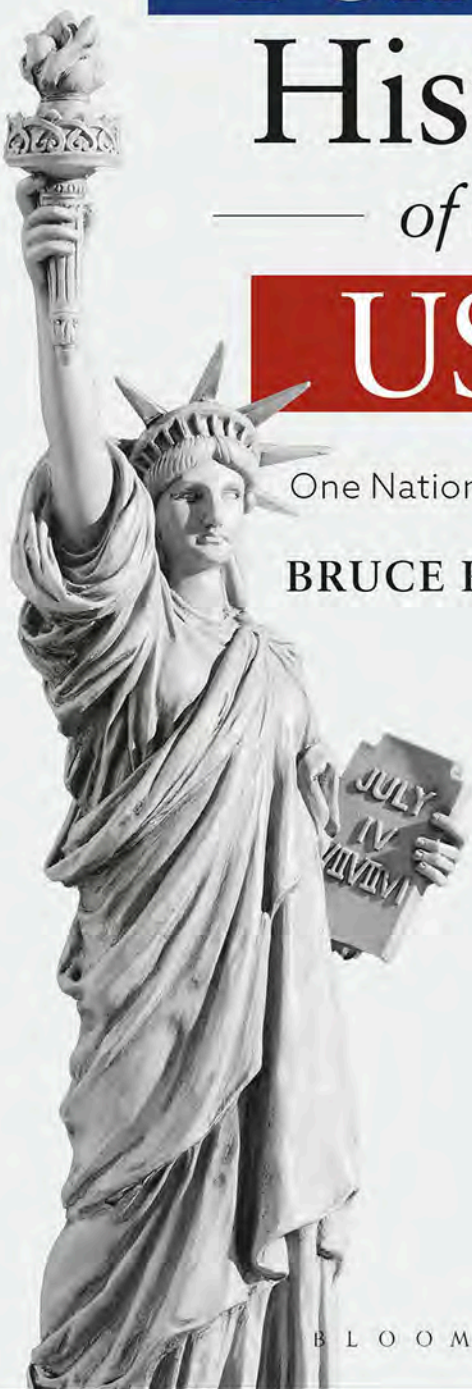
THIRD EDITION

A Political History of the USA

One Nation Under God

BRUCE KUKLICK



BLOOMSBURY

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Bruce Kuklick

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For Marya, Stan, Casey, and Jake

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INTRODUCTION

The National Experience

In Philadelphia, in 1787, influential semi-aristocrats drafted the Constitution of the United States, a short document about how they would manage public affairs. When the deliberations were over, Elizabeth Willing Powel, the upper-class wife of the mayor, asked Benjamin Franklin: "Dr. Franklin, what kind of government have you given us?" He replied, "A republic, Madam, if you can keep it." A lot is going on in this much-repeated anecdote. Well-off men assemble and set down on paper regulations for a group of former colonies. When they finish, a woman questions the most famous American in the world. She trusts and respects him but wants him to explain what has been done. What does "republic" mean anyway? Whatever it is, Franklin says it is her job—the work of the people—to preserve it, and not the job of the male leaders. Even though she was female and did not have elementary rights, Franklin suggests that she has a voice and can make claims on the politicians.

Political History

One Nation Under God explores issues like the one this story raises. The book is a history of the United States of America, a political entity. This narrative involves the creation of a nation, the evolution of its administration, and its advance at home and around the world. We look at how some inhabitants defined the country and at the same time how the country defined these inhabitants as its proper residents, and secured their loyalty. The origins and history of the nation raise weighty questions about patriotism and authority. How do individuals decide who will lay down the law? Maybe government just reflects who is strongest; maybe human beings just have periodic struggles over who has control. Could wars just be bigger versions of gangland fights? Statespeople might not differ from criminals and murderers who also use violence to get others to do what they want. Or can we all sit down and rationally determine what is just? Do we have rights, and a right to resist bad leaders? Some regimes are better than others, but the better could get worse. How can we prevent the better from becoming worse, or make a bad one better?

The phrase American history is sometimes synonymous with the history of the United States from the time of the famous meeting of 1787, "the Founding." We can also use the phrase to talk about earlier events that took place in North and South America and that we connect to the Founding. These developments occurred before the United States

existed but led to its existence. Because the values of English migrants shaped the United States, the book looks at how and why they came to the New World in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Because the acquisition of land dominated America until the end of the nineteenth, the book examines how the English and other Europeans linked up with the indigenous, the Indians, who were living on this land when the Europeans came. Because slavery had such an impact, I investigate how Africans arrived, long before the Founding.

In the new United States not everyone qualified as a citizen. The Indians did not. Neither did most of the Blacks who had been brought to the country. Women also had no say. As the United States grew after 1787, debates continually occurred over who could participate. Who made up the "nationals," who could ask for services or protection, and who, in turn, had certain obligations to the government? Foreign policy sometimes involved the protection of these mainly white males, but often meant worrying about what would happen if America extended its clout outside the United States.

Politics and Religion

American history does not just jumble together facts but makes a compelling story. In 1500, while the Christianity of the Roman Catholic Church overshadowed Europe, the countries that we know today hardly existed. Few Europeans were living in the New World, and no one knew about such a thing as national culture. Toward 1800 England, France, and Spain competed for power, and England, which had rebelled against Catholics, had contributed to uniting a group of weak colonies on the coast of North America. Two hundred years later, in our present twenty-first century, this once vulnerable coalition had grown into the most dominant state the planet had ever seen. How did it happen?

The story, like any story, has a beginning that finds people in the middle of things. Life has a lot more to it than politics, but politics affects the lives of all. It colors their spiritual endeavors, customs, and family life. Yet these traditions give human beings somewhere to stand outside of politics to judge what it is about and might be about—of how they are ruled, and ought to be ruled. A continuous back and forth occurs between politics and culture. Political history does not just include laws, vying parties, and elections, fundamental as they are. Political history also tells us about the culture in which politics is planted.

In the United States, I focus on Protestant Christianity as an outstanding non-political factor. Protestantism has not played an all-important role, but at various times and in various fashions, it has seeped into politics. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Protestant and Catholic Europeans fought over who would control the New World. By the middle of the eighteenth, English Protestants had won the major battles in much of North America. There, they had impressed their ideas on Europeans who were not Protestant or English; on Africans who had been brought as slaves; and on the natives. After the Founding of the late eighteenth century, the United States continued to attract

immigrants from everywhere. Many of them barely knew what its religion was—or is. Nonetheless, American Protestantism influenced them as much as they influenced it.

This is not a history of the sacred in Western Europe, or in the United States. Protestantism itself changes, as does its bearing on America. But we deepen our understanding of the politics by looking at the other-worldly. It is remarkable that even today the United States serves not only as the vanguard of the modern and secular but also as a forceful defender of beliefs elaborated in the sixteenth century.

American Character

Historians have identified different traits as the core of the United States. Some have said that mobility, lack of family attachments, and the accidental nature of social ties are essentially American. Other commentators stress individualism over shared commitments; or the immediate and recent over the lasting. Still other scholars focus on how materialism—"The chance for every American to become rich"—drives out of the United States a gentle love for the soul. We are told that Americans prefer solutions to current problems as opposed to reflection over the long term. Finally, experts argue that Americans disdain the inward-looking and most value reception to experience. Even though oversimplified, these generalizations are useful for exploring politics, and we should ponder them as we think about US history.

The temptation of expansion strikes me most—it sometimes means conquest and creating an empire; sometimes spreading faith; and sometimes guaranteeing safety or room to live. Expansion often relies on the military and supports missionary Protestants. The nation's politicians in their devotional setting have relentlessly reached out. Americans have always wanted to tend gardens outside their own. Protestants began reforming their environment when they stepped ashore in the New World, and they later often used the government. Americans have left their mark in the enlargement of territory considered to be "theirs." But just as often they have wanted to stamp others with their ideas. I tell the story of these ambitions. When you read the book, ask yourself what has driven events. But look out for Protestant expansion.

One final plea. My story includes many quotations from documents, or books, or statements of principle. Don't skip these! They will reward your reading.

PART I
RELIGIOUS LONGINGS

CHAPTER 1
THE IMPACT OF THE EUROPEANS, 1494–1676

The New World from the Treaty of Tordesillas to Virginia Slavery

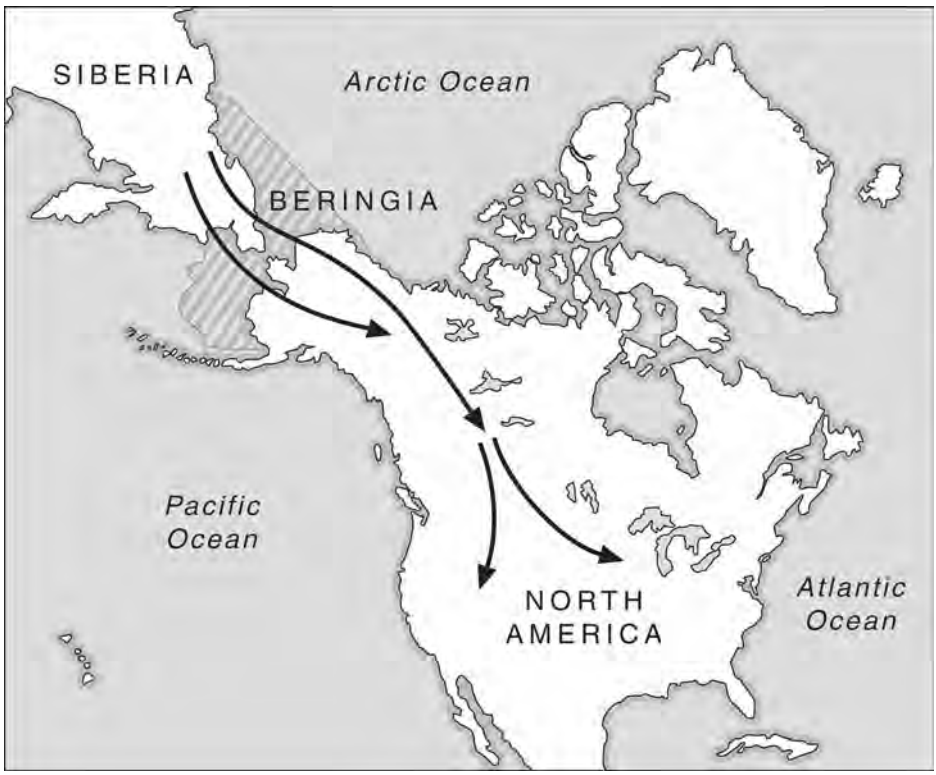
The prehistory of the United States joins three groups. Twenty thousand to forty thousand years before the Christian era (BC), migrants came from Asia to the Americas. They are now named the indigenous peoples or natives. By the sixteenth century AD (Anno Domini, or the Christian Era), the Europeans arriving from "the Old World" claimed the countryside for themselves. They entangled themselves with the natives because ownership of land defined the life of the newcomers. The Euro-Americans soon brought Africans to work. This enforced bondage is an essential thread of US history.

Natives

During the Great Ice Age of thousands of years ago the sea level dropped. A land bridge surfaced between Eurasia and the landmass of North and South America. You could walk over the present-day Bering Sea between Siberia and Alaska. Some geographers and geologists believe that the first people to live in the Americas were wandering Asian hunters who crossed the Bering Sea Bridge. Other investigators think that small boats traversed the inlets along the common coasts between Siberia and Alaska. These "native" Americans spread out through present-day North America and down to the tip of South America. Evidence suggests that human beings were living there some 25,000 years ago.

Estimates vary about the number of aboriginals in the western hemisphere when they encountered the Europeans at the end of the fifteenth century. In what is now North America the earliest peoples numbered 4–6 million. Some were hunter-gatherers composed of different competing groups—eventually tribes. Others tilled the land. Stronger or weaker ties linked inhabitants over broad areas. Some societies extended widely—for example, groups known as "The Mound Builders" were prominent in what is now the Ohio Valley and along the Gulf Coast. They developed rural civilizations around 1,000 BC. Over 1,500 years they gave way to even more settled agriculturalists, who built at least one city near today's St. Louis. The Pueblos of the contemporary southwestern United States farmed in communities and were living in multitiered buildings in the thirteenth century AD. Centuries before the Europeans arrived in the 1500s, the Iroquois of present-day New York had political and military alliances that made them powerful.

Present-day Central and South America had a greater population, perhaps more than 25 million in 1500. Scholars base this estimate on the fact that in the south the natives prospered. They created temples that served sizeable numbers. The Maya, who flourished



Map 1 Bering Sea Bridge. This reconstruction is really a theory about how the Americas were originally populated.

in the Yucatan Peninsula between 300 and 800 fashioned jewelry, invented writing and mathematical systems, and developed an astronomy. Their merchants built up trade, although wars weakened the Maya. Eventually another people, the Aztecs, overran them.

Our understanding of these groups, whom the Europeans quickly named Indians, differs from our knowledge of the Europeans themselves. The natives left few written records, and studies of anthropologists and archaeologists are the primary bases for our view. When the indigenous talk to us, they usually do so through a European explorer or writer:

> They are so guileless and so generous with all they possess, that no one would believe it who has not seen it. They never refuse anything which they possess, if it be asked of them; on the contrary, they invite anyone to share it, and display so much love as if they would give their hearts.
>
> Christopher Columbus, 1490s

We find that they were spread throughout the Americas, and that they had different modes of life and speaking:

> 'Tis very strange that every nation of the savages of the Northern America should have a peculiar language; for though some of them live not ten leagues from one another, they must use an interpreter to talk together, there being no universal language amongst them.
>
> Louis Henepin, 1698

Moreover, they fought with one another when competitors came into close contact, and similar groups often could not associate peacefully:

> Their old soldiers being swept away by the plague which was very rife amongst them … they do not now practice anything in martial feats worth observation, saving that they make themselves forts to fly into if the enemies should unexpectedly assail them … [From there they] deliver their sharp and bloody embassies in the tawny sides of their naked assailants, who … lose their lives by their too near approachments.
>
> William Wood, 1634

The native sense of property differed from the Europeans. The indigenous respected use of land more than being landlords. When Europeans reached what they called the New World, the first thing they did was to demand the ground for a flag, a king, a country, or themselves. The indigenous had social organizations that centered around land. They had hunting camps, fishing privileges, and harvests that belonged to them and not others. The countryside was at the heart of life, and native culture was set in the environment. But these peoples doubted deeds and property rights, whereas the Europeans thought them fundamental. This difference had enormous consequences. Immunity to disease was another difference. Natives and Europeans exchanged viruses and bacteria. Neither group was prepared for the traffic, although the former suffered disproportionately. The Europeans unintentionally spread fatal illnesses. The natives could not survive common Old-World maladies such as smallpox and measles, and sicknesses almost wiped them out.

Europeans

By the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, independent European countries were slowly emerging out of the battles of local chiefs. Warriors assumed power over large areas and over clans with ethnic similarities. These leaders developed religions and governments that legitimated their rule in what are now great European nations. Often in a bewildering fashion, these proto-nations made their mark on what would become the United States.

The kingdom of Portugal came about in 1143. The land we now call Spain had two kingdoms in Castile and Aragon. The marriage between their rulers, Isabella and Ferdinand, integrated the kingdoms in 1479. In France, from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries, the writ of a single king spread from the north central region to what is now the entire country. The northerners dominated the south, and kings from England with

claims to France were expelled. In what is now the island of Great Britain, a long series of contests resulted in united control of England and Wales. But a single ruler only absorbed Scotland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and war to subdue the western island of Ireland never ended.

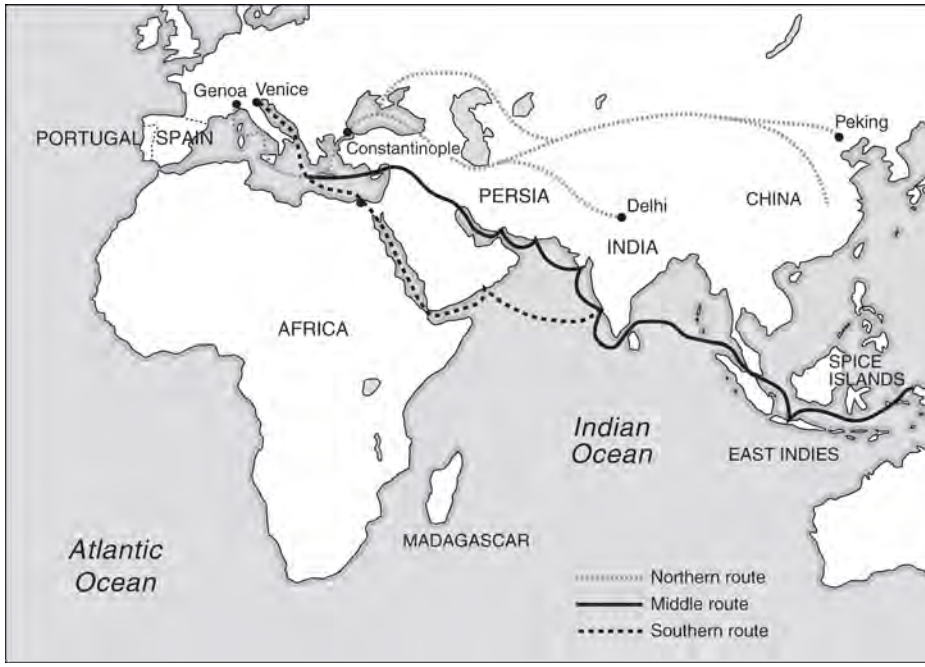
Moreover, different peoples that were becoming nations fought outside their own districts. The growth of France, Spain, Italy, and Britain went hand in hand with conflict amongst them. These states defined themselves in reference to others not subject to their authority or to their rituals. So, for example, France only became France because it contested with Britain. The rivals fought for wealth or for marks of who was physically stronger, or battled in areas no one of them governed.

The Catholic (Christian) church led by a Pope in Rome, which was to become the center of Italy, was a further factor. The church had endured for 1,000 years and oversaw the meaning of existence in the mysterious universe of medieval and early modern times. On the one hand, the alien religion of Islam endangered Catholicism from the outside in what is now the Middle East. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Roman church had sponsored Crusades to take the holy places of its religion from the Muslim "infidels." These wars had at least checked a Turkish Empire that was coming into existence with its Islamic spirituality. But in 1453, the Muslim conquest of Constantinople, the Turkish gateway to Europe, frightened Europeans: Islam threatened the Catholicism of Europe. On the other hand, militant reformers harassed Catholicism from within. Not all Christians accepted the authority of Rome, and even Catholics accused it of corruption and lack of piety. Catholicism could divide various groups yet also make them cling together against the foreign.

The building of nations, internal and external; and conflicts over the sacred, internal and external, defined much of European history in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These encounters had repercussions in the New World as Europeans increased their trade.

The Europeans had profitable but dangerous commerce east of the Turkish Empire with the "Spice Islands" or "the Indies." Even the educated had little sense of geography, and this formless region spread from India to what is now Indonesia. The trade took merchants from western Europe by ship to Turkey, and then by caravan to Persia (now Iran), India, and even China; or overland from North Africa to the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean. But Islam regulated most of this buying and selling. A sea route to the Indies would make business easier and more lucrative. If Europeans broke Turkish control, they would also boost Christianity. Sailors thought they might get more quickly to the Indies and outwit Islam by going round the coast of Africa. By the middle of the fifteenth century, with advances in navigation, explorers sailed into the South Atlantic around Africa to the Indies. Or west to get to the same place; later, for example, the hunt for a "northwest passage" took seamen to Iceland and Greenland and perhaps the interior of present-day Canada to access the Indies by way of the St. Lawrence River or Hudson's Bay.

Spain and Portugal together first entered the race for trade with the Indies. Christopher Columbus sailed for Spain's Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492. His lineage is in dispute. He



Map 2 European Trade to the Indies.

was either a Spanish Jew or was born in the peninsula that became Italy. In any case, he journeyed southwest and hit the islands of San Salvador and Cuba in the Caribbean, near the great American landmass. Satisfied that he had reached the Indies, Columbus gave the natives their European name—Indians. Three more trips would not persuade him that he had found a "new world," although others realized that they were not in the East Indies: "West Indies" got a permanent use. Columbus first landed on October 12th, and from the early twentieth century, that day was a national holiday, which Italian-Americans especially revered. By the early twenty-first century, Columbus's misdeeds in the Americas had led to a fight over what to call the celebration, which got re-named Indigenous Peoples Day.

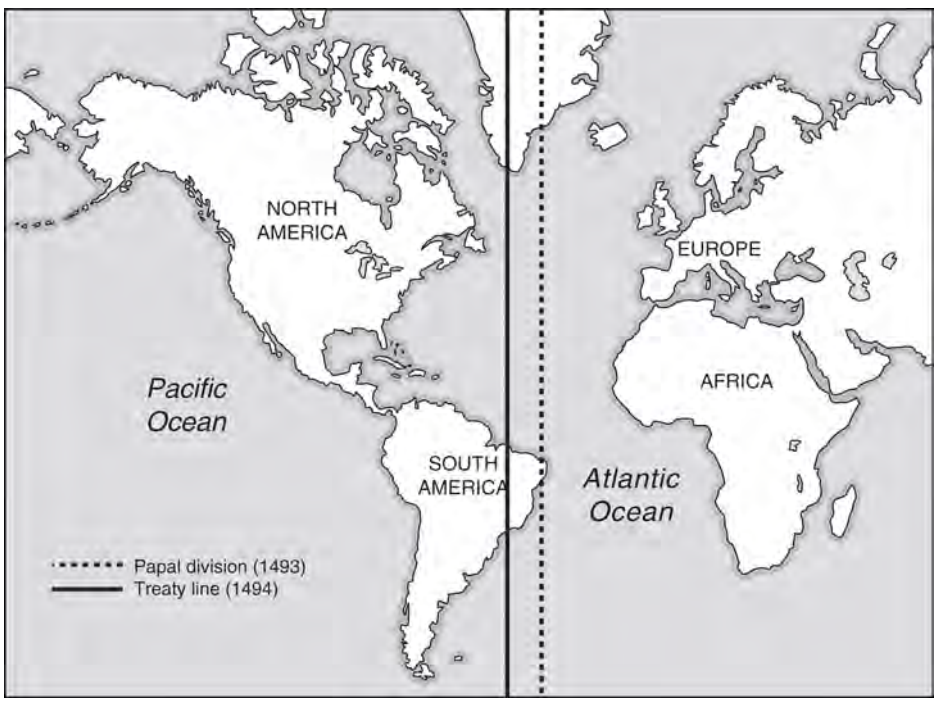
Another Italian, Amerigo Vespucci, sailed to South America soon after and reported on his travels. Misconceiving the report, a German geographer argued that the territory should be called America to pay homage to its supposed Italian founder. The name stuck.

Europe thought that the Indians had no proper religion and did not own the land. In European eyes, the pagans only squatted. In 1493 and 1494, with a line on a map, the Pope, Alexander VI, divided this non-Christian world between Spain and Portugal. The Treaty of Tordesillas identified the lands each nation could seize and Christianize. The Pope and the politicians wanted not only to ensure Catholicism in new territory, but also to broker conflict between Portugal and Spain. Everything east of this line, the eastern coast of South America and Africa, went to Portugal; west of the line, to Spain. Portugal focused on what would roughly become Brazil and the west coast of Africa, and would

not be a force in North America. In the Caribbean, in other parts of South and Central America, and in the south and southwest of the present-day United States, from Florida to California, Spain had a sphere. Explorers called conquistadores made their country a global force.

By the first half of the sixteenth century, the Spanish had fanned out from the Caribbean. They overran the Aztecs in Mexico and the Incas in Peru. The conquistadores downplayed trade and forged a different strategy of expansion. The Americas were not the Indies, and the navigators would not make fortunes in commerce as they expected. But the conquistadores could conquer the Indians and secure prestige and precious metals for Spain. Intimidating the locals, Spain took their gold and silver mines. One Aztec said: the Spanish "thirsted mightily for gold; they stuffed themselves with it; they starved for it; they lusted for it like pigs."

Spain puzzled about how to treat Indians. The conquistadores wanted to lead the pagans to Christianity. Nonetheless, the almost casual way that the Spanish degraded Indian societies ominously signaled how all Europe would think about them. The conquistadores planned to convert Indians to Catholicism, and this aim implied that the Spanish did regard the New World as in the same moral universe. But sometimes we most charitably interpret the Europeans if we argue that Spain did not see the New World in this way. The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europeans may be more acceptable to the twenty-first century if we believe that they did not recognize the Indians as humans.



Map 3 Treaty of Tordesillas and Spanish–Portuguese Line of 1494.

The Spanish cheated and lied to the Indian whenever they could. When deception did not work, the Spanish resorted to violent military superiority. European diseases also weakened the natives. In one hundred years, from the early sixteenth century when Spain got to Mexico, the population went from roughly 15–25 million to 2 million.

Moreover, the European attitude toward land crushed the Indians. The Spanish saw the New World as real estate that they might take and defend against others. This attitude conflicted with that of the indigenous, who had a less acquisitive sense. Spain excluded the natives from groups who might own land and presumed that only Europeans had rights to property. England's Queen Elizabeth spoke for all of Europe when she instructed her sailors to explore and colonize "heathen lands not actually possessed by any Christian prince."

A famous missionary, Bartholomé de las Casas, denounced Spanish exploration. "Who of those in future centuries," he wrote, would learn the effects of disease on the natives? It would have been better for the Indians to have fallen into the hands "of the devils of hell than of the Christians of the Indies." At the same time, the Indians often fought among themselves. The Spanish increased the tensions and destructiveness of conflict but also allied themselves with some natives against others in the search for wealth and property. And while the conquistadores wanted gold and silver, Spain established civilizations that eventually combined Spanish and native cultures. By the end of the sixteenth century, Spain had founded about 200 towns. It set up schools in Mexico and Peru, and a system of publication. The Spanish built settlements in Saint Augustine, in present-day Florida (in 1565, the oldest western city in North America), Santa Fe (in present-day New Mexico), and later (in California) San Diego and San Francisco. Conquistadores explored west from Florida to the Mississippi River. They went inland from the present-day states of Arizona and New Mexico to Kansas, making claims to ownership that would later be used in arguments with other Europeans.

Europeans Contend over Religion

At home Spain's Catholics (and those of Rome) worried about more than Islam. Roman Christianity had enemies within who found it sinful. In the early sixteenth century, discontented Christians challenged the church, and our attention shifts from southern Europe to the north. Martin Luther was a priest who hailed from yet another distinct quasi-national group, the Germans of northwest Europe. He considered Rome a degraded and barely devout bureaucracy. Luther publicly demanded its purification in 1517, and started the long movement now called the Reformation. Luther based his demand on his reading of the church's inspired book, the Bible, and wanted a religion that this scripture, and not human rulers, justified.

One result was that the Bible was translated from ancient languages only available to a minute number into "the vernacular," the languages of current believers. Literate Christians could read themselves, in the "Old Testament," how God had created the world in six days; and how he had thrown Adam and Eve, the first people he had made, out of the Garden of Eden for breaking the rules. The reader could find out how their

descendants in the tribes of the persecuted Israelites had wandered over the holy lands in the Middle East; and how it was prophesied that from the tribe of Judah (later the Jews) a redeemer would come. In the "New Testament," Christians could learn about the birth of this redeemer, the son of God, to the virgin Mary; about how three kings or wisemen following a star and shepherds tending their flocks—the high and the low—witnessed this event; about how this son, Jesus the Christ (the savior), began his ministry and performed miracles; and how politicians in the Roman Empire had nailed him to a cross to die. Three days later, he rose from the dead and promised his followers eternal life. The Bible then told how the disciples of Jesus started the Christian church. This knowledge, and much more, entered the thoughts of English readers through the "King James" translation of 1611.

At first, men like Luther only wanted to improve Rome, but their premier intellect, John Calvin, went beyond an in-house critique. Calvin, a French refugee who lived in Geneva, Switzerland—yet another European principality—presented Christian doctrine in his Latin *Institutes of the Christian Religion* of 1536, and in French in 1541. He put all the stories of the Bible into a systematic framework and distilled their message. Calvin censured the Catholic church and electrified his learned followers and ultimately lay people.

We wanted to escape death, and Christianity was the instrument of salvation. But in its worst error, Rome taught that worthy undertakings such as giving money to the church would buy immortality. Yet, in a hopelessly flawed world, said the Bible, victory over death could never come from trying to be virtuous—from "good works"—for people would always act selfishly. Self-interest always tainted deeds. According to Calvin, the Bible said that salvation came from the infinite mercy and the undeserved blessing—the "grace"—of an inscrutable and even angry God. He might rescue us, but we could never earn rescue. Works never sufficed and individual regard always tarnished them; we undertook to live blamelessly just because we thought it would make us look well. We would receive God's grace only if we recognized our own egotistic worthlessness and put absolute faith in Him. "Faith alone" was the watchword of the reformers.

How could we accept our own lowliness and find faith, when we could think only of ourselves? Calvin preached total submission, in contrast to the respect for wealth and position that Rome taught. But if Calvin were right, human beings could not do what was necessary—abase themselves and leave everything to God. On their own, human beings would think that God had to reward their works; on their own, they would believe that they deserved His approbation. Thus, acquiring grace was mysterious and miraculous. God's will prevailed and reminded us of our lack of merit and weakness.

Another way of looking at these "Calvinist" ideas is to examine their development in the "covenant theology," a religious doctrine that emphasized God's formal agreements with human beings. According to this theology, He had produced two contracts. The first, with Adam and Eve, promised an eternal happy life in the Garden of Eden if they were obedient. They promptly disobeyed by eating a forbidden apple; God drove them from the Garden and served up the punishment of death. This broken contract, which proclaimed eternal life dependent on good behavior, was the Covenant of Works. The

second contract was the Covenant of Grace. God now agreed to rescue people from death if they truly recognized their insubordination and mortified themselves before him. Carrying out this pact, for God, involved sending Jesus to earth. Although the mechanics of the Covenant of Grace still puzzle interpreters, the son was sacrificed to atone for our waywardness. At the same time, many misbehaving people wrongly conceived they could hide their sins and please God by secretly acting on the repudiated Covenant of Works.

Covenantal theology ranks highly in American history. As it arose in religious life, economic life was also promoting pledged obligations. Actual and symbolic official promises were appearing in both religious and business arrangements.

Protestors against Catholicism followed Luther and Calvin. These "Protestants" practiced self-effacement in the face of God, although they often prided themselves in securing humility. Calvinists rejected arrogance, but always measured their faith by what they might achieve as Christians. The Protestants had complicated souls, and thrashed about between meekness and conceit, the humble and the proud. The Reformation also made redemption more personal. Church structure among Protestants was less corporate and hierarchical than in Catholicism. The contrast became starker between human beings who were depraved and without faith, and those who were saved with faith—"visible saints." But at the same time, all of us remained equally small in God's eyes.

As the Protestants attracted supporters, European leaders came to terms with this revitalizing movement as hatred appeared between Romanists and non-Romanists. The rulers of northern Europe, especially, wanted to consolidate their own areas, and they tilted to Protestantism to escape the influence of southern Europe, and especially of Catholic Spain. Political fights merged with religious ones in England, France, and Germany, and among relatives of the Germans, the Dutch, who lived in the provinces on the western edge of the continent, the Netherlands or Holland.

Governed by Spain, the Dutch contested fiercely with Catholicism for sway of their homeland. In the early seventeenth century, they sent explorers to seek a northwest passage that would create their own rights in the New World, far to the north of Spanish influence. The Dutch hired Englishman Henry Hudson, and Dutch sea power increased. The Protestant Netherlanders also challenged the Spanish in those islands in the Caribbean on which the Europeans had first landed.

The French remained Catholic but were idiosyncratic in the New World. Even though France and Spain observed the same religion, they were only marginally allied. The French sailed in the West Indies, where they might confront Spain—and Holland. Like the Dutch, the French also sought a northwest passage to steer clear of Spanish power. France navigated the area of the St. Lawrence Seaway in present-day eastern Canada in the 1500s. In 1608, Samuel De Champlain fortified a village at Quebec, on the St. Lawrence River, and in 1642 New France founded a settlement at Montreal. Throughout the seventeenth century other adventurers widened French gains through much of present-day Canada and North America. The French swept through the upper Mississippi River, and then the lower. Robert de La Salle, the explorer of this region in

1682, named it Louisiana, after the French king, Louis XIV. By the eighteenth century, the French—at odds with Spain—had checked Spanish advance north.

The French did not intend to people North America or to obtain precious metals. Although France tried to convert the Indians to Christianity, it did not want to conquer them, fought fewer wars, and aimed for trade. The Indians received metal tools and guns for regional contests amongst themselves, and in exchange the French got food and animal skins. A luxury item in Europe, the furs generated profit and committed France to the New World. Whether their small numbers prevented their combat with the Indians, or whether their humanity was greater, the French had better relations with the Indians than the other Europeans. France could usually count on the Indians in the battles that the Europeans themselves had in the New World, and French influence on the Mississippi frustrated Spain.

England

The problems of the Catholic church shattered England. The Tudor line of royalty strengthened in the sixteenth century. Henry VIII (Henry Tudor), king between 1509 and 1547, wanted a successor. Nonetheless, Catherine of Aragon, his wife and the daughter of Spain's Ferdinand and Isabella, did not give birth to a son, and the Pope refused to annul Henry's marriage. Using the Reformation as an excuse, Henry renounced Rome in 1534, and declared himself head of an English church. The (Protestant) Church of England, or the Anglicans, gave Henry the authority to marry whomever he wished. In time, Henry got a boy, and did sire a capable heir in his daughter Elizabeth, queen from 1558 to 1603.

Historians have long argued that two factors, one religious and one economic, influenced Tudor politics. The great German scholar, Max Weber, looked first to otherworldly impulses in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905) while the English theorist, R. H. Tawney, argued for money-making's influence on the divine in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1926). Recent scholarship has found matters more complex. Anglicans linked salvation to worldly success in trading, although they thought that this success was just a sign of salvation but did not cause it. The accumulation of private wealth to advance large economic projects—the rise of Weber's capitalism—fused with a "Protestant ethic," a zeal to achieve that indicated God's approval. We can't essentially bond English Protestantism and moneymaking, for Roman Catholics took up with capitalism, and among Protestants not only Anglicans were associated with capitalism. The same sort of association took place, for example, among Dutch Calvinists; and some English Protestants were not interested in accumulating wealth. Nonetheless, in England and elsewhere, trade for profit and Protestantism connected.

Capitalism and its morality led people to make demands on their rulers. The state prospered when its tradesmen flourished, and they now took a hand in setting up regulations. Englishmen making money through commerce came to think of themselves as a "freeborn" group with a public role. The Tudors cooperated with those interested in buying and selling, and in an emerging legislature. Composed of a noble House of Lords and a House of Commons of the wealthy and influential, this "Parliament"—from

the French *parler*, to talk—had some responsibility for law-making in the capital city of London.

Spain now fought with a wealthier England that was sure of the evil of Catholicism, and that gave political room to its well-to-do businessmen. When Henry humiliated the Spanish by breaking his marriage to Catherine, he began a century of hostility between Spain and England. In 1588, in the English Channel, the English defeated a huge Spanish fleet, the Invincible Armada, sent to destroy them. The victory undermined the Spanish, gave the English a reputation on the sea, and promoted the country's entrance in the scramble for the New World. The Spanish clutch on the world was waning.

English merchants and explorers with some, although not enough, royal assistance, put outposts on the east coast of North America in the late sixteenth century. From that period, here is Richard Hakluyt, a propagandist who wanted to populate the New World with the English:

> For to posterity, no greater glory can be handed down than to conquer the barbarian, to recall the savages and the pagan to civility, to draw the ignorant within the orbit of reason, and to fill with reverence for divinity the godless and the ungodly. There is under our noses … [a] great and ample country; the inland whereof is found of late to be so sweet and wholesome a climate, so rich and abundant in silver mines, a better and richer country than Mexico itself. If it shall please the Almighty to stir up Her Majesty's heart to continue with transporting one or two thousand of her people, she shall by God's assistance, in short space, increase her dominions, enrich her coffers, and reduce many pagans to the faith of Christ.

Sir Walter Raleigh sent expeditions in the 1580s, and believed they gave the English authority over a land he called Virginia to venerate the unmarried queen, Elizabeth. For Raleigh the name designated the coast of North America from Florida to Canada, although it referred in fact to territory north and south of the present state of Virginia. But these early ventures failed. Profits might blossom, but the first costs and risks meant that adventurers did not prosper. By the early seventeenth century, the monarchy showed greater willingness to chance such voyages. Fear of Spanish expansion north, the desire for trade and gold, and a need to Christianize the Indians motivated the English. Two groups of merchants received "charters"—contractual agreements—that gave them some autonomy to send people to Virginia and to set up some kind of rule. Each group formed a company, a communal legal entity. London merchants held one and aimed to get settlers to southern Virginia. Based in Plymouth (and Bristol), the second company had rights in northern Virginia.

The Virginia Company of London acted first. They would spread Christianity in the New World and bring "the Infidels and Savages, living in those parts, to human Civility." Imitating the Spanish, the group also hoped to extract gold, silver, and copper from southern Virginia. At the end of 1606, the London Company sent off about one hundred people, and in 1607 they founded Jamestown, after Elizabeth's successor, James I. Even joking, the English sense of the New World conveyed the expectations:

> Gold is more plentiful there than copper is with us … Why, man, all their dripping pans and their chamber pots are pure gold; and all the chains with which they chain up their streets are massy gold; all the prisoners they take are fettered in gold; and for rubies and diamonds, they go forth on holidays and gather them by the seashore, to hang on their children's coats and stick in their caps.
>
> Ben Johnson's play, *Eastward Ho!* 1605

Southern Virginia, or simply Virginia, proved a disaster for its promoters, who lost all they had invested. As Old-World diseases were killing off the Indians, New-World sicknesses decimated the invaders, who could not carry out even subsistence farming, and battled with the natives. Virginia persisted, however, with yearly supplies of migrants, and they ultimately made a go of it, not because of metals, but because by the 1610s they were exporting tobacco to England. As with the French trappers who could sell animal skins in the Old World, the Virginians grew something Europeans wanted. By the second quarter of the seventeenth century, tobacco dominated Virginia, which thrived even though prices fluctuated. The settlers launched plantations, and equally as often exhausted them. The English did not thickly populate the region but spread out. New generations of farmers looked for arable lands for tobacco and profited from its sale. Agriculture drove this English settlement. In their worship, the Virginians did not deviate from Church of England Protestantism, with deferential and respectable, but not ardent, spirituality.

In 1624, after disputes between the crown and the merchants of the Virginia Company, the London Charter was revoked. Just as it began to do well, Virginia was subjected to the more heavy-handed rule of royal officials. At the same time, the Euro-American instituted a rudimentary form of self-government, mimicking the Parliament of England. Composed of delegates selected from various districts of the settlement, the Virginia "House of Burgesses" had regular meetings. Although puny, the institution aspired to deliberate about affairs and to advise the governor from London.

The second group of speculators, the Virginia Company of Plymouth, differed. Their story, which began with Henry VIII's divorce, showed how a quest for virtue could dominate less worldly Protestant merchants.

While there were ferocious contests for supremacy and much backsliding, Elizabeth Tudor's long rule through the second half of the sixteenth century unified England as Protestant. At the same time, the Tudors unleashed religious ideas that they could not regulate. The pragmatism of Henry's conversion from Catholicism left the country with many of the flaws of Romanism, or so many English Protestants believed. Wanting to cleanse and refurbish Anglicanism, these nonconformists were known as Puritans and later as Reformed Protestants. They championed many of Calvin's views about holiness, hoping to scour England of imperfection. They displayed the contradictions of self-abasement in the search for faith and self-regard in the belief that they had found it. Although most Puritans did not insist on separating from the Church of England, some did, and so—even among the most unpolluted—a split occurred between separatists

and non-separatists. Later, those of Puritan heritage disagreed about where primary authority within the community of the faithful should lie. Should say-so be with individuals? Or with single congregations (Congregationalists)? Or with a larger body, a presbytery, somewhat duplicating the hierarchy of the Roman or Anglican churches (Presbyterians)? Catholics pointed to this fragmentation of dissenters as proof that the Reformation sheltered anarchy, egoism, and misery. They had a point, especially when solitary persons claimed primacy, and threatened all sacred institutions. Yet Catholics also overlooked in Reform Protestantism its consensus on work in the world as the most enduring tribute one could pay to God, and a self-righteousness that spanned over 500 years.

Elizabeth had no children, and when she died, James Stuart, a distant relative, became king in 1603—James I. James and his Stuart family successors worried the Puritans. He was married to a Catholic and indulged Rome. In 1606, English separatists, persecuted in their country and now fearing the worst of James, left England for Holland and its leading town of Leiden, known for both its strict Reformism and comparative tolerance. A few years later, dissatisfied even with austere Dutch Protestants, these English "Pilgrims" moved once more, to America. The departure underscored their fervor and their view that they must separate from the immoral Church of England.

The Pilgrims in Leiden had negotiated with the second body of entrepreneurs, the Virginia Company of Plymouth, for a grant to settle on the northern boundary of Virginia, present-day New York City. In September of 1620, these Pilgrims set out on a ship, the *Mayflower*. They led a group only one hundred strong. At the end of the year, they reached the coast of North America, off course, on Cape Cod Bay near the shores of present-day Massachusetts. North of where they were supposed to go, they had indeed sailed outside the lands of the Virginia Company. Anxious that they might be free of all authority, the Pilgrims and their long-time governor, William Bradford, drew on covenantal theology, and drew up "the Mayflower compact": "Solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one another … [we] combine ourselves … into a civil Body Politick … and by Virtue hereof do enact … such just and equal laws … as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general Good of the Colony."

The separatist outpost of Pilgrims, which they called Plymouth, did not prosper. Yet, although precarious, Plymouth typified the settlements at the northern edge of the lands of the Virginia Company—what would become New England, with its center in Massachusetts. Plymouth persevered in pursuit of its holy goals, and the inhabitants determined to survive and make their point: "It is not with us as with other men, whom small things can discourage." In his history *Of Plymouth Plantation* (1630–50), Bradford wrote:

> They had thoughts on … some of those vast and unpopulated countries of America, which are fruitful and fit for habitation, being devoid of all civil inhabitants, where there are only savage and brutish men which range up and down, little otherwise than the wild beasts.

Material accomplishments did not measure what Bradford considered success:

> The tyrannous bishops [of Catholicism] are ejected, their courts dissolved … their ceremonies useless and despised, their plots for popery prevented … and all their superstitions discarded and returned to Rome … and the monuments of idolatry rooted out of the land … And are not these great things? Who can deny it?

The Pilgrims joined tenacity and communal self-governance. They defined their "Body Politick" through rules that a document—their compact—set out. That is, they assumed the supremacy of some sort of community but also thought that as individuals they could create that community. Bradford wrote:

> Thus out of small beginnings greater things have been produced by His hand that made all things of nothing, and gives being to all things that are; and, as one small candle might light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone unto many, yea in some sort to our whole nation.

In 1620, a further group, the Council for New England, reorganized the Plymouth Company and disposed of tracts of land north of Cape Cod. One tract went to Puritans from Dorchester, England, who themselves established the Massachusetts Bay Company. Unlike the Pilgrims, the Puritans from Dorchester were non-separatists. But the successor to James, his son Charles I, was more committed to reining in dissent and, some Puritans thought, wanted to take the Anglican church in the direction of Rome. The Puritans of Dorchester felt compelled to migrate to save their faith. Nonetheless, they did not feel they had to break from English society as had the Pilgrims and had a better sense of their venture's economics.

In the summer of 1630, the directors of the Bay Company selected the lawyer John Winthrop to govern their settlement-to-be. He left England on his ship, the *Arabella*, leading almost 1,000 people. He wrote up his thoughts on their enterprise, "A Modelle [that is, a summary] of Christian Charity." His words captured the missionary passion of the "experiment" of these Puritans:

> Thus stands the cause between God and us. We are entered into a covenant with Him for this work. We have taken out a commission … If we shall neglect the observation of these articles … the Lord will surely break out in wrath against us … The only way to avoid this shipwreck, and to provide for our posterity, is … to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God. For this end, we must be knit together, in this work, as one man … as members of the same body … so … that men shall say of succeeding plantations, "may the Lord make it like that of New England." For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world. We shall open the mouths

> of enemies to speak evil of the ways of God, and all professors for God's sake. We shall shame the faces of many of God's worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us till we be consumed out of the good land whither we are going.

While other strict European Protestants set themselves up on the coast in the early seventeenth century, the English are the lynchpin. We cannot understand America unless we heed the ideas that flourished with little competition in Massachusetts. By the fall of 1630, Winthrop and his followers had founded Boston and several other towns. The Puritans had limited self-management, in some ways reproducing what went on in England. Male church members, the visible saints, were presumed to have grace. They elected a General Court that served as a legislature. Almost all the rights accorded to women derived from their connection to their fathers, brothers, or husbands.

Winthrop and his fellows could not stand heresy. Roger Williams was a separatist who found even the Puritans impure and demanded acceptance of his own idiosyncratic righteousness. Anne Hutchinson went a step further and asserted that God had spoken directly to her. Williams and Hutchinson were notorious as dissidents in the 1630s, and their treatment created precedents for how Massachusetts would handle rebels. The Bay Colony forced Williams "to depart from this jurisdiction." Ministers ordered Hutchinson, a daring woman who challenged men's authority, to "be banished out of our liberties and imprisoned until she be sent away." Inhabitants had to accept the views of an elite that enforced male-dominated communalism. Theologically, this elite obsessed in its Calvinism.

