what they say about it, we're gonna keep it.

—Senator Richard Nixon, “Checkers” speech, September 23, 1952

Nixon's “Checkers” speech was a high point in a tumultuous career that culminated in his election to the presidency in 1968. In the years that followed, President Nixon would engineer stunning successes in both domestic and foreign affairs. He would also set in motion a humiliating fall from power.

54.2 – Richard Nixon's Rise to the Presidency

Born in California in 1913, Richard Nixon was one of five brothers. He worked to pay his way through college and law school. After serving in the Navy during World War II, he was elected to the House of Representatives and, later, to the Senate. From 1953 to 1960, he served as vice president to Dwight Eisenhower.

In 1960, Nixon ran for president. He lost to John F. Kennedy in a very close election. Two years later, he ran for governor of California and lost that race as well. In his concession speech, Nixon announced his retirement from politics. “You won't have

Richard Nixon to kick around any more,” he told reporters. In reality, however, Nixon’s political career was far from over.

A Bumpy Road to the White House

In 1968, Nixon made a spectacular political comeback by winning the Republican nomination for president. In what had been a troubled election year, the choice of Nixon as a candidate was one of many surprises and shocks. First, President Lyndon Johnson had unexpectedly decided not to run for reelection. Soon thereafter had followed the stunning assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy.

To add to the surprises, Alabama governor George Wallace mounted a strong campaign for president on the American Independent Party ticket. During civil rights struggles in his state, Wallace had been an ardent segregationist. His resistance to integration won him support from white voters in the South. Wallace also appealed to “the average man on the street” by attacking the “liberals, intellectuals, and long hairs [who] have run the country for too long.”

A final shock to the nation came with the outbreak of violence in Chicago, Illinois, during the Democratic National Convention. Outside the convention, protesters opposed to the Vietnam War clashed with police, while inside, Vice President Hubert Humphrey won the Democratic nomination on a prowar platform. The Democratic Party left the convention anything but united.

These troubling events left many Americans fearful that the country was falling apart. Recognizing this concern, Nixon made it central to his campaign. As he put it, “We live in a deeply troubled and profoundly unsettled time. Drugs, crime, campus revolts, racial discord, draft resistance—on every hand we find old standards violated, old values discarded.” In his campaign, he depicted himself as the champion of the many ordinary people who worked hard, paid their taxes, and loved their country. Nixon appealed to their desire for stability by promising a renewed commitment to “law and order.” To win votes in what had long been the solidly Democratic South, Nixon implemented a “southern strategy.” For a running mate, he chose a southern governor, Spiro T. Agnew, of Maryland. Agnew was known for his tough stand against racial violence and urban crime. Nixon also reached out to conservative southern voters with talk of respect for states’ rights and a smaller federal government, which were traditionally valued by southern Democrats.

The election proved to be very close. Nixon won with just 43.4 percent of the popular vote. In five Southern states, Wallace won a plurality of votes—not a majority but more than any other candidate. Democrats also maintained control of Congress. Because Nixon lacked both a strong electoral mandate and a Republican majority in Congress, it was not clear whether he would be able to lead the country the way he wanted.

Nixon’s Domestic Policies: A Conservative and Liberal Blend

Having won the presidency by a narrow margin, Nixon tried to appeal to conservatives and liberals once in office. He reached out to conservatives with a plan, called New Federalism, to reduce the size and power of the federal government. “After a third of a

century of power flowing from the people and the states to Washington,” Nixon explained, “it is time for a New Federalism in which power, funds, and responsibility will flow from Washington to the people.”

The centerpiece of Nixon’s New Federalism was a proposal called revenue sharing. Under revenue sharing, the federal government distributed tax revenues to states and local governments to spend as they saw fit. State and local leaders liked the practice because it gave them more funds as well as the power to spend those funds where most needed. Revenue sharing proved to be popular with conservatives.

However, Nixon was less successful at shrinking the federal government. He did do away with some of Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society bureaucracy, including the Office of Economic Opportunity. At the same time, though, Nixon expanded several social benefit programs. He increased Social Security and enlarged the Food Stamp Program.

Nixon went on to increase the size and power of the government by signing new federal agencies into existence. One was the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). He charged OSHA with protecting workers on the job. He also established the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in order “to protect human health and to safeguard the natural environment.”

Nixon’s most surprising initiative was the Family Assistance Plan. Under this proposed plan, the government would support every poor family with a minimum annual income. To get this support, family members able to work would be required to seek employment. The Family Assistance Plan would have greatly expanded the number of families eligible for public assistance.

Nixon thought this program would appeal to liberals. He also hoped the increased responsibility for running welfare programs that it gave the states would interest conservatives. Instead, conservatives attacked the plan as a reward for laziness. Liberals denounced its proposed guaranteed income as too little to live on. After much debate, Congress rejected the plan.

A Mixed Record on Civil Rights

Nixon’s civil rights policies were as mixed as the rest of his domestic agenda. In pursuit of his “southern strategy,” he sought to appoint conservative southern judges to the Supreme Court. His first two choices had records of supporting segregation. The Senate rejected them both. Nixon also called for changes to the Voting Rights Act when it came up for renewal in 1970. Congress rejected his proposals, which would have reduced federal oversight of voting officials in the South. Nonetheless, he re-signed the Voting Rights Act into law. Upon doing so, he stated,

In the 5 years since its enactment, close to 1 million Negroes have been registered to vote for the first time and more than 400 Negro officials have been elected to local and State offices. These are more than election statistics; they are statistics of hope and dramatic evidence that the American system works.

They stand as an answer to those who claim that there is no recourse except to the streets.

—President Richard Nixon, June 22, 1970

At the same time, Nixon sought to increase economic opportunities for African Americans by expanding affirmative action. Under the Philadelphia Plan, he required construction companies working on federally funded projects to hire specific numbers of minority workers. He also encouraged “black capitalism” by providing federal assistance to black-owned businesses.

Struggling with a Stagnant Economy

Throughout his presidency, Nixon struggled with the nation’s economic problems. In 1970, the United States entered a recession. Normally, during a recession, unemployment rises, wages drop, and consumers spend less money. To encourage people to buy goods, companies lower their prices. As prices drop, people start spending again. Then business activity picks up, and eventually the recession ends. However, this is not what happened in the early 1970s. Instead, the nation experienced an economic condition known as stagflation. Unemployment rose, just as it would in a normal recession. But prices also increased at an alarming rate. Americans found themselves living with both a stagnant economy and rapid inflation.

Nixon responded to stagflation in two ways. First, he attacked inflation with a three-phase program. In Phase I, he froze wages and prices for 90 days. In Phase II, he authorized a new federal agency to strictly limit future wage and price increases. He then turned to unemployment. He increased government spending to put more money into the economy. As a result, joblessness fell. Nixon then moved to Phase III of his inflation plan, replacing strict wage and price controls with voluntary guidelines. Unfortunately, with controls lifted, the nation suffered its most rapid rise in cost of living since World War II’s end.

To make matters even worse, in the fall of 1973, oil-exporting nations in the Middle East stopped shipping oil to the United States. They established this oil embargo to protest U.S. support for Israel in conflicts between Israel and Arab nations. The result was a nationwide energy crisis. To conserve dwindling supplies, the government urged homeowners to lower their thermostats. It also reduced highway speed limits to 55 miles per hour. The crisis did not ease until the Middle Eastern nations lifted the ban the following year.

54.3 – President Nixon's Foreign Policy Record

Early in his political career, Richard Nixon had made a name for himself as a staunch opponent of communism. As president, however, he was determined to reshape America’s containment policy. He hoped to replace endless conflict with a stable world order in which the superpowers could coexist peacefully.

Nixon's Realistic Approach to Foreign Affairs

Nixon based his foreign policy on *realpolitik*, a German term that means “the politics of reality.” It refers to politics based on practical rather than idealistic concerns. Nixon’s top foreign policy adviser, Henry Kissinger, backed him in this realistic approach.

As part of their *realpolitik* approach, Nixon and Kissinger concluded that the United States could no longer bear the full burden of defending the free world. Addressing the nation in 1969, the president laid out his plan, which became known as the Nixon Doctrine. He promised that the United States would continue to protect its allies from Soviet or Chinese nuclear attacks. In other cases of aggression, however, the United States would expect the nation at risk to do more to help itself. The president’s plan for Vietnamization of the war in Southeast Asia was an early application of the new Nixon Doctrine.

The president also applied the Nixon Doctrine in the Persian Gulf region of the Middle East. With their vast deposits of oil, Persian Gulf nations had become increasingly important to the United States. However, the United States had no military forces stationed in the region. Rather than try to move troops in, Nixon sent military aid to Iran and Saudi Arabia. With this aid, he hoped these allies would take on the responsibility of keeping the region peaceful and stable. At the same time, the United States continued to support its closest ally in the Middle East, Israel, with both military and financial aid.

The limits of the Nixon Doctrine became clear when Israel was attacked by a coalition of Arab countries led by Egypt and Syria during the Yom Kippur holy days in October 1973. The Yom Kippur War lasted just three weeks, but that was long enough to trigger the oil embargo. Despite receiving American aid, Saudi Arabia backed the embargo to punish the United States for its long-standing support of Israel.

In dealings with the Soviet Union and communist China, Nixon and Kissinger pursued a policy of *détente*. *Détente* is a French word that means a relaxation of tension or hostility. To many conservatives, *détente* seemed inconsistent with Nixon’s earlier anticommunism. Some also saw it as a sellout of U.S. interests and ideals. Most liberals, however, applauded any policy that had the potential to prevent a nuclear holocaust.

Opening Diplomatic Relations with China

The policy of *détente* brought a dramatic change in U.S. interactions with China. When Nixon took office in 1969, the United States did not engage in diplomatic relations with China. Nor did it officially recognize the communist government that had ruled mainland China since 1949. Nixon believed that the policy of isolating China had worn out its usefulness. In 1970, he reported to Congress that it was in America’s national interest to improve “practical relations with Peking [Beijing].”

The president had several reasons for wanting better relations with China. One was the sheer size of that nation—one fifth of the world’s population lived in China. In addition, Nixon had watched the relationship between China and the Soviet Union change from

one of communist comrades to one of hostile neighbors. He believed that establishing friendly diplomatic relations with China might pressure Soviet leaders, who feared Chinese power, to cooperate more with the United States.

In April 1971, a sporting event opened the way for détente. The Chinese government had invited a U.S. table tennis team to play in Beijing. The 15 team members were the first Americans to visit Beijing since the communists took power. Chinese leaders treated the American athletes as though they were ambassadors. At a meeting with the team, Chinese Premier Chou En-lai stated that the athletes' arrival in China marked a new chapter in U.S.-China relations.

Shortly after the table tennis competition, Nixon announced proposals to begin trade and travel between the two countries. Two months later, Kissinger secretly traveled to China. In July 1971, Nixon announced that he would visit China the next year. The following February, Nixon and his wife, Pat, made an official state visit to China. While there, Nixon pledged to establish formal diplomatic relations between the two countries. He described the trip as bridging "12,000 miles and twenty-two years of non communication and hostility."

The historic visit marked a turning point in relations between the United States and the world's largest communist nation. The trip led to the communist government, based in Beijing, taking over China's seat in the United Nations. Until that time, the Nationalist government of Taiwan had occupied China's seat. In 1973, the United States and China opened information offices in each other's capitals. By 1979, the two countries engaged in full diplomatic relations.

Working Toward Détente with the Soviet Union

Nixon's expectation that by improving relations with China he could push the USSR toward détente proved accurate. Just three months after visiting China, Nixon embarked on another historic journey. In May 1972, he became the first American president to visit Moscow, the capital of the USSR. Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev had invited Nixon partly in response to Soviet concerns about U.S. involvement with China. The invitation had also revealed Brezhnev's desire to receive U.S. economic and technological aid.

Brezhnev and Nixon were able to negotiate a trade deal that benefited both countries. The United States agreed to sell to the USSR at least \$750 million worth of grain over a three-year period. The grain deal helped the people of the Soviet Union, which was not growing enough grain to feed its population. It also helped American farmers, who were happy to sell their surplus grain.

The two leaders then negotiated a much more difficult agreement—to limit the number of nuclear missiles in their arsenals. Such an agreement had been made possible by the development of spy satellites in the 1960s. Cameras mounted on these satellites took photographs that, when sent back to Earth, allowed the two countries to monitor each other's missile sites. The Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT), later called SALT I, was a five-year agreement. The treaty limited the USSR to 1,618 missiles and

the United States to 1,054. The United States accepted the smaller number because its missiles were more advanced. The deal applied to both ground-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). In addition, Nixon and Brezhnev signed a statement of “basic principles,” which called on both of the superpowers to “do their utmost to avoid military confrontations.”

Nixon was pleased with this first agreement to halt the arms race. “The historians of some future age,” he predicted, “will write . . . that this was the year when America helped to lead the world up out of the lowlands of constant war, and to the high plateau of lasting peace.” Over time, however, hope that détente would lead to an era of cooperation between the superpowers began to fade. The USSR continued to support armed struggles in the Third World. It also began arming its missiles with multiple warheads in order to work around the treaty’s limits. As a result, conservative critics of détente concluded that the Soviet Union should never be trusted again.

54.4 – Watergate Ends Nixon's Career

On June 17, 1972, five men broke into the offices of the Democratic National Committee in Washington, D.C. A security guard at the Watergate building, where the offices were located, caught the men. But the burglars were unusual—they wore suits and carried bugging, or wiretapping, devices. Further investigation showed that they had ties to Nixon’s reelection campaign.

Early news reports of the break-in did not stop Nixon from winning the 1972 presidential election by a landslide. But the bungled burglary and attempts to cover it up would eventually lead to Nixon’s fall from power.

Abusing Power to Limit Dissent

At first, the Watergate burglars’ intentions were unclear. Their actions, however, were part of a larger pattern of abuse of presidential power. Nixon tended to view critics of his policies as a threat to national security. Once elected, he developed an “enemies list” that included reporters, politicians, activists, and celebrities whom he viewed as being unfriendly to his administration. He authorized the FBI to tap the phones of news reporters whom he felt were biased against him. He even ordered phone tapping of members of his own staff whom he distrusted. All these wiretaps were unconstitutional, and thus an abuse of power, because a judge had not properly authorized them.

The president also showed grave concern for secrecy. He set up his own White House security operation to investigate leaks of damaging information to the press. The group received the nickname “the plumbers,” because their main job was to “plug” leaks. In 1971, the plumbers had broken into the office of a psychiatrist whose clients included Daniel Ellsberg, a former defense analyst. Nixon had suspected Ellsberg of leaking the Pentagon Papers, a set of secret military documents on the Vietnam War, to the New York Times. A year later, it was the White House plumbers who carried out the botched Watergate burglary.

The Watergate Scandal Unfolds

The break-in might have been forgotten after Nixon's reelection if not for the work of two Washington Post reporters. Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein would not let the matter drop. With the help of an anonymous source, whom they called Deep Throat, they discovered that Nixon's reelection campaign had paid the plumbers to bug the Democrats' offices. More details came out when the plumbers faced trial in 1973. During the legal proceedings, one of them implicated the Nixon administration in a cover-up. He reported that the defendants had been paid to lie to protect government officials.

At this point, what the White House had tried to dismiss as a "third-rate burglary" had turned into the Watergate scandal. Pressure to thoroughly investigate the scandal increased. The Justice Department appointed Archibald Cox, a respected law professor, to serve as special prosecutor in the case. A special prosecutor is a lawyer from outside the government whom the attorney general or Congress appoints to investigate a federal official for misconduct while in office.

After the plumbers' trial, the Senate formed a committee to investigate the Watergate affair. In televised hearings, former White House counsel John Dean testified that Nixon had been involved in efforts to cover up White House links to the Watergate break-in. Another former Nixon aide revealed that President Nixon had installed a recording system in the White House Oval Office that taped every conversation Nixon had there. If the committee could hear those tapes, it would find out whether the president had ordered a cover-up.

In July 1973, the Senate Watergate Committee issued a subpoena, or court order, compelling Nixon to turn over several tapes. Nixon refused, invoking a right to withhold information known as executive privilege. The concept of executive privilege is based in the constitutional separation of powers. Presidents since George Washington's day have argued that separation of powers gives the executive branch the right to operate without having to reveal to the other branches the details of every conversation or working document.

Over the next few months, Nixon battled both Special Prosecutor Cox and the Senate Committee over the release of the White House tapes. In October 1973, in what became known as the "Saturday Night Massacre," Nixon fired Cox. Nixon's own attorney general then resigned in protest.

That same month, for reasons unrelated to Watergate, Vice President Spiro Agnew resigned. He left office to avoid facing trial on charges of accepting bribes and evading taxes while governor of Maryland. Nixon appointed Gerald Ford, Republican minority leader in the House of Representatives, to be Agnew's successor as vice president.

In July 1974, in the case of *United States v. Nixon*, the Supreme Court ruled that the president must release his tapes to the Senate. Once released, the recordings proved beyond a doubt that he had ordered a Watergate cover-up.

Nixon Resigns in Disgrace

Late in July, the House Judiciary Committee approved three articles of impeachment against Nixon. The articles accused him of obstruction of justice, abuse of power, and contempt of Congress. Rather than face trial and almost certain conviction in the Senate, Nixon announced his resignation on August 8, 1974. On August 9, Vice President Gerald Ford was sworn in as president. “Our Constitution works,” Ford said. “Our long national nightmare is over.”

In September, Ford issued Nixon a presidential pardon. Ford hoped the pardon would help unify the country by putting the Watergate mess to rest. Instead, it aroused controversy. Some Americans wanted to see Nixon tried for his alleged crimes. Others preferred to move on from Watergate. Despite Ford’s efforts to close this unhappy chapter of presidential history, the nation remained deeply disillusioned with political leadership.

54.5 – Differing Viewpoints: What Was Watergate’s Most Important Legacy?

Decades after the Watergate break-in and Richard Nixon’s resignation, Americans still debate the long-term effects of the scandal. Following are three different perspectives on the significance of the Watergate scandal.

Detroit Free Press: Watergate Showed That No One Is Above the Law

Even while the Watergate scandal was still unfolding, some argued that the response of Congress and the courts proved that no one, not even a president, is above the law. The following editorial appeared in October 1973, after an appeals court ordered Richard Nixon to turn over White House tapes to the special prosecutor:

In ringing terms, the court reiterated the fundamental principle that no man, not even the President, is above the law . . . If there is a single buttress [source of support] that has been strengthening the country as it has faced the Agnew and Watergate scandals, it has been the renewed demonstration that the laws do indeed apply to those in high places.

Sometimes the processes seem to work with painful slowness . . . Slowly, though, the nation’s institutions—the courts, the federal prosecutors, the Justice Department—are calling the executive branch to account. The President is subject to the law . . .

The rule of law is being restored, and the public official who tries to ignore its claim does so at his own peril. This includes especially the President of the United States.

—Detroit Free Press, October 16, 1973

Lawrence Meyer: Watergate Damaged Confidence in the Presidency

On the 10th anniversary of the Watergate break-in, Washington Post writer Lawrence Meyer reflected on its impact. “Lives were disrupted, careers derailed, reputations shattered,” he reminded readers, continuing on to say,

Some have seen the stuff of tragedy in all of this—great men brought low. But the greater impact of Watergate was on us, on the loss of innocence for all but the most jaded and cynical among us.

The American people revere and respect no one so much as their president, believing that even men of humble gifts rise to the challenge and grow in stature when they enter the White House. Richard Nixon showed that the office does not always transform the man, that the man can also lower esteem for the office . . .

Watergate also fostered an air of cynicism about presidents and the presidency . . . In 1973, 29 percent of Americans said they had a “great deal” of confidence in the executive branch and 18 percent had “very little.” By 1975, the percentages were reversed, and by 1980 only 12 percent had “a great deal” and 30 percent had “hardly any” confidence.

—Washington Post, June 17, 1982

Washington Post: Scandals Have Lost Their Power to Shock Us

Since Watergate, other scandals have erupted in Washington. The press now labels each one with a “-gate,” as in “Iran-Contra-gate” or “Travelgate.” In 1996, the Washington Post reported on the impact of these endless scandal charges on political campaigns and on the public:

Recent American history has plenty of ethical lows . . . [But] Watergate remains the granddaddy of them all, the scandal by which all others leading to the Oval Office are judged.

“On a one-to-10 scale, Watergate was a 10 and everything else is a four,” said J. Brad Coker who runs the . . . Mason-Dixon Political Media Research polling firm. “Since Watergate, this country has had wannabe scandals that never amounted to much. Everything has a ‘-gate’ behind it to the point where everybody’s getting numb” . . .

Suzanne Garment, a political scientist and author of *Scandal: The Culture of Mistrust in American Politics*, said . . . “In the olden days, there was more genuine shock at things, and genuine shock is hard to produce now. We’re not scandalized because the coin of scandal has been debased.”

—R. H. Melton and Bill MacAllister, “From Watergate to Whitewater Ethics an Issue,” Washington Post, October 21, 1996

Summary

Richard Nixon won the presidency in 1968. While in office, he made strides toward easing the tensions of the Cold War. He also saw many of his domestic policies enacted. However, scandal forced him to resign in disgrace in 1974.

