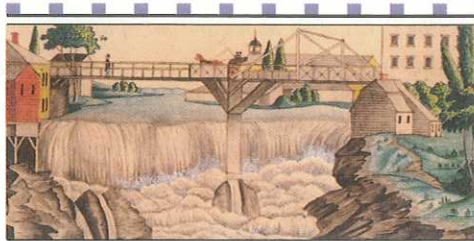




# 12



## THE MARKET REVOLUTION AND SOCIAL REFORM 1815–1850



**WHAT MARKED** the increasing industrialization in the U.S. economy between 1815 and 1850?

**HOW AND** why did inequalities increase among the rich, the middle class, and the working classes?



**WHAT ROLE** did women play in the reform movement that followed the War of 1812?

**WHY DID** the abolitionist agitation and sentiment in the North grow?



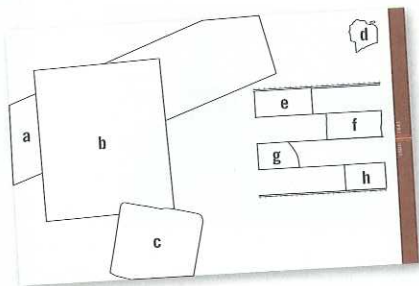


## Credits

- e. Rhode Island Historical Society.  
Courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Society, Pawtucket Bridge and Falls, 1812, Watercolor and ink on Paper, D.B. Negative number RHi x 522.
- h. Frederick Douglass (1817?–95). Oil on Canvas, ©1844, attr. to E. Hammond. The Grangler Collections.

## IMAGE KEY

for pages 288–289



- a. A map of western New York State in 1811 including the proposed Erie Canal route, the Finger Lakes, Lake Ontario, and Lake Erie.
- b. An abolitionist freeing a slave from his shackles: colored woodcut, c. 1840, from an American anti-slavery almanac.
- c. Pages from an American Pictorial Primer, c. 1845.
- d. The original cotton gin of inventor Eli Whitney, stuffed with cotton.
- e. Pawtucket Bridge and Falls, watercolor and ink on paper, 15 × 19 1/2.
- f. Six females model American Victorian fashion in Godey's *Lady's Book for April, 1867*. Colored, painted lithograph.
- g. American feminists include clockwise from top: Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary A. Livermore, Lydia Maria Child, Susan B. Anthony, Grace Greenwood and in center is Anna E. Dickinson.
- h. Frederick Douglass (1817?–1895). Oil on canvas, c1844, attr. to E. Hammond.

East Boylston, Mass.

10th mo. 2d, 1837.

Dear Friend: . . .

*The investigation of the rights of the slave has led me to a better understanding of my own. I have found the Anti-Slavery cause to be the high school of morals in our land—the school in which human rights are more fully investigated, and better understood and taught, than in any other. Here a great fundamental principle is uplifted and illuminated, and from this central light, rays innumerable stream all around. Human beings have rights, because they are moral beings: the rights of all men grow out of their moral nature; and as all men have the same moral nature, they have essentially the same rights. These rights may be wrested from the slave, but they cannot be alienated; his title to himself is as perfect now, as is that of Lyman. Beecher [a prominent minister]: it is stamped on his moral being, and is, like it, imperishable. Now if rights are founded on the nature of our moral being, then the mere circumstance of sex does not give to man higher rights and responsibilities, than to woman. To suppose that it does, would be to deny the self-evident truth, that the “physical constitution is the mere instrument of the moral nature.” To suppose that it does, would be to break up utterly the relations, of the two natures, and to reverse their functions, exalting the animal nature into a monarch, and humbling the moral into a slave; making the former a proprietor, and the latter its property. When human beings are regarded as moral beings, sex, instead of being enthroned upon the summit, . . . sinks into insignificance and nothingness. My doctrine then is, that whatever it is morally right for man to do, it is morally right for woman to do. Our duties originate, not from difference of sex, but from the diversity of our relations in life, the various gifts and talents committed to our care, and the different eras in which we live.*

—Angelina Emily Grimké

Aileen S. Kraditor, ed., *Up from the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism* (New York: Quadrangle, 1968), pp. 62–63.

ANGELINA GRIMKÉ wrote the above as part of a public letter to Catherine Beecher, a pioneer in women's education and the daughter of the evangelical preacher Lyman Beecher mentioned in the letter. In 1837, on an abolitionist lecture tour in New England, Angelina had become the first American woman to defy the social taboo against women speaking in public to a mixed audience of men and women. Catherine Beecher was among her many critics, and Angelina publicly responded to her attacks.

Born in 1805 to a wealthy slaveholding family in Charleston, Angelina nonetheless rejected slavery and joined the abolitionist movement in 1835. As she made clear in her letter to Beecher, her commitment to women's rights flowed out of her exposure to abolitionism.

Soon after her marriage in 1838 to the abolitionist Theodore Weld, Angelina compiled much of the firsthand documentation on slavery for his *American Slavery As It Is*, a popular antislavery tract that appeared in 1839. Her marriage also coincided with





her withdrawal from public life for a dozen years. Although she worked for the emancipation of the slaves during the Civil War, she spoke only rarely in public.

Although Angelina's commitment to radical reform was hardly typical of antebellum American women, her social activism speaks to the radicalizing potential of the reform impulse that swept over the nation after the War of 1812.

This reform impulse was strongest in the North, where traditional social and economic relations were undergoing wrenching changes as a market revolution accelerated the spread of cities, factories, and commercialized farms. Urbanization also brought new production patterns and increasingly separated one's home from one's place of work. New middle and working classes evolved in response to such changes. The North was also the area where the emotional fires of evangelical revivals burned the hottest.

The religious message of the Second Great Awakening that began in the early 1800s provided a framework for responding to the changes that accompanied the market revolution. Through Christian activism, individuals could strive toward moral perfectibility. Social evils, and the sinful consequences of economic and social changes, could be cleansed if good Christians helped others find the path of righteousness.

The first wave of reform after the War of 1812 focused on individual behavior, targeting drinking, gambling, sexual misconduct, and Sabbath-breaking. A second phase of reform turned to institutional solutions for crime, poverty, and social delinquency. The third phase of the reform cycle rejected the social beliefs and practices that prescribed fixed and subordinate positions to certain Americans based on race and sex. This radical phase culminated in the abolitionist and women's rights movements.

## INDUSTRIAL CHANGE AND URBANIZATION

In 1820, four in five of the free labor force worked in agriculture, and manufacturing played a minor role in economic activity. Over the next three decades, however, the United States joined England as a world leader in industrialization. By 1850, manufacturing accounted for one-third of total commodity output, and nonfarm employment had more than doubled to 45 percent of the labor force.

The most direct cause of this surge in manufacturing was the increasing consumption within the United States of the goods the country was producing. The **transportation revolution** dramatically reduced transportation costs and shipping times, opened up new markets for farmers and manufacturers alike, and provided an ongoing incentive for expanding production (see Table 12.1). As agricultural and manufactured goods were exchanged more efficiently, a growing home market stimulated the development of American manufacturing.

TABLE 12.1

### Impact of the Transportation Revolution on Traveling Time

Route	1800	1830	1860
New York to Philadelphia	2 days	1 day	Less than 1 day
New York to Charleston	More than 1 week	5 days	2 days
New York to Chicago	6 weeks	3 weeks	2 days
New York to New Orleans	4 weeks	2 weeks	6 days

WHAT MARKED the increasing industrialization in the U.S. economy between 1815 and 1850?

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



Baltimore Center for Urban Archaeology, Baltimore, Maryland

**Transportation revolution** Dramatic improvements in transportation that stimulated economic growth after 1815 by expanding the range of travel and reducing the time and cost of moving goods and people.





## WHERE TO LEARN MORE

Erie Canal Museum,  
Syracuse, New York  
[www.eriecanalmuseum.org/](http://www.eriecanalmuseum.org/)



9-3

The Case for the Erie Canal

## THE TRANSPORTATION REVOLUTION

In 1815 the cost of moving goods by land transportation was prohibitively high. It cost as much to haul heavy goods by horse-drawn wagons 30 miles into the interior as to ship them 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean. Water transportation was much cheaper, but it was limited to the coast or navigable rivers. Only farmers located near a city or a river could grow surplus crops for sale in an outside market. Western farm surpluses followed the southerly flow of the Ohio and Mississippi river systems to market outlets in New Orleans.

Steamboats provided the first transportation breakthrough. In 1807, Robert Fulton demonstrated their commercial practicality when he sent the *Clermont* 150 miles up the Hudson River from New York City to Albany. By the 1820s, steamboats had reduced the cost and the time of up-river shipments by 90 percent. More and more farmers could now export corn, pork, and other regional foodstuffs.

Western trade did not start to flow eastward until the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, the first and most successful of the artificial waterways designed to link eastern seaboard cities with Western markets (see Map 12-1). Funded by the New York legislature, the Erie Canal stretched 364 miles from Albany to Buffalo. Its construction by Irish immigrants was the greatest engineering feat of its era. The Erie canal reduced the cost of sending freight from Buffalo to New York City by more than 90 percent, and by the 1840s, it was pulling in more Western trade than was being sent to New Orleans on the Mississippi River.

Before the Panic of 1837 abruptly ended the canal boom, three broad networks of canals had been built. One set linked seaboard cities on the Atlantic with their agricultural hinterlands, another connected the Mid-Atlantic states with the Ohio River Valley, and a third funneled western grain to ports on the Great Lakes.

Railroads were the most important link in the transportation improvements that spurred economic development in Jacksonian America. Moving at 15 to 20 miles per hour—four times as fast as a canal boat and twice the speed of a stage-coach—the railroads of the 1830s were a radically new technology that overturned traditional notions of time and space. “I cannot describe the strange sensation produced on seeing the train of cars come up. And when I started in them . . . it seemed like a dream,” exclaimed Christopher Columbus Baldwin of Massachusetts when he saw his first railroad car in 1835.

In 1825, the same year the Erie Canal was completed, the world’s first general-purpose railroad, the Stockton and Darlington, opened in England. The construction of the first American railroads began in the late 1820s, and they all pushed outward from seaboard cities eager to connect to the Western market. The Baltimore and Ohio, crossed the Appalachians and connected Baltimore with Wheeling, Virginia, on the Ohio River. The Boston and Worcester linked New England and the eastern terminus of the Erie Canal at Albany. By 1840, U.S. rails had become the most dynamic booster of interregional trade. Whereas the canal network stopped expanding after 1840, the railroads tripled their mileage in the 1840s. By 1849, trunk lines from Atlantic Coast cities had reached the Great Lakes and the Ohio Valley and were about to enter the Mississippi Valley.

The rail network in place by midcentury was already altering the North-South sectional balance. Western trade was most shipped to the East, and Northern-born settlers, manufactured goods, and cultural values increasingly unified the free states east of the Mississippi into a common economic and cultural unit. The Northeast and the Old Northwest were becoming just the North. No direct rail connection linked the North and the South.

Both national and state government promoted the transportation revolution. High construction costs and the uncertainty of profits made private investors

### QUICK REVIEW

#### Railroads

- ◆ Most important link in Jacksonian transportation revolution.
- ◆ 1825: first general-purpose railroad opened in England.
- ◆ By mid-century, railroads were a vital part of American economy.





# MAP EXPLORATION

To explore an interactive version of this map, go to <http://www.prenhall.com/goldfield2/map12.1>



MAP 12-1

**The Transportation Revolution** By 1830, a network of roads, canals, and navigable rivers was spurring economic growth in the first phase of the transportation revolution. By 1850, railroads, the key development in the second phase of the transportation revolution, were opening up additional areas to commercial activity.

**WHICH CITIES** probably benefited the most from the new transportation infrastructure and why?





### CHRONOLOGY

- |           |  |           |  |
|-----------|--|-----------|--|
| 1790      | Samuel Slater opens the first permanent cotton mill in Rhode Island.   | 1834      | New York Female Reform Society is founded. Female workers at the Lowell Mills stage their first strike.  |
| 1793      | Eli Whitney patents the first cotton gin.  | 1836      | Congress passes gag rule.  |
| 1807      | Robert Fulton's steamboat, the <i>Clermont</i> , makes its pioneering voyage up the Hudson River.              | 1837      | Horace Mann begins campaign for school reform in Massachusetts. Antiabolitionist mob kills Elijah P. Lovejoy. In <i>Charles River Bridge v. Warren Bridge</i> , the Supreme Court encourages economic competition by ruling that presumed rights of monopolistic privileges could not be used to block new economic enterprises. |
| 1814      | The Boston Associates opens its Waltham mill, the first textile factory to mechanize all phases of production. | 1839–1843 | Economic depression.   |
| 1817      | Construction on the Erie Canal begins. American Colonization Society is founded.                               | 1840      | Abolitionists split into Garrisonian and anti-Garrisonian societies. Political abolitionists launch the Liberty party.   |
| 1819–1823 | Economic depression.   | 1841      | Brook Farm is established.   |
| 1824      | In <i>Gibbons v. Ogden</i> , the Supreme Court strikes down a state monopoly over steamboat navigation.        | 1842      | Massachusetts Supreme Court in <i>Commonwealth v. Hunt</i> strengthens the legal right of workers to organize trade unions.  |
| 1825      | Erie Canal is completed.   | 1845      | Potato famine in Ireland sets off a mass migration of Irish to the United States.  |
| 1826      | American Temperance Society launches its crusade.  | 1846–1848 | Mormons migrate to the West.   |
| 1828      | The Baltimore and the Ohio, the most important of the early railroads, is chartered.                           | 1847      | John Humphrey Noyes establishes the Oneida Community.  |
| 1829      | David Walker publishes <i>Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World</i> .                                    | 1848      | Seneca Falls Convention outlines a program for women's rights.   |
| 1830      | Joseph Smith founds the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.   |           |  |
| 1830–1831 | Evangelical revivals are held in northern cities.  |           |  |
| 1831      | William Lloyd Garrison begins publishing <i>The Liberator</i> .  |           |  |
| 1833      | Slaves in the British Empire are emancipated. American Anti-Slavery Society is organized.                      |           |  |

**Gibbons v. Ogden** Supreme Court decision of 1824 involving coastal commerce that overturned a steamboat monopoly granted by the state of New York on the grounds that only Congress had the authority to regulate interstate commerce.

leery of risking their capital in long-term transportation projects. State legislatures furnished some 70 percent of the funding for canals and about half of all railroad capital. By the 1830s, the states were also making it easier for private businesses, and especially those in transportation, to receive the legal privileges of incorporation, which included the protection of limited liability—that is, the limiting of an investor's liability to one's direct financial stake in the company—and the power of eminent domain—the legal right to purchase land for rights-of-way. The federal government provided engineers for railroad surveys, lowered tariff duties on iron used in rail construction, and subsidized the railroads in the form of public land. Two decisions of the Supreme Court helped open up the economy to competition. In *Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824), the Court overturned a New York law that had given Aaron Ogden a monopoly on steamboat service between New York and New Jersey. Thomas Gibbons, Ogden's competitor, had a federal license for the coastal trade. The right to compete under the national license, the Court ruled, took legal precedence over Ogden's monopoly. The decision affirmed the supremacy of the national government to regulate interstate commerce.