Winthrop and his General Court defined limits, and many later researchers would consider "the New England way" essentially narrow-minded. An early-twentieth-century critic, H. L. Mencken, described Puritanism as "the haunting fear that someone, somewhere might be happy." When he left office in 1989, Ronald Reagan—quoting John Winthrop—alternatively described the President's own vision as "the shining city upon a hill." More accurately, Massachusetts Bay and its Boston center displayed the sanctimony of immigrants convinced that they had the goodness the homeland lacked.

Destroying the Natives

The Europeans thought that the Indians only had rights that the explorers and settlers gave them. The Spanish exterminated natives in South America; the French, smaller in number and further north, had more practical connections. On the North American coast, south of New France, the English associated in yet another way.

In creating towns and farms, the English in both Virginia and Massachusetts needed the Indians. The two groups cooperated, and a harvest festival in North America sometimes conceded the help of the locals, most notably one in 1621 in Plymouth. This "Thanksgiving" originated the later national holiday that takes place in November and that has been consecrated by proclamation from the US Civil War of the early 1860s onwards. But breaking bread in the 1620s with the Indians, who did not understand

Map 4 European Claims in America, 1700. Note that the Hudson's Bay Company, a private English enterprise, was for a long time in control of what is now the north of Canada.

the English hunger for property, would not last. The natives were soon weaker than the Europeans in the lands that the newcomers wanted to occupy. The indigenous put up a better battle than they are often credited with doing, but disease took a toll. The Europeans used advances in musketry and English organization to put the locals at a disadvantage. One eighteenth-century spectator wondered about Indian order: how

could you "call it government which has neither laws nor power to support it?" Friction often broke out into violence, inherent to English and Indian life. Native warriors might attack a family or isolated settlement. Without government license, English farmers might ambush Indians. They were slowly pushed back—as far as the English wanted to move inland. When compromise or pressure would not give the migrants what they wanted, there was always war.

In Virginia, around Jamestown in the early part of the seventeenth century, the English negotiated with natives loosely organized by chief Powhatan. He made concessions, hoping for help in battles to extend his own power. Then, the Virginia Company, in ever more dangerous circumstances, decided on war in 1610. The Company would restructure or eliminate Indian society. How could the pioneers diminish resistance? They could not lure the natives into decisive battles but could get at the source of the problem if they assaulted villages. The English embraced these techniques, which had been effective in the ongoing battle on the other side of the world to conquer Ireland. In Virginia, in 1614, a peace satisfactory to the English was achieved. But the Powhatan Confederacy tried to turn back the land-hungry whites in further campaigns that ended with native defeats in 1622 and again in 1644. By the third quarter of the century immigrants and illnesses had overcome Powhatan's people, and hinted at the future. The Indians might not survive the Virginians who were extending farming in the New World and emphasizing land ownership.

By the late 1630s, to the north, the Puritans fought the Pequot tribe, which also had resisted the push. The English allied themselves with the enemies of the Pequot. In Massachusetts Bay, the settlers attacked villages and not just warriors, and annihilated their enemy. The Pequot War displayed another futile attempt to prevent European expansion.

In 1675 and 1676 more bloody contests occurred in Massachusetts. Again, the Indians could not hold back penetration from the coast. The natives allied under a leader, Metacom, whom the English called King Philip. But Metacom's own adversaries collaborated with those from overseas. He had hoped to use the English as pawns in a contest for power and coordinated attacks against settlements throughout New England. Yet the English and "their" Indians won a costly victory. Captured and beheaded, Metacom had slowed the growth of European-style farming, but the defeat swung the balance against the Indians, whether or not they befriended the English. The indigenous could barely delay their foes. King Philip's War showed that the Puritans were not above slaughter in forwarding their way of life.

Down the coast in 1676, inland from Jamestown, Virginia, Nathaniel Bacon, a popular leader, led immigrants demanding property from the Susquehannock Indians. Bacon and his men wanted land and violated agreements with cooperative natives. This disorder, Bacon's Rebellion, showed that Virginia's European elite hesitated in confronting the Indians, and Bacon challenged both the natives and royal authority. Raising an army that killed Indians and that additionally turned on the Jamestown officials, Bacon fleetingly cut a wide path. He drove off the governor, and the English navy restored order. Bacon's attacks on the Indians, which went against policy, exemplified a common occurrence. A small well-to-do class wanted to deal cautiously with the reds and to restrain the growth

of white communities. The poor without land were only interested in getting rid of the Indians, the sooner the better. Leaders learned to be more aggressive. They had to help "the back country," or to worry about threats from unpropertied Englishmen. If the migrants killed off or moved the Indians, the propertied would increase. If governors treated the indigenous more fairly, they would jeopardize stability among their own.

For 1,000 years Europeans had murdered one another to command far smaller bits of land than those that now confronted them. In a few generations they came to see that they might govern enormous territories if they vanquished the natives. The Euro-Americans extended property ownership, often thought to define social solidity, far beyond what was common in Europe. Moreover, by 1700 a different sort of politics was in evidence, for the many novice landlords might have a say in how they were ruled. The Virginia House of Burgesses was turning into a respectable institution for men who had titles to real estate. Killing the Indians went hand-in-hand with building a middle-class order.

No one, however, averted conflict. In Spanish New Mexico in 1680, the Pueblos revolted against and killed greedy Catholic missionaries and settlers. The Spanish could not reassert their authority for almost fifty years. Along the Great Lakes from the 1670s to the turn of the eighteenth century even the French battled with the Iroquois to keep France's trade with the other Indian tribes, and to prevent Iroquois takeover of that trade. We can generalize from these unhappy exchanges. Europeans in North America got used to a perpetually dangerous frontier. They had to fight to sustain their cultures, and they gradually wasted the natives.

African Americans

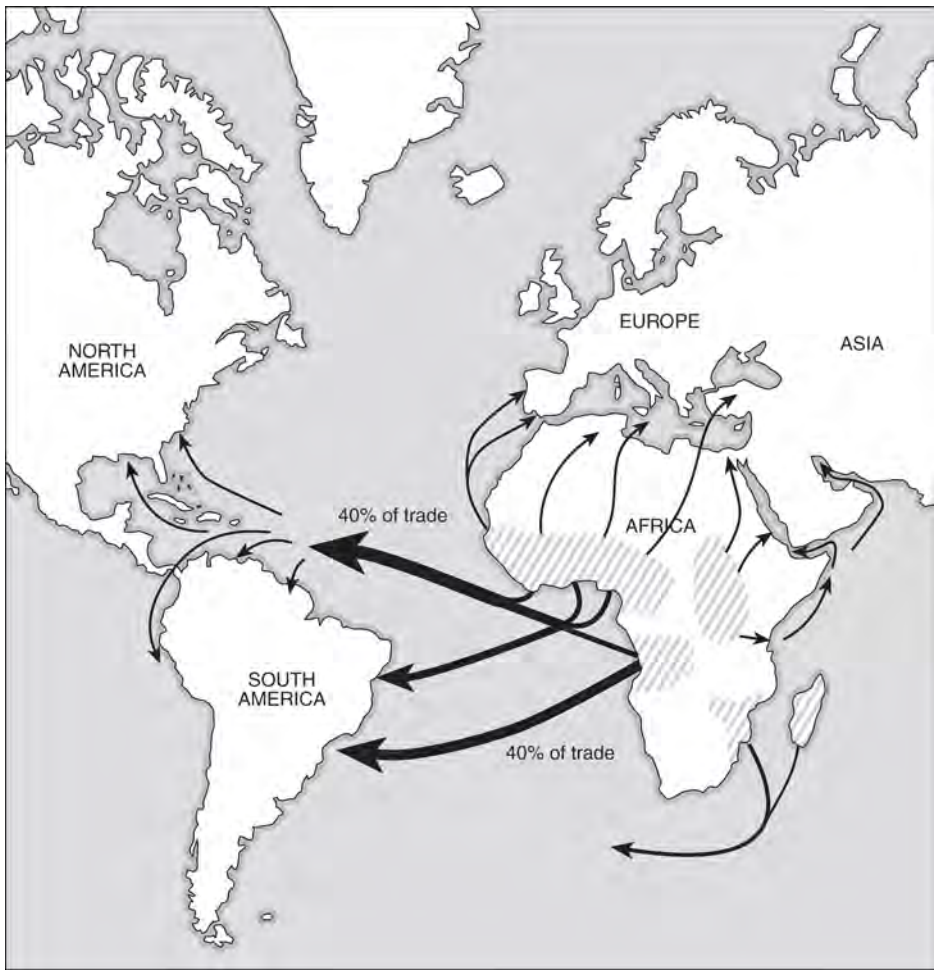
African Americans were the third group to leave their mark. As with the Indians, we often see the Africans through the eyes of Europeans. But unlike the Indians, whom the Europeans met in the New World, the African Americans did not come freely.

As Portuguese seamen traversed the coast of Africa in the middle of the fifteenth century, looking to get to the Indies, they quickly set up trading posts for the purchase of gold—and of people who could be enslaved. The Europeans followed the practices of Islamic traders and of Africans themselves, who for centuries had bought and sold human beings. The Portuguese increased this trade, and upped the demand for groups that could be captured and marketed for money. The sailors also used strategies that earlier slavers taught. The Portuguese separated persons from the same districts, mixed the disparate, and moved the Africans as far as possible from their place of origin. The greater the disorientation, the less resistance and the more submission.

The "slaves" worked on the islands along the West-African coast that brought wealth to the Portuguese. The profits, which came from sugar, motivated a demand for more un-free individuals. The sugar industry involved large farms exploiting forced labor. Plantations used substantial numbers in hard, dangerous, and unrewarding work.

By the early sixteenth century these plantations along the coast were models for Spain in the West Indies. When the Spanish arrived, they espoused *encomienda*, in which the

rulers might commend or give Indians to settlers if the latter agreed to Christianize the natives. The system mixed slavery with religion. Masters saved the souls of the barbarians for Christianity in exchange for their dictated employment. The Spanish were forerunners of the other Europeans who later participated in the African slave trade in the New World. Bartolomé de las Casas, the Spanish priest, called *encomienda* "a moral pestilence invented by Spain." For farmers and traders in the Caribbean, the enslavement formed the basis of sugar plantations in the New World. From 1500 onwards, from present-day Senegal in northwest Africa to Angola in the south, European sailors traded in *Negroes*, the Spanish word for Black. The Europeans took this human cargo to Spanish and Portuguese South America, to Central America, to Mexico, and to the West Indies. By 1600, hundreds of thousands of forced hands served on the sugar farms in the Caribbean. By 1800, traders had transported millions. The Europeans do not appear to



Map 5 Slave Trade, 1500–1800.

have had a distaste for this commerce; they were perhaps dealing not with human beings but with a sub-human species: white over black.

Said one commentator: those "Negroes [are] a people of beastly lineage, without a god, law, religion, or commonwealth." Another: African males "have low and flat brows [and] are as libidinous as apes that attempt women." In a Virginia legal case of 1630, authorities punished a white settler "for abusing himself to the dishonor of God and shame of Christians, by defiling his body in lying with a negro."

Both the Spanish and Dutch had slaves in West Indian plantations in the sixteenth century. Even after the Spanish outlawed slavery in 1542, they imported Africans as laborers. By the early seventeenth century, the English were following the example of the Spanish and Portuguese in procuring Blacks. By 1655, when the English took the island of Jamaica, they were profitably producing sugar. Indeed, through the end of the seventeenth century, the West Indian sugar outposts held greater significance to England than the settlements scattered on the east coast of the now United States. The Africans made the plantations possible, and their descendants dominate these islands in the twenty-first century, although they had resisted abandoning their homelands:

> The Negroes are so willful and loth to leave their own country, that have often leap'ed out of the canoes, boat and ship, into the sea, and kept under water till they were drowned, to avoid being taken up and saved by our boats, which pursued them; they having a more dreadful apprehension of Barbados [a West Indian plantation island] than we can have of hell.

The success of the plantations soon turned them into single-crop agricultural societies. Their European leaders looked to the southern settlements on the North American coast for foodstuffs and supplies. Some English farmers in the West Indies who did not raise sugar migrated north to Virginia. In 1619, a Dutch ship brought Africans to Jamestown, Virginia. They were bought as "indentured" servants. Selling their labor for a specified time, the Black Africans had a status that differed little from that of many English inhabitants of Virginia.

In the early twenty-first century, "The 1619 Project" became the name of a controversial history curriculum that emphasized the centrality of "racism" to the story of the United States. It is not difficult to embrace such an interpretation, for a profound aversion to Africans was always in evidence, systemic racism. By the end of the seventeenth century, traders took enslaved Blacks from Barbados to settlements in Virginia, south of Jamestown. Still, through much of the 1600s, slavery hardly existed in the mainland of English America. From 1500 to 1700, only about 4.5 percent of the Africans imported to the New World came to the mainland. At the same time, we have only fragmentary knowledge of the place of origin of these peoples from West Africa or the Caribbean. Groups may have had a common culture; others may have shared only their color, as viewed by Europeans. The condition of the Africans soon determined everything in their lives.

Many landless Europeans migrated to America. The indentured among them exchanged their work for a term of years for a free trip and, for some at the end of their service, small grants of land. In Virginia, a "headright" system encouraged the use of such workers. The prosperous paid for the trip of servants, who would increase the number of Europeans, and received fifty acres of land. Royal governors in Virginia boosted large and profitable farming, which cheap hands sustained. In the seventeenth century, men and women required by contract to work for another accounted for three-quarters of Virginia's immigrants, as masters got hold of both property and labor. In one way or another, however, many of these "white slaves" obtained property themselves after their indenture was over.

The English devised formal regulations that defined the status of the enslaved in the sugar lands. Europeans in the Caribbean understood slave property. In North America, however, the legalities lacked clarity because of work contracts. In the middle of the seventeenth century on the mainland, some Africans enjoyed freedom; some may have had contracts; others were slaves whose lives "black codes" determined.

Tobacco farms in Virginia invigorated bondage. They often looked like the plantations in the West Indies, which used many slaves. Sugar growing demanded big farms, difficult cultivation of the cane, and complex refining of the product. On the contrary, tobacco growers could plant more easily on smaller farms, and in a year could raise a marketable crop that needed little processing. But sugar gave an example to Virginia. Even though prices varied, poorer farmers could make a living—and more—with tobacco, especially when un-free hands assisted. White owners, moreover, found the imported workers ideal. The ghastly trip from Africa maximized disorientation and guaranteed a suitable workforce, once it was used to its new surroundings.

In 1672 the Royal African Company formed to make enslaved Blacks more readily available, and at the end of the century a European war cut off markets for tobacco, depressed prices, and diminished migration. Slavery instead of indenture was solving the problem of Virginia's need for inexpensive workers. This economy contrasted with Massachusetts Bay. Large farms in Virginia were standard, and tobacco grew in a warm climate, but also rice and indigo, a shrub producing a blue dye. In the north, cultivation did not require employees. Massachusetts had a society with diversified little farms, and trade in small towns. The southern region had limited but stable crops grown on plantations. Both north and south joined in a fear of Negroes that mixed hatred and contempt. But in the Bay Colony and its surroundings, fewer people experienced Africans and slavery, which stayed a foreign institution.

Understanding the Slave System

Many factors in mainland North America other than Virginia's economy had brought the system into being. The English borrowed the idea from the Spanish and Portuguese. They could find slavery in the Bible. They could define it from the labor services available in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Human rights did not exist, and not only women but also bonded people of both sexes had marginal status. The shortage of labor

and the expansive land made enslavement attractive. In *American Slavery, American Freedom* (1975), Edmund S. Morgan pointed out connections between the enslaved African Americans and the empowerment of Euro-Americans with property. The institutions that gave white men in Virginia authority grew up organically connected to slavery. Moreover, white Virginians might only have been able to tolerate the instabilities of a new sort of "free" society by categorizing the whites, no matter who they were, over and above the African Americans. And perhaps granting these liberties to whites ensured that African Americans would become slaves.

* * *

In 200 years, the Europeans had done more than open a beachhead in the New World. They had settlements all over North and South America. They gave the Indians European religion, as they extinguished their way of life. Sailors and traders also brought to Virginia the Africans who made a success of agriculture. Complex forces caught up Europeans, Indians, and Africans. The English were making a propertied society that depended on the takeover of indigenous land, and ultimately the annihilation of native civilization. In the south, a form of this propertied society and representative government depended on racial distinctions that cursed America.

CHAPTER 2
NORTH AMERICAN COLONIES, 1632–1732

From the Founding of Maryland to the Founding of Georgia

The Europeans recognized that some of their influence hung on their standing in the New World. They fought over who had what in the Americas, extended their holdings, and undertook new ventures. No nation worked more actively than England in the Caribbean and along the North American coast. By the first part of the eighteenth century the English had not just sent some migrants to Jamestown and Massachusetts Bay. From present-day Maine to the West Indies, the English had a network of "colonies." Obligated to a Mother Country and subject to decisions made there, each one had its own local affairs, on the one side, and exclusive concerns across the Atlantic, on the other.

Stuart England

From Henry VII (father of the more famous Henry VIII) to Elizabeth, the Tudor monarchs in the sixteenth century presided over a regally Protestant country that also circumscribed royalty. The accession of James I, James Stuart, in 1603, began a century of strife, due in part to political change, in part to debate between Protestants and Catholics. In part, however, the Stuarts showed that they could not govern adeptly. England's public life influenced journeys overseas. Migrants left England because of James's supposed Catholic inclinations. The Stuarts generated migrants. In the New World, moreover, refugees absorbed their own views of England. Disapproval grew up about the Stuarts. They were not, for Anglo-Americans, truly English but tyrants set on wiping out the Protestant faith of the homeland and the liberties of her people.

Sometimes the English in London agreed. The king regularly fought with the well-to-do, who insisted on their rights. Aristocrats and merchants looked to the Parliament, which promoted discussion with the king and gave advice. James and his successors instead emphasized their divine right. James's son, Charles I, who ruled from 1625 to 1649, leaned toward Rome. When he attempted to rule without Parliament from 1629 to 1640, a crisis erupted. One result, "the Great Migration," took unusual numbers of Puritans, fearful of Catholicism, to the New World. From 1642 to 1649 the king and those around him fought firm Protestants in the English Civil War, and in 1649 Charles was beheaded. In the 1650s, the military leader Oliver Cromwell governed. Indeed, from 1642 to 1660 England really had no king, and during this "inter-regnum" immigration

declined. Troubles pervaded Cromwell's England, but it tolerated political liberty and dissident Protestants.

In "the Restoration" of 1660, the third Stuart king, Charles II, took the throne till his death in 1685. From the standpoint of the English Americans, Charles II was more moderate than the other Stuarts, but his grasping and un-astute brother, James II, crowned in 1686, revived fears of the Stuarts. But in 1688, "the Glorious Revolution" deposed James. The aristocratic victors, the "Whigs," believed in Parliament, regulation by law, religious toleration, and increased independence for the colonies. The Glorious Revolution ended an effective Stuart monarchy, confirmed ideas in the colonies about the evils of the Stuarts, and later put on the throne Protestants with reduced power.

From afar, through the seventeenth century, England looked like an unpredictable place where rulership was uncertain, and good warred with evil. Nonetheless, from 1632, when Charles I granted a charter for Maryland, until 1688, when the Stuarts were ousted, they grew the colonies. By 1732, when Georgia received a final charter, Virginia and Massachusetts formed the core of a large ocean-facing group.

The Mainland Colonies Catch on

Massachusetts Bay flourished. To the south, the migrants of the Virginia Company of London increased their tobacco farming. Each colony became the hub of others. As soon as the colonies stabilized, in both north and south, they looked west to the interior, where lay dreams of growth.

Massachusetts Bay was religiously constrained, and malcontents migrated south to form Rhode Island in 1636. In the mid-1630s, too, others went further south and west to occupy the fertile valley of the present state of Connecticut. A colony in Connecticut sprang up, and next to it another, New Haven, was even more religiously stringent than the Bay Colony. In 1662 the king merged New Haven with Connecticut, and despite New Haven's complaints, Connecticut became a pious and commercial success. North of the Bay Colony in the contemporary states of Maine and adjacent New Hampshire, the English also tried to settle, although they often flopped. The Bay Colony uneasily integrated Maine in 1677. In 1679 the king separated New Hampshire, which Massachusetts had taken over in 1641. The Pilgrims at Plymouth joined the Bay Colony in 1691.

Northerners all bore the stamp of Massachusetts and evolved from it. By the end of the seventeenth century, New England looked permanent—many "native Americans" were now of European stock. Centered in Boston, Massachusetts, had fiercely held beliefs, distrusted pro-Rome England, and feared Catholic New France to the northwest.

In the south, Jamestown differed. Virginia was based on deference to a bondage-holding elite. These large property owners worried about slavery, but also felt that their ideas of self-rule improved on those of Englishmen, whose liberties were always threatened. Virginia had skillful leaders, fluent in protecting their autonomy, but also afraid of being reduced to the servitude that they had imposed on the African American. Their Protestantism was more lenient than Massachusetts but not as lax as England.

Virginia forgave itself over the enslaved, while New England was less implicated in unfree labor.

In 1632, Charles I awarded land to George Calvert, Lord Baltimore, to set up a colony, just north of Virginia; it would provide sanctuary for Baltimore's fellow papists. The Catholic-oriented Stuarts spawned not only the Puritan Great Migration but also a refuge for Romanists. It was called Mary Land, after Charles I's wife, Queen Henrietta Maria. The area had more Catholics than any other English-speaking colony, and Protestants soon fought with them for control. A Protestant governor was appointed, but his oath required him to say: "I will not by myself nor [will] any person, directly or indirectly trouble, molest, or discountenance any person whatsoever in the said Province professing to believe in Jesus Christ and in particular any Roman Catholic." To stem anti-Catholic feeling, an Act of Toleration of 1649 expressed the early form of religious liberty that developed in America—the pre-eminence of almost any Protestant and a resentful tolerance of Romanists. The act declared:

> [W]hatsoever … persons shall from henceforth … in a reproachful manner … declare, call, or denominate any person or persons … within this Province … an heritick, Scismatick, Idolator, puritan, Independant, Presbyterian, popish priest, Jesuit, Jesuitical papist, Lutheran, Calvinist, Anabaptist, Brownist, Antinomian, Barrowist, Roundhead, Separatist, or any other name or term in a reproachful manner relating to matter of Religion shall for every such Offence forfeit and loose the sum of ten shillings sterling … the one half thereof to be forfeited and paid unto the person … of whom such reproachful words are … spoken.

With tobacco plantations, Maryland flourished as part of the Chesapeake, the great harbor that present-day Maryland and Virginia surround. As in Virginia, Maryland's indentured servants harvested crops. But like Virginia, Maryland turned to enslavement by the end of the seventeenth century.

The Stuarts continued their colony-building under Charles I's son, Charles II. In 1670 he gave land that vaguely extended southwest of Virginia to some of his supporters. The Latin for Charles is Carolus, and the province was named Carolina in tribute. Many of its denizens migrated from the Caribbean island of Barbados. They made profits in Carolina by serving the plantations in the West Indies, and they imported slaves from both Africa and Barbados. Olaudah Equiano was a late-eighteenth-century "freedman" and writer who lived in London. In his autobiography of 1789, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, he said he had been enslaved in his birthplace, today's southern Nigeria, and described the first leg of the captured persons' voyage from West Africa to Barbados:

> At last, when the ship we were in had got in all her cargo … we were all put under deck … The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship's

> cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers … The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable.

Carolinians not only brought forced labor from the Caribbean, but also had a lucrative trade within the colony, although rice rather than tobacco turned out to be the more profitable crop. One visitor remarked that "Carolina looks more like a Negro country than like a country settled by white people." In 1730 African Americans outnumbered whites by two to one and were subject to cruel codes. But Charles Town, later Charleston, South Carolina, overtook Jamestown and became the busiest southern seaport on the mainland. Charleston feared Black uprisings. "Accustomed to tyrannize from Infancy," said one visitor, the gentry "carry with them a disposition to treat all mankind in the same manner they have been used to treat their Negroes." In 1735, the *City Gazette* spoke of the "evil" of miscegenation that was "spreading itself among us" like "a dreaded … Epidemical Disease." Any man would "fall into the utmost confusion to see the Product of such an Amour, the exact Features of his own Face, s[k]ulking beneath the … thin disguise of a tawny complexion." This sort of liaison involving enslaved women, white men, and their progeny came to pervade the south.

North Carolina officially separated in 1712. Poor whites and religious dissidents from Virginia peopled it. North Carolinians disturbed more cultured Virginians who conceived of the colony as a product of "outcasts": "the manners of the North Carolinians are Vile and Corrupt … The whole Country is in a stage of Debauchery, Dissoluteness and Corruption." To the south of South Carolina, Georgia came even later. It was founded for the "worthy poor," and inhabited by those less committed to slavery. English authorities conceived Georgia as a buffer state between English and Spanish possessions. The most southern of the English colonies on the coast, Georgia lay north of the Spanish America that extended to Florida. Lack of the better sort in North Carolina and Georgia aside, they both had enslaved labor. The plantation system remained less central in both North Carolina and Georgia than in Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina, but even in the early going slavery made all five similar.

Middle Colonies

Freeing themselves from Spain in the early seventeenth century, the Dutch had set out on their own colonization. The Dutch East India Company had power in the South Asia of Indonesia. Its sibling, the West India Company, was less influential. But it kept thriving enterprises in the Caribbean and in 1623–4 had founded New Netherland with its capital New Amsterdam on the Hudson River, southwest of Connecticut. The Dutch

hoped to match the accomplishments of France to the north. But they soon jousted not just with Indians but also with another northern European land, Sweden. The Swedes had made a stab at colonization in New Sweden, slightly south of the Hudson. The New Netherlanders triumphed over the New Swedes in the 1650s, but then the English threw out the Dutch.

Soon after the Restoration of 1660, Charles II granted the area of the Hudson River Valley (of New Netherland) to his brother, the Duke of York. Charles looked on the land between Massachusetts and Virginia as a field of English growth. Disregarding the Dutch, he sent the navy to enforce English claims. New Amsterdam fell, and became New York, named after the king's brother. The Dutch left landowners who stretched upriver from New York City along the Hudson and included the ancestors of the two twentieth-century Roosevelt presidents, Theodore and Franklin. While these Dutch had not promoted the tolerance for which the Old World knew Amsterdam, by the time the English took over, the colony had a population from many parts of Europe.

In 1681 Charles II completed the design that flung out colonies in an arc from the Caribbean up the coast from Georgia to Maine. South of New York and north of Virginia he made a grant to William Penn, the son of Sir William Penn, in consideration of a debt the king owed the elder Penn. Charles called the land Pennsylvania—Penn's woods—in tribute to Sir William. William Penn supported the Stuarts less than his father. As a young man, the son had embraced one of the latest dissenting sects, the Society of Friends, which had arisen in the middle of the seventeenth century. Better known as Quakers because they "quaked" when God's grace visited them, the Friends believed in the direct revelation of God to individuals. Dismissing institutions, they promoted an egalitarianism that stubbornly refused to doff a hat to convention. Penn wanted wealth from Pennsylvania, but also an asylum for his religion and for tolerance. Contemporaries knew Penn for his comparative fairness to the Indians, despite his presumptive sense of property. He wrote the Indians from London:

> My friends: There is one great God and power that has made the world and all things therein, to whom you and I and all people owe their being … This great God has written his law in our hearts … Now this great God has been pleased to make me concerned in your parts of the world, and the king of the country where I live has given unto me a great province therein, but I desire to enjoy it with your love and consent, that we may always live together as neighbors and friends … I shall shortly come to you myself … In the meantime, I have sent my commissioners to treat with you about land and a firm league of peace.

In making the grant of Pennsylvania, Charles II paid a debt and afforded yet another escape hatch for the non-conforming voices that the Reformation had created in England.

Though Penn never got to the New World, he laid out his capital city south of New York City and north of Maryland's town of Baltimore. "Philadelphia" is derived from the Latin for "brotherly love." Even with his assumption that he owned the land, Penn circumvented many problems with the Indians. He offered to buy the territory and attempted to keep

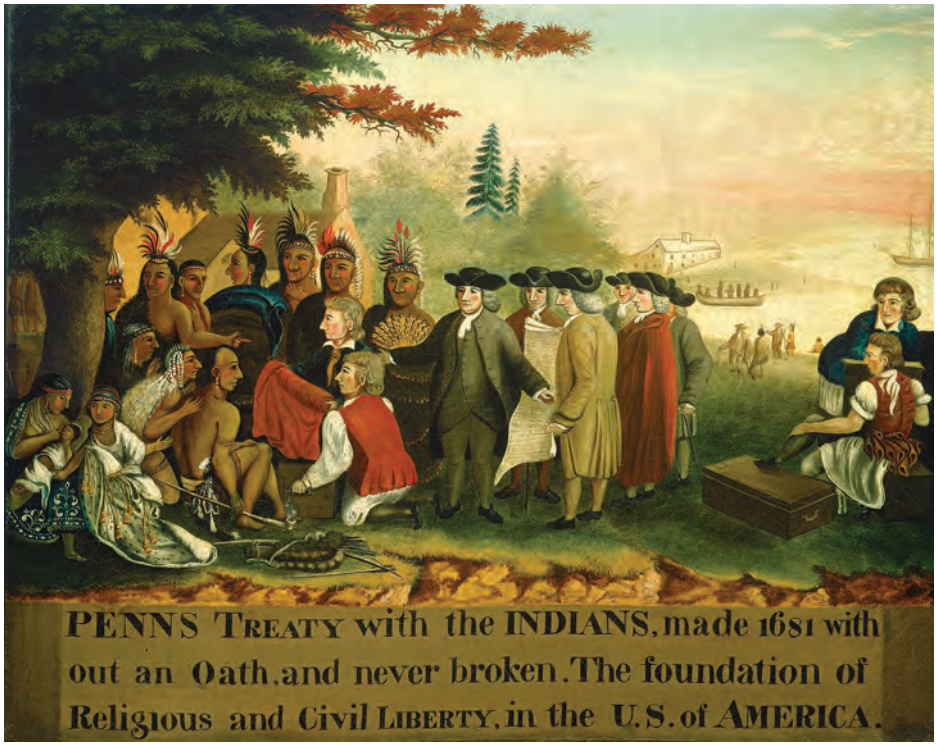


Figure 1 Penn's Treaty (1847) by Edward Hicks. Copyright Library of Congress.

the promises he made. In addition to the Quakers themselves, Pennsylvania attracted a jumble of Dutch, Swedes, Welsh, and Germans. They made up a fair proportion of the Protestant outcasts from other colonies and from varied locales in Europe. With mixed farming, Pennsylvania had a growing urban center and seaport in Philadelphia. In 1700, less than twenty years after its founding, Pennsylvania ranked third in population after Virginia and Massachusetts. The Quakers also influenced the nearby smaller colonies of New Jersey (at one time West and East Jersey) and Delaware.

The Caribbean Connection

At the end of the seventeenth century, the mainland colonies were going enterprises, but were scraping out an existence on the border of the European world. Throughout this period, the island colonies of the English had greater prominence than those on the mainland. The Caribbean stood out as a destination of choice for plantation owners and entrepreneurs who profited from the West Indies. The Dutch West Indies Company succeeded with sugar, as did the remaining Spanish strongholds, and even those of the French. Until about 1700, Jamaica and the other sugar islands with their slave populations were essential to Britain. The colonies on the coast, not an afterthought, were peripheral.

Even during the Great Migration that stabilized Massachusetts Bay, more than half of the migrants went to the Caribbean, often to Barbados.

The plantations looked north to the coast for trade, and migration made for ties. In this association, the islands served as a way station for enlarging slavery in North America. From 1600 to 1800, the Caribbean absorbed almost half of the over 7 million in bondage imported to the New World. Four hundred thousand came to North America, most of them after 1700 in the last century of the trade.

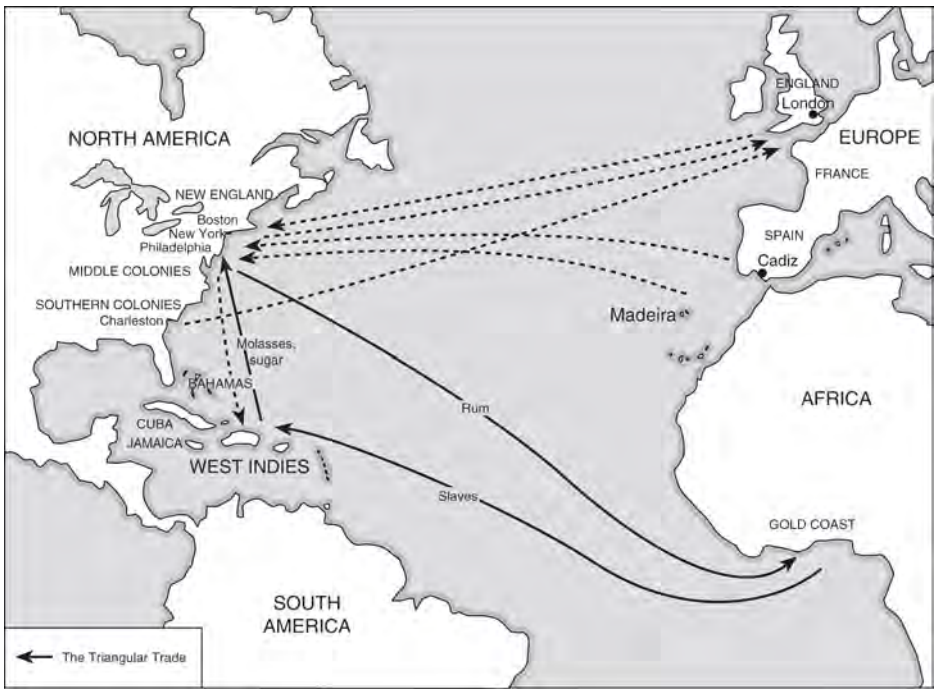
Sugar and slavery linked developments among Africa, the Caribbean, the mainland colonies, and England. New England mariners might take provisions to the West Indies and exchange them for sugar. Ships would then take the sugar to England and return to America with manufactures. In another three-way exchange, New England would ship simple finished products to the coast of Africa and be paid in Negroes. Then, on the infamous "middle passage," the ships would sail to the West Indies and sell the trapped and disoriented Africans for molasses. This product would go back to New England.

While the "triangular trade" in these simplified examples received most notice, it totaled only a small part of the colonial commerce. Merchants up and down the coast shipped lumber, fish, and tobacco to England, and brought back finished products. Traders sent food to the sugar islands and returned with sugar and molasses or cash for other purchases. The trade joined the mainland and island colonies to the Mother Country, and slaves from Africa became critical to the economies of the colonies, especially those involved with sugar.

There was a seventeenth- and eighteenth-century "Atlantic world." Sometimes unstable and unpredictable, commerce depended on the flexibility of traders, and over time its administration shifted north. The transactions depended on regional surpluses and shortages, and success required adroit speculators and agents who often came from the same families. New England evolved as a financial center over an area that extended from New England to London, to Jamaica, and to the African coast. Implicated in slavery, northern merchant families with networks of relatives grew rich. Boston set the example in creating fortunes that would last for centuries and create moneyed businessmen and politicians. Calvinist religion blended with business flair. In the twenty-first century, many US institutions in the Northeast offered investigations, apologies, or even reparations for their involvement in slavery.

Spanish and French America

While the Spanish left their greatest imprint in South and Central America, New Spain's heartland province of Mexico extended north into the present southwest of the United States. In the eighteenth century, Spanish priests colonized the far west with missions and later forts (presidios) along the coast of present-day California. Mexican pioneers, "Californios," followed, but the priests competed unfairly against them as commercial farmers. They converted the natives to Christianity but were most effective at forcing their labor. At the bottom of Spanish society, the Indians in California resembled the enslaved on English plantations.



Map 6 Atlantic-World Trade, 1750.

Not even the French on the mainland side-stepped slavery, but as traders and trappers, they needed workers less and local knowledge more. Other European nations did not dispute the French around the Great Lakes and the fortifications of Quebec and Montreal. France additionally had a presence at the mouth of the Mississippi, present-day New Orleans, and in the interior. Often leagued with the Spanish, the French hunters on the river nonetheless halted Spain's influence north. Both Spain—from its beachhead in Florida—and France—from the west—threatened the coastal colonies. The continental Europeans might push the English into the sea. The English did not measure victory in conquest of other Europeans. Instead, the colonists on the coast made crab-like advances into the interior as they scattered the Indians, killed them off, or watched them die of disease.

English Colonial Cultures

Colonial "bigwigs" had less polish than their counterparts in England. Leaders in the New World were also less wealthy, although the privileges of women were as restricted in the New World as in the Old. As opposed to the governor and a council associated with a distant king, elected representatives made up a "popular" regime that often acted to block directives from afar. The colonists prevented London's encroachments on provincial enterprises, on "the people's freedom." Simultaneously, various areas on

the mainland had peculiar connections to England and to each other. These separate colonies had their own styles and economies. New England farming villages had yielded to the leadership of profitmaking traders who interacted with English merchants in an international system. The port city of Boston, committed to buying and selling, was also devoted to religious learning and culture, and sophisticated and sensitive about its own advantages. The elite had early on founded a training school for Protestant ministers, Harvard College, and other civilizing organizations in Boston strove to excel while simultaneously exuding the self-satisfaction of a society that knew it had gotten it right. Listen to one merchant:

> I … desire from my heart to renounce all confidence or expectation of merit or desert in any of the best duties or services that ever I have, shall, or can be able to perform, acknowledging that … had [they] been a thousand times more exact … [they] are all polluted and corrupt and fall short of commending me to God … They deserve nothing at God's hand but hell and condemnation … [But] my books of account … will testify to the world on my behalf that I have not lived an idle, lazy, or dronish life, nor spent my time wantonly, fruitlessly, or in company-keeping.
>
> Robert Keayne, 1653

From the early seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century, "Puritans" changed into "Yankees" in New England. But inhabitants did not simply "decline" from strict Calvinism. Puritanism had promoted humility before an all-powerful God. By the early 1700s, Yankees depended on God but also called upon their own abilities to better society. Yet we would be mistaken in overemphasizing rationality in their religion. Back in 1692, a scourge of witchcraft in Salem, Massachusetts, had occurred. The colony executed nineteen supposed witches before authorities put an end to the escalating chronicles about partnering with Satan. New England religion was never merely about the balance between unworldly meekness and worldly vanity. Popular religion included ghosts, goblins, spiritual manifestations, and the casting of spells. The Bible corroborated belief in a world of demons, as well as conveying a theology. Even the learned, who in Massachusetts curtailed the excesses, insisted on the role of the devil in human affairs. For a long time, historians have explained the witchery as a product of class antagonisms, psychological disorders, and tensions between the generations or between men and women. The term "witch hunt" has lost its Protestant connotations and come to mean an unjustifiable, often political, search for scapegoats. New England sat between the late-medieval world and the modern. Its peculiarity lay in its belief that its notables were men of rectitude and were not tainted as in England. Both the earlier Bay Company and the later Yankee Massachusetts embodied this "moralism." And in the interior, west of Boston and to the southwest of Connecticut this moralism was still Calvinist.

The colonies of New York and Pennsylvania gained more business than Massachusetts. New York City and Philadelphia outshone Boston in economic activity, if not in refinement. With 700,000 people, London and its culture made colonial life crude,

and 90 percent of the colonial population did not even live in towns. Yet in the middle of the eighteenth century, Philadelphia with 28,000 and New York with 22,000 had more people than the 16,000 in Boston. Without the single-minded religiosity of New England, the middle colonies had more variation. People from all over Western Europe jostled with those of English descent, as well as native-born white Americans who had left New England. While Pennsylvania and New York defined the geographical center of the mainland colonies, their citizens also had "middling" values, and their politics might compromise the notions of colonies to the north and south. These middle colonies tolerated dissent in the way that New England did not and had a less deferential public life than in the south. The middle colonies, scholars have argued, pointed to the later moderation of life in the United States. In the eighteenth century, the Frenchman Michel de Crèvecoeur commented on this aspect of Pennsylvania and New York:

> They are a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes. From this promiscuous breed, that race now called Americans has arisen … I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and who's present four sons have now four wives of different nations.

Crèvecoeur did not mention that all were Protestant in orientation and despised Romanists.

Gentry led Virginia's plantation culture. Below Virginia, the south was thinly populated, and slavery there did not have a base of gracious owners. The Carolinas and Georgia also lacked political might and looked to Virginia for examples of how to rule. By the early eighteenth century, the civic-minded planters of that colony depended on the enslaved to support a lifestyle like that of landed Englishmen. Virginians practiced a tolerant Anglicanism, different from the rigid Reformed doctrines of New England. They also underestimated their devotion to slavery that increasingly troubled the reflective:

> I rose at 5 o'clock this morning and read a chapter in Hebrew and 200 verses in Homer's Odyssey. I ate milk for breakfast. I said my prayers. Jenny and Eugene were whipped. I read law in the morning and Italian in the afternoon.
>
> We rode to Jamestown church … Nothing could hinder me from sleeping at church, though I took a great deal of pains against it. About 3 o'clock we dined with the Governor where everything was polite and well served … In the evening my wife and I took a walk about the plantation and were good friends … I said my prayers and had good health, good thoughts, and good humor; thanks be to God Almighty. I gave my wife a flourish.
>
> William Byrd of "Westover" Virginia, 1709–10

Concerns on the coast, from Massachusetts to the south of Virginia, also varied from those inland, on what was the western frontier of the eighteenth century. Here yet another distinct culture grew.

In the 1600s an impoverished group of Scots migrated to Northern Ireland to evade the hardships of their native land. These Reformed Protestants were also escaping a hated Church of England and, in Catholic Ireland, struggled for their religion. Early in the eighteenth century, now known as "the Scots–Irish," they fled Ireland, chiefly to Pennsylvania. They arrived too late to get the best farmland, and while defiantly asserting their rights, the Scots–Irish found Penn's Quakerism unpersuasive. They migrated to the boundaries of civilized Pennsylvania where they had the reputation as aggressive but effective frontiersmen. The Appalachian Mountains first curtailed their movement west, and so they moved south into the "backcountry" of Maryland, then into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, and finally to the west of Carolina. During the eighteenth century, a chain of Scots–Irish settlements grew up along the "great wagon road" from Pennsylvania to Georgia. This highway hugged the east of the Appalachians. Later these Scots–Irish merged with immigrants from Virginia and the Carolinas on a march further west to present-day Kentucky and Tennessee.

Americans living on the coast looked down upon the Scots–Irish, who kept their hatred for English rule and for any sort of approved church. They resented authority and had enemies among the colonies' rulers, especially in Pennsylvania and Carolina. The Scots–Irish found America as oppressive as England and Ireland. While they demanded assistance in moving west, and in pushing back or exterminating the Indians, they also wanted little to do with government.

The Scots–Irish contributed to a distinctive ethos. Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia in the 1670s, in which the poor pressed the wealthy to remove Indians, had typified this attitude. The backcountry added insubordination to politics. Even the most egalitarian cultures along the coast showed more respect for authority than the Scots–Irish, who had the task of hacking out settled agriculture and faced threats from the indigenous. Yet government in America barely listened to the west, overly standing for not just the better classes but also interests along the coast. Backcountry folk brought justified grievances against Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Jamestown, and Charlestown. Much later, those inland from the coast claimed to be the heart of the United States and were aggrieved about the east.

A Coastal Culture?

Despite the multiplicity of cultures, the embedded colonies all had a common source and heritage in England. Ruled from afar, however, the settlers were conscious that they were not fully British, a wider name for all of those who hailed from England, Scotland, and Wales. There was no single pattern, but an exotic version of Britain came into being. Colonies adjusted distinctively to the New World but, as time went on, became more similar. As in England, occupants respected geography and property rights, but lost some of their fear of the environment. In contrast to the natives' notion of the unity of land and life, colonists obsessed over ownership. They also came to value the local leadership, and the institutions they believed derived from England. The institutions across the sea protected the liberties of Britons. At the same time, the Americans could

not look squarely at slavery in the south, or on the taking of the Indian lands up and down the seaboard. The colonists never asked how slavery and the seizure of property fit with the liberties for themselves, as the 1619 Project later stressed.

New England created an ordered Protestant society less individualistic than the others. Over time, however, New England was subject to the same economic forces operating everywhere. South of New England the colonies moved from individualism to greater organization, while New England moved from communalism to individualism. They all converged. Many historians, me included, have argued that New England typifies the experience of the colonies and later that of the United States. Perhaps this argument is mistaken, for Massachusetts may rather have been a deviant if influential case, eventually pulled in the same direction as everyone else. Nevertheless, it is hard to doubt the impact of crusading reformed Protestantism on the United States even into the twenty-first century.

Moreover, the sugar colonies in the Caribbean dropped in import. The islands had no frontier to conquer and had less room for a middling class of whites. Relying on the English navy and shipping, the islands displayed less of a sense of their own rights and bowed more to the Mother Country. The mainland communities suspected the plantation Indies. They were too black. Finally, the Atlantic separated the mainland from the plantations. Strung out, mostly, from Boston to Charleston, the Britons in North America shared aims that scarcely reached to the Caribbean, despite the huge territory of the non-island colonies. The economic ties could not overcome the perceived difference between the Caribbean and the coast.