New Federalism Nixon came into office determined to revive federalism. He hoped to reduce the power of the federal government and return power to the states. Revenue sharing, central to his plan, allowed state and local governments to spend tax revenues as they saw fit.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration Despite his promise to shrink the federal government, Nixon created OSHA, which works to improve health and safety in the workplace.

Environmental Protection Agency Another new agency, the EPA, was created to protect Americans' health and the natural environment.

Energy crisis Nixon tried to revive a stagnant economy with increased spending while fighting inflation with wage and price controls. However, an energy crisis made a bad situation worse.

Détente Nixon tried to encourage détente, or a relaxation of Cold War tensions. In 1972, he visited both communist China and the Soviet Union.

Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty In 1972, Nixon and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev signed SALT I, the first superpower treaty to place limits on the arms race.

Watergate scandal In 1972, burglars broke into Democratic headquarters in the Watergate building. The scandal over the cover-up that followed the break-in led to Richard Nixon's resignation in 1974.

Chapter 55 — Politics and Society in the "Me Decade"

How should historians characterize the 1970s?

55.1 – Introduction

On July 4, 1976, the United States celebrated the bicentennial—or 200th anniversary—of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Across the nation, Americans marked the day with parades, picnics, and fireworks displays. But the celebration surpassed the usual Independence Day events. It lasted most of the year. The U.S. Mint issued coins with bicentennial designs. Television networks featured programs that explored the events of the nation's first two centuries. A flag with a special bicentennial logo flew throughout the year.

To many Americans, the bicentennial year brought a welcome sense of national pride. The celebrations, with their focus on the nation's founding ideals, helped them move past the trauma of Vietnam and the disillusionment of Watergate. Others, however, reacted differently. As they looked back on the nation's founding, they worried that the United States had lost its sense of purpose.

In the bicentennial year, a journalist named Tom Wolfe captured such concerns in his essay, "The Me Decade and the Third Great Awakening." In it, Wolfe wrote of changes he had seen in American life since the end of the 1960s. In that decade, he noted, idealistic Americans had worked hard to end racism, fight poverty, and create a more just society. During the 1970s, however, the drive for social change had been replaced with a quest for self-improvement and personal fulfillment. "We are now in the Me Decade," he wrote, "seeing the upward roll of . . . the third great religious wave in American history." The focus of this latest "great awakening," Wolfe observed, was "the most fascinating subject on earth: Me."

Wolfe's characterization of the 1970s as the "Me Decade" stuck. Today, however, most historians view the 1970s as being much more complex than the label "Me Decade" suggests.

55.2 – A Time of Economic and Political Malaise

When Gerald Ford took office as president in 1974, he inherited a number of political problems. Although the United States had withdrawn from Vietnam, the war there raged on. Ford's decision to pardon Richard Nixon had divided the nation. In addition, the economy continued to suffer from stagflation. In a speech to Congress, Ford explained just how dire the situation was. "Inflation, our public enemy number one, will, unless whipped," he stated, "destroy our country, our homes, our liberties, our property, and finally our national pride, as surely as any well-armed wartime enemy."

President Ford Tries to "Whip Inflation Now"

The inflation that dragged down the economy in the 1970s had many causes. One was President Johnson's decision to escalate the war in Vietnam while also launching a War

on Poverty. Both military and welfare spending tend to be inflationary, because they put more money into people's pockets without increasing the supply of goods those dollars can buy. When too many dollars chase too few goods, prices rise.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) made matters worse. Formed in 1960, OPEC is an association of nations that depend on oil sales for their national income. In its early years, OPEC priced oil at \$2 to \$3 per barrel. The 1973 oil embargo, however, revealed the dependence of many countries on imported oil. As a result, OPEC began to increase oil prices. By 1976, the price of a barrel of oil had jumped to \$12.

Soaring oil prices hurt the U.S. economy. Products that used oil as a raw material became more costly to produce. As fuel prices went up, so did the cost of moving goods from farm or factory to consumers. Stunned by high gas prices, drivers stopped buying American-made gas-guzzlers for a while. As sales plummeted, auto manufacturers laid off more than 225,000 workers in 1974.

Ford tried to beat down rising prices with a crusade called Whip Inflation Now (WIN). He cut federal spending while urging Americans to conserve energy and practice thrift. "Clean up your plate before you leave the table," the president advised. "Guard your health." Unfortunately, WIN was not effective. Prices continued to rise, growing 11 percent in 1975. The unemployment rate grew more than 8 percent—the highest it had been since the Depression's end.

An Outsider in the White House: Jimmy Carter

The 1976 presidential election pitted Ford against former Georgia governor Jimmy Carter. Carter appealed to voters as a Washington outsider untouched by scandal. He promised Americans, "I will never lie to you."

Neither candidate generated much excitement. As Election Day neared, people talked of a "clothespin vote," a phrase that implies "hold your nose and vote for one or the other." Only 53 percent of eligible voters went to the polls—the lowest turnout since 1948. Carter won, but by a narrow margin.

Once in the White House, Carter maintained his outsider status. Rather than hiring experienced Washington insiders, he surrounded himself with staff from Georgia. Nor did he establish close relations with Congress. As a result, his efforts to enact such reforms as a national health insurance system went nowhere.

Carter's Energy Program: "The Moral Equivalent of War"

Convinced that the era of cheap energy had ended, the new president called on Americans to "face the fact that the energy shortage is permanent." Soon after taking office in 1977, Carter put forward a plan to end the nation's dependence on imported oil. He called this effort the "moral equivalent of war."

Carter's energy plan centered on conservation. "It is the cheapest, most practical way to meet our energy needs," he told Congress, "and to reduce our dependence on foreign oil." His plan would penalize energy waste while encouraging energy efficiency. Lawmakers, however, were slow to respond to it. Reporters began to refer to Carter's "moral equivalent of war" as MEOW, revealing their feeling that Congress would not take it seriously.

Late in 1978, Congress finally passed a watered-down version of Carter's original plan. This National Energy Act offered tax credits as incentives to people who conserved energy by insulating their homes or investing in alternative energy sources, such as solar energy panels. Tax credits reduce the amount of taxes a taxpayer owes to the government.

While the National Energy Act helped make the nation more energy efficient, it did not end U.S. dependence on foreign oil. In 1979, a second energy crisis disrupted life across the country. This energy shortage was triggered by a revolution in Iran that led that country to stop exporting oil. Over the next year, oil prices rose to a staggering \$39.50 per barrel. Long lines reappeared at gas stations, and fistfights broke out among some motorists who were waiting in line for gas.

Americans Face a "Crisis of Confidence"

With his approval rating low, at 25 percent, Carter planned to speak to the nation once more about conserving energy. However, after a week of discussions with various advisers, he changed his mind. "I want to speak to you first tonight about a subject even more serious than energy or inflation," Carter told the nation in a televised address.

I want to talk to you right now about a fundamental threat to American democracy . . . It is a crisis of confidence. It is a crisis that strikes at the very heart and soul and spirit of our national will. We see this crisis in the growing doubt about the meaning of our own lives and in the loss of unity of purpose for our Nation . . .

In a nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close-knit communities, and our faith in God, too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns. But we've discovered that owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning. We've learned that piling up material goods cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose.

—Jimmy Carter, "Crisis of Confidence" speech, July 15, 1979

Carter's address, which the media called his "malaise speech"—malaise meaning "a feeling of general unease"—backfired. "There's nothing wrong with the American people," responded newspaper editorials. "Maybe the problem's in the White House, maybe we need new leadership to guide us."

55.3 – President Carter's Approach to Foreign Policy

Once Carter took office in 1976, it was clear that his approach to foreign policy differed sharply from Richard Nixon's *realpolitik*. Whereas Nixon had prided himself on his realism, Carter applied his idealism to foreign affairs. He insisted that the government not separate foreign policy from "questions of justice, equity, and human rights." "Fairness, and not force," he urged, "should lie at the heart of our dealings with nations of the world."

Promoting Justice, Equity, and Human Rights

Carter worked hard to put his ideals into practice. In some areas, he saw success. For example, he established a more equitable relationship with the nation of Panama. Panamanians had long regarded a 1903 treaty between the two countries as unjust, as it gave the United States permanent control of the Panama Canal. In 1977, Carter negotiated a new treaty that would return control of the canal to Panama in 1999. Despite strong objections, the Senate ratified the Panama Canal Treaty in 1978.

In the area of human rights, Carter's record proved to be more mixed. He came into office determined to end the Cold War policy of supporting dictators who opposed communism even if they abused human rights. When leftist rebels ousted an anticommunist dictator from Nicaragua in 1979, Carter stood by his new policy and did not intervene. However, he did continue to support dictators with poor human rights records in other parts of the world—such as the Philippines and Indonesia—that he viewed as vital to American interests.

A Step Toward Middle East Peace: The Camp David Accords

Carter achieved his greatest foreign policy success in the Middle East. In 1978, he invited the leaders of Egypt and Israel to peace talks at Camp David, the presidential retreat in Maryland. Just five years earlier, Egypt and Israel had been adversaries in the Yom Kippur War. During that conflict, Israel had gained control of lands that had previously belonged to its neighbors. These occupied territories included Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.

Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat conversed for 13 tense days. Finally, they reached an agreement known as the Camp David Accords. The Accords provided a framework for peace between the two countries. Israel agreed to return the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt, while Egypt agreed to establish normal diplomatic relations with Israel. This made Egypt the first Arab country to formally recognize Israel's right to exist, which Arab nations had opposed since Israel's establishment in 1948.

In 1979, Sadat and Begin together received the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to end hostilities between their countries. When presenting the award, the chairman of the Nobel Committee spoke of Carter's contribution. Carter, he said, was "the master builder responsible for the bridge" that brought "two one-time enemies" together to talk of peace.

The Death of Détente Between the U.S. and USSR

Both presidents Nixon and Ford had pursued a policy of détente toward the USSR. In contrast, Carter openly criticized the Soviet Union's human rights record. Still, he cooperated with Soviet leaders enough to negotiate a second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II). "Peace will not be assured," he said in a speech before the United Nations, "until the weapons of war are finally put away."

Any remnants of détente vanished in 1979, when Soviet troops marched into Afghanistan. The USSR invaded this neighbor to help its failing communist government handle a rebellion. Calling the invasion the "most serious threat to world peace since World War II," Carter responded by promoting a boycott of the Olympic Games that would be held in Moscow the following summer.

A Hostage Crisis in Iran

Under Carter, the Nixon Doctrine fared little better than did détente. Early in the 1970s, as part of that policy, the United States had increased military aid to Iran. In return, it had expected Iran's royal ruler, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, to help maintain stability in the Persian Gulf region. Carter continued to support the Shah, despite the leader's poor human rights record. However, in January 1979, a revolution swept through Iran. Under a religious leader, the Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini, the revolutionary army declared Iran a republic. It forced the Shah from the throne and into exile. Khomeini established a new government based on a strict understanding of Islamic principles.

Later that year, Carter allowed the exiled Shah to enter the United States for medical treatment. This decision enraged many Iranians. On November 4, 1979, militant students stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran, Iran's capital. In violation of international law, which protects diplomats, the students took 66 Americans hostage. They paraded the hostages through the streets of Tehran, while the angry crowd shouted, "Death to Carter!"

For more than a year, Carter struggled to bring the hostages home. Appeals to the United Nations and U.S. allies for help in securing the hostages' release accomplished little. In April 1980, Carter attempted a military rescue. The mission failed when two helicopters had engine trouble, a third was damaged while landing, and a fourth crashed, killing eight Americans.

The hostage crisis angered Americans. Some directed their outrage at Iran. Texans displayed signs urging, "Don't buy Iranian oil." Other Americans blamed Carter's "fairness, not force" approach to foreign policy. "Wild as he is," stated former energy secretary James Schlesinger, "the Ayatollah Khomeini would not have touched the Soviet embassy." Fifty-two of the hostages were not released until Carter left office in January 1981. By then, they had endured 444 days in captivity.

55.4 – Protecting the Environment

On April 22, 1970, Americans celebrated the first Earth Day. Across the country, nearly 20 million people came together to show their concern for a healthy environment. Some held marches. Others organized cleanup projects. "The Establishment sees this as a great big antilitter campaign," observed George Brown, a congressman from California. But Earth Day was far more than that. By 1970, polls showed that for many Americans, the condition of the environment had become the nation's most pressing domestic issue.

An Environmental Movement Emerges

The success of Earth Day signaled the emergence of a grassroots environmental movement. Some groups, such as the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club, had existed for many years. The Sierra Club had come into being in 1892 under the leadership of John Muir and other conservationists. The club's original purpose was to enjoy and protect the mountains of the West. Over time, it expanded this mission to include preserving wilderness and protecting the environment across the nation. As a result, the club's membership grew. In 1970, the Sierra Club had 100,000 members. By the end of the decade, membership had swelled to nearly 200,000.

New organizations also sprang up in response to environmental concerns. Some dealt with local issues, such as cleaning up rivers or starting recycling programs. Others dealt with national and even global issues. A group called Zero Population Growth (ZPG) that formed in 1968 aimed to raise awareness of the connection between rapid population growth and environmental destruction. With its slogan "Stop at Two," ZPG encouraged families to stay small.

A Decade of Environmental Legislation

In response to growing public concern, Congress enacted a number of environmental laws during the 1970s. Soon after the first Earth Day in 1970, it approved legislation to create the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This agency's mission was to repair damage already done to the natural environment and to prevent new problems. The EPA grew quickly. By the end of the decade, it had become the government's largest regulatory agency, with more than 10,000 employees.

Air pollution was a major concern during this decade. In 1970, Congress amended the Clean Air Act of 1963. The updated act set stricter standards for emissions from automobiles, factories, and power plants. In 1977, lawmakers amended the act once more. This time they strengthened air-quality standards.

Congress also dealt with water pollution. In 1969, Americans had been shocked when the polluted Cuyahoga River burst into flames in Cleveland, Ohio. The Clean Water Act of 1972 limited the amount of sewage and other pollutants flowing into waterways. The Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 allowed the EPA to regulate the quality of public drinking water.

The EPA also took steps to deal with another source of water pollution, acid rain. Acid rain is precipitation that contains acid as a result of water vapor mixing with molecules of sulfur dioxide and oxides of nitrogen in the atmosphere. These pollutants are released into the atmosphere by automobiles, factories, and power plants that burn fossil fuels. Acid rain can harm plants and animals. It also corrodes buildings and other stone structures.

During the 1970s, the EPA began requiring cars to have reduced pollution. By 1975, manufacturers were equipping each car with a catalytic converter, a device that removes pollutants from the car's exhaust. By 1979, the EPA had also required the use of smokestack scrubbers. These removed pollutants from the exhaust of coal-fired power plants. This technology was widely adopted during the 1980s.

Environmental Disasters Fuel Public Concern

Two well-publicized disasters underscored public concern about environmental hazards during the 1970s. The first occurred in Love Canal, a neighborhood in Niagara, New York. People in Love Canal unknowingly resided atop a chemical waste dump, which exposed them to poisons. As a result, residents developed unusually high rates of cancer and birth defects. When officials discovered the cause of the health problems in 1978, Love Canal became a media event. Eventually, the federal government relocated 800 families to safer areas. Meanwhile, Congress passed laws requiring companies to clean up their toxic waste areas.

The second disaster of the decade occurred at Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island Nuclear Generating Station. On March 28, 1979, the nuclear power plant suffered a partial meltdown. The situation was brought under control. However, some radioactive gases did escape into the atmosphere. The Three Mile Island accident convinced many Americans that nuclear power plants posed an unacceptable risk to people and the natural environment. As a result, no new nuclear power plants have been built in the United States since 1979.

55.5 – Women Continue their Struggle for Equality

On September 20, 1973, professional tennis player Billie Jean King took on an aging former Wimbledon champion named Bobby Riggs. Billed as "The Battle of the Sexes," this was no ordinary tennis match. Riggs proudly admitted to being a male chauvinist, a person who believes men are superior to women. He boasted that at age 55, he could beat King, who was, after all, only a woman. In a match that 50 million people watched on television, King proved Riggs wrong and easily won the match. To many viewers, King's victory symbolized the gains women were making not only in sports but also in many other realms.

Women Challenge Gender Segregation in the Workplace

During the 1970s, record numbers of women entered professions that men had traditionally dominated. The decade saw a 144 percent increase in the number of female accountants and a doubling of female chemists. In 1972, only 4 percent of the

nation's lawyers were women. By 1980, that figure had risen to 13 percent. By the same year, one in five medical students was female.

As encouraging as these numbers were, they did not tell the whole story. In the 1970s, most women still toiled in a workplace segregated by gender. Men did certain jobs, and women did others. In addition, women's jobs usually paid less than men's jobs did. For example, nurses, most of whom were women, earned less than truck drivers, most of whom were men.

To address this inequality, feminists in the late 1970s began a campaign for what they called comparable worth. Advocates of comparable worth argued that jobs typically held by women, such as nursing positions, should command as much pay as those jobs typically held by men that required comparable education and training. If this change took place, a highly trained nurse would make more money than a less-skilled truck driver. These arguments convinced many employers to examine their pay practices. Some agreed to increase pay for certain jobs traditionally held by women.

Feminists also addressed barriers that prevented women from entering higher-paying jobs. One was the reluctance of men who controlled most workplaces to promote women to management. Women described this barrier as a "glass ceiling" that allowed them to rise only so far in a company but no higher. Eventually, women began to break through this glass ceiling, proving not only that they could take on management tasks, but also that a man could work for a female boss. Another obstacle was a shortage of affordable childcare. Without such care, many women took on part-time or less-demanding jobs in order to have time to watch over their children. Such jobs usually paid less than full-time or more demanding work. Feminists lobbied for employers and government officials to establish and help fund childcare centers for working parents.

The lack of affordable childcare was part of a larger problem referred to as the "feminization of poverty." Poverty rates for all Americans had declined during the 1960s. However, the decline was more dramatic for men than for women. By the 1970s, women were much more likely to be poor than men were. This was especially true for single mothers with children to support.

Feminists addressed this problem in a number of ways. For example, they worked to achieve better treatment of divorced women and their children. They did so by pushing government officials to ensure that divorced mothers received child-support payments that they had been awarded as part of their divorce settlements. They also sought stricter penalties for divorced fathers who did not meet financial obligations to their families.

Women Increase Their Political Clout

To bring about such reforms, many women threw themselves into politics. During the 1970s, a growing number of women voted, sought public office, and worked for changes in public policy. The National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), formed in 1971 by feminist leaders, encouraged such activism. The new organization raised money to get

more women elected to office. The NWPC also helped fund male candidates who took a strong stand on women's issues.

Women quickly became more active and influential in their political parties. In 1968, only 13 percent of the delegates at the Democratic National Convention were women. By 1972, due to the efforts of the NWPC, women accounted for 40 percent of delegates. Women in the Republican Party also increased their representation at national conventions—from 17 percent of delegates in 1968 to 30 percent by 1972.

Women also gained influence with elected officials by voting in larger numbers than men did. As a result, a candidate running for office could no longer risk failing to address women's concerns. In addition, at the national level, Congress in 1972 voted to prohibit discrimination against women in the armed services. Under pressure from female voters, state legislatures reformed laws that had made it nearly impossible to prosecute cases involving sexual assaults against women. Women also worked with local governments and school boards to ensure that their daughters had the same opportunities to grow and thrive as their sons had.

55.6 – Technology Reshapes How People Work and Play

In 1977, the first installment of the Star Wars epic opened in movie theaters. With its dazzling computer-generated special effects and fast-paced action, the film was a blockbuster hit. Star Wars was so popular with moviegoers of all ages that it revived the science-fiction film genre. In addition, the movie showcased new uses of computer technology. By the 1970s, innovations in technology were changing everything from movies to medicine.

The Microprocessor Shrinks Computing Devices

Computing machines began to change the ways Americans worked as early as the 1950s. However, the first computers were large and complicated to use. During the 1970s, new technologies that replaced bulky vacuum tubes and transistors with tiny silicon chips inspired a revolution in computing. For the first time, it became practical for ordinary Americans to buy and use a personal computer, or PC.

The introduction of microprocessors in 1971 made the PC possible. The processor is like the computer's brain—it performs all the basic operations that enable a computer to do work. A microprocessor integrates all the elements of a processor on a piece of silicon called a chip. As silicon chips shrank in size, so did computers and other computing devices.

The microprocessor inspired an array of new products that people today often take for granted. One was the pocket-sized calculator. The first of these, called the Bowmar Brain, hit the U.S. market in 1971. Unlike bulky adding machines, this mini number-cruncher was only a little more than 5 inches high and 3 inches wide. At a cost of \$245, it initially was a luxury item. However, as demand for pocket calculators grew and more companies began to make them, prices dropped significantly.

Another favorite new product based on microprocessor technology was the video game. The first successful video game was a ball-and-paddle game called Pong. It appeared in game arcades in 1972. In 1975, its manufacturer, Atari, released a home version in the form of a video game console that connected to a television. To the surprise of company executives, Atari sold 150,000 units that year. During the 1975 holiday season, people waited in lines for hours to purchase a “pong on chip”-powered video game to play at home.

In 1977, a California-based company called Apple Computer introduced a computer that was small enough and cheap enough to use at home. By today’s standards, the Apple II was slow and had a minuscule amount of memory. But selling at a price that middle-class families could afford, the Apple II launched the personal computer revolution. Families, businesses, and schools purchased more than two million Apple IIs between 1977 and the end of the computer’s production in 1993.