A new Court, presided over by Roger B. Taney, who became chief justice when John Marshall died in 1835, struck a bolder blow against monopoly in the





case of *Charles River Bridge v. Warren Bridge* in 1837. Taney ruled that the older Charles River Bridge Company had not received a monopoly from Massachusetts to collect tolls across the Charles River. Any uncertainties in the charter rights of corporations, reasoned Taney, should be resolved in favor of the broader community interests that free and open competition would serve.

## CITIES AND IMMIGRANTS

At midcentury, more than one in seven Americans was a city dweller, and the nation had ten cities whose population exceeded fifty thousand. The transportation revolution triggered this surge in urban growth. The cities that prospered were those with access to the expanding network of cheap transport on steamboats, canals, and railroads. This network opened up the rural interior for the purchase of farm commodities by city merchants and the sale of finished goods by urban importers and manufacturers. A huge influx of immigrants after the mid-1840s and advances in steam engines provided the cheap labor and power that made cities manufacturing centers.

America's largest cities in the early nineteenth century were its Atlantic ports: New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Boston. These seaports all benefited from the transportation revolution, but only New York experienced phenomenal growth. By 1810, it had become the largest American city, and its population exceeded 800,000 by the 1850s. One-third of the nation's exports and more than three-fifths of its imports passed through New York between 1820 and 1860. No wonder poet Walt Whitman trumpeted this metropolis as "the great place of the Western Continent, the heart, the brain, the focus, the main spring, the pinnacle, the extremity, the no more beyond of the new world."

New York's harbor gave oceangoing ships direct, protected access to Manhattan Island, and from there the Hudson River provided a navigable highway flowing 150 miles north to Albany, deep in the state's agricultural interior. No other port was so ideally situated for trade. New York City merchants established the Black Ball Line in 1817, the first line of packet ships that ran on a regular schedule for moving cargoes, passengers, and mail across the Atlantic. The city's merchants also convinced the state legislature to finance the Erie Canal, which guaranteed the ongoing commercial preeminence of the port of New York.

New York City also benefited from the swelling flow of finished goods shipped out of New York for sale in the West. Western families with access to the Erie Canal became increasingly specialized economically. New markets encouraged them to concentrate on cash crops, and profits were spent on finished goods. The rise in the disposable income of farmers generated a demand for the consumer goods that the Erie Canal brought in. These goods came out of New York, but most were not manufactured in the city. Nonetheless, the jobs created by handling these goods and the profits derived from supplying the western market solidified the city's position as the nation's most dynamic economic center.

New Yorkers plowed the profits of this commerce into local real estate and into financial institutions such as the New York Stock Exchange, founded in 1817. The city's banks brought together the capital that made New York the country's chief financial center. Agents for the city's mercantile and financial interests used this capital to offer advantageous terms to capture much of the Southern trade and dominate commerce with South America.

Commercial rivals in other port cities launched their own canal and railroad ventures to penetrate the West, but none developed a hinterland as rich or extensive as New York's. Still, Boston, Baltimore, and Philadelphia at midcentury remained the nation's largest cities behind New York.

*Charles River Bridge v. Warren Bridge* Supreme Court decision of 1837 that promised economic competition by ruling that the broader rights of the community took precedence over any presumed right of monopoly granted in a corporate charter.

## QUICK REVIEW

### New York

- ◆ By 1810 New York was America's largest city.
- ◆ 1820–1860: one-third of nation's exports and three-fifths of imports pass through New York.
- ◆ New York benefited from rich and extensive hinterland.





As they grew, the Atlantic ports pioneered new forms of city transportation. Omnibuses (horse-drawn coaches carrying up to twenty passengers) and steam ferries were in common use by the 1820s. The first commuter railroad, the Boston and Worcester, began service in 1838. Horse-drawn street railway lines in the 1850s moved at speeds of about 6 miles an hour, over-coming some of the limitations of the “walking cities” of the early nineteenth century. Cities began to spread outward as cheaper, faster ways of traveling to work became available.

The first slums also appeared. Small, flimsy wooden structures, often crammed into a back alley, housed the working poor in cramped, fetid conditions. Back-yard privies, supplemented by chamber pots, were the standard means of disposing of human wastes. These outhouses overflowed in heavy rain and often contaminated private wells, the source of drinking water. Garbage and animal wastes accumulated on streets, scavenged by roving packs of hogs.

A densely packed population in a poorly drained, garbage-strewn setting made cities unhealthy. Mortality rates were much higher than in rural areas, and the death rate in New York City was double that of London. Stagnant pools of water bred mosquitoes that carried yellow fever, and contaminated water supplies produced frequent epidemics of cholera and typhus. But the cities continued to grow.

The fastest-growing cities were in the interior. Their share of the urban population quadrupled from 1800 to 1840. Pittsburgh, at the head of the Ohio River, was the first Western city to develop a manufacturing sector to complement its exchange function. With access to the extensive coalfields of western Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh had a cheap fuel that provided the high heat needed to manufacture iron and glass. It emerged as America’s best-known and most polluted manufacturing city. “It is surrounded,” noted the French traveler Michel Chevalier in the 1830s, “with a dense, black smoke which, bursting forth in volumes from the foundries, forges, glass-houses, and the chimneys of all the factories and houses, falls in flakes of soot upon the dwellings and persons of the inhabitants. It is, therefore, the dirtiest town in the United States.”

Cincinnati, downstream on the Ohio, soon became famous for its hogs. “Porkopolis,” as it was called, was the West’s first meatpacking center. Industries in animal by-products, such as soap, candles, shoes, and boots, gave the city a diversified manufacturing base that kept it in the forefront of Western urban growth.

By the 1840s, St. Louis and the Great Lakes ports of Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Chicago were the dynamic centers of Western urbanization. St. Louis, just below the merger of the Missouri and the Mississippi Rivers, serviced American trade with the trans-Mississippi West. The city was also the eastern end of the Santa Fe Trail, a corridor of Anglo-Mexican trade that stretched across the southern plains to Santa Fe, New Mexico. St. Louis tripled in population in the 1830s, and by midcentury, it was developing rail connections that linked it to the Great Lakes cities.

The Great Lakes served as an extension of the Erie Canal, and cities on the lakes where incoming and outgoing goods had to be unloaded for transshipment benefited enormously. They soon evolved into regional economic centers serving the surrounding agricultural communities. They also promoted themselves into major rail hubs and thus reaped the economic advantages of being at the juncture of both water and rail transport.

The combined populations of Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Chicago increased twenty-five-fold between 1830 and 1850. The only other cities experiencing such phenomenal rates of growth were the new industrial towns. The densest cluster of these was in rural New England along the fall line of rivers, where the rapidly falling water provided cheap power to drive the industrial machinery

#### QUICK REVIEW

##### Midwestern City

- ◆ America’s fastest growing cities in interior.
- ◆ Pittsburgh became center of iron and glass manufacturing.
- ◆ St. Louis, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Chicago were centers of Western urbanization.





of factories and machine shops. Each town was tied to a transportation network that brought in raw cotton for the textile mills from the mercantile centers of Boston and Providence and shipped out the finished goods.

Lowell, Massachusetts, was America's first large-scale, planned manufacturing city. Founded in 1822 by Boston businessmen, Lowell was built around the falls of the Merrimack River. Within a decade, rural fields had been transformed into a city of eighteen thousand people. Lowell's success became a model for others to follow, and by 1840, New England led the North in both urbanization and industrialization.

A surge of immigrants swelled the size of the cities after the 1830s. At mid-century, most of the population in New York was foreign-born, and in all the port cities of the Northeast, immigrants dominated the manufacturing work force. Most of these immigrants were Irish and Germans who settled in the Northeast.

In the 1840s, economic and political upheavals in Europe spurred mass migration, mostly to America. Catholic peasants of Ireland, dominated by their Protestant English landlords, eked out a subsistence as tenants on tiny plots of land. A potato blight wiped out the crop in 1845 and 1846, and in the next five years about 1 million Irish died of malnutrition and disease. Another 1.5 million fled, many to America.

Without marketable skills, the Irish had to take the worst and lowest paying jobs: ragpickers, porters, day laborers, and unskilled factory hands. Wives and daughters became laundresses and maids for the urban middle class. Packed into dark cellars, unventilated attics, and rank tenements, they suffered from high mortality rates.

German immigrants came to America to escape poor harvests and political turmoil. Far more Germans than Irish had the capital to purchase land in the West and the skills to join the ranks of small businesspeople in the cities. They were also more likely than the Irish to have entered the country through Baltimore or New Orleans, Southern ports engaged in the tobacco and cotton trade with continental Europe. From there they fanned out into the Mississippi and Ohio Valleys. With the Irish, they made up over half of the population of St. Louis by the 1850s and were close to a majority in the other large cities of the Midwest and Northeast. With their diversified skills, the Germans found ample economic opportunities in the fast-growing cities and a setting in which to build neighborhoods of German-speaking shops, churches, schools, and benevolent societies.

About four in five of the 4.2 million immigrants from all nations who arrived from 1840 to 1860 settled in the New England and Mid-Atlantic states. Their sheer numbers transformed the size and ethnic composition of the working class, especially in the cities of the Northeast. And their cheap labor provided the final ingredient in the expansion of industrialization that began after the War of 1812.

## THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The Northeast led America's industrial revolution. In 1815, this region had the largest cities, the most developed capital markets, the readiest access to the technological skills of artisans, and the greatest supply of available labor. For the next thirty years, the United States had the most rapidly developing industrial economy in the world.

The household and the small workshop were the sites of manufacturing in Jefferson's America. Wider markets for household manufactures began to develop in the late eighteenth century with the coming of the **putting-out system**. Local merchants furnished ("put out") raw materials to rural households and paid at a piece rate for the labor that converted those raw materials into manufactured products. The supplying merchant then marketed and sold these goods.

## QUICK REVIEW

### Immigration at Mid-Century

- ◆ Surge of immigrants fueled of cities after the 1830s.
- ◆ Economic and political upheaval spurred mass migration from Europe.
- ◆ Famine drove 1.5 million Irish to America.



As revealed in this portrait of the blacksmith Pat Lyon, the self-image of the artisans was closely related to the pride and dignity they derived from their craft work.

Pat Lyon at the Forge, 1826–27, John Neagle, American, 1796–1865, Oil on canvas, 238.12x172.72 cm (93 3/4x68 in), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Henry H. and Zoe Oliver Sherman Fund, 1975.806©2003 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

**Putting-out system** System of manufacturing in which merchants furnished households with raw materials for processing by family members.





## FROM THEN TO NOW

### Immigration: An Ambivalent Welcome

Americans have long extended an ambivalent welcome to newcomers. In the mid-nineteenth century, employment posters often read “Irish Need Not Apply,” and today stepped-up border patrols seek to keep out Mexican and other Latin American immigrants. Yet America is a nation settled and built by immigrants whose founding ideals promise equality and opportunity to all. And for much of its history it has offered asylum for the world’s oppressed.

In the early years of the republic, Federalists worried that immigrants from Europe might be contaminated by the radical ideas of the French revolution and sought to make it harder for them to become naturalized citizens. The nation’s first naturalization law in the 1790s also barred black immigrants from citizenship. The first sustained attack against newcomers, however, emerged as a result of the surge in immigration during the 1840s and 1850s. It was directed by established immigrant groups—the descendants of settlers from Britain and northwestern Europe—at unfamiliar newcomers, particularly the Irish.

Nativist arguments of that time have found an echo in all subsequent immigration debates. The Irish, it was claimed, would take jobs away from American workers and lower their wages. Taxpayers would have to foot the bill for the strains the newcomers imposed on schools, hospitals, and other civic services. The ignorant immigrants would corrupt the political process. Nativists especially feared religious contamination, claiming that the Catholicism of the Irish was alien to the Protestant values held to be indispensable to the preservation of American liberties. So many Irish arrived so quickly that many nativists were convinced of a Papal plot to undermine American freedom. “The bloody hand of the Pope,” one wrote, “has stretched itself forth to our destruction.”

Eventually the Irish and Germans merged into the economic and political fabric of American life. But in the late nineteenth century a massive new immigrant surge dominated by people from Southern and Eastern Europe seeking economic opportunity and fleeing religious oppression transformed American society and renewed nativist fears. This time, race replaced religion as the basis for drawing invidious comparisons between established residents and the newcomers. Pseudo-scientific theories relegated Jews, Slavs, and Mediterranean peoples, together with Africans, to an inferior status below people of Northern European and especially Anglo-Saxon descent. The newcomers, it was claimed, were unfit for democratic government and would endanger American civilization. Strict anti-immigrant legislation in the 1920s sharply curtailed immigration from outside the Western Hemisphere, banning Asians entirely and setting quotas based on national origin for others.

Recent concerns about immigration result from the unforeseen consequences of a 1965 reform in immigration law that abolished quotas. Since then, immigration has risen sharply, and the national origin of the immigrants has diverged from previous patterns. By the 1980s, Europeans constituted but 10 percent of the newcomers. The bulk of the remainder came from Asia (40 percent) and Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. Once again, anti-immigrant voices worry that alien newcomers are threatening the cohesiveness of the nation’s institutions and values. But, once again as well, a more inclusive vision of American identity and ideals seems likely to prevail as the newcomers establish themselves. As Abraham Lincoln expressed it, “There was no exclusively American race entitled to claim liberty by heredity. What held the nation together was an idea of equality that every newcomer could claim and defend by free choice.”

In the cities and larger towns, most manufacturing was done by artisans, skilled craftsmen who were also known as mechanics. Working in their own shops and with their own tools, they produced small batches of finished goods. Close to half of the population in the seaport cities, artisans and their families fed, clothed, and housed the urban population. Each artisan had a skill that set him above common laborers. These skills came from hands-on experience and craft traditions that were handed down from one generation to the next.