* * *

The Spanish had a strong presence in the southwest, and often joined with French interests in the interior. Spain and France together could challenge the existence of the English outposts. These mainland colonies had different and still divided legacies, and the natives still battled the invaders. But England under the Stuarts in the seventeenth century had implanted vigorous English-speaking societies that included assorted Europeans. In the eighteenth century, the Mother Country would push this hodgepodge to confront not only England but also the Indians, the Spanish, and the French.

PART II
THE REVOLUTION AND THE CONSTITUTION

CHAPTER 3
THE COLONIES IN THE EMPIRE, 1651–1774

From the Navigation Acts to the Continental Congress

In a hundred years, from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century, England imposed order on an empire. At the same time, the dependencies sensed their autonomy, and disdained hierarchy and titles. Although their beliefs in liberty and equality did not always go together, each went against the grain of English ideas. In creating an imperial system, the Mother Country helped its New World possessions to define themselves as different. When this viewpoint grew hostile to Britain, the English found that making the Empire safe also put their rule at risk.

The Empire Strikes Back

By the early eighteenth century, Britain participated in "mercantilism": a collection of states—Britain, France, Spain, and the Netherlands—competed for a finite amount of wealth that their merchants would get through trade. England would sell to the other countries more than it bought, and so accumulate gold, the most precious commodity. London would have an advantageous trade balance and would even work for economic self-sufficiency—for needing nothing from others. In consuming finished products and providing raw materials, Britain's colonies would aid the homeland, for England made the greatest profits when it sent furnished materials to colonies that did not purchase from foreigners. Navigation Acts in 1651, 1660, 1663, and 1673 regulated American trade. Only English or colonial-built vessels with English or colonial crews could carry goods. Merchants must use English ports to ship items, and traders had to send colonial exports, "enumerated goods," to England. As much as possible, other countries were shut out.

The disadvantageous connection to Britain caused Americans only minor irritation. Distance, indifference, and lack of enforcement of the Navigation Acts undermined imperial policy. Even apprehensive colonists smuggled. Moreover, mercantilism worked well for the colonies. They did not have manufactures but did have raw materials. Despite resentment and resistance, businesses on both sides of the Atlantic were served.

When James II came to the throne in 1685, England began to rationalize management of its sprawling possessions, and the king asserted control in the colonies. The "Dominion of New England" exemplified the strategy. In 1686, James combined the New England colonies with New York and New Jersey into this new entity. Centrally organized units would not only make it easier to regulate trade but also reduce the

popular assemblies. James sent Sir Edmund Andros to govern the Dominion. Enraging the locals, Andros carried out his mandate by imposing taxes, limiting meetings, and rescinding land titles.

At home, James's assertion of royal dominance led to the Glorious Revolution of 1688. English Protestantism at last triumphed over Catholicism, and Parliament over the monarchy. Mary, James's daughter, and her Dutch husband, Prince William, were Protestants. They saw more clearly than James that they must behave as the crown was curtailed. The long Stuart attempt to contain the Reformation suffered its decisive defeat. By 1714, in a complex set of moves, England had installed the Hanover dynasty of Protestants. People worried less about Catholics and kings. Even if imperfectly and unfairly, Parliament represented the British and drew its members from many places. Different factions came into being, and Parliament selected leaders, a "cabinet," to govern. Its leader, a "prime minister" to the king, came forward.

But the religion of William and Mary and the growth of Parliament did not mean that England had changed its basic stance toward the colonies. While the Dominion collapsed, the British became more invasive. Influential parliamentarians and men standing for the monarch continued the imperial program. They acted no differently from James II.

The View from America

Americans who attended to what went on across the Atlantic believed that English rule was mercurial at best, suspicious at worst. Catholics fought with Protestants, but colonists could not count on the outcome. Kings feuded with Parliament, again in dubious battle. The provincials were out of the line of fire while the location of sovereignty was debated. Loyal to the crown, Americans still had misgivings about English rule and its religious proclivities. They also had heightened feelings about even a hint of tyranny and their benefits as "freeborn."

The colonies had various sorts of administrations. Some came directly under the king; others had "proprietors," owners who had received grants from the king; and peculiar corporations originated still others. But such distant and changing management was usually ineffective and ill-informed of what went on in the New World. The king or proprietor appointed a governor, and he initially had a council to assist him. But most colonies had transformed this council into a court and legislature, roughly resembling the Parliament in Britain. However, this "upper house"—like the colonial governor—often did not respond to domestic interests, and a "lower house" or "popular" assembly had come into being and more reflected the people. Instrumental in law-making, it gave civic life its character. An elite composed this house, but propertied males elected it. Even when it fought with the governor or his supporters, the squabbles inculcated into Americans a sense of their own "rights." In villages and towns, white property owners chose "selectmen" who exercised power. Militias drawn from the populace provided policing and a force to be used against the Indians.

The Mother Country correctly perceived that the dependencies had few reasons to cooperate. Each zone along the Atlantic focused on the day-to-day problems of re-creating English life. Natives regularly challenged this re-creation. Not even a single colony's relations with Britain, and certainly not the direction of the entire seaboard, could long capture attention in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The Euro-Americans had ideas that made them wary of the crown, but had no unified image of themselves, and "colonial opinion" rarely existed.

Nonetheless, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, those in the New World could see a complicated outcome to England's spiritual wars. The royal religion comforted them, but new views in Parliament were altering their connection to Britain. The Americans might have to accommodate more officials and direct rule, and endure troops in their homes. On the one hand, the threat of Romanism had vanished. On the other hand, thought Americans, the Glorious Revolution had given way to an era of intrusion and regulation.

Literate Americans came to idolize an English group, "the Commonwealthmen." These "radical Whigs" were seen to have embodied the British who made the Glorious Revolution and opposed the falling away from its best days. Henry St. John (Viscount Bolingbroke), John Trenchard, and Thomas Gordon achieved a mythic status in America, where they exemplified virtue. In the eighteenth century, the Americans lamented that in the Mother Country political vice had replaced religious evil. The Commonwealthmen gave Americans an exaggerated picture of what good rule should be like and of what rights the ruled should have.

The Euro-Americans had simplified but not irrational feelings about global politics. Old World alliances came and went, and had a varying impact on Indians, colonies, and Europeans. The colonists approved of England's belligerency with Catholic France and Spain, and with the native partners of the French. The battles justified American participation in the Empire and made the new imperial emphases palatable. Colonials might worry about the corruption of English domestic politics and about novel decrees, but they also valued the fights against Catholicism and the local ones against Indians.

In 1689, the first of four worldwide wars had broken out among England, France, and Spain, fought in Europe, India, and North America. For almost seventy-five years, from the late seventeenth century into the second half of the eighteenth, Americans witnessed their Mother Country battling to prevail against Rome and to keep the colonies from Catholics. Americans were learning not just that the sovereignty back home might be up for grabs but that nations perpetually contested for self-rule and wealth. A good offense furnished the best safety.

Forging Leadership

The colonies were responding to a more energetic Britain. The European conflicts and English policy in America were defining all-colony interests, and a class of leaders was

also being created. This class fused New England religion, middle colony practicality, and Virginian gentility. The kernel of the collective personality is exhibited by three famous men—Jonathan Edwards, Benjamin Franklin, and George Washington.

In the 1730s and 1740s, religious revivals ultimately known as the "Great Awakening" swept New England and made an impact on the other colonies. The movement among Calvinists appeared to halt the growth of relaxed religion and invigorated Protestants. The "harvests" brought to the limelight the preacher and theoretician Jonathan Edwards. A Reformed thinker, he was the most compelling theologian ever to adorn North America. Edwards terrifyingly depicted human depravity. In Enfield, Connecticut, in 1741, in urging sinners to repent and to receive God's grace, he struck deep at the congregation's shortcomings:

> Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they won't bear their weight … The arrows of death fly unseen at noonday; the sharpest sight can't discern them …. The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked … O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath … You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you could do, to induce God to spare you one moment.

At the same time, Edwards could write lyrically about God's special interest in the New World:

> 'Tis not unlikely that this work of God's spirit … is a prelude of that glorious work of God, so often foretold in Scripture, which … shall renew the world … This work will begin in America … What is now seen … especially in New England may prove the dawn of that glorious day; and … seem[s] to me strongly to argue that God intends it as the beginning of … something vastly great.

Whereas Edwards had been born into a family of preachers, our second figure, Benjamin Franklin, was the son of a New England candle-maker and learned the trade of printing. He left Boston as a teenager in part to escape New England's conformity—Edwards and his fellow ministers. Skeptical of Protestant dogma, Franklin grew up and made his reputation in Philadelphia as a publisher and essayist. In 1732, he issued his first *Poor Richard's Almanack*, known for its proverbs and witty advice. Franklin pursued politics and energized Philadelphia. He founded institutions—a Philosophical Society, a Library Company, and an Academy that eventually became the University of Pennsylvania. In addition to high culture, Franklin was devoted to the people's welfare. He proposed a fire department, a hospital, and a night watch for Philadelphia. He capped

his reputation with experiments in electricity that gave him standing almost equal to Isaac Newton, one of the great figures of the early modern West and the mastermind who had formulated the laws of nature. With his knowledge of Newton's physics and of electricity, Franklin invented a lightning rod to protect homes from fires as well as an efficient stove and bifocal spectacles. By the middle of the eighteenth century, Franklin had a larger-than-life status in America.

Like Franklin, Jonathan Edwards too had read Isaac Newton; but while the religious thinker wrestled with how physics could reinforce spirituality, Franklin used the physics to improve human affairs. For Edwards, improvements mattered little in a world of reprobates. By contrast, Franklin was committed to judicious practicality, and he had a mischievous humor that made his caution both funny and appealing. With some self-mockery, and at the expense of the likes of Edwards, Franklin's *Autobiography* told of his youthful ambition:

> I conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection. I wished to live without committing any fault … But I soon found I had undertaken a task of more difficulty than I had imagined. While my attention was taken up and care employed in guarding against one fault, I was often surprised by another … I cannot boast of much success in acquiring the reality of this virtue [of humility], but I had a good deal with regard to the appearance of it. I made it a rule to forbear all direct contradiction to the sentiments of others and all positive assertion of my own … When another asserted something that I thought an error, I denied myself the pleasure of contradicting him … and in answering I began by observing that in certain cases or circumstances his opinion would be right, but that in the present case there "appeared" or "seemed to me" some difference. I soon found the advantage of this change in my manners. The conversations I engaged in went on more pleasantly; the modest way in which I proposed my opinions procured them a readier reception.

During the religious awakenings of the 1730s, Franklin became an acquaintance of a spellbinding preacher, George Whitefield:

> The multitudes of all sects and denominations that attended his sermons were enormous, and it was matter of speculation to me, who was one of the number, to observe the extraordinary influence of his oratory on his hearers and how much they admired and respected him, notwithstanding his common abuse of them, by assuring them they were naturally "half beasts and half devils" … In the course of [one of his sermons] I perceived he intended to finish with a collection, and I silently resolved he should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket a handful of coppers, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded, I began to soften and concluded to give the coppers. Another stroke of the oratory made me ashamed of that and determined me to give the silver; and he finished so admirably that I emptied my pocket wholly into the collector's dish, gold and all

> … And methinks my testimony in his favor ought to have more weight as we had no religious connection. He used, indeed, sometimes to pray for my conversion but never the satisfaction of believing that his prayers were heard. Ours was a mere civil friendship.

Just as Franklin displayed religious broad-mindedness, he was dispassionate about politics. When the colonists' conflicts with England increased, Franklin's appraisal was almost impartial:

> I do not pretend to the gift of prophecy. History shows that … great empires have crumbled heretofore; … and … without a greater share of prudence and wisdom than we have seen both sides to be possessed of, we shall probably come to the same conclusion.

George Washington, our third figure, was a generation younger than Edwards and Franklin. While Edwards had come from Calvinist ministers, and Franklin had proven himself as a craftsman, Washington had a different pedigree, a member of minor Virginia gentry. Dependent on relatives of wealth and status, Washington educated himself. He trained as a surveyor and speculated in lands to the west that Virginia might acquire from the Indians. The young man conceived of a career as a military officer in the British Empire, and his bearing—at six feet two inches—and his horsemanship recommended him. "Not a king in Europe," it was noted, "but would look like a *valet de chambre* by his side." At the same time, Washington absorbed Virginia's codes of respectability, and relished slave-holding dignity. He had begun his adult life as an Anglican and adhered to conventional religion, although he did not think much about it. Closer in religion to Franklin than to Edwards, Washington still would not have dreamed of spoofing Protestantism as Franklin did. In the second half of the eighteenth century, Washington was increasingly committed to a sober experiment of American self-government.

Unlike Edwards and Franklin, Washington had no claims as a thinker. When he later wrote about the faith others placed in him, he noted how his decency might interact with his society:

> I beg it to be remembered by every gentleman … that I, this day, declare with utmost sincerity, I do not think I am equal to the command I am honored with … [It is] too boundless for my abilities and far, very far, beyond my experience … But, as it has been a kind of destiny that has thrown me upon this service, I shall hope that my undertaking is designed to answer some good purpose, … [although there is] such a dearth of public spirit and want of virtue … I should not be surprised at any disaster that might happen …. [I find it difficult to justify matters] to posterity and my conscience … [Men of] virtue and fortitude [are put] to severest test … [But] the approbation of my Country is what I wish … It is the highest reward to a feeling Mind; and happy are they, who so conduct themselves to merit it … If you

> have any regard for your Country, concern for yourself or posterity, or respect for me, … banish [from your mind] abhorrent, mischievous ideas.

The work of Edwards and of others in the revivals had complex consequences. The preaching contributed to the emotional turmoil that overwhelmed converts when God gave grace. Respectable observers worried about emotional display, "enthusiasm." The social dislocation of the revivals upset clergymen who lamented that individuals were stimulated to think they could save themselves. When God converted people, wandering preachers said, He reduced all to abject humility, to the same rank of sinner in need of salvation. Protestants of marginal status—groups called Baptists and Methodists—multiplied. They challenged more refined and upper-class Congregationalists and Presbyterians, as well as the Anglicans in the south.

The revivals underscored New England's assurance of its moral superiority. Although Edwards was not embroiled in politics, his thinking left politicians with a brooding sense of the world's evil mixed with anticipation that they might straighten out mankind. John Adams of Massachusetts, later a critical lawyer in Revolutionary America, had just this set of ideas. Another such organizer and theorist, James Madison from Virginia, received a Calvinist education at the College of New Jersey (Princeton) where Edwards had been president shortly before Madison attended. Although men like Washington and Franklin devalued robust Protestantism, a streak of virtuous zeal ran through everyone.

The revivals did not much make women equal to men, but the view that sin created equality was a step in the direction of weakening patriarchy. Moreover, by the 1760s, revival egalitarianism was consistent with the dismissal of English claims of hereditary status. Yet, with Washington, leaders believed that followers should yield with courteous regard to their betters. While some Americans might challenge Washington about a cultural pecking order, an elite should govern and receive deference. And sin was not all-defining. While America might have something wrong at its core, it had more purity to start with, and a consensus held with Franklin that the New World could be made better.

The French and Indian War

In North America French traders and explorers had secured concessions north and west of the coast, and fur trappers extended trading. As hunters killed beaver, they broadened French influence down the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico where they met up with their co-religionists, the Spanish in Florida and to the west in the New Spain of the southwest. In encroaching on the western boundary of the colonies, the French frightened England with the prospect that they might sweep away the colonies or convert them to Catholicism. In addition, the French blocked Spain in the Gulf of Mexico. Catholic ties made the French and Spanish only sometime allies, while the Spanish too might threaten Britain. Although the English did not primarily fear Spain, they saw repeated confrontations with Catholics as a matter of life or death.

Britain faced a specific challenge from France. While the French antagonized the Iroquois of upper New York, other natives had befriended New France and had sided

with it against the English, who menaced Indians more than French trappers. The Indians did not worry about losing lands to New France, as they did to the colonists, even though the indigenous would most prosper if they played the Europeans off against one another.

As English pressed westward into what is now the Ohio Valley, the French tried to halt the movement with a line of stockades. In the spring of 1754, Virginia decided to prohibit the French from completing one of these strong points, Fort Duquesne, in what is now southwestern Pennsylvania. The governor sent a force commanded by a young George Washington. The French and Indians defeated Washington, although he surrendered unharmed. He got used to the thrill of battle and began to demonstrate the civil–military leadership that was to impress those who served under him or saw him in action. The scuffle at Fort Duquesne provided the powers with a ground for war. As the French thinker Voltaire put it later, "a torch lighted in the forests of America set all Europe ablaze."

The "Seven Years War" was the last and most cataclysmic of the global disputes in the seventy years after the Glorious Revolution. The other wars had not sent Europeans to America. But not trusting to colonial soldiers, the British in the 1750s used their army to break the French stranglehold inland, and France also sent forces. In the New World, the "French and Indian War" pitted France and her natives against Britain and her colonials. The Europeans thought the future of North America, English or French, was at stake.

At the start of the conflict in 1754, the English-speakers met about a coordinated resistance. Seven colonies sent delegates to a "congress" at Albany, New York. From Pennsylvania came Benjamin Franklin, the foremost personage in America. He developed "the Albany Plan of Union." It provided for a government of the colonies that would raise taxes and an army. Franklin thought up the cartoon of the separated parts of a snake each of which was a colony. The caption read: "JOIN, or DIE." Britain did not like the Plan because it contributed to an independent state. Individual colonies rejected the idea because they did not want to give up their autonomy. The British assumed that the colonies would not act in concert, and that England must defend them. Still, the Albany Plan set a precedent. The colonists recognized Franklin as a shrewd leader, although for a long time he remained a Briton, and simply wanted more for the dependencies within the Empire. One of many eminences who put their faith in the king as a unifying symbol, Franklin nonetheless suspected selfish Parliamentarians. The meeting at Albany had just the stirrings of American self-sufficiency. Later, Franklin would follow younger men, and not lead.

In the summer of 1755, English soldiers tried again at Fort Duquesne. French and Indian forces trounced them. This time Washington, who went with the British General Edward Braddock, shared in a military disaster. The enemy killed Braddock, and inflicted 900 casualties, many occurring during a panicky retreat. The indigenous on the French side now threatened large settlements on the frontier in what is now the state of Ohio.

Britain's fortunes did not change until George II appointed William Pitt his prime minister. Pitt directed both the European and the American campaigns. He negotiated

Figure 2 Join or Die (*Pennsylvania Gazette,* May 1754) by Benjamin Franklin. Copyright Library of Congress.

in Europe and cultivated the colonies, where he focused on military priorities. When Fort Duquesne finally fell to the English in 1758, the victors renamed it Fort Pitt (later Pittsburgh). That same year the English converged on French Canada. They captured Louisburg in Nova Scotia commanding the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the St. Lawrence River. Then, at Quebec City in 1759, James Wolfe defeated the Marquis de Montcalm in one of the most consequential battles ever to take place in North America. Both leaders were killed, and the fight was often depicted in prints and pictures. Further along the St. Lawrence, Montreal surrendered in 1760, and Canada became English. In 1763, France gave to Spain the French interest in lands west of the Mississippi River that New France had claimed. France's Spanish ally turned Spanish Florida over to the English. The French kept some islands in the West Indies.

The loss eliminated France from Canada and elevated the British in North America, and on the sea. New Spain still covered a great expanse, but her enterprises in North America were vulnerable. Europeans respected Spain only in South America. Although no one tested the Indians in the interior, the British had clobbered the French, and weakened the natives as well as the Spanish. Along many disputed borders, the Indians could no longer count on France. The natives were less able to set one European at the throat of another. Proud of the victory, the colonists were pleased to be part of a kingdom that stretched from India in the east to some thirty American colonies, including Barbados and Jamaica and Canada, in the west.

Figure 3 The Death of General Wolfe (1770) by Benjamin West. Courtesy of Clements Library, University of Michigan.

The peace nonetheless altered the dynamic between England and her possessions. The New Worlders had fought with England and delighted in its gains. Although they only marginally contributed to British success, their exploits puffed them up. Putting their own deficiencies out of mind, the Americans made realistic, if overly critical, judgments about English blunders and military defects. On the other side, the Mother Country dismissed "the dirtiest, most contemptible, cowardly dogs that you can conceive," as Wolfe had written about the American militia that fought with him at Montreal. The English refused to promote any colonial officer above the rank of captain and so, for instance, they demoted Washington. Finally, the period of benign neglect ended, and along with English supremacy went a strategy to enforce mercantilism.

Fruits of Success

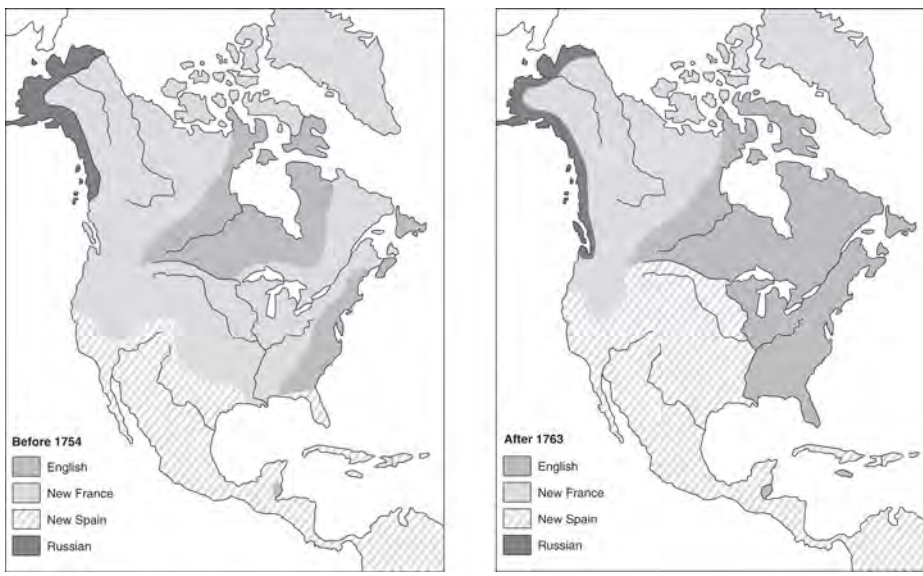
The wars had cost Britain blood and treasure. England had procured the well-being of the Euro-Americans, and they must pay for this benefit; they could also contribute more to mercantilism. The English must find a way to shun brawls with the Indians. In 1763, the assaults by Chief Pontiac on settlements in the Ohio Valley from New York to Virginia underlined these problems, and frightened both England and the colonists. Pontiac led tribes that had been allied to the French, and the English sent regulars to put down the uprising. Britain determined to place troops in the New World.

The Empire announced a "Proclamation Line" that ruled out settlement west of the Appalachians, the mountains that informally defined the borders of the colonies. The British would turn aside further conflict between their troops and Indians. An imaginary line, however, did not do the trick. Angry colonists responded defiantly. To the Americans, prevailing over the French and Indians meant easier access to western lands. In retrospect, the Proclamation Line inaugurated a period of move and countermove, as the colonies and the Mother Country worked out a new definition of their relation, when each felt self-confident.

In the two years after the peace of 1763, George III, king from 1760, and his prime minister, Lord George Grenville, accelerated the less-than-welcome mercantilism that the Proclamation Line heralded. "Great Britain protects America," Grenville stated. "America is bound to yield obedience." The parent nation believed the colonials were spoiled children, who must help in meeting the costs of imperial administration.

Splits among the New World Europeans, England reasoned, would allow it to divide and conquer. Although all colonial life looked more or less the same to officials—the Americans were thought of as boorish, uncultured, and insecure—the dependencies had never shown any ability for concerted action. In addition, according to the English, the colonies could hardly overcome problems of transport and communication that went with the vast distances from Boston to Charleston. Britain saw the localism as both explicable and likely to continue. Yet the English got it wrong.

Grenville enacted three measures that aroused distrust. The Sugar Act, or the Revenue Act of 1764, placed duties on foreign sugar and other luxuries. It led to stricter enforcement of the Navigation Acts to stop contraband. The obnoxious Quartering Act of the following year required Americans to give food and lodging to soldiers. That



Map 7 Before and After 1763.

same year, 1765, a Stamp Act, to provide more revenue for troops, placed a levy on most printed papers. The Act gained notoriety because for the first time the Mother Country directly taxed the colonists. Britain had conceived previous taxes differently. The Empire, the colonists understood, might legitimately regulate and adjust the flow of trade. This imperial dispensation required tariffs—taxes paid by traders or merchants who might pass the cost on, silently raising the price of goods. Britain erred, however, in making the Stamp Act obviously invasive; the tax ordered the purchase of stamps on everything printed in the colonies from newspapers to legal documents.

Ire greeted the Stamp Act. In the Virginia House of Burgesses (the legislature), a young and overheated Patrick Henry urged that "Caesar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell." Then Henry is reported to have concluded, "and let George the Third profit by their example." When more timid burgesses interrupted with cries of "Treason! Treason!," Henry continued: "If this be treason, make the most of it!" Henry agitated Americans because he had gone further than attacking Parliament. He had blamed troubles on the king, the icon of the Empire. The fiery speaker denied "taxation without representation." Taxation differed from the regulation of trade by tariff. As Henry implied, Virginians would permit a tax only if they had a say in figuring out when and how it was imposed; the Empire could not dictate. The spellbinding Henry associated mercantilism with the enemy. He later proclaimed, "Give me liberty or give me death," and leapt into history texts.

A secret group, the Sons of Liberty, banded together to intimidate tax agents, often using violence or its threat. The Stamp Act also stirred cooler heads up and down the coast. Franklin had spent most of his time in London representing the colonies, and presumed they would accept the Stamp Act. Out of touch with his constituency, Franklin only slowly took up against the Act. But attending to public opinion in a country where it counted, Franklin quickly joined in complaint. James Otis of Massachusetts planned action against the Stamp Act. Building on the Albany Congress of more than ten years before, delegates from nine colonies met in New York in 1765 at "the Stamp Act Congress." They protested that only elected representatives could rightly tax them. Boycotts against all goods imported from Britain sprang up. This protest influenced English merchants on behalf of the colonies. In 1766, the Mother Country beat a retreat. Many colonial moderates—and some English politicians—feared that British practices upset time-honored relations. The Empire did not want combat, although it did not relinquish its prerogatives. Legislators repealed the Stamp Act, yet also passed a "declaratory" act: Parliament had the authority "in all cases whatsoever" to tax the colonies and make their laws. Charles Townshend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (the Treasury), formulated new revenue measures.

Revolutionary Beliefs

As the conflict escalated, New World politicians embraced fresh beliefs. By the 1760s, an all-colonial perspective existed. Politicized Americans transmuted the ideas of the European Enlightenment to the shores of the western Atlantic.

The educated were interested in applied science, which absorbed popular expressions of Isaac Newton's physics. The colonists were "rationalists": all those examining the world carefully and thinking about their experience could arrive at fundamental truths. No one could deny these truths. Laws governed nature. Perhaps the genius of Newton (and Franklin) had to uncover them but, by the end of the eighteenth century, all could understand them. "Reason," patient investigation, revealed the principles on which the physical world operated. This reason was tied to observation and enabled men to make further discoveries, or to put the principles to work for human benefit, as Franklin had done.

An extension of these concepts came in the grasp of religion. Leaders had absorbed the generic self-righteousness of Reformed Protestantism and could not abide Catholics. Yet the absence of doctrinal Protestantism in the politics of the period 1760–1820 is unique in America. Many leaders rejected Christianity. The inconsistencies in the Bible made it difficult to believe. Its stories about the birth of Jesus to a virgin, his resurrection from the dead, and many more, could not be serious. On the other hand, the harmonies of the cosmos did convince the sophisticated that an orderly God had created the universe. A first cause of nature had to exist, and leaders could reasonably assume that this cause, God, exemplified the laws. "Deism" esteemed an Author of all things, who had a clockmaker's mind. But after constructing a tidy world, the creator did not directly intercede in human affairs. The religion of some of the elite had little time for a Jesus, the son of God who performed miracles, but Deism was "providential": life worked out for the best if reasonable beings acted with foresight. The other-worldly disquiets of Christianity were downgraded. Deism heightened moral impulses directed to our relations with our fellows and in some instances had a strain that accentuated perfection. Although worried about sin, leaders sometimes promoted Jesus as the ideal of a human being.

The Deist-politicians often understated their beliefs for public consumption and, at times, blandly adapted themselves to the regnant supernatural Protestantism. Franklin, for example, denied the truths of Protestantism, yet cheerfully granted that religion was useful or desirable to ensure acceptable comportment. Leaders might not believe in Christianity and might only be committed to a distant and impersonal God, but they had no thought of dismissing mainstream religion. They knew that life had a spiritual basis, although not one that any single denomination defined. While officials would never support the supremacy of any one sect, they did foster religion in general, which for them meant Protestant churchgoing. Although they reviled Romanists, society should even tolerate them. This partiality for the religious and dislike of dogma grounded opinion about the separation of church and state. Government should acknowledge worship of a creator, and sponsor Protestantism, but the state should discourage the enforcement of any single brand. Americans later endorsed diverse Christian views, including those of Catholics; much later something called Judeo-Christianity; and finally the diversity of world religions that marked the twenty-first century. Self-righteous Protestantism remained at the heart of culture, but Reformed ideas gave way to a vaguer religiosity.

These ideas of an American Enlightenment led to a comprehension of politics also indebted to those aspect of Calvinism that made everyone equally without merit. The peculiar orientation owed as much to the depravity of all in Edwards as to the calculation in Franklin and the respectability in Washington.

The creator made everyone somehow the same, or at least white males of property. In the order of things, men should have equal opportunities and equality with other men in determining the arrangement of society. The Architect of all things "endowed" men with such "natural rights," and no government could take them away. Americans learned the lessons of the Awakening: we all looked the same to God. Simultaneously, differences in station were expected and promoted. Variations in aptitude, industry, and frugality among individuals justified the differences and would lead to a civilized life that recognized rank. Egalitarian rights could conflict with entitled status, and liberties might be at odds with equality.

Thinkers distinguished society and government. The outcome of the human condition, society derived from collections of human beings living together, raising their young, and sharing efforts. These joint, implicit responsibilities defined existence. Communities had created government as a negative instrument necessary to the extent that things might go wrong. The New World knew of the "social contract" theorists of the Old World, like John Locke the Englishman whom the learned thought of as the Newton of politics. Locke believed that men came together and worked out how to rule and to be ruled. You must end up with something more than government by the strongest, and the basis of government lay in what was just. For philosophers like Locke, polities arose when individuals decided to make agreements among themselves and to formulate laws. Contract theorists reasoned about how solitary individuals decided to protect themselves, but individuals also somehow emerged out of an early and primitive collectivity. God originated persons and the community, and both came before the state or a king. Examples of these ideas were the *Mayflower* compact that William Bradford had overseen; or the covenant John Winthrop had spoken of aboard the *Arabella*. For Locke, a regime could never have absolute power. God gave rights to individuals, and no king could lord it over them. And the government also bore watching. You had a right to mistrust it—necessary but artificial.

James Madison put it well:

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

These beliefs of an American Enlightenment led Americans to exaggerate the struggle with Britain. What wrong turn in England had led to an aggressive Empire? Colonists now nodded even more ardently to the early-eighteenth-century Commonwealthmen. These heroes supposed that mercantilism had weakened Britain after the Glorious

Revolution. The growth of monetary power brought about a situation where the king and Parliament bought and sold offices, and beat down the citizens. The Commonwealthmen looked back to a time of imagined integrity in the seventeenth century before the wicked had undermined lawful order. A minority view in England, this nightmare received wider acceptance in the New World. The Americans did at first lack the distaste for English politics that the Commonwealthmen expressed, and tended to blame Parliament and exonerate the king. Nonetheless, the Euro-Americans came to see deteriorating uprightness in the Mother Country. The Catholic evils of the seventeenth century had given way to the political decay of the eighteenth.

After 1763, another stage was revealed. In the next ten years, England verified American fears by its tax policies. Victorious in England, the opponents of the Commonwealthmen had shifted their malice to the New World, where they wished to enslave the colonists.

In London, in 1713, Joseph Addison had his play *Cato* performed. It told of Cato the Younger, the statesman born at the end of the first century BC, and his failed attempt to defend Rome against the tyranny of Julius Caesar. Cato was the idol of the Commonwealthmen, and of the Americans who thought about their connection to the Romans and to the iniquity of "Caesarism." Addison depicts Cato as uncompromising, wearisome, in his commitment to public good. In the colonies, theaters put on the play over and over in the middle of the eighteenth century. In England, the Commonwealthmen John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon had together written as "Cato." Franklin memorized long passages from *Cato*, and one of his guidelines for virtuous living was "Think Cato sees thee." Washington quoted and paraphrased lines from the play in his correspondence over forty years. Patrick Henry took his "Give me liberty or give me death" from the drama. To arrest the decline of public life in the Empire, the Americans required Cato's ethics.

The Commonwealthmen gave the New World notions of what its politics should and could be like. The Americans believed England's decadence explained their troubles. Ideas about the natural and rational order offered them a way to correct the problem. But the Commonwealth position developed in its own way among the colonists. They emphasized liberty of conscience, religious toleration, resistance to oppressors, and reform of the legislature. The colonies denounced hereditary English institutions. The decrees of a single person, whom no one had a role in choosing, went against reason. Logic could not legitimate the privilege, wealth, and power given to an aristocracy of birth. Natural rights taught that men had come equal into the world, and so colonists could debate the foundations of stability in Britain.

In place of such foundations, at best unnatural, at worst debased, the Americans propounded different schemes. Experience and argument in the period from 1774 to 1812 would decide the precise regime they worked out. But they agreed that somehow governors had to lodge power with "the people," a restricted but large group of propertied white men who had rights of citizenship. However, such a "popular government"—Republicanism, as it came to be called—could not give direct power to a mass public.

To the Revolution

Events had to catch up to ideas. Having backed down in 1766, the English—in 1767—determined on new taxes. Parliament taxed various imported items. The money from these "Townshend Acts" would pay officials in America and make them independent of the colonial assemblies that conventionally dispersed salaries. Townshend also organized the easy search of houses where colonists might keep smuggled goods: "writs of assistance" licensed officials to look where they wanted.

A delayed response occurred in the colonies because the taxes were indirect. Britain did not place them on American consumers when they bought items, but on tradesmen. Nonetheless, in *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* (1767) John Dickinson (no mere farmer) penned a landmark pamphlet that attacked the legislation. The colonists were devising arguments that demonstrated how the parent country went wrong. America allowed that Britain might impose tariffs. They secured predictable commerce throughout the Empire, although goods might be smuggled into the colonies to sidestep such tariffs. Merchants who imported goods, and not consumers directly, usually paid the tariffs. Yet the Americans would not accept that Britain might broaden such tariffs into an "external tax." Such amplification would allow Britain to tax the colonies in the name of regulating trade. As Patrick Henry had put it, Britain could not tax the Americans unless Parliament represented them. Dickinson also made this point, although colonists did not want a few men in London who, of course, might always be outvoted. Moreover, Americans scoffed at the view that as Englishmen they were "virtually" represented in Parliament.

A further boycott occurred. Although it had less of an effect, the English diminished their commitment to the Townshend Acts because the revenue generated was disappointing. Moreover, English troops had moved into Boston in October 1768. In early March of 1770, the troops, in ambiguous circumstances, killed five Americans demonstrating against the Acts. This "Boston Massacre" incensed the colonists, and made a reputation for John Adams, another colonist who paraphrased Addison's *Cato*. He defended the confused and threatened soldiers in the first step of a political career as an honest, sober moderate. A new prime minister, Lord Frederick North, repealed the Townshend Acts. England refused to go to the brink, though North avowed Parliament's right to tax by leaving in place a small tax on tea. Britain wanted to save face and dodge a crisis.

Other incidents inflamed the colonies. Most ominously, well-known citizens alerted the public if England planned further subversion. In Massachusetts, again, Sam Adams, a cousin of John Adams, arranged "committees of correspondence." They made different localities and eventually men in different colonies aware of English activities. In 1773, Virginia formed a committee on inter-colony connections as a standing body of its House of Burgesses.

That same year, the North ministry disastrously miscalculated. Because the English still taxed tea, the Americans boycotted it or smuggled it in. The Tea Act of 1773 lowered the cost of tea so that, even with the tax, colonists could get legal tea more cheaply than smuggled tea. England thought it could hoodwink the colonies to accept taxation or

motivate them to do so out of greed. But when a shipment of tea arrived in the Boston harbor, locals dressed up as Indians boarded the ship and dumped the tea overboard. The "Tea Party" became a synonym for organization against a usurping government and endured into the twenty-first century. The "Boston Tea Party" heightened tensions and offended less radical Americans who otherwise opposed English intrusion. Men in the middle like Washington feared what might happen if the colonies accepted law-breaking as a way of retaliating. The struggle was ripping the British fabric of America.

Parliament answered the Tea Party with the Coercive Acts of 1774. One of them punished Boston, and closed her port, while another strengthened the Quartering Act, applying it to all colonies. In a separate but related measure, North passed the Quebec Act of 1774. Britain recognized Catholicism as the official religion of Quebec and defined the boundaries of formerly French Canada in a way that the colonies found detrimental to their interests. Britain shored up its relations with the Romanist Canadians and implied that cooperative colonies might obtain good treatment. Some wondered if the Mother Country was again promoting the Papacy! The Americans knew the Coercive Acts and Quebec Act together as "the intolerable acts."

Leaders had an all-coastal meeting in Philadelphia in the early autumn of 1774, a "Continental Congress." It had delegates from almost all the mainland colonies and realized the idea of an appropriate collection of states. They were defined on the continent but left out Canada because of its religion and willingness to accept English guidance. Also omitted were the sugar islands: too black in population, lacking a republican orientation, and separated by the ocean and the protection of the English fleet. The Continental Congress deliberated on what steps the white Protestant colonies might take. It faulted Parliament, but still wished to express fidelity. The colonies would formulate a unified response to George III. The representatives authored a document "The Association," which bound them to the boycott of English goods. In a series of declarations, the Congress petitioned the king to have Parliament repeal its offensive legislation and restore the status quo of the end of the French and Indian War. Patrick Henry of Virginia and John and Samuel Adams from Massachusetts headed one faction demanding immediate concessions. John Dickinson of Pennsylvania led a more centrist element. Washington, another centrist, attended and reminded his fellows of his ability to command an army. Less militant members wanted only a mild statement of protest. A "Declaration of … Grievances" resulted. If England did not attend appropriately to complaints, however, the delegates pledged to meet again in May of 1775.

* * *

The Empire's attempt to direct the colonies had backfired. A dozen years after the accomplishments of the Seven Years War, the colonies were rebelling under capable leadership unreceptive to Britain. Even as the Continental Congress met in 1774, Lord North had declared, "The die is now cast, the colonies must either submit or triumph." From the English perspective, Boston had an insurrection that force must crush, and the king and Parliament rejected the appeal of the Continental Congress.

CHAPTER 4
WAR AND ORDER, 1775–87

The Politics of Virtue from the Revolution to the Constitution

Americans in the twenty-first century still revere "The Founding," which began with the meeting of a second Continental Congress in 1775 in Philadelphia and with hostilities in Boston in the same period. Battles were underway when, in July of 1776, a Declaration of Independence was announced in Philadelphia. The war, long and hard but successful, did not end until 1783. It was followed by a short period of "confederation." Then, in 1787, the era culminated with a strong statement of governmental organization, The Constitution of the United States of America

The Colonies Go to War

By the spring of 1775, the situation in Massachusetts reached such a pitch that the British decided on a pre-emptive strike. The "Redcoats" determined to seize supplies outside of Boston, in the town of Concord. Fights over the next two months around this provincial center were the first incidents in what would be known as the Revolutionary War, which detached the colonies from Britain. For 150 years after the conflict, no one found fault with the epoch-making events of 1775 and the origins of what became the "United States." Literature inscribed into generation after generation a heroic view of these tussles between the "Patriots," as they were called, and their persecutors. The United States found themselves as the first new nation, emerging in an earth-shattering conflict with a European empire. For well over one hundred years, US literary giants extolled the events.

The sage, Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Concord Hymn*,1837:

Here once the embattled farmers stood
And fired the shot heard round the world.

The poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Paul Revere's Ride*, 1860:

You know the rest. In the books you have read
How the British regulars fired and fled,
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall …

The historian George Bancroft, *The Results of the Intolerable Acts*, 1890:

> In this manner Great Britain, allured by a phantom of absolute authority over colonies, made war on human freedom … If it shall succeed in establishing by force of arms its "boundless" authority over America, where shall humanity find an asylum? … As the fleets and armies of England went forth to consolidate arbitrary power, the sound of war everywhere else on the earth died away. Kings sat still in awe, and nations turned to watch the issue.

The historian, Edmund S. Morgan, *The Birth of the Republic*, 1956:

> The Americans' search for principles … brought them to war in 1775, but it did not end there … It continued and finally culminated in the adoption of the federal Constitution. It was a noble search, a daring search, and by almost any standards a successful search.

As the soldiers and farmers skirmished near Boston, a second Continental Congress gathered in Philadelphia, in the State House, now known as "Independence Hall." This meeting featured New Englanders, hot for independence. Only the middle colonies, which wanted negotiations, restrained New England. Delegates had ambiguous aims. On the one hand, to give a stake to the south, the Congress named George Washington commander-in-chief of an army, and sent him north to fortify the resistance with the "Continentals," a small force that would fight for the united colonies. On the other hand, in July, an "Olive Branch Petition" pledged duties to George III. This last-ditch effort asked the king to intercede with Parliament. Lord North responded by declaring the Americans in revolt. Some 25,000 British soldiers would initially join the fray. The English also contributed to the unity of the states by hiring 30,000 German mercenaries, the Hessians.

By using massive force to put down the traitors, the English reasoned that decision would restore order, and end the crises of the past decade. The Redcoats accompanied this presence with an embargo on trade. In the late summer of 1775, the Continental Congress, on its side, approved an invasion of Canada to put a fourteenth colony (of Quebec Province) in rebellion. But the raid did not take Quebec City at the end of 1775, although it evidenced the long-standing interest of the English-speaking Americans in their own expansion. It also signaled to Britain that only war would stop the resistance. England did not believe claims of devotion to the king.

Washington brawled with the British in Boston, but they occupied the town. Taking cities would splinter the Patriots, the English thought, but they did not kill or imprison the defenders of these cities. Britain also wanted to isolate the colonies from one another. It blockaded the coast not just to cut off trade but also communication via water. In March of 1776, the British evacuated Boston for Halifax, Nova Scotia, where they prepared to assault New York. Washington hurried to the city, expecting battle. In June

and July of 1776, the British army that had laid waste to Boston captured New York. But William Howe, like other Redcoat generals, was overly cautious and allowed Washington to retreat across the Hudson River to New Jersey, then across the Delaware River from New Jersey to Pennsylvania.

Declarations of War

In January 1776, *Common Sense* unleashed more passion. Thomas Paine, a recent and unknown immigrant, authored this bestseller. It testified to the appetite for politics in the colonies, to their literacy, and to Paine's abilities to speak to and for a large audience. Many eyewitnesses credited *Common Sense* with rousing North America and inspiring the Revolution. The pamphlet began a dialogue between the leaders determined for war and citizens who would die for the cause. Paine started a twenty-year career as a political journalist, although he was such a difficult personality that he alienated the chief patriots. "Every spot of the Old World is overrun with oppression. Freedom is hunted around the globe," Paine wrote. "O! [Americans], Receive the fugitive and prepare in time an asylum for mankind." It incensed Paine that an anonymous critic dared to sign himself "Cato."

In the first half of 1776, the second Continental Congress in Philadelphia was slow to call for independence. In June, Richard Henry Lee of Virginia asked the Congress to announce that "these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States." They were "absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown," and "totally dissolved" their connection. The Congress appointed a committee to document the reasons for this resolution. The committee included not only John Adams and Franklin but also the youngest member of the Congress, 33-year-old Thomas Jefferson of Virginia. Tall, slender, and sandy-haired, Jefferson had brilliant expressive gifts. His elders tasked him with writing up the reasons, a "Declaration of Independence." On July 2, the Congress passed Lee's resolution breaking with Great Britain. Two days later, on July 4, 1776, the delegates adopted Jefferson's draft, largely as he had written it. Around the same time, bells across the city were rung, including in the State House, the one known thereafter as "the Liberty Bell."

"I did not consider it any part of my charge to invent new ideas," Jefferson wrote later. Rather, he wanted, as "an expression of the American mind," "to place before mankind … common sense … in terms so plain and firm as to command … assent." In setting up a practical argument, Jefferson gained lasting fame. The document had two parts. The longer second section listed the complaints that the colonists had about the Mother Country. Jefferson flung every bit of mud he could find to show that George III did not deserve fealty. Britain's "injuries and usurpations" of the second section instanced the general justifications that warranted revolution. The first, briefer, section laid out these justifications. "When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them to another," Jefferson wrote, "a decent respect for the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation":

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of those ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government …

The document expressed the self-regard of the American Enlightenment that it had inherited from Protestantism. The Declaration spoke of the God of nature and invoked Providence as a protector of the revolutionaries. A spiritual orientation to the universe formed the basis for government. You could not just take over a country because you had more power; you had to have right on your side. Yet Jefferson pledged only one thing as holy, "our sacred honor." In a world that acquisitiveness, ambition, and tyranny engulfed, the Americans would uplift humanity with their lofty aims.