Medical Advances

Advances in medical technology improved health care in the 1970s. Inspired by the success of the polio vaccine in preventing that disease, researchers developed vaccines for other childhood plagues. By 1971, scientists had introduced a combination vaccine to prevent measles, mumps, and rubella, or German measles.

The microprocessor soon found its way into a new imaging device that enabled doctors to look inside a person’s body for problems. The computed tomography (CT) scanner was introduced in 1974. This device uses X-rays and a computer to construct detailed three-dimensional images of a patient’s internal organs. Doctors use CT scanners to spot tumors, bone breaks, and other problems that less-advanced technologies leave invisible.

Other medical advances created new options for women who had difficulty getting pregnant. In 1978, the first “test-tube baby” was born in England. In such cases, a woman’s egg is fertilized outside of her body. This type of fertilization is called in vitro, meaning “in glass,” because it takes place in a glass test tube or dish. A doctor then implants the fertilized egg in the woman’s womb, and pregnancy proceeds as normal. The first American test-tube baby was born in 1981. Although the technique remains controversial, more than 40,000 babies are born in the United States each year using in vitro fertilization.

Microwaves and Movies at Home

Two electronic devices reshaped Americans’ home lives in the 1970s. The first was the microwave oven. Microwave technology had existed since the 1940s, but it was not until the late 1960s that Raytheon produced a microwave oven for home use. Microwave ovens work by bombarding food with radio waves. As the waves pass through the food, they set molecules of water, fat, sugar, and other elements into rapid motion. This rapid motion causes friction, which creates heat. Foods that take an hour to cook in a

conventional oven heat in minutes in a microwave—an attribute that appealed to the growing number of working women.

The second electronic device to change life at home was the videocassette recorder, or VCR. The VCR allowed people to record TV programs on videotape and replay the shows later. VCR users could also play prerecorded tapes of movies and videotapes they had made themselves using video cameras called camcorders. VCRs changed the way Americans entertained themselves. In the past, people had seen movies at theaters or watched them at home when broadcast on television. The VCR changed those viewing habits. Movie fans could rent or buy videotapes of movies to watch whenever they wanted. In addition, fans of television shows no longer had to plan their schedule around broadcast times.

55.7 – The Baby Bust and Retirement Boom

In 1971, a new landmark appeared in the Arizona desert. It was London Bridge, the old English bridge that was always falling down in nursery rhymes. Built in 1831, London Bridge had become a victim of its own great weight. In 1962, London officials announced that it was sinking into the Thames River and would have to be torn down. An American businessman named Robert McCulloch had a different idea. McCulloch purchased the bridge and had it transported, stone by stone, to Arizona. Workers reassembled it in tiny Lake Havasu City, a new resort community that McCulloch was planning in the Arizona desert.

As McCulloch had hoped, the relocated London Bridge drew people to his real estate development. Many of the visitors were older people who chose to retire there. Lake Havasu City became one of numerous Sunbelt cities to benefit from the aging of the U.S. population that began in the 1970s.

A Baby Bust Begins the Aging of America

During the baby boom that followed World War II, the average age of the U.S. population decreased year by year. In the 1970s, this trend reversed itself. Rather than getting younger, the U.S. population began growing older.

One cause of this shift was a drop in the birthrate. At the peak of the baby boom in 1957, the average American woman had three to four children. Between 1975 and 1980, that statistic slipped to between one and two children. Newspapers referred to this sharp decline in fertility as the “baby bust” or birth dearth.

Many factors contributed to this dearth, or lack, of births. One was the decision that a growing number of women made to enter the workforce. In 1950, one third of adult women worked outside the home. By 1978, fully half of adult women were part of the labor force. Those who chose to enter demanding professions, such as law, medicine, or teaching, often postponed having children to pursue their careers. Once they did begin families, most of those women gave birth to fewer children than their mothers had.

Another key factor in the aging of America was a rise in life expectancy. A person born in 1900 could expect to live an average of 49 years. In contrast, a person born in 1980 had a life expectancy of almost 74 years. This change meant that there were more older people than ever before.

With Longer Lives, Americans Redefine Retirement

Longer life expectancies meant Americans who retired in the 1970s could look forward to more retirement years than earlier generations had. In addition, the economic boom that followed World War II had left many Americans with enough money to enjoy their last years. Many retirees owned their own homes. Most had pensions from years of working for one employer. Retirees also benefited from the expansion of Social Security and Medicare benefits in the 1960s and 1970s. Whereas in 1950, approximately 33 percent of older Americans lived in poverty, by 1978, only 14 percent were poor.

With these changes, older Americans began to redefine retirement as a time for fun, travel, and relocation. A growing number of older Americans, especially those living in northern states, sold their homes and moved to the Sunbelt. Other retirees, called “snowbirds,” traveled from place to place according to the season. Resort communities like Lake Havasu City attracted mobile retirees who visited there to boat and golf during the winter months.

Population and Power Shift from the Rustbelt to the Sunbelt

The movement of people from northern to southern states caused shifts in economic and political power. Fast-growing Sunbelt states saw their economies grow with the influx of people and new businesses. In contrast, the Northeast and the Midwest suffered economically. Parts of these regions were known together as the Rustbelt because of the rusting factories that declining industries left behind. Even well-established Rustbelt industries, such as steel milling and automobile assembly, struggled to survive the stagflation of the 1970s. Many laid-off workers then migrated to the Sunbelt in search of work.

The Sunbelt states saw their political clout grow along with their populations. After each census, seats in the House of Representatives are reapportioned to reflect population changes. States with expanded populations gain seats in the House and, with those seats, votes in the Electoral College. Since the 1970s, Sunbelt states have gained more than 35 electoral votes at the expense of Rustbelt states. Between 1964 and 2004, every successful candidate for president came from a Sunbelt state.

55.8 – Looking for Meaning and Fun in Daily Life

For some Americans, the 1970s were a time to look inward to explore who they were and what they believed. Others found joy in fads and fashions.

The Third Great Awakening: Self-Improvement and Spirituality

When Tom Wolfe wrote of the Third Great Awakening in the 1970s, he had in mind two broad movements. He called the first the “therapeutic movement.” Its focus was on self-improvement through some kind of therapy, or treatment. A variety of self-improvement activities emerged during the decade. The common goal, observed Wolfe, was to change “one’s personality—remaking, remodeling, elevating, and polishing one’s very self.”

The second broad movement was more spiritual in nature. The 1970s saw an explosion of new religious groups. Some were based on Eastern religious traditions, mainly Buddhism and Hinduism. Buddhist meditation and the Hindu practice of Yoga both gained many followers. One new group, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, originated in India. Members of this group regularly chant a mantra, or set of sacred words, to bring about a higher spiritual awareness. Because the mantra begins with the phrase “Hare Krishna,” or “Oh, Lord Krishna,” the group is more commonly known as the Hare Krishnas.

Other new religious groups drew more from Western traditions. One of the most successful was the Unification Church, founded by a Korean religious leader named Sun Myung Moon. In 1972, Moon moved to the United States and began a major drive to expand his new faith. Called Moonies by people outside the church, his followers rapidly grew in number. In 1982, Moon made news by presiding over a mass marriage of 2,075 couples in New York’s Madison Square Garden. Moon had selected many of the couples to marry each other.

Exploring Identity, Ethnicity, and Diversity

For some, turning inward meant exploring one’s cultural identity. This was especially true for descendants of immigrants from Italy, Poland, and other parts of southern and eastern Europe. When they arrived in the United States, these immigrants and their offspring were expected to “melt” into a society dominated by WASPs, or white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. As novelist James T. Farrell observed in 1972, “The melting pot was essentially an Anglo-Saxon effort to rub out the past of others.”

In his 1973 book *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics*, Michael Novak wrote about the stubborn survival of many ethnic groups. His goal, he explained, was to invite readers to explore their ethnic identity by asking questions like, “Who, after all, are you? What history brought you to where you are? Why are you different from others?” In answering such questions, many Americans reclaimed their ethnic background as a heritage to be proud of, not a past to leave behind. This new interest in ethnicity, or ethnic identity, quickly found its way into politics. In 1974, President Ford set up the Office of Ethnic Affairs.

The growing awareness of ethnic diversity also made its way into popular culture. Movies like *The Godfather* and *Saturday Night Fever* fascinated audiences with portrayals of ethnic groups whose values and traditions were often different from their own. The creators of the television show *Sesame Street*, which debuted in 1969, carefully constructed it to reflect the nation’s diversity. The program took place on a

fictional street on which people of different backgrounds lived and worked. The puppets on the show interacted with an African American couple, a Latina woman, and people with disabilities.

Fun, Fads, and Funky Fashions

The 1970s also had a less serious side. Disco, a form of dance music loved by some and loathed by others, drew young people to dance clubs called discotheques. Disc jockeys at these clubs kept records spinning and dancers dancing long into the night. As one disco fan later wrote, "With its driving beats, [disco] almost had a hypnotic feel that makes you wanna dance . . . It's really hard to sit still when you hear a good disco tune." The decade also saw its share of silly fads, such as the pet rock craze. A pet rock was a rock packed in a box that looked like a pet carrying case. Streaking, another fad, involved running naked through public places. In 1974, a streaker ran across the stage during the Academy Awards ceremony.

The 1970s also saw a flowering of funky fashions. Platform shoes, polyester leisure suits, and hot pants came and went. Bell-bottom pants moved from hippies to housewives. Also popular were mood rings, which supposedly changed color to match the wearer's mood. A black ring signaled stress. Blue meant the wearer was relaxed or in a romantic frame of mind.

Summary

During the 1970s, the U.S. economy suffered from stagflation as the nation faced a number of crises. The decade was also a time of changing views about everything from the environment and ethnicity to retirement and gender equality.

Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries A major cause of inflation was OPEC's decision to raise the price of oil. This led to rising prices for many goods.

National Energy Act In 1978, Congress tried to reduce U.S. dependence on imported oil. The National Energy Act offered incentives for conserving energy or using alternative energy sources.

Camp David Accords In 1978, Jimmy Carter brokered a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. The Camp David Accords ended the long state of war between these two countries.

Earth Day The first Earth Day celebration in 1970 signaled the emergence of a new environmental movement. Followers worked to clean up and protect the environment locally and globally. Congress passed antipollution laws such as the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Three Mile Island accident An accident at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Generating Station in 1978 highlighted the potential dangers of nuclear energy.

Searching for meaning During the 1970s, many Americans turned inward to search for meaning. Some explored self-help movements, others new religions, and others their ethnic identity.

Population changes Fewer births and longer life expectancies led to an aging of the U.S. population. The population also shifted south, as people migrated from the Rustbelt to the Sunbelt.

Gender equality Women worked to gain greater equality in the workplace and politics. In growing numbers, women entered professions that had once been dominated by males.

Chapter 56 — A Shift to the Right Under Reagan

Was the Reagan Revolution good for the nation?

56.1 – Introduction

When Ronald Reagan took office on January 20, 1981, he was almost 70 years old—the oldest man ever to become president of the United States. A little over two months later, his presidency—and his life—almost came to an abrupt end. As he emerged from a Washington, D.C., hotel, a gunman attempted to assassinate him. The would-be killer was 25-year-old John Hinckley Jr.

Timothy McCarthy was one of the Secret Service agents guarding Reagan. He had thought it would be a routine day. Everything was going as planned until Reagan left the hotel and headed for the presidential motorcade. “Just before the president got to the car,” McCarthy recalled, “Hinckley pushed himself forward and fired six rounds in about one and a half seconds.” McCarthy threw himself in front of Reagan, taking one of the bullets himself. But another bullet hit Reagan in the chest.

Hinckley also shot Reagan’s press secretary, James Brady, and a police officer. Reagan and the other injured men were immediately transported to the hospital, while police grabbed Hinckley and took him to jail. Hinckley later confessed that he had shot the president to get the attention of a famous movie actress. At his trial, he was declared not guilty by reason of insanity and sent to a mental institution for life.

At the hospital, Reagan joked with the doctors before going into surgery. As they wheeled him into the operating room, he looked around, smiled, and said, “I hope you are all Republicans.”

When Reagan was elected president, some people wondered whether he had the energy and stamina to carry out such a demanding job. However, he survived the shooting and went on to lead the country for two terms as president. His conservative agenda calling for lower taxes, reduced government regulation of business, and cuts in spending on social programs ushered in an era of political and economic change known as the Reagan Revolution.

56.2 – The Triumph of the Conservative Coalition

Two years after the assassination attempt, Ronald Reagan appeared before a gathering of conservative Christian organizations. They were part of a broad coalition of diverse groups of Americans who favored traditional social values. In his speech, Reagan touched on many of the points that had helped him win the support of conservatives. He also spoke of the importance of religion in the founding of the nation. “Freedom prospers when religion is vibrant and the rule of law under God is acknowledged,” he said.

Evangelical Christians Gain a Political Voice

Reagan's audience that day was made up of evangelical Christians, or evangelicals. These are Christians who emphasize the authority of the Bible, believe strongly in spreading their faith, and seek a direct, personal experience of God. Many describe their conversion to evangelical faith as being "born again." By the late 1970s, evangelicals had become a significant force in both religion and politics.

Many evangelicals, particularly conservative fundamentalists, were upset by what they saw as declining moral and religious values in American society. They were distressed by rising divorce rates, drug use, gay rights, and feminism. They were also angered by Supreme Court decisions legalizing abortion and banning prayer in public schools. They feared that the nation was turning away from religion and becoming a "godless culture."

In 1979, evangelical leaders joined forces to form the Moral Majority, a political lobbying group led by the Reverend Jerry Falwell. Falwell wanted to train Christian activists who could make their voices "heard in the halls of Congress." He also called on Christians to elect public officials who were "pro-life, pro-family, pro-moral, and pro-America." The Moral Majority was succeeded by an even larger group, the Christian Coalition, led by the Reverend Pat Robertson.

These groups formed part of a political movement known as the New Right. This movement comprised various special-interest groups and activists who worked for conservative causes. New Right groups lobbied Congress and raised money for political campaigns. They also supported the growth of conservative "think tanks" like the Heritage Foundation, where scholars wrote policy papers and opinion pieces for newspapers and journals. The New Right influenced the public debate on many issues and helped bring about the Reagan Revolution of the 1980s.

Reagan Wins the 1980 Election

As the 1980 election drew near, conditions at home and abroad were prompting many Americans to look for a change in leadership. The nation faced high inflation, high unemployment, and soaring energy prices. Overseas, the Iran hostage crisis continued, and the Cold War showed no signs of ending.

For many voters, Ronald Reagan offered an appealing alternative to President Jimmy Carter. Before starting his political career, Reagan had been a movie actor and the host of a popular TV show. He had served two terms as governor of California before running for president. On the campaign trail, he showed a natural gift for public speaking, a skill that earned him the nickname "the Great Communicator." He knew how to make a point or gently attack his opponent with a joke. One of his most memorable jabs came when he poked fun at Carter's handling of the economy. "A recession is when your neighbor loses his job," Reagan said. "A depression is when you lose yours. And recovery is when Jimmy Carter loses his."

During a TV debate with Carter in October 1980, Reagan delivered the most famous line of the campaign when he asked viewers, "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" For millions of Americans, the answer was no. Reagan promised to pull the

nation out of its slump and restore its standing in the world. His optimism appealed to many Americans, making them feel more confident about the nation's future.

On election day, Reagan defeated Carter by more than 8 million votes. Part of his success was due to the Republican Party's effective use of databases to identify potential supporters and get out the vote. Reagan won the support of the religious right, most Republicans, many business leaders, and many moderate Democrats. Republicans also won control of the Senate for the first time since 1955. Democrats managed to retain their majority within the House of Representatives, but Republicans made significant gains there, too.

Reagan in the White House

In his inaugural speech, Reagan introduced many of the themes he would return to as president. Recognizing that many Americans had become disillusioned with government in the aftermath of the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal, he called on his listeners to have faith in themselves and in their ability to solve the country's problems. "After all," he said, "why shouldn't we believe that? We are Americans." Minutes after Reagan took the oath of office, Iran freed the American hostages as a result of previous negotiations. Across the country, Americans celebrated their release. Reagan's first term was off to a good start.

As president, Reagan used speeches on television and in public to build support for his programs. He sometimes recalled scenes from old movies to explain his ideas in ways that made sense to his listeners. Charming and friendly, he was often liked even by those who disagreed with his policies. Reagan's advisers soon learned, however, that the president rarely involved himself with policy details or the day-to-day tasks of governing. He provided a general overview of what he wanted done and relied on his advisers and staff to carry out his wishes.

56.3 – Reagan's Economic Policies

Ronald Reagan came into office promising to change government. He had won support from voters who believed that government taxed them too much and wasted their tax dollars. Pledging to get government "off their backs," he set out to reduce the power of the federal government. "Government is not the solution to our problem," he said. "Government is the problem."

The Evolution of the New Federalism

As part of his assault on "big government," Reagan expanded the policy of New Federalism begun by Richard Nixon. Like Nixon, Reagan wanted to shift power from the federal government to the states. Nixon had used revenue sharing to distribute federal tax dollars to the states. Reagan went a step further by handing responsibility for many programs in health, education, and welfare to the states themselves.

Reagan helped states pay for these social programs with block grants from the federal treasury. These were lump-sum payments that states could use as they wished. This

system gave the states more flexibility, allowing them to design programs and allocate resources to suit their needs. However, these block grants generally provided less funding than the federal programs they replaced. Some liberal critics charged that the block grant system was really a way to reduce federal spending on social programs.

Supply-Side Economics Leads to Tax Cuts

When Reagan took office, the economy was burdened by inflation. According to the law of supply and demand, inflation occurs when demand exceeds supply. Inflation often occurs in times of low unemployment, when more workers are trying to buy goods and services. However, when Reagan took office, he faced both inflation and high unemployment, partly as a result of soaring oil prices. To meet this challenge, he promised to stimulate the economy by cutting taxes and promoting private enterprise. His economic plan quickly became known as Reaganomics.

Much of Reagan's plan was based on a theory called supply-side economics. According to this theory, economic growth depends on increasing the supply of goods and services. The way to increase supply is to cut taxes. Lower tax rates will leave more money in the hands of individuals and businesses, providing an incentive for them to save and invest. Individuals will then work harder, save more, and spend more. Companies can hire more workers and increase the supply of goods and services. As businesses create more jobs, new workers will pay taxes, which will replace the revenues lost through lower tax rates.

Critics called this theory "voodoo economics," saying it was unrealistic to believe that lowering tax rates would increase revenues. But Reagan and his advisers believed it was the route to economic growth. In August 1981, Reagan signed a bill that cut federal taxes by 25 percent over a three-year period. However, the economy continued to lag for another two years, with even greater unemployment.

Gradually, though, the inflation picture began to improve. By the end of 1983, the economy was making a strong comeback. The following year, the gross national product grew by 7.1 percent. The stock market also rose. The recovery created 18.4 million new jobs. Economists still debate what role the tax cuts played in the resurgence. However, many agree that a major factor was a large increase in defense spending. Military purchases pumped billions of dollars into the economy.

Not everyone fared equally well, though. While personal income grew at all levels of society in the 1980s, the income gap between rich and poor widened. The rich saw their incomes rise, while those with lower incomes saw fewer benefits. Liberals charged that Reaganomics helped the rich and hurt the poor. One economist noted that tax cuts had redistributed "income, wealth and power—from government to private enterprise, . . . from poor to rich." One Reagan official acknowledged that the tax cuts were intended to produce wealth at the upper levels that would "trickle down" to all Americans.

The economic boom made Reagan an even more popular candidate in the 1984 election. He built his campaign around the theme "It's Morning Again in America,"

suggesting a new era of pride and prosperity. A Reagan adviser noted the difficulties that the Democratic challenger, Walter Mondale, faced. "It's like running against America," he said. Reagan won by a landslide.

Reagan Calls for Deregulation

Another key element of Reagan's economic plan was deregulation. Deregulation is the reduction or removal of government controls on business in order to promote economic efficiency and stimulate free enterprise. Reagan saw deregulation as another way to limit the power of government. Like many conservatives, he believed that deregulation would make businesses more efficient and competitive, thereby allowing them to pass the savings on to consumers. In the 1970s, under President Carter, Congress had lifted many regulations on the airline and trucking industries. Reagan felt that further deregulation would increase business activity in other industries and boost the economy even more.

Some deregulation efforts focused on getting rid of laws designed to curb pollution and ensure safety in the workplace. Many companies found such regulations a costly obstacle. A Reagan task force on deregulation delayed or blocked rules on the handling of hazardous waste and the exposure of workers to toxic chemicals. Under Reagan's guidelines, the Environmental Protection Agency also began to lower federal standards on air and water quality.

Reagan chose officials to lead government agencies who shared his belief in deregulation. For example, Secretary of the Interior James Watt removed many environmental regulations, arguing that these laws prevented industry from creating jobs and expanding the economy. He opened up more national forest land to logging operations and gave oil and gas companies offshore drilling rights. He also approved the sale of public lands at low prices to oil and mining companies.