The “mysteries of the craft” were taught by master craftsmen to the journeymen and apprentices who lived with them and worked in their shops.



Journeyman had learned the skills of their craft but lacked the capital to open their own shops. Before establishing their own businesses, they saved their earnings and honed their skills while working for a wage under a master. Apprentices were adolescent boys sent by their fathers to live with and obey a master craftsman in return for being taught a trade. By the terms of the contract, known as an indenture, the master also provided for the apprentice's schooling and moral upbringing. An apprentice could expect to be promoted to journeyman in his late teens and begin advancement toward his competency, a secure income from an independent trade that would support a family.

Artisans controlled entry into their trades and the process of production from start to finish. They set their own work rules and were their own bosses. "The Mechanics are a class [of] men," proudly wrote "Peter Single" in the *Mechanic's Free Press* of Philadelphia, "who compose that proportion of the population of our country, on whom depends its present and future welfare; from them emanates her glory, her greatness and her power."

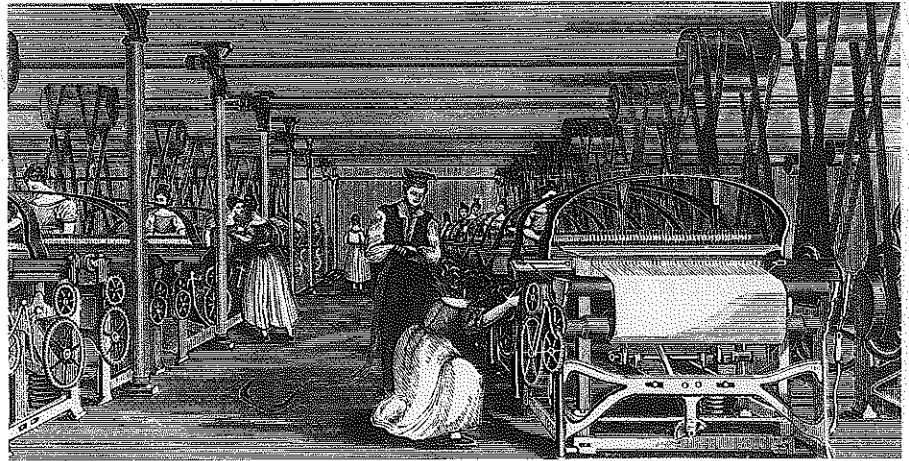
The factory system of production that undercut both household and artisanal manufacturing could produce goods far more quickly and cheaply per worker than artisans or rural households. Factories subdivided the specialized skills of the artisan into a series of semiskilled tasks. Factories also put workers under systematic controls, and in the final stage of industrialization, they boosted workers' productivity through the use of power-driven machinery.

Britain pioneered the technological advances that drove early industrialization. The secrets of this technology, especially the designs for the machines that mechanized textile production, were closely guarded by the British government. Despite attempts to prohibit the emigration of artisans who knew how this machinery worked, some British mechanics got to the United States. Samuel Slater was one of them, and he took over the operation of a fledging mill in Providence, Rhode Island. With his knowledge of how to build water-powered spinning machinery, Slater made the mill the nation's first permanent cotton factory.

Slater's factory, and those modeled after it, manufactured yarn that was put out to rural housewives to be woven into cloth. The first factory to mechanize the operations of spinning and weaving and turn out finished cloth was incorporated in Waltham, Massachusetts in 1813 by the Boston Associates, a group of wealthy merchants. The Waltham factory was heavily capitalized, relied on the latest technology, and recruited its work force from rural farm families.

The first real spurt of factory building came with the closing off of British imports during the Embargo and the War of 1812. Hundreds of new cotton and woolen mills were established from 1808 to 1815. But the great test of American manufacturing came after 1815 when peace with Britain brought a flood of cheap British manufactured goods. If factories were to continue to grow, American manufacturers had to reach more consumers in their home market and overcome the British advantage of lower labor costs.

Industrial labor was more expensive in America than in England, where the high cost of land forced the peasantry into the cities to find work. In contrast, land was cheap and plentiful in the United States, and Americans preferred the



Shown here working at power looms under the supervision of a male overseer, young single women comprised the bulk of the labor force in the first textile factories of New England.

Corbis





## QUICK REVIEW

## Mill Work

- ◆ In the 1820s and 1830s most New England mill hands were young farm daughters.
- ◆ Most Americans associated mill towns with moral depravity.
- ◆ Mill workers worked six-day weeks for low wages.

independence of farm work to the dependence of factory labor. Consequently, the first mill workers were predominantly children. The owners set up the father on a plot of company-owned land, provided piecework for the mother, and put the children to work in the mills.

But this so-called Rhode Island system of family employment was inadequate for the larger, more mechanized factories that were built in New England after the War of 1812. These mill owners recruited single, adolescent daughters of farmers from across New England as their laborers in the **Waltham system**.

Throughout the 1820s and 1830s, most mill hands in New England were young farm daughters. Factory wages (a little over a dollar per week after deductions for room and board) were more than these young women could earn doing piecework in the home or as domestics. The wages also brought a liberating degree of financial independence. “When they felt the jingle of silver in their pockets,” recalled Harriet Hanson Robinson of her fellow workers at Lowell in the 1830s, “there for the first time, their heads became erect and they walked as if on air.”

Based on what they had heard of conditions in British factories, most Americans associated mill towns with morally depraved, impoverished workers. To overcome these fears New England manufacturers set up paternalistic moral controls. Single female workers had to live in boardinghouses owned by the company. Curfews were imposed, visitors were screened, and church attendance was mandatory.

The mill women still worked six days a week from dawn to dusk for low wages. The operatives tended clattering, fast-moving machinery in a work environment kept humid to minimize the snapping of threads in the machines. In 1834 and 1836, the female hands at Lowell “turned out” to protest wage reductions in demonstrations that were the largest strikes in American history up to that time.

After the economic downturn of the late 1830s, conditions in the mills got worse. By the mid-1840s, however, the Irish, desperate for work, sent their children into the mills at an earlier age than Yankee farm families had. These workers did not leave after two or three years of building up a small dowry for marriage, as many New Englanders did. By the early 1850s more than half of the textile operatives in New England were Irish women.

The rise in immigration after the 1820s was crucial for urban manufacturing. By drawing on this cheap pool of immigrant labor, manufacturers could increase production while driving down the cost. Urban manufacturing became labor-intensive, depending more heavily on workers than on investment in machines and other capital. New York and Philadelphia, followed by Boston in the 1840s, thus built up a diversified manufacturing sector in consumer goods.

Except in New England textile factories and the smaller factories and shops in the seaboard cities, native-born males were the largest group of early manufacturing workers. As late as 1840, women, including those working at home, made up about half of the manufacturing work force and one-quarter of the factory hands. Regardless of their sex, few of these workers brought skills to their jobs. Economic necessity forced them to accept low wages and harsh working conditions. The sheer increase in their numbers, as opposed to productivity gains from technological innovations, accounted by 1850 for two-thirds of the gains in manufacturing output.

After 1815 American manufacturers began to close the technological gap with Britain by drawing on the skills of American mechanics. Mechanics experimented with and improved designs and patented inventions that had new industrial applications.

The most famous early American invention was the cotton gin. Eli Whitney, a Massachusetts Yankee, built the first prototype in 1793 while working as a tutor



## WHERE TO LEARN MORE

Hanford Mills Museum,  
East Meredith, New York  
[www.hanfordmills.org/](http://www.hanfordmills.org/)

**Waltham system** During the industrialization of the early nineteenth century, the recruitment of unmarried young women for employment in factories.





on a Georgia plantation. By cheaply and mechanically removing the seeds from cotton fibers, the cotton gin spurred the cultivation of cotton across the South.

Whitney also pushed the idea of basing production on interchangeable parts. After receiving a federal contract to manufacture muskets, he designed new milling machines and turret lathes that transformed the technology of machine tool production. The federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, developed machine tools that could manufacture standardized, interchangeable parts. The new techniques were first applied in 1815 to the manufacture of wooden clocks and by the 1840s to sewing machines, farm machinery, and watch parts. The **American system of manufacturing**—low-cost, standardized mass production, built around interchangeable parts stamped out by machines—was America's unique contribution to the industrial revolution.

The 1840s registered the highest rate of expansion in the manufacturing sector of the economy in the nineteenth century. The adoption of the stationary steam engine in urban manufacturing fueled much of this expansion.

In the 1840s, high-pressure steam engines enabled power-driven industry to locate in the port cities of the Northeast and the booming cities on the Great Lakes. The West became the center of the farm machinery industry, and the region produced 20 percent of the nation's manufacturing output by the 1850s.

Steam power was beginning to transform the American landscape by the mid-nineteenth century. However, most of the change evident in the countryside by 1850 was the product of preindustrial technologies and the aftermath of impounding water for factory use.

About one-fifth of the original forest cover in the United States east of the Mississippi was gone by 1850. Most of this loss resulted from agricultural use. Wood that was not needed for farmhouses, fences, and fuel found a ready market in the cities and factories, where it was both the primary energy source and the basic building material.

As the land was being cleared and carved into private farms, the lakes and streams became dumping grounds for agricultural and industrial wastes. By 1840, the woolens industry alone was discarding some 18,000 tons of grease into rivers and streams.

To provide their mills with a steady, reliable source of water, one that would not be affected by the whims of nature, the Boston Associates constructed a series of dams and canals that extended to the headwaters of the Merrimack River in northern New Hampshire. Inevitably, the ecology of the region changed. Farmers protested when their fields and pastures were submerged, but lawyers for the Boston Associates argued that water, like any other natural resource, should be treated as a commodity that could contribute to economic progress. Increasingly, the law treated nature as an economic resource to be engineered, bought, and sold.

#### American system of manufacturing

A technique of production pioneered in the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century that relied on precision manufacturing with the use of interchangeable parts.

## GROWING INEQUALITY AND NEW CLASSES

As the economy expanded after 1815 and the industrial revolution began to take hold, per capita income doubled in the first half of the century. Living standards for most Americans improved. Houses, for those who could afford them, became larger, better furnished, and heated. Food was more plentiful and varied, and factory-made consumer goods made domestic life easier and more comfortable.

There was a price to be paid, however, for the benefits of economic growth. Half of the adult white males were now propertyless. Wealth had become more concentrated, and extremes of wealth and poverty eroded the Jeffersonian ideal of a republic of independent proprietors who valued liberty because they were economically free.

#### HOW AND why did

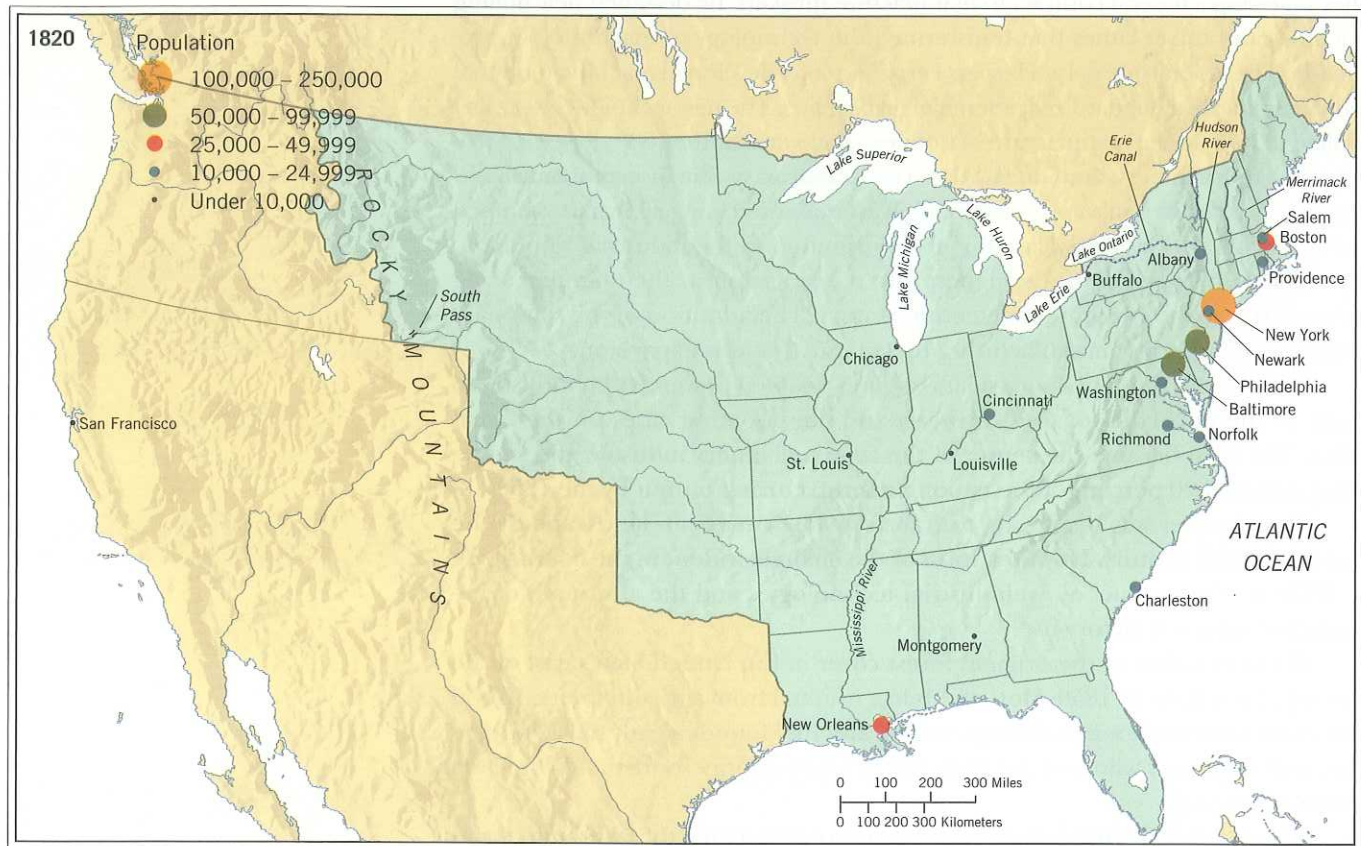
inequalities increase between the rich, the middle class, and the working classes?





