

Section 1: Immigrants and Urban Challenges

MILLIONS OF IMMIGRANTS ARRIVE

Between 1840 and 1860, more than 4 million immigrants came to the United States. Many came from Ireland, fleeing starvation that came with a terrible potato famine there. The famine also meant that many Irish immigrants arrived poor. These immigrants often got jobs working long hours for little pay.

Unlike the Irish, immigrants from Germany often arrived with some money. Many came to America after a revolution in their homeland. Others came for the opportunities America offered. Many bought farmland in America's Midwest. Others settled and worked in cities.

THE NATIVIST RESPONSE

To many native-born Americans, the new immigrants posed a threat. Americans worried that immigrants would take away their jobs. Immigrants would do the same work but for less money. The Americans also mistrusted immigrants who were Catholic. In Europe, Protestants and Catholics had a history of conflicts. Americans who opposed immigration for these reasons were known as **nativists**. Together, the nativists formed a political group called the **Know-Nothing Party** to try limiting immigration.

THE GROWTH OF CITIES

In the mid-1800s, the Industrial Revolution encouraged rapid growth in America's cities. The jobs the Industrial Revolution created also helped build a **middle class**-a social and economic level between the wealthy and the poor. These new urban dwellers enjoyed the culture in America's cities. Libraries, clubs, and theaters grew as the cities grew.

URBAN PROBLEMS

The people who moved to the city to work could afford only tenement rents. **Tenements** were poorly designed housing structures that were dirty, overcrowded, and unsafe. Cities had not yet learned how to deal with the filth and garbage generated by so many people, and killer epidemics resulted. Crime and fires also plagued the fast-growing cities of the United States.

Section 2: American Arts

TRANSCENDENTALISM AND UTOPIAN COMMUNITIES

Transcendentalism was a belief system in which followers thought they could rise above material things in life and that people should depend on themselves rather than outside authority. **Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Henry David Thoreau** were among the great American thinkers who were also transcendentalists. Emerson expressed his ideas in the essay "Self-Reliance." Fuller wrote *Women in the Nineteenth Century*, a book about women's basic rights. In his book *Life in the Woods*, Thoreau summarized many of his transcendentalist beliefs.

Some transcendentalists created communities apart from society. In these **utopian communities**, people hoped to form a perfect society. Some, such as the Shaker communities, were based on religious beliefs. Other groups pursued utopian lifestyles for other transcendental reasons.

THE AMERICAN ROMANTICS

In the early and mid-1800s, many artists were inspired by simple life and nature's beauty. Some joined the Romantic movement that began in Europe with British poets such as Blake, Byron, Keats, and Shelley. For the Romantics, each person brought a unique point of view to the world.

These writers used their emotions to guide their works. It was at this time that American Romantic writers also began to write in an American style. Female writers such as Ann Sophia Stephens wrote popular historical fiction. Another historical novel, *The Scarlet Letter* by **Nathaniel Hawthorne**, described Puritan life in America. Herman Melville wrote *Moby Dick*, considered to be one of America's finest novels. **Edgar Allan Poe** also gained fame for his short stories and poetry.

Emily Dickinson, **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**, and John Greenleaf Whittier are just three of the poets of this time whose works have long outlived them. The same is true of **Walt Whitman**, who used his poem *Leaves of Grass* to praise America's individualism and democracy.

Section 3: Reforming Society

THE SPIRIT OF REVIVAL

During the 1790s, a period of Christian renewal began. It was known as the **Second Great Awakening**. By the 1830s, it had swept through New England, the Appalachians, and the South.

Charles Grandison Finney was one of the leaders of the Second Great Awakening. Some did not agree with Finney's message. However, the Constitution's First Amendment guaranteed Finney's right to speak and be heard. Through the efforts of Finney and other ministers, many Americans joined churches across the country.

SOCIAL REFORMS

In the spirit of the Second Great Awakening, people tried to reform many of society's ills. In the **temperance movement**, people aimed at limiting alcohol consumption. **Lyman Beecher** and other ministers spoke about the evils of alcohol.

Another reformer, **Dorothea Dix**, reported on the terrible conditions she found when she visited some Massachusetts prisons. Imprisoned along with adult criminals were the mentally ill and children. Because of efforts by Dix and others, governments built hospitals for the mentally ill and reform schools for young lawbreakers. They also began to try to reform—not just punish—prisoners.