Many public-interest groups fought efforts to revise environmental laws and workplace safety rules. They charged that the proposed changes endangered workers and the general public. In some cases, court decisions and actions by Congress slowed efforts by Reagan officials to drop environmental regulations. In 1987, Congress overrode Reagan's veto of a bill to renew funding for the 1972 Clean Water Act.

Deficits and Debt Grow Under Reagan

Despite Reagan's efforts to control government spending, federal budget deficits soared during his two terms in office. A budget deficit is the shortfall that results when government spending exceeds government revenues in a given year. Before Reagan, budget deficits remained below \$75 billion. From 1982 to the end of Reagan's second term, however, annual deficits exceeded \$100 billion. In 1986, the annual deficit reached a new record of \$221 billion.

One reason for these soaring deficits was tax cuts and the resulting fall in government revenues. Another was high military spending. During Reagan's first term, the annual

budget of the Department of Defense increased nearly 85 percent. Budget deficits also grew as the cost of Social Security and Medicare rose.

Federal budget deficits caused the national debt to soar. The national debt is the sum of all loans taken out by the government to finance its annual deficits. During the Reagan years, the national debt nearly tripled from \$908 billion in 1980 to \$2.6 trillion in 1988. This sum was far greater than the debt accumulated by all former presidents combined. The government had to borrow hundreds of billions of dollars each year just to pay the interest on this debt.

Conservatives and liberals held different views on the problem of deficits and debt. Although both favored a balanced budget, each said debt could be justified for the right reasons. Conservatives believed that low taxes and a strong defense were good reasons. Liberals argued that debt was acceptable if it came from investing in transportation, education, health care, and other social and economic improvements. Analysts called this the “guns or butter” debate, with conservatives favoring “guns” and liberals favoring “butter.”

56.4 – Reagan's Social Policies

Ronald Reagan liked to compare the United States to a “shining city upon a hill.” This phrase was adapted from a sermon by John Winthrop, a founder of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Winthrop hoped the new colony would become a model Christian society, a “city upon a hill” that would serve as an example to the world. In his farewell address, Reagan said,

The past few days, I've thought a bit of the “shining city upon a hill.” . . . In my mind it was a tall, proud city . . . God-blessed and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace, open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here.

—Ronald Reagan, Farewell Address, January 11, 1989

Had Reagan's social policies helped to create such a model society? His admirers and critics disagree.

Social Welfare Spending Is Reduced

Reagan and other conservatives opposed most government spending on social welfare. They believed that social programs stifled personal initiative and produced a dependence on government aid, thus trapping people in a cycle of poverty. At Reagan's urging, Congress slashed funds for many of Lyndon Johnson's antipoverty programs, including food stamps and aid to the elderly, poor, and disabled. Other cuts targeted student loans and subsidized-housing programs that helped low-income families pay their rent.

Liberals protested that these cuts harmed the poor and forced cities to reduce services to those in need. Cuts fell most heavily on single women with young children and on young adults with few job skills and little education. In the 1980s, the number of children living in poverty grew by 25 percent. The number of homeless people also increased dramatically.

HIV/AIDS Emerges

In the 1980s, the United States also faced a grim health crisis brought on by a previously unknown disease called HIV/AIDS. This disease attacks the immune system, making it much harder for the body to fight illness. Many AIDS patients die from infections, such as pneumonia, that their weakened immune systems cannot fight.

In the United States, many of the first AIDS cases were among gay men, which led to the mistaken belief that AIDS was largely a “gay disease.” In the mid-1980s, however, AIDS began to appear in patients who had received blood transfusions. This led to the discovery that AIDS was transmitted mainly through contact with the blood or other bodily fluids of an infected person. This type of transmission also explained why many drug users who shared needles got AIDS.

At the end of Reagan’s first term, statistics showed over 8,700 confirmed U.S. deaths from AIDS. Four years later, that number had grown to over 46,000. AIDS activists urged Reagan to speak out on AIDS and fund AIDS research. At first he resisted, but by the end of his second term he had declared AIDS “public health enemy number one.” Still, he put little effort into fighting the epidemic.

The Reagans Urge Americans to “Just Say No” to Drugs

Like AIDS, drug-related violence in inner-city neighborhoods was also a concern in the 1980s. With his wife, Nancy, the president initiated a “Just Say No” media campaign that urged youths to “just say no to drugs.” The Reagan administration also funded a drug education program known as DARE. This program sent police officers into schools to teach students about the dangers of drug use.

Reagan advisers labeled DARE a success, citing studies that showed reduced drug use among high school seniors. By the mid-1990s, however, longer-term studies showed little or no effect from the program. In addition, critics of Reagan’s drug-intervention policy pointed to studies showing increased use of cocaine among the urban poor and minority youths.

Although many conservatives favored teaching students about the dangers of drug use, they opposed government programs to provide treatment for drug addicts. Critics of this approach argued that helping people overcome addiction is also an essential part of the effort to reduce drug-related crime and unemployment.

Conservatism Dominates the Supreme Court

In the legal arena, Reagan’s judicial appointments helped move the Supreme Court in a more conservative direction. He appointed three new justices to the Court. Sandra Day

O'Connor, the first female justice, was followed by two more conservatives, Antonin Scalia and Anthony Kennedy.

The Court's more conservative makeup was evident in a 1985 case, *New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, which considered the privacy rights of high school students. The case focused on a 14-year-old girl, identified as T.L.O., whose purse was searched at school and found to contain marijuana. As a result, she was charged with delinquency and sent to juvenile court. Her lawyers argued that the evidence against T.L.O. was gained in violation of the Fourth Amendment's protection against unreasonable search and seizure. The Supreme Court disagreed. It ruled that a search without a warrant by school officials did not violate the Fourth Amendment as long as "there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school."

A decade later, the Court—still dominated by Reagan-era conservatives—ruled against privacy rights again in *Vernonia School District v. Acton*. In that case, the Court said that schools have a right to impose random drug testing on student athletes, despite objections that such tests violate the students' rights.

Civil Rights Groups Feel Alienated

With respect to civil rights, Reagan believed the federal government should be less involved in enforcement. He was reluctant to support an extension of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and was against the use of school busing as a means to achieve integration. He also called for an end to affirmative action, which he considered a form of reverse discrimination that was unfair to the majority white population.

Reagan and most conservatives argued that federal efforts to enforce civil rights actually hindered the cause of equality by arousing resentment. They also claimed that such efforts infringed on the rights of state and local governments. But civil rights groups contended that Reagan was simply trying to appeal to southern white voters by turning back the clock on civil rights.

Civil rights activist Jesse Jackson was one of the strongest critics of Reagan's policies. In the 1980s, he twice sought the Democratic nomination for president. In 1984, he formed the National Rainbow Coalition, a political organization that advocated social progress and equal rights for people of color, women, and gays and lesbians.

In a speech at the 1984 Democratic National Convention, Jackson blamed worsening conditions in the inner cities on cuts in social programs for the poor and elderly. Quoting a common saying in economics that "a rising tide lifts all boats," Jackson disputed the claim that the economic expansion under Reagan would eventually benefit all Americans. "Rising tides don't lift all boats," he said, "particularly those stuck at the bottom. For the boats stuck at the bottom there's a misery index . . . Under Mr. Reagan, the misery index has risen for the poor." Jackson called for renewed efforts to advance civil rights and help the poor.

Reagan Supports Immigration Reform

Immigration laws were another focus of domestic policy during the Reagan years. The last major immigration reform, the Immigration Act of 1965, had opened the doors to a new wave of immigration. By the 1980s, large numbers of immigrants from Asia and Latin America had come to the United States. Some of these were undocumented immigrants who entered the country illegally, without a visa. Many of these undocumented immigrants were Latin Americans who crossed the U.S.-Mexico border. As a result, the impact of illegal immigration was most keenly felt in the southwestern border states, from Texas to California.

Some Americans showed their opposition to increased immigration by joining the “English-only movement.” Members of this group advocated laws to make English the official language of the United States and to limit the use of other languages by government agencies. Most English-only supporters opposed bilingual education in schools, believing that it kept immigrants from learning English. In the 1980s, several states passed laws making English the official language.

In 1986, Reagan signed the Immigration Reform and Control Act. This act called for increased immigration controls on the U.S.-Mexico border and provided stiff penalties for employers who hire undocumented workers. At the same time, it offered amnesty for 2.8 million immigrants who had entered the country illegally, thus putting them on the road to citizenship.

56.5 – Current Connections: Immigration Reform: An Ongoing Debate

The immigration law of 1986 did not halt illegal immigration. In the 1990s, more than 1.3 million immigrants, many of them undocumented, arrived in the United States each year. In 2006, the Census Bureau estimated that between 8 and 9 million undocumented immigrants were in the country. Other estimates put the number much higher.

Struggling to Curtail Illegal Immigration

Most immigrants come to the United States seeking jobs and a better standard of living. Though many of them encounter serious hardships as a result, the benefits of life in the United States usually outweigh the costs.

This human motivation hints at the main reason illegal immigration is so hard to curtail: people will take great risks to better their lives. But there are other reasons as well. The U.S.-Mexico border, the main entry point for immigrants, is long and difficult to monitor. Many immigrants have false documents, making it hard for employers to know that they are in the country illegally. Laws to keep businesses from hiring such workers are tough to enforce.

The American people are divided on the economic impact of illegal immigration. Some point out that undocumented workers play a key role in the economy. They often take hard, low-paying jobs that many Americans do not seem to want. By working for low

wages, they lower the cost of goods and services for all Americans. Others argue, however, that Americans would take these jobs if the pay were fair. They claim that undocumented immigrant workers drive down wages and make it harder for American workers to earn a living. They also contend that immigrants act as a drain on resources by using schools, health clinics, and other services.

Debating Immigration Reform

Most Americans agree that illegal immigration is a problem and that some type of immigration reform is necessary. But they disagree on the solution. Some believe that building a fence along the U.S.-Mexico border and patrolling it with a large force like the National Guard would be a good idea. In 2006, Congress passed a bill authorizing 700 new miles of fencing along the border. Even if built, however, the new fence would leave another 1,300 miles of border unprotected.

Another proposed solution is to crack down on employers who hire undocumented workers. Advocates of this approach point out that employers who hire these workers are breaking the law. They argue that illegal immigration would end if immigrants could no longer get jobs in this country. But opponents of a get-tough approach say that it would increase government regulation and stifle business activity. Also, they contend that employers and workers would probably find a way to evade the law.

Some advocates of immigration reform support the creation of a national database and federal identity cards for all citizens and documented immigrants. Such a system would help to prevent undocumented immigrants from getting work or using public services. Critics of this proposal note that such a project would be very expensive. Moreover, they worry that the national database, which would contain private information about everyone with an identity card, might be accessed by hackers or others hoping to misuse the information.

Yet another suggested solution is the creation of a guest worker system similar to the Bracero Program begun during World War II. Guest workers would have contracts to stay in the United States for a specific period of time and would return home when their contracts expired. Civil liberties advocates counter that such a program would lend itself to abuses of workers' rights. Other critics argue that a guest worker system would simply bring more immigrants into the country, where they might stay after their contracts ran out.

Even if political leaders come up with a new strategy to curb illegal immigration, it is unlikely to offer a permanent solution to the problem. Like many aspects of life in a democratic society, immigration policy may always be a "work in progress."

Summary

In the 1980s, Ronald Reagan's political skills and conservative support won him two terms in office. During his presidency, the economy revived, but the federal budget deficit soared. Reagan approached serious social problems, such as the

HIV/AIDS crisis, rising drug abuse, and illegal immigration, in ways that reflected his conservative ideals.

Reagan Revolution Reagan helped spark a conservative revolution in American politics. He worked to shrink government, promote free enterprise, and reduce social programs.

The New Right Reagan's strongest support came from the New Right, a movement of conservative activists and organizations. This movement included evangelical Christian organizations like the Moral Majority.

Supply-side economics Reagan's economic plan was based on supply-side economics. He cut taxes to stimulate business activity, arguing that this would boost the economy and produce jobs. Tax cuts and increased defense spending, however, led to large budget deficits and a huge national debt.

Social and environmental issues Reagan called for reducing regulations on business and the environment. He also cut spending on social services. Critics claimed that pollution and social problems increased as a result. Jesse Jackson formed the National Rainbow Coalition to support equal rights and challenge Reagan's social policies.

A conservative Court The Supreme Court moved to the right under Reagan. This shift was evident in such cases as *New Jersey v. T.L.O.*, which limited privacy rights for students.

Chapter 57 — Ending the Cold War

Were the effects of President Reagan's foreign policy actions mostly positive or mostly negative?

57.1 – Introduction

On June 12, 1987, President Ronald Reagan stood on a platform in front of the Berlin Wall. Behind him loomed the Brandenburg Gate, a symbol of the divided German capital. The president was visibly angry. He had just been told that police had driven off East Germans who had gathered on the other side of the wall to hear him speak. “General Secretary Gorbachev,” he said, knowing that his words would reach the Soviet leader in Moscow. “If you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate!” Reagan continued, his last four words loud and clear, “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!”

It was a ringing challenge from one superpower to the other. The Wall was by far the most well-known symbol of the Cold War. Twelve feet tall and over 100 miles long, it encircled West Berlin. Thousands of well-armed guards, aided by hundreds of tracking dogs, patrolled the wall with orders to shoot anyone who tried to escape to the West. Despite the risks, however, as many as 10,000 East Germans tried to cross the Wall over the years. About half of them succeeded, while the rest were captured or lost their lives. Some died jumping out of windows. Others were shot. Some drowned as they tried to swim across lakes or rivers along the border.

On the night of November 9, 1989, however, a little more than two years after Reagan’s speech, the gates of the Berlin Wall finally opened. As the news spread, hundreds of thousands of people rushed to the Wall. Strangers hugged and kissed, while others cheered, danced, and set off fireworks. Then the crowd began to dismantle the Wall by hand. The noise level grew “louder and louder,” reported one journalist, “as hundreds of hammers and chisels attack[ed] the wall, taking it down chip by chip.” It was a celebration of freedom after decades of anxiety, fear, and oppression. As one young East German put it, “I don’t feel like I’m in prison anymore.”

57.2 – Anticommunism Guides Reagan's Foreign Policy

Reagan had strong views on the dangers of communism. He believed that the Soviet Union posed an ongoing threat to freedom and democracy. In a speech in March 1983, he described the Soviet Union as the “evil empire.” Reagan’s tough talk pleased conservatives but alarmed other Americans who feared an escalation of Cold War tensions.

An Ardent Cold Warrior

Reagan believed that the Soviet Union was bent on world domination and had to be stopped. To counter the Soviet threat and undermine communism, he boosted defense spending. The result was the largest peacetime military buildup in U.S. history.

In 1983, Reagan announced plans for a new arms program, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). This program would create a “missile shield” designed to protect the United States from nuclear attack. It would include land-based and space-based weapons, which could in theory knock down incoming missiles. Reagan argued that SDI would be a deterrent to war and make nuclear weapons “impotent and obsolete.”

Critics of the SDI program nicknamed it Star Wars after the popular science fiction movies of the time. They claimed that SDI would provoke a new arms race and undermine arms control agreements. Many scientists expressed doubts that an effective missile shield could ever be built, while members of Congress also voiced concerns about SDI’s enormous cost. The program went ahead anyway, though technical problems hampered its development.

To further undermine the Soviets, Reagan called for the United States to openly support anticommunist insurgents and movements around the world. Under this policy, which became known as the Reagan Doctrine, the United States provided aid to rebels fighting Soviet-backed governments in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Reagan called these groups “freedom fighters.”

Battling Communism in Central America and the Caribbean

Central America was one of the first places where the Reagan Doctrine was applied. In Nicaragua, leftist rebels known as Sandinistas had overthrown the country’s dictator, Anastasio Somoza, in 1979. The Sandinista government then acquired Soviet arms and forged close ties with communist Cuba.

Reagan saw events in Nicaragua, along with a growing insurgency in El Salvador, as evidence of Soviet and Cuban efforts to spread communism in Central America and throughout the Western Hemisphere. In a speech to Congress in 1983, he warned that these events threatened U.S. interests. “The national security of all the Americas is at stake in Central America,” he warned. “If we cannot defend ourselves there, we cannot expect to prevail elsewhere.”

In the early 1980s, the Reagan administration began funding covert operations to overthrow the Sandinista government. U.S. advisers armed and trained over 10,000 Nicaraguan rebels. This U.S.-backed force, known as the Contras, attacked the Sandinistas from bases in neighboring countries.

Congress questioned Reagan’s policy. In 1984, after lawmakers learned that the CIA had been illegally placing mines in Nicaraguan harbors, they banned further U.S. military aid to the Contras. Covert operations continued, however, and would later embroil the Reagan administration in its most serious scandal.

Meanwhile, the administration was also providing economic and military aid to El Salvador, which was battling its own leftist rebellion. Reagan argued that this aid would counter communist influence and support the country's struggling democratic government. But most U.S. aid went to the Salvadoran military, which compiled a brutal human rights record. The civil war lasted for 12 years and left at least 70,000 Salvadorans dead, before ending in 1992.

The Reagan Doctrine also led the United States to invade the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada. In 1983, a military coup brought a communist leader to power in Grenada. He invited Cuban workers to the island and signed military agreements with several communist countries. Alarmed by these events, Reagan sent an invasion force of U.S. Marines to Grenada to oust the regime, expel the Cubans, and install a new government. The people of Grenada and nearby islands supported the U.S. invasion. But many countries around the world condemned the action as unlawful interference in another nation's affairs.

57.3 – On Shaky Ground in the Middle East

The Reagan administration also got involved in the Middle East. The United States provided aid to Israel along with moderate Arab states in the region, such as Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon. In 1975, a civil war broke out in Lebanon when various ethnic and religious groups, both Christian and Muslim, began to struggle for power. This conflict included factions tied to Syria and Iran, as well as elements of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), a group fighting for a Palestinian homeland in Israel. In the early 1980s, the United States intervened in this war in an effort to bring peace.

Hopes of Peace in Lebanon Shattered

Just before the U.S. entry into Lebanon, the conflict took a turn for the worse. Angry over repeated PLO raids from southern Lebanon, Israel set out to secure its northern border. In June 1982, Israeli troops crossed into Lebanon and destroyed PLO bases. In heavy fighting, they pushed the PLO north to Beirut, Lebanon's capital. Syria condemned the Israeli invasion and sent its own troops to support the PLO.

Reagan feared that Syrian involvement in the conflict might lead to a wider war in the Middle East. Hoping to end the fighting, Reagan sent a diplomat to Beirut to negotiate a settlement. An agreement was reached to create a multinational force consisting of troops from the United States, France, and Italy. These troops would enforce a cease-fire in Lebanon and give the PLO time to withdraw from Beirut. After that, Israel would leave, too.

The United States saw its troops as peacekeepers, but many Muslim groups did not. The U.S. presence in Lebanon angered Islamic radicals and provoked terrorist attacks against U.S. forces. In April 1983, terrorists bombed the U.S. embassy in Beirut, killing 63 people, including 17 Americans.

The following September, Israel began withdrawing its troops from Lebanon. But this did not bring peace. A month later, on October 23, a suicide bombing took place at the marine barracks at Beirut International Airport. The suicide bomber drove a truck filled with explosives into the barracks, killing 241 Americans. At the same time a few miles away, a similar explosion left at least 58 French troops dead. Unwilling to risk more American lives, Reagan withdrew all U.S. troops from Lebanon in February 1984. French and Italian troops left as well. It was a grim setback for U.S. peacekeeping efforts in the Middle East.

Despite the U.S. withdrawal from Lebanon, terrorist attacks on Americans continued. In June 1985, Lebanese terrorists hijacked an airliner flying out of Athens, Greece. Most of the 153 passengers on board were Americans. The plane landed in Beirut, where one passenger was killed. Another 39 passengers were held captive in Lebanon for 17 days before they were released. This incident, along with other events in the Middle East, underscored a growing trend in Third World conflicts. Increasingly, insurgent groups with little political power relied on terrorism to advance their goals.

Scandal Rocks the White House: The Iran-Contra Affair

A year later, in 1986, Reagan faced the most serious crisis of his presidency, a scandal known as the Iran-Contra Affair. In November, a Lebanese magazine reported that the United States had been secretly selling arms to Iran. The public then learned that the weapons had been sold to Iran to help gain the release of U.S. hostages held by Iranian-backed terrorists in Lebanon.

This news shocked Americans. Reagan had repeatedly vowed that he would “never deal with terrorists.” Yet his administration had supplied arms to Iran, a country that had once held Americans hostage and that was known to support terrorism. By the time the weapon sales were uncovered, more than 1,500 missiles had been shipped to Iran. The weapons deal had not made Lebanon safer for Americans, though. Three U.S. hostages were freed, only to be replaced by three more. Secretary of State George Schulz called the exchange “a hostage bazaar.”

Over the next several months, the scandal widened. Investigations by Congress and a special commission appointed by Reagan discovered that millions of dollars from the Iranian arms sales had been passed along to the Contras in Nicaragua, in violation of U.S. law. Investigators learned that top administration officials had backed this operation and lied to Congress.