## MAP EXPLORATION

To explore an interactive version of this map, go to <http://www.prenhall.com/goldfield2/map12.2a>



**MAP 12-2A**

**The Growth of Cities, 1820–1860** In 1820, most cities were clustered along the Atlantic seaboard. By 1860 (map 12-B), new transportation outlets—canals and railroads—had fostered the rapid growth of cities in the interior, especially at trading locations with access to navigable rivers or to the Great Lakes. Much of this growth occurred in the 1850s.

Data Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States*.

### WHY WAS the growth of cities the slowest in the South?

The gap between the rich and the poor widened considerably in the early phases of industrialization. In 1800, the richest 10 percent of Americans owned 40 to 50 percent of the national wealth. By the 1850s, that share was about 70 percent. The most glaring discrepancies in wealth appeared in the large cities. In all American cities by the 1840s, the top 10 percent of the population owned over 80 percent of urban wealth.

Most of the urban rich at midcentury had been born wealthy, the offspring of old-money families who had married and invested wisely. They belonged to exclusive clubs, attended lavish balls and dinners, were waited on by a retinue of servants in their mansions, and recoiled from what they considered the “mob government” ushered in by the Jacksonian Democrats.

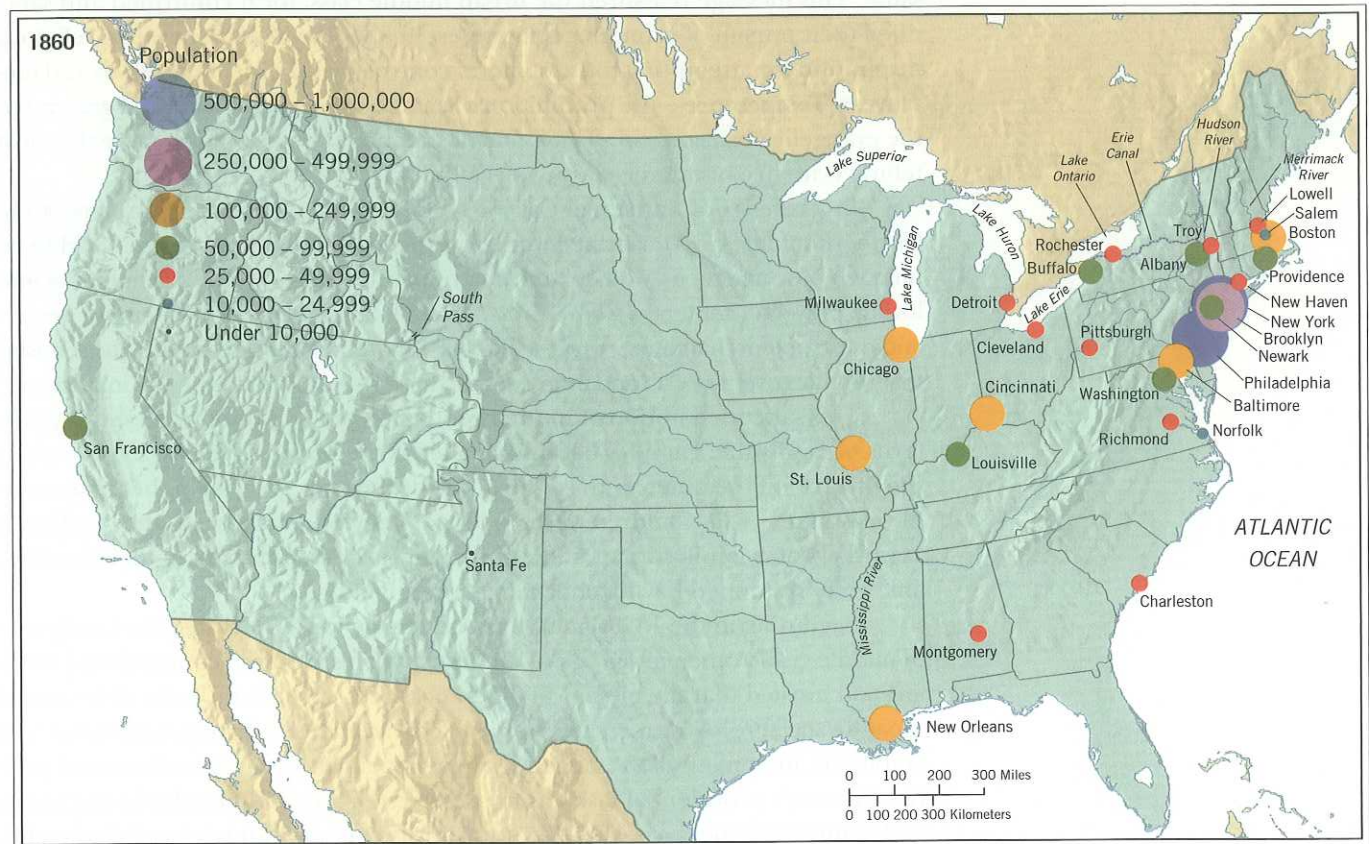
The faster pace of economic growth also created opportunities for an expanding new middle class. This class grew as the number of nonmanual jobs increased. Most of these jobs were in Northern cities and bustling market towns, where the need was greatest for office and store clerks, managerial personnel,





## MAP EXPLORATION

To explore an interactive version of this map, go to <http://www.prenhall.com/goldfield2/map12.2b>



MAP 12-2B

sales agents, and independent retailers. The result by midcentury was a new middle class superimposed on the older one of independent farmers, artisans, shopkeepers, and professionals.

The apparent separation of work and home constituted the first step in an evolving sense of class consciousness. As the market revolution advanced, the workplace increasingly became a specialized location of production or selling. Middle-class fathers left for their jobs in the morning, while mothers governed households that were primarily residential units.

Homes became places of material comfort for the rising middle class. Growing quantities of consumer goods—pianos, carpets, draperies, mirrors, oil lamps, and ornate furniture—filled their homes. Stoves replaced open fireplaces as the main source of heat, and plumbing eliminated outdoor privies.

Having servants, the single largest field of employment in the cities, became a status symbol. Shunned as degrading by most native-born white women, these low-paying jobs were filled by African-American and young immigrant (especially Irish) women. Work had not left the middle-class home; instead, it was disguised as the “domestic duties” of middle-class wives who supervised servants.

Besides seeking guidance from etiquette books on proper manners, the middle class also tried to shape its behavior by the tenets of evangelical religion. Revivals swept Northern cities in the late 1820s. Charles G. Finney led the most dramatic and successful ones in the cities along the Erie Canal in upstate New York. Finney preached that salvation was available to those who willed it.

### QUICK REVIEW

#### Class Consciousness

- ◆ Separation of home and work first step in evolving class consciousness.
- ◆ Home a place of material comfort for rising middle class.
- ◆ Having servants a sign of status.
- ◆ Middle class shaped by evangelical religion.





He also stressed that economic and moral success depended on the virtues of sobriety, self-restraint, and hard work. Aggressiveness and ambition were not necessarily sinful as long as businessmen led moral lives and helped others do the same. This message reassured the urban middle class, for it confirmed and sanctified their pursuit of economic self-interest. It also provided them with a religious inspiration for attempting to exert moral control over their communities and employees. **Temperance**—the prohibition of alcoholic beverages—was the greatest of the evangelically inspired reforms, and abstinence from alcohol became the most telling evidence of middle-class respectability.

In a reversal of traditional Calvinist doctrine, the evangelical ministers of the Northern middle class enshrined women as the moral superiors of men. Held to be uniquely pure and pious, women were now responsible for converting their homes into loving, prayerful centers of domesticity. "There is a ministry that is older and deeper and more potent than ours," wrote a liberal Presbyterian clergyman; "it is the ministry that presides over the crib and impresses the first gospel influence on the infant soul."

This sanctified notion of motherhood reflected and reinforced shifting patterns of family life. Families became smaller as the birthrate fell by 25 percent in the first half of the nineteenth century. The decline was greatest in the urban middle class after 1820. Children were no longer an economic asset as they had been as workers on a family farm. Middle-class couples limited the size of their families, and women stopped having children at a younger age.

Beginning in the 1820s, ministers and female writers elevated the family role of middle-class women into a **cult of domesticity**. This idealized conception of womanhood insisted that the biological differences of God's natural order determined separate social roles for men and women. Characterized as strong, aggressive, and ambitious, men naturally belonged in the competitive world of business and politics. Women's providential task was to preserve religion and morality in the home and family. Only they possessed the moral purity necessary for rearing virtuous children and preserving the home as a refuge from the outside world.

Parents could now devote more care and resources to child rearing. Middle-class children lived at home longer than children had in the past and received more schooling than working-class children.

Unlike the wealthy, whose riches were inherited, members of the middle class believed that their property was the product of hard work and self-denial. They also saw themselves as the industrious Americans whose moral fortitude and discipline enabled them to escape the clutches of poverty, the fate of those who were presumed to be lazy and undisciplined.

The economic changes that produced a new middle class also transformed the working class. In preindustrial America, the working class was predominantly native-born and of artisan origins. By midcentury, most urban workers were immigrants or the children of immigrants and had never been artisans in a skilled craft.

Job skills, sex, race, and ethnicity all divided workers after 1840. Master craftsmen were the most highly skilled and best-paid members of the labor force. Industrialization splintered the unity of the old artisan class. Ambitious master craftsmen with access to capital ignored craft traditions to rise into the ranks of small businessmen and manufacturers. They expanded output and drove down the cost of production by contracting out work at piece wages and hiring the cheapest workers they could find. The result was to transform the apprentice system into a system of exploited child labor.

By the 1830s, most journeymen were becoming a class of permanent wage earners with little prospect of opening their own shops. They denounced the new industrial relations as a "system of mental and physical slavery." To protect their liberties from what they considered a new aristocracy of manufacturers, they organized

**Temperance** Reform movement originating in the 1820s that sought to eliminate the consumption of alcohol.

**Cult of domesticity** The belief that women, by virtue of their sex, should stay home as the moral guardians of family life.





workingmen's political parties in the 1830s. At the top of these parties' list of reforms were free public education, the abolition of imprisonment for debt, and a ten-hour workday. But the depression of 1839–1843 forced mechanics to concentrate on their economic survival, and the Democrats siphoned off many of their political leaders.

Journeyman also turned to trade union activity in the 1820s and 1830s to gain better wages, shorter hours, and enhanced job security. Locals from various trades formed the National Trades Union, the first national union, in 1834. The new labor movement launched more than 150 strikes in the mid-1830s.

Although the Panic of 1837 decimated union membership, the early labor movement achieved two notable victories. First, by the late 1830s, it had forced employers to accept the ten-hour day as the standard for most skilled workers. Second, in a landmark decision handed down in 1842, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled in *Commonwealth v. Hunt* that a trade union was not necessarily subject to laws against criminal conspiracies and that a strike could be used to force employers to hire only union members.

The unions were the defenders of artisanal rights and virtues, and they ignored workers whose jobs had never had craft status. As massive immigration merged with industrialization after 1840, this basic division between workers widened. On one side was the male, Protestant, and native-born class of skilled artisans. On the other side was the working-class majority of factory laborers and the unskilled. These workers were predominantly immigrants and women who worked for a wage as domestic or factory hands. On average, they earned less than \$500 a year, about half what skilled workers earned. Their financial survival rested on a family economy in which all members contributed whatever they could earn.

Increasingly fearing these workers as a threat to their job security and Protestant values, American-born artisans joined **nativist organizations** in the 1840s, which sought to curb mass immigration from Europe and limit the political rights of Catholic immigrants. Ethnic workers viewed temperance as business-class meddling in their lives, while successful native-born workers tended to embrace the evangelical, middle-class ideology of temperance and self-help. The greatest unity achieved by labor was the nearly universal insistence of white workers that black workers be confined to the most menial jobs.

Gender also divided workers. Working-class men shared the dominant ideology of female dependence. They measured their own status as husbands by their ability to keep their wives and daughters from having to work. Male workers also argued that their wages would be higher if women were barred from the work force. A report of the National Trades Union in 1836 cited women's "ruinous competition to male labor." It insisted that a woman's "efforts to sustain herself and family are actually the same as tying a stone around the neck of her natural protector, Man, and destroying him with the weight she has brought to his assistance."

With these views, male workers helped lock wage-earning women into the lowest-paying and most exploited jobs. Of the 25,000 women in 1860 working in manufacturing in New York City, two-thirds were in the clothing trades. Many were seamstresses working at home fifteen to eighteen hours a day for starvation wages of less than \$100 a year. Over half of them were the sole breadwinners in their households.

"If we do not come forth in our defence, what will become of us?" asked Sarah Monroe of New York City in the midst of a strike by seamstresses in 1831. Women tried to organize as workers, but the male labor movement refused to lend much support. The men tried to channel the discontent of women workers into "proper female behavior" and generally restricted their assistance to pushing for legislation that would limit the hours worked by women and children, a stand that enhanced their male image as protectors of the family.

## QUICK REVIEW

### Unions

- In the late 1830s and early 1840s unions won important victories.
- Union concentrated on artisanal rights and virtues.
- American-born artisans increasingly saw immigrants as a threat to job security.

**Nativist organizations** Joined by American-born artisans in the 1840s which sought to curb mass immigration from Europe and limit the political rights of Catholic immigrants.





## REFORM AND MORAL ORDER

WHAT ROLE did women play in the reform movement that followed the War of 1812?

The rapidity and extent of the social and economic changes that accompanied the market revolution were disorienting, even frightening, to many Americans, particularly religious leaders and wealthy businessmen in the East. Alarmed by what they perceived as a breakdown in moral authority, they sought to impose moral discipline on Americans.

These Eastern elites, with the indispensable support of their wives and daughters, created a network of voluntary church-affiliated reform organizations known collectively as the **benevolent empire**. Revivals in the 1820s and 1830s then broadened the base of reform to include the newly evangelicalized middle class in Northern cities and towns.

### THE BENEVOLENT EMPIRE

For the Reverend Lyman Beecher, the American condition in 1814 presented “a scene of destitution and wretchedness.” He believed that only religion, as preached by “pious, intelligent, enterprising ministers through the nation,” could provide the order that would preserve the Union and place it under “the moral government of God.”

Evangelical businessmen in the seaboard cities backed Beecher’s call to restore moral order. Worried by the increasing number of urban poor, wealthy merchants financed a network of reform associations that grew to include the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1810), the American Bible Society (1816), the American Sunday School Union (1824), the American Tract Society (1825), and the American Home Missionary Society (1826).