Education in the early 1800s improved with the **common-school movement**. This movement, led by **Horace Mann**, worked to have all students, regardless of background, taught in the same place. Women's education also improved at this time. Several women's schools, including **Catherine Beecher's** all-female academy in Connecticut, opened. Teaching people with disabilities improved, too. For example, **Thomas Gallaudet** bettered the education of the hearing impaired.

AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOLS

In this period, life improved for the nation's free black population. The Free Africans Religious Society, founded by Richard Allen, pressed for equality and education. Leaders such as Alexander Crummel helped build African American schools in New York, Philadelphia, and other cities. In 1835 Oberlin College became the first college to admit African Americans. Soon after, in the 1840s, several African American colleges were founded.

Section 4: The Movement to End Slavery

ABOLITION

By the 1830s, many Americans formed a movement to end slavery. They supported **abolition**. These abolitionists worked for emancipation, or freedom from slavery, for all who lived in the United States.

Some abolitionists thought that ex-slaves should get the same rights enjoyed by other Americans. Others, however, hoped to send the freed blacks back to Africa to start new colonies there. In fact, the American Colonization Society successfully founded the African colony of Liberia.

Many abolitionists spread the message of abolition using the power of the pen. **William Lloyd Garrison**, for example, ran the *Liberator* newspaper. He also helped found the **American Anti-Slavery Society**. This group believed in emancipation and racial equality. **Angelina and Sarah Grimké** were two sisters from a southern slave-holding family. They wrote pamphlets and a book to try to convince other white people to join the fight against slavery.

AFRICAN AMERICANS FIGHT AGAINST SLAVERY

When **Frederick Douglass** was a slave, he secretly learned to read and write. After he escaped slavery, he used those skills to support the abolition movement by publishing a newspaper and writing books about his life. Douglass also was a powerful speaker who vividly described slavery's horrors. Many other ex-slaves also were active abolitionists. One example was **Sojourner Truth**, who became famous for her anti-slavery speeches.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

The **Underground Railroad** was the name given a loosely knit group of white and black abolitionists who helped escaped slaves get North to freedom. One of the most famous "conductors" on this Railroad was an ex-slave named **Harriet Tubman**. She made 19 trips to the north, freeing more than 300 slaves.

OPPOSITION TO ABOLITION

Many white southerners felt slavery was vital to their economy. They also felt that outsiders should not tell them what to do. Some justified enslaving people by claiming that African Americans needed the structure of slavery to survive.

Section 5: Women's Rights

THE INFLUENCE OF ABOLITION

In the mid-1800s, some female abolitionists also began to focus on the women's rights in America, despite their many critics. For example, the Grimké sisters were criticized for speaking in public. Their critics felt they should stay at home. Sarah Grimké responded by writing a pamphlet in support of women's rights. She also argued for equal educational opportunities, as well as for laws that treated women in an equal manner..

Abolitionist Sojourner Truth also became a women's-rights supporter. The ex-slave never learned to read or write, but she became a great and influential speaker.

OPPONENTS OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The women's movement had many critics-both men and women. Some felt a woman should stay home. Others felt women were not as physically or mentally strong as men. Therefore, they needed the protection of first their fathers, then their husbands. This was why upon marriage, husbands took control of their wives' property.

THE SENECA FALLS CONVENTION

With the support of leaders like **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** and **Lucretia Mott**, the **Seneca Falls Convention** opened July 19, 1848, in Seneca Falls, New York. It was the first time American women organized to promote women's rights. It resulted in the **Declaration of Sentiments**. This document officially requested equality for women. It brought 18 charges against men, much as

the Declaration of Independence had brought 18 charges against King George III.

THE CONTINUING STRUGGLE

After the convention, more women rose to lead the fight for rights. **Lucy Stone**, for example, was another abolitionist who spoke out for women's rights. So did **Susan B. Anthony**. Anthony argued that women should be paid the same as men for the same job, and that women could do the jobs reserved for men. Anthony also fought for property rights for women. Many states changed their property laws because of her efforts. But some rights, such as the right to vote, were not won until much later.