The “point man” for the Iran-Contra operation was Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, a staff member at the National Security Council. During special hearings in Congress, North told investigators that his superiors at the NSC had approved his actions, even though they violated the 1984 law banning aid to the Contras. He also admitted that he had helped to mislead Congress with statements that were “evasive and wrong.” North’s boss, Admiral John Poindexter, justified such deceptive practices as necessary to avoid “leaks” of information to the press. Both men were convicted of crimes related to the Iran-Contra Affair, but their convictions were overturned on appeal for technical reasons.

Meanwhile, the Tower Commission, an independent group set up to investigate the Iran-Contra Affair, later found that Reagan “did not seem to be aware” of the illegal operation. But it said that the president’s disengagement from White House affairs had made the deception possible. It also found fault with the president for his failure to “take care that the laws be faithfully executed.”

Reagan’s approval ratings dropped sharply as a result of the Iran-Contra Affair, and some people wondered if his presidency would survive. In the end, however, the scandal didn’t “stick” to the president, and his popularity rebounded.

57.4 – The Cold War Winds Down

In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev became the head of the Soviet Union. At 54, he was the youngest Soviet leader in decades. The son of peasants, Gorbachev had risen rapidly to the top ranks of the Communist Party. Energetic and confident, he took office with bold plans for reform. The changes he made would help bring the Cold War to an end.

A Changing Soviet Union

By the time Gorbachev came to power, the Soviet economy was in deep trouble. Production on farms and in factories was in decline. Centralized planning had left local managers little freedom to increase output or improve the quality of goods. Soviet workers also had little incentive to work harder and produce more.

The Soviet Union faced shortages of all kinds. Consumer goods such as shoes, clothing, and soap were in short supply. So were many foods. Families sometimes spent hours in line waiting to buy necessities. When scarce goods did appear in stores, shoppers often bought as much as they could afford. Such hoarding only made shortages worse. Eventually, rationing was imposed on many products. In addition, the country had a severe housing crisis, especially in the cities. Many families had to wait for years to get a tiny, cramped apartment.

Gorbachev knew that the Soviet economy had to change. Soon after taking office, he announced a program of economic reforms called perestroika, or restructuring. He closed many unprofitable state-run factories and allowed some private businesses to operate. He also cut the defense budget to make more money available for domestic needs.

Along with economic reforms, Gorbachev announced a policy of glasnost, or openness. He called for an honest discussion of the nation’s political and social problems. He also allowed the Soviet media greater freedom to criticize the government. Gorbachev hoped that this new climate of openness would help win public support for his reforms. At the same time, however, he made it clear that he did not intend to do away with the communist system.

Negotiating with the “Evil Empire”

When Gorbachev took office, the Cold War was intensifying. In the early 1980s, both the Soviet Union and the United States had increased the number of nuclear missiles deployed in Europe. This arms buildup, as well as the Reagan administration's hostile references to the Soviet Union as an "evil empire," revived fears of nuclear war.

In the United States and Western Europe, these fears gave rise to the nuclear freeze movement. This movement called for a moratorium, or "freeze," on the production, testing, and deployment of nuclear weapons by the superpowers. Freeze advocates held parades and rallies, lobbied Congress, and raised money for antinuclear political candidates. On June 12, 1982, close to a million people turned out for a "No Nuke" rally in New York City. Hundreds of communities supported the movement by declaring themselves nuclear-free zones.

Despite these protests, the likelihood of a thaw in U.S.-Soviet relations seemed slight during Reagan's first term in office. With Gorbachev in power, however, the prospects for ending the Cold War began to improve. Gorbachev knew that continuing the arms race would jeopardize his efforts to bring economic reform. The economy was already weakened further by a lengthy war in Afghanistan, where Soviet forces were fighting a rebellion against a Soviet-backed government. Gorbachev also feared that the development of SDI and other U.S. weapons systems would leave the Soviet Union more vulnerable to attack. As a result, he was prepared to negotiate new arms control agreements with the United States.

Surprising both his supporters and his critics, Reagan agreed to meet with Gorbachev in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1985. It was the first of four summit meetings between the two leaders. Although they made little progress on arms control in Geneva, the men discovered that they liked each other. Reagan later described Gorbachev as having "warmth in his face and his style, not the coldness bordering on hatred I'd seen in most senior Soviet officials."

In 1986, the two leaders met again in Reykjavik, Iceland. They discussed removing missiles from Europe and reducing nuclear stockpiles. The talks stalled, however, when Gorbachev insisted that Reagan cancel the SDI program, a demand that Reagan refused.

Negotiations got back on track the following year when Gorbachev agreed to discuss missile reductions without an end to SDI. At a summit in Washington in December 1987, the two leaders signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, more commonly called the INF Treaty. They agreed to remove and destroy all missiles with a range of between 300 and 3,400 miles. It was the first arms treaty that required both sides to destroy missiles. It also allowed both sides to inspect each other's missile bases to verify that the weapons had been withdrawn and destroyed.

Five months later, the fourth and final summit took place in Moscow. By that time, the two leaders had become friends. In his farewell address to the nation in 1989, Reagan told Americans that the United States had "forged a satisfying new closeness with the

Soviet Union.” It was a far cry from the anti-Soviet views Reagan had voiced just a few years before.

57.5 – The Soviet Union Falls While Communism Struggles On

In August 1991, crowds in Moscow’s Lubyanka Square cheered as a huge bronze statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky toppled to the ground. Dzerzhinsky was the founder of the Soviet Union’s hated secret police, the KGB. Protesters used giant cranes to pull the statue down as millions of startled Soviet citizens watched on television. This incident became a symbol of the Soviet Union’s collapse.

The Breakup of the Soviet Bloc

By the late 1980s, the Soviet economy was in tatters and the future of Soviet communism was in doubt. The new openness of glasnost had made more people in the Soviet bloc aware of the success of free-market economies and the failure of central planning. Many demanded greater freedom and independence.

In 1989, Gorbachev announced that the Soviet Union would no longer interfere in the internal affairs of other communist countries. “Any nation,” he said, “has the right to decide its fate by itself.” With the threat of a Soviet invasion removed, communism collapsed across Eastern Europe. Most governments fell peacefully, as leaders resigned or agreed to reforms. One exception was Romania, where an angry mob rose up to drive dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife from power. In East Germany, desperate communist officials tried to hold on to power by opening the Berlin Wall and promising other changes. But like other Eastern European nations, East Germany rejected communist rule, and it soon reunited with West Germany.

The Soviet republics broke away as well. By the fall of 1991, the Baltic republics of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania had achieved independence. Ukraine and the other republics soon followed. By the end of the year, all 15 Soviet republics had become separate nation-states. A nation-state is an independent country populated mainly by citizens who share a common culture, history, and language.

In July 1991, Eastern European leaders disbanded the Warsaw Pact. A month later, communist hardliners who were angry with Gorbachev for the breakup of the Soviet empire tried to overthrow him. The coup failed, but four months later Gorbachev resigned as the Soviet leader and declared the Soviet Union officially dissolved. The Cold War was finally over.

Communism Survives in Other Countries

While communism was disappearing in Eastern Europe, communist governments remained in power in Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea, and China. With the fall of the Soviet Union, however, most communist countries lost a key sponsor. For decades, Cuba had relied on the Soviet Union for trade and economic aid. Without Soviet help, Cuba faced serious economic problems. Nevertheless, Cuban leader Fidel Castro remained a staunch communist.

In the late 1980s, Vietnam's communist government began to carry out reforms. It allowed some private businesses to operate and sought foreign investment to boost its economy. By the 1990s, Vietnam's mixed economy—one combining elements of free enterprise and central planning—was growing rapidly, offering more opportunities to the Vietnamese people. Relations with the United States and other Western nations also improved.

Unlike Vietnam, communist North Korea remained isolated. With the fall of the Soviet bloc, North Korea lost a major source of economic support. It turned increasingly to China as an ally and remained a closed, rigidly controlled communist society.

The changes that rocked Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union also touched China. The Chinese were already pursuing economic reforms, but the fall of Soviet communism prompted many Chinese to call for greater political freedom as well. In May 1989, thousands of students joined pro-democracy protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. After several weeks of demonstrations, Chinese leaders finally decided to act. On June 3 and 4, government troops and tanks moved into the square to crush the protest. The protesters were dispersed and an unknown number were killed. By repressing the protest, the Chinese government signaled that it was not ready to accept political change.

Summary

Reagan's foreign policy emphasized anticommunism and support for democracy and freedom. His efforts to undermine Soviet power, along with changes in the Soviet Union itself, helped end the Cold War.

Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) Reagan increased military spending to counter the Soviet threat. One program, the Strategic Defense Initiative, was designed to create a "missile shield" to defend the United States from nuclear attack.

Reagan Doctrine The president backed anticommunist movements around the world as part of the Reagan Doctrine. He gave aid to rebels like the Contras, who were fighting to overthrow the Sandinista government of Nicaragua.

Middle Eastern policy Reagan sent U.S. peacekeeping forces to Lebanon. These troops helped secure the withdrawal of the Palestine Liberation Organization. But terrorist attacks later forced Reagan to pull the soldiers out.

Iran-Contra Affair The Reagan administration faced a scandal over arms sales to Iran and the diversion of funds to the Contras. Several top officials were convicted of illegal actions in the Iran-Contra Affair.

Nuclear freeze movement Rising tensions with the Soviet Union increased fears of nuclear war. The nuclear freeze movement called for an end to the spread of nuclear weapons.

Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, reducing nuclear missiles in Europe. U.S. pressure, along with economic and political problems at home, eventually caused the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

Chapter 58 — U.S. Domestic Politics at the Turn of the 21st Century

To what extent did George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush fulfill their domestic policy goals?

58.1 – Introduction

Inauguration Day is an emotional time for presidents. This is true whether they are moving into or taking leave of the Oval Office. George H. W. Bush described his inauguration in 1989 as a “moment rich with promise.” After eight years serving as Ronald Reagan’s vice president, Bush was taking office as the nation’s chief executive. “We live in a peaceful, prosperous time,” Bush stated in his inaugural address, “but we can make it better.”

Four years later, Inauguration Day became a time of leave-taking for the Republican president. Bush had lost his bid for a second term. On January 20, 1993, he turned the Oval Office over to his Democratic opponent, William Jefferson Clinton. This transition marked more than a shift in power from one political party to the other. It also signaled a generational shift. Born in 1946, Bill Clinton was the first baby boomer to become president. At his inauguration, he spoke of the need for change: “Not change for change’s sake, but change to preserve America’s ideals—life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness.”

After two terms in office, it was Clinton’s turn to depart the Oval Office. On Inauguration Day 2001, he welcomed George W. Bush, son of George H. W. Bush, to the White House. It was the first time the son of a former president had stepped into the presidency since John Adams’s son, John Quincy Adams, took office in 1825. In his inaugural speech, the new President Bush pledged to “build a single nation of justice and opportunity.” He spoke of “confronting problems instead of passing them on to future generations.”

Like presidents before them, all three of these leaders came into office with goals they expected to achieve and promises they planned to keep. In a country deeply divided in its party loyalties, none of them would accomplish all that they had hoped. In this chapter, you will examine how well these three presidents—George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush—met their domestic policy goals after entering the Oval Office.

58.2 – Parties and Politics at the Turn of the Century

At the turn of the 21st century, U.S. politics were taking a new shape. Many observers felt there had been a splintering of the nation into two camps. This was made most evident in the 2000 election. On election night that year, the major television networks all used the same two colors to shade their election maps. Red represented states in which a majority voted for Republican George W. Bush. Blue signified states that favored Democrat Al Gore. By evening’s end, most states in the Midwest and Sunbelt

were red. Most states on the West Coast and in the industrial Northeast were blue. There seemed to be two Americas—red and blue. However, a closer look at recent elections reveals a more complex picture.

Red America: “Compassionate Conservatives”

The voters who made so many states red in 2000 supported a conservative agenda. They believed in reducing the size of government, lowering taxes, maintaining a strong military, and promoting traditional social values. This agenda appealed to many evangelical Christians and people living in small towns. It also attracted blue-collar workers, veterans, and businesspeople. These groups made up the Republican Party’s political base, or core supporters.

In his 2000 campaign, George W. Bush tried to soften the antigovernment language of Reagan Republicans. He did so by promoting compassionate conservatism. This approach to governing centers on the belief that “everyone deserves a chance, . . . everyone has value.” As Bush later said, “The policies of our government must heed the universal call of all faiths to love a neighbor as we would want to be loved ourselves.”

Blue America: Party Loyalists and “New Democrats”

The voters in blue states in 2000 represented two groups of Democrats. The first group included those who had long been loyal to the party—liberals, African Americans, immigrants, and union members. These party loyalists had voted Democratic since Franklin Roosevelt forged his New Deal coalition during the Depression. They were united by their faith in government’s power to improve life for ordinary people.

The second group of “blue” voters in 2000 included what party leaders called New Democrats. They were moderates who had been attracted to the party in the 1990s by Bill Clinton. As the leading New Democrat, Clinton had reached out to these voters with an “opportunity agenda.” It embraced welfare reform, a balanced budget, expanded trade, and a tough stand on crime.

Neither Red Nor Blue: Independents and Third-Party Voters

Not all voters in 2000 belonged to one of the two major political parties. About 35 percent of those who cast ballots that year defined themselves as independents. As a result, neither Democrats nor Republicans can claim that their party represents a majority of the electorate, or the officially qualified voters. To win elections, both parties must also appeal to independent voters.

This new political arithmetic drove Bill Clinton’s decision to campaign as a New Democrat in 1992. It also helped motivate George W. Bush’s call for a more “compassionate conservatism” in 2000. Even so, in both of those elections, millions of voters rejected the major party nominees. Instead, they cast their ballots for third-party presidential candidates.

The most successful third-party candidate in recent elections was Texas billionaire Ross Perot. In 1992, Perot ran for president as an independent candidate. On election day,

Perot received 19 percent of the votes cast. This was the best showing for a third-party candidate since Theodore Roosevelt ran for president as a Progressive in 1912.

In 2000, consumer advocate Ralph Nader ran for president on the Green Party ticket. The roughly 2.9 million votes cast for Nader amounted to only 2.7 percent of the vote. But that election was so close that some Democrats accused Nader of acting as a “spoiler” whose candidacy cost Al Gore the White House.

58.3 – George H. W. Bush: Continuing Reagan’s Policies

The election of 1988 was a test of both old and new party loyalties. The Republican candidate, Vice President George H. W. Bush, promised to continue the Reagan Revolution. His campaign appealed to evangelicals and voters who had benefited most from Reaganomics. Bush’s Democratic opponent, Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis, tried to rally the fraying Democratic coalition by focusing on weaknesses in the economy. Dukakis appealed to liberals and to poor and middle-class voters who had not shared in the Reagan recovery.

When the votes were tallied on election night, Bush was the clear winner. He captured 40 states and 53 percent of the popular vote. Most alarming to Democratic Party leaders, Bush had even won key industrial states, including Michigan and Ohio, which had long been Democratic strongholds.

Legislative Wins and Losses

In his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention, Bush had made a number of campaign promises. He had pledged to expand the economy by creating “30 in 8—Thirty million jobs in the next eight years.” He had promised to hold the line on taxes. “Read my lips,” he had declared, “no new taxes!” And he had talked of creating a “kinder, gentler nation.” He made a pledge “to do whatever it takes to make sure the disabled are included in the mainstream,” explaining that “for too long they’ve been left out. But they’re not gonna be left out anymore.”

Bush succeeded in carrying out this last campaign promise. In 1990, Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This law banned discrimination in employment against people with disabilities. It also required employers to make “reasonable accommodation” to help disabled employees. This might mean building a ramp to enable a person in a wheelchair to enter a workplace. Or it could entail ordering special equipment to help workers with limited vision or hearing carry out their job responsibilities.

The president was less successful in carrying out his pledge to create 30 million new jobs. One reason for this was a financial mess, known as the savings and loan crisis, which he inherited from the Reagan administration. Savings and loan associations, or S&Ls, are financial institutions that were originally set up to provide low-cost home loans to the public. During the Depression, the FDIC had encouraged people to deposit

money in S&Ls by guaranteeing their deposits up to a fixed amount. In return for this guarantee, S&Ls were limited by regulation to making low-risk loans.

During the 1980s, the Reagan administration deregulated the S&L industry. Some S&Ls began making risky loans in the hopes of earning higher profits. More than a thousand of these S&Ls stumbled into financial troubles and went bankrupt. A slowdown in lending and home sales resulted, hurting the economy. By 1990, the nation was moving into a recession, and unemployment was on the rise.

Bush worked with Congress to clean up the S&L mess by repaying depositors who had lost their savings. But the cost of their plan, borne partly by taxpayers, was more than \$150 billion. The resulting drain on the federal treasury contributed to another economic problem—soaring budget deficits.

In 1990, Bush sat down with leaders in Congress to forge a budget compromise that would reduce the deficit. Congress agreed to cut spending, but only after Bush agreed to raise taxes. This violation of Bush's "Read my lips" pledge upset his conservative backers. Journalist Tom Wicker later wrote,

[Bush] had broken one of the most ironclad political pledges ever made—offered . . . before a national television audience—a promise without which he might conceivably not have been able to win the presidential election. With that one action . . . the president of the United States brought into question both his personal reliability and his political judgment.

—Tom Wicker, *George Herbert Walker Bush*, 2004

Economic Problems and Social Tensions Increase

Despite the budget compromise, the deficit and debt continued to rise. In late 1990, the economy entered a recession. Economic growth slowed, and unemployment shot up. Working-class Americans were hit especially hard.

At the same time, social tensions were mounting, especially in urban areas. In April 1992, rioting broke out in a poor Los Angeles neighborhood after a jury acquitted four police officers in the videotaped beating of Rodney King, a black resident. The Rodney King riots, as they were called, soon spread across the city. They caused more than 50 deaths and millions of dollars in damages. Smaller riots also broke out in other U.S. cities. For many Americans, the riots were a sign of continued social and economic tensions in the country.

58.4 – Bill Clinton: A New Democrat in the White House

As Democrats approached the 1992 presidential election, they had to confront some unpleasant realities. The New Deal coalition was broken. The Reagan Revolution had moved the nation to the right. And George H. W. Bush, running for a second term, began the campaign with high approval ratings. To overcome these obstacles, the party

needed an appealing candidate with a fresh message. It found both traits in the young, five-term governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton.

The Election of 1992 Leaves Clinton Without a Mandate

Clinton reached out to voters as a New Democrat who cared deeply about the struggles and concerns of ordinary Americans. When he accepted the Democratic nomination, he spoke of creating a new style of government, which he described as

a government that is leaner, not meaner; a government that expands opportunity, not bureaucracy; a government that understands that jobs must come from growth in a vibrant and vital system of free enterprise . . . We offer opportunity. We demand responsibility. We will build an American community again. The choice we offer is not conservative or liberal. In many ways, it is not even Republican or Democratic. It is different. It is new. And it will work.

Opportunity, responsibility, and community became the central themes of Clinton's campaign.

Two factors helped Clinton overcome Bush's early lead. The first was the recession that began in 1990. As the slump deepened, Bush's popularity sank. At Clinton headquarters, a sign reading "The Economy, Stupid," reminded staffers that promoting economic growth was the key to victory. The second factor was the third-party candidacy of Ross Perot. The Texas billionaire promised to restore prosperity by balancing the federal budget and paying off the national debt. His frank talk about the economy attracted voters who felt dissatisfied by the two main parties. The majority of Perot's supporters, however, were conservatives who otherwise might have voted for Bush.

On election day, Clinton won 32 of 50 states. But due to Perot's strong showing at the polls, Clinton received only 43 percent of the popular vote—the lowest percentage for a winning presidential candidate since 1912. As a result, Clinton would enter office lacking a strong electoral mandate.

Legislative Wins and Losses

Clinton took office with a Democratic majority in both houses of Congress. With this support, he won several legislative victories, including passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act. This law allowed workers to take time off for family emergencies without risking their jobs. Other achievements are listed in the chart on page 763.

However, Clinton failed to deliver on a campaign promise to reform the nation's health insurance system. Since the end of World War II, most working Americans have received health insurance through their employers. The creation of Medicare and Medicaid in the 1960s provided health insurance to retirees and the poor. Even so, when Clinton took office in 1993, millions of Americans had no health insurance. For those lacking such coverage, a serious illness or accident could quickly become a financial disaster.

In October 1993, Clinton sent to Congress a plan for sweeping reform of the nation's health care system. Developed by a panel headed by First Lady Hillary Clinton, the plan would provide universal health care, or health care for all Americans. But the plan proved too complex for most people to comprehend. And health care providers opposed it, fearing increased government regulation. After much debate, Congress chose not to act on the plan. When Clinton left office in 2000, about 40 million Americans still lacked health insurance.

Republicans Take Control of Congress

Between presidential elections, midterm elections take place to select members of Congress. As the 1994 midterm elections approached, Republicans aimed to gain control of Congress. Led by Georgia Representative Newt Gingrich, Republican candidates appealed to voters with a 10-point plan called the Contract with America. The contract promised that, if elected, Republicans would strive to balance the federal budget, combat crime, reform the welfare system, cut taxes, create jobs, and minimize lawsuits. The contract captured many voters' imaginations. When Congress met in 1995, Republicans had gained a majority in both the House and the Senate.