The reform societies built on the Second Great Awakening’s techniques of organization and communication. The Christian reformers sent out speakers on regular schedules along prescribed routes. They developed organizations that maintained a constant pressure for reform. National and local boards of directors supervised the work of salaried managers, who inspired volunteers to combat sin among the unconverted.

When steam presses and stereotype plates halved the cost of printing and dramatically increased its speed, the American Bible Society was the first to exploit this revolution in the print media. By 1830 religious presses were churning out more than 1 million Bibles and 6 million tracts a year. These publications were mass distributed by traveling agents and heavily promoted in national advertising campaigns. As the *Christian Herald* editorialized in 1823, “Preaching of the gospel is a Divine institution—‘printing’ is no less so. . . . The PULPIT AND THE PRESS are inseparably connected.”

A host of local societies were more concerned with stamping out individual vices. Their purpose, as summed up by a Massachusetts group, the Andover South Parish Society for the Reformation of Morals, was “to discountenance [discourage] immorality, particularly Sabbath-breaking, intemperance, and profanity, and to promote industry, order, piety, and good morals.” These goals linked social and moral discipline in a way that appealed both to pious churchgoers concerned about godlessness and profit-oriented businessmen eager to curb their workers’ unruly behavior.

With volunteers drawn largely from the teenage daughters of evangelical businessmen, Sunday interdenominational schools combined elementary education with the teaching of the Bible and Christian principles. The American Sunday School Union was both a coordinating agency for local efforts and a publishing house for books and periodicals. By 1832, nearly 10 percent of all American children aged 5 to 14 were attending one of eight thousand Sunday schools.

**Benevolent empire** Network of reform associations affiliated with Protestant churches in the early nineteenth century dedicated to the restoration of moral order.



The boldest expression of the drive to enhance Christian power was the **Sabbatarian movement**. In 1828, evangelicals led by Lyman Beecher formed the General Union for Promoting the Observance of the Christian Sabbath whose immediate goal was the repeal of a law passed by Congress in 1810 directing post offices to deliver mail on Sunday. This law symbolized to Christian reformers the moral degeneracy into which the republic had fallen. Its broader mission was to enforce local statutes that shut down business and leisure activities on Sundays. The Sabbatarians considered such statutes no less “necessary to the welfare of the state” than “laws against murder and polygamy.” To their opponents, such statutes were “repugnant to the rights of private property and irreconcilable with the free exercise of civil liberty.”

In 1829, insisting on the separation of church and state, the Democratic Congress upheld the postal law of 1810. Businessmen, workingmen, Southern evangelicals, and religious conservatives in New England all felt that the Sabbath purists had gone too far.

The General Union disbanded in 1832, but it left an important legacy for future reform movements. On the one hand, it developed techniques that converted the reform impulse into direct political action. In raising funds, training speakers, holding rallies, disseminating literature, lobbying for local Sunday regulations, and coordinating a petition to Congress, the Sabbatarians created an organizational model for other reformers to follow in mobilizing public opinion and influencing politicians. On the other hand, the failure of the Sabbatarians revealed that heavy-handed attempts to force the “unconverted” to follow Christian standards of conduct were self-defeating. A new approach was needed that encouraged individuals to reform themselves without coercive controls. It soon emerged in the temperance movement.

## THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT

Temperance—the drive against the consumption of alcohol—had the greatest immediate impact on the most people of any reform movement. Its success rested on what Lyman Beecher called “a new moral power.” Dismayed by popular resistance to the coercive moralism of the first wave of Christian reform, evangelicals like the Reverend John Chester concluded in 1821 that “you cannot coerce a free people that are jealous to fastidiousness of their rights.” Therefore, reform had to rest on persuasion, and it had to begin with the voluntary decision of individuals to free themselves from sin. For these evangelicals, the self-control to renounce alcohol became the key to creating a harmonious Christian society of self-regulating citizens.

In 1826, evangelicals founded the American Temperance Society in Boston and took control of the movement. They were inspired by Beecher’s *Six Sermons on Temperance*, a stirring call for voluntary associations dedicated to the belief that “the daily use of ardent spirits, in any form, or in any degree” was a sin. They now sought a radical change in American attitudes toward alcohol and its role in social life.

American consumption of alcohol reached an all-time high by 1830 of 7.1 gallons of pure alcohol per year for every American aged 14 and over (about three times present-day levels). Alcoholic beverages were plentiful and cheaper than tea or coffee. Alcohol was used to pay both common laborers and the itinerant preachers on the early Methodist circuit. Masters and journeymen shared a drink as a customary way of taking a break from work. No wedding, funeral, or meeting of friends was complete without alcohol.

For the temperance crusade to succeed, the reformers had to finance a massive propaganda campaign and link it to an organization that could energize



11-2  
Lyman Beecher, *Six Sermons on Intemperance* (1828)

**Sabbatarian movement** Reform organization founded in 1828 by Congregationalist and Presbyterian ministers that lobbied for an end to the delivery of mail on Sundays and other Sabbath violations.





thousands of people. They built such a mass movement by merging temperance into the network of churches and lay volunteers that the benevolent empire had developed and by adopting the techniques of revivals to win new converts.

Evangelical reformers denounced intemperance as the greatest sin of the land. Alcohol represented all that was wrong in America—crime, poverty, insanity, broken families, boisterous politicking, Sabbath-breaking.

This message was thundered from the pulpit and the public lectern. It was also broadcast in millions of tracts printed on the latest high-speed presses. As in the revivals, temperance rallies combined emotionally charged sermons with large, tearful prayer meetings to evoke guilt among sinners, who would then take the pledge of abstinence.

Within a decade, the American Temperance Society had more than five thousand local chapters and statewide affiliates. A million members had pledged abstinence by 1833. New England and New York alone claimed 72 percent of all temperance societies in the mid-1830s. Most of the converts came from the upper and middle classes. Businessmen welcomed temperance as a model of self-discipline in their efforts to regiment factory work. Young, upwardly mobile professionals and petty entrepreneurs learned in temperance how to be thrifty, self-controlled, and more respectable and creditworthy. Many of them presumably agreed with the *Temperance Recorder* that “the enterprise of this country is so great, and competition so eager in every branch of business . . . , that profit can only result from . . . temperance.”

Women were indispensable to the temperance movement. As the moral protectors of the family, they pressured their husbands to take the teetotaler’s pledge and stick by it, raised sons to shun alcohol, and banished liquor from their homes. By the 1840s, temperance and middle-class domesticity had become synonymous.

Temperance made its first significant inroads among the working classes during the economic depression of 1839–1843. Joining together in what they called Washington Temperance Societies, small businessmen and artisans, many of them reformed drunkards, carried temperance into working-class districts. The Washingtonians gained a considerable following by insisting that workers could survive the depression only if they stopped drinking and adopted the temperance ethic of frugality and self-help. Their wives organized auxiliary societies and pledged to enforce sobriety and economic restraint at home.

By 1845, per capita consumption of alcohol had fallen to less than two gallons. In 1851, Maine passed the first statewide prohibition law. Other northern states followed suit, but antitemperance coalitions soon overturned most of these laws outside New England. Nonetheless, alcohol consumption remained at the low level set in the 1840s.

### WOMEN’S ROLES IN REFORM

The first phase of women’s reform activities represented an extension of the Cult of Domesticity. Assumptions about their unique moral qualities encouraged women to assume the role of “social mother” inspired by the revivalist call of the 1820s they founded maternal associations, sponsored revivals, visited the poor, established Sunday Schools, and distributed Bibles and religious tracts. These reformers widened the public role of women, but their efforts also reinforced cultural stereotypes of women as nurturing helpmates who deferred to males.

A second phase in the reform efforts by women developed in the 1830s. Unlike their benevolent counterparts, the reformers now began to challenge male prerogatives and move beyond moral suasion. The crusade against prostitution exemplified the new militancy. Women seized leadership of the movement in 1834 with the founding of the New York Female Moral Reform Society. In the pages of





# OVERVIEW

## THE REFORM IMPULSE

Type	Objects of Reform	Means	Example	Origin
Moral reform	Individual failings such as drinking, sexual misconduct, Sabbath-breaking	Mass distribution of literature, speaker tours, lobbying	American Temperance Society	1810s–1820s
Institutional reform	Crime, poverty, delinquency	Penitentiaries, asylums, almshouses, state-supported schools	Massachusetts Board of Education	1830s
Utopian societies	Selfish materialism of society	New, highly structured communities	Shakers	1820s
Abolition	Slavery	Petition and mailing campaigns	American Anti-Slavery Society	1830s
Women's rights	Legal subordination of women	Lobbying, petition campaigns	Seneca Falls Convention	1840s

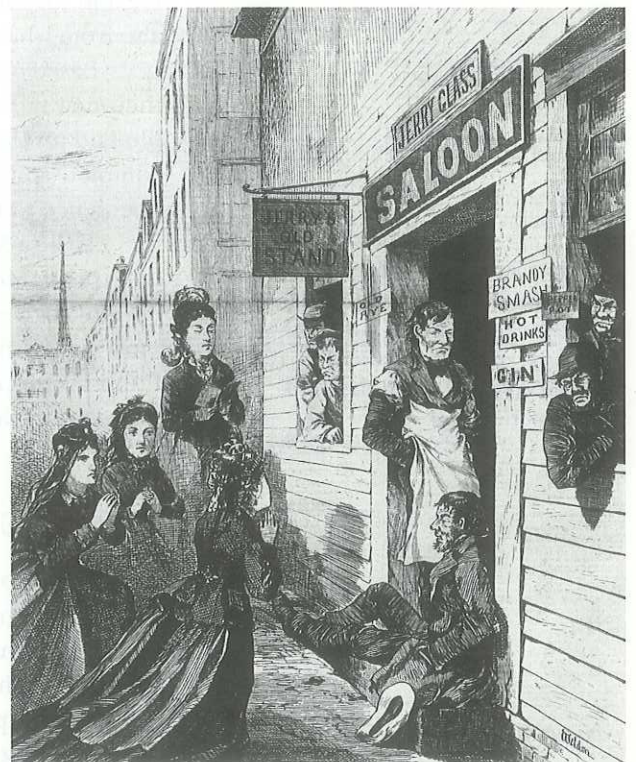
their journal, *Advocate for Moral Reform*, members identified male greed and licentiousness as the causes for the fallen state of women. Identified, too, were the male patrons of the city's brothels. The society blamed businessmen for the low wages that forced some women to resort to prostitution and denounced lustful men for engaging in "a regular crusade against [our] sex."

In 1839, this attack on the sexual double standard became a national movement with the establishment of the American Female Moral Reform Society. With 555 affiliates throughout the evangelical heartland of the North, female activists mounted a lobbying campaign that reached out to a mass audience for signatures. By the 1840s, such unprecedented political involvement enabled women to secure the first state laws criminalizing seduction and adultery.

Other women's groups developed a more radical critique of American society and its male leadership. The Boston Seamen's Aid Society, founded in 1833 by Sarah Josepha Hale, a widow with five children, soon rejected the benevolent tradition of distinguishing between the "respectable" and the "unworthy" poor. Hale discovered that her efforts to guide poor women toward self-sufficiency flew in the face of the low wages and substandard housing that trapped her clients in poverty. She concluded in 1838 that "it is hardly possible for the hopeless poor to avoid being vicious." Hale attacked male employers for exploiting the poor. "Combinations of selfish men are formed to beat down the price of female labor," she wrote in her 1836 annual report, "and then they call the diminished rate the market price."

**The temperance crusade** brought women out of their homes and into the streets to pray in front of taverns filled with drunken men.

Getty Images Inc. – Hulton Archive Photo







### BACKLASH AGAINST BENEVOLENCE

Some of the benevolent empire's harshest critics came out of the populist revivals of the early 1800s. They considered the Christian reformers' program a conspiracy of orthodox Calvinists to impose social and moral control on behalf of a religious and economic elite. The goal of the "orthodox party," warned the Universalist *Christian Intelligencer*, was the power of "governing the nation."

These criticisms revealed a profound mistrust of the emerging market society. In contrast to the evangelical reformers, drawn from the well-educated business and middle classes who were benefiting from economic change, most evangelical members of the grass-roots sects and followers of the itinerant preachers were unschooled, poor, and hurt by market fluctuations that they could not control. Often they were farmers forced by debt to move west or artisans and tradesmen displaced by new forms of factory production and new commercial outlets. Socially uprooted and economically stranded, they found a sense of community in their local churches and resisted control by wealthier, better-educated outsiders. Above all, they clung to beliefs that shored up the threatened authority of the father over his household.

With the elevation of women to the status of moral guardians of the family and agents of benevolent reform outside the household, middle-class evangelicalism in the Northeast was becoming feminized. This new social role for women was especially threatening—indeed, galling—for men who were the casualties of the more competitive economy. Raised on farms where the father had been the unquestioned lawgiver and provider, these men attacked feminized evangelicalism for undermining their paternal authority. They found in Scripture an affirmation of patriarchal power for any man, no matter how poor.

The **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** (also known as the **Mormon Church**) represented the most enduring religious backlash of economically struggling men against the aggressive efforts of reforming middle-class evangelicals. Joseph Smith, who established the church in upstate New York in 1830, came from a New England farm family uprooted and impoverished by market speculations gone sour. He and his followers were alienated, not only from the new market economy but also from what they saw as the religious and social anarchy around them.

Based on Smith's divine revelations as set forth in *The Book of Mormon* (1830), their new faith offered converts to Mormonism both a sanctuary as a biblical people and a release from social and religious uncertainties. Mormonism assigned complete spiritual and secular authority to men. Only through subordination and obedience to their husbands could women hope to gain salvation.

To be a Mormon was to join a large extended family that was part of a shared enterprise. Men bonded their labor in a communal economy to benefit all the faithful. Driven by a strong sense of social obligation, the Mormons forged the most successful alternative vision in antebellum America to the individualistic Protestant republic of the benevolent reformers. (For the Mormons' role in the westward movement, see Chapter 13.)

**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon Church)** Church founded in 1830 by Joseph Smith and based on the revelations in a sacred book he called the Book of Mormon.

### INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT

**A**lthough evangelical Protestantism was its main-spring, antebellum reform also had its roots in the European Enlightenment. Enlightenment thinkers, like the evangelicals inspired by religious optimism, had unbounded faith in social improvement.

Studies published in the 1820s that documented increasing urban poverty, crime, and teenage delinquency created a sense of urgency for many reformers.