The year 1776 was etched into the minds of citizens. But it also became contentious when, in the twenty-first century, "The 1776 Project" was contrasted to "The 1619 Project." The 1776 Project denied that racism was essential to America and hailed the patriotism of men like Jefferson.

In any case, a year later in 1777, in the first "flag act," the Continental Congress provided for a national banner with thirteen red and white stripes, and a white star on a blue field for each colony-state. A little later, the Congress adopted the American bald (white) eagle as the national symbol.

Figure 4 The Declaration of Independence (1817–19) by Jonathan Trumbull. Copyright Library of Congress.

Fighting a War

Although Washington learned from defeats over the next years, he never showed strategic ability, and while his integrity benefited the rebels, throughout the conflict he had inadequate supplies. He could not rely on the state militias whose assistance was erratic. His Continentals rarely numbered above 10,000, and usually less. Washington said he lacked "a respectable army"; complained about "venality, corruption, prostitution of office, … and perversion of funds" in the Congress; and often fretted that the war was lost and that "no man … ever had a greater choice of difficulties and less means to extricate himself." The Continentals survived through flight.

The British matched American deficiencies. The Redcoats combined arrogance about the marginal proficiency of their opponent with their own less than dexterous generalship. The English had taken measured responses to minor disturbances in a corner of the Empire, but now were waging war that required sending men 3,000 miles across the Atlantic. The distance and delays in communiqués made supply and the coordination of plans difficult. The invaders did not think enough about the size of the country they were trying to subdue, or its lack of a concentrated populace or a single seat of power.

The British had mocked American claims to cultural maturity as ignorant pretensions—"doodle" or "macaroni." The colonists turned the mockery into a song of defiance:

> Yankee Doodle went to town, A-riding on a pony,
> Stuck a feather in his cap, And called it macaroni.
> Yankee Doodle keep it up, Yankee Doodle dandy,
> Mind the music and the step, And with the girls be handy.
>
> "Yankee Doodle"

The Patriots nonetheless appeared desperate, their army humiliated by the Redcoats. Washington had left New York for New Jersey, and at the end of 1776 left New Jersey for the safety of Pennsylvania. Unexpectedly, however, on Christmas night 1776, Washington re-crossed the Delaware into New Jersey. At Trenton he surprised and defeated the reviled Hessians. This bold stroke enlivened the Patriots and motivated them to continue fighting.

With British armies entrenched in the middle of the colonies in 1777, England decided to split the enemy. General Howe was to take troops up the Hudson River in New York to link up in Albany, New York, with an army sent south from Canada. Britain would cut off New England, and then march east to re-conquer this land at the core of the rebellion. But Americans defeated the Canadian force under John Burgoyne in the early fall of 1777 at Saratoga, New York. Howe had ignored the critical nature of this campaign, and instead of going north at once moved his men south to Philadelphia to confront the main colonial army under Washington. Howe seized this latest city but, again, his opponent ran away.

Wintering outside of Philadelphia at Valley Forge in 1777–8, the Continentals endured terrible hardships, perhaps the low point of Washington's command. Again, however, the general came back. At Valley Forge, the Prussian, Baron Friedrich von Steuben, joined Washington. Von Steuben trained the soldiers and transformed them into a force more equal to the Redcoats. Washington himself did not philosophize about politics as did many of the other leaders. Nor did he orate or show military genius. But he had *gravitas*, the Latin word for moral weight or seriousness of purpose. He rallied his troops and ordered the performing of Addison's *Cato*. After Tom Paine published *Common Sense* in early 1776, he began a series of essays, "The American Crisis." Washington had "Crisis, #1" read at Valley Forge. It began:

> These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated.

Whatever the hardships of the colonists, the British defeat at Saratoga turned the insurrection into another phase of the free-for-all among the Europeans. Fearing that the French would regain status in the New World, the English yielded on the issues that had agitated Americans. It sent peace commissioners to Philadelphia in the middle of 1778 to negotiate a settlement. The Americans rejected England: they had just endorsed agreements with France.

The French foreign minister from 1774, Charles Gravier, the Comte de Vergennes, prophesied that "Providence has marked out this moment for the humiliation of England." The French were happy to help the gods. Through 1776 and 1777, to weaken Britain, France had supplied the Americans with war goods and loans. The Continental Congress had dispatched Franklin to Paris in 1776. His charm had dominated a delegation that parleyed for more help. Then, in early 1778, in the wake of Burgoyne's surrender, the French had signed a treaty of Amity and Commerce with the thirteen political entities. The treaty recognized their independence and anticipated closer ties. France hoped to recoup and to assure that the colonies would not slide back into an informal alliance with the English. The French and the nation-to-be also signed a military pact. In June of 1778, Britain and France went to war.

A year later Spain joined France, each intending to undermine Britain around the globe and in the Americas. In 1780, Britain herself declared war on the Netherlands, partly to capture the Dutch Caribbean Island of St. Eustacius, where Americans obtained supplies from the Hollanders. A larger group of powers formed the "Armed Neutrality," hostile to Britain. The combined naval strength of enemies broke the blockade of the colonies and of their trade, a dimension of England's strategy. Opponents of Britain even

put at risk command of the home waters. A just-born American navy harassed ships of the Mother Country off its coast.

In the thirteen new states, several lesser scraps worsened. The war discredited those Americans partial to Great Britain, the Loyalists. Losing position and possessions, they often fled. Overall, they represented some of the wealthiest people, and thus the Revolution compressed class distinctions, even though young and well-to-do commercial and planter elites managed it. Large numbers of whites witnessed but did not participate, but even for them the war gave them less respect for rank and more for equality. Tom Paine and his writing verified this development. Jefferson provided another example with his many rhetorical flourishes about revolution, and the bloodshed needed to achieve it. On the other side, leaders like Washington and the young James Madison, a diffident but accomplished friend of Jefferson whom we have already heard from, feared that the war would make commoners uppity. Alexander Hamilton, a rising public man from New York who served as Washington's chief aide, worried that the hostilities would stir up the masses. He half wanted a new system of monarchy to come about in the aftermath of the conflict.

Indians and slaves also took part. To break up the colonies General Burgoyne made deals with the Indians, although so too did the Patriots. Yet Britain, which wanted to surround the Americans with permanent Indian lands, could better induce the natives to join the British on the legitimate grounds that the rebellion would not respect indigenous ways. Instead of the French, the English were now the Europeans most likely to conciliate the indigenous. Everyone knew that the colonies held the greatest peril for the natives. The diplomacy resulted in splitting the powerful Six Nations of the Iroquois in the Northeast, who battled against each other, leaving memories of slaughter on all sides. The outcome only underscored the truth of British arguments. After the Revolution, the most militant of the remaining Iroquois migrated west where they continued to skirmish with the new United States.

The war inspired dreams in Black Americans. When it began, the English offered to free slaves who would kill for the Empire. "How is it," one English critic complained, "that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of Negroes?" The Patriots responded to this critique with their own proposals for freeing slaves, and some 5,000 fought for the rebels, although many African Americans fled their bonds. Even in the south slaves were sent to battle instead of their masters. Moreover, the fervor of the revolution put slavery in the north on the road to destruction, and even southerners took up proposals for liberation or gradual emancipation. In the long term, the proposals came to little, but the upheavals saw slavery on the defensive.

After the colonies and the French signed their agreement in 1778, the British changed tactics to break the colonies in two. This time they moved south. There, earlier, England had negotiated with the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Creeks who first sided with the Loyalists. Patriot counterattacks, however, convinced the Indians that they might be better off as neutrals. By 1779, English armies tried to placate colonists in the south, perceived to be friendlier. After Britain had secured the south and re-introduced royal government, Redcoats would march north to confront a rump group of colonies. In

a series of victories, the English captured southern cities. Then, Charles Lord Cornwallis, Redcoat commander, moved his forces north, wanting to fortify a strong point where he might force a showdown.

In July 1781, Cornwallis chose Yorktown, Virginia, on the Chesapeake Bay, as his base. A French fleet made its way from the West Indies to seal off the Bay. Along with French

Map 8 Revolutionary War.

troops, Washington hastened south from New York after learning of the movements of the French navy. In the early fall of 1781, he blockaded Yorktown, trapping a British force of 8,500. Cornwallis surrendered in October 1781. The defeat undid the British. Fighting in the oceans of the world against more dangerous enemies than the Americans, the British gave up on the colonies but also expected to exert control in other ways. Washington returned to New York to watch over a British force of 10,000, while low-intensity clashes continued in the south. Meanwhile, a different American delegation schemed in Paris. The able Massachusetts leader, John Adams, and John Jay from New York, who had been president of the Continental Congress and the minister to Spain, now helped Franklin. The three negotiated with a new English cabinet in 1782 and agreed to preliminary terms by November, but only signed the Peace of Paris in September of 1783.

Britain recognized the independence of "the said United States," whose boundaries the diplomats set at the Mississippi to the west and roughly the boundary of today's

Map 9 United States in 1783.

Canada to the north. The British proved obstinate in vacating areas around the Great Lakes, and the French and Spanish contested America in the west and south—Spain held claims west of the Mississippi, as well as Florida. As Adams wrote, the French meant to keep their hands "under our chin to prevent us from drowning, but not to lift our head out of the water." Yet the English preferred weak former colonies preeminent in the Mississippi Valley rather than Britain's European rivals. Perhaps wanting a firmer English stand, the French complained that the English now gave in "too easily"; they "buy the peace more than they make it." Playing the Europeans off against one another helped the Americans reach independence.

A Critical Period?

The "constitution" that determined the liberties of England was not a piece of writing or a legal contract. Britain's constitution was rather expressed in customs and precedents, the heritage of a parliament, and ideas about a way of life. On the contrary, the Americans believed that, to keep the unscrupulous from public affairs, the people should have a document. Such a constitution would spell out what leaders could and could not do. In America, the Enlightenment, with a bow to covenant theology, eventuated in a literal version of John Locke's social contract. Individuals and their community preceded the government, and individuals could assemble a regime to provide for their needs—even sit down in a room and do it. In 1776, as Jefferson was drafting the Declaration of Independence, John Dickinson wrote up principles to guide the new states. Dickinson, who spoke for the middle states as a Pennsylvania delegate to the Second Continental Congress, had authored the Olive Branch Petition. He opposed the Declaration and wanted close ties to the monarchy in a "confederation." The Congress rejected his version of some "Articles of Confederation" and instead preferred an administration more independent of England that would provide for the primacy of individual states. The Congress defined this confederation of the old colonies as a "league of friendship." In this loose organization the states would cooperate but keep their sovereignty. In fact, although the Congress acknowledged a revised Articles of Confederation in 1777, the distinct colony-states did not accept them until 1781.

These Articles allowed for a one-house legislature where each state had a vote. The document required nine of thirteen votes to pass legislation, and unanimity for amendments. The Confederation could make war and borrow money, but could not regulate commerce or collect taxes. The states limited the Confederation because it had to extract funds from each of them. No distinct executive existed to enforce the decisions of the legislature. This document practically expressed the ideals of the Declaration of Independence, and reflected how the thirteen were cutting loose from repressive rule. They distrusted authority and accented the self-determination of people who in the first instance held citizenship in separate provinces. The same priorities came up in the agreements that each state drew up. The states defined themselves as individual entities, rather than as members of a larger organization. Each government broke up power among a judiciary, an executive, and a legislature. But the executive usually

remained weak, and the legislature unassailable. The governments of the new states had a "bill" or "declaration" of the freedoms of their white males who had proper claims to property. These freedoms illustrated "rights" that the states could not touch.

In the aftermath of the rebellion, patriot influentials had reason to believe that their successful revolution might endanger their own entitlements. Those in the backcountry and without education made their interests clearer to marginally urban groups on the seacoast. The leaders had at least gone along with more drastic tendencies but, in the 1780s, politics vexed men like Washington. Hamilton and like-minded individuals, prizing obedience over justice, dreaded the drift of events. The Articles of Confederation also made dealing with European nations and the Indians difficult. Alarm about such weakness made sense if the Confederation wanted to force the Indians to yield domains, to rid North America of the English, French, and Spanish, and to add more states to the west. This trepidation would trouble the United States less if they were only a friendly cluster of small sovereign lands—with no intent to enlarge. When Hamilton said the new nation resembled a baby Hercules, he was wishing more than describing.

In Massachusetts, a local farmer, Daniel Shays, led an uprising in the summer of 1786 that heightened anxiety. High taxes, imprisonment for debt, and a short supply of money angered Shays and his followers. He headed a group that stopped the collection of taxes and closed the debtors' court. When he tried to seize weapons from an armory, Massachusetts's authorities assembled an army and put down "Shays's Rebellion." Can we figure out how serious these incidents were? Jefferson described such a "little" rebellion as "a medicine necessary for the sound health of government." "The blood of patriots and tyrants" had to refresh "the tree of liberty," and supplied "its natural manure." But Jefferson spoke flippantly, and wrote from a distant and refined diplomatic position in Paris. In any case, the events motivated men like the celebrated Washington to argue for a stronger constitutional government that could suppress disturbances, an argument Jefferson accepted.

In a book written in 1888, *The Critical Period in American History*, John Fiske urged that the 1780s displayed the weakness of the Confederation. The states had to have a more dynamic administration to preserve themselves, perhaps from chaos. This interpretation stays attractive in explaining the background to the constitutional convention of 1787 and the resulting Constitution of the United States. We can hardly demean the achievement of the sturdy framework that would eventuate with this Constitution. Yet we need not postulate that the Constitution ducked a calamity.

The Setting of the Constitutional Convention

In early 1786, Virginians called a conference to discuss boundaries, navigation, and trade. Eleven states responded, but in September only five sent delegates to Annapolis, Maryland. Without a quorum the group could merely discuss common problems. Nonetheless, the Annapolis men were cogitating on a more vigorous regime. They did not give up and gathered for another meeting to revise the Articles of Confederation in Philadelphia in May of the following year, 1787. By this time Shays's Rebellion had attracted attention in

New England, and leaders responded more positively to calls for change. On behalf of all the states but Rhode Island, fifty-five politicians worked in Philadelphia for four months. They deliberated in secret not over an amended Articles of Confederation but over a new Constitution of the United States of America that survived into the twenty-first century as the hallowed text that had "founded" the nation. Those who framed it have for more than one hundred years been known as "the Founding Fathers."

The Founders slid around the doubt that they did not have lawful authority to redesign the country. Nonetheless, the most famous book written about the Constitution, Charles Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (1913), saw the framers of the document as well-to-do conservatives. They shored up the economic interests of their class, which the Revolution had endangered. Deficient in charity and complexity, this view did not lack credibility. The publication of the book opened the door to a realistic understanding of the stakes in the new government, and one twenty-first-century historian has called the Constitution "the Framers' coup."

In Philadelphia sat familiar eminences—well-to-do lawyers, successful colonial officials, some military dignitaries, land speculators, plantation owners, entrepreneurs, and gentry. From Paris, Jefferson gave support, as did John Adams also serving abroad. The aged Franklin attended although he contributed little. The group unanimously chose Washington to preside. His prestige justified the enterprise. Washington, however, did not engage in the bargaining and left that labor to others. Two younger men used the discussions to vault into reputation. Jefferson's colleague from Virginia, James Madison, now in his mid-thirties, proved to be an ingenious politician as well as an astute thinker. Despite his reticence, he set the agenda and formulated a program. Washington's protégé, the 31-year-old Alexander Hamilton, worked to legitimate the proceedings, although he stood in the background during the gatherings. One of those with the bleakest view of human nature, Hamilton did not go far wrong when he described his peers on whom society must rely as "the rich, the well born, and the able." More generous, Jefferson spoke of "a natural aristocracy …. of virtue and talent." Hamilton, Jefferson, and their partners had many motives for starting the Revolution. High among these was their apprehension—historians have estimated it as exaggerated if not baseless—that Britain was moving to displace the locally dominant with a new English *crème de la crème*. One account of the Revolutionary period has long held that the war was not about home rule, but who should rule at home.

The men agonized about the instability of the last several years. They displayed alarm about "mobocracy" but also about a fall into monarchy. The Founders had a clouded view of human nature. Believing in their own virtue, they wanted to safeguard their own status but to convince average white men that the regime served them. Leaders wanted "popular government." But they worried about making citizens of even those with land if the men were illiterate or without much of a stake. The Founders tilted away from Jefferson in the Declaration. The implications of the Declaration of Independence went beyond the agreeable. Jefferson himself, whose writing acceded his real commitments, never thought that women or Indians or Blacks or the propertyless were to be given the rights of "all men." Even Founders more cynical than Jefferson, however, believed that

a voice had to be given to the multitude. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Jefferson's document had not acquired its remarkable place among American hallowed manuscripts. Nonetheless, inhabitants could and should make claims on the government, exercise the franchise, and select their sovereign. The riddle was how to provide for the input of the vulgar while preventing excesses.

The text of 1787 was a cautious antidote to the tendencies of the two decades after 1763. The involvement of "the people" was roundabout and eluded "leveling." The Founders called what they were doing an "experiment in republicanism." Historians have named the product "American Republicanism." It would preserve what the Revolution had won, but curtail democracy, which leadership had learned about from the Greeks of 2000 years before. Not an everyday word in the eighteenth century, at least in newspapers, pamphlets, and public broadsides, democracy was the direct management of affairs by the folks. Such government, the Founders were convinced, esteemed the expedient over a prudent calculation of lasting realities. Democracy might easily rely on emotion instead of more colorless intellect, passion over rational dialogue. Momentary majority appetites could easily sacrifice a minority. Worst of all, democracy might lead to a tyranny, the arbitrary sway of a licentious leader who aroused frenzied crowds. The Fathers worried about how to regulate this tendency. The reigning classes had fretted over uprisings from Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia in the seventeenth century to Shays' Rebellion the previous year. These fracases involved rampages by the propertyless who had debt, but who might be able to wrest estates from the Indians. According to American Republicanism, a "democratical" rabble could not conduct itself responsibly.

Several factors, absent in North America, had constrained democracy in England. Less trust emanated from crown or aristocracy, formal or vernacular. Extended moneyed families in proximity had less sway. England had moreover contained the democratic by making participation in public life contingent on the acquisition of land. Such acquisition, so the thinking went, set an elevated bar for a group that would shun democratic vices. Because the Euro-Americans could take acreage easily from the natives, ownership became more effortless—and less a guarantee of correct thinking. Finally, the thirteen colonies had no suppressive religion—Roman Catholicism was anathema, and Episcopalianism, the most hierarchical Protestant sect, was not foremost in the colonies.

For a republican, on the contrary, power should rest not in a numerical majority, but in a selected group, and its views had to be "filtrated." This diminished pool excluded most adults. Even those in the pool would leave civics in the hands of their betters, the most laudable among them, such as the Founders themselves. And the Constitution would see to it that residents made their decisions circuitously. Hamilton thought of an extended people as "the great beast." Even Jefferson, in speech the friendliest to the *hoi polloi*, wanted his preferred white small-propertied farmers educated for inhibited participation in affairs: they would be tutored to realize that state policy had complexities that were beyond them. Citizens should recognize the vulnerability of civilization and leave it to notables. A republican polity rested on the creditably privileged to whom the shrunken society of citizens ought happily to submit. Monarchy and hereditary advantage were shunned, but Republicanism sidetracked democracy.

When the Founders repudiated democracy, they additionally had in mind representative democracy, if represent meant that voters chose leaders to duplicate or mirror them. For the Founders, such representative democracy did not cure democracy. A representative only owed the run-of-the-mill his best discernment. Those who gave the mandate should have only an indirect connection to the elevation of the renowned, and the independent action of the representative should be protected. The appropriate representative stood above his constituents in status and wealth, and might not parrot whatever views they had.

Republicanism brought together the conflicting values of equality and liberty. It would give more than lip service to the view that all stood naked before God. But a republic had additionally both to protect genteel freedoms, mainly important to an upper crust of individuals; and to constrict the suspect inclinations of the masses. Republicans finally worried about how statesmen of rectitude could be selected to manage public affairs and to preserve an ever-threatened mutual good. Leaders exuded unease about how self-seekers weakened states like ancient Rome and England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Governors—appointed, elected, or picked by birth—might be debased. Only vigilance in picking out leaders would combat endemic political immorality. A country had to seek out estimable men and convince them to serve. Exhortation to avert venality helped to define Republicanism.

In sum, a republic should give limited but essential responsibility to ordinary men, but they should bow to an elite whose integrity had to be deserved. It emphasized constricted citizenship, oblique representation, and deference to a virtuous upper class.

Making a Nation

The opening line of the new Constitution, "We the people of the United States," only ambiguously made for the primacy of the individual states. The "people" had agreed to put in place something superior to each of the states. At the same time, the leaders restricted this general government. It would have more weight than the confederated Congress, the highest body under the Articles, but would still give the states substantial competencies. The delegates meant to create a "federal" system, meaning that one national and many state governments would divide up responsibilities. Only later did "federal" come to mean national. Federalism was, in the late 1700s, a mixed form. It included the states, and the nation with three branches of rulers. Power would not come to a head.

Article One of the Constitution elaborated on the legislative branch, regarded as primary. Two plans in respect to the legislature received much discussion in the summer of 1787. One proposal had a single body of representatives whom the residents of each state would elect directly, thus bolstering the (larger) states with greater populations. The framers called this "the Virginia Plan." The smaller states objected and wanted a grouping in which all states would be equal—"the New Jersey Plan." The dispute also suggested that economic interest was central and that individual states embodied such

interest. The founders resolved their difference when they compromised on a legislature of two parts, each with different prerogatives.

Property owners—excluding the landless, the enslaved, women, and every native American—as they occupied the individual states, elected members of the House of Representatives, each for a two-year term. The number of members allowed in each state was based on its population, and the first House had sixty-five men, though the number had grown to 435 by the twenty-first century. This House benefited the states with larger populations. Only the House of Representatives could initiate revenue laws, an impressive power.

Two public men from each state would compose the Senate, a second body. Here the Founders preserved the rights of the small states especially, but all the states as separate entities. The self-sufficiency of the states—and not inhabitants within the states—was recognized. Moreover, the election of the senators, who served for six years, showed how the Founders defended Republicanism. State legislators (whom the voters of each state selected) cast a ballot for the two senators from each state. The United States did not change this kind of choice until 1913. This is the paradigmatic example of what the Founders thought proper in a polity. The Senate distanced itself from the governed, and independent dignitaries composed it. Only the Senate had the power to advise on treaties with foreign regimes.

Article Two told about the executive. The presidency illustrated the energy that the Constitution would bring to the country. The belief that Washington would first assume this office did much to legitimate it. The Founders took indirect choice as the norm, and the manner of choosing the president for his four-year term is the most complex example of Republicanism and its detachment from democracy. Votes of the states—and not the voters within the states—picked the executive. Each state got two votes (for each senator) plus one for each member of its delegation in the House. "Electors" convey the votes: when someone selects a president, the choice is for a group of electors, or an elector, pledged to one's candidate—although at times "faithless electors" have disregarded the pledges. Thus, numbers only loosely regulated the votes for the president that an individual state held, and those who exercised the franchise did not vote directly for their desired nominee. Moreover, the electors do not divide proportionately, in accord with the percentage of the vote for each candidate in a state. Winner takes all, and a candidate who gets even a plurality of votes obtains all the electors. Something later called "the Electoral College" meets after an election. The electors from the states were to deliberate and cast ballots in the College. Finally, the Founders originally intended that this Electoral College would only yield a short list of candidates for the nation's highest position. In the usual case no one would win in the College, and the House of Representatives—with each state having one vote—would decide on a winner from the short list generated. The vice president would be the second-most wise and esteemed statesman.

By the early nineteenth century, the College had a reduced role. It had ceased to act as a quasi-independent institution for picking a leader, instead becoming the venue

where the state's ballots for president were tabulated. Additionally, the vice presidency declined in importance. This official had few duties and was often not a major presence. On the other hand, the president headed the military and made recommendations to the legislature on the country's needs.

The subject of Article Three was a national judiciary. In another privilege, the President names the federal judges. Nonetheless, he does so for life and with the consent of the Senate—a very indirect form of popular management with respect to the judiciary, whose task was to secure compliance with the document.

The Founders gave specific responsibilities to the overall government. It could impose taxes, regulate trade, and make war. The Constitution deprived the separate states of their rights to issue currency, to negotiate with non-nationals, or to tax imports or exports. However, in divvying up these responsibilities among the legislature, executive, and judiciary, the general government had what commentators have called a "separation of powers." This scheme provided "checks and balances." In addition to the examples I have already given, the president might veto laws that the legislatures had passed. Or the two legislatures might impeach—get rid of—the president, but only when each fulfilled a different role in the process. Or the highest court might review the legislation of the national government or that of the states to ensure conformity to the document, although the Constitution did not explicitly specify this authority.

The last three articles, the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh, provided for amendments; explained how the new arrangements took over the Confederation's old obligations; and described how the Constitution was to be ratified: a positive vote in nine states was necessary, but everyone knew that that most weighty states had to accede to the document. Article Four, in the middle, revealed the dark side of Republicanism. In 1776, in a draft of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson had condemned the king because he had "waged a cruel war against human nature." In this interpretation, George III himself had carried slavery to the New World and had foiled every attempt "to prohibit or restrain this execrable commerce." These propositions struck at the slaveholding south, and it is curious that Jefferson, a slaveholder, had proclaimed them. Some have called him "the velvet hypocrite." In any event, the second Continental Congress dropped the complaint from the draft of the Declaration. Now, eleven years later, many of the same leaders again had to deal with the contradiction in their thinking.

How could the whites count those in bondage? In what sense were the latter a part of "the people"? In Article One, the "three-fifths compromise," satisfactory to the south, had considered that each enslaved human being was three-fifths of a person for purposes of representation and taxation, although no forced laborer got even three-fifths of a vote. In Article Four, the Constitution guaranteed that the south could import slaves for twenty years, after which the House and Senate acting jointly could outlaw the slave trade (which they did). Moreover, the article, more generally, required each state to respect the institutions of each of the others, and to grant future states the same entitlements as the first thirteen: the Founders had written into their esteemed composition protection for slavery that would last almost eighty years.

In elaborating these stipulations in such a way as never to use the word "slave," the Founders revealed an original sin at the heart of Republicanism. They had a grand sense of their own sovereignty, which went hand-in-hand with the benefits they denied to others. They were self-knowing enough to be aware of the inconsistency. These leaders did not just fool themselves; it took a long time for historians to confess to race as a keystone of the United States.

A final consideration about the Constitution is also pertinent. We must distinguish the checks and balances that permeate it from the various attempts to water down the administration of the people. The checks and balances tell us that the Founders wanted to forestall agglutinations of "interest" or "factions," as they were called. It was expected that influential communities would be pitted against each other. Constricting the power of the people spoke not to pragmatic groups at odds, but about a multitude acting without regard to economic advantage. Factions were reasonable. A mob was not. Statesmen wanted to circumvent the convergence of interests, based mainly on calculation of financial gain, but also to prevent the irrational focus of the populace on some momentary gratification.

While it is not wrong for Americans to worship the Founders, it is also necessary to recognize how distant their world and beliefs are from the present.

The Bill of Rights

In the months after the delegates sent the Constitution to the states for approval, serious squabbles took place over ratification. The Framers themselves were aware of the imperfections in the document, and they also contended with lower-down followers who aspired to have more of a say. The most acute debates perhaps occurred in New York. There, Hamilton and Madison, joined by John Jay, wrote a series of essays to promote the new agreement. The *Federalist Papers* have since shaped the understanding of the intent of the Founders. Each essay was signed "Publius," after the man who had launched republican government in ancient Rome. But debate did not just occur in New York. Up and down the coast, the "Federalist" proponents of the Constitution argued with a disparate opposition. These adversaries often signed their writings "Cato," but unluckily got named "Anti-Federalists."

The Constitution, opponents said, could not be identified as federalist—giving power to states and a general government—but as national—obliterating the individual states. The Virginian Richard Henry Lee urged that the Constitution would "fix an elective despotism" on the United States. And Patrick Henry, now an elegant Anti-Federalist, agonized that the government would "squint … toward monarchy." The Anti-Federalists stood too for men in the backcountry, indifferent to European conflicts. For them, the Constitution would bring about autocracy.

In July of 1788, New York became the eleventh state to ratify the document, but, like many others, called for alterations. The first national elections occurred that November, but while the Anti-Federalists lost out, they did obtain major concessions. In its first

order of business, the new Congress adopted ten amendments to the Constitution. The modifications were not just an afterthought; they proved that everyone had entitlements.

Despite the Founders' unease and the subsidiary role of Jefferson's ideas, the amendments inserted into Republicanism a democratic tinge guaranteeing what the Anti-Federalists thought necessary to gain their assent. The First Amendment said that the new general government could make no laws abridging the press, speech, and the license of petition. Another important clause banned a national church and supported the free exercise of religion. The Second Amendment ruled out the government's "infringing" on the ownership of weapons that would allow for state militias. Officials were not to interpret these enumerated freedoms, and several more, "to deny or disparage other[s] retained by the people." All liberties that the general government did not delegate or forbid were "reserved to the States respectively, or to the people thereof," said Amendment Ten.

These avowals, known as "the Bill of Rights," have ever since defined life in the United States, and accentuated the rights-based nature of America. They were a powerful reminder of the inclinations expressed in the Declaration of Independence. It was also true, as the judiciary would soon clarify, that no one right trumped all the others; none was absolute. At certain times, some might conflict with others, and courts would decide which would prevail in specific cases, although leaders were loath to admit that basic tensions might arise.

Indeed, the non-party state and a regime of agreed-upon men of virtue at once disclosed itself a fantasy. By the 1790s, rival notables fought for respect and slandered their opponents to win even the temporary devotion of the electorate. That is, in their etiquette, the Founders undermined their American Republicanism. Deference at once came under attack, and the élite cultivated even the momentary preferences of those who were supposed to be humble. Still, the avowedly democratic or the opportunistic had little appeal to leadership. It did not want to promote the ignorant and those not awake to public notions. This first generation of US politicians kept a republican structure intact for thirty to forty years. They aimed not at democracy, but something opposed to it.

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From 1775 to 1783 the Americans had forced the greatest power in the world into a corner. They had set the stage for their expansion, which Britain had opposed. The Americans then designed a government by writing down—in what often later was reproduced in a booklet—how they thought their rulers should behave. The Founders had embarked on a test of "free government" that rejected the aristocratic ideas of Europe. At home, citizens took part in affairs as a matter of right, and disdained imperial rule over others. Was this crazy, or inspired?

For the Europeans, the United States were either a future beacon, or a danger to order. Yet developments in America were exceptional. The widespread ownership of land that had made the popular government possible occurred because the Indians were dispossessed. As had happened earlier in the smaller compass of Virginia, a nation of free white men resulted when slavery was permitted in the south. The Constitution

organized this government around three different branches that clashed. Federalism set a national authority against the states, and while the autonomy of the individual states had diminished, they kept many dispensations. Localities might preserve Protestant custom, and erect administrations that were more majoritarian and communal, with less room for minority rights. But the general government could not impose national rules on localities.

Scholars have questioned the Framers, who have come under assault for being white and slaveholders to boot. Yet few have questioned the wisdom of independence as a movement itself. Would it have been so bad for the thirteen states to have remained dependencies? Might then, for instance, the anti-slavery movement in Britain would have meant a swifter road toward emancipation in the colonies? Might the ugliness of nineteenth-century America that led to a civil war have been swapped for class hierarchy and more predictable but only rhetorical resentments toward a king? We need not romanticize colonialism to ask these questions.

CHAPTER 5
THE CULTURE OF POLITICS, 1788–1826

From Washington's Presidency to the Deaths of Adams and Jefferson

As states were added to "the Great Republic," the same leaders and their constituency of white male property owners created a political culture in which both commoners and influentials got a hearing. The war had brought together men from Massachusetts to Georgia. In the 1770s and 1780s, service in the army, in congressional committees, or in diplomatic missions had made them the most ardent believers in an American people. But these superiors still had little experience of what a national life might mean. They entered the 1790s with different state allegiances, and they held up different foreign countries as ideals. Those in charge would build their nationalism on the job, and in an uneasy dialogue with those they led. Except for Franklin, who died in 1790, the same principals filled the highest positions—Washington, Jefferson, and Madison from Virginia; and Hamilton and Adams from New York and Massachusetts. James Monroe and John Marshall from Virginia, and Adams's son, John Quincy, later joined them. All would find themselves performing for the ordinary white man as much as for each other.

Making Public Life

In the early 1790s, the bubbling disputes between Britain and France again broke out in another war that, with two short intermissions, lasted for twenty-three years. Americans observed a global conflict between a coalition led by monarchical England, and a France that had toppled its king and proclaimed its own liberties in the French Revolution. The Americans brooded about the consequences for the United States. They had ousted the English who then refused to accept the full consequences of defeat. Many Americans rejoiced in the French Revolution. Although extreme, it promised another republican government. Yet the French Revolution ended with the bloody "Terror" of the 1790s, in which the rabble killed thousands in an orgy of executions, and a military government materialized under Napoleon Bonaparte. Democracy had led to despotism. Bonaparte then gave his name to the Napoleonic Wars, in which France and England continued to face off. The United States were terrified of Europe's impact on their institutions.

An atmosphere of conspiracy and subversion challenged the good sense of the Founders. On every side, they thought, turncoats might ambush America. Instead of showing the ordinary the path to goodness, a conspirator might steer them to perdition. As Hamilton put it, "No popular government was ever without its Catalines & its Caesars"—Caesar had brought dictatorship to Rome; and Cataline, who had also led an

anti-republican defection there, had behaved as viciously as Cato had behaved virtuously. In the contemporary world of the eighteenth century such malicious men—might they include some of their own?—would take their cues from Europe.

Yet the Founders did not come apart. The Constitution only roughly guided. What they did revealed the meaning of the document as much as it determined their decisions. How they would be regarded in memory also moved politicians, and ceremonies shaped them. Republican government premised that the people elected their superiors, and then praised these leaders. But as it came to pass, the leaders had to earn the approval of their supporters. Politicians wrapped themselves and their friends in descriptions of the noble and decorous. The Revolution had given the populace a greater interest in politics, and officials were convinced that their countrymen would not tolerate base or unjust service. While everyone used unrestrained language in denouncing, chastising, and vilifying enemies, all sides joined in an uneasy and paradoxical commitment to their collective reputation. To keep a respectful republic, the leaders yielded to a widespread demand that they all be seen as governing with principle and credit.

The dominance of the Virginia politicians sticks out. Washington, Jefferson, and Madison were wealthy but high-minded, bookish but more active than academic, leisured but not lazy, matter-of-fact but principled, sober but graceful, patriotic but not jingoistic. This gentry did have slaves despite its proclamations of human self-respect, but commentators would often not speak of this fault explicitly, and sometimes overlooked it even in the twenty-first century. Those who opposed slavery, north and south, did not press the Virginians beyond good taste. Everyone adopted a mode of talking: slavery, now a necessary evil, would, in the fullness of time, pass away. Politicians accepted this rationale, consonant with the Virginians' own sense of decent self-regard.

Virginia's style shadowed the Early Republic. But students have usually subordinated the style to scholarship on an early "party system." To put it too clearly, this system of factions or parties separated Jefferson and Madison—defenders of rural democracy and small government—from a nationalist like Hamilton. He wanted a stronger overall government, while they emphasized the states. The Federalists who had promoted the Constitution split. One focused on the new powers of the nation, while the other wanted those powers restricted. Followers of Hamilton, often in the north, found themselves squaring off against Jefferson and Madison, with adherents in the south and in the new southwest states of Kentucky (1792) and Tennessee (1796). While the development of political parties was critical, and unanticipated by the Constitution, we must see it in the context of the authority of the Virginians.

Federalists versus Republicans

George Washington accepted an unopposed nomination for the first election to the presidency. He was not a figurehead but, according to the theory, a republic would not have contesting parties. Law-making would take place as men acted to gain common goods by mutual consent. As a symbol, Washington would embody this just state and its unified will. The president appeared in public in a carriage drawn by six white horses or,

if he rode alone, on a great white horse with a leopard-skin saddle trimmed in gold. Each step he took, he knew, set a precedent, and he conveyed the majesty of the office and of the United States. This popular government still lacked competing groups and perhaps still had royalty. By his second four-year term, however, Washington could not ignore the genesis of two factions and, indeed, his association with one of them.

Eager to create a nation that the best men oversaw, Washington appointed a "cabinet" of advisors or "secretaries" who came to head an increasing number of central "departments." Washington appointed Hamilton secretary of the treasury, and Jefferson secretary of state, a job ultimately connected to foreign policy. There was also a secretary of war, and soon a secretary of the navy. Many expansions would occur, along with "executive reorganization," one of which, for example, much later combined many military functions into a department of defense. In wartime, it housed, among others, a Coast Guard; a Marine Corps that conducted expeditionary and amphibious operations; and an air force.

Along with other leaders—and with Vice President John Adams—the cabinet assisted Washington. But it did not end up as Washington expected. The vice presidency turned out to be meaningless, hinting at the way the selection of the vice-presidential candidate and the role of vice president himself were devalued, even though being "VP" became the surest route to the highest office.

Hostility also developed between Jefferson and Hamilton, contrasting types in temperament and politics. Jefferson extravagantly considered himself a revolutionary, and used excessive language when he talked about the right of rebellion, and about his consummate citizen, the farmer. Still, Jefferson did believe more in the people than Hamilton. Jefferson liked small communities, and wanted a middling individualism with widespread education. Hamilton made concessions to the people but thought more comfortably about how the United States might rival Europe. Strength would come in imitating Britain. Much of the argument between the two Founders flowed from their ideas about foreign affairs. Jefferson often uncritically identified with France and spoke as if the French example and not the American ought to guide Republicanism. In his regard for Britain, Hamilton could not get it into his head that the colonies had fought England to liberate themselves from monarchy.

As America separated from England and France, Hamilton's and Jefferson's visions grew amorphous. Neither side had pure ideas. Hamilton wanted the United States strong but not at the price of a European system based on birth and nobility. Jefferson's desire to advance the provinces ran up against his functional promotion of a central government. Distinctions often existed only in talk. Jefferson spoke for both men when he said, "What is practicable must often control pure theory." Factions developed around each man, but both believed that the Republic would work only for propertied males, and certainly not for women, Indians, and the enslaved, although Hamilton never really got esteem for his anti-slavery views.

The Federalists of 1787 and 1788 divided on what the Constitution might achieve, or what it needed to achieve. Some, like Hamilton, read the document as a call for an assertive state and continued confusingly to be called Federalists. "Federal," instead of meaning a

blend of national and state authority, pointed toward "national." Others, like Jefferson, called themselves Republicans to distinguish themselves from the royal tendencies they saw in the new Federalists. Was not Washington himself acting as a king? Soon, however, Jefferson's Republicans became, denigratingly, Democratic-Republicans—the excesses of the French Revolution were attached to them. Later, as Jefferson's (and Madison's) ideas became more acceptable, they were simply the Democrats; and they stressed the anti-national and state-oriented dimensions of the Constitution that fragmented power between national leaders and the states.

In their *Federalist* essays defending the mixed national and state powers of the Constitution, Hamilton and Madison had talked about the inevitability of factions. But, on their account, the new polity would get around factions and make them work for everyone. Now, a few years later, Jefferson and Hamilton became the leaders of two parties, embodiments of factions.

Hamilton had a splendid mind, which he used to good advantage to leave his birthplace in the West Indies and get an education in New York at King's College (now Columbia University). He had lived only briefly on the mainland before the war, when he fought alongside Washington. Although he rose as a successful lawyer and married into a leading New York family, Hamilton did not have a local allegiance. Committed to a forceful presidency, he would make the country an international presence. As secretary of the Treasury and as the most influential advisor, Hamilton wanted Washington to adopt a program based on eighteenth-century mercantilism—an early endorsement of capitalism. Money would come from a system that exported profitable finished products and received in return raw materials or unfinished goods. In pursuit of this scheme in the early 1790s Hamilton wrote two reports—*On the Public Credit* and *On Manufactures*—as well as an opinion encouraging a national bank, *Defense of the Constitutionality of the Bank*.

Incorporated in 1791, this bank issued paper money as the nation's currency. It also paid the United States' bills and collected them for the Treasury. In creating a debt, Hamilton expanded the financial role of the general government and reduced the power of the states. He wanted the affluent to tie themselves to the regime by borrowing from the bank and by lending it money.

Although the United States displayed some signs of a thriving industrial economy, the Congress rejected Hamilton's "On Manufactures." Hamilton's enemies argued that he neglected the country's roots in agriculture. The Democratic-Republicans wanted a land of farmers. Skeptical of cities, Jefferson expected agricultural commerce. Deep down, Jefferson and Madison distrusted the general government. But Jefferson's views did not always favor small landholders or an America free of English influence. In supporting the planter class in Virginia, he placed its crops in the control of English agents. He thus worked against his "yeoman," often without slaves. Almost against his will, Jefferson was led over time to a mild version of Hamilton's program, embracing not just for-profit farming but shipping and trade. Hamilton got it right when he said of Jefferson: "it is not true … that he is an enemy to the power of the executive."

Continuing conflict between the French and English cooked up trouble through the 1790s. Madison and Jefferson attacked Hamilton's nascent "system" not so much for its economics but for its effort to assimilate "the American government to the form and spirit of the British monarchy." While Washington accepted advice from his cabinet of all types, detractors identified him with the Federalists, even though Washington exhorted Hamilton about Addison's *Cato*. In September 1796, the president issued a proclamation on his coming retirement. "Washington's Farewell Address" disliked "the baneful effects of the spirit of party." He condemned both "inveterate antipathies" and "passionate attachments" to any foreign nation. The United States should not tie themselves either to England or France. The new country should reject monarchy and the rule of the crowd. In dealing with foreign nations, said Washington, the United States must preserve their independence and display their own virtues.

Unease on all sides about the weakness of Republicanism made for sleepless leaders, upset about how opponents might inflame the people. The relative dominion of the states and the nation was untested, the balance not decided until the Civil War of 1861–5. Before that time Americans gave their primary allegiance to their state or region. Hamilton's faction would stay awake at night because the states might leave the federation, and Jefferson's because the national administration might become imperial. Two political parties, in our contemporary sense, were emerging from the Hamilton and Jefferson factions, and they fought about who was to succeed Washington in 1797.

John Adams won the contest between himself and Thomas Jefferson. Washington's Vice President Adams was identified as a Federalist but showed a reluctant party spirit, and his party was reluctant too. In some complex moves involving the Electoral College, Jefferson wound up as the vice president. Initially, the pairing of Adams and Jefferson looked as if it would work, for they had old ties, and both suspected Hamilton. Adams wanted to continue the all-party presidency that he associated with Washington and embraced Jefferson.

The combination, however, failed. In the context of European wars, verbal denunciation occupied the next several years. The notion of educated and united rulers addressing citizens with arguments did not disappear. But heightened rhetoric meant that a flow of insults issued about opponents. Statesmen planned to instruct the people about integrity in government. In reality, a leader had to convince the citizens he should have power, or rather that others should not. Democratic-Republicans described Hamilton as "a man devoid of every moral principle," and even accused Washington of "debauch[ing] and deceiv[ing] the nation." Adams claimed that Hamilton "reflects total ignorance of everything in Europe, in France, England, and elsewhere." Adams's enemies complained: "You can have no idea of the meanness, indecency, almost insanity of his conduct." He acted like "a mock monarch, surrounded by a court of Tories [English conservatives] and speculators." Critics of Jefferson insinuated that he was fathering children with a slave-mistress, Sally Hemings. Incidentally, he was "an atheist in religion and a fanatic in politics," "a brandy-soaked defamer of churches."

The derision isolated Adams and broke the friendship of Adams and Jefferson for many years. The disputes brought out the worst aspects of the personalities of all involved, but especially of Jefferson, who could not hide his own ambition about the presidency.

The year 1798 was perhaps the most trying. Hamilton prodded the Congress to pass legislation known as the Alien and Sedition Acts. Federalists wanted to censure the exaggerated name-calling. The most unfortunate of these laws criminalized "false, scandalous, and malicious" criticism of the government. Federalists used the Acts to muzzle newspapers that slandered Hamilton's followers. Although there was at that time no mechanism for deciding if a law was "unconstitutional," it surely seems as if the Bill of Rights looked askance at such muzzling. In reply to the Alien and Sedition Acts, Jefferson and Madison drafted resolutions and introduced them into the legislatures of Kentucky and Virginia in the fall of 1798. The Resolutions declared the Constitution a covenant among the states. The people speaking through the states judged constitutionality, and the Resolutions announced that the Acts had no force. Other states—through "interposition" and "nullification"—were asked to join in dismissing the Acts. This argument early expressed the tension between the nation and "states' rights." Here were the first signs of a peculiar Jeffersonian "Liberalism," which accented minimal government. The inflammatory nature of what was later called the media was in evidence. The fear of the corruption of the Republic was to become a persistent theme. The invective illustrated that American Republicanism might develop into a democratic horde.

The Acts and Resolutions were the high point of factionalism, but when Washington died in early 1800, many wondered if the Republic would fail. In his eulogy, Richard Henry Lee of Virginia described Washington as "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." Would the nation survive his passing? The answer seemed in doubt, as the election of 1800, again between Adams and Jefferson, proved unusually unpleasant.