Flush with victory, House Republicans set out to balance the federal budget. They called for major cutbacks in government spending on education, welfare, and Medicare. Clinton rejected their plan, claiming the reductions were too steep. Both sides refused to alter their stances. Without a budget to authorize expenditures, the government prepared to close down in mid-November 1995. On the eve of the shutdown, Clinton met with Republican leaders. "I am not going to sign your budget," he told them. "It is wrong. It is wrong for the country."

The next day, the federal government came to a standstill. Most Americans blamed Congress for the shutdown. The government did not reopen until early 1996, after a budget that Clinton would accept was approved.

Reforming the Welfare System

Republicans in Congress next turned to welfare reform. The U.S. welfare system included a federal program known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Initiated during the Depression as part of the Social Security system, this program gave money to unemployed single mothers. By 1996, nearly 5 million women and 9 million children were receiving public assistance under AFDC.

Critics of the welfare system charged that instead of serving as a temporary safety net to help families through hard times, AFDC had created a culture of poverty that continued from one generation to the next. They pointed out that if welfare recipients married or found work, they would lose their welfare benefits. Such eligibility rules, they felt, discouraged mothers from making changes that might help them gain economic stability. The program's opponents also observed that children raised in homes with no working parent were more likely to need welfare as adults.

During his 1992 campaign, Clinton had pledged to “end welfare as we know it.” Democrats took this to mean reforming AFDC. Instead, the Republican-controlled Congress abolished AFDC and created a new system, called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). TANF limited the amount of time a family could receive welfare payments to five years. Its goal was to get mothers off welfare and into the workforce as quickly as possible.

Despite protests from Democrats that the new law would increase poverty and hunger, Clinton signed the welfare reform bill. It soon made a significant impact. Employment of single mothers increased dramatically. As it did, the child poverty rate decreased from 20.8 percent in 1995 to 17.8 percent in 2004.

A Balanced Budget and an Economic Boom

Clinton’s support for welfare reform, coupled with an improving economy, boosted his popularity as president. In 1996, he easily won reelection. The victory made Clinton the first Democratic president since Franklin Roosevelt to secure a second term.

Clinton began his second term determined to avoid another budget impasse. Over the next year, Republicans and Democrats worked together to craft a tax cut bill and the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. “This legislation represents an historic compromise,” said Clinton, “a monument to the progress that people of goodwill can make when they put aside partisan [political party] interests to work together for the common good and our common future.” In 1998, the federal budget ran its first surplus in nearly 30 years. Clinton’s efforts to slow federal spending contributed to the surplus.

Between 1998 and 2000, the U.S. government took in more money than it spent. “If we maintain our fiscal discipline,” Clinton declared, “America will entirely pay off the national debt by 2015.” Republicans argued that the government should return some of the surplus to taxpayers in the form of tax cuts.

A surge in tax revenues made an even greater impact on the surplus. By 1998, the country was enjoying a period of prosperity. Known as the “dot-com boom,” it was largely driven by new business opportunities related to the Internet. The Internet is a network that links computers all over the world. In the early 1990s, new technology allowed Internet users to access documents stored on other computers connected to the Internet. The vast amount of information made available in this way is known as the World Wide Web.

The Internet gave rise to a host of online businesses whose Web addresses ended in .com—short for commercial. As the dot-com economy flourished, un-employment dropped to less than 4 percent, the lowest it had been in 30 years. Inflation also remained low, while stock prices soared. As the amount of money people earned, spent, and invested increased, tax revenues poured into the federal treasury, helping balance the federal budget.

Surviving Scandal and Impeachment

Rumors of scandals had dogged Clinton from the beginning of his presidency. The primary charge was that he illegally profited from an investment in an Arkansas real estate development called Whitewater. Accusations also surfaced of his having had numerous affairs while he was governor of Arkansas. In May 1994, a former Arkansas state employee, Paula Jones, filed a lawsuit accusing Clinton of sexual harassment.

Attorney General Janet Reno appointed lawyer Kenneth Starr to investigate the Whitewater claims. In January 1998, Starr also obtained evidence that Clinton had engaged in an affair with a White House intern, Monica Lewinsky, which contradicted Clinton's testimony in the Paula Jones case. In September, Starr submitted to Congress a report that accused the president of committing perjury, or lying under oath. It also recommended that Clinton be impeached.

On December 19, 1998, the House voted along party lines to impeach President Clinton on two counts: (1) he had committed perjury, and (2) he had obstructed justice by lying under oath. In January 1999, the Senate tried Clinton on both counts. At the close of the trial, senators voted along party lines. As a result, the votes on both charges fell far short of the two thirds needed to remove Clinton from office. After the trial, Clinton asserted, "I want to say again to the American people how profoundly sorry I am for what I said and did to trigger these events and the great burden they have imposed on the Congress and on the American people."

The majority of Americans seemed both to agree with the Senate's decision to acquit Clinton and to accept the president's apology. Clinton not only survived the scandal but also ended his presidency with a remarkably high 65 percent approval rating. This was the best "end-of-career" showing of any president since the end of World War II.

58.5 – George W. Bush: Conservatism in Action

As Republicans approached the presidential election of 2000, it was their turn to face some unpleasant realities. Clinton had been effective at building a new Democratic coalition. Vice President Al Gore, the Democratic candidate for president, was a strong and seasoned campaigner. In contrast, the Republican Party seemed deeply divided between conservatives and moderates. The party needed a candidate who could unite Republicans while appealing to moderate Democrats. That task fell to the governor of Texas, George W. Bush.

The Supreme Court Decides the 2000 Presidential Election

When Bush began campaigning, his chances of winning seemed slim. Al Gore, having served eight years as vice president, was well known. The Clinton scandals had not affected his reputation. And his work on environmental issues had won him broad support from environmentalists. Moreover, Gore could point to a soaring economy and years of peace as Democratic achievements. In contrast, people knew little about Bush other than that he was the son of a former president.

During the campaign, the situation changed. Bush presented himself as a compassionate conservative. Unlike Reagan conservatives, who wanted to reduce the power of government, Bush talked of using government to “put conservative values and conservative ideas into the thick of the fight for justice and opportunity. This,” he explained, “is what I mean by compassionate conservatism.” Bush’s promise of a more caring Republican Party became a central theme of his campaign.

Two factors helped Bush catch up with Gore by election day. One was his personality. After watching Bush campaign, a New York Times reporter wrote, “Mr. Bush is a natural politician . . . with a down-home, one-of-the-guys charm that puts people at ease.” The second factor was the third-party candidacy of Ralph Nader. His Green Party platform of reducing the power of corporations while increasing environmental protections attracted liberal voters who otherwise might have supported Gore.

On election day, Americans were stunned to see how close the vote was. Gore led Bush in the popular vote by one half of 1 percent. The all-important Electoral College vote came out similarly close. With 270 votes needed to win, Gore had 266 and Bush 246. Florida’s 25 electoral votes would decide the election. But the Florida vote proved too close to call. An initial count had Bush ahead by 1,784 votes out of nearly 6 million. The next day, a recount by machine reduced his lead to just 327 votes.

In some counties, officials raised questions about confusing ballots or ballots that may not have been properly counted by voting machines. Gore demanded that those counties recount their votes by hand. To stop the recount, Bush filed a lawsuit known as *Bush v. Gore*. When the Florida Supreme Court ruled against Bush, he appealed its decision to the Supreme Court. On December 12, 2000, the Court voted 5–4 to stop the recount. The majority reasoned that without clear legal standards for evaluating the ballots in question, a hand recount violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. This decision gave Florida’s 25 electoral votes to Bush. On January 20, 2001, George W. Bush took the oath of office as the 43rd U.S. president.

The Supreme Court decision cast a cloud of doubt over Bush’s legitimacy, or right to exercise power, as president. These doubts were largely dispelled when he ran for reelection in 2004. That year he became the first candidate since his father in 1988 to win more than 50 percent of the popular vote.

Legislative Wins and Losses

For six of his eight years in office, Bush was backed by a Republican majority in Congress. With this support, he was able to enact much, but not all, of his domestic agenda. He did succeed in winning passage of an education reform bill known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Bush outlined the need for such reform in his speech accepting the Republican nomination in 2000:

Too many American children are segregated into schools without standards, shuffled from grade to grade because of their age, regardless of their knowledge. This is discrimination, pure and simple—the soft bigotry of low expectations . . .

When a school district receives federal funds to teach poor children, we expect them to learn.

NCLB ushered in a new era of accountability for public schools. Accountability is based on the principle that individuals or organizations are responsible for their actions and should be able to show how well they are doing at achieving their goals. NCLB requires schools receiving federal funds to test their students' progress in reading and math and to share the results. Schools unable to meet a standard called Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) must offer their students extra tutoring help or the opportunity to attend school elsewhere. "The time for excuses has passed," Bush explained to critics of NCLB. "Our reforms insist on high standards because we know every child can learn."

Bush's efforts to reform the Social Security system were less successful. Many political leaders agreed that the system was heading for trouble. With baby boomers moving into retirement, there would soon be too few workers to support the growing number of retirees at the current levels of benefits. Many also agreed that something should be done to keep the pension system financially sound. The question was what.

Bush proposed reforming the system by allowing workers to invest part of their Social Security tax payments in retirement accounts. He argued that personal accounts would provide workers with better pensions than the current system. It would also leave them with funds to pass on to their children. Critics complained that Bush's plan could leave some workers worse off. Also, it would be an expensive approach.

"Social Security has been called the third rail of American politics," Bush once observed, "the one you're not supposed to touch because it might shock you." Bush's efforts seemed to prove this true. His plan never generated widespread support. By the end of 2005, Bush had dropped Social Security reform from his domestic agenda.

Reviving the Economy with Tax Cuts

Bush had made cutting taxes a key element of his 2000 campaign. His pledge took on new urgency when the dot-com bubble began to burst just as he was taking office in 2001. To spur an economic recovery, Bush pushed through Congress a plan that cut income tax rates for most Americans. But the economy received a second shock in 2001. Terrorists attacked the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon on September 11, or 9/11. Uncertain of what would happen next, Americans stopped traveling and spending. By the end of 2003, the U.S. economy had suffered a loss of more than 2 million jobs.

Bush responded by pushing Congress to reduce tax rates on earnings from savings and investments. He argued that lower tax rates would encourage people to work harder, save more, and invest in new enterprises. His opponents charged that his tax cuts would mainly enrich the wealthy. They predicted that cutting tax rates would also lead to falling tax revenues and a string of budget deficits.

The federal budget did fall from a surplus of more than \$100 billion in 2001 to a deficit of nearly \$200 billion in 2002. But the shift from surplus to deficit was not entirely due to the recession and tax cuts. The events of 9/11—which you will read more about in Chapters 59 and 60—also played a part. In response to the attacks, Bush created the Department of Homeland Security. He also launched a war on terrorism in both Afghanistan and Iraq. As spending to fight terrorism soared, so did budget deficits, reaching nearly \$400 billion by 2004.

Fortunately, as Bush had predicted, the tax cuts helped stimulate an economic recovery. As the economy rebounded, tax revenues rose rapidly. To the surprise of Bush's critics, tax revenues in 2005 were higher than in any year since the peak of the dot-com boom in 2000. In addition, the share of income taxes paid by the wealthiest taxpayers was on the rise.

Surviving Falling Approval Ratings

After 9/11, the nation rallied behind President Bush. His approval rating soared to 90 percent. But from that high point, his popularity began to plummet. Dissatisfaction with the progress of the war on terrorism was growing. Many disapproved of how the new Department of Homeland Security reacted to its first large natural disaster. In August 2005, Hurricane Katrina destroyed much of New Orleans and other Gulf Coast towns. The federal response to the disaster seemed slow and disorganized. By July 2006, Bush's approval rating had sunk below 40 percent in many polls.

During the 2006 midterm election campaign, many voters used their ballots to express dissatisfaction with Bush's presidency. For the first time since 1994, Democrats won control of the House and the Senate. "It was a thumping," Bush admitted afterward. "But nevertheless, the people expect us to work together." Looking ahead, he said, "I believe that the leaders of both political parties must try to work through our differences." Just how well his administration and the Democrat-controlled Congress would work together remained to be seen.

Summary

Democratic president Bill Clinton and Republican Presidents George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush struggled to meet their domestic policy goals.

George H. W. Bush In 1988, Bush appealed to Reagan Republicans with his campaign pledges to expand the economy, not raise taxes, and create a "kinder, gentler" America. After a costly bailout of the savings and loans crisis, he broke the no-taxes pledge in an effort to balance the federal budget.

Bill Clinton As a moderate New Democrat, Clinton breathed new life into the Democratic coalition. One of his main legacies is welfare reform. Clinton failed to enact universal health care, however. In his second term, Clinton was impeached but not removed from office.

Contract with America In the 1994 midterm elections, Republicans won control of Congress with their 10-point Contract with America.

Bush v. Gore In the 2000 election, Al Gore led George W. Bush in the popular vote by a very thin margin. The Supreme Court decided the outcome, denying Gore's demand for a recount in Florida.

George W. Bush As a candidate, Bush reached out to moderates with his compassionate conservatism. One of his main legacies is education reform. However, Bush failed to reform the Social Security system.

59.1 – Introduction

In 1998, 16 nations—including the United States and Russia—began a joint project to build and operate the International Space Station (ISS). The ISS is a space research facility that orbits Earth at an altitude of about 220 miles. Since 2000, a rotating crew of both Russian and American astronauts has occupied the space station on a permanent basis.

The creation of the ISS was a striking example of international cooperation in the post–Cold War era. Prior to the 1990s, when the United States and the Soviet Union were still bitter enemies, such a venture would have been far less likely. But in 1991, the situation changed. The Soviet Union collapsed, and a new era in international relations began. With the Cold War over, many people heralded the beginning of a new world order based on peace and cooperation. In early 1991, President George H. W. Bush declared,

Now, we can see a new world coming into view. A world in which there is the very real prospect of a new world order. In the words of Winston Churchill, a world order in which “the principles of justice and fair play protect the weak against the strong.” A world where the United Nations, freed from Cold War stalemate, is poised to fulfill the historic vision of its founders. A world in which freedom and respect for human rights find a home among all nations.

—Speech to Congress, March 6, 1991

However, the prospects for a new world order were by no means certain. Freed from the constraints of Cold War politics, the three presidents of the post–Cold War period—George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush—still faced many challenges. Their policy decisions and actions, which reflected elements of both realism and idealism in foreign affairs, fueled an ongoing debate over the course of U.S. foreign policy.

59.2 – Forging New Relations After the Cold War

Although people around the world welcomed the end of the Cold War, the sense of celebration was short lived. Although the close of the Cold War brought new freedom, it also raised many difficult questions about the future. This was especially true in Europe and the former Soviet Union, where political changes called for the building of new relationships among countries.

Negotiating with the Former Soviet Union

Despite the tensions and dangers of the Cold War, a certain, predictable order had marked the post–World War II era. The United States and the Soviet Union had dominated affairs, setting most of the rules in a bilateral, or two-sided, world. When the Cold War ended, so did that predictability. Instead of confronting one major adversary—

the Soviet Union—the United States now faced a host of potential challenges in a more multilateral, or many-sided, world.

An immediate set of problems concerned nuclear weapons in the former Soviet empire. In mid-1991, before the Soviet collapse, the United States and the USSR had signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START. This agreement called for both countries to reduce their nuclear stockpiles. Two years later, President Bush and Russia's new president, Boris Yeltsin, signed START II, which called for further reductions.

In the meantime, the various Soviet republics had declared independence. Some of these countries also possessed Soviet nuclear weapons. The United States formally recognized the independence of the new republics. It then tried to persuade them to place their nuclear weapons under Russian control. This action would help protect the weapons, which the United States feared potential terrorists might otherwise buy or steal. Eventually, all the republics agreed. However, the security of the Russian arsenal remained in doubt.

Economic problems also challenged peace and democracy in the former Soviet Union. Several republics had formed democratic governments. However, economic difficulties threatened to undermine their political stability. President Bush urged Congress to provide foreign aid and assistance to these republics. He argued that it was in the best interest of the United States to help them:

A victory for democracy and freedom in the former USSR creates the possibility of a new world of peace for our children and grandchildren. But if this democratic revolution is defeated, it could plunge us into a world more dangerous, in some respects, than the dark years of the Cold War.

Many legislators balked at Bush's request. Some wanted to spend more on domestic needs. Others opposed foreign aid to the former Soviet Union on principle. In the end, however, Congress approved the aid package. Over the next decade, the United States provided billions of dollars to help stimulate economic growth and support democracy in Russia and the other new republics.

In 1999, Vladimir Putin succeeded Yeltsin as president of Russia. Putin's strong leadership brought stability, but the nation continued to suffer from economic woes and political corruption. Putin also restricted rights and freedoms in Russia and tried to exert control over the former Soviet republics. Still, the United States and Russia maintained a cooperative relationship.

Building New Ties in Europe

During the Cold War, the Iron Curtain divided Europe in many ways. After the Cold War ended, however, new political, military, and economic alliances developed in Europe.

One set of changes revolved around the collapse of the Soviet military alliance—the Warsaw Pact—and the coinciding expansion of NATO. Several former Warsaw Pact nations hoped to join NATO as a way to develop closer ties to Western Europe and the United States. After careful consideration, NATO agreed to enlarge its membership.

First, however, NATO leaders had to address opposition from Russia, which feared that an expansion of NATO might isolate it and threaten its interests. Eventually, the two sides reached a compromise. NATO would admit former Soviet bloc countries first as “junior partners” rather than as full members. It would also give Russia a voice in NATO policy.

Europe changed in political and economic terms as well. In 1992, 12 countries in Western Europe agreed to form the European Union (EU). The EU was an expanded version of the Common Market, established 40 years earlier. The EU was designed to advance Europe’s economic integration and unify European laws and foreign policies. In 1999, as part of this goal, most of the EU countries adopted a shared currency, the euro. In 2004, 10 new member states joined the EU, including nations from the former Soviet bloc.

59.3 – Confronting Dictators

As the Cold War wound down, the United States carried out several military actions against foreign dictators. In the past, fear of either provoking a superpower conflict or losing an anticommunist ally might have inhibited such actions. But with the Cold War ending, the United States had more freedom to act. It also had a greater opportunity to forge international coalitions to deal with foreign crises.

Removing a Dictator in Panama

The United States acted alone in its first military intervention. This action took place in Panama, which General Manuel Noriega had ruled since 1983. Although Noriega was a ruthless dictator, he had close ties to the United States. He had helped the Reagan administration by aiding the Contras in their battle against the Nicaraguan government.

U.S. relations with Noriega soured under the first President Bush. In 1988, before Bush took office, the United States had indicted Noriega on drug trafficking charges. The following year, Panamanians began protesting against Noriega after he voided national elections. At that point, Bush withdrew U.S. support from Noriega, emphasizing Noriega’s violations of human rights and democratic rule.

Another key factor—the Panama Canal—influenced the change of U.S. policy toward Panama. As the site of the canal, Panama held great economic and strategic importance. Although the Panama Canal Treaty of 1977 had given control of the canal to Panama, the United States feared that Noriega might violate the terms of the treaty. For trade purposes, it was vital for the United States and other nations to have access to the canal.

Bush decided to intervene. On December 20, 1989, he sent into Panama an invasion force of more than 20,000 U.S. troops. Their goal was to remove Noriega from power and bring him to justice in the United States. Some critics objected to the invasion, accusing the United States of trying to impose its will on the hemisphere. Despite such claims, U.S. forces quickly overran Noriega's defenses and occupied Panama City. Two weeks later, they captured Noriega and took him to Miami. In 1992, a U.S. federal court convicted him of drug trafficking and sent him to prison. Meanwhile, Panamanians elected a new government that established better ties with the United States.

Halting Iraqi Aggression

Bush faced his next foreign crisis in the Middle East. In August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait, its much smaller, oil-rich neighbor to the south. Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein tried to justify this invasion by claiming that Kuwait was rightfully part of Iraq. Shortly after the invasion, Saddam announced plans to annex Kuwait.

Saddam's aggressive action alarmed the United States for a number of reasons. First, Iraq controlled a large military in a region prone to instability and conflict. Second, the United States and other developed nations relied on oil from the Persian Gulf. Saddam's actions threatened the oil supply and could wreak havoc on Western economies. Third, if Saddam's invasion of Kuwait succeeded, he might decide to invade other countries in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia, a U.S. ally and major oil producer, was especially vulnerable.

President Bush condemned the invasion and called for an international coalition to force Saddam out of Kuwait. Thirty-four countries, including most of the Arab nations, joined the UN-sponsored coalition. The Soviet Union, which had not yet dissolved, also agreed to collaborate with the coalition, despite the USSR's previously friendly relations with Iraq.

As a first step, the coalition sent nearly 700,000 troops to Saudi Arabia's border with Kuwait. This force, which included more than 400,000 U.S. soldiers, stood ready to defend the Saudi kingdom from invasion. The United Nations also imposed economic sanctions on Iraq in hopes of forcing Saddam's withdrawal without going to war.

The United Nations then issued an ultimatum. It gave Iraq until January 15, 1991, to pull its troops out of Kuwait. If Iraq did not comply, the United Nations would authorize coalition forces to drive the Iraqis out. The U.S. Congress, however, was divided over whether to support a war. Some legislators believed that Saddam must be removed by force. Others wanted to allow more time for economic sanctions to take effect. Some critics also questioned the reasons for taking military action. They argued that it was the desire to control oil supplies—not to punish aggression—that motivated calls for war in the Middle East. Nevertheless, on January 12, Congress approved the use of "all necessary means" to free Kuwait from Iraqi occupation.