Guided by the Enlightenment belief that environmental conditions shaped human character, reformers created a new system of public schooling in the North. They also prodded state legislatures to fund penitentiaries for criminals, asylums for the mentally ill, reformatories for the delinquent, and almshouses for the poor.

As reformers were implementing new institutional techniques for shaping individual character after 1820, a host of utopian communities also tapped into an impulse for human betterment. They typically rejected either private property or families based on monogamous marriage and offered a communitarian life designed to help a person reach perfection. Most of these communities were short-lived.

## SCHOOL REFORM

Before the 1820s, schooling in America was an informal, haphazard affair that nonetheless met the basic needs for reading, writing, and arithmetic skills of an overwhelmingly rural population. Private tutors and academies for the wealthy, a few charitable schools for the urban poor, and rural one-room schoolhouses open for a few months a year comprised formal education at the primary level.

The first political demands for free tax-supported schools originated with the Workingmen's movement in Eastern cities in the 1820s. Decrying what the Philadelphia Working Men's Committee in 1830 described as "a monopoly of talent, which consigns the multitude to comparative ignorance, and secures the balance of knowledge on the side of the rich and the rulers," workers called for free public schooling. In pushing for what they called "equal republican education," they were also seeking to guarantee that all citizens, no matter how poor, could achieve meaningful liberty and equality. Wealthier property holders, however, refused to be taxed to pay for the education of working-class children.

The breakthrough in school reform came in New England. Increasing economic inequality, growing numbers of Irish Catholic immigrants, and the emergence of a mass democracy based on nearly universal white male suffrage convinced reformers of the need for state-supported schools.

In 1837, the Massachusetts legislature established the nation's first state board of education. The head of the board for the next twelve years was Horace Mann, a former Whig politician and temperance advocate who now tirelessly championed educational reform. Mann demanded that the state government assume centralized control over Massachusetts schools. All schools should have the same standards of compulsory attendance, strict discipline, common textbooks, professionally trained teachers, and graded, competitive classes of age-segregated students.

Once this system was in place, Mann promised, poverty would no longer threaten social disruption because the ignorant would have the knowledge to acquire property and wealth. Trained in self-control and punctuality, youths would be able to take advantage of economic opportunities and become intelligent voters concerned with the rights of property.

Democrats in the Massachusetts legislature denounced Mann's program as "a system of centralization and of monopoly of power in a few hands, contrary in every respect, to the true spirit of our democratical institutions." The laboring poor, who depended on the wages their children could earn, resisted compulsory attendance laws and a longer school year. Farmers fought to maintain local control over schooling and to block the higher taxes needed for a more comprehensive and professionalized system. The Catholic Church protested the attempts of the reformers to indoctrinate students in the moral strictures of middle-class Protestantism. Catholics began building their own parochial schools.

Mann and his allies prevailed in most of the industrializing states with strong support from the professional and business constituencies of the Whig party.

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ECLECTIC FIRST READER.



### LESSON XI.

#### *Boys at Play.*

Can you fly a kite? See how the boy flies his kite. He holds the string fast, and the wind blows it up.

Now it is high in the air, and looks like a bird. When the wind blows hard, you must hold fast, or your kite will get away.

Boys love to run and play.

But they must not be rude. Good boys do not play in a rude way, but take care not to hurt any one.

Moral Lessons such as this one for boys at play filled the page of the McGuffey's readers.

Richard Nowitz Photography





In the concern etched in her face, this photograph captures the compassion that Dorothea Dix brought to her crusade for mental health reforms.

Courtesy of Library of Congress

School reform appealed to the growing Northern urban middle class. Schools would instill the moral and economic discipline that the middle class deemed essential for a progressive and ordered society. Teaching morality and national pride was central to the educational curriculum, and from the popular McGuffey Readers students learned that “God gives a great deal of money to some persons, in order that they may assist those [who] are poor.”

Out of the Northern middle class also came the young female teachers who increasingly staffed elementary schools. Presumed by their nature to be more nurturing than men, women now had an entry into teaching, the first profession open to them. Besides, women could also be paid far less than men; school boards assumed that they would accept low wages while waiting to be married.

By 1850 just over 50 percent of the white children between 5 and 19 years of age in the United States were enrolled in school—the highest percentage in the world at the time, although the slave states, especially in the Lower South, lagged behind the rest of the nation in public education.

### PRISONS, WORKHOUSES, AND ASYLUMS

Up to this time, Americans had depended on voluntary efforts to cope with crime, poverty, and social deviance. Reformers now turned to public authorities to establish a host of new institutions—penitentiaries, workhouses, mental hospitals, orphanages, and reformatories—to deal with social problems.

Eighteenth-century Americans never thought of rehabilitating criminals, but the institutional reformers of the Jacksonian era believed that criminals, the poor, and other deviants, could be morally redeemed. In the properly ordered environment of new institutions, discipline and moral character would be instilled in those who lacked the self-control to resist the corrupting vices and temptations that pervaded society.

As two French observers noted in the early 1830s, “The penitentiary system . . . to them seems the remedy for all the evils of society.” Unlike earlier prisons, the penitentiaries were huge, imposing structures that isolated the prisoners from each other and the outside world. No longer were criminals to be brutally punished or thrown together under inhumane conditions that perpetuated a cycle of moral depravity. Now, cut off from all corrupting influences, forced to learn that hard work teaches moral discipline, and uplifted by religious literature, criminals would be guided toward becoming law-abiding, productive citizens.

The same philosophy of reform provided the rationale for asylums to house the poor and the insane. The number of transient poor and the size of urban slums increased as commercial capitalism uprooted farmers from the land and undercut the security of craft trades. Believing that the poor, much like criminals, had only themselves to blame, public officials and their evangelical allies prescribed a therapeutic regimen of discipline and physical labor to cure the poor of their moral defects. The structured setting for that regimen was the workhouse.

The custodians of the workhouses banished drinking, gambling, and idleness. Inmates lived in a tightly scheduled daily routine built around manual labor. Once purged of their laziness and filled with self-esteem as the result of work discipline, the poor would be released to become useful members of society.

Public insane asylums offered a similar order for the mentally ill. Reformers believed that too many choices in a highly mobile, materialistic, and competitive society drove some people insane. By 1860, twenty-eight states had established mental hospitals. These facilities set rigid rules and work assignments to teach patients how to order their lives.





While the reformers did provide social deviants with cleaner and safer living conditions, their penitentiaries and asylums succeeded more in classifying and segregating their inmates than in reforming them. Submission to routine turned out not to be the best builder of character. Witnessing the rigorous control of every movement of the isolated prisoners at the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, English novelist Charles Dickens declared “this slow and daily tampering with the mysteries of the brain to be immeasurably worse than any torture of the body.”

Penitentiaries, reformatories, and workhouses failed to eliminate or noticeably check poverty, crime, and vice. By midcentury, reformers were defining deviants and dependents as permanent misfits who suffered from ingrained character defects. Stripped of their earlier optimism, the asylums became little more than holding pens for the outcasts of society.

### UTOPIAN ALTERNATIVES

Unlike the reformers, who aimed to improve the existing order by guiding individuals to greater self-discipline, the utopians sought perfection by withdrawing from society. A radically new social order, not an improved old one, was their goal.

Though following different religious and secular philosophies of communitarian living, all the utopians wanted to fashion a more rational and personally satisfying alternative to the competitive materialism of antebellum America. Nearly all the communities sought to transform the organization and rewards of work, thus challenging the prevailing dogmas about private property.

The most successful utopian communities were religious sects whose reordering of both sexual and economic relations departed most sharply from middle-class norms. The **Shakers**, at their height in the 1830s, attracted some six thousand followers. Named for the convulsive dancing that was part of their religious ceremonies, the Shakers traced their origins to the teachings of Ann Lee (“Mother Ann”). An illiterate factory laborer in mid-eighteenth-century England, Lee had a revelation in 1770 that the Second Coming of Christ was to be fulfilled in her own womanly form, the embodiment of the female side of God. Fired by another vision in 1774, Lee led eight of her followers to America, where, after her death in 1784, her disciples established the first Shaker community in New Lebanon, New York.

Organized around a doctrine of celibate **communism**, Shaker communities held all property in common. The sexes worked and lived apart from each other. Dancing during religious worship brought men and women together and provided an emotional release from enforced sexual denial. As an early Shaker leader explained, “There is evidently no labor which so fully absorbs all the faculties of soul and body, as real spiritual devotion and energetic exercise in sacred worship.” In worldly as well as spiritual terms, women enjoyed an equality in Shaker life that the outside world denied them. For this reason, twice as many women as men joined the Shakers.

The Shakers gradually dwindled. Their rule of celibacy meant, of course, that they could propagate themselves only by recruiting new members and few new converts joined the movement after 1850. The Shakers today are best remembered for the beautiful simplicity of the furniture they made in their workshops.

John Humphrey Noyes established the **Oneida Community** in upstate New York in 1847. He attracted over two hundred followers with his perfectionist vision of plural marriage, community nurseries, group discipline, and common ownership of property. Charged with adultery, Noyes fled to Canada in 1879, but the Oneida Community, reorganized in 1881 as a joint-stock company in the United

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



Shaker Museum at  
South Union, Kentucky  
[www.shakermuseum.com/](http://www.shakermuseum.com/)

**Shakers** The followers of Mother Ann Lee, who preached a religion of strict celibacy and communal living.

**Communism** A social structure based on the common ownership of property.

**Oneida Community** Utopian community established in upstate New York in 1848 by John Humphrey Noyes and his followers.





WHERE TO LEARN MORE

★ Historic New Harmony,  
New Harmony, Indiana  
[www.newharmony.org/](http://www.newharmony.org/)

States and committed thereafter to conventional sexual mores, survived into the twentieth century.

Secular utopians aspired to perfect social relations through the rational design of planned communities. Bitter critics of the social evils of industrialization, they tried to construct models for a social order free from poverty, unemployment, and inequality. They envisioned cooperative communities that balanced agricultural and industrial pursuits in a mixed economy that recycled earnings to the laborers who actually produced the wealth.

Despite their high expectations, nearly all the planned communities ran into financial difficulties and collapsed. The pattern was set by the first of the controversial socialist experiments, **New Harmony** in Indiana, the brainchild of the wealthy, Scottish industrialist and philanthropist Robert Owen who was a proponent of utopian **socialism**. But within two years of its founding in 1825, New Harmony fell victim to inadequate financing and internal bickering.

**Brook Farm** established in 1841 in West Roxbury, Massachusetts (today part of Boston), was a showcase for the transcendentalist philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson. A former Unitarian minister in Boston, Emerson taught that intuition and emotion could grasp a truer (“transcendent”) reality than the senses alone could. Boston intellectuals saw Brook Farm as a refuge from the pressures and coarseness of commercial society, a place where they could realize the Emersonian ideal of spontaneous creativity. Although disbanded after six years as an economic failure, Brook Farm inspired intellectuals such as Nathaniel Hawthorne. His writings and those of others influenced by **transcendentalism** flowed into the great renaissance of American literature in the mid-nineteenth century.

In an 1837 address at Harvard, Emerson had called for a national literature devoted to the democratic possibilities of American life. “The literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street, the meaning of household life, are the topics of the time,” he proclaimed. Writers soon responded to Emerson’s call.

Walt Whitman, whose *Leaves of Grass* (1855) foreshadowed modern poetry in its use of free verse, shared Emerson’s faith in the possibilities of individual fulfillment, and his poems celebrated the democratic variety of the American people. Henry David Thoreau, Emerson’s friend and neighbor, embodied the transcendentalist fascination with nature and self-discovery by living in relative isolation for sixteen months at Walden Pond, near Concord, Massachusetts. His *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (1854) became an American classic. “I went to the woods,” he wrote, “because I wished to . . . confront only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.”

Novelists Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville focused on the existence of evil and the human need for community. In *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), Hawthorne probed themes of egoism and pride to reveal the underside of the human soul. Melville’s *Moby Dick* (1851) depicted the consequences of a competitive individualism unchecked by a social conscience.

Much of the appeal of the utopian communities flowed from the same concern about the splintering and selfishness of antebellum society that animated Hawthorne and Melville. The works of these novelists have endured, but the utopian experiments quickly collapsed. Promising economic security and social harmony to buttress a threatened sense of community, the utopians failed to lure all but a few Americans from the acquisitiveness and competitive demands of the larger society.

**New Harmony** Short-lived utopian community established in Indiana in 1825, based on the socialist ideas of Robert Owen, a wealthy Scottish manufacturer.

**Socialism** Political and economic theory advocating that land, natural resources, and the chief industries should be owned by the community as a whole.

**Brook Farm** A utopian community and experimental farm established in 1841 near Boston.

**Transcendentalism** A philosophical and literary movement centered on an idealistic belief in the divinity of individuals and nature.





## OVERVIEW

### TYPES OF ANTISLAVERY REFORM

Type	Definition	Example
Gradualist	Accepts notions of black inferiority and attempts to end slavery gradually by purchasing the freedom of slaves and colonizing them in Africa	American Colonization Society
Immediatist	Calls for immediate steps to end slavery and denounces slavery and racial prejudice as moral sins	Abolitionists
Political antislavery	Recognizes slavery in states where it exists but insists on keeping slavery out of the territories	Free-Soilers

## ABOLITIONISM AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Abolitionism emerged from the same religious impulse that energized reform throughout the North. Like other reformers, the abolitionists came predominantly from evangelical, middle-class families, particularly those of New England stock. What distinguished the abolitionists was their insistence that slavery was *the* great national sin, mocking American ideals of liberty and Christian morality.

Under the early leadership of William Lloyd Garrison, the abolitionists attacked slaveholders and those whose moral apathy helped support slavery. After provoking a storm of protest in both North and South, the abolitionist movement split in 1840. Crucial in this division was Garrison's support of women's rights. Most abolitionists broke with him and founded their own antislavery organization. Female abolitionists organized a separate women's rights movement.

### REJECTING COLONIZATION

In the early nineteenth century, when slavery was expanding westward, almost all white Americans regardless of class or region were convinced that emancipation would lead to a race war or the debasement of their superior status through racial interbreeding. This paralyzing fear, rooted in racism, long shielded slavery from sustained attack.

In 1817, antislavery reformers from the North and South founded the **American Colonization Society**. Slaveholding politicians from the Upper South, notably Henry Clay, James Madison, and President James Monroe, were its leading organizers. Gradual emancipation followed by the removal of black people from America to Africa was the only solution that white reformers could imagine for ridding the nation of slavery and avoiding a racial bloodbath. Their goal was to make America all free and all white.