Adams disapproved of party categorizations and had consciously deviated from Hamiltonian principles during his single term that ended with his defeat that year. The mechanics of the Electoral College again tested the limits of the parties. Adams lost, but the College had no means to break a tie between Jefferson and his vice-presidential running mate, Aaron Burr of New York. The grandson of Jonathan Edwards, Burr combined genius and administrative ability. In some ways, we should consider him one of the Founders. But Burr had an unscrupulous streak, and his lack of restraint made many distrust him. The Democratic-Republicans did not want him as president—Jefferson thought him a Cataline. Yet the rules of the Constitution threw the election into the House of Representatives, where Jefferson and Hamilton parleyed out of sight. Like many others, Hamilton believed Burr, whatever his politics, indifferent to Republicanism. Hamilton also thought Jefferson "too much in earnest in his democracy," and "not very mindful of the truth," but supported him in preference to Burr.

Jefferson may also have promised, if picked, not to dismantle Hamilton's economic policies or not to lean toward the French in foreign policy. This trade is impossible to verify, although it would not have been unprecedented. In 1800, as Adams was exiting

the presidency and Jefferson was entering it, the capital of the United States was moving from Philadelphia to just south of Baltimore, on the Potomac River on Virginia's northeast border, in the newly crafted "District of Columbia." The headquarters of the country received the name "Washington City," after the first president. This deal between Jefferson and Hamilton had been contrived some ten years before. The location would assist Democratic-Republicans, whose strength lay in the south. Hamilton had gone along in exchange for the creation of his national debt. Whatever the precedents, in 1800, the arch Federalist had helped swing the presidency to the arch Democratic-Republican, and Jefferson took office near Virginia and far from Philadelphia.

The contest almost ended the strife. For the first time, an election transferred power peacefully from one party to another. In Jefferson's inaugural speech of March 1801, he told citizens, "Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle." "We have called by different names brethren of the same principles," he went on. "We are all Republicans—we are all Federalists. If there be any among us who would wish to dissolve … [the nation's] republican form, let them stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left to combat it." The country must respect the freedom to dissent. Everyone would "bear in mind this sacred principle that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will to be rightful must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal law must protect, and to violate would be oppression." The nation, said Jefferson, would keep "free and firm" and would not "want energy" to preserve itself.

Just over three years later Hamilton equaled Jefferson. He had long disliked Jefferson's now Vice President, Aaron Burr, whom Hamilton called "an embryo-Caesar." In dismissing Burr's *bona fides*, Hamilton had spoken out more than others. Burr rightly accused Hamilton of "secret whispers traducing his fame and impeaching his honor" during a decade of politicking in New York and Washington. Hamilton conceded that he had done what he was accused of. When Burr challenged him to a duel, Hamilton—in conformity with the era's (illegal) *code duello*—felt bound to a contest both distasteful and terrifying to him. Separate boats took each man from Manhattan, New York, across the Hudson River to a customary and secluded spot near Weehawken, New Jersey. At ten paces the two statesmen fired. Burr mortally wounded Hamilton, who died the next day, July 12, 1804. Hamilton martyred himself to the common values of the Founders. The shooting discredited the vice president and he never held office again. He did soon involve himself in intrigues against the United States for which Jefferson himself pursued him.

The duel blasted any hope of a Federalist renaissance, since its greatest spokesman was dead. But the exchange of shots illuminated politics. We could easily place Burr, with Tom Paine, among the Founding Fathers. Yet the leadership of the time excluded Paine because his drunkenness, slovenliness, and personal irascibility made him an outsider at least to the propriety of what the others were about. Burr was more an outsider in his flawed dedication to the Republic. When Burr killed Hamilton, leaders closed ranks against the murderer. Hamilton died on a primitive field of sacrifice, and Burr was kept from a circle of trust. Membership in this circle, and not the gulf between Federalists and

Democratic-Republicans, was pivotal. The elite negotiated with citizens in the invention of a culture in which both Federalists and Democratic-Republicans had to convince the people of their virtues. Subsequent citizens would continue to appraise the men in this circle, and not others, as Founders.

Triumphant Political Culture

After Hamilton's death, his party, at least in name, never gained power again. Like Washington, Jefferson was re-elected in 1804. Fellow Virginians and Democratic-Republicans Madison and James Monroe, a disciple of Jefferson, followed, each serving for eight years. They established Washington's limit of two terms. John Quincy Adams, the son of would-be Federalist John Adams, was elected in 1824, at the end of this era. The fashion of upper-class, refined statesmanship lasted for more than four decades, although Jefferson's years in office added two more strands to the political fabric.

Washington personified one way of being president, regal and formal. Jefferson differed. He turned to plain dressing and the unceremonious, and often greeted peers in slippers and dressing gown. He dropped some "aristocratic" customs of the previous twelve years by having visitors shake hands instead of bowing, and by having dinner guests sit at a round table rather than by order of rank along sides of a rectangle. At his presidential banquets, noted for their wide-ranging discussions, he often served his own dinners. Jefferson projected himself as had Benjamin Franklin when his simplicity was the talk of Europe twenty years before. But Jefferson's homespun and effortless sophistication and his admirable breadth of mind did not mean an American contempt for the elegant. Rather, we should be reminded that Jefferson revered a "natural" aristocracy.

The second strand of the fabric had its origin in John Adams's appointment of Virginian John Marshall as chief justice of the Supreme Court. As a young man, Marshall had served in Washington's army, including the terrible winter of 1777–8 at Valley Forge. Military duty had made him a formidable centralizer. Although Marshall had little legal training, he had an impressive intellect and an inclination to fortify those engaged in business and commerce. Until the turn of the century, the job of chief magistrate had wanted for prestige and definition. Marshall dedicated himself to building nationalism in a way that infuriated his cousin Jefferson, who nonetheless recognized his relative's abilities. Over the next thirty-four years, Marshall molded the Court to serve a vigorous state. His decisions defined the powers of the national (federal) system of courts.

His ruling in the case of *Marbury v. Madison* in 1803 was celebrated. In 1801, as Adams was leaving office, he had signed William Marbury's commission as a justice of the peace, but Marbury had not received the letter. After Jefferson won the presidency, Marbury demanded that Madison, the new secretary of state, issue the commission. Madison declined, and Marbury sued, claiming that under the Judiciary Act of 1789 the Supreme Court could order Madison to make good. Marshall assumed that if he pushed for Marbury's choice, the new administration would ignore the order, and so he sacrificed Marbury for bigger game. Marbury may have had a right to his job, yet Marshall argued that the Judiciary Act expanded the Court's power beyond what the

Constitution intended. The Court did not have the ability to give such an order, which was "unconstitutional." "A law repugnant to the constitution is void," said Marshall. "It is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is." At a stroke Marshall had declared that the Supreme Court would act as the final arbiter of the Constitution. The Court might declare even acts of Congress as without force. Some associates of Jefferson argued against this outcome, which inclined to the Federalists. Marshall had taken the opportunity to shift some clout to the general government, to its Supreme Court. The verdict, however, required only that Marbury—a Federalist—not become a judge, a conclusion the Democratic-Republicans accepted. Not for over fifty years did the Court rule another act unconstitutional. But in judging the legitimacy of law, Marshall weighed in on the role of the Supreme Court, and the limits of the legislature and executive.

The Marshall Court decided other precedent-setting cases in such a way as to concentrate judicial authority. The justices found that the Court could review findings of the state courts and veto them if necessary. In *Fletcher v. Peck* (1810) and the Dartmouth College case (1819), Marshall forwarded national prerogatives to protect creditors and entrepreneurs from unfriendly state legislatures. *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819) first stated a "broad interpretation" of the Constitution. The decree guaranteed that Congress could exercise the powers delegated to it and its law-making in the economic field. The nation gained supremacy over state laws in defending enterprise. Marshall's ideas about the economy were comparable to Hamilton's, but Marshall had greater success.

The Man without a Country

In 1776 the English had executed a young patriot, Nathan Hale. For generations schoolmasters drilled into their charges his supposed last words, again taken from Addison's *Cato*: "I only regret that I have but one life to give for my country." What kind of country had the politicians constructed? Hale's grandnephew, Edward Everett Hale, had grown up in the 1820s and 1830s. In his short piece of fiction, *The Man without a Country* (1863), he conveyed the evolving sense of patriotism.

In Hale's little novel, his protagonist, Philip Nolan, is a lieutenant in the army. But in his early twenties, in about 1805, Nolan is caught up in a scheme of Aaron Burr's. "The Burr conspiracy" actually took place after Burr killed Hamilton. It perhaps meant to set up a renegade nation in the southwest and underscored the fragility of the union of states. In Hale's fiction, Nolan is depicted as boyishly confused in the activity, but he is court-martialed. At his trial Nolan declares that he wishes never to hear the name of the United States again. This denunciation shocks the judge, who has fought in the Revolution. He pronounces that Nolan shall get his wish: he will live out his life on board ships, and crews will never mention America. In 1807 President Jefferson signs the order, and Nolan spends the rest of his days with naval officers who follow the magistrate.

Before long Nolan has recanted his foolishness. In the early 1820s, he helps his crew to capture a ship illegally bringing slaves to America, and the crew decides to listen to

the pleas of the Africans to be sent home, to their countries. After the incident, Nolan tells a young officer, "For your country … and for that flag never dream a dream but of serving her as she bids you … [N]ever let a night pass by but you pray God to bless that flag." Behind the flag, says Nolan, never forget that "there is the Country Herself, your Country, and that you belong to Her as you belong to your own mother." Nolan dies aboard ship over fifty years after he has first embarked. On his deathbed, he calls a sailor into his room, where he has drawings of an old American flag, an eagle, and an incomplete map of the United States, "with queer old names on it, in large letters: 'Indiana Territory', 'Mississippi Territory', and 'Louisiana Territory', as I suppose our fathers learned such things." The dying Nolan asks the sailor to fill in the map: Nolan knows of twenty states, but he wants knowledge of the others admitted to the United States. He has come to believe that his identity depends on his commitment to the American experiment. Nolan asks that a stone be set up in his memory: "He loved his country as no other man has loved her."

Hale did not use heroism to convey the meaning of one's native land. He rather chronicled the experience of a man who lived emptily because he severed all national ties. The matter-of-fact realism convinces many readers that Hale wrote a biography, and many people in the twenty-first century mistakenly believe the book is non-fiction.

* * *

The Virginians and their northern partners built up a common view of politics. Their policies often belied the language of Jefferson, while at the same time his faction prevailed over the Federalists. His party could not be defined as Jeffersonian but not as Hamiltonian either. The Democratic-Republicans believed in an energetic presidency that in some measure spoke for the joint interests of the United States. But the states had wide opportunity for their own business. When in office, Jefferson's disciples accepted opposition to their rule. Competitors recognized that electoral politics often demanded only alternative ways of talking to the public and that statesmen overstated their disagreements. Jefferson and his peers believed in worthy and honest citizens governed by a meritorious upper class. This group supported popular rule but assumed, with unease, that the people would respect its wisdom. The people usually did, but also required that the wisdom be expressed in an open forum.

On the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1826, Adams and Jefferson both died. Was this not a sign of the miracle of the Founding? They and the other Founders would dominate American culture for 250 years. John Adams wrote, "I must study politics and war that my sons may … study … philosophy … in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry [and] music." Yet Adams, a troubled soul, despaired that he would not be gloriously recalled. As early as 1790 he complained:

> The History of our Revolution will be one continued Lye from one End to the other. The Essence of the whole will be that Dr. Franklin's electrical Rod, Smote the Earth and out Spring General Washington. That Franklin electrified him with

> his Rod—and thence forward these two conducted all the Policy Negotiations, Legislation, and War.

Adams was not far wrong. In 1972, the film musical *1776* called Adams "obnoxious and disliked" and, in 2008, a heralded "mini-series," *John Adams*, portrayed the man as difficult and unyielding. This view was underscored in another series, *Franklin*, in 2024. It starred the celebrated Michael Douglas as a Franklin who regularly mocked Adams.

In his complaint, Adams had omitted his rivals, Jefferson and Hamilton. But of course they counted. In 1962, President John Kennedy entertained US Nobel Prize winners and reported on America's view of Jefferson: "I think this is the most extraordinary collection of talent, of human knowledge, that has ever been gathered together at the White House, with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone."

Finally, in 2015, an astonishingly successful Broadway musical, *Hamilton*, had rap lyrics, and the Founders were played by people of color. The production analogized the revolutionary era to that of the rise of a dazzling Black street gang confronting law enforcement. The central protagonist, Hamilton, raps: he is "young, scrappy, and hungry," like his country. He has "brains, but no polish … a diamond in the rough." And "I am not throwing away my shot." "Don't be shocked when your history book mentions me/ I will lay down my life if it sets us free/ Eventually, you'll see my ascendancy."

PART III
IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT

CHAPTER 6
EXPERIMENTS IN REPUBLICANISM, 1783–1832

From the Northwest Ordinances to the Trail of Tears

In the first decades of their existence, the United States sorted out real issues. Victory in the Revolution heartened citizens to move to the frontier, and weakened the Europeans and Indians. Developing in the context of Old-World rivalries, the country had grown as an outlier in the European system by the early nineteenth century. In a series of laws, opportunities, and emergencies, values were spread. America mixed the expansion of nationality with views of how non-nationals might be quelled.

The Northwest Ordinances

At the end of the Revolution, the Americans obtained British prerogatives to the area east of the Mississippi and had to administer these new lands over the Appalachians. The individual states had not determined their present-day boundaries and had overlapping deeds to inland territory. The Articles of Confederation gave no one authority to adjudicate competing demands. By 1784, however, the states agreed to have the United States, under the Articles, manage regions north of the Ohio River, the Northwest Territory. Sale of this land would raise money, and over the next few years Congress passed laws, known collectively as the Northwest Ordinances. They outlined how the nation would develop its holdings.

Congress did not want colonies. The leaders of the Confederation broke up the Northwest Territory into future states, which would have republican rule, a stipulation later written into the Constitution. In addition to this anti-imperialism, the Ordinances ordered a survey of the district and set conditions for how the states-to-be would be settled. The Indians would fight for the Northwest Territory; American control did not exist; and England undermined US efforts. Yet the United States sketched a structure that demarcated their civilization. The legislation combined a drive for agrarian republics with an abstract approach to real estate. On paper the Ordinances created townships six-mile square and divided each township into one-mile square sections of 640 acres, numbered in the same order 1 through 36. Lawmakers reserved the revenue from the sale of section 16 for support of public schools. The American government would sell land for $1 per acre, with a minimal sale of a section being $640. Wealthy speculators received a gift, and pioneers made only a tiny entrée in the last part of the eighteenth century but found it easier to buy property as they moved west in the early nineteenth. By 1820, the minimum price per acre had risen to $1.25, but people could buy just

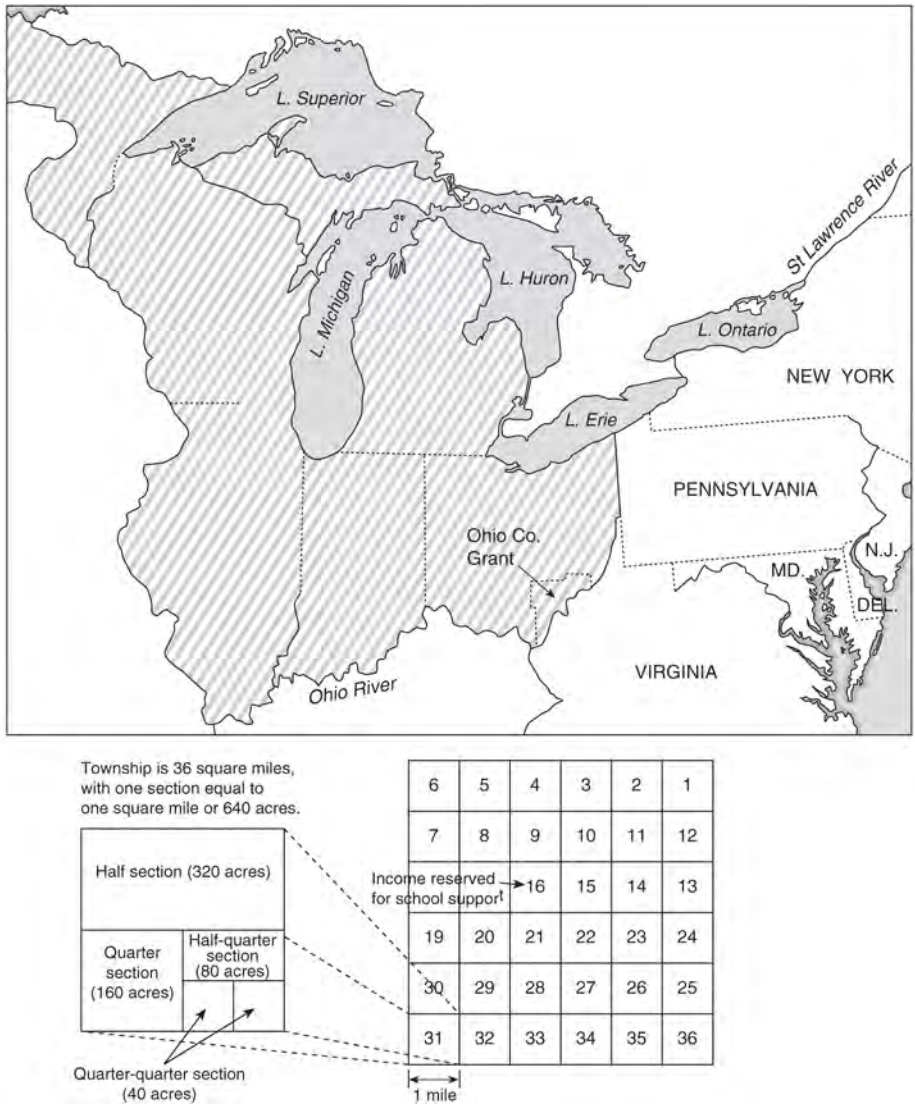
one-eighth of a section, the smallest allotment. A farmer could get eighty acres for $100, and liberal credit made ownership possible.

According to the Ordinances, governments would form a bill of rights, but congressional appointees would rule. When officials counted 5,000 free adult males in the state-to-be, a territorial assembly would be empowered with limited independence. Congress then specified how a government could be constructed. When its population equaled 60,000, authorities would welcome the state into the United States. But Congress could direct that the government not have slavery, and abolished it in what would become Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

Jefferson notably contributed to the Ordinances. He did more than doff his cap to yeoman farmers and the abolition of slavery. The Ordinances showed how America would amalgamate distinct properties into a growing republic of states and how their residents would become citizens. While new states would have "equal footing with the original States," they were also creatures of the United States. Jefferson conceived that the nation would grow with self-rule in the individual states. Leaders wanted educated inhabitants and political participants. No one would own slaves, and the whites assumed that few African Americans would migrate, at least to the Northwest. The Indians were ignored. Indeed, these free governments depended on taking land from the indigenous. Territories with diligent white men would make the best candidates for statehood. Not least, these white men believed that they could impose geometry on the society they were building: roads would go perpendicular to one another; boundaries would run straight; townships would be perfect squares; and property contracts rational and easy to follow.

The Confederation could not put the Ordinances into effect. The Indians resisted, and Britain, contemptuous of the Confederation, helped them. Then, after 1788, the new United States was more effective. In the early 1790s, the United States battled against northwestern tribes and tamed the emerging state of Ohio along the lines the Ordinances dictated. Americans were already telling stories of rugged individualism. Frontiersmen, among them Daniel Boone who blazed the Wilderness Road in 1775, typified the folklore. So too did fabled hunter Davy Crockett, as well as the itinerant farmer Johnny Appleseed, credited with planting across the Northwest Territory in the 1800s.

In 1795 the Treaty of Greenville broke native power in Ohio but set the precedent that Indians had some rights. Politicians signed an agreement and thus made concessions to obtain tribal lands. Americans thereafter repeatedly persuaded Indians to sign treaties, although the Indians rarely understood real estate technicalities. If the Native Americans refused to come to terms, a negotiator might redefine their rights to even greater disadvantage. Or the United States could drive Indians further west, by force, out of the way of citizens, or kill them off. To little avail, the Shawnee warrior Tecumseh (a leader in present-day Indiana) urged his people to have nothing to do with "ownership." "Sell a country! Why not sell the air, the clouds, and the great sea, as well as the earth? Did not the Great Spirit make them all for the use of his children?"



Map 10 Plan of the Northwest Ordinances.

The Louisiana Purchase

As lands west of the Appalachians became accessible to pioneers, statesmen acted with foresight about the land on the other side of the Mississippi, to which Europeans still held titles. Americans engaged in complex diplomacy before they added the great Louisiana Territory.

When the English won the French and Indian War in 1763, European titles in America—the only one that counted to the great powers—were thrown into disarray. The British allowed France to hand over its interest west of the Mississippi to Spain, thought to be declining. Yet Spain had the huge province of Mexico, which included the southwestern United States and the Mexico of today. In addition, Spain held the mouth of the Mississippi, the port of New Orleans, and a large but imprecise territory of Louisiana stretching from the Gulf of Mexico westward to the Rocky Mountains. Spain may have been puny but, under the Articles of Confederation, the United States could not oppose its influence—even in lands on the eastern side of the Mississippi north of New Orleans. Spain also had forts on the Mississippi as far upstream as St. Louis. In 1784 the Spanish closed the river to Americans.

The Constitution strengthened the US hand. So too did Spanish fears that the United States would side with England in the continued European sparring. The Spanish did not want to league Great Britain with the United States, and the territory of Louisiana left Spain's southern empire (Mexico) exposed to attack from the north. A deal would help Spain preserve some power in North America, and in 1795 Americans regained the right to navigate the river and to use New Orleans. Spain confined its interest to the Louisiana lands west of the Mississippi and, in the east, property that is now Florida. Five years later, in 1800, in a further balancing act, the French got the Louisiana Territory back from the Spanish, although the French did not really know what to do with it. Before the French took over, however, the Spanish in 1802 again took steps to shut New Orleans to the United States. Politicians fretted that a crisis was coming.

President in 1801, Jefferson worried about war with France. The United States might even have to ally itself with England to keep Mississippi trade. Despite his hatred for England, Jefferson wrote: "The day that France takes possession of New Orleans, we must marry ourselves to the British fleet and nation." He sent Virginian James Monroe to join Ambassador Robert Livingston in Paris to buy New Orleans from the French and so duck a fight. At the same time, in January of 1803, Congress secretly appropriated money to explore the Mississippi north of New Orleans, the whole of the Spanish–French territory, and lands that spread to the Pacific. The President had pushed such exploration, another mission to find a northwest passage to Asia. Although the United States had made no demands west of the Mississippi, Jefferson wanted to establish rights in case of an argument with France. He also had scientific and naturalistic hobbies that prompted his plans.

In France, however, events outstripped Jefferson. With many other possessions in the New World, the French feared further scraps with England, and saw no profit in hanging onto an indefensible Louisiana. France also needed to finance more wars and wanted American friendship. The French offered to sell their new deeds to Louisiana. A stronger United States, thought France, would mean a less robust England. European quarrels again benefited America.

Ignoring their limited instructions, Monroe and Livingston agreed to $15 million for Louisiana and promised religious choice and citizenship to Catholics there. By May 1803, the American negotiators had received in return a territory that had boundaries France

declared to be the same as when Spain held it. The French minister Talleyrand said: "You must take it as we received it … You have made a noble bargain for yourselves, and I suppose you will make the most of it." The grant was fuzzy: soon to become Emperor of France, Napoleon Bonaparte told the Americans that "If an obscurity did not already exist [in the deed], it would perhaps be good policy to put one there." This "Louisiana Purchase" thus formed the basis for American land west of the Mississippi. The Purchase itself encompassed roughly 827,000 square miles. It doubled the size of the United States at the time, equaling about a third of the later continental United States. The Indians who had the best claims were not consulted.

Jefferson believed that he did not have the authority to make the Purchase. Although Euro-Americans in the southwest of Kentucky and Tennessee felt positively about obtaining the property, New Englanders were angered at a doubtful measure that would bump up the public debt. An uncomfortable Jefferson thought about a constitutional amendment that would permit him the acquisition yet followed another path. He allowed the Senate to ratify the treaty of acquisition that he submitted. Constitutional objection aside, the United States owned all the European grants to a great part of one-time New France. Jefferson had spoken about small self-governing units. Now, it was said, he had caught assertive American nationalists bathing, and made off with their clothes. Ambassador Livingston talked just as frankly: "From this day the United States take their place among the powers of the first rank."

In a world of hostile Europeans, Jefferson reasoned, increase of territory was the surest way to guarantee the well-being of his country and its ideas. He did not want independent nations, even if "sister republics," on the borders of the United States. Future states of the United States would eventually spring up in the territory, as pioneers traveled west. Jefferson also fancifully thought that if bondsmen moved into this territory, "diffusion" would dilute slavery and help end it. Moreover, Jefferson did not parley with the Indians, Spanish, or French in the Louisiana Territory, nor did he want them—pagans or Catholics—to form the new states. Jefferson's "empire of liberty" and his great "Valley of Democracy" hitched Old World notions of colonies to a New World fondness for a people's government. When Jefferson led white male Americans toward the horizon, his practical nationalism curbed his belief in a small republic.

To secure the new property, Jefferson implemented his earlier plans, making exploration a priority. His personal secretary, Meriwether Lewis, and William Clark took about fifty men on a two-year mission. Lewis and Clark trekked from the junction of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers up the Missouri and across the Rockies. Next, outside the boundaries of Louisiana, the party went down the Columbia River to the Pacific. The adventurers added to knowledge of the Trans-Mississippi west. In addition, Lewis and Clark gave the United States privileges even further west: to the north of the Oregon country connected to England, and to the south of New Spain. In acquiring Louisiana, statesmen provided for new states, but looked even further afield to the Pacific.

Although provincials on the rim of Europe's consciousness, the United States had great expectations. The shape of the continent gained clarity. The white Protestant men had first secured a foothold on a narrow coastal plain that, once they began to move inland,

Map 11 Louisiana Purchase, 1803.

sloped upward to the Appalachians. The mountains initially stopped migration. Yet, on their western side, the Mississippi and its tributaries irrigated a huge continental basin. Lightly populated by the Indians and French trappers, this expanse had its future in settled farming. Crossing the Mississippi would finally lead Americans to the Great Plains, where farming might be more difficult; to an arid region; and finally to the Rocky Mountains. The Rockies then fell off into another basin bounded by the Rockies on the east and the Sierra and Cascade ranges to the west. Over the latter mountains was fertile Spanish California. As soon as migrants settled in the east, distant territory enticed their children.

Leaders had faith that Americans would people the land, most of which was rough country. They would clear this country of the indigenous, and force the withdrawal of France, Spain, and Britain. Despite European ill will, they dreamed they could impress a rectilinear order on the wilderness. Against all odds, vigorous actions realized these reckless dreams. At the same time, the words of Jefferson contrasted with his deeds, with ambiguous results. He overcame his distaste for a gigantic nation. The Louisiana Purchase also made it inevitable that troubles with Indians would continue. Jefferson may have thought about ending slavery, but it expanded with plantations in the southwest. His republican empire would advance both yeoman farmers and slaveholders.

The War of 1812

Tensions among the Europeans had prompted France to sell Louisiana, and the sale showed that the United States were pawns of the Old World. The Napoleonic Wars continued, and led to a contest that distressed the United States, while suggesting again that they did not have European respect. The English and French blockaded the trade of each other to the United States. Both ignored America, although the British caused more trouble and were less diplomatically adept. This was neither the first nor the last time that Atlantic commerce troubled foreign affairs. In the early nineteenth century, Americans rightly thought that England's interference reflected its refusal to admit their independence. Nonetheless, while Britain provoked Jefferson, and some congressmen called for war, the president steered clear of it. He withstood the temptation to strike out against the English, whom he loved to denounce. On the contrary, Jefferson sided with the New England merchants who disliked him but also called for moderation.

Wanting to punish the foreigners with a penalty milder than war, Jefferson stopped the trade of both England and France with the United States in an Embargo Act of 1807. The legislation did not work, and one critic said it was like cutting off one's toes to cure one's corns. When Jefferson left office in 1809, the United States suffered from England's scorn for their rights, and eventually the embargo fostered manufacturing, a development incompatible with Jefferson's nation of small farmers. The English continued to disrupt trade under the new president, James Madison, who found it harder to hold out against Congress, shouting for war to uphold American pride.

Conflict with the Indians in the southwestern region of Kentucky also pressured Madison. The natives had used Kentucky to separate northern and southern tribes. Now boatloads of whites came down the Ohio River to populate Kentucky. With his brother, the notable Shawnee leader Tecumseh brought together tribes east of the Mississippi to battle the frontiersmen in Kentucky and their view of property.

Were not the British, from Canada, helping the Indians? America could ensure its success in the southwest if it took on the English and wiped out the Canadian base of Tecumseh's forces. Commercial cities on the coast wanted none of this. According to New England merchants, Americans should put up with the underhanded practices of Britain to obtain access to its market. Many also believed that war would help French militarists more than English shopkeepers. If the United States confronted Britain, Napoleon would gain.

In the middle of 1812, the United States again went to war with England. Who got them into it? England might interfere with the sale of the goods of western farmers and planters, and while they both might prefer war, they did not force the issue. Rather, a new generation of statesmen from southern and western states had ambitions beyond economics. The "War Hawks"—among them the youthful congressmen Henry Clay of Kentucky and John C. Calhoun of South Carolina—were more belligerent than the Virginia dynasty. These men propelled the United States to arms. But they had the same priority as most Americans. Everyone wanted land and a larger field of endeavor. The War Hawks especially looked to an attack in Canada to undercut English strength and

the supposed Indian strongholds. Protestant expansion would marginalize Catholics to the north. "On to Canada," cried the War Hawks, spoiling to spill blood and yet again showing American yearning for enlarging northward.

Oblivious to indigenous grievances, the War Hawks did understand that the remains of British power prevented the extension of farming. If the United States could humiliate England, they could reduce the aboriginals more easily. In the south, additionally, the defeat of the natives would open Spanish Florida, a lingering European oasis in the southeast, to Republicanism.

The War Hawks communicated the idea of the war but had difficulty in carrying it out. The Americans skirmished with Canada along a front stretching west to east from Lake Michigan to Lake Champlain. But the United States failed in 1813 and 1814. Canada remained English although the Americans killed Tecumseh, fighting alongside the British. Then after the English defeated Napoleon in 1814, they launched their own three-point invasion of the United States but also gained little. First, an offensive from Canada to the United States came to nothing. Second, although the raids had no lasting effect, the British attacked Washington City. They shamed Madison and forced him to flee the town. They burned the president's quarters, soon known as the White House; and the seat of government and legislature, The Capitol. Shortly thereafter, the English could not take nearby Baltimore, Maryland, in a battle at Fort McHenry. The futile English assault lasted twenty-five hours, and "the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air" had given proof through the night "that our flag was still there." These phrases, from a patriotic poem written at the time, became part of a song, and the United States later adopted "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the national anthem.

The third point of the failed English offensive, after Canada and Washington City, focused on the southwest and along the Gulf of Mexico. The Indians lost most. The British had emboldened the Creek Indians in what is now Alabama and Mississippi, but United States forces under the command of General Andrew Jackson of Tennessee scored several victories. "Old Hickory" next turned east and took Pensacola in Florida. The supposedly neutral Spanish had allowed Britain to use this port as a base, and Jackson disrupted the British invasion. He simultaneously secured eastern Spanish Florida, an area that the War Hawks hoped would eventually belong to the United States. Jackson's last and most famous triumph occurred when he routed the English when they tried to seize New Orleans. The battle inspired songs for over 150 years about American prowess:

For ev'ry man was half a horse,
And half an alligator
The Hunters of Kentucky, 1824
Old Hickory said we could take 'em by surprise
If we didn't fire our muskets till we looked them in the eyes.
We fired our guns, and the British kept a'coming
There wasn't quite as many as there was a while ago.
We fired once more and they began to runnin'

Down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico.

The Battle of New Orleans, adapted from an old banjo tune

England and the United States had had this contest in early 1815 after diplomats had signed a peace agreement based on how matters stood before the war. The conflict first set the south and west against the north, and had boosted a generation of southwesterners, including Jackson. Yet the Americans had not changed the Atlantic trade or undermined the British navy watching over the trade. What did the war accomplish? Americans called it the War of 1812, but it was more accurately the last act of the Revolution. The victory lay in driving England out of the United States and in unleashing US nationalism.

After the war, the United States continued to enlarge their frontiers, and exhausted the natives in the south. America prepared to move into what would become the state of Florida. In the Northwest Territory the losses of the Indians in 1813 ended their unity and defiance, and the United States took control there, where states in addition to Ohio would soon be set up. While Europeans discounted America in their struggles, their power politics were copied. The country was taking over a landmass that dwarfed Europe in size and resources. The Indian hope of playing off the English and the Americans against one another suffered another blow. The war finally advanced another development: the farmers were also going to be traders who would market their products.

Slavery and the Missouri Compromise

The Louisiana Purchase and the War of 1812 exemplified commitments of the republic, but not all of them. In 1819 and 1820, a legislative deal called the Missouri Compromise illuminated another leading idea, whose roots lay back in the eighteenth century.

From 1763 to 1767 Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, an English astronomer and surveyor respectively, had checked the border between Maryland and Pennsylvania, which ran east–west to the edge of western Pennsylvania. After the Revolution, this "Mason–Dixon Line" divided the northern states from the slave states. Although only a few African Americans lived in the north, it disdained them at best, hated them at worst. But the northerners did end slavery or adopted gradual emancipation. To the immediate west of Pennsylvania, the Northwest Territory prohibited slavery. But in the south, slavery troubled thoughtful citizens. It had also entrenched itself in adjacent territories to which slave owners had migrated. Those territories later became states of the United States with bondage, according to the Southwest Ordinance (1790). The Northwest and Southwest Ordinances assumed that Congress might police slavery. The United States might ban it from new states with no history of it, but also might allow slavery where it had roots. According to the rationale that allowed the Founders to approve or deny the institution, bondage had an uncomfortable and peculiar status. Both southerners and northerners could believe that slavery would fade away. A temporary malignity, it was not thought to delimit a way of life.

In the 1780s Jefferson wrote: "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just." He had worked to have the Northwest Ordinances outlaw slavery although, again,

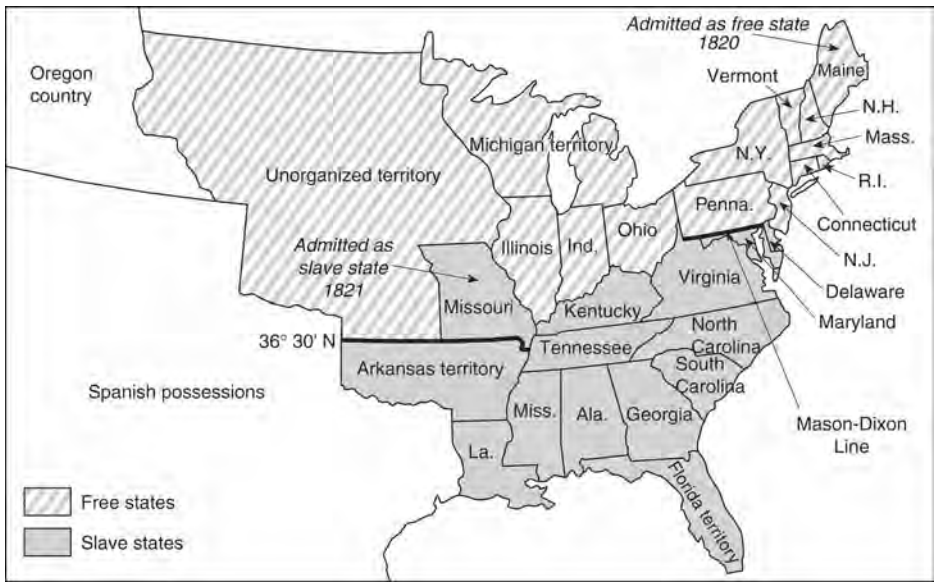
men like him did not give up their own slaves, and Jefferson himself did indeed have children with the enslaved Sally Hemings. Other southern leaders preserved the system. The Constitution protected slavery, although the Founders played as if it were on its way out. From the late eighteenth century, events from time to time upset the excuses of a liberty-loving nation still devoted to human property. But servitude did not intrude into politics until 1819, when the territory of Missouri, part of the Louisiana Purchase, asked for admission as a slave state. Then, the aroused passions showed that southerners did not just own human beings as a convenience.

By 1819 the United States had admitted five new states (Kentucky, Tennessee, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama) with slavery. But they had bordered the slave states among the original thirteen or were geographically part of the south where bondage existed. Missouri had no connection to the original states with forced labor and extended north to Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, states formed from the Northwest Territory, where the Ordinances had prohibited slavery. But slaveholders from Kentucky and Tennessee had settled in Missouri. "God has given us Missouri," said one southern politician, "and the devil shall not take it from us."

When the House of Representatives responded to the Missouri request with a law providing for statehood, Representative James Tallmadge, Jr., of New York proposed an amendment: human property would be banned there, and the African Americans manumitted. Although the Senate defeated the proposal, a spiteful debate opened. Free labor should define all land that did not originally have slavery. The Tallmadge Amendment made public the hopes of northerners to kill the system. On the contrary, southerners argued, since new states had the same rights as the old, abolition could not be a condition for statehood. With the Northwest Ordinances, Congress had strangled slavery, while the Southwest Ordinance had extended it. Now, in 1819, it seemed, politicians could contract or further slavery without regard to its connection to the first thirteen states. One northern newspaper recognized that Missouri questioned "the future character of our nation." "If blood is necessary" to end slavery, said Tallmadge, "I shall not forbear to contribute."

A year later, Congress got round the issue in the Missouri Compromise, or the Compromise of 1820, which Kentucky's Henry Clay, now a Senator, thought up. Missouri's admission would make eleven slave states, one more than the ten states that did not have slavery. To equalize the number of states with and without slavery, the United States admitted Maine, split off from Massachusetts. Moreover, the Congress divided the remaining land of the Louisiana Purchase along the 36° 30° north latitude, the southern boundary of Missouri. Above that line, Congress declared that slavery could not exist. On a map, the Mason–Dixon Line, if extended, roughly joined the northern boundary of Missouri in the west. With the Compromise, the Mason–Dixon Line came to mean the division between north and south.

For a time, 1820 answered the issues. Politicians wanted growth without introducing absolutes, and the expanse of land enabled it. Clay's law damped down the emotions slavery had set ablaze. But any rules about slavery would make a fire. The feelings aroused over Missouri, southerners believed, showed that they must protect white



Map 12 Missouri Compromise, 1820.

mastery. For some northerners Maine cancelled out Missouri, and slavery might still vanish. But Missouri riled New Englanders. Bondage especially revolted the descendants of the Puritans. Although the south and north had bickered before, the Compromise gave slavery a boundary on the map to remind statesmen of the problem. Moreover, a glance at an atlas told southerners that they faced catastrophe when northern states in the west joined the United States without slavery. The South could provide for new slave states only in the southwest, but New Spain controlled this land.

Astute politicians, not least the aged Jefferson, believed that the uproar forecast a disaster. Opposed to slavery, so he said, and eloquent in describing its evils, Jefferson wrote that Missouri was "a firebell in the night." "We have the wolf by the ear, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go." The Compromise had "hushed" trouble "for the moment." "But this is a reprieve only, not a final sentence. A geographical line, coinciding with a marked principle, moral and political, once conceived and held up to the angry passions of men, will never be obliterated; and every new irritation will mark it deeper and deeper." The younger and equally perceptive John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts, son of the second president, John Adams, and president himself in the 1820s, added that Missouri was "a mere preamble—a title page to a great tragic volume."

Removing the Indians

Indians kept company with African Americans in having their status subject to repeated negotiation. In the northwest, the War of 1812 ruined indigenous chances of holding the line against the United States. In the south, too, the War crippled the natives. But since

they still held much of their land, in the 1820s they made another stand, and challenged the United States.

What consideration could whites afford the Indians? This question came up as soon as the earliest settlers arrived. Annihilation competed with segregation and long-term attempts to make the Indians resemble the dominant Americans. Slow as well as humiliating, assimilation assumed that the Indians must embrace European ways, or congregate in areas where they might learn trades. Such integration, however, only reflected the position of national politicians, or of philanthropists who wanted Indians on lands far from whites. Federal administrators helped Protestant missionaries in caring for the Indians and educating them in European customs. Were the Indians converted to single-family farming perhaps American society could incorporate them. This view did not have popular appeal. Presidents generally only defended it as a way of asserting national power over states and localities. The twenty-first century castigated these supposed large-hearted approaches as a form of liquidation.

White Americans disliked and distrusted people different from them—that was the bottom line. The military superiority of the United States and the increase of their citizens guaranteed that unjust policies would prevail. State governments took amalgamation or segregation as spineless or foolish. Men on the frontier just wanted to be rid of the natives. The politicians should put the Indians far from whites, by peaceful means if possible, by violent ones if necessary. Jefferson had also assayed "removal" as the one way to preserve Indian cultures. The issue usually arose when old treaties no longer served the needs of homesteaders.

In 1817, General Jackson, the Tennessee Indian fighter, again led an expedition into Spanish Florida to subdue the Seminoles, who raided settlements in Georgia. Jackson's victories made the Indians even feebler. Moreover, the United States demanded that the Spanish police Florida; the Americans wanted to force the Europeans to leave. In 1819 the program had the consequence of having the Spanish give up the southeast. In return, the Americans settled debts with Spain. They also agreed on the east–west border between the United States and New Spain along the line of the Louisiana Purchase, and owned up to Spanish ownership of the great southwest of the present United States. The agreement made Florida statehood certain and Indian relations worse.

In Georgia, in the 1820s, the Creeks and Cherokees had thriving societies that showed assimilation's virtues. Fearing that these natives would live in their midst forever, local whites petitioned Congress. The state pushed the federal government to make good on what Georgians perceived as a promise of 1802 to dispatch the Indians in return for Georgia's renouncing its western lands. James Monroe, who had followed Madison in 1817 as the last Virginia president, looked at the row between Georgia and the Indians differently. On the one hand, the national government should stand by its treaties (to the present detriment of Georgia). On the other hand, to prevent a contest, Monroe urged the Indians to sell their lands to Georgia and told Georgians that he would dispatch offending Indians.

The matter was still festering when John Quincy Adams became president in 1825. Quincy Adams was a rare principled statesman and hinted that he would protect Indian

titles if necessary. But to rule out a ruckus, like Monroe before him, Adams persuaded the Indians to leave whatever regions the pioneers could possibly want: the difference in power and the ascendancy of European civilization required this arrangement even if it was unjust. By separating the two groups, Adams would preserve peace and, for a time, Indian culture. Yet, he believed, that culture would perish as the most enlightened of the indigenous discarded their roots. As the congressional leader Henry Clay said, the natives were "essentially inferior to the Anglo-Saxon race … and their disappearance from the human family will be no great loss to the world."

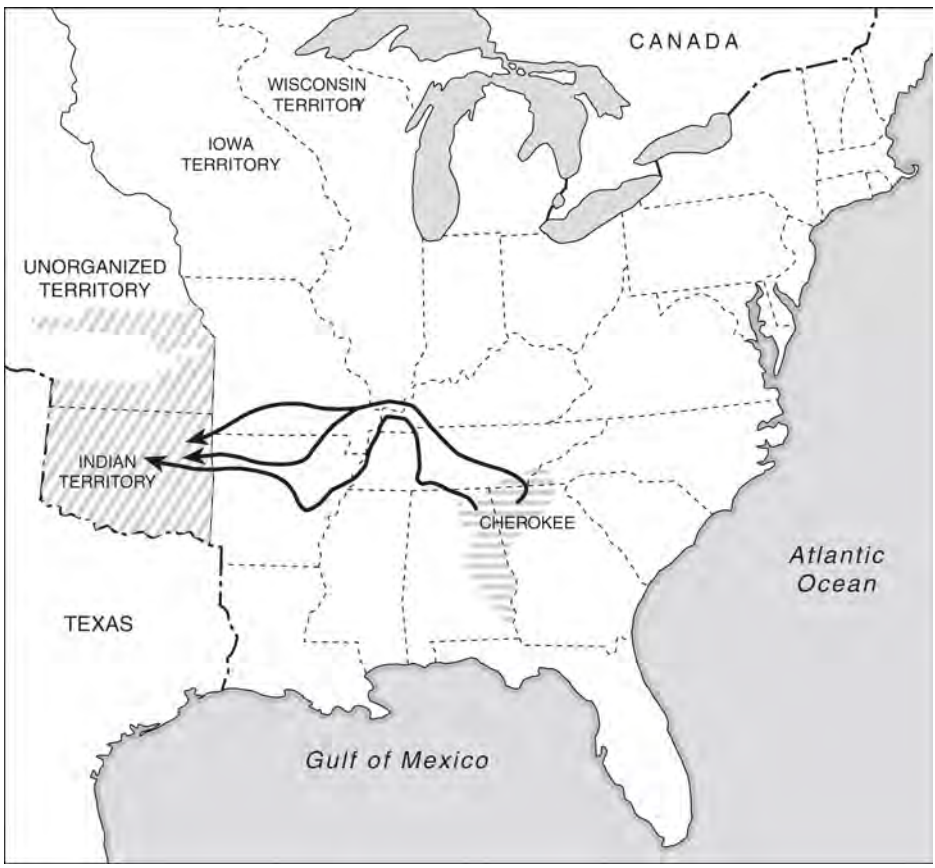
In 1826 the Creeks gave up most of their land, and Adams threatened to honor the remaining treaties. Then he deferred an argument with Georgia when the Georgia Creeks moved west. They got a treaty and lands elsewhere. Even Adams, far more reflective than most leaders, would not confront the states about their hunger for property and willingness to supplant federal agreements. Three years later the Georgia Cherokees went to the Supreme Court to defend their treaty with the United States and to prevent Georgia from seizing Indian lands. Chief Justice John Marshall was another citizen who personified thoughtfulness about the issues involved in carving out a European-style nation from the non-European. The Court ruled in two cases, *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831) and *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832). For him, an Indian tribe was a distinct political community in which "the laws of Georgia can have no force." Georgians could not enter the Indian lands without permission or treaty privileges. The Indians had no standing in federal courts, but they could lose their territory only by voluntarily giving it up. Marshall put Quincy Adams's reasoning into legalese.