Four days later, the Persian Gulf War began. The first phase consisted of air strikes against Iraq. For six weeks, coalition aircraft bombed Iraqi troops that were dug in along

the Iraq-Kuwait border. They also struck key military and industrial centers in the Iraqi heartland. Still, Saddam remained defiant, promising to wage “the mother of all battles” against his attackers. On February 24, the ground war began. But as coalition forces moved into Iraq, they encountered little resistance. Just four days later, Iraq agreed to a cease-fire.

The war had lasted less than two months, but it had devastating effects on the Persian Gulf region. As Saddam’s troops fled Kuwait, they set fire to the country’s oil fields. These fires burned out of control, causing an environmental disaster in much of the area. The war also had a severe impact on Iraq. It destroyed key infrastructure and left as many as 100,000 people dead. In contrast, fewer than 300 coalition soldiers had died in battle.

For the coalition, the Persian Gulf War was a success. Although Saddam Hussein remained in power, the coalition had shown that international cooperation could be marshaled against a common enemy for the common purpose of opposing aggression. The war also convinced many Americans that the United States had moved beyond the “Vietnam syndrome.” That is, U.S. leaders had overcome their reluctance to get involved in a foreign war for fear of ending up in “another Vietnam.”

59.4 – Responding to Ethnic Conflict and Genocide

In the post–Cold War era, the rise of ethnic conflict posed a challenge to U.S. presidents. In parts of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, ethnic and national tensions that communist rulers had suppressed for decades were suddenly unleashed. Some of the worst violence occurred in the former Yugoslavia. At the same time, brutal tensions flared in Africa.

Ending Ethnic Cleansing in Yugoslavia

During the Cold War, Yugoslavia consisted of six republics held together under communist rule. Diverse ethnic and religious groups peopled these republics. Most Serbs were Orthodox Christians. Most Slovenes and Croats were Catholics. And most Bosnians and ethnic Albanians were Muslims. Tensions simmered among these groups, but the communist system kept the situation from boiling over.

When communism collapsed in Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia also fell apart. Four of its republics declared independence, and civil war broke out in Bosnia. The fighting pitted Bosnian Serbs against the majority Muslim population. The conflict was stoked by neighboring Serbia, whose president, Slobodan Milosevic, hoped to hold Yugoslavia together under Serbian leadership.

Bosnian Serbs carried out a policy that they called ethnic cleansing—the forced removal and murder of ethnic groups. They rounded up Muslims, Croats, and ethnic Albanians and forced them from their homes. The Serbs burned villages, tortured and raped their victims, and committed other atrocities. They killed at least 200,000 people and caused

some 2 million Bosnians to flee. Serbian troops also surrounded and bombed the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo.

During the 1992 U.S. presidential campaign, candidate Bill Clinton called for military intervention in Bosnia. He declared that such violence was unacceptable in the post-Cold War world. Once elected, however, Clinton—like Bush before him—hesitated to commit U.S. forces. He feared getting bogged down in a foreign war. He also felt reluctant to act, because the strife was contained in the Balkan region. It did not immediately threaten the United States or the rest of Europe.

In 1995, however, the conflict expanded. Croats and Muslims began fighting back against the Serbs. NATO decided to support these attacks by bombing Serbian forces and installations. Many Americans opposed this intervention. Some argued that the Bosnian conflict was not an American concern, while others feared that NATO intervention would result in more death and destruction. But under the conditions of a widening conflict, the United States was finally able to bring the three warring factions to the peace table.

The peace negotiations, held in Dayton, Ohio, eventually led to the Dayton Accords. This peace plan called for a cease-fire to begin in 1996. Once that occurred, U.S. troops joined NATO forces in the region. They separated the warring factions, protected civilians, and provided economic aid. The peacekeeping forces remained in place until 2000.

Meanwhile, a similar crisis was developing in Kosovo, a Serbian province bordering Albania. Ethnic Albanians, who made up the majority of the population in Kosovo, sought independence. But the Serbian government opposed this move. Although Serbs constituted only about 10 percent of Kosovo's population, they began another cycle of ethnic cleansing. They rounded up the province's Muslims and executed them, destroying towns and cities in the process. As Albanian rebels fought back, the war broadened.

Eventually, Clinton called for NATO intervention. In March 1999, NATO fighter-bombers attacked the Serbian military in Kosovo. The bombing lasted until June, when Serbian forces began to retreat.

Defeated, Milosevic resigned in 2000. The next year, the new government arrested him, charging him with war crimes and crimes against humanity. Milosevic stood trial at the International Tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands, but he died in 2006 before a verdict was reached.

Ignoring Genocide in Rwanda

In the 1990s, ethnic violence also took place on a mass scale in Africa. For decades, conflict had brewed in the East African nation of Rwanda. Two rival ethnic groups, the Hutus and the Tutsis, vied for power. In 1994, their struggle erupted in a deadly civil war.

The conflict began when the Hutu-led government lashed out at the Tutsi minority. In about three months, Hutu forces slaughtered more than 800,000 Rwandans, most of them Tutsis. This brutal massacre shocked the world and prompted charges of genocide. But most countries, including the United States, refused to become involved. France eventually intervened—but too late. When the French troops arrived in Rwanda, they found thousands of bodies littering the countryside. Many had been hacked to death with machetes. Not long afterward, Tutsi rebels took power. Two million Hutus fled Rwanda for neighboring countries.

The United States failed to take action in Rwanda for a number of reasons. As you will read in the next section, a previous intervention in another African nation, Somalia, had gone badly. Clinton and other U.S. leaders were reluctant to take a similar risk in Rwanda. Some leaders also viewed the conflict as an internal matter for Rwandans to resolve. They felt that the United States could not afford to get involved in every civil war around the world. But many observers suggested another reason for the inaction of the United States and other powerful nations. They claimed that world leaders did not take the fate of Rwanda seriously or did not regard any small African nation as crucial to their interests.

59.5 – Trying to Ease Human Suffering

Although the United States did not halt the genocide in Rwanda, it did provide humanitarian aid to Rwanda and other countries during the post–Cold War era. Humanitarian aid includes money, food, and other forms of assistance given to people who are suffering and in need. During the Cold War, humanitarian aid had often been tied to politics. Both the United States and the Soviet Union had used aid to support their allies in the superpower struggle. Once the Cold War ended, however, the United States had greater freedom to offer help where it was most needed. At the same time, however, Americans found that providing humanitarian aid came with complications.

Sending Relief Aid to Somalia

One of the countries the United States tried to help was Somalia, a desperately poor nation in East Africa. Somalia had been a U.S. ally during the final years of the Cold War, even though it was ruled by a harsh dictator. Once the Cold War ended, the Somali people overthrew their leader. The country soon descended into civil war. Various factions battled for power, giving rise to chaos and crippling the nation's economy. As a result of this chaos and the effects of a severe drought, the people of Somalia faced widespread starvation. By late 1992, some 300,000 Somalis had died of hunger, and some 2 million more were in danger of starvation.

In response, the United Nations organized a humanitarian relief mission mostly made up of U.S. soldiers. It charged these troops with restoring order and distributing food. But the United Nations soon realized that humanitarian aid would not be enough to solve Somalia's problems. The United Nations then shifted its focus to nation building, or constructing political institutions and a stable government. But Somalia's rival factions refused to cooperate, and the conflict grew even deadlier.

As the fighting spread, combatants attacked and killed U.S. soldiers. After Somalis dragged a U.S. soldier's body through the streets of Mogadishu, Somalia's capital, the American public demanded the withdrawal of troops. Clinton pulled the soldiers out, and the UN mission ended shortly thereafter.

Although the humanitarian effort in Somalia had been well intentioned, it had failed to address the nation's underlying problems. The experience in Somalia taught the United States a strong lesson in the difficulties of supplying aid to countries in conflict.

Countering Famine in North Korea

North Korea also experienced a food crisis in the 1990s. During the Cold War, North Korea had relied on the Soviet Union for trade and aid, including food shipments and farm equipment. After the Soviet Union collapsed, North Korea was no longer capable of feeding its population. Within a few years, famine gripped the country.

Natural disasters made the situation worse. In 1995 and 1996, severe floods hit North Korea, damaging the nation's crops. Droughts followed, with devastating results. Between 1995 and 1998, as many as 3 million people died of starvation in North Korea. In contemplating a response to the North Korean crisis, the United States faced a dilemma. North Korea was one of the last hardline, or rigidly, communist regimes in the world. It was hostile to the United States and posed a military threat to South Korea, a staunch U.S. ally. North Korea was also pursuing a nuclear weapons program that violated global nonproliferation agreements. To complicate matters further, North Korea's government was reluctant to admit aid workers. It wanted to keep the country closed to the outside world.

But the deepening famine left North Korea with little choice. In 1995, it began to accept aid from the World Food Program (WFP), a branch of the United Nations. Over the next few years, the WFP oversaw the delivery of millions of tons of food to North Korea, including large shipments from the United States.

U.S. contributions to this effort aroused controversy at home. Critics said that helping a communist state like North Korea violated U.S. interests. They believed that food aid helped prop up the North Korean regime. They further charged that much of the food went to the North Korean army, never reaching the starving peasants it was meant to help. Supporters of the policy contended that aid would help undermine the communist regime by showing North Koreans that the United States was not their enemy. They also argued that aid was a humanitarian gesture that represented the best of American ideals.

Dealing with AIDS in Africa

In the 1990s, another humanitarian crisis emerged in Africa: the HIV/AIDS epidemic. By the end of the decade, 24 million Africans were infected with HIV/AIDS, and several million were dying every year. The United States responded slowly to the crisis.

Although President Clinton offered sympathy, his administration did little to combat the AIDS epidemic.

In 2003, President George W. Bush signed a bill allocating \$15 billion to combat AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean. At the signing ceremony, Bush declared that the United States had a moral duty to take action and urged other rich nations to do the same. “I will remind them that time is not on our side,” he stated. “Every day of delay means 8,000 more AIDS deaths in Africa and 14,000 more infections.”

Bush’s AIDS-fighting package was the most ambitious plan attempted by any country up to that time. But critics asserted that U.S. assistance was too little and too late to stem the crisis.

59.6 – Managing Global Trade

The United States confronted new economic challenges in the post–Cold War era. At the height of the Cold War, the world had been divided into two main trading blocs—communist and capitalist. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world moved quickly toward a more diverse, global economy. As a result, the United States had to find new ways to compete in the global marketplace.

Promoting Free Trade in North America

At the end of the Cold War, the United States had the most powerful economy in the world. However, it ran a high trade deficit with economic powers such as China, Japan, and the European Union. A trade deficit occurs when the value of a country’s imports exceeds the value of its exports. One way U.S. leaders hoped to correct the trade imbalance was through free trade.

In the early 1990s, President George H. W. Bush began to work for passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). NAFTA would create a free-trade zone among the United States, Mexico, and Canada. A free-trade zone is a defined geographic area in which governments lower or eliminate tariffs and other barriers to international trade. Supporters of NAFTA claimed that it would benefit the United States by increasing the market for American exports. They also asserted that it would create new, high-wage jobs for American workers. In addition, they claimed that NAFTA would boost Mexico’s economy and help limit illegal immigration from Mexico.

But NAFTA provoked opposition in the United States. Labor leaders argued that NAFTA would encourage American factories to move to Mexico, where labor costs were lower. This, they said, would cost jobs and harm workers in the United States. Critics also worried that NAFTA would promote environmental damage, since pollution controls in Mexico were less stringent than in the United States. Ultimately, NAFTA’s supporters, including President Clinton, prevailed. Congress passed the bill, and Clinton signed it into law in 1993.

NAFTA has had mixed results. Although trade among the United States, Canada, and Mexico has increased, the U.S. trade deficit has continued to grow. Although many U.S. factories have moved overseas, taking jobs with them, U.S. employment has grown. Overall, Americans differ about whether NAFTA has fundamentally helped or hurt the American economy.

The Challenges and Opportunities of Globalization

The Clinton administration soon worked to approve another free-trade agreement. In 1994, Congress ratified a new version of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The first GATT, signed after World War II, had required member nations to reduce barriers to trade. The updated GATT called for further reductions. It also established the World Trade Organization (WTO). The main function of the WTO is to set trade policies and mediate disputes among members. The organization includes the member nations of GATT.

The creation of NAFTA, GATT, and the WTO was one indication of increasing globalization during the post-Cold War era. Globalization refers to the integration of markets and societies around the world. It includes the movement of goods, money, people, and information across national borders.

Several factors have contributed to globalization. Trade policies like GATT and NAFTA have certainly spurred the growth of the global marketplace. But advances in transportation and communications technology have been just as important. The Internet, for example, has helped to “shrink” the globe, making it possible for people in distant parts of the world to communicate and work together almost instantaneously.

Globalization has had many benefits. It has given more people access to goods and services from around the world. It has helped promote economic development and create new opportunities in poor countries. It has also stimulated cultural diffusion, or the sharing of ideas and customs among nations.

But globalization has also raised concerns. Environmentalists fear that the rapid growth of the world economy is contributing to environmental problems such as global warming. Labor leaders worry about the transfer of jobs to low-wage countries. And human-rights advocates warn against the rise of sweatshop labor. Many people are also concerned that globalization may result in a loss of cultural diversity. They fear that modern, Western values will take the place of more traditional customs. In addition, some critics argue that globalization helps concentrate wealth in the hands of large corporations and wealthy individuals. They argue that globalization amounts to a new type of colonialism.

Such objections have led to major protests at WTO meetings around the world. Demonstrators hope to influence WTO policies and curb what they see as the problems of globalization. Nevertheless, globalization is a reality that will continue to pose challenges and create opportunities for the modern world.

59.7 – Fighting Terrorism

Among all the challenges facing the United States in the post–Cold War era, one of the most critical is fighting terrorism. For decades, terrorists had used violence to achieve their political goals. The end of the Cold War opened up new opportunities for such tactics. Groups emerged to carry out terrorist acts in previously unaffected parts of the world, including the United States.

Terror Strikes the United States

A wave of terrorist attacks took place during Clinton’s presidency. In 1993, Muslim terrorists set off a bomb beneath the World Trade Center in New York City. In 1998, the U.S. embassies in the East African nations of Kenya and Tanzania were bombed. Then in 2000, terrorists attacked the USS Cole, a Navy destroyer anchored off the coast of the Arab nation of Yemen. In response, the United States launched missile strikes against terrorist camps overseas. It also arrested and prosecuted suspects.

Such actions did not deter terrorists. The next attack occurred in the first year of George W. Bush’s presidency. It was by far the worst. On September 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked four airplanes. They smashed three of the planes into buildings in New York City and Washington, D.C. Two slammed into the Twin Towers of New York’s World Trade Center, causing both towers to collapse. The third hit the Pentagon, the Defense Department’s headquarters just outside of Washington, D.C. The fourth airplane crashed in a Pennsylvania field after passengers fought with the hijackers. This last plane had been heading for either the White House or the Capitol building. Altogether, about 3,000 people died in the terrorist acts of 9/11.

In the days that followed, Americans learned that an international terrorist network called al Qaeda had carried out the 9/11 attacks. The organization’s leader was Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi Arabian and Muslim extremist who sought to rid Muslim countries of Western influence and to establish fundamentalist Islamic rule. Bin Laden ran al Qaeda from Afghanistan, but local al Qaeda groups operated all over the world. Al Qaeda had also carried out the U.S. embassy attacks in Africa and the assault on the USS Cole.

In 1998, bin Laden declared that all Muslims had a duty “to kill the Americans and their allies—civilian or military.” He was not representing the feelings of the vast majority of Muslims, who reject terrorism as being counter to Islamic values. But he did speak to a general feeling among some Muslims that the United States did not respect Islam or support Muslim interests. These Muslims resented having thousands of U.S. soldiers stationed in Saudi Arabia—the holy land of Islam—years after the Persian Gulf War’s end. They also resented U.S. support for Israel in its struggle with the Palestinians. Bin Laden used these bitter feelings to promote his cause and to recruit terrorists.

President Bush reacted to al Qaeda’s attacks on September 11, 2001, by declaring a war on terrorism. In a speech to Congress, he declared, “Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global

reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.” This war would be waged not only against the terrorists themselves, Bush explained, but also against any governments that sponsored them.

Ending Taliban Rule in Afghanistan

The war on terrorism began in Afghanistan, al Qaeda’s main base of operations. A radical Muslim group called the Taliban ruled the nation. The ultraconservative Taliban were known for their harsh punishments and their rules barring women from working, receiving an education, or enjoying other basic rights. The Taliban also approved of al Qaeda’s terrorist training camps.

After 9/11, President Bush asked the Taliban to turn bin Laden over to the United States. The Afghan leaders refused. The United States formed an international coalition to overthrow the Taliban and capture bin Laden. In early October 2001, U.S. and British forces began bombing al Qaeda camps and Taliban military sites. Anti-Taliban Afghan militias also joined the fighting. Soon Afghanistan’s capital, Kabul, and other major cities fell. In November, U.S. Marines landed in the country to subdue the remaining Taliban forces. The U.S forces then began to hunt for bin Laden, who had gone into hiding.

Toppling the Iraqi Regime

After the victory in Afghanistan, President Bush turned his attention to another Middle Eastern country—Iraq. In his State of the Union address in January 2002, Bush referred to Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as an “axis of evil.” These nations, he said, all had weapons of mass destruction (WMD). WMD include chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. Bush feared that Iraq, in particular, might provide such weapons to terrorists.

Since taking power in 1979, Iraq’s dictator, Saddam Hussein, had compiled a horrific human-rights record. He brutally tortured and killed his opponents. In the late 1980s, he had used chemical weapons against the Kurds, an ethnic group in northern Iraq. At least 50,000 Kurds had died. After the Persian Gulf War, Saddam—a Sunni Muslim—crushed a rebellion by Shi’a Muslims in southern Iraq. The Sunni and Shi’a branches of Islam have a long-standing rivalry in the Muslim world. In putting down the rebellion, Saddam murdered many thousands of Shi’ites and other Iraqis. He also blocked UN inspectors in their search for WMD, which were banned in Iraq after the Gulf War.

Some Americans called for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein’s regime. Foremost among them were neoconservatives. These “new conservatives” favor using U.S. military power to confront hostile dictatorships and to promote democracy around the world. President Bush shared these views. After 9/11, he accused Saddam of aiding terrorists and hiding WMD. Bush thus urged extending the war on terrorism to Iraq. Persuaded by Bush’s arguments, Congress authorized the president to send troops to Iraq if necessary.

In March 2003, an international coalition led by the United States launched an invasion of Iraq. Several European allies, including France and Germany, opposed the invasion.

But in a speech at the time, President Bush contended that the action was justified and had widespread support:

Our coalition is broad, more than 40 countries from across the globe. Our cause is just, the security of the nations we serve and the peace of the world. And our mission is clear, to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, to end Saddam Hussein's support for terrorism, and to free the Iraqi people.

—President George W. Bush, address to the nation, March 22, 2003

Within a month, coalition forces had seized Iraq's capital, Baghdad, and toppled the government. Saddam escaped, only to be captured eight months later, tried in court, and sentenced to death. Meanwhile, U.S. inspection teams began the search for banned weapons. However, they would later find that Iraq had no WMD.

After its quick victory, the United States struggled to bring peace and democracy to Iraq. Although most of the population welcomed the end of Saddam's regime, some Iraqis resented having foreign troops in their country. An armed resistance, including insurgent forces from both inside and outside Iraq, soon rose up to battle the coalition forces.

Building Democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq

In Afghanistan, with the Taliban ousted from power, the United States and the United Nations worked with Afghan opposition groups to establish a democratically elected government. By 2005, the nation had a new president and a constitution. The constitution included rights and freedoms found in many Western democracies. It made Afghanistan an Islamic republic, but it also guaranteed freedom of religion. In addition, it ensured that women would have the same rights as men—a system far different from the oppressive rules enforced by the Taliban.

The United States also helped bring democracy to Iraq. In October 2005, Iraqis voted by a large majority to approve a new constitution. As in Afghanistan, Islam would play a role in the nation's laws, but Iraqis would enjoy most of the rights and freedoms of other democracies. Two months later, in a spectacular display of civic participation, more than 50 percent of Iraq's registered voters cast ballots to elect a national assembly.

But despite progress toward democracy, both Iraq and Afghanistan continued to suffer from political violence. In Afghanistan, the Taliban resurfaced as an armed force, launching attacks on the Afghan army and coalition forces. In Iraq, the insurgency forged on. Attempting to destabilize the new government, insurgents used guerrilla warfare and terror tactics, such as the assassination of Iraqi leaders. Meanwhile, armed conflicts between rival Sunni and Shi'a militias increased, especially in Baghdad. Many analysts began calling the Iraq conflict a civil war.