The American Colonization Society had no chance of success. No form of emancipation could appeal to slave owners who could profit from the demand for their slaves in the Lower South. Black people already free accounted for nearly all of those the society transported to its West African colony, Liberia. At the height of its popularity in the 1820s, the society sent only fourteen hundred colonists to Africa. During that same decade, the American slave population increased by 700,000.

### WHY DID abolitionist

agitation and sentiment in the North grow?

### American Colonization Society

Organization, founded in 1817 by antislavery reformers, that called for gradual emancipation and the removal of freed blacks to Africa.





Free African Americans bitterly attacked the colonizers' assumption that free black people were unfit to live as free citizens in America. Most free African Americans were native-born, and they considered themselves Americans with every right to enjoy the blessings of republican liberty. As a black petition in 1817 stated, banishment from America "would not only be cruel, but in direct violation of the principles, which have been the boast of this republic."

Organizing through their own churches in northern cities, free African Americans founded some fifty abolitionist societies, offered refuge to fugitive slaves, and launched the first African-American newspaper in 1827, *Freedom's Journal*. David Walker, a free black man who had moved from North Carolina to Massachusetts, published his *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* in 1829. Rejecting colonization, Walker insisted that "America is more our country, than it is the whites'—we have enriched it with our *blood and tears*," and he warned white Americans that "wo, wo, will be to you if we have to obtain our freedom by fighting."

As if in response to his call for revolutionary resistance by the enslaved, Nat Turner's Rebellion exploded in the summer of 1831 (see Chapter 11). Both alarmed and inspired by the increased tempo of black militancy, a small group of antislavery white people abandoned all illusions about colonization and embarked on a radically new approach for eradicating slavery.

### ABOLITIONISM

The leading figure in early abolitionism was William Lloyd Garrison, a Massachusetts printer, who became coeditor of an antislavery newspaper in Baltimore in 1829. Before the year was out, Garrison was convicted of criminal libel for his editorials against a Massachusetts merchant engaged in the domestic slave trade and spent seven weeks in jail. Garrison emerged with an unquenchable hatred for slavery. Returning to Boston, he launched his own antislavery newspaper, *The Liberator*, in 1831. A year later, he was instrumental in founding the New England Anti-Slavery Society.

As militant as the free African Americans who comprised the bulk of the early subscribers to *The Liberator*, Garrison thundered, "If we would not see our land deluged in blood, we must instantly burst asunder the shackles of the slaves." He committed abolitionism to the twin goals of immediatism—an immediate moral commitment to end slavery—and racial equality. Only by striving toward these goals, he insisted, could white America ever hope to end slavery without massive violence.

The demand of the abolitionists for the legal equality of black people was as unsettling to public opinion as their call for immediate, uncompensated emancipation. Discriminatory laws, aptly described by abolitionist Lydia Maria Child as "this legalized contempt of color," restricted the political and civil liberties of free African Americans in every state. (See *American Views*: "Appeal of a Female Abolitionist," pp. 318–319) Denied the vote outside New England, segregated in all public facilities, prohibited from moving into several western states, and excluded from most jobs save menial labor, free black people everywhere were walled off as an inferior caste unfit for equality.

Garrison was uncompromising in denouncing slavery and advocating black rights. But without the organizational and financial resources of a national society, the message of the early Garrisonians rarely extended beyond free black communities in the North. The success of British abolitionists in 1833 when gradual, compensated emancipation was enacted for Britain's West Indian colonies, inspired white and black abolitionists to gather at Philadelphia in December 1833 and form the **American Anti-Slavery Society**.

***Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*** Written by David Walker, a published insistence that "America is more our country, than it is the whites'—we have enriched it with our *blood and tears*."

**American Anti-Slavery Society** The first national organization of abolitionists, founded in 1833.





Arthur and Lewis Tappan, two wealthy merchants from New York City, provided financial backing, and Theodore Dwight Weld, a young evangelical minister, fused abolitionism with the moral passion of religious revivalism. Weld brought abolitionism to the West in 1834 with the revivals he preached at Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati. The “Lane rebels,” students gathered by Weld, fanned out as itinerant agents to seek converts for abolitionism throughout the Yankee districts of the rural North. Weld’s *American Slavery as It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses*, a massively documented indictment of slavery, became a bestseller in 1839. Abolitionist women, notably Angelina Grimké, Weld’s wife and the daughter of a South Carolina planter, contributed much of the research.

Revivalistic exhortations were just one technique the abolitionists exploited to mobilize public opinion against slavery. They spread their message through rallies, paid lecturers, children’s games and toys, and the printed word. Drawing on the experience of reformers in Bible and tract societies, the abolitionists harnessed steam printing to the cause of moral suasion. They distributed millions of antislavery tracts, and by the late 1830s, abolitionist sayings appeared on posters, emblems, song sheets, and even candy wrappers.

To change public opinion, the abolitionists described slavery in terms of moral and physical degradation. By 1840, nearly 200,000 Northerners belonged to the American Anti-Slavery Society. Most whites, however, remained unmoved, and some violently opposed the abolitionists.

In the mid-1830s antiabolitionist mobs in the North disrupted antislavery meetings, beat and stoned speakers, destroyed printing presses, burned the homes of the wealthy benefactors of the movement, and vandalized free black neighborhoods in a wave of terror that drove black people from several northern cities. Elijah P. Lovejoy, an abolitionist editor in Illinois, was killed by a mob in 1837. The mobs’ fury expressed the anxieties of semiskilled and common laborers who thought they might lose their jobs if freed slaves moved North.

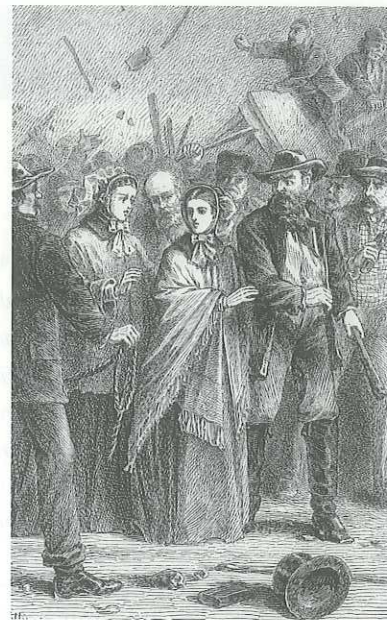
In the South, the hostility to abolitionism took the form of burning and censoring antislavery literature, offering rewards for the capture of leading abolitionists to stand trial for inciting slave revolts, and tightening up slave codes and the surveillance of free black people. Meanwhile, Democrats in Congress passed a gag rule that automatically tabled antislavery petitions.

In 1838, Garrison helped found the New England Non-Resistant Society, dedicated to the belief that a complete moral regeneration, based on renouncing force in all human relationships, was necessary if America were ever to live up to its Christian and republican ideals. The Garrisonian nonresistants rejected all coercive authority, whether expressed in human bondage, clerical support of slavery, male dominance in the patriarchal family, the racial oppression of black people, or the police power of government. The logic of their stand as Christian **anarchists** drove them to denounce all formal political activities and even the legitimacy of the Union, based as it was on a pact with slaveholders.

Garrison’s support for the growing demand of antislavery women to be treated as equals in the movement split the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1840. In turn, the opposition of most male abolitionists to the public activities of their female counterparts provoked a militant faction of these women into founding their own movement to achieve equality in American society.

## THE WOMEN’S RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Feminism grew out of abolitionism because of the parallels many women drew between the exploited lives of the slaves and their own subordinate status in Northern society. Considered biologically inferior to men, women were denied the vote,



**Mobs of angry men** often broke up meetings organized by women to vote. Shown here is a male escort offering protection to Lucretia Mott and another suffragette at one such meeting.

Corbis

**anarchists** Persons who believe that all government interferes with individual liberty and should be abolished by whatever means necessary.





## ◆ AMERICAN VIEWS ◆

### APPEAL OF A FEMALE ABOLITIONIST

**L**ydia Maria Child's *Appeal*, published in Boston in 1833, was a landmark in abolitionist literature for both its thorough attack on slavery and its refutation of racism. The condemnation of racial prejudice directly challenged the deep beliefs and assumptions of nearly all white Americans, in the North and the South. Racism and slavery, as Child shows in this excerpt from her *Appeal*, fed off one another in the national curse of slavery.

HOW DOES Child argue that Northern white people must bear some responsibility for perpetuating slavery? What arguments does Child make against racial discrimination in Northern society? What did Child mean when she wrote that “the Americans are peculiarly responsible for the example they give”? Do you agree with her? How does Child deal with the charge that the abolitionists threatened the preservation of the Union?

While we bestow our earnest disapprobation on the system of slavery, let us not flatter ourselves that we are in reality any better than our brethren of the South.

Thanks to our soil and climate, and the early exhortions of the Quakers, the form of slavery does not exist among us; but the very spirit of the hateful and mischievous thing is here in all its strength. . . . Our prejudice against colored people is even more inveterate than it is at the South. The planter is often attached to his negroes, and lavishes caresses and kind words upon them, as he would on a favorite hound: but our cold-hearted, ignoble prejudice admits of no exception—no intermission.

The Southerners have long continued habit, apparent interest and dreaded danger, to palliate the wrong they do; but we stand without excuse. . . . If the free States wished to cherish the system of slavery forever, they could not take a more direct course than they now do. Those who are kind and liberal on all other subjects, unite with the selfish and the proud in their unrelenting efforts to keep the colored population in the lowest state of degradation; and the influence they unconsciously exert over children early infuses into their innocent minds the same strong feelings of contempt. . . .

The state of public feeling not only makes it difficult for the Africans to obtain information, but it pre-

deprived of property or control of any wages after marriage, and barred from most occupations and advanced education. “In striving to cut [the slave’s] irons off, we found most surely that *we* were manacled *ourselves*,” argued Abby Kelley, a Quaker abolitionist.

Antislavery women now demanded an equal voice in the abolitionist movement. Despite strong opposition from male abolitionists, Garrison helped Abby Kelley win a seat on the business committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society at its convention in 1840. The anti-Garrisonians walked out of the convention and formed a separate organization in 1840, the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

The “woman question” also disrupted the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. The refusal of the convention to seat the American female delegates was the final indignity that transformed the discontent of women into a self-conscious movement for women’s equality. Two of the excluded delegates, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, vowed to build an organization to “speak out for *oppressed* women.”

Their work went slowly. Early feminists were dependent on the abolitionists for most of their followers. Many women sympathetic to the feminist movement



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Sojourner Truth, Address to the Woman's Rights Convention, Akron, Ohio (1851)





vents them from making profitable use of what knowledge they have. A colored man, however intelligent, is not allowed to pursue any business more lucrative than that of a barber, a shoe-black, or waiter. These, and all other employments, are truly respectable, whenever the duties connected with them are faithfully performed; but it is unjust that a man should, on account of his complexion, be prevented from performing more elevated uses in society. Every citizen ought to have a fair chance to try his fortune in any line of business, which he thinks he has ability to transact. Why should not colored men be employed in the manufactories of various kinds? If their ignorance is an objection, let them be enlightened, as speedily as possible. If their moral character is not sufficiently pure, remove the pressure of public scorn, and thus supply them with motives for being respectable. All this can be done. It merely requires an earnest wish to overcome a prejudice, which . . . is in fact opposed to the spirit of our religion, and contrary to the instinctive good feelings of our nature. . . . When the majority heartily desire a change, it is effected, be the difficulties what they may. The Americans are peculiarly responsible for the example they give; for in no other country does the unchecked voice of the people constitute the whole of government. . . .

The strongest and best reason that can be given for our supineness on the subject of slavery, is the fear of dissolving the Union. The Constitution of the United States demands our highest reverence. . . . But we must not forget that the Constitution provides for any change that may be required for the general good. The great machine is constructed with a safety valve, by which any rapidly increasing evil may be expelled whenever the people desire it.

If the Southern politicians are determined to make a Siamese question of this also—if they insist that the Union shall not exist without slavery—it can only be said that they join two things, which have no affinity with each other, and which cannot permanently exist together.—They chain the living and vigorous to the diseased and dying; and the former will assuredly perish in the infected neighborhood.

The universal introduction of free labor is the surest way to consolidate the Union, and enable us to live together in harmony and peace. If a history is ever written entitled, “The Decay and Dissolution of the North American Republic,” its author will distinctly trace our downfall to the existence of slavery among us.

*Source:* Lydia Maria Child. *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans* (originally published 1833), ed. Carolyn L. Karcher (University of Massachusetts Press, 1996).

held back lest they be shunned in their communities. A minister’s wife in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, spoke for many of these women when she wrote to a feminist friend, “There are but few here who think of women as anything more than slave or a plaything, and they think I am different from most women.”

In 1848, Stanton and Mott were finally able to call the first national convention ever devoted to women’s rights at Seneca Falls, in upstate New York. The **Seneca Falls Convention** issued the **Declaration of Sentiments**, a call for full female equality. It identified male patriarchy as the source of women’s oppression and demanded the vote for women as a sacred and inalienable right of republican citizenship.

The Seneca Falls agenda defined the goals of the women’s movement for the rest of the century. The call for the vote met the stiffest opposition. The feminists’ few successes before the Civil War came in economic rights. By 1860, fourteen states had granted women greater control over their property and wages—most significantly under New York’s Married Women’s Property Act of 1860. Largely the result of the intense lobbying of Susan B. Anthony, the act established women’s legal right to their own wage income and to sue fathers and husbands who tried to deprive them of their wages.

WHERE TO LEARN MORE



Women’s Rights Historical Park,  
Seneca Falls, New York  
[www.nps.gov/wori/wrnhp.htm](http://www.nps.gov/wori/wrnhp.htm)

**Seneca Falls Convention** The first convention for women’s equality in legal rights, held in upstate New York in 1848.

**Declaration of Sentiments** The resolutions passed at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 calling for full female equality, including the right to vote.





The feminist movement did not attract broad support. Most women found in the doctrine of separate spheres a reassuring feminine identity that they could express either at home or in benevolent and reform societies. Within the reform movement as a whole, women's rights were always of minor concern.