By this time, to the dejection of those religious teachers who wanted to help the natives, Andrew Jackson had made it to the White House. He had defeated Adams in 1828, and his victory brought to power the southwestern expansionists who had wanted to fight natives in 1812. As the first military man elected president after Washington, Jackson had been rewarded for success in war—he and Washington contributed to a pattern that eventually resulted in the United States' electing twelve former generals to the presidency.

Jackson's foes wrongly accused him of being an ignorant soldier, although he did worry less about the Indians than Monroe or Quincy Adams or Marshall. Jackson spoke for the southwest and the non-Virginia south, and allowed the Georgians to do what they wanted with "their" Indians. However, he also promoted "the Union," as the system was called. The *nation* would license the states to remove the Indians. He disregarded the Court's decision, and is reported to have said, Let Marshall enforce it. Jackson also reassured Georgians that they might ignore the judiciary; the executive had the authority to dictate to the Indians, and the president could overrule earlier treaties. Furthermore, in what was called the Removal Act of 1830, Congress appropriated funds for Jackson to negotiate new treaties and resettle the Indians west of the Mississippi. Jackson thought that "this much injured race" made a "powerful appeal to our sympathies." He convinced himself that the supposed voluntary emigration would not have to employ "cruel and unjust" force in obliging "the aborigines to abandon the graves of their fathers."

Under Jackson's orders, over a prolonged period in the 1830s, his old enemies, the Florida Seminoles, joined the Georgia Cherokees and tribes from Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi. Their march was compulsory and not voluntary. It took the Indians, Jackson claimed, to land where they could stay "as long as the grass grows or the water runs, in peace and plenty." The journeys of some 1,200 miles west led them in reality to a bleak "Indian Territory" Part of this route was over the infamous "Cherokee Trail of Tears," a walk to new homelands during which disease and exhaustion took many lives. Throughout most of the nineteenth century the regions to which Jackson sent the Indians were regarded as so desolate as to be useless. Eventually, however, even this area would alter, and it would be taken from the Indians. In the early twentieth century, Indian Territory became the state of Oklahoma.

Jackson did not disagree with Quincy Adams and Marshall about the natives. But Jackson was convinced (in some ways like Jefferson) that delicate principles should not stand in the way of improvement. The Trail of Tears illustrated what happened when the people and politicians dealt with the powerless and culturally different. Americans found two options: removal or murder.



Map 13 Cherokee Trail of Tears.

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The Compromise of 1820 bought time and kept slavery from tearing apart the United States. The Compromise and Jackson's Indian policies clarified the elevation of the group on top and the suppression of the strange and inferior. Ironically, the wretched status of natives and bondspeople enriched the liberty of the farmers, traders, craftsmen, and small proprietors. But an era had ended. Jackson was not a semi-aristocrat modeled after Jefferson. The polished leadership of Virginia slaveholders no longer extended its moral suasion north. After Jackson destroyed the power of the Indians, disputes over bondage would be preoccupying. New England Protestants, especially, would challenge slavery in the United States.

CHAPTER 7
NATIONALISM, SECTIONALISM, AND SLAVERY, 1820–61

From Andrew Jackson to the Civil War

In the second third of the nineteenth century a more authentic democracy arose, if we associate democracy with voting rights for all white men, who presumed equality with those for whom they cast a ballot. The deference of Republicanism gave way to a more aggressive politics that spread from the backcountry to the coast. Varied reformers gained acceptance. Democracy also worsened successive fallings-out over slavery. In the North, less respect was shown for what was easily perceived as the lack of democracy in the South. A "sectional crisis" had one of its roots in a concomitant sense of peculiar southern identity. Finally, as the United States enlarged, southerners helped to construct a power that threatened slavery.

Economic Growth

In 1831, the Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville toured the United States. He later published a book about his travels. Its translation, *Democracy in America* (1838, 1840), turned into a popular success, and an enduring reference work. *Democracy in America* told citizens that they had a common culture that someone might analyze. De Tocqueville wrote:

> The first thing that strikes a traveller in the United States is the innumerable multitude of those who seek to emerge from their original condition … No Americans are devoid of a yearning desire to rise … All are constantly seeking to acquire property, power, and reputation … Nothing seems impossible to anyone … /T/he religious aspect of the country … struck my attention; and the longer I stayed there, the more I perceived the great political consequences resulting from this new state of things. In France, I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom marching in opposite directions. But in America I found they were intimately united and that they reigned in common over the same country.

Although the United States remained agricultural, in the early nineteenth century cities spread out across the northwest and beyond as local economic centers. From Pittsburgh in western Pennsylvania, to Detroit in Michigan and Cincinnati in Ohio, to

Chicago in Illinois and Milwaukee in Wisconsin, to Des Moines in Iowa, and St. Louis and Kansas City on the Missouri frontier. In 1790 most of the 4 million non-Indians lived on or near the Atlantic coast. By 1860, over 30 million, Black and white, spilled across the continent. Immigration from Ireland and Germany—the Irish a bit earlier, the Germans in force later—added to the growth. They did much of the laboring, as did the bondsmen. The closing of the slave trade in 1808 and the arrival of the Europeans gradually "whitened" the population from 1820, but also gave "old stock" Americans more to worry about in a society that was more composed of unfamiliar groups. With their Catholicism, the Irish especially realized the distaste for Romanists.

In addition to human resources, the United States had natural ones, mainly farmland, whose availability sent children off to get homesteads and limited the supply of urban workers. Industry, commerce, and finance defined the North, which extended into what was becoming the "Old" Northwest. Plantation slavery distinguished the South, which by the early nineteenth century included five new states. The West, which stretched beyond the Old Northwest to much of the Louisiana Purchase, took farm implements and supplied food.

With labor scarce, manufacturers invested in mechanized equipment. Improvements in shipping and hauling tied the states together, as the toll road, steamboats, and canals sped up travel. Next, the railroad, built with immigrant sweat, decreased the costs of goods and of doing business. Some gruesome humorists said an Irishman was buried under every railroad tie. Faster journeys made it easier for Americans to be in contact, and the invention of the telegraph in 1844 made for lightning connection. Even the far west saw the effects of swifter transport and communication because of the horse-drawn overland stage and, for a brief period, of the pony express. Teams of riders on horseback took the mail from St. Joseph, Missouri, on the edge of civilization, across the continent to California, after it had become a state in 1850 and before the telegraph was extended there.

The United States had a thriving economy in which growing numbers toiled for wages. Workers and farmers alike bought from shops and factories elsewhere. The South did not fully partake in these developments. Stronger links grew up between the North, the Old Northwest, and the West, to an extent excluding the South.

Jacksonian Politics

In 1824 John Quincy Adams, the son of John Adams, had won a disputed election over General Jackson, and many claimed that Jackson, who stood for new forces, should have gained the presidency. Jackson did defeat Quincy Adams in 1828, triumphed again in 1832, and saw a follower win in 1836, and another in 1844. Jackson gave his name to an era and evidenced such personal dynamism on his part that his enemies formed their own party, the Whigs. This legendary group had opposed the monarchy in early-eighteenth-century England. The American Whigs combatted "King Andrew." They feared in Jackson the tyranny that democracy, as opposed to Republicanism, could fall into. These new Whigs, who descended from the same groups that had composed

Alexander Hamilton's Federalists, contested national and state elections. Jackson's men, however, were more successful, as the old Democratic–Republicans were renovated to Democrats. From the 1830s to the 1850s, these Democrats and the Whigs formed "the second American party system," after the Democratic–Republicans and Federalists. Just as the Democratic–Republicans dominated the Federalists, the Democrats dominated the Whigs. Both parties, nonetheless, had strength in all areas of the country and so toned-down sectional differences.

The argument often goes that Jacksonian Democracy brought together a growing labor movement in the urban north and smaller indebted southern farmers: the poor were set against the larger economic enterprises of the Whigs; Jackson's Democrats early instanced "reform," associating disadvantaged "producers" in the cities and countryside. This concept, however, underplays the attraction of Democrats to slavery. Despite embracing a strong leader, they emphasized the rights of individual states and spoke for diversity. The party accepted local differences, including the taste for servitude in the South and, certainly in New York, Irish newcomers committed to the Church of Rome. Looking back at Jefferson, Jackson and his followers were further defining a "Liberalism" linked to Jefferson as a penchant for laissez-faire provincialism.

In some ways, the Whigs looked like the Federalists and especially drew strength from New England, though they were also joined to the deference of the Virginia dynasty. Whig leaders in the North descended from the Puritans. They thought of themselves as the better sort, and hated the Catholics and, as time went on, the slave South. For New England and for respectable people, the Democrats—though usually victorious before 1860—were the party of outsiders, of men not really in the republican mold.

Henry Clay, who rose to prominence as a War Hawk in 1812 and as a peacemaker over Missouri, became the Whigs major leader. That he was a slave owner from Kentucky showed the complexity of party politics. Abraham Lincoln later called him the "beau ideal" of a statesman. In 1824 Clay had advanced his "American System" for building a stronger nation based on overall economic planning. A protective tariff would push eastern manufacturing. The money derived from the tariff would fund haulage inland; raw materials and food from the South and West to the North; and finished products from the North. Whigs liked "internal improvements" that recurred to Hamilton's ideas. In Clay's case, rivals defeated the American System because, they said, it upset the balance between the federal and state governments. Clay's nationalism confronted the states. Jackson stood for these states' rights and, in the most celebrated event of his administration, killed a "Bank of the United States" that would have given a more central direction to finance.

As voter turnouts increased and the qualifications to vote diminished, Whigs and Democrats mastered a new politics. It went along with a rise in the number of newspapers (from sixty-five in 1830 to 254 in 1850), increases in circulation, and a decrease in price. The "penny press" was even more parochial in its presentation of "news" than the more elevated reportage of the late eighteenth century. An efficient arm of Washington City, the post office, delivered the newspapers and contributed to public knowledge.

Based explicitly on the organization of mass emotions, elections became straightforward contests among opposed groups of voters, less a concession to largely respectful citizens. In the late eighteenth and very early nineteenth centuries, the disagreements between Jefferson and Hamilton were regarded as an unfortunate falling away from a republican ideal. Now, white men were invited to involve themselves in public affairs and presumed they had something to say. They accepted as normal, and not problematic, wild campaigns and partisanship. Whigs and Democrats catered to a polity that was more a democracy than a republic; equality was stressed more than liberty. This concept of democracy, with an electorate that now includes women and non-whites, continues to be relevant and followed in the twenty-first century. Indeed, the complications of politics of the 2020s resemble those of the 1830s.

James Fenimore Cooper, from western New York, wrote a series of novels about a quintessential American, the scout or frontiersman, on the edge of civilization. These "Leatherstocking Tales" included *The Pioneers* (1823), *Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Prairie* (1827), *The Pathfinder* (1840), and *The Deerslayer* (1841). The novels expressed an American literature. While his enemies thought Jackson a tyrant, he resembled Cooper's trailblazing hero. Jefferson had hoped that farmers would be the foundation of a good commonwealth. They would, for Jefferson, elevate the most capable and dignified of their fellows to rule. Was Jackson this kind of man? At the same time, in *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville worried about "the tyranny of the majority": pedestrian citizens would drag leadership down. Was Jackson one of them? Maybe the political class could not keep the Founders' standards. Whether Jackson appeared as a capable commoner or as mediocre, the views of white men and of politicians mirrored one another; the regime mimicked its citizens.

In the South, the most vociferous slavers found friendlier comrades among the Democrats than the Whigs. The Protestantism of New England tinged the Whigs, and by the 1840s they made moral reform central. These Whigs targeted Catholics and plantation owners as well as personal habits like drinking, and metropolitan disorder. The Democrats, on the other hand, were easier about human frailty. Although Protestants still dominated the Democrats, slaveholders and Catholics in their midst embraced lenient beliefs.

Even the Democrats, however, whose talk often emphasized the states and their inhabitants, had aggressive national leaders in what we can call foreign policy. Adhering to limited government, Jefferson purchased Louisiana, and his partner Madison oversaw empire-building when he fought the English in 1812. Presidents could not resist the lure of adding land through any available means—migration, purchase, negotiation, war. Politicians and voters debated how the domain would grow, but a majority usually sustained an executive eyeing fresh territory. Even in vetoing measures that would strengthen a national economy, Jackson affirmed the authority of the central government. Into the nineteenth century, the United States advanced across the continent. America had a national bureaucracy, a military, and a belief that Washington City should act vigorously for the country when it could obtain new lands. The citizens of individual states might rarely feel this force because the limited domestic administration restrained

politicians arguing over roads, banking, public lands, and the like. But Indians, nations in the vicinity, and the Europeans who still wanted an entrée to the continent, did not doubt the power of the United States.

The poet Walt Whitman put it this way in his "Song of Myself" (1855):

> One of the Nation of many nations …
> A Southerner soon as a Northerner, a planter nonchalant and hospitable
> down the Oconee I live,
> A Yankee bound my own way ready for trade …
> A Kentuckian …,
> a Louisianian, or Georgian,
> A boatman over lakes or bays or along coasts, a Hoosier, Badger, Buckeye; …
> At home on the hills of Vermont or in the woods of Maine, or the Texas ranch,
> Comrade of Californians, comrade of free North-Westerners, …
> Comrade of raftsmen and coalmen, comrade of all who shake hands
> and welcome to drink and meat,
> Of every hue and caste am I, of every rank and religion,
> A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, quaker,
> Prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician, priest.
> I resist any thing better than my own diversity,
> Breathe the air but leave plenty after me …

The United States drove for either territory or control, and sometimes both. Americans had a blind self-righteous streak about their bulging free societies. They hardly noticed that they applied their ideals sporadically, if at all, to those who were alien or unprotected. Yet, resourceful and energetic, Americans had a rule that protected their interests and guaranteed for them a measure of liberty. The people gave the regime their loyalty, and it secured their prosperity. Soon that government would confront the tension between the expansion of popular government and slavery.

Slavery

In part, the Founders had presumed or pretended that slavery would vanish because it had seemed unprofitable and even to be dying out at the end of the eighteenth century. Farming based on forced labor was not flourishing in the Upper South, and tobacco growers in Virginia were indebted. They did earn money with "long staple" cotton fibers. But only planters on the islands off South Carolina and Georgia grew this cotton. Farmers in the interior cultivated the short-staple variety but removing the sticky seed in the fiber baffled them. In 1793, when Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin (or engine), he revived the plantations. His machine quickly separated seed, and lucrative cotton agriculture moved inland. English mills demanded more cotton than the South could sell and enlivened "the Cotton South"; there "King Cotton" and slavery reigned.

The Virginia legislature struggled for years over its slaves but debated the issue for the last time in 1831 and 1832, just at the end of the era of Republicanism. White Virginians concluded that their economy depended on servitude and that it best provided for the unfortunate race that, as a fact, they controlled. Virginians rejected emancipation just as the Black leader Nat Turner and a group of zealots rampaged and killed some white owners. Turner had been educated and revealed a fine intelligence in his Protestant belief that God spoke directly to him. His *Confessions* of 1831 claimed

> The Spirit appeared to me …,and said, as the Savior had been baptized so should we be also—and when the white people would not let us be baptized by the church, we went down into the water together, in the sight of many who reviled us, and were baptized by the Spirit—After this I rejoiced greatly, and gave thanks to God. And on the 12th of May 1828, I heard a loud noise in the heavens, and the Spirit instantly appeared to me and said the Serpent was loosened, … and that I should … fight against the Serpent, for the time was fast approaching when the first should be last and the last should be first. … On the appearance of the sign, I should arise and prepare myself, and slay my enemies with their own weapons. And immediately on the sign appearing … I communicated [to my fellows] the great work laid out for me to do.

In 1831, terror rippled through Virginia and the South with Turner's "rebellion." It gave the lie to the make-believe that the African Americans loved their masters and accepted enslavement. Yet few whites argued against the "peculiar institution" of the South. The passing vice became a lasting good that kept social peace and a money-making economy.

Virginia and North Carolina still grew tobacco, and certain places raised rice and sugar. But the two states shifted toward wheat and corn that demanded less intensive labor than cotton. The core of slavery moved from the Upper South, and masters there often sold the enslaved "down river" to the cotton plantations that dominated the Lower South. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the plantation owners who stridently sponsored slavery and expansion spread in an arc from South Carolina and Georgia to Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and (finally) eastern Texas, "the black belt." Here in the "Deep South" slavery was most rooted, and what was "the Old South" was clearly spelled out.

Historians have debated its nature. Was it part of a global capitalism, or "pre-capitalist"? Was slavery profitable? Could it compete with free labor? Whatever the answers to these disputed questions, the South was rural and in the hands of a small number. Aside from a few cities, the South did not share the urbanity of the North, and took pride that industry and manufacture had not developed. Southerners also lacked the trimmings of northern life in go-getting colleges, learned societies, and literary life. Southern leadership did not disdain these achievements but instead evolved a different, refined style. The elite maintained rituals that looked back to Anglo-American life in the eighteenth century,

cultivated hospitality and good manners, and esteemed deference and reputation. Women were put on a pedestal and relegated to the home even more than in the North. Large slaveholders had wealth, but scorned the greedy aspects of trade. Their highest values included responsibility to the community and noblesse oblige to one's neighbors and (as they conceived it) those in bondage. A military ethic prevailed more in the South than in the North, and involved dress, the firm rule of men, and the duel to settle affairs of honor.

In 1850 some 1,700 families had 100 or more slaves. Some 350,000 families were less affluent owners. As small farmers, two-thirds of these families claimed fewer than ten slaves. They might often work in the fields beside their bondspeople, and hardly had a stereotypical planter life. Small farmers or craftsmen without slaves led some 35 to 50 percent of households. Finally, in addition to the slaves and Blacks who were free, 25 to 40 percent of whites had no land, a large "mudsill" class. Their betters dismissed them as "crackers," "rednecks," or "clay eaters."

An increasingly smaller proportion of the population counted as the elite. In the first half of the century perhaps one-third of southern white households had bonded humans, but by 1860 only a quarter of the population did, and half of the slaveholders held five African Americans or fewer. Moreover, fewer owners acquired more and more enslaved: in 1830, 36 percent of slave owners held 90 to 95 percent of the human property; by 1860, 25 percent did. An oligarchy dominated a social order from which it more and more differed. The upper reaches nonetheless set the standard. The white South looked to plantation living, and whites expected guidance from respected families. This *crème de la crème* faced few challenges and saw itself as the heir of the Founding Fathers.

Why did the southerners, with such a splintered society, appear so uniformly attached to their way of life? The Old South, "Dixie"—on many accounts referring to what was south of the Mason–Dixon Line—revolved around slavery. Its leadership argued that race and not class or money made the South estimable. Even "white trash" existed in a different realm from the Blacks. Race secured the loyalty of all whites to the large owners, not always entirely but always dependably. In the white South, a hyperbolic allegiance to self-rule and independence from outside forces went hand-in-hand with absolute power over others.

One consequence has only recently gripped historians: the predatory sex that involved white men and Black women. The inevitable offspring compromised the morality of plantation owners. Such compromise went back to Jefferson and Sally Hemings. The power over Black people immeasurably flawed southerners, but damaged African Americans more. They had made the South, and slavery disfigured their experience. Although they showed strength in survival, they existed in want, misfortune, and never-ending work. Their only hope was to have no hope. Whites despised them, degraded the females, and often deprived them of home and family. The slaves showed courage, autonomy, and dignity; they fashioned an independent culture, preserved a sense of identity, and did not accept their owners' values. None of this compensated for lives bereft of liberty or prospect. Contrary to southern ideas, as I have indicated again and again, forced laborers did not love their enslavers, nor did they thank whites for their

bondage. As one put it, "It's bad to belong to folks that own you soul an' body. I could tell you about it all day, but even then you couldn't guess the awfulness of it." In some measure white society knew this and suppressed fears of a cataclysm.

Southerners had less to fear than they imagined. Some of the enslaved educated themselves, when the South knew that knowledge was dangerous for them to have. But the danger of violent Black outbursts hardly existed. In these circumstances the bonded had their own version of the Protestant religion that their owners offered. Like the popular religion of the old Puritans, slave religion mixed Calvinism and local routines. In the case of Blacks, elements of their religion, like other aspects of their culture, might be a carryover from Africa. Yet we have little sense of what remained from their homeland, or how it was wed to their spirituality. The white Protestant southerner taught that the slaves should live on earth with a broken will and dutiful humility. Black Americans did not reject this teaching, and their supernatural lives often focused on the emotional outbursts that preceded the breaking of the will and that one saw in the religion of less reputable white revivals. At the same time, slave Protestantism proffered justice. Yet only the afterlife would achieve it, when African Americans would gain emancipation, and masters would be "broilin' in hell for their sin." But this Protestantism also held the seeds of a revelation in which redemption might come on earth.

White southern leaders read the novels of early-nineteenth-century Scottish author Sir Walter Scott who had written about long-ago Britain. Southerners believed that Scott's ideal of chivalry—of King Richard the Lionheart, Robin Hood, and crusading knights—applied to the South. Literate southerners also praised William Gilmore Simms, the southern equivalent of Fenimore Cooper. Simms wrote eighty-two volumes of novels, stories, poems, and essays portraying his region. He romanticized the South, elevated its ladies, and extolled its carefree and beloved enslaved. However, Simms urged that southern distinctiveness could only come about because the South formed part of a nation. "To [have] a national … literature," he said, "one must … be sectional. No one mind can fully or fairly illustrate the characteristics of any great country; and he who shall depict one section faithfully, has made his proper and sufficient contribution to the great work of national illustration." Southern civilization could only mature in the United States.

Stephen Collins Foster was known as the father of American music and wrote some 200 sentimental songs. Although a northerner, he portrayed the south—"Way down upon the Sewanee River"—as a land of happy African Americans. In "Oh Susanna," Collins told us that "the buckwheat cake was in her mouth, a tear was in her eye." When "Old Uncle Ned" died, there was "No more hard work for poor Old Ned, /He is gone whar de good niggars go." The first verse of "My Old Kentucky Home" went:

The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home,
'Tis summer, the darkies are gay,
The corn top's ripe and the meadow's in the bloom
While the birds make music all the day.
The young folks roll on the little cabin floor,
All merry, all happy and bright.

The divide between white fictions and African-American reality still makes historians shake their heads.

Religion and the Improvement of Society

By the time the last of the Founders had died, Protestantism and not the Enlightenment again formed the backdrop to politics. Explicit Enlightenment beliefs vanished, and historians have not sorted out why, or how, undercurrents of the American Enlightenment endured into the present. From the early nineteenth century, and into the twenty-first, Protestants dominated politics. They had their ups and downs but made a constant impact. Alexis Tocqueville underscored the decline of the Enlightenment of the Founders when he wrote that "the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men … in America" than in any other country.

Tocqueville was referring to "the Second Great Awakening" that scorched the United States at the turn of the nineteenth century. The First Awakening of the 1730s and 1740s gained prominence in New England and the middle colonies. It had promoted egalitarianism and a religion of emotion, and discredited upright Protestant authorities who complained of passions that passed for the spiritual. The Second Awakening took up where the First left off and became a vehicle for women especially to gain churchly power. Baptists and Methodists, two barely middle-class denominations, multiplied. These denominations of "evangelicals" had their roots, again, in eighteenth-century revivalism, and drew the less respectable who might undergo a violent adult conversion, "born again." Baptists and Methodists emphasized the ability "to get right with Jesus" and propagated their Protestantism in the hinterland. They now outnumbered the more staid New England Congregationalists and mid-Atlantic Presbyterians. Upstate New York was "the burned-over district" because "hell-and-brimstone" revivals had swept over it so many times. Even Congregationalists and Presbyterians accentuated saving oneself by work and the obligation to change the manners of their fellow citizens. In the South, religion was also often identified not with the refined Anglicans of Virginia but with the uncouth, and how they might be brought to salvation. Ministers used the fear of death and damnation to stir people up. Traveling clergymen ignored God's omnipotence and concentrated instead on how the unwashed could repent if only the preacher could bring them to a fevered recognition of their sins.

The Second Awakening boosted various reform movements among Baptists and Methodists, who shared the Whig impulse to cleanse society. They still nonetheless looked for leadership to the high-class descendants of the New England Puritans. Elite Protestants worried about the uneducated poor in the United States and the need, in a republic, for reading, writing, and arithmetic. Moreover, primary schools must instill Protestant morality: teachers should promote hard work, punctuality, and sobriety. In the early part of the nineteenth century, latter-day Puritans found another issue in the restriction of alcohol. In the first decades of the century, ministers in Boston founded the American Temperance Society, an organization to control drinking. Reformers also considered African Americans. The American Colonization Society (ACS) of 1817

descended from Congregationalists and Presbyterians. They had created Liberia on the coast of West Africa where a community of American blacks could be built. The ACS wanted incrementally to rid the United States of slaves. A "special providence" of God had sent them to the North American colonies. After ministers had taught the essentials of culture to the African Americans, they would be repatriated and lift "the Dark Continent" to Christianity. In working for slaves to return to Africa, the ACS presumed they had the wherewithal for independent leadership.

By the 1830s colonization was joined to slavery's abolition, the position of northern white intellectuals most violently hostile to slavery. New Englander William Lloyd Garrison most effectively promoted the immediate overthrow of slavery in the South. In 1831 he founded *The Liberator*, a weekly anti-slavery magazine: "I will be as harsh as truth and as uncompromising as justice … I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—and I WILL BE HEARD!" For its shilly-shallying with slavery, Garrison declared the Constitution "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell." In 1833, Garrison and like-minded Bostonians inaugurated the American Anti-Slavery Society. They supposed that African Americans would remain in the United States after slavery ended. They thus needed training in manual occupations that befitted the status they would have. That is, the abolitionists shared the prejudice of most whites about the abilities of Blacks. Moreover, anti-slavery ideas grew in the mid-nineteenth century because the western territories wanted no contact with African Americans. Anti-slavers may have wished the slaves freed at once, but usually wished them put in distant areas. Politicians often hoped to move the Indians far away from whites, and this policy had an anti-slavery parallel.

Frederick Douglass was an African American who escaped bondage in Maryland and became an abolitionist leader in Massachusetts and New York. People like Garrison would find him a giant. Douglass's career extended from the earlier period of northern antislavery activism in the 1840s till well after the Civil War, when he faced more subtle signs of racism in the United States. Douglass spoke eloquently in the North about the evils of slavery, but also wrote three autobiographical accounts that examined bondage and called for equality.

About his gaining freedom in the late 1830s he said:

> I have often been asked, how I felt when first I found myself on free soil. And my readers may share the same curiosity. There is scarcely anything in my experience about which I could not give a more satisfactory answer. A new world had opened upon me. If life is more than breath, and the "quick round of blood," I lived more in one day than in a year of my slave life. It was a time of joyous excitement which words can but tamely describe.

In the North: "I felt as one might feel upon escape from a den of hungry lions … Anguish and grief, like darkness and rain, may be depicted; but gladness and joy, like the rainbow, defy the skill of pen or pencil."

Years later, Douglass wrote an open letter to his former master:

> Oh! sir, a slaveholder never appears to me so completely an agent of hell, as when I think of and look upon my dear children. It is then that my feelings rise above my control. … The grim horrors of slavery rise in all their ghastly terror before me, the wails of millions pierce my heart, and chill my blood. I remember the chain, the gag, the bloody whip, the deathlike gloom overshadowing the broken spirit of the fettered bondman, the appalling liability of his being torn away from wife and children, and sold like a beast in the market.

The Protestantism of the slave south came under withering fire:

> I … hate the corrupt, slaveholding, women-whipping, cradle-plundering, partial and hypocritical Christianity of the land … I look upon it as the … boldest of all frauds, …. I am filled with unutterable loathing when I contemplate the religious pomp and show, together with the horrible inconsistencies, which everywhere surround me. We have men-stealers for ministers, women-whippers for missionaries, and cradle-plunderers for church members. The man who wields the blood-clotted cowskin during the week fills the pulpit on Sunday, and claims to be a minister of the meek and lowly Jesus.

Perhaps more consequential than white men in New England and even Douglass were growing numbers of women who had a higher education. Convinced of the "unnatural" aspects of patriarchy, these "ladies" determined not just to reform but to disrupt the existing order. In 1848, some 300 men and women gathered in Seneca Falls, New York, for what is now known as the Seneca Falls Convention, the first women's rights gathering that females organized. It issued a "Declaration of Sentiments," whose principal author was Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Stanton went on to a polemical calling. Her commitments extended not only to seeking the vote for females—suffrage—but also to abolition and temperance, and her followers forwarded the rights of labor and working children, and at the extreme what was called "free love." Behind all of these movements was a feminine brand of northern Protestantism.

Stanton modeled the "Declaration of Sentiments" on the Declaration of Independence and wrote:

> The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpation on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her … He has not ever permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise. He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

Frederick Douglass was the only Black to attend the Convention and wished for a resolution demanding the vote—a crucial mark of citizenship. He noted the link between abolitionism and feminism: he could not accept the right to the franchise as a Black male if women could not claim that right.

In 1851, Stanton met Susan B. Anthony, another feminist. They formed a decades-long partnership critical to the movement. In 1852, in Rochester New York, they set up the Women's State Temperance Society—now women would join men in combatting the evil of alcohol. The organization preceded the later and much more famous "WCTU"—the Women's Christian Temperance Union. During the Civil War, the two founded the Women's Loyal National League. After the war, they organized the American Equal Rights Association, which campaigned for both African Americans and women.

By the middle of the century, crusaders in the north had made slavery the priority. The Second Awakening convinced many non-southern Protestants that bondage was wicked. We have already met the most strident men and women, absolutist about ridding the nation of slaves. More moderates contributed to minor political configurations. The Liberty and Free Soil "third parties," for example, were dedicated to the condemnation of slavery, but more cautious about "immediatism." Abolitionists worsened tensions between North and South. Southerners responded by becoming more intolerant of the North. Charleston, South Carolina, was as stubborn as Boston, Massachusetts. But the abolitionists put southerners on the wrong side of a great ethical divide and called into question the morality of the Constitution. In the twenty-first century, historians too have aggressively debated the extent to which the document sanctioned bondage.

America in the Southwest

In the early nineteenth century, New Spain prevented the spread of the United States along their southwestern border. Indeed, Spain wanted to people its Texas territory in what is now the US southwest and to clear it of Indians. Then, in 1823, Mexico, which included Texas, won its independence from Spain. The boundaries of Mexico extended from Central America to the Pacific northwest. Like the Spanish before them, Mexicans would remove the indigenous from Texas and settle it. The Mexicans stood in the way of America, as did a loosely organized grouping of tribes, the Comanche. "Comancheria" dominated parts of Texas and the southwest. Both Mexico and America fought the natives to control or obliterate them. But Mexico made a critical mistake in going after the Comanche. To weaken Comancheria, Mexico gave land to Stephen Austin, a citizen of the United States who brought 300 families into Texas and began a steady migration of Americans, usually slaveholders from the South. "G.T.T."—Gone to Texas!—described the less desirable of the Texas-American migrants, "Texians."

Muddled and dictatorial, the Mexicans had nonetheless outlawed slavery in Texas in 1829. They also required immigrants to convert to Roman Catholicism and soon clashed with the Texians who practiced a slaveholding Protestantism and thought of themselves as "Americans." Resentment peaked as Texians defied the Mexican politician General Antonio López de Santa Anna, who insisted on a Catholic province without bondage. In March 1836, Sam Houston, another migrant, led an uprising and declared Texas independent. After some famous battles, including a massacre of Texians at a San Antonio fort, the Alamo, they captured Santa Anna and forced him to divest Mexico of Texas. Houston became the first president of this new slave-holding republic. "The

Lone Star State" battled against Comancheria—a by now conventional squabble with Indians—and asked for admission to the United States.

For well over a decade the application created difficulties for politicians, but not just because Mexico did not recognize Santa Anna's decision to allow Texas' break away. Policymakers were also frightened that Texas slavery would generate turmoil, because northerners fumed that Texas might house several slave states. Congressman Samuel Vinton of Ohio put the matter cogently: "The question of the formation of new States and their admission into the Union has always been regarded … as one of grave importance … It is a proceeding that gives a new identity to the Republic and cannot fail to have a greater or less influence upon the ultimate destiny and stability of the Union itself."

In 1845, Congress annexed Texas. Simultaneously, America settled with the English to divide the northwest of the Oregon Territory. It would provide free states, and the agreement generated the boundary between the United States and Canada, still British governed. The decisions in the southwest and the Pacific northwest assured rough equality between slave and free states, for Texas would join with slavery and the Oregon Territory without. Nonetheless, the expansion worsened tensions between North and South.

The United States immediately dealt with the Mexican reaction to the loss of Texas. President was Jacksonian Democrat, James K. Polk. Determined to ask all the market would bear, and more, he wanted Mexico to give up further land as the two sides worked out the uncertain Mexico–Texas border. The United States claimed the Rio Grande River to the south, whereas Mexico held the border to be at the Nueces River further north. Neither title could be nailed down. Easily ignoring Indian claims, Polk also wanted Mexico to sell to America the western Mexican territories of present-day New Mexico and California. In the spring of 1846 negotiations stalled, and Polk looked for trouble. He sent troops into the disputed territory. On April 25 modest Mexican and American forces clashed in a no-man's land along the Texas-Mexico border. Polk charged that the Mexicans had "invaded our territory and shed American blood upon American soil."

When the ensuing war had all but ended, a young congressman from Illinois, Abraham Lincoln, wanted to know the exact American "spot" for which Polk had gone to battle. Lincoln's point was that the United States was fighting over a district not certainly "ours." Many in the North shared Lincoln's complaint, but found it hard to question Polk while loyally supporting the soldiers. These events were a lesson about dissent in time of war. Patriotism spread over the country in 1848, as "the American eagle screamed." "Manifest Destiny" became a phrase for a nation that would work its will wherever it could.

Disaster awaited Mexicans who did not want to give in to the arrogant United States. Mexico did not surrender until America had done awful damage. Small American armies took Texas, as well as property in today's New Mexico, and in southern and northern California. They marched into the heart of Mexico and captured Mexico City. The later Marine Corps Hymn sang about an advance to "the Halls of Montezuma." In the peace treaty of 1848, Mexico recognized the Rio Grande as its border with Texas. In the Mexican Cession, for $15 million and payment of debts, America got the former Mexican provinces of California and New Mexico. As one US soldier wrote about

Mexico, "God has done as much to bless & man to curse this country as any region on earth." Counting Texas, Mexicans had lost one half of their property to the "Bully," the "Colossus" to their north.

Although years would pass before the Comanche were on reservations, America enlarged by about one-third, in an addition greater than the Louisiana Purchase. The Lone Star State gave the names Austin to its capital, and Houston to the future city in the southeast of the state. The United States incorporated into their national culture unending troubles along the Texas-Mexico border and the Texas swagger that Americans heeded in the second half of the twentieth century and early years of the twenty-first. At the same time, the defeat of the Hispanics and Comanche almost ended the struggles among different peoples that had defined North America for 300 years. World-renown American diplomatic historians admitted that the United States had stolen Mexican lands, but rhetorically asked: Would you give it back? This is still a pertinent question.

The southern states had pushed for Texas. The South had perhaps wanted gains in the southwest, which might result in more slavery. In 1846, David Wilmot, a Pennsylvania congressman who himself spurned Black people and did not want them in free territories, had asked that legislators change an appropriations bill to forbid bondage in any territories taken from Mexico. Like the Tallmadge Amendment of twenty-five years before that had made trouble over Missouri, the "Wilmot Proviso" passed the House of Representatives twice, where the North had a majority. On the contrary, the Senate defended southern principles. John C. Calhoun of South Carolina thought the southwest unfit for slavery. Yet he also believed that the rights of the states trumped those of the nation. Since the states commonly owned the territories, Calhoun said, Congress could not stop any citizen from taking a slave into them—slavery might not work in Texas, but Congress could not prevent slavery there. Calhoun's "Resolutions" to this effect never got to the Senate, although it did defeat Wilmot's Proviso, which needed a positive vote from both houses. Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, a slaveholder but also a nationalist, found that Calhoun's Resolutions were abstract "leading to no result." But Calhoun and Wilmot, Benton worried, had made a pair of shears. Neither blade was of much use, but between them they might sever the Union. What would happen if northerners tried to keep slavery out of a territory, and the South said slavery could go anywhere? The Mexican War added to the clout of Washington City while simultaneously stoking sectional animosity.

The United States were poised for a real fight among themselves, a civil war. Henry David Thoreau of Massachusetts had stopped paying his taxes to protest the role of his state in a regime that permitted slavery. Local authorities jailed him as the Mexican War began. His writing about why he went to prison enriched thought. If the government, he said, "requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then, I say, break the law." For over 150 years students read Thoreau's lecture on the subject, first published as *Resistance to Civil Government* (1849) but best known as *Civil Disobedience*. Thoreau exclaimed:

> Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison … There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the

Map 14 Mexican War, 1846–8.

> State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived. I please myself with imagining a State at last which can afford to be just to all men, and to treat the individual with respect as a neighbor.

The story went that Thoreau's friend Ralph Waldo Emerson asked the prisoner what he was doing in jail. Thoreau is said to have replied: Waldo, what are you doing outside?

Thoreau's writing took its place in a genre that one could see going back to the *Mayflower* compact of William Bradford and the Founders. Everyone was perplexed about the tug between the individual and the community. Who should rule: individual citizens, the states, or the national government? What guidance did the Constitution give? Did it indeed countenance the unjust?

The Sectional Crisis

Emergencies grew from Mexico. The presidents, congresses, and the Supreme Court fought over how the vast lands might become states. The politics undercut national sentiment in the South and intensified hostility to slavery in the North.

In the late 1840s, the discovery of gold led nearly 100,000 settlers to California. They overwhelmed the Spanish-Mexicans ("Californios") and perhaps 70,000 Indians. "Anglo" Californians drafted a constitution and asked for entry into the United States as a free state. California's admission in 1850 would upset the balance in the Senate (15 v. 15) and prompted a southern attack. South Carolina spoke of leaving the United States. Slavers also looked further south to where they might implant servitude. The rest of Mexico and Nicaragua in Central America were long shots, less so the Spanish island of Cuba off the coast of Florida. In 1849–50 the Senate, however, again did a deal, and "The Compromise of 1850" showed off three politicians: Clay of Kentucky, Calhoun of South Carolina, and Daniel Webster of Massachusetts. Clay proposed a clutch of bills. One secured California statehood. A Fugitive Slave Law made the chief concession to the South and pledged northerners to track down runaway slaves and return them to their owners. Another aspect of the collective legislation served up a fresh idea about slavery in the territories.

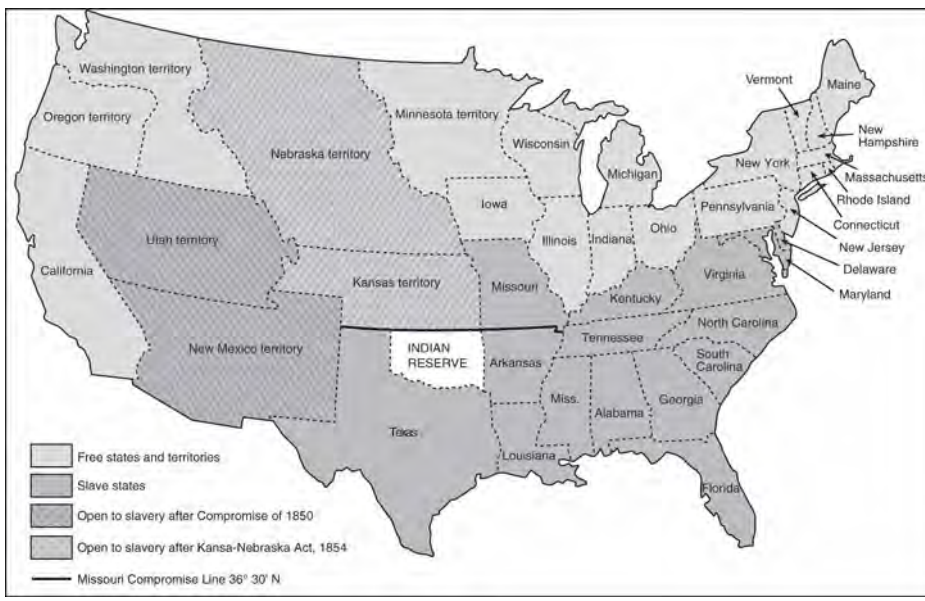
According to "squatter" or "popular" sovereignty the people in a territory could choose to have slaves or not. The United States might admit a state as either slave or not depending on the wisdom of the territory's white males. Necessity invented the doctrine. The Northwest and Southwest Ordinances of the late eighteenth century gave Congress the right to legislate over slavery. States had been admitted from the Old Northwest without it. In 1820, in Missouri, Congress allowed slavery but prohibited it elsewhere in the Louisiana Purchase. In 1848, in an extension of the Northwest Ordinances, the United States outlawed slavery in the Oregon Territory. By 1850 a more fragile set of ideas embodied policy. With popular sovereignty, it seemed, the people of the territory shared power with Washington City.

After California entered in 1850, as the last element of the compromise, Congress split what remained of the Mexican Cession into the territories of Utah and New Mexico. Each would decide on slavery on its own, although no one knew when. The South argued that a ban could occur only when a constitution was readied; slavery could gain a foothold everywhere. The North argued that migrants could veto slavery from the start. But just how could Americans outlaw slavery in an unorganized territory? This problem had no easy solution.

For moderate southerners, popular sovereignty gave them the best chance of extending slavery. The barren southwest might not promise much; bondage might not prosper there. But southerners did look longingly at Cuba, which might eventuate in several states. If politicians showed flexibility about how to make a territory and a state, the South might benefit. At the very least, popular sovereignty allowed southerners a dignified retreat.

Clay brokered the Compromise. In the North, pitting his conscience against his anti-slavery constituency, Webster supported Clay. Completing his metamorphosis from a nationalist to a sectionalist, Calhoun opposed. His *Disquisition on Government* (1849), like Thoreau's *On Civil Disobedience* of the same year, agonized about authority, although Calhoun defended not individual rights but the autonomy of states. In one respect Calhoun was correct. The United States were changing "from a Federal Republic, as it originally came from the hands of its framers … into a great national consolidated Democracy." The "natural limits" of slavery combined with dread of the North. Southerners needed radical measures to protect their independence. Calhoun agonized that the United States could be preserved only if North and South each had a veto on national legislation. All three statesmen were dead within two years and, indeed, the dynamic and up-and-coming Stephen A. Douglas, Democratic Senator from Illinois, had done the work of assembling the different coalitions that had gotten the legislation passed in 1850.

Fears over the merit or misery of slavery challenged expansion. Douglas thought slavery would not take root in many places. Yet he had no overriding moral feeling either for confinement or extension. Douglas had western loyalties; he favored a proposed Pacific railroad whose eastern end would stop in Chicago, where he had real estate investments. Nonetheless, more than self-interest was at stake. A West with its own independent affairs could break up the dangerous pair of North and South. A believer in popular sovereignty, Douglas might damp down slavery as an issue, and stimulate a many-sided politics. Indebted to southern Democrats, he also believed that popular sovereignty would attract nationalist moderates in all sections.



Map 15 Territorial Arrangements of the 1850s.

In 1854, Douglas worried about a competing railroad that would run to the Pacific, from Houston in the south of Texas. He introduced a bill that divided the last chunk of the Louisiana Purchase into Kansas and Nebraska. With these territories organized, entrepreneurs could more easily route a railroad west from Chicago. Through popular sovereignty, the people would say whether the states should be slave or not. Next to Missouri, Kansas might possibly be slave, while Nebraska, more to the north, might follow Iowa, the free state to its east. Douglas's scheme had one major drawback. Whereas the United States had acquired Utah and New Mexico in the fracas with Mexico, Kansas and Nebraska were located within the Louisiana Purchase. Except for Missouri, the Missouri Compromise of 1820 had outlawed slavery in the Louisiana Purchase, above the 36°30° line where Kansas and Nebraska fell. In addition to casting aside the Indians, Douglas had jettisoned the semi-sacred agreement of 1820. He may have believed, and in his heart even hoped, that Kansas would choose the North. But the possibility of servitude there made his Kansas–Nebraska Act attractive to the South, and an evil to the North. Douglas said that he did not care, one way or the other, if Kansas went slave or free.