U.S. forces remained a prime target of the violence. By early 2007, more than 3,000 U.S. soldiers had died in the Iraq War. At home, many Americans opposed the U.S. policy in Iraq. Although President Bush asserted that the U.S. presence in Iraq was

necessary to fight terrorism and spread democracy, critics disputed the president's claims. They argued that the Iraq War was actually inciting terrorism by fueling Muslim anger toward the United States and serving as a breeding ground for terrorists. Some critics also questioned the value of nation building in Iraq. They wondered whether the attempt to build democracy was worth the cost in money and lives. However, the Bush administration stood behind its policy that U.S. forces should remain in Iraq until the Iraqi government was stable and the country could defend itself.

Summary

The end of the Cold War brought hopes for a new era of peace and cooperation in the world. Nevertheless, the United States faced many challenges in the post-Cold War era.

New relations and alliances The collapse of the Soviet Union led the United States to build new relations with Russia and the other former Soviet republics. Several of the republics joined NATO and the newly formed European Union.

Confronting dictators The United States worked to oust an aggressive dictator in Panama. In the Persian Gulf War, it fought alongside other nations to force Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait.

Ethnic cleansing and genocide Ethnic conflicts in various countries prompted mixed responses from the United States. In the former Yugoslavia, the United States backed NATO military actions against ethnic cleansing. However, it failed to stop genocide in Rwanda.

Humanitarian aid The United States offered humanitarian aid to ease suffering in Somalia and North Korea, but with mixed results. The HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa prompted concern but little action.

NAFTA and the WTO U.S. presidents promoted free trade as part of a growing trend toward globalization. The North American Free Trade Agreement linked Mexico, Canada, and the United States. The World Trade Organization represented a more global effort.

Fighting a war on terrorism The al Qaeda terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, prompted the United States to declare a war on terrorism. It invaded Afghanistan to oust the Taliban regime. Then it moved to Iraq to topple Saddam Hussein. However, efforts to build stable democracies in these countries proved difficult.

Chapter 60 — 9/11 and Its Aftermath: Debating America's Founding Ideals

What debates have arisen since 9/11 about how to balance security while preserving American ideals?

60.1 – Introduction

On the morning of September 11, 2001, an airplane hijacked by terrorists smashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. In just two hours, nearly 3,000 people lost their lives—more than had died when approximately 350 Japanese bombers attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941. Richard Moller, whose office was on the 100th floor, later realized that a series of delays that made him late to work that day had saved his life. “If I had gotten an elevator just a few minutes earlier,” he recalled, “I would be dead.”

The aircraft that hit the North Tower was a Boeing 767 jetliner carrying a full load of fuel. Most Americans can recall exactly where they were when they heard the news. Many people turned on their televisions just in time to see a second passenger plane slam into the South Tower 17 minutes after the first. As fire began consuming the upper floors of both buildings, most Trade Center workers managed to escape down stairwells. But many did not. Shock turned to horror as the Twin Towers collapsed. By that time, a third hijacked passenger jet had crashed into the Pentagon building near Washington, D.C. Soon after came news that a fourth hijacked plane had crashed in Pennsylvania.

As Americans watched the tragedy unfold, they reacted with emotions ranging from bewilderment and dismay to anger and outrage. And most sensed that life had suddenly changed. An editorial in *The New York Times* later observed, “It was one of those moments in which history splits, and we define the world as ‘before’ and ‘after.’” The deaths provoked both an outpouring of grief and tremendous anxiety as Americans all around the country asked one another, “Are you all right?”

But the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, had not only shattered Americans’ sense of security. In the months and years ahead, they would also significantly influence the nation’s approach to preserving its founding ideals.

60.2 – The Immediate Impact of 9/11

On the evening of 9/11, President George W. Bush spoke to the nation about the horrific events of the day. He began by calling the terrorist attacks an assault on the nation’s values. “Today,” he said, “our way of life, our very freedom came under attack.” He went on to reassure Americans that the government was taking action not only to help with rescue efforts in New York but also to find those “behind these evil acts.” The president ended by saying,

This is a day when all Americans from every walk of life unite in our resolve for justice and peace. America has stood down enemies before, and we will do so this time. None of us will ever forget this day. Yet, we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world.

A New Sense of Vulnerability

In the days following the attacks, shock gave way to a mixture of stunned disbelief and fear. It seemed incomprehensible to many people that terrorists could launch such a devastating attack on U.S. soil. After all, the United States had the most powerful military in the world. Most Americans believed the nation to be secure from outside threats. But after 9/11, no one knew how many terrorists might still be in the country, prepared to strike again at any time. As one Florida resident commented, "I realize now that we are as vulnerable as all of those nations [in] Europe [and] the Middle East."

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, many normal activities came to a halt, especially in New York City. One journalist wrote, "It was as though life as we knew it had stopped, to be replaced by an anxious emptiness, a national stillness, immobility." The stock markets were closed, and the tunnels and bridges leading into Manhattan were shut down. Airlines canceled flights around the country, and they did not resume service for several days. And when they did, most planes flew virtually empty. In towns and cities across the nation, heightened security measures caused delays and disrupted everyday life. Authorities around the country warned Americans to be vigilant and report suspicious activities.

Drawing Together to Defend Our Way of Life

Despite the mood of fear and vulnerability, 9/11 also drew Americans together. For weeks after the attacks, strangers greeted one another on the streets. Friends who had not spoken in years phoned to talk. A New Jersey woman who lost her husband at the World Trade Center found anonymous gifts of food at her front door every morning. "The kindness of people is what is getting me through this," she said. "It's enlightening to know that I'm not entirely alone."

Americans also came together in groups, holding vigils and memorials for the victims of 9/11 and raising money for their families. Similar organizations drew together to combine their resources. Firefighters across the nation felt solidarity with the New York City Fire Department. Some took time off to travel to Manhattan to help with the recovery effort. A group of Indiana firefighters ran the distance from Indiana to New York City, an effort that raised \$170,000 for victims of the attacks. And the Wisconsin-based company that supplies New York's fire trucks quickly began work on replacing the trucks lost in the disaster.

Numerous civil rights groups also offered encouragement to the nation after the attacks. Organizations as varied as the Arab American Institute, the National Urban League, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People published advice on how Americans could treat one another respectfully as they processed their own grief

and anger. Similar stories of individual and group actions of support recurred all over the nation.

The Administration Takes Action

In the meantime, the Bush administration devised a two-pronged strategy to cope with the threat of terrorism and keep the country safe. First it rolled out the war on terrorism, which called for aggressive military action abroad to combat perceived terrorist threats. This approach led to the lengthy and controversial wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Second, the administration focused on measures to prevent future terrorist attacks at home. Like the wars abroad, these domestic security measures aroused controversy.

At the heart of the often-heated debates that followed 9/11 lay a question that Americans have confronted before during times of national peril: How can we balance such ideals as equality and liberty with our desire for security? In the years since 9/11, both the U.S. government and the American people have worked to review and, at times, revise domestic and foreign policy choices in hopes of ensuring that they achieve just that balance.

60.3 – Safeguarding Equality

For many Americans, the 9/11 attacks brought to mind memories of the U.S. response to Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor 60 years earlier. Following that assault, the government forced more than 100,000 Japanese Americans to live in internment camps. After learning that the 9/11 terrorists were Arab Muslims, many people of Middle Eastern descent worried that they might suffer a similar fate. Many felt afraid to go to work or school for fear of being singled out for attack, even if they were not Muslim.

In contrast to the events of 1941, Bush made an effort to reassure American Muslims that they would be treated the same way as other citizens. Days after the attacks, he met with Muslim leaders. "America counts millions of Muslims amongst our citizens," he declared. "In our anger and emotion, our fellow Americans must treat each other with respect."

Balancing Safety and Equality: The Profiling Debate

The question of how best to protect the ideal of equality in the new, post-9/11 circumstances first arose in airports. Air travel resumed within a week of the attacks. Airport security officials began paying special attention to young men who looked like the 9/11 terrorists or had names similar to those of the terrorists. These travelers faced more rigorous searches than others did. Authorities even took some of them off planes "for security reasons." The practice of using physical traits to decide whether to investigate or arrest someone is known as racial profiling.

To some Americans, racial profiling was clear discrimination. They felt that all passengers should go through the same search procedures. Norman Mineta, the U.S. secretary of transportation, agreed. As a child, he had been sent to an internment camp. After 9/11, Mineta banned racial profiling in airports. He explained, "Surrendering to

actions of hate and discrimination makes us no different than the despicable terrorists who rained such hatred on our people.”

Others strongly supported racial profiling. They viewed terrorism as an extreme threat that justified the use of special security procedures. To them, putting an elderly woman through the same security checks as a young man of Middle Eastern descent went against common sense. The principle of equality, they urged, should not be allowed to jeopardize public safety.

Despite the difference of opinions, racial profiling continues to be a fact of life in the United States—for Arab Americans and many others. By 2005, according to Amnesty International USA, 32 million Americans had reported experiencing racial profiling. Another 87 million, the organization claimed, had traits that put them at risk of being profiled in this way. They might face such treatment in many places other than airports—while shopping or looking for housing, for example. The federal and many of the state governments do ban forms of racial profiling. But there often are few provisions for how to enforce such bans or punish those who violate them.

In 2006, the International Association of Chiefs of Police addressed such concerns. With Justice Department support, it published a set of civil rights guidelines for police. The publication acknowledges the challenges a law enforcement agent faces when trying both to protect equality and to prevent crime. The aim of the guidelines is to assist officers in handling such situations.

60.4 – Preserving Opportunity

The United States has long appealed to immigrants as a land of opportunity. But after 9/11, the government put in place tougher immigration policies in an effort to keep terrorists out of the country. Some Americans felt that these policies reflected a growing fear of foreigners. The new laws did, in fact, make it harder for some foreign students, workers, and tourists to enter or stay in the country. The result has been a loss of opportunity for foreigners and for the schools and businesses that cater to them. Can the United States continue to be a land of opportunity while trying to close its borders to terrorists?

Balancing Security and Opportunity: Screening Foreign Visitors

Tens of millions of foreigners visit the United States each year. Some arrive as permanent immigrants, but the vast majority comes as short-term visitors. In 2001, foreigners except Canadians and Mexicans needed a passport and visa to enter the United States. A passport is a document issued by a person’s home government to verify his or her identity. A visa is an authorization from a government for a foreigner to enter its country. Before 9/11, foreigners could easily obtain visas for the United States through travel agents. The 9/11 terrorists all entered the country legally in 2001, with valid passports and visas.

After 9/11, Congress passed new laws to make the country's borders more secure. Today all foreign visitors must show travel documents to enter the United States. Those from Canada and Mexico now need only a passport. Those coming from other countries must present a passport and a visa. The U.S. government added numerous new procedures to make visas harder to obtain. As part of the process, officials now check each applicant's identity against a "watch list" of known or suspected terrorists. The restrictions on applicants from the Middle East are especially strict. Some people feel that the new security procedures violate visitors' privacy. Others see them as a legitimate way of protecting the nation from terrorists.

The new visa requirements led to long delays for applicants. Many Americans complained that the delays were denying foreigners access to the opportunities that have been a hallmark of American life. Others worried about the impact of the new policies on American culture and economics. The Department of State, which issues visas, has worked to streamline the application process. But the careful screening of visitors continues in efforts to limit potential threats to national security.

The government has also sharpened its focus on foreigners who enter or live in the country illegally. Most are Mexicans looking for work in the United States, where they find better pay and more work options than in Mexico. Some entered the United States legally but have stayed beyond the terms of their visas. Others came into the country illegally. Many U.S. employers rely heavily on these workers and may overlook or not be aware of their workers' illegal status.

Many Americans feel it is inappropriate and unsafe to allow anyone to be in the country illegally. Yet, as the government has increased its focus on border security, critics have pointed out that the motivations for illegal immigration—the need for work and workers—persist. The question of whether the flow of undocumented migrants can or should be stopped is a heated one.

60.5 – Securing Liberty

As the initial shock of 9/11 began to fade, many Americans remained fearful. A week later, Bush addressed their fears in a speech to the nation:

After all that has just passed . . . it is natural to wonder if America's future is one of fear . . . But this country will define our times, not be defined by them. As long as the United States of America is determined and strong, this will not be an age of terror; this will be an age of liberty, here and across the world.

Balancing Safety and Freedom: The Department of Homeland Security

Bush's words highlighted an immediate reaction that many Americans had to 9/11. Would the only way to stay safe in light of this new situation—the threat of warfare on U.S. soil—be to stay indoors, avoid speaking to anyone one did not know well, or restrict the activities of all Americans until the situation came under control? That is, would Americans have to give up their freedoms of movement and expression, among

many others, to feel secure? The nation was on new ground. Many people felt unsure of how to navigate it. What most knew for certain was that they wanted their liberty secured in this time of terrorism.

Before 9/11, numerous government agencies shared the role of defending the nation. After the attacks, Bush called on Congress to centralize these functions by creating the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). DHS coordinates 22 security-related federal agencies that deal with issues including border control, disaster relief, and nuclear safety. Its mission is to “prevent and deter terrorist attacks and protect against and respond to threats and hazards to the nation.” To do this, it implemented the National Response Plan to deal with emergencies and set up a system to inform the public about terrorist threats. The system includes five threat levels, ranging from “low risk” to “severe risk.”

In 2002, Bush also set up a commission to investigate the circumstances surrounding the 9/11 attacks and suggest lessons to be learned. The commission published its findings in 2004 and made 37 recommendations to improve national security. For example, the nation’s infrastructure still needed a formal protection plan, airline passenger screening still needed improvement, and there needed to be government-wide sharing of information.

But considerations of how to bring about such improvements have raised further concerns. Congress determines the DHS budget, but some Americans have questioned whether party politics and financial concerns, rather than need, have shaped DHS policies. For example, Congress allocates DHS funds to each state. The amount to be spent on high-risk areas varies from state to state. However, DHS also distributes a fixed amount to all states, regardless of the state’s population. Politicians and citizens have debated this practice. Should funding increase with state population, or should all states receive equal funds? Are some cities at greater risk than others? Do they deserve more money?

Determining which areas of public life face the greatest threat of attack raises the questions of whether Americans have an active voice in who decides that and how. These questions highlight a challenge: how to balance the threat that terrorists pose to our liberty with the realities of the financial and political limitations under which any government agency operates.

60.6 – Protecting Rights

After 9/11, the Bush administration asked Congress for new powers to fight terrorism. Just 45 days after the attacks, Congress passed a 342-page bill known as the USA Patriot Act. This act loosened many restrictions on intelligence gathering by U.S. security and law enforcement agencies. As details became public, Americans began debating the act’s impact on their constitutional rights.

Balancing Security and Privacy Rights: Debating the Patriot Act

The most controversial sections of the Patriot Act involve privacy rights protected by the Fourth Amendment. Originally written in response to the British practice of invading colonial homes to collect unpaid taxes, this amendment bans unreasonable searches and seizures by government officials. It defines as reasonable only searches and seizures that are authorized by a search warrant from a judge. To gain a warrant, agents must show probable cause. That is, they must show that there is reason to believe a crime has already been committed.

Today the Fourth Amendment applies to both homes and communication devices. For example, federal agents cannot place wiretaps on telephones without a search warrant. Before the Patriot Act, a judge had to issue a separate warrant for each phone that agents wished to monitor. The act expanded the power of federal agencies to carry out such electronic surveillance. Judges may now approve a single warrant for tapping all phones a suspect uses. That means a wiretap can “rove” from phone to phone to follow a suspect’s communications.

Concerned Americans have opposed roving wiretaps, arguing that their use could easily violate the privacy rights of people who talk unknowingly to a suspected terrorist. But law enforcement officials contend that agents need roving wiretaps to track down terrorists who move from phone to phone.

The Patriot Act also allows agents with a warrant to search a suspect’s home or business in secret. Agents may break in, take photographs, examine computers, and remove evidence without alerting the suspect. Officials argue that this freedom allows them to carry out a lawful search without giving suspects a chance to flee or destroy evidence. Critics view the use of these “sneak and peek” warrants as a clear violation of privacy rights.

The Patriot Act also allows officials to seize and search computer records for data that might lead to terrorists. First, agents must make a case that they need the data “to protect against international terrorism.” But they do not have to show probable cause—only suspicion that a crime might occur. Critics view this as a step away from the Fourth Amendment’s intent. They worry about giving the government such access to electronic databases. And they complain that the Patriot Act gives judges little power to deny requests for such access.

In 2005, reporters discovered that Bush had allowed phone calls between Americans and suspected terrorists to be monitored without warrants. Critics viewed such warrantless surveillance as another violation of privacy rights. The Bush administration claimed that judges could not issue warrants quickly enough to support terrorism investigations. In 2007, the administration changed its stance on warrantless surveillance. It established a secret court geared at working quickly to approve all surveillance. But Americans continued to debate the question: To what degree is spying on civilians justified?

60.7 – Defending Democracy

Soon after 9/11, President Bush raised a question that was on many Americans' minds:

Why do they hate us? They hate what they see right here in this chamber—a democratically elected government . . . They hate our freedoms—our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other.

Over the next five years, Americans both praised and criticized Bush's policies in the war on terrorism. Some applauded his efforts to bring democracy to Iraq. Others denounced his treatment of prisoners captured in the war in Afghanistan.

Debating the Limits of Presidential Power: Military Commissions

During the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, the U.S. military took many prisoners. After the fighting, most remained in Afghanistan. But Bush ordered that 660 prisoners from 42 nations be detained at a U.S. military base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. These detainees were described as unlawful enemy combatants, or fighters in armed conflict with the United States who were not part of a regular army. They were not accused of any crime, yet they were interrogated regularly. The government hoped they could provide information about anti-U.S. terrorists.

Bush's critics argued that detainees should be treated as prisoners of war (POWs). Under the Geneva Conventions, POWs have certain rights. They may not be tortured or subjected to humiliating treatment. They may petition for a writ of habeas corpus—an order compelling a prison official to take a prisoner in front of a court to assess whether the person is imprisoned lawfully. Bush claimed that these rights did not apply to unlawful military combatants.

In June 2004, the Supreme Court ruled in *Rasul v. Bush* that the detainees did have the right to challenge their imprisonment in court. Bush responded by establishing military commissions to try detainees. These are courts set up by the armed forces to try enemy forces during wartime. Critics attacked Bush's decision on several grounds. One was that detainees tried by the commissions lacked basic legal rights. For example, they might not be allowed to hear evidence against them if the court ruled that making such evidence public could damage national security. Critics also charged that Bush had gone beyond the limits of his power in setting up the military courts. In the U.S. democratic system, the power to establish courts belongs to Congress, not the president.

In June 2006, the Supreme Court agreed with the critics. In *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*, the Court ruled that Bush did not have constitutional authority to set up military courts. In his written opinion, Justice Stephen Breyer noted that "the Court's conclusion ultimately rests upon a single ground: Congress has not issued the Executive a 'blank check'" to do whatever he wants. Breyer wrote that the president must still ask Congress for the authority he believed necessary. Further, Breyer stated that the Court's insistence that the president consult with Congress did not undermine the nation's ability to defend

itself. “To the contrary,” Breyer wrote, “that insistence strengthens the Nation’s ability to determine—through democratic means—how best to do so. The Constitution places its faith in those democratic means. Our Court today simply does the same.”

After this ruling, Bush did consult with Congress on the treatment of detainees. In September 2006, Congress passed the Military Commissions Act of 2006. This act authorized the use of military commissions to try enemy combatants and set out rules for such trials. However, the act was widely condemned for failing to grant detainees basic legal rights, including habeas corpus. A New York Times editorial described the Military Commissions Act as “a tyrannical law that will be ranked with the low points in American democracy, our generation’s version of the Alien and Sedition Acts.” Clearly the debate over the treatment of illegal enemy combatants was far from over.

Pursuing America’s Founding Ideals

Writing in 1776, Thomas Jefferson could not have even dimly imagined the complex world in which we live today. Nonetheless, the ideals he set forth for our nation have endured, as points of pride and prods to progress. In the troubled times since 9/11, they have also led us to consider new ways—at times successful, at others not—to uphold them.

Building a nation based on ideals has never been easy. Being human, we are bound to disagree about what our founding ideals mean. We are even more likely to disagree about how they should be applied to the complex business of governing a nation of hundreds of millions of people. However, it is our commitment to these ideals that binds us together as Americans. Like our founders, we know that a nation built on ideals is never finished—it is always becoming. Just what it is to become, however, is up to each generation to decide.

Summary

The attacks of 9/11 left Americans with a new sense of vulnerability. President Bush declared war on terrorism—at home and abroad. The conduct of that war once again raised the challenge of balancing our founding ideals with our desire for security.

Equality After 9/11, Americans debated these questions: Should all airline passengers be treated equally? Or should those fitting the profile of the 9/11 terrorists face special scrutiny? The nation chose equality over racial profiling, but racial profiling persists.

Opportunity In an effort to secure the nation’s borders, Congress struggled to preserve the United States as a land of opportunity while tightening visa requirements and border control to keep terrorists out.

Liberty Congress created the Department of Homeland Security to defend the country and protect our free way of life by better coordinating various government security

agencies. Critics worried that the DHS was not as effective as it should be. They raised questions about what factors influence decision making within the department.

Rights Congress enacted the Patriot Act after 9/11 to help government agencies track down terrorists. The act sparked a long debate over what some saw as assaults on privacy rights.

Democracy Bush's policies toward unlawful enemy combatants raised questions about presidential power in a democracy. In *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*, the Supreme Court ruled that the president had overstepped his powers in creating military commissions without consulting Congress.