### POLITICAL ANTISLAVERY

Most abolitionists who had broken with Garrison in 1840 believed that emancipation could best be achieved by moving abolitionism into the mainstream of American politics. Political abolitionism had its roots in the petition campaign of the late 1830s. Congressional efforts to suppress the discussion of slavery backfired when John Quincy Adams, the former president who had become a Massachusetts congressman, resorted to an unending series of parliamentary ploys to get around the gag rule. Adams became a champion of the constitutional right to petition Congress for redress of grievances. White Northerners who had shown no interest in abolitionism as a moral crusade for black people now began to take a stand against slavery when the issue involved the civil liberties of whites and the political power of the South. By the hundreds of thousands, they signed abolitionist petitions in 1837 and 1838 to protest the gag rule and block the admission of Texas as a slave state.

In 1840, anti-Garrison abolitionists formed the **Liberty party** and elected several antislavery congressmen in antislavery districts dominated by evangelical New Englanders. The Liberty party condemned racial discrimination in the North, as well as slavery in the South, and won the support of most black abolitionists.

Frederick Douglass was the black abolitionists' most dynamic spokesman. After escaping from slavery in 1838, Douglass became a spellbinding lecturer for abolitionism and in 1845 published his classic autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. Dissatisfied with Garrison's Christian pacifism and his stand against political action, Douglass broke with Garrison in 1847 and founded a black abolitionist newspaper, *The North Star*. The break became irreparable in 1851 when Douglass publicly denied the Garrisonian position that the Constitution was a proslavery document. If properly interpreted, Douglass insisted, "the Constitution is a *glorious liberty document*," and he called for a political war against slavery.

That war had started in the 1840s with the Liberty party, which kept slavery in the limelight of national politics. Led by Joshua R. Giddings, a small but vocal bloc of antislavery politicians began to popularize the frightening concept of "the Slave Power"—a vast conspiracy of planters and their Northern lackeys who had seized control of the federal government and was plotting to spread slavery and subvert any free institutions that opposed it. As proof, they cited the gag rule shutting off debate on slavery and the campaign of the Tyler administration to annex slaveholding Texas. The Michigan Liberty party in 1843 claimed that slavery was "not only a monstrous legalized system of wickedness . . . but an overwhelming political monopoly . . . which has thus tyrannically subverted the constitutional liberties of more than 12,000,000 of nominal American freemen." The Liberty party blamed the depression of 1839–1843 on the "withering and impoverishing effect of slavery on the free States." Planters, it was charged, had reneged on their debts to Northern creditors and manipulated federal policies on banking and tariffs to the advantage of the South.

The specter of the Slave Power made white liberties and not black bondage central to Northern concerns about slavery. White people who had earlier been apathetic now began to view slavery as a threat to their rights of free speech and self-improvement through free labor untainted by the degrading competition of slave labor.

The image of the Slave Power predisposed many Northerners to see the expansionist program of the incoming Polk administration as part of a Southern plot



#### WHERE TO LEARN MORE

★ Oberlin College Library,  
Oberlin, Ohio  
[www.oberlin.edu/library/](http://www.oberlin.edu/library/)

**Liberty party** The first antislavery political party, formed in 1840.





to secure more territory for slaveholders at the expense of Northern farmers. Northern fears that free labor would be shut out of the new territories won in the Mexican War provided the rallying cry for the Free-Soil Party of 1848 that foreshadowed the more powerful Republican Party of the late 1850s.

## CONCLUSION

After 1815, transportation improvements, technological innovations, and expanding markets drove the economy toward industrialization. Wealth inequality increased, old classes were reshaped, and new ones formed. These changes were most evident in the Northeast, where capital, labor, and growing urban markets spurred the acceleration of manufacturing. The reform impulse that both reflected and shaped these changes was also strongest in the Northeast.

The new evangelical Protestantism promised that human perfectibility was possible if individuals strove to free themselves from sin. Influenced by this promise, the Northern middle class embraced reform causes that sought to improve human character. Temperance established sobriety as the cultural standard for respectable male behavior. Middle-class reform also emphasized institutional solutions for what were now defined as the social problems of ignorance, crime, and poverty.

The most radical reform movements focused on women's equality and the elimination of slavery. The women's rights movement emerged out of women's involvement in reform, especially in abolitionism. Feminism and abolitionism triggered a backlash from the conservative majority. That prevented women from gaining legal and political equality, and convinced most abolitionists that they had to switch from moral agitation to political persuasion. Political abolitionists found that the most effective approach was their charge that a Slave Power conspiracy threatened the freedoms of white Northerners.

## SUMMARY

**Industrial Change and Urbanization** In the 1800s the United States experienced a transportation and manufacturing revolution; this accelerated the spread of cities, factories, and commercial farming. Urbanization brought new work patterns as manufacturing moved from the home to factories. The Northeast experienced the greatest growth; swelling the size of all cities were immigrants, most coming from Ireland and Germany. The new middle class was the product of the changes in employment opportunities; the new working classes contained native-born artisans competing for jobs with immigrants and women.

**Reform and Moral Order** The changes to society that accompanied this market revolution frightened religious leaders and businessmen in the East. The benevolent empire responded with a host of societies targeted at individual vices, especially the consumption of alcohol. Women played a significant role in these reform movements, not always with the approval of males who saw their authority being undermined.



After escaping to freedom in 1838, Frederick Douglass became a commanding figure in the abolitionist movement. His speeches denouncing slavery were fiery and eloquent.

Frederick Douglass (1817?–1895). Oil on canvas, c. 1844, attr. to E. Hammond. The Granger Collection







**Institutions and Social Improvement** Based in the Enlightenment belief that people and society could be improved, the reformers implemented new institutions to shape individual character. Free, tax-supported public education was one of their most lasting achievements; prisons and asylums for the mentally ill were also targeted. Utopian reformers sought self-improvement by withdrawing into communitarian societies; the intellectuals who were drawn to Brook Farm had a lasting impact, as these transcendentalists were the catalyst for the nineteenth-century renaissance of American literature.

**Abolitionism and Women's Rights** Abolitionism emerged from the same religious impulse that energized reform throughout the North. Believing slavery was the great national sin, abolitionists attacked the institution and all its supporters. After provoking a storm of protests in the North and the South, the abolitionist movement divided, with women expanding their efforts into a women's rights movement. Abolitionists moved their cause into the political mainstream and focused attention on what they called the growing "Slave Power" threatening the nation.

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## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why were improvements in transportation essential to the growth of the economy after 1815?
  2. What is an industrial revolution? Why did manufacturing surge in the United States from 1815 to 1850?
  3. What drew women into reform?
  4. Why was abolitionism the most radical reform of all?
  5. Why was Angelina Grimké's journey from social privilege to social activism so exceptional?
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## KEY TERMS

**American Anti-Slavery Society**  
(p. 316)

**American Colonization Society**  
(p. 315)

**American system of manufacturing**  
(p. 301)

**Anarchists** (p. 317)

***Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*** (p. 316)

**Benevolent empire** (p. 306)

**Brook Farm** (p. 314)

***Charles River Bridge v. Warren Bridge***  
(p. 295)

**Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon Church)** (p. 310)

**Communism** (p. 313)

**Cult of domesticity** (p. 304)

**Declaration of Sentiments** (p. 319)

***Gibbons v. Ogden*** (p. 294)

**Liberty party** (p. 320)

**Nativist organizations** (p. 305)

**New Harmony** (p. 314)

**Oneida Community** (p. 313)

**Putting-out system** (p. 297)

**Sabbatarian movement** (p. 307)

**Seneca Falls Convention** (p. 319)

**Shakers** (p. 313)

**Socialism** (p. 314)

**Temperance** (p. 304)

**Transcendentalism** (p. 314)

**Transportation revolution** (p. 291)

**Waltham system** (p. 300)





## WHERE TO LEARN MORE

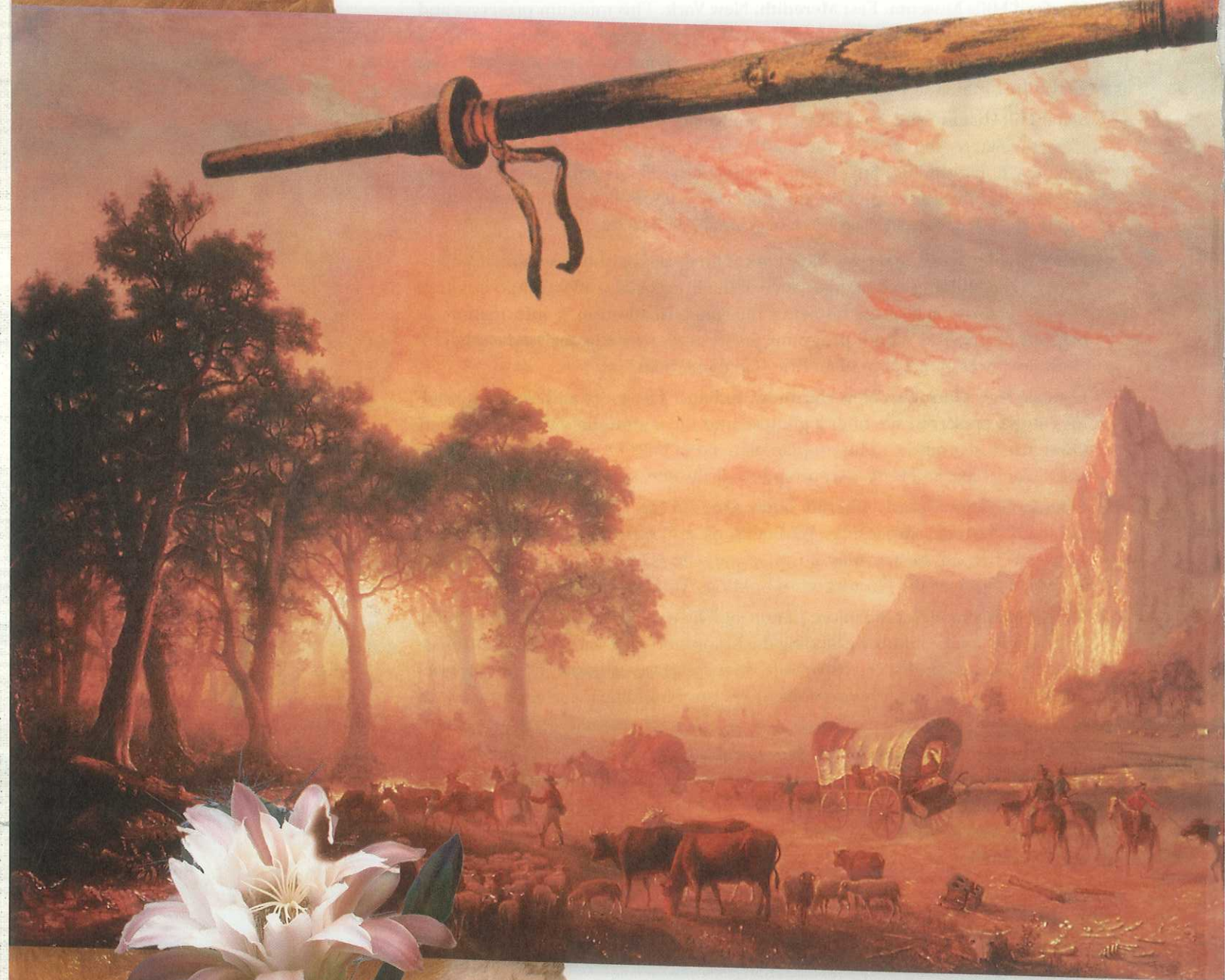
- ☞ **Baltimore Center for Urban Archaeology, Baltimore, Maryland.** Operated by Baltimore City Life Museum, the center has a large collection of artifacts depicting urban life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and a working archaeological library.
- ☞ **Hanford Mills Museum, East Meredith, New York.** This museum preserves and interprets water-powered machinery and explains the role played by local mills in the community life of the nineteenth century. For a map and links to events, workshops, and education programs, visit: [www.hanfordmills.org/](http://www.hanfordmills.org/)
- ☞ **Slater Hill Historic Site, Pawtucket, Rhode Island.** The Sylvanus Brown House of 1758, the Slaren Mill of 1793, and the Wilkinson Mill of 1810 are on the site. An extensive library and holdings provide insight into the social and economic world of the early industrial revolution. Information on hours, collections, and exhibits can be found at: [www.artcom.com/museums/vs/sz/02862-06.htm](http://www.artcom.com/museums/vs/sz/02862-06.htm)
- ☞ **Erie Canal Museum, Syracuse, New York.** The museum houses extensive collections on the building and maintenance of the Erie Canal, and its photo holdings visually record much of the history of the canal. In addition to information on exhibits, tours, and school programs, its website, [www.eriecanalmuseum.org/](http://www.eriecanalmuseum.org/), includes pictures of a replica of an Erie Canal line boat.
- ☞ **Historic New Harmony, New Harmony, Indiana.** The tours and museum holdings at this preserved site offer a glimpse into the communal living that Robert Owen tried to promote in his utopian plan. For a brief history of New Harmony and links to special events and programs at the site, go to: [www.newharmony.org/](http://www.newharmony.org/)
- ☞ **Oberlin College Library, Oberlin, Ohio.** Oberlin was a hotbed of reform agitation, and the tracts, broadsides, photographs, and other memorabilia here are especially rich on the activities of white evangelicals and black abolitionists. For an introduction to the library and its holdings, visit: [www.oberlin.edu/library/](http://www.oberlin.edu/library/)
- ☞ **Shaker Museum at South Union, Kentucky.** The exhibits, artifacts, and archives are a superb source for understanding the history and material culture of the Shakers and other radical sects. Its website, [www.shakermuseum.com/](http://www.shakermuseum.com/), includes a brief history of the Shakers, photographs of restored buildings, and an overview of the museum's holdings.
- ☞ **Women's Rights Historical Park, Seneca Falls, New York.** The park provides an interpretive overview of the first women's rights convention and includes among its historical sites the restored home of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Go to [www.nps.gov/wori/wrnhp.htm](http://www.nps.gov/wori/wrnhp.htm) for links to the museum's summer calendar of events and information on programs.



For additional study resources for this chapter, go to:  
[www.prenhall.com/goldfield/chapter12](http://www.prenhall.com/goldfield/chapter12)



*They immigrate constantly, hardly no one  
to prevent them, and take possession of  
the location that best suits them without either  
asking leave or going through any formality  
other than that of building their homes.*



**Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902), "The Oregon Trail" (oil on canvas).**  
Private Collection/Bridgeman Art Library International Ltd., New York