Douglas's bill passed, although as he predicted, he provoked "a hell of a storm." The fires of his burning images, he commented, could have lit his way at night from Boston to Chicago—the North.

The Nation Fragments

Harriet Beecher Stowe was from a New England family of ministers associated with the Second Great Awakening. She received an academic education, rare for women of her time, at the Hartford (Connecticut) Female Seminary and began a career in which, from time to time, she would join women like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in commenting on controversial issues thought to be the purview of men. She notably compared the rights of slaves to those of married women. In 1852 Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or Life among the Lowly*. Actually, she said, "God wrote it." A tearjerker about a slave, Uncle Tom, and his vicious owner, Simon Legree, the novel sold a million copies by mid-1853. Another literary voice of the mid-nineteenth century, Stowe showed that women were having an increasing public role based in the romantic Protestantism of the nineteenth century.

Stowe wrote:

> For many years … the author avoided all reading upon or allusion to the subject of slavery … But, since the legislative act of 1850 … [there] arose a desire to exhibit [slavery] in a living dramatic reality … The writer has given only a faint shadow, a dim picture of the anguish and despair that are, at this very moment, riving thousands of hearts, shattering thousands of families … Nothing of tragedy can be written, can be spoken, can be conceived, that equals the frightful reality of scenes daily and hourly acted on our shores, beneath the shadow of American law, and the shadow of the cross of Christ.

The book itself declared about the death of Uncle Tom at the hands of Legree:

> And this, oh, Africa, latest called of nations,—called to the crown of thorns, the scourge, the bloody sweat, the cross of agony,—that is thy victory; by this shalt thou reign with Christ when his kingdom shall come down on earth.

Just as Tom Paine's *Common Sense* had raised passions in the Revolution seventy-five years before, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did in the 1850s. Nonetheless, it did not stand alone: penetrating and mean-spirited essays in a science of race relations could now rally abolitionists and their opponents. Such books compared American Blacks to the poor and to working-class whites. George Fitzhugh's argument for slavery in *Sociology for the South; or The Failure of Free Society* (1854) and in *Cannibals All!; or Slaves without Masters* (1857) showed the drift of affairs. Slavery, he said, provided the best basis for society because few people could govern themselves; the rest deserved no better than animals. For northern intellectuals, slavery led logically to such anti-democratic thought.

The overturn of the Missouri Compromise told some northerners that they could not satisfy the South. They loathed the Fugitive Slave Act. People antagonistic to slavery wanted to prohibit it in Kansas by emigrating there. The possibility of a free community maddened southerners, and slavers arrived also. Each side used questionable methods fighting over statehood.

Most important, the Whigs crumpled. The weaker of the two parties, they still spanned both sections. In the wake of the Kansas–Nebraska Act a new party, the Republicans, arose. They reached across the North from the Old Northwest to New England. That is, unlike the Whigs, the Republicans did not exist in the South. They adopted the name of Jefferson's original party but did not look to Jefferson. The Republicans consisted of Whigs from the North, anti-slavery Democrats, and fringe groups of the 1840s and 1850s angry over bondage. At first Republicans shared voters with another new group, the American Party. These men were called the "Know-Nothings" because they pretended to be ignorant of the secret faction to which they belonged. Organized against Irish and German immigrants, the Know-Nothings went after Roman Catholics, and took votes from the Whigs, who ran their last presidential candidate in 1852. But after the American Party had hurt the Whigs, it collapsed in the late 1850s. The Republicans, whose core attracted Protestants from the North, bloomed in the anti-slavery atmosphere that permeated New England and the Old Northwest.

Incident piled on incident to convince each side that it could not trust the other. At the end of May 1856, the scene shifted to the less-violent halls of the Congress. There, Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner, who would convert to the Republican Party, attacked the Democrats in a bitter speech, "The Crime against Kansas." Among other things, Sumner insulted South Carolina's Senator Andrew Butler. Congressman Preston Brooks, Butler's nephew, struck back. He entered the Senate and hit Sumner with a cane, which broke on Sumner's head. Sumner fell, bloodied and unconscious, to the floor and left the Senate for over three years because of his injuries. How else could the South treat such insolent politicians? How could the North cope with such viciousness?

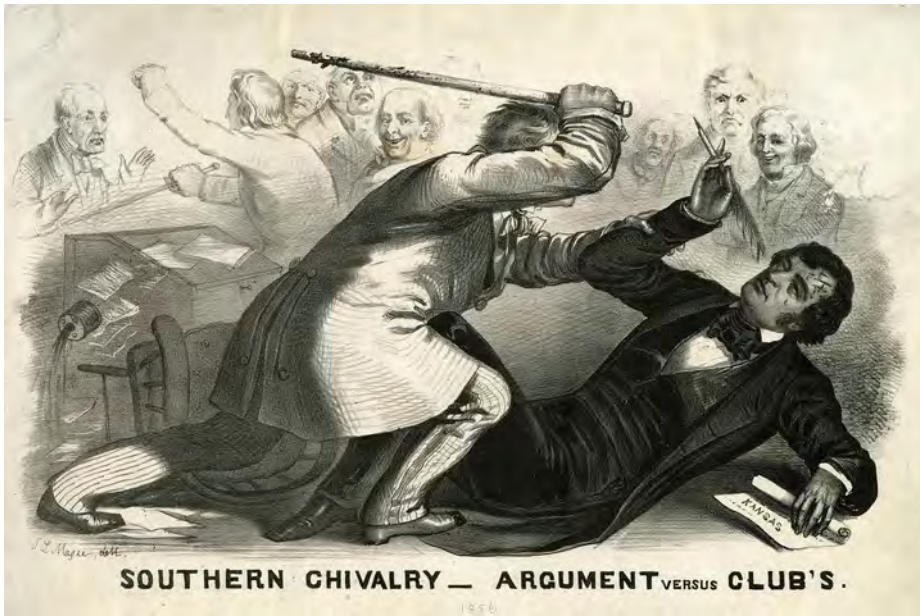


Figure 5 Southern Chivalry—Argument versus Clubs (usually known as the Caning of Sumner), 1856 lithograph by Alexander Gardner. Courtesy of Print Collection, New York Public Library.

Less than a year later, in March of 1857, the Supreme Court convinced northerners that the South was determined to triumph. The Court ruled on Dred Scott, a slave who had spent time with his master in free territory. With the aid of abolitionists, Scott sued for his emancipation. Had his home in the North liberated him? Was Scott even entitled to sue? The Court, led by Roger Taney, from slave Maryland, ruled in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* that Scott was not a citizen and had no standing. His stay in a free territory could not alter his status. The justices, however, went further. As property, said Taney, slaves could go anywhere, where their owners might legally hold them. The Congress had no power to forbid slavery in the territories. Blacks, reasoned Taney, had "no rights which the white man was bound to respect." With the Kansas–Nebraska Act, Douglas had rejected the Missouri Compromise. Now, in only the second decision of its type (after Marshall's *Marbury v. Madison* of 1803), the Court said that the already rejected Missouri Compromise had no force in the first place. It had been "unconstitutional." Attempting to settle the issue, when slavery stymied the legislature and executive, a pro-active Court made things worse when it forsook the conservative legal doctrine called *stare decisis*, the Latin for: Let the decision stand. Taney threw the precedent of the Missouri Compromise aside. For Republicans, Taney's reasoning was "the greatest crime in the annals of the republic."

Exaggerating, but revealing their deepest fears, the Republicans urged that the Democrats wanted enslavement everywhere. The South did want to expand, especially

because its decline in the Senate continued with the admission of the states of Minnesota (1858) and Oregon (1859). Despite the North's strength, *Dred Scott* marked southern ambition to nationalize slavery.

As the struggle in "bleeding Kansas" continued, Douglas displayed some statesmanship. He tried to find the middle in the pragmatic give-and-take of politics instead of speculations about an apocalyptic future. The Senator first dealt with an illegitimate attempt to admit Kansas as a slave state through voting that did not reflect popular sovereignty. He refused to support a pro-slave constitution for Kansas. With his help, in a complicated procedure, Congress called for another vote in Kansas. The territory was left without a constitution and so outside the United States (until southern states had left the United States in 1861). Douglas had honestly served popular sovereignty but lost southern allies. His troubles were not yet over.

What did Douglas say about the Taney decision? Did the United States have to admit slavery in the territories? At Freeport, Illinois, in 1858—further angering the South—Douglas said that the Supreme Court had ruled on the power of Congress to prohibit slavery, but not of a territorial legislature. According to the "Freeport Doctrine," Douglas argued (rightly) that slavery could only exist if a territory had the laws and regulations that made slavery possible. Lawmakers in a territory might prevent slavery by refusing to pass such laws. Freeport shored up Douglas's reputation in the North, but it continued to slide in the South.

The year 1859 brought chilling events. John Brown, an abolitionist, had received attention in Kansas in 1856 during the first rounds of violence. Mentally unbalanced, he had participated in butchering some pro-slavers. Now, in 1859, Brown obtained funds from abolitionists in a scheme to unfetter Black Americans. He went south to start an uprising at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, attacking a federal arsenal to get guns for African Americans. Federal troops overwhelmed Brown and his band, and the government tried, convicted, and hung him. For abolitionists, he was a disturbed hero. For southerners, he exemplified the northern dream of sabotaging slavery; a "murderous gang of abolitionists" was paying men to kill slave owners and raze their social system. Through the fall and winter of 1860 reports of intrigues and mutinies swept over Dixie.

* * *

From the time of the Missouri Compromise in 1820, slavery had complicated American growth, while at the same time democracy became more entrenched. By the Mexican War, with passions stoked by northern intellectuals, you could not ignore slavery. Stephen A. Douglas worked to harness the conflict. The premier politician of the 1850s, he wanted the presidential nomination of his Democratic Party. But when his turn came in 1860, crises had devalued his nomination. Deal-making could no longer repair disputes. The Democrats split, and Douglas became the candidate only of its northern wing. The Republicans did not exist in the South, which was rejecting the Union.

CHAPTER 8
LINCOLN AND THE CIVIL WAR, 1858–65

Words to Make a Country

In the early 1860s, Americans fought a savage war in which the North bloodily prevailed. The hitherto unknown Abraham Lincoln arose as the most respected leader in the nation's history, and a figure of world renown. He died a martyr's death in April of 1865. The conflict over which he presided would shape the American future.

Lincoln's Career

In 1809 Lincoln was born in poverty to anti-slavery Baptists in Kentucky. Moving around the Old Northwest as a young man, he tried his hand at various occupations. Honest and self-taught by the King James version of the Bible and the plays of the English dramatist William Shakespeare, he chose the law, and by the 1840s was a prominent Illinois attorney. Lincoln had an unrefined personality that his height and clumsy appearance accentuated. But he also wrestled, and his ugly looks gave him advantage in the courtroom when he told downhome stories, often on himself, to make legal points. Lincoln had an unusual force of intellect, which he marshaled against those who thought him a yokel. His political ambitions led to one term (1847–9) in the House of Representatives, where he opposed the Mexican War. Yet Lincoln was content with his career. At the same time, while he viewed the United States as a white man's country, he detested slavery. "If slavery is not wrong," he wrote, "nothing is wrong." But Lincoln believed it would have a "natural death," a "minor question on its way to extinction."

In 1854, the Kansas–Nebraska Act re-ignited Lincoln's interest in politics. A Whig admirer of Henry Clay, Lincoln joined the Republicans. Although a moderate in the new party, "popular sovereignty" angered him. Illinois's Senator Stephen Douglas had made this doctrine, which could expand slavery, his trademark. Lincoln hardened his resolve that the United States must rid themselves of slavery. The *Dred Scott* decision reinforced this resolve, for Lincoln held the hyperbolic view that a "slave power conspiracy" wanted servitude everywhere.

In 1858, Lincoln ran as a Republican for the Senate in Illinois against Douglas, who had served in the Senate for almost twelve years and was a rising Democrat. In the "House Divided" speech, Lincoln accepted his party's nomination for the Senate. "If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it." Adopting the hyperbolic vision of extremist slavers and anti-slavers, Lincoln quoted from the New Testament that "A house divided against itself

cannot stand." "I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other."

Nonetheless, the United States had existed since 1783, half slave, half free, and Lincoln had intensified the argument. Debating Douglas across Illinois, Lincoln grasped the jugular. But neither would anyone describe Douglas as a slouch. The Lincoln–Douglas debates featured the humorous intelligence of the squeaky-voiced six-foot-four-inch Lincoln against the oratorical prowess of Douglas, twelve inches shorter, "the steam engine in breeches." The speechifying has rightly been a benchmark exposition of free government.

Pleading for popular sovereignty, Douglas had often said, "[I] don't care whether [slavery] is voted up or voted down." Lincoln despised this blindness and made the extension of slavery fundamentally moral. Moreover, he despised Douglas's agreeing with the *Dred Scott* decision. How could Douglas reconcile Taney's opinion that whites could take their slaves anywhere with popular sovereignty, that settlers could ban slavery? It was Lincoln who forced the "Freeport Doctrine" from Douglas when they debated in Freeport, Illinois. Territorial legislatures could refuse laws governing slavery, said Douglas, and so slavery could not get a foothold. However Douglas sidestepped, he lost credit. He could not satisfy northerners opposed to slavery and southerners eager for its growth. Lincoln poisoned trade-offs between North and South. For him, the issue was not to be compromised; he helped to transmute a problem of give-and-take into one of principle. While Lincoln (barely) lost, he had become a national figure, for he had stood equal to "the Little Giant." In early 1860 Lincoln shambled into immortality when easterners invited him to speak in New York City.

At Cooper Union, a private institute with a large auditorium, he astounded an audience of sophisticated Republicans with his thoughts about slavery and the Founders. The Founders had acceded to slavery but committed themselves to its slow ending. The Declaration of Independence, for Lincoln, pronounced the goals of an American people. Time would realize Jefferson's idea that "all men are created equal." Imperfect legal documents only realized this idea at any given date. The United States had improved from the Articles of Confederation to the Constitution. Then the Bill of Rights and later amendments to the Constitution made steps forward. As the nation grew, Lincoln believed, legislators advanced equality. Lincoln elevated the Declaration over the republican Constitution. The Declaration stated the quasi-religious trajectory of an American people—an interpretation still licensed today.

Lincoln's thought changed as the predicaments of the middle of the century took new turns. Nonetheless, commentators have argued that he primarily wanted to preserve the United States. This argument is wrong. Lincoln's "conservatism" consisted in his return to the supposed dedication of the Founders. They had, he said, viewed slavery as a temporary malady that America must do away with. Lincoln too wanted slavery placed "where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction." He would preserve a Union that would eventually be rid of slavery and realize the Declaration. Constitutional government should subvert, not underwrite, the limited acceptance of enslavement in the earlier documents. Since slavery was so

deep-seated, Lincoln gave new life to sentiments that many had written off, and one could easily urge that he occupied an extreme.

In the presidential election of 1860, the Republicans ran Lincoln. The race split the Democrats into northern and southern wings, each with its own candidate, although Douglas, the candidate of the North, did keep the support of some southern moderates. The election also generated a reconstituted but minor Whig party (the Constitutional Unionists). Southern "fire-eaters" reasoned that Republicans, who drew only from the North, were unalterably opposed to accommodation; the South would exit, "secede," if Lincoln won. He did. With just under 40 percent of the ballots—only from the North—Lincoln defeated Douglas, the one candidate with a claim to national following.

In the months between Lincoln's victory at the end of 1860 and his appointment to office some three months later, politicians scrambled to give southerners guarantees and keep them in the Union. Outgoing President James Buchanan fretted as the country dissolved. Fearing correctly that Lincoln wanted the end of slavery in the fullness of time, southern states left in the winter of 1860–1, first South Carolina, then the other states of the Lower South. In early March of 1861, the new president was inaugurated. With Stephen Douglas, a loyal unionist, at his side holding his hat, Lincoln gave what for him was a conciliatory speech. At its close, he said, "We are not enemies, but friends. We

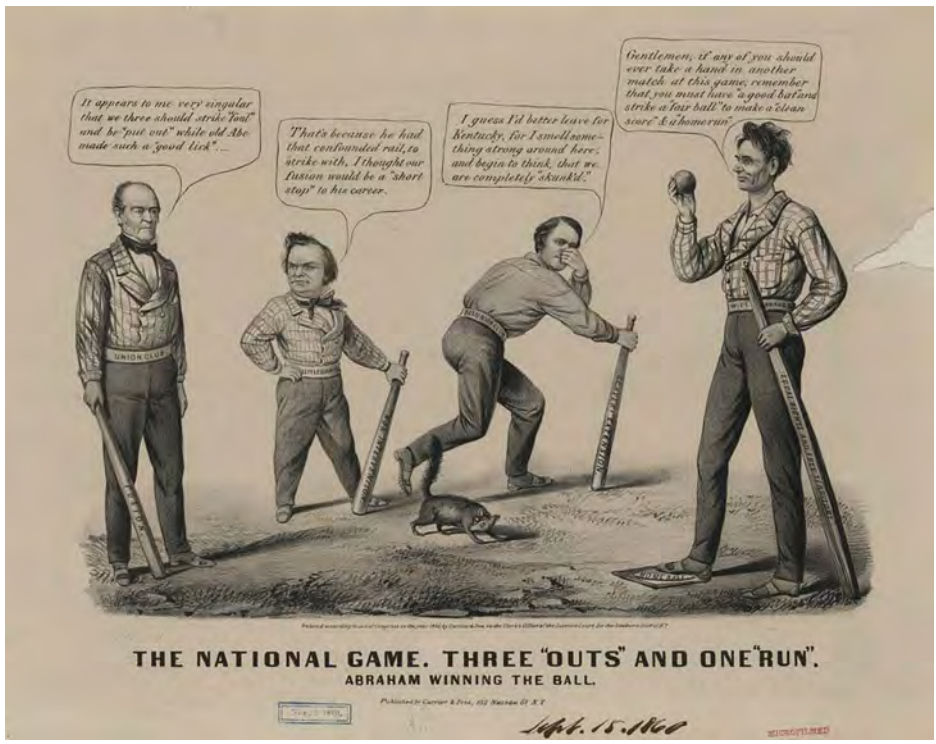


Figure 6 The Election of 1860 (an early cartoon comparing politics to baseball). Courtesy of Library of Congress.

Map 16 United States in 1861. This conventional map of the Civil War states omits the free states of Oregon and California in the far west, and Nevada, admitted to the United States in 1864.

must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection." In response, four states of the Upper South, including Virginia, departed. Their rationale lay easily at hand. The country was founded on the right of revolution in the face of tyrannical power. The United States lacked the authority to hang on to the states without their consent.

For almost one hundred years the states and the national government had argued over who had the say. Now came the crunch. As during the American Revolution, grave issues of sovereignty came to the fore, though this time much, much, more blood would be shed.

And the War Came

We have many explanations of the contest that broke out after Lincoln took office—as it was called at the time the War Between the States or War of the Rebellion. In the nineteenth century northerners stressed the evil of slavery, at odds with fundamentals.

For the plantation elite, northerners had overthrown the original Constitution, which had protected the rights of states and their local institutions. After the First World War, some intellectuals believed that, in 1914–18, the United States had stumbled into an unnecessary European fight. These commentators attributed the Civil War to politicians who could or should have contained disputes over slavery. Some historians have interpreted the war as a conflict between two contrasting economies: an industrial North and expansionist white farmers fought an agricultural South tied to slavery.

The goal of the southern elite to preserve slavery was undoubtable. The seriousness of the South's nationalism was additionally displayed. Of the new "Confederate States of America," a southern poet, Henry Timrod, wrote:

> At last, we are/ A nation among nations, and the world
> Shall soon behold in many a distant port/ Another flag unfurled!

The war overwhelmed sentiment about the Founding and, especially, about the Virginia Founders. It still perplexes historians that what Lincoln named "the mystic chords of memory" could so little confine the death-dealing struggle. In 1865 Lincoln commented as well as anyone:

> One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves … These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

Lincoln's summary did not mention his own leadership. He was cautious, some said even hesitant. But Lincoln decided to bring the South to heel, to refuse its secession, and to constrict slavery. He wanted to make it disappear over time. None of the other statesmen, I believe, had the stomach for the fierce trials that followed as southerners determined to preserve slavery even at the cost of leaving the union and provoking battle.

The South wanted to go in peace. So keen were its leaders, however, that they presumed they would easily prevail against the North; and were willing to risk a little scuffle. Southerners also thought that Europe might support the breakaway states. England was key, even though its people detested slavery. British merchants had a good relationship with southern cotton exporters, and since abolition was not at issue, the British would happily see the United States reduced. An English editor wrote:

> We do not see why three or four independent republics … will not answer better than one overwhelming dominion. We are certain that such an arrangement will be more conducive to the civilization of America. Limitation will produce modesty and caution … There may be jealousies and quarrels … but … even if they occasionally proceed to bloodshed, [they] will have a far less demoralizing influence on all concerned than the conviction of boundless power and unmatched grandeur which now inflates the bosom, disturbs the brain, and damages the principles and sense of justice of nearly every American citizen.

The South nonetheless overestimated the strength of its cotton kingdom. The population of the northern states was 23 million, as opposed to the 9 million in the South, including almost 4 million slaves. The South had inconsequential manufacturing. The North boasted three-quarters of the wealth, with both factories and farms, and controlled most of the railroads. At the same time, the "Confederacy" did realistically appraise the difficulties Lincoln would face. To win, his forces would have to invade and conquer. Some found an alluring analogy: the North, like the British some eighty-five years before, would have to occupy a great territory and suppress its resistance.

On the other side, not all the slave states left the Union. Eleven states of the Upper and Lower South composed the rebels. The "border" of Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware—and West Virginia, which itself seceded from Virginia—had slaves but did not withdraw from the United States. These states enabled the North to fight from slave soil. Finally, in the Confederacy, individual states were overriding, despite a southern nationalism. The South demanded self-rule but often lacked the concentration of power needed to defeat the North and to secure a government.

In April of 1861, a defining moment came after the inauguration. The president would defend Fort Sumter, a federal property in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. In deciding not to give up Sumter, Lincoln challenged the South. If the complaining states wanted a fight, they would have to start it. After US ships left for Sumter with supplies, South Carolinians fired on the fort, which surrendered after thirty-four hours. Fortitude and a little firepower, some southerners thought, would scare the North off. In a spasm of patriotism, the North rallied and quickly filled a call for 75,000 troops. As Lincoln put it, "And the war came." Like the British at the start of the Revolution, he also expected that, with a basic show of force, the contest would last three months, and then the South would yield.

Armed Struggle

The Confederates made their capital Richmond, Virginia, 100 miles south of Washington City, across the Potomac River that cut off the District of Columbia from Virginia. There was a new "Union"—the North. The president believed that a fight at Bull Run Creek (Manassas Junction, for the South), 30 miles southwest of the capital, would send a message to the Confederacy. An attack might even capture Richmond, and end the rebellion. The battle in July of 1861 rocked the North, when its forces disintegrated and fled in confusion. The rebels terrorized civilians from Washington City who thought the battle would make an afternoon's diversion. In shock, the North saw that a long struggle was in the offing. On the other side, the Confederates believed they could outlast their enemy.

The Union effectuated the "Anaconda Plan," named after a snake that chokes animals to death. The northern navy would seal off the South. In addition to destroying Richmond, the Union would split the Confederacy by taking the Mississippi River and separating Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas from the rest of the Confederacy. Eventually, the North would triumph by wiping out southern society. The differences in generalship

made this idea costly. Either overly careful or foolishly aggressive, the North's military was minimally successful. Particularly frustrated by George McClellan, the early Union commander, Lincoln relied on his own imperfect instincts. It is conventional to contrast the North's bumbling to the abilities of the South, notably those of Robert E. Lee of Virginia. Lee's aptitude may have been overrated, at the time and historically. Yet the southerners proved cunning in a way that northerners initially did not.

The campaigns to take Richmond in 1862 illustrated how matters would go. Always outnumbered, Lee again and again prevailed but lost soldiers whom he could not easily replenish. With an army of at most 60,000 he held off Union forces sometimes exceeding 80,000, in engagements with total casualties in the tens of thousands. Lee concluded that no number of victories could overcome the North's material advantages. Only dramatic gains by Lee in the North might induce negotiation and secure Southern independence. In September of 1862, he marched northwest of Washington and crossed the Potomac, taking the fight to the enemy at Sharpsburg, Maryland, near the Antietam Creek. That September 17 was the war's greatest day of carnage. In blue 90,000 "Yankees" and 40,000 "Johnny Reb[el]s" in grey fought to a standstill. Northern casualties were 13,000; Southern, 11,000. But the North drove Lee back.

Just as Lee's strategy changed, so too did Lincoln's. While he had begun the fight to inhibit slavery and phase it out, radicals pressured the president for abolition. Lincoln moved slowly: "I can only go just as fast as I can see how to go." But the higher aim would give meaning to the continuing deaths while preventing the English from supporting the Confederacy. Yet Lincoln wanted to act from what others could perceive as the strength of the Union and its inevitable triumph. He chose Antietam, a narrow victory, if a victory at all. But Lee had retreated, and Lincoln acted as if the South was on the defensive. In late September of 1862, he issued a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. At the start of 1863, he would declare all slaves free in areas still in rebellion, "an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity." The same necessity dictated that the four (Union) border states with slaves did not yet have to free them. The Proclamation manumitted only slaves liberated by Confederate losses. But, at the cost of overstepping the Constitution, Lincoln was turning the war into a crusade for noble goals that Europeans could not oppose. Monarchical elements supported the South. Yet people in many lands fighting against aristocratic governance and for democratic rights looked upon the conflict as "the cause of all nations." Confronting slavery, the North—America!—was a beacon for the world. The South's hope that the British would recognize its independence vanished. In Dixie, Mary Chestnut, a southern matron, kept a diary. Since the early twentieth century, historians have considered it to be the most compelling statement of the views of plantation owners; they were frightening in their zeal for their way of life.

A marching song of the time suggested the Protestant fervor that went with the Union cause.

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;

He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword,
His truth is marching on …
In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me;
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on.

The Battle Hymn of the Republic, Julia Ward Howe (1861)

In the South, they sang *Dixie*:

I wish I was in the land of cotton, old times there are not forgotten,
Look away, look away, look away, Dixie Land.
In Dixie Land where I was born in, early on a frosty morn',
Look away, look away, look away, Dixie Land.
Then I wish I was in Dixie, hooray! hooray!
In Dixie Land I'll take my stand to live and die in Dixie,
Away, away, away down South in Dixie,
Away, away, away down South in Dixie

After Antietam, Lee was again on the Southern side of the Potomac. For the second and last time, Lincoln removed George McClellan, his tentative general, but the indecision continued. At Fredericksburg, Virginia, the North tried to finish the Rebs. A total of 120,000 Union troops faced 70,000 southerners, in a battle that hurt the Yankees. They lost 13,000; the South 5,000. Five months later, at nearby Chancellorsville, the South won again, with each side having about 10,000 dead or wounded.

Lee's expensive victories prompted him again to move north, through Maryland and into Pennsylvania. He still reasoned that invading the North would stop the North's war of attrition. Perhaps Lee could harass Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania, or threaten Philadelphia or Baltimore before scurrying back to Virginia. The Northern army, with another head, George Meade, followed Lee. The two sides met up at the small town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The Union occupied the crest of a low hill, Cemetery Ridge, overlooking a shallow valley, where the Confederate lines formed. Lee stormed uphill after pounding the Northern army with artillery. For two days in early July 1863, the South repeated its assaults. On July 2, the South failed to skirt the Union left at Little Round Top, the end of Cemetery Ridge. The failure may have saved the Union. The victory lifted the defenders of Little Round Top, the 20th Maine and their leader Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, into a place in history. The next day Lee's lieutenant, General George Pickett, frontally attacked Cemetery Ridge and withdrew in a sea of red. The Union soldiers screamed, "Give them a bit of Fredericksburg. Fredericksburg! Fredericksburg!" While both sides suffered great losses, the blue repulsed the grey. "Pickett's charge" shattered the Confederate offense and gave Pickett his own historical place.

Gettysburg was the fiercest battle of the war. In three days of fighting the 96,000 northerners and 76,000 southerners suffered 25,000 casualties each. Lee's army was

ruined as an attacking force. The set-piece setting of the battle still stirs tourists in the twenty-first century, and Americans regularly watch the 1993 Hollywood movie *Gettysburg*.

To Lincoln's dismay, Meade permitted the Confederates to slip back to Virginia, although Meade still has his defenders.

The West

This war in the east symbolized the slow destruction of the rebels. The same pattern occurred in other theaters. Although the South developed some industry, the Union naval blockade had an effect. The North deprived the South of weapons, clothing, and equipment. Moreover, the fighting in the south and west took the same course. The Anaconda Plan had foreseen that the North could divide the South through rule of the Mississippi River. Victories along the river, in the states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and southern Louisiana, would shrink the Confederacy and kill its men. Here Lincoln had a warrior, Ulysses S. Grant, who won victories in Kentucky and kept the state in Union hands. In the spring of 1862, over two days, at Shiloh Tennessee, just north of the Mississippi border, he lost 13,000 out of the 63,000 Union troops and allowed the enemy, which had almost 11,000 casualties, to flee. Shiloh, which took place before major battles in the east, was to that date the grisliest meeting. Lincoln temporarily relieved Grant, but Grant took a lesson from the exchange: only bestial tactics would end the war. Indeed, in the West, in 1862, Union victories had disturbed the Southern home front. They had given hope to the North that it might prevail despite Lee.

Grant's enemies called him a careless ne'er do well, unfit for command, and pointed out that he drank. Lincoln denied having said: Find me the brand, and I'll send a barrel to each of my other generals. He did say: "I can't spare this man; he fights."

The Union navy captured New Orleans at the base of the Mississippi in the spring of 1862. After action in Tennessee and Mississippi, with massacres on both sides, in July of 1863 Grant succeeded in besieging Vicksburg, overlooking the Mississippi at a sharp bend upstream. When the town surrendered, the river belonged to the Union. "The father of waters," said Lincoln, "again goes unvexed to the sea." Louisiana, Texas, and Arkansas were isolated from the other secessionist states, and the Union had taken the major step in dismembering the Confederacy.

The simultaneous triumphs at Gettysburg and Vicksburg staggered the South. Toward the end of 1863, around Chattanooga, near Tennessee's southern border with Georgia, the callousness continued as Grant cleared Tennessee of southern forces and prepared to invade Georgia. Americans knew him as "Butcher."

Fighting in the South

Lincoln called Grant east to command all Northern forces. Grant left Georgia to his deputy, William Tecumseh Sherman. Sherman fought as his predecessor, but perhaps even added a dimension of "total war." Sherman brought home the futility and catastrophe

of the rebellion to southerners. Sherman wiped out their social order, while Grant went east. This time the Lower South would be cut from the Upper. In the spring of 1864, with more than 100,000 men, Sherman left Chattanooga—southeast toward Atlanta, in northwestern Georgia. He captured and fired the city in September. Next, Sherman cut a 60-mile-wide path through Georgia, pillaging and burning, as he advanced east to Savannah, on the coast, "Shermanizing" the South. "Marchin' through Georgia," Sherman "ma[d]e Georgia howl," and completed his "march to the sea" by Christmas, 1864. For the South his efforts flaunted Northern barbarism. From Savannah, Sherman went north and inland to South Carolina and then into North Carolina. He aimed to join Grant in Virginia.

During this time, Grant, assisted by another hard warrior, Phil Sheridan, sought out Lee's army in Virginia. Grant wanted Richmond, but Lee kept his soldiers between the Confederate capital and the Union army. Over and over Grant attacked. He intended not just victory but the elimination of Lee. "When in doubt," Grant said, "fight." Lincoln urged him on: "Chew and choke, as much as possible." North of Richmond in "The Wilderness Campaign" of May and June 1864, Grant took 50,000 casualties, about the total number under Lee's command. Grant could replace his losses; Lee could not. "I propose," said Grant, "to fight it out on this line, if it takes all summer." In battle after battle, he killed Lee's men, gradually eradicating them.

Lincoln worried that the country would not see the gory conflict through. Even toward the close of 1864, with the end near, the North did not deeply approve the struggle. The United States had unfairly drafted troops. Lincoln had compromised First-Amendment rights and imposed aspects of martial law. The Democratic Party remained strong, even though Lincoln stretched the Constitution to keep Republicans in power and to care for disciplined forces. In the presidential contest of November 1864, he ran against Democrat George McClellan, the former chief general. Lincoln worried that a McClellan victory would bring a settlement; the South would get a way out. Committed to Republicans, the army swayed elections in many states, and votes in the Electoral College overwhelmed McClellan. But with only the North taking part, he received 45 percent of the popular vote.

The desperate South called for the enlistment of 300,000 of the bonded in March of 1865. But the secessionists found it too late, as one noted, "to gain our independence by the valor of our slaves." In April of 1865, Grant burned Richmond. Shortly thereafter, southwest of the city, he trapped what remained of Lee's army at Appomattox Court House. Grant made the terms of surrender generous, and he sent the remnants of the Confederate military back to farms for spring planting. When his own troops cheered the surrender, Grant chastised them: "The war is over; the rebels are our countrymen again." The northern novelist Herman Melville wrote about the encounter: "Perish their Cause! but mark the men … And think how Grant met Lee."

When Lincoln learned that Lee had surrendered, he made a few remarks to the crowd gathered at the White House. And then ordered an army band to strike up Yankee Doodle and Dixie, a beloved tune. A few days later, John Wilkes Booth, a rabid devotee of the now "Lost Cause," assassinated Lincoln. The killing began the presidential murders, and

Map 17 The Civil War.

attempted murders, which have defiled American history ever since. The killing also converted a doubtful enterprise into epic drama, and Lincoln into a god. Walt Whitman eulogized Lincoln in two poems of 1865.

> O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
> The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
> The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
> While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
> But O heart! Heart! Heart!

O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies, Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! My Captain! (1865)

Night and day journeys a coffin …
Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags with the cities draped in black,
With the show of the States themselves as of crape-veil'd women standing,
With processions long and winding and the flambeaus of the night,
With the countless torches lit, with the silent sea of faces and the unbared heads
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and solemn,
With all the mournful voices of the dirges pour'd around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—where amid these you journey,
Here, coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.

When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd (1865)

The Toll of the War

The North dictated to the nation. The Republican Party, with its Protestant base, dominated politics for the next seven decades. Between 1860 and 1932, it lost only four national elections. The South suffered a debacle. Before the conflict, Dixie had equality in the Senate. Even after the last of the great Virginia leaders retired in 1825, Southerners shaped the presidency before the Civil War, including Andrew Jackson and James K. Polk from Tennessee. The South also molded the policies of northern Democratic presidents. Finally, from John Marshall to Roger Taney, the South held the Supreme Court. After the war, the South was a conquered province. No Southern president would come for fifty years, and it would be over one hundred years—in the late twentieth century—before Southerners would have more than a negative role in national politics.

The South no longer had property in African Americans, but they were uneducated, despised, and dependent. Whites had little time for their difficulties. No one knew what would become of the former slaves, or how politicians might provide for their future. Lincoln, who had proven himself an effective leader and had at least thought about the possibilities of liberation, died before many African Americans knew slavery had ended. For example, emancipation for the enslaved in Texas was only proclaimed on June 19, 1865. "Juneteenth" became a federal holiday in 2021.

We do not know what would have happened had the states not gone to war. But we cannot mistake the magnitude of the war in human terms. The planet would not

see more carnage until the First World War, some fifty years later, and that conflict was global. Commanders on either side in the Civil War only slowly appreciated that charges by soldiers at established positions were not romantic. The destructiveness of the latest cannons and the withering fire of rifles flabbergasted and frightened generals and politicians. Strategists describe the Civil War as "the first modern war." The fighting called to battle not just armies but entire societies, and in the South civilians were targeted. The North did not fight to take advantage of an adversary, but to wreck a culture. In girding itself for combat, the Union put almost 1.6 million men under arms, the South almost 1.1 million. To break the Confederacy, of a total American population of some 28 million (not counting the southern slaves who were largely spared service) more than 700,000 died, far more from disease than bullets. Fighting wounded 375,000 more. Countless numbers lost limbs, physically unfit for peace. Others were psychologically damaged. In the South, 90 percent of white males of fighting age, roughly those in their twenties, thirties, and even forties, fought for the rebels. One-quarter lost their lives. The war wasted the South.

Lincoln and the Meaning of the War

Was it worth it? Did it have a point? Before he was killed, Lincoln made the most substantial effort not just to prepare for a fair peace but also to make sense of what had happened and to understand the war positively.

In the "House Divided" speech of 1858, Lincoln pressed for slow emancipation. We cannot know what he would have done in 1861 or 1862 if a diplomatic settlement had ended the fighting. But the long conflict spurred abolitionism. The Emancipation Proclamation contributed to but did not culminate the larger purpose of anti-slavery. At the end of 1864, Lincoln pressed for a Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery. Congress passed the legislation in early 1865, and the states ratified the Amendment later that year. The change realized the ethical ideals that legitimated the violence.

Lincoln met Frederick Douglass in the White House three times, once shortly before the assassination. The president's views about African Americans were developing, as the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment showed. But the president remained suspicious about assimilating Blacks and would have been happy if some way could have been found to have them all go away. Douglass could not accept this premise. Simultaneously, he recollected that Lincoln showed him genuine respect. Still, Douglass noted that Lincoln's "interests, … associations, … habits of thought, and … his prejudices, stamped him as a white man." "You are the children of Abraham Lincoln," Douglass commented later to a white audience. "We are at best only his stepchildren."

In November of 1863, some months after the battle of Gettysburg, Lincoln spoke at a new cemetery there to pay homage to those who had died. He described how the war elicited a novel understanding of the United States as a people. "Four score and seven years ago"—in Jefferson's Declaration of Independence of 1776—Lincoln said, "our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty." The

war, and particularly Gettysburg, tested whether such a country "could long endure." The horrors would be acceptable, said the president, if the nation had "a new birth of freedom." For Lincoln the nation was a living thing composed of the quick, the dead, and those yet to come. The Founders' focus on individuals and on the rights of states gave way to a communal orientation. The war settled the issue that the states were subordinate. The murdering ended the non-stop bickering from the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798 to the popular sovereignty of the 1850s.

The "Gettysburg Address" paradoxically combined a greater commitment to democracy with this organic nationalism. Throughout the Republic's history, the communal has only uneasily linked up to the individual. But in reshaping the Constitution to force people to conform to the will of the regime, Lincoln used the military to give greater reality to Jefferson's words of equality. A stronger state went hand-in-hand with more liberty—the freeing of the slaves. Lincoln asked that from the Union dead "we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure … that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth." As one commentator has said, Lincoln—in speaking—probably emphasized the people three times: of the *people*, by the *people*, and for the *people*. For the Founders, this trope was rhetoric. Not for Lincoln; he meant it.

From early in the war, Lincoln minimized his own responsibility. According to the mythology of the family of Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Lincoln greeted her at the end of 1862 with the words "so you are the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war." The president unburdened himself of blame while being simultaneously patriarchal. He took on an unfamiliar religiosity. As an adult, he had given up the beliefs of his Protestant rearing and had a reputation as a skeptic. During the war, however, he returned to his heritage. In 1862 he had written privately that "God wills this contest, and wills that it shall not end yet." When he met Harriet Beecher Stowe, he also exclaimed "What has God put me in this place for?" More than two years later, in his "Second Inaugural Address" of March 1865, he reconceived the war as a holy experiment in which he was a tool of redemption. North and South, he said, "read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes his aid against the other." God could not answer the prayers of both and did not answer fully the prayers of either. Suppose, said Lincoln, that slavery was an evil that an inscrutable God providentially willed and then willed to remove. "The Almighty has his own purposes," and was still the divine lawgiver:

> Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled up by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

* * *

The Founders launched an uncertain Republicanism. Under Jackson, democracy for white men had grown. The Civil War turned talk even more toward the democratic, while national power uniquely created more equality. In taking office for a second time in 1865, Lincoln diminished the role of his own inflexibility. But in moving liability to God's broader shoulders, the president made over the United States. Lincoln, equal to England's Winston Churchill in his mastery of the language, gave Americans a heightened sense of their religious destiny as a cohesive people. He weakened federalism and brought into existence a more corporate state. In the twenty-first century, the president's greatness was seized on in the film *Lincoln* (2012). Lincoln looms as one of history's most compelling figures, mysterious in his achievement.

PART IV
REPUBLICAN ASCENDANCY

CHAPTER 9
A NOVEL ELITE, 1865–96

From Occupation of the South to Army Strike-Breakers in the North

From 1787 until 1865 slavery complicated the expansion of the Republic. The War Between the States raised new questions. How would the South re-enter the Union? How would the United States absorb western lands now that the North no longer had to negotiate with the South? How should the former slaves be treated? For seventy years after the war, unique authorities—college-educated experts—were instrumental in giving answers.

Higher Education

Before the Rebellion, provincial colleges on the outskirts of politics trained Protestant preachers. After the cataclysm, northern businessmen became even richer as America industrialized, and wanted to connect with something higher than finance. They contributed to advanced learning. By the end of the nineteenth century, gifts had transformed old and small centers like Harvard College, Yale College, and the College of Princeton into internationally recognized schools with special programs in a variety of fields. These institutions now headed a fresh elite group, the "Ivy League." The wealthy also donated to new establishments such as Johns Hopkins University, the University of Chicago, and Stanford University, and permitted these private academies to challenge older ones. Schools funded by individual states gained in reputation: in Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota; and in the far west, California at Berkeley.

At these places, at others like them, and at many smaller campuses that drifted from a robust Protestantism, educators altered what students studied. Ministers lost the hold they had had since the seventeenth century. Academics downgraded training in religion and instead pushed for practical science and emphasized usefulness in the world. Universities took over instruction in law and medicine, and faculty devised courses in business practices, social work, education, and public policy. Applied knowledge of the natural world might also help Americans, and so the Morrill Act of 1862—sponsored by Justin Morrill, Republican Congressman from Vermont—aided learning that stressed "scientific" agriculture, engineering, and military tactics. The fields of sociology, political science, and economics—the social sciences—were invented to master problems. The centers that taught these subjects had a mission tied to religion, but now human beings no longer stood in awe of forces beyond them but could manage God's universe for the benefit of mankind.

Outstanding among these modernizing organizations, although different in style, was the US Military Academy in New York State. From the early nineteenth century, "West Point" offered training in civil engineering, and after the Civil War its technicians were involved in surveying, construction, and the design of infrastructure across the United States. Graduates, of course, also led the armed force pervasive from after the Civil War to the First World War—in policing the South in the late 1860s; in confronting the western natives in the 1870s and 1880s; in putting down unrest in the North in the 1880s and 1890s; and then in warring in Cuba, the Caribbean, and the Philippines in 1898–1902; and in Mexico and France in 1916–18.

The expert soldiers made their imprint earliest. But they rubbed elbows with civilian politicians and opinion-makers with rare college diplomas awarded in the second half of the nineteenth century and in the early part of the twentieth. Some examples from a varied company: James Garfield of Williams College (1856), elected president in 1880; secretary of state in the 1890s, Richard Olney, with a BA from Brown University (1856) and a Harvard University law degree (1858); Gifford Pinchot, Yale 1889, environmentalist and later governor of Pennsylvania in the 1920s and 1930s; and William Donovan (Columbia University—1905 and its Law School—1907), organizer of the Office of Strategic Services in the Second World War, the predecessor of the CIA. The first generations of university women stepped to the front: Anna Howard Shaw, one of the first ordained female Methodist clergy and a campaigner for women's rights, with an 1886 degree from the Boston University School of Medicine; Elsie Clews Parsons, PhD from Columbia University in 1899, an anthropologist who helped to found the New School for Social Research; Jeanette Rankin, the first woman to be elected to the US House of Representatives, with a BS in biology from the University of Montana in 1902. Last but not least, African Americans were members of this singular group: W. E. B. Du Bois with degrees from Harvard (1890, 1895), and Alain Locke, also of Harvard, the first Black Rhodes Scholar in 1907.

Many of the causes that attracted these men and women had their roots in earlier moral crusades. But now these "modernist" or "liberal" Protestants looked to the university rather than the church as an instrument of change. They disdained the crude beliefs of lower-status Protestants, who had been gaining adherents since the early nineteenth century. Instead, modernists came to terms with the biology of Englishman Charles Darwin. In 1859 he had published *On the Origin of Species*. This treatise was perhaps the most influential book written in Western Europe or the United States in the nineteenth century. Darwin argued that all life had begun with a single form, and that over time the diversity of kinds had come about through an existential struggle. Darwin made a long crusade for acceptance. But various sorts of "evolutionary" thought, loosely connected to him, became popular. Some evolutionists understood races as occupying places on a scale of civilization from higher to lower; the higher had advanced earlier, while others trailed. Evolutionists also talked about the battle for survival that Darwin said went along with the emergence of new species. Some "Social Darwinists" could be cruel, and statesmen might see this battle as natural to organized life and as a justification for a military. But do-gooders might talk of intervening to protect weaker groups and

affirmed that the arc of history was evolving to justice. In a related movement, some Protestants gave up a "literal" interpretation of the Bible. These non-traditionalists, for example, read the story of Adam and Eve as poetry, and took the stories about Jesus as metaphors for living a good life. Religion was this-worldly and joined with science to improve society.

In its politics, the new class of the university-guided was largely Republican but often saw itself as non-partisan, above faction. It was committed to a rational, orderly America that, to collegiate eyes, had fallen out of the control of everyone. Poor foreigners in the cities, on the one hand, and rich businessmen lacking in culture, on the other, defined the country. High-minded politics would bring moderate and genteel culture to the immigrants, who would be raised up; and the country would reflect virtue in contrast to the gilded excess of the moneyed.

The educated elite of 1870–1930 embodied what I call a "New Republicanism" after the eighteenth-century Republicanism of the Founders. Those in the eighteenth century—like Franklin and Jefferson—were also cultivated, and looked to lead by reason and applied science. The Founders positioned themselves between overweening monarchical aristocrats and a dangerous democratic mass. The new republicans got named "progressives" at the height of their prominence from 1900 to 1920.

The Conquered Province

Lincoln had not acknowledged that the South had seceded. He had enforced the law to put down renegades without sovereign standing. In the early part of the war, he wanted to move Black Americans elsewhere: the South would give them up, and they would leave the country. Lincoln appears later to have rejected this idea and instead looked to limited citizenship for former slaves, inevitably lodged in the South. At the same time, he wanted the Confederacy integrated again into the Union as quickly as possible. The tensions in Lincoln did not die with him.

Although some white Americans foresaw equality between the races, most northerners cared little about the ex-slaves. Nonetheless, to discipline the South might require benefits for them. If Republicans were to prosper, they would have to prevent southern whites from again joining with anti-war northern Democrats. The Republican Party had to manage dependent but hostile states in the South, and to stand for the emancipated Union, the hope of African Americans. In both North and South, Democrats were more anti-Black, and knew that this gave them an advantage among white voters. If Republicans empowered Blacks, they might make the South Republican, but Republicans could not associate so closely with the Blacks as to drive northern voters to the Democrats. In the South itself the old slaveholders and their former property, now "freedmen," renewed their unequal ties amidst the rubble. All these items made up "Reconstruction."

In a bid for wartime accord, Republicans had placed Andrew Johnson, a Union Democrat from Tennessee, on Lincoln's ticket in 1864. Johnson's ascension to the presidency after the assassination illustrated the problem in selecting a "running mate."

An intense Unionist, Johnson displayed an equal racism. Hoping to keep Blacks down, but with little competence, he ran afoul of congressional Republicans, who had earlier opposed Lincoln because they thought the old president too easy with the rebels.

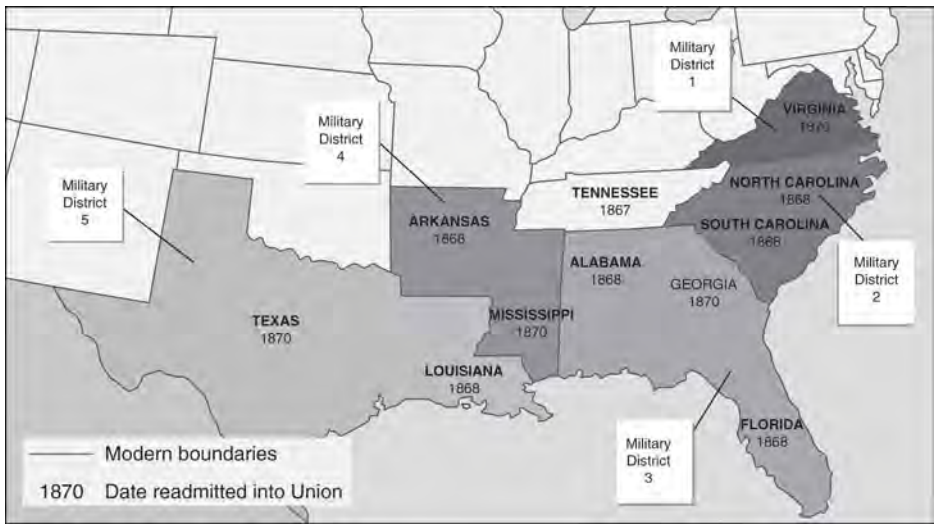
Elected leaders from the South were refused their places in the Congress that assembled in 1865. The former Confederates had instituted laws for the former bondspeople in their states to duplicate the pre-war system. These regulations did give African Americans rights but also ensured that their rights would not compare to those of the old master; that the Blacks would obey whites; and that the planters would have low-cost labor. When legalities did not work for the whites, they bullied and terrified the African Americans. Johnson himself hated the planters but also undermined the principal means of helping the past slaves—the Freedmen's Bureau, a new agency of 1865. By early 1866, according to one report (about Georgia), "the blacks eat, sleep, move, live, only by the tolerance of the whites who hate them." The South defied the North. Southerners would not abandon their sovereignty over the previously bonded, and the latter had few resources to defend themselves.

Recovered from his caning, Charles Sumner, in the Senate, and Thaddeus Stevens from Pennsylvania, in the House, commanded the Republicans. They decided that anti-slavery forces needed to win the peace. The conquered South maddened these "radical" Republicans. They passed the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution that gave rights of citizenship (civil rights) to the ex-enslaved in 1868. This much-debated Amendment also limited the rights of former Confederates. And the Fifteenth Amendment soon after guaranteed the vote to Black men.

When the Radical Republicans proposed these changes, the coalition between Frederick Douglass and his female supporters broke down. The women opposed the Fifteenth Amendment, insisting that the ballot should be extended to African-American men and all women at the same time. Bitter arguments between Negro men and white women followed, with the women expressing racial condescension and the men misogyny. The Amendment became law in 1870, as some feminists condemned it while still exhorting politicians to permit women the vote. Whatever the hostilities between Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Douglass, in 1872, another suffragette, Victoria Woodhull, became the first woman to run for the presidency for the Equal Rights Party; her vice presidential candidate was Frederick Douglas. Douglass always supported activism:

> If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.

Idealistic movements aside, a stricter program for the South was in the offing. As Thaddeus Stevens put it, legislation must "revolutionize southern institutions … The foundation … must be broken up and relaid, or all our blood and treasure have been



Map 18 Southern Military Districts.

spent in vain." He would treat the South as "conquered provinces." While "moderate" Republicans fought with the radicals, "Radical Reconstruction" mixed regard for the released slaves, smugness, anger at the South for causing the war, and calculation. In 1867 Congress had passed the Military Reconstruction Act. This law and later ones divided the South into five districts. Northern soldiers occupied the south. The victory showed, General Grant noted, that "our people have proven themselves to be the most formidable in war of any nationality." Now, Union army generals and 20,000 to 30,000 troops oversaw the South to punish the insolent Confederates.

Soldiers forced Republican government on the South. They safeguarded Black citizens, emboldened them in politics, and elevated their status. The military would stay in southern states, Republicans decided, until the South respected the outcome of the war. The United States also appointed Union General Oliver O. Howard, who had graduated from Bowdoin College before attending West Point, to lead an invigorated Freedmen's Bureau. The Bureau was staffed with northern college graduates committed to imprinting their version of egalitarianism on the now Old South; the Bureau was an early and potent example of the civil–military cooperation of the New Republicanism. By the late 1860s, the agency employed the best practical actions northern white society would undertake.

Howard wrote:

> This sort of work … was quite new to our Government. It was the exercise of benevolent functions hitherto always contended against by our leading statesmen even when providing for the Indian Bureau. The Nation, as something to love and cherish and to give forth sympathy and aid to the destitute, began then to be pronounced more than ever before … we are growing to cherish … the idea of a

> single name for the Republic, and we are fast assuming that "America" should be that name … The reward … was in the vast work undertaken and accomplished in the interest of humanity.

The Bureau provided elementary education and minimally defended the emancipated. But it proved only marginally successful: it did not distribute confiscated farmlands, despite its power to do so, and often allowed planters to do what they wanted with African Americans.

Movement West

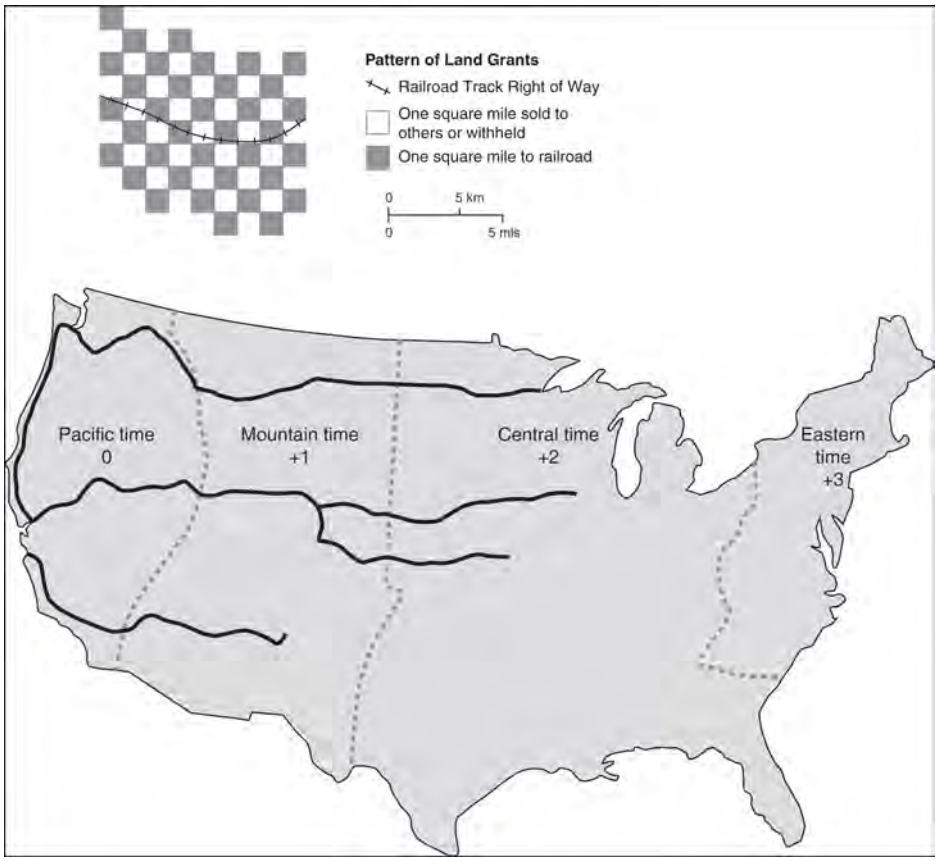
In the years before the Civil War, white Americans had barely settled east from the Pacific Coast and west from Kansas and Nebraska. When California was admitted to the Union in 1850, it was 500 miles away from the nearest state (the west of Texas). Although politicians had determined to take all of North America south of Canada, almost half of the current United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific still lay open in 1865. Part desert, this rough square of almost 1,000 miles to a side was less watered than the area east of the Mississippi.

In 1860 Republicans had not only campaigned against slavery. They had also advocated western expansion. Unlike the Democrats, however, who thought both enslaved and free might form states, the Republicans wanted the West for whites alone. Once the South left the Union, the Homestead Act of 1862 nurtured settlement at nominal cost, although the standard 160-acre quarter-sections of the Northwest Ordinances did not meet the farming requirements west of the Mississippi. The knowledge needed to tame the Trans-Mississippi was, however, later generated in part by John Wesley Powell. Powell studied at Illinois College, Wheaton College, and Oberlin College, and then had a career in the Union army, mustered out as a Lieutenant Colonel. After the war, as professor of geology at Illinois Wesleyan University, he famously explored the Grand Canyon and Colorado River in 1869 and published a celebrated *Report on the Lands of the Arid Region of the United States* (1878).

Businessmen, whom the government had encouraged to construct railroads, also proved important, continuing the efforts of Stephen Douglas. The Union Pacific Railroad assembled track from the northwest, and the Central Pacific from the east, and the two lines met near Ogden Utah in 1869. A "golden spike" signaled that a week's travel bound the United States. The entrepreneurs then drew settlers to areas around the train lines. The railroads built on the mining and prospecting that had first lured men to California for gold; and then to the present states of Nevada, Idaho, Montana, and Colorado for silver. The two railroads, and other lines in the south and southwest, got outrageous incentives. They received land through which they were to lay track. The railroads sold much of their property to farmers and provided credit and tips. They developed passenger rates that attracted not just Americans but also immigrants who eventually farmed 190 million acres, the equivalent of Britain and France. If agriculturalists peopled the land, the railroads would prosper by shipping

food from west to east and supplies the other way. At first, cattle ranchers in Texas and the southwest, expanding from the 1860s to the 1880s, lent a hand to the railroads. The cow towns of Cheyenne (Wyoming), Denver (Colorado), and Abilene (Kansas) had railheads where the livestock went to Kansas City and Chicago, to be slaughtered and shipped east. The cattlemen paved the way for cultivators of the often-inhospitable soil. The farmers used windmills with wells to irrigate. A heavy iron tool, "the plow that broke the plains," nurtured the prairie, and specialized farming yielded new strains of wheat. With the invention of barbed wire in 1874, farmers enforced property lines when they could not erect fences on the treeless land.

Salesmen could mislead and exploit the novices, many of whom went bust. Commercial agriculture—"agri-business"—prevailed at the expense of the smaller farmers. But the growth in output led to the pursuit of even world markets. Simultaneously, eastern railroaders drove economic change and controlled the cattle, timber, grain, and precious metals of the West by supplying them from the East. Local leaders made fortunes as junior partners. Moreover, towns grew up around the train stations. The railroads



Map 19 Railroad Expansion. Time Zones, 1883.

furthered national organization, and "time-zones" made the railroad schedules coherent. Finally, the "Iron Horse" aided business "back east" because of the manufacture of freight and passenger cars, and of parts for repair of farm equipment; the construction of depots; the mining of coal; and the growth of the iron and steel industry.

The Army Goes West

New states would complete the growth of the United States, and railroads would link the nation. But some 250,000 Plains Indians stood in the way. When the Spanish had introduced horses into New Spain in the sixteenth century, the natives became more nomadic—and warlike. The Plains Indians themselves differed little from the Indians before them. They distrusted and disliked the land-hungry whites—miners, railroad builders, cattle ranchers, or farmers—and resisted making property from land.

Violence against whites from various tribes increased during the Civil War, when the troops needed to safeguard settlers were otherwise occupied. But after the war the triumphant Union army could defend migrating whites. The real warriors did not oversee the South but killed Indians. The officer corps had cut its teeth in the southwest from the time of the Mexican War in the 1840s. From the late 1860s through the late 1880s these men brought conflict and combat to the Great Plains, particularly during the period 1869 to 1874, when the military protected cattlemen and farmers.

The interactions between the Euro-Americans and the Indians had a similar pattern for 300 years. "But for the [Civil] war," said Ulysses Grant, "it is probable that the Indians would have had control of these lands for a century. We must conclude, therefore, that wars are not always evils unmixed with some good." Grant's former deputy, General William Tecumseh Sherman, commanded this effort.

In the nineteenth century the Plains Indians depended on 13 million buffalo. The locals were wandering hunters, locked to these herds. Often the buffalo as much as the natives impeded immigrants. The beasts could overrun settlements and railroad lines, and make boundaries useless. In the late 1860s and 1870s, as Reconstruction took place in the South, railroads and soldiers disciplined the West. Workers on the railroad lived on buffalo meat, and animal hides gained value. The Iron Horse also took professional hunters, "sportsmen," to kill the animals on which the Indians lived.

As the army cleared the remaining places of Indian strength, each side massacred, the most famous being the "last stand" of George Armstrong Custer. Custer was another Union general with a reputation as a cavalry officer, exceeded in fame only by Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan. Demoted to colonel after the war, Custer spent a decade pacifying the natives. In 1876 he led a "scientific" expedition into the Sioux reservation in the south of the Dakota Territory. A flamboyant and, many argued, irresponsible and self-promoting Indian fighter, he announced the discovery of gold. When adventurers rushed into the reservation, the Sioux went to war. Custer then used US troops to battle the Indians. A superior force of 2,500 led by chiefs Rain-in-the-Face, Crazy Horse, and Sitting Bull more than matched Custer. They wiped out 264 soldiers at the Little Bighorn River in 1876, in present-day Montana.

A legendary skirmish, Little Bighorn reminded Americans of their fearless campaigns against "savages":

> Men had sunk down beside their gallant leader until there was but a handful left, bleeding from many wounds … The day is almost done, when, look! heaven now defend him, the charm of his life is broken, for Custer has fallen … and dies, too, with the glory of accomplished duty in his conscience and the benediction of a grateful country on his head.

A young Indian fighter also recited the slaughter:

> There was a soldier on the ground, and he was still kicking. [Someone] rode up and said to me: "Boy, get off and scalp him." I got off and started to do it. He had short hair, and my knife was not very sharp. He ground his teeth. Then I shot him in the forehead and got his scalp … I thought I would show my mother my scalp, so I rode over … where there was a crowd of women and children.

In November of 1941, shortly before the United States entered the Second World War, work was ended on a monument in South Dakota on land taken from the Sioux in this period of executions. "Mount Rushmore" was a huge sculpture of the heads of four presidents—Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Teddy Roosevelt.

Why did Americans celebrate the slaughter and especially Little Bighorn? The natives cut down the whites. But the defeat convinced many US nationals about why they had had to get rid of the Indians and justified the centuries of wicked treatment. Moreover, Custer's calamity only momentarily set Americans back. By the early twentieth century, bringing civilization to the far west had resulted in popular genres—western fiction and western movies. Thousands of Hollywood films featured dogged tracking of Indians; encircled wagon trains; calvary; railroads; shoot outs; cattle drives; robberies of banks, trains, and stagecoaches; range wars; chases on horseback; men with a price on their heads; saloons; or a lone gunslinger saving a community.

The conflicts in the West brought little pleasure to federal politicians. They preferred negotiations that would move Indians away from whites. But over and over, Washington gave way to the demands of migrants to decide "the Indian problem" by force. After the Civil War, the cry went: "Less Phil-Anthropy; more Phil Sheridan." The reference to this Civil War assistant of Grant's underscored Sheridan's famous remark: "The only good Indians I ever saw were dead."

As he ended his work for the Freedmen's Bureau, General Howard helped, in 1867, to found the Black institution of higher learning named after him, Howard University, in Washington DC, an early HBCU—Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Howard then went West to fight the Indians, though his attitude differed from Sheridan's:

> The … purpose of our people was then, as it has been all along, to conquer the [Indians] in battle, drive them out, or exterminate them, in order that savagery

> might give place to civilization. A few men believed, and I came to join them, that a portion of the [Indians] might be civilized and made respectable citizens … It is my hope and belief that a remnant … will be saved, perhaps not in any tribal way … It is a slow process to get entirely rid of the old savagery and all that goes with it, and the development is not rapid even among the best … The most pronounced success in moral and Christian teaching is where the children are separated from the degrading influences of their rough life.

Howard's sort of charity only became an alternative to fighting after the army had dealt with the Indians and moved the remaining tribes on distant reservations. Then Washington might work for slow assimilation, but this was more hope than policy. In 1871, Congress overruled Justice Marshall in the Cherokee cases of the late 1820s and early 1830s. America would now not recognize any tribe "as an independent nation … or power, with which the United States may contract by treaty." Instead, lawmakers discouraged tribal unity, and treated the natives more like individual contractors. The Indians might survive but not as a people. Like the earlier overturning of the Missouri Compromise, this decision showed the ability of politicians to alter constitutional precedents.

The Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, named after Henry Dawes, a Yale graduate and Republican senator from Massachusetts, divided up Indian lands and redistributed them among tribes, giving 160 acres to each head of a family and varying shares to other Indians. Laws prohibited the sale of these lands, and people who received grants became citizens. Other laws followed over the next thirty-five years and took 90 million acres out of tribal control. If single Indians and their families did not claim some of this land, whites might. The natives would prosper, said Dawes, only if they "wear civilized clothes … cultivate the ground, live in houses, ride in … wagons, send children to school, drink whiskey [and] own property." He thought the other possibility was war and extinction. Dawes also endorsed schools that would teach Protestantism, the English language, citizenship, manual occupations, and farming. Dawes's allies took children from reservations and immersed them in white culture. For this purpose, twenty-five boarding academies opened in the east, the leader being the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, founded in 1879.

The Indians could not outlast the avaricious United States. In 1889 Congress opened Oklahoma, which Andrew Jackson had permanently granted to the Indians, for settlement and statehood. Soldiers, politicians, and do-gooders despoiled the natives. Students should find the outcome inevitable in this sense: American racism was invincible. Although the issues differed with African Americans, we find a similar failure. Whites did not see that they paraded rights for themselves in opposition to outsiders who were denied all rights. In the twenty-first century when Native America had all but disappeared, such practices were called not just "cultural appropriation" and "settler colonialism" but "genocide," and many feeble attempts at "reparation" were made.

Redeemer Nation

In the South, Republicans installed governments with mixed records. With doubtful friends in the North, African Americans got a measure of independence and self-rule. In an orgy of fear directed against Blacks, white southerners protected a society that still gave them frightening power. Some northerners who came south set their sights on their own fortunes. White southerners contemptuously called even those with more admirable motives "carpetbaggers," who carried their belongings in one cheap bag, having no long-term interest in the South. Whites who worked with Blacks and who risked much were ridiculed as "scalawags," underfed cattle. With the help of the military, however, white and Black voters together initially built governments that pointed toward a biracial society; such a society might develop opportunities for the manumitted. Unquestionably, politicians were frequently corrupt, as were politicians in the Old South and in the North. Black officials could do well or be embarrassments. In office, African Americans might differ little from white southerners. Democrats, however, held the Black southerners and southern Republicans to higher standards.

After a few years, Radical Reconstruction confronted short northern memories, ingrained southern habits, and the inequities of life. Northern tempers cooled, and distaste for African Americans, North and South, increased once slavery had ended. Northerners showed less interest in egalitarianism; the South could handle African Americans as it chose. Republicans did not want free Blacks coming north. The Republicans coveted the mantle of the Union party, but if they got stigmatized as the party of the former slave, they would be voted out even in the North. "The real trouble," said one proponent of Radical Reconstruction, "is that we hate the Negro."

Some Republicans thought that the United States ought to seize the Caribbean and exile Black citizens to Santo Domingo or Cuba. The United States might then admit another state and give African Americans full rights. But they would be remote. Removal of the Black race might parallel the removal of the natives. When elected president from 1869 to 1877—the fate of famous generals—Ulysses Grant conjectured:

> The colored man … was brought to these shores by compulsion, and he now should be considered as having as good a right to remain here as any other class of our citizens … The colored man would move [to Santo Domingo] …, so as to have independent states governed by their own race. They would still be States of the Union, and under the protection of the General Government; but the citizens would be almost wholly colored.

Such formulas never became serious options. No one would pay for Black immigration, or risk Black states that sent representatives to Congress. African Americans in the South might be a worry, but they would stay there—without rights. By the early 1870s, the army had left several of the secessionist states. Northerners knew that Republican governments could not stay in power in Dixie after the military left. The North was tired, however, of chastising the South.

As soon as the US Army disappeared, southerners elected Democrats, and looked on them as reformers. These "Redeemers" benefited from the "Lost Cause," which pretended that the South would rise once more. Organizations of terror sprang up, the most famous, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) or the "Invisible Empire of the South," in Tennessee in 1866. The Klan also had the earmarks of a religion, with oaths and rituals. Appearing as ghosts of the Confederates, Klansmen threatened Blacks. Dressed in sheets, members with burning crosses would torture suspect Black men and kill them by hanging, "lynching." Union troops could not stamp out the night-riding lawlessness. By the late 1870s successors to the Klan were contributing to the political isolation of African Americans. In the society that was forming, the ex-slaves had formal freedom but, at the mercy of whites, were ghettoized in schooling, housing, and business life.

Slowly giving the South to the Democrats, the Republicans still dominated national politics. They brandished "the bloody shirt" from the war, reminding northern voters of patriotic battles and untrustworthy Democrats. Everyone wanted former Civil War generals in politics, but Republicans especially used this strategy. The Democrats, however, remained consequential even in the North with its growing Catholic immigrant population that liked alcohol. The Republicans still attracted Protestants who disliked drinking and Romanism. While the Republicans had committed themselves to a positive role for the Blacks, no leader campaigned for African-American rights in the North comparable to these rights in the South during Reconstruction. Moreover, Democrats got votes in the North because they were more anti-Black. In the contested presidential election of 1876, anxious Republicans did a deal that solidified their national supremacy in exchange for Democratic sway in the South.

The election had ended in a near draw. The Democrat, New Yorker Samuel Tilden of Yale College and the law school of the University of New York (NYU), had a small popular majority, but the vote in Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida was disputed. Complex bargains gave their electoral votes (and the presidency) to the Republican, Rutherford B. Hayes of Kenyon College and the Harvard Law School. Hayes was a former Civil War general who, as president, then withdrew the army occupying Louisiana and South Carolina. The Republicans made other concessions but forestalled a crisis because they gave up designs on the South. It would have its way with Black Americans and became unyieldingly Democratic. The Republicans got the presidency and the national agenda, and the northern Democratic reformer Tilden was abandoned.

The contested election was not unlike similar borderline results for the presidency in 1800, when Jefferson and Adams contested; and in 1824 when John Quincy Adams defeated Andrew Jackson. Hayes's doubtful victory in 1876 was also a harbinger of things to come.

Democrats in the South were a key to the Democratic Party before the Civil War. The one-party "solid South" also anchored the Democrats for a century after 1876 but fractured them. Sometime between 1850 and 1890, Roman Catholics came to count as the largest sectarian Christian group, disproportionately devoted to the Democrats. But Catholics had a challenging time in making their values dominant, for their party stayed in the hands of a Protestant leadership in both North and South. Enemies called

the Democrats the party of "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion," as a mishmash of urban elements in the North, including drinkers and Catholics, now and again collaborated with the old Confederacy. The Democrats were outsiders; the Republicans a unified group of the country's more respectable types. Nonetheless, even after 1876, Democrats proved resilient and competitive in the North, always threatening Republicans. As was said of the election of Republican Benjamin Harrison in 1888: the man thanked "providence" for his election, but "would never know how close a number of men were compelled to approach the penitentiary to make him President."

Without opposition, the Democrats in the South now suppressed the friendless colored. Whites sentenced Black farmers to scrape out a living under conditions narrowly distinguishable from slavery. Yet the planter class also worried about a white revolution from below. The "Bourbon" leaders, named after a French royal family that conservatively ruled in Europe for hundreds of years, dreaded the impoverished of both races. Just as before the Civil War, the wealthiest southerners kept their superiority by elevating racial purity and fed the hatred of one race for the other. By the end of the century, Black southerners did not try to vote and were forced out of public life.

In 1895, Black leader Booker T. Washington, believing there were no alternatives, outlined the "Atlanta Compromise" in a speech in that city. African Americans should accept second-class citizenship. In return, Washington hoped, whites would fit Black people into the economy as necessary laborers who had a minimal humanity. Negroes could learn useful trades that would serve the South.

The Supreme Court aided these developments. The Civil War had consolidated the nation, but then a backlash occurred. Major wars have always resulted in increasing federal power, but a reaction to the increase has also regularly followed. Legislators had devised the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to protect the rights of Black citizens. Now the Court held that neither Amendment prohibited states from isolating African Americans. While no one asserted the sovereignty of individual states, Court decisions by the 1880s gave preference to state and local ordinances over national law. In *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) the justices legitimated segregated schools and public conveyance so long as they were comparable to those provided for whites. The ruling meant that the South could marginalize African Americans in an "equal but separate" existence. This was the South of "Jim Crow," taken from the name of a stereotypical Black man in song-and-dance acts of the period before 1860.

After the Civil War, some leaders wished to industrialize the South, and textile mills did spring up where cotton grew. But a "New South" that would beat the North at its commercial game never developed. By offering discriminatory rates, northern railroads shipped manufactured goods to the South and made it difficult for the South to build up its own companies. The South would supply raw materials to the North. Many southerners did not want manufacturing. Only whites had jobs in the textile mills. A mixed laboring class, or even industrial wage earners who might remake the region, were was feared. Most Black families and many white ones existed as "sharecroppers," as farms stayed the primary place of work. With a shortage of cash, members of each race haggled with landowners for a share of the crops. Alternatively, they would farm as

tenants. Many in the South survived in debt and lived by bartering goods and services. If farmers profited and rose above poverty, they sold tobacco, cotton, or sugar.

The dominance of white society came at a price. After 1876, southerners prominent before secession returned to power, and passed on their power. But the national role of the South vanished. The North gave the South home rule but left southern Democrats to govern a poor and weak section. The Redeemers presided over a backwater—reduced, rural, and indigent. The late-nineteenth-century South resembled the Old South, although after the War Between the States the old masters had less money and elegance.

In the long term, North and South made the conflict about the rights of states in the Union. Both Blue and Grey, it was said, had fought nobly. According to northerners, the South stubbornly adhered to slavery, but the institution had given way to a majestic United States. According to the southerners, the North unfortunately committed itself to Radical Reconstruction. Now both slavery and Reconstruction had passed. Everyone spoke of a "tragedy" that blamed nobody. Slavery had to go but, overall, did not look like a bad institution, and in the 1880s the North must congratulate the South for constructively dealing with its "problem." Yet again the agreement of the white majority on the history of the recent past left Blacks with the short end of the stick.

Millions of schoolchildren memorized the great poem that commemorated the War, on the holiday "Decoration Day," later Memorial Day, May 30:

> From the silence of sorrowful hours the desolate mourners go,
> Lovingly laden with flowers alike for the friend and the foe …
> Sadly, but not with upbraiding, the generous deed was done;
> In the storm of the years that are fading, no braver battle was won …
> No more shall the war-cry sever, or the winding rivers be red;
> They banish our anger forever when they laurel the graves of our dead!
> Under the sod and the dew, waiting for judgment day;
> Love and tears for the Blue, tears and love for the Grey.
>
> "The Blue and the Grey," Francis Miles Finch (1867)

The New Northeast and the Cities

In the last third of the century, the United States had the largest market in the world without trade restrictions. The nation's size did make for problems of shipping and hauling unknown to Europe, and the railroad only partially solved them. But the roads called into existence experts in financial transactions that made the system work. Pierpont Morgan of Morgan Banking had a career as a negotiator and dealmaker. John D. Rockefeller got his fortune in the oil and petroleum industry, and Andrew Carnegie in iron and steel, both industries that the railroads had promoted. These huge corporations were often "trusts," in which property owners gave assets to others to manage. Corporations employed thousands of workers and managers.

The decisions of the Supreme Court had consequences not just for race relations in the South. Private economic rights were endorsed. For the judiciary, ex-slaves and Indians had "freedom of contract" because of the Fourteenth Amendment. The federal government was restricted from intervening in the affairs of employers and labor. Low taxes and laws that stiffed workers made regulation difficult and promoted business. The Court only slowly allowed that businessmen had obligations to citizens.

Industry and manufacture were primarily located in New York and Philadelphia. But the geographic center extended up the coast to Boston and down to Washington, a "Northeast." There, Republicans dictated banking and finance—how the suppliers of raw materials and food would relate to those who sold finished goods—in both the United States and abroad. The Republicans supported high tariffs, taxes on merchandise shipped to the United States from Europe. Tariffs "protected" items from foreign competition. They also allowed northern businessmen to raise the price of their commodities or to sell sub-standard ones at home. Finally, the tariff caused Europeans to get even, typically with taxes on American foodstuffs that were exported from the Midwest (formerly the Old Northwest), the West (now meaning west of Kansas and Nebraska, and including the California coast), and the South. The Northeast did not bear the brunt of the retaliation. By accepting direction and control, other areas received a limited autonomy. America was no longer a yeoman republic or even a commercial democracy, but a land of the machine controlled from the Northeast.

Businesses demanded a labor force in urban areas. Such areas would not hold a majority until 1920, but every decade the movement of people to cities showed the decline of rural America. By 1900, 40 percent of the people no longer lived in farms and villages. In 1800, six cities had more than 8,000 people; in 1890, 448 had. The metropolises in the Northeast and in a line that extended from Pittsburgh and Buffalo west to Chicago grew dramatically. New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Chicago, and St. Louis had more than 500,000 people. Regional centers were connected to the Northeast but offered wealth to a provincial elite: New Orleans, Birmingham, and Atlanta in the South; Denver in the West; and Los Angeles and San Francisco on the California coast.

The population of the United States had jumped from about 23.2 million in 1850 to about 76.2 million in 1900. During this period, 16.2 million arrived from other lands, although the height of immigration was not reached until 1900–10, when a peak of 8.8 million came from Europe. Through the 1880s, they left from Britain, Germany, and Scandinavia. From the 1890s, they embarked from southern and eastern Europe—Italians, Greeks, and Russians. Some worked in the United States and went back to their native lands but, for many, "America!" beckoned imperatively. Catholics and Jews thronged into the coastal cities, but also as far west to Chicago, which was dirty, strange, and crowded. Noisy and competing ethnic groups bloomed in a landscape of saloons, seedy clubs, and unfamiliar churches. The outsiders formed the armies of the unskilled that manufacturers needed.

Just as the Irish previously had been problematic, so the latest migrants were apprehensively regarded. The Irish, the one earlier group that did not believe in reformed Protestantism, welcomed them. Attached to the Democratic Party, the Irish had a closer

affiliation with the Italians, Greeks, and Poles than had the Protestant Republicans. The Irish familiarized the newest voters with America, in exchange for their franchise. The people from southern Europe needed the help, for they had grim and erratic jobs. Wages were low; time off for illness did not exist, nor did payment for injury or help for families when there was no employment. The ups and downs of the economy, part of employment from the Civil War to the end of the century, often left both skilled and unskilled in degraded housing, frustrated and hard up.

While migrants were often hated, the United States offered an easy path to citizenship. Movements for restriction occurred but were ineffective. Yet in the late nineteenth century the combination of corrupt politicians and corruptible strangers especially disturbed the "old stock," both Republicans and Democrats in the Northeast. They took initiatives to cleanse politics by improving public administration—by "civil service reform" and "merit" hiring of bureaucrats. They wanted to reconstruct the recent arrivals, whom they believed were exploited and ignorant of their own interests. Programs of literacy in English and training in democracy occupied upscale Protestants. Generational differences nonetheless set apart the younger well-off who had university learning and their parents less likely to be schooled. Also challenging was the ideological cleavage between the more collectivist Republicans, and Democrats committed to constricted government power and laissez faire. The Civil War nationalism of the Republican "GOP"—The Grand (or Gallant) Old Party—butted up against old-time Democratic Jefferson–Jackson Liberalism. Well-mannered improvement was stymied in the 1880s. Indeed, its proponents got the pejorative name "Mugwumps," from the native Algonquin designating pretentious leaders.

Many foreigners highly regarded America. They had only to pledge faith in the Constitution and entrust themselves to democracy. Birth did not limit citizenship, as it did in Europe. Increasingly, citizenship was not restricted to blood and soil, to white men born in the United States. It more clearly meant that one believed in a set of ideals. The French, for the 1876 centennial of the United States, bowed to idealistic notions. France configured a monument, 150 feet high, "Liberty Enlightening the World," which was assembled and dedicated in the New York harbor in 1886. After some dispute, in 1903, a plaque with an inscribed poem was installed on the gift. It was initially not well received, but is now known familiarly as the Statue of Liberty, and the sonnet reads:

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

"The New Colossus" (1883), Emma Lazarus

While the French were building "Lady Liberty" and shipping her off, a number of the "tempest-tost" were expressing their distaste for the United States. Homegrown critics wanting major change cited Tom Paine and promoted a "socialism" that would end the disparities of wealth and the misery of workers. Some from overseas, however, brought notions of how people might organize to promote economic equality and not just democracy. These radicals criticized "capitalism," which permitted private entrepreneurs to accumulate enormous amounts of money. "Capitalists," a small class of rich businessmen, determined the outlook of the government and subdued the poor—the "proletariat." These ideas of the German Karl Marx and of "Marxism" demanded that workers bring down the government and distribute wealth more fairly.

In 1877, laborers from Chicago to the Northeast refused to work for their railroad employers. US soldiers, some reconstituted Civil War veterans, broke the strike. The two ranking generals, Sherman and Sheridan, used the crisis to shield the army from attacks and to promote its use during unrest. Republicans had drawn on the army in the South and the West. Now soldiers assisted the forces of order in northern cities, and not for the last time. Indeed, the defiance of workers and the response of their bosses were repeated over the next twenty years.

The walkouts for higher pay and shorter hours of work strengthened a mass association, the Knights of Labor. The Knights attracted the untaught in mammoth firms. After winning some minor contests with employers, the Knights grew to about 750,000 by the mid-1880s. Then, in May 1886 at Haymarket Square in Chicago, a bomb exploded during a protest and disgraced the Knights. Instead, that same year, Samuel Gompers started the American Federation of Labor (the AF of L), which appealed to craftsmen. This elite had greater power, because it could more easily set terms of work—such men could only be replaced with difficulty. The AF of L led conservative and pragmatic wage-earners, effective just because they were distinct from the non-trained. The accomplishments of the craftsmen underscored the distress of those more easily substituted. In the summer of 1892, more violence occurred. Near Pittsburgh, at Andrew Carnegie's Homestead Steel Plant, officials paid hundreds of private detectives, the Pinkertons, named after their founder Allan Pinkerton, who had first provided security to Abraham Lincoln. In 1892 they were called in to defeat a work stoppage against a new organization—a labor "union." While steelworkers routed this now infamous private army, the US military succeeded. Soldiers, at the same time, fought disgruntled silver miners in Idaho.

A changing Protestant church helped laborers in cities. It developed "social Christianity" and a "Social Gospel" movement. Social gospelers came from the more staid, middle- and upper-class denominations, in contrast to the downscale evangelicals, and moved Protestantism from the individual to the more communal. The efforts of

eccentric northern Protestant women before the Civil War were normalized and enlarged. Now mainstream Protestants strove to improve the daily lot of their fellows. This effort fell short of the strident, for even when Social Gospelers announced an extreme solution, they implied it would come about gently. Walter Rauschenbusch, who studied and taught at the Rochester Theological Seminary, was one of the most famous Social Gospel preachers. He talked about bringing into being "the Kingdom of God on earth." Reverend Charles Sheldon graduated from Philips Academy, Andover. He asked his congregation, "What would Jesus do?" *In His Steps* (1896) answered that Christianity meant compassion and equity for the worse off. George Herron went to Ripon College and taught Applied Christianity at Grinnell College. *The Christian State: A Political Vision of Christ* (1895), went further than Sheldon, intimating that men of wealth would sacrifice in a religious culture.

The Turning Point

By the 1890s the GOP sat on an angry labor movement, and some respectable people were urging adjustments. In the South, the Midwest, and the West, more serious protests had been gathering since the 1870s. An international economy trapped southern and mid-western farmers, and their local businesses. The value of their foodstuffs fell, and fell again. Farmers no longer controlled the price of their products and depended on northeastern middlemen. The farmers hated the tariff policies of the Republicans and identified tariffs with unaffordable prices for purchases from the Northeast. Tariffs also made it more difficult to sell farm products outside of the United States, where Europeans retaliated by putting tariffs on agricultural exports. Farmers focused on the railroads and the rates for transport to the east. Finally, regional leaders from western states with silver mining joined protestors. Agriculturalists associated troubles with "the gold standard"—the United States exchanged paper money for gold, the most precious metal whose supply was controlled. Owners of the silver mines wanted the government to exchange currency for silver along with gold, "bimetallism."

The complicated and inflammatory "silver issue" had great symbolism, for the farmers felt disadvantaged by the gold standard. The "monetization" of silver would help silver mines, for the government would want their ore. Many other supporters of the farmers thought that if silver became acceptable, inflation—a rise in prices—would occur. More metal would exist to back the paper; the amount of money would increase; the price of food products would rise; and the farmers would have money in their pockets.

In the late 1860s and 1870s, farmers in the great plains, "Grangers," organized in semi-secrecy to fight the railroads, and spread in the Midwest and South. The Grange left habits of collective action before it faded. A cousin group, the Greenback-Labor Party of the late 1870s and early 1880s, fielded a presidential candidate and some winning congressmen. Farmers' alliances, mainly in the South in the late 1880s, fomented anger and discontent. In the early 1890s, as challenging times seemed unrelenting, the most formidable assembly focused complaints—the Peoples Party or populists. They drew on capable spokespeople. "Mary Yellin'" Lease from Kansas became famous to farmers

and to generations of textbook writers for calling on Kansans to raise "less corn and more hell." "Sockless Jerry" Simpson, a Kansan who had been deprived of his ranch, joined her in pointing out how folks like him were losing direction of their own modest destinies. Simpson observed that he did not wear silk stockings. Ignatius Donnelly, from Minnesota, served in the Congress and authored a famous novel, *Caesar's Column* (1890), foretelling disaster for the United States.

The populists struggled. The Democratic Bourbons responded to the agitation by exacerbating racial tensions, and made white cohesion more important than discord between rich and poor, Black or white. In addition to a divided South, great distances separated the strongholds of Populism in the South, Midwest, and silver West. Moreover, large and small agriculturalists disagreed, and complaint in the West did not extend beyond silver. Populists had an uphill battle.

In 1892, the tariffs of the Republicans in the face of unrest made for major troubles in the presidential contest. But Democrats ignored their South, which seemed to vote for them no matter what. They ran New Yorker Grover Cleveland, whom southern farmers disliked because he was attached to the gold standard. Cleveland had served as president from 1885 to 1889 but had been defeated in another disputed election in November of 1888. He had retired from politics, but came back to run in 1892, and was victorious—the only president to serve two non-consecutive terms in office to that time.

That 1892 was the year of the Homestead strike, and labor disruption in the Northeast was an issue. The GOP (atypically) received more of the blame, although Democrats dismissed lowly southerners. When Cleveland won, his triumph seemed to confirm that the Democrats did not need to listen to the South. Simultaneously, however, the Peoples Party emerged as a noteworthy force, with about 8 percent of the vote, and the Electoral College votes of Kansas, Colorado, Idaho, and Nevada. Its ticket consisted of James Weaver of Iowa, a former Union general, and James Field of Virginia, a former Confederate general.

The Depression of 1893, the most severe in the nation's history to that date, soon damaged Cleveland irreparably. Unemployment in the Northeast gave malcontents reason to attack him and increased conservative anxiety. Unemployed men, victims of the Depression, came together in complaint. A businessman from Ohio, Jacob Coxey led some individuals to Washington in 1894—"Coxey's Army"—to speak to Cleveland about a far-fetched plan to relieve unemployment. Labor violence, which seemed never ending, expressed workers' bitterness. In 1894, trouble again converged on Chicago, when the Pullman Company, a builder of railway cars, was struck. Workers shut down the railroads from the Northeast to the Midwest, and interrupted the mail, a function of the federal government. Cleveland announced: "If it takes the entire army and navy to deliver a postal card in Chicago, that card will be delivered." Against the wishes of the governor of Illinois, Cleveland put down the strike with soldiers. Yet again, the army built up in the Civil War was politicized. This troop intervention was special because it occurred on the watch of Democrats, who detested infringements on the states.

As controversy swirled about the role of the gold standard in the downturn, Cleveland refused compromise with silver interests. Southern Democrats wanted little to do with

him or with the northern "gold bugs" of their party. Even some northerners blamed Cleveland for the Depression. The Democrats were ready for a dramatic break.

When the Democrats chose their candidate in a convention in July of 1896, William Jennings Bryan, a 36-year-old Nebraska congressman, stepped into the limelight. For the only time in American history, complicated policy over money captured imaginations. A spellbinding speaker, Bryan thrilled his sympathizers and astonished the "gold delegates" whom he addressed:

> We say to you that you have made the definition of a businessman too limited in its application. The man who is employed for wages is as much a business man as his employer; the attorney in a country town is as much a businessman as the corporation counsel in a great metropolis; the merchant at the cross-roads store is as much a businessman as the merchant of New York; the farmer who goes forth in the morning and toils all day, who begins in spring and toils all summer, and who by the application of brain and muscle to the natural resources of the country creates wealth, is as much a businessman as the man who goes upon the Board of Trade and bets upon the price of grain; the miners who go down a thousand feet into the earth, or climb two thousand feet upon the cliffs, and bring forth from their hiding places the precious metals to be poured into the channels of trade are as much businessmen as the few financial magnates who, in a back room, corner the money of the world. We come to speak of this broader class of businessmen.
>
> … Ah, my friends, we say not one word against those who live upon the Atlantic Coast, but the hardy pioneers who have braved all the dangers of the wilderness, who have made the desert to blossom as the rose … are as deserving of the consideration of our party as any people in this country. It is for these that we speak. We do not come as aggressors. Our war is not a war of conquest; we are fighting in the defense of our homes, our families, and posterity. We have petitioned, and our petitions have been scorned; we have entreated, and our entreaties have been disregarded; we have begged, and they have mocked when our calamity came. We beg no longer; we entreat no more; we petition no more. We defy them! … You come to us and tell us that the great cities are in favor of the gold standard; we reply that the great cities rest upon our broad and fertile prairies. Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country … [W]e will answer the … demand for a gold standard by saying … : You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.

Complex factors led to the Democrats' nomination of Bryan. Nonetheless, the deciding moment came with this "Cross of Gold" speech, with its final and compelling Christian image. If the Democrats put up another eastern candidate, they might lose the South to Populism. To keep the South and attract the populists, the Democrats nominated

Bryan. But the party also dreaded Bryan's alienation of northern voters. The poet Vachel Lindsay caught the dynamic when he described Bryan as "Smashing Plymouth Rock with [his] boulders from the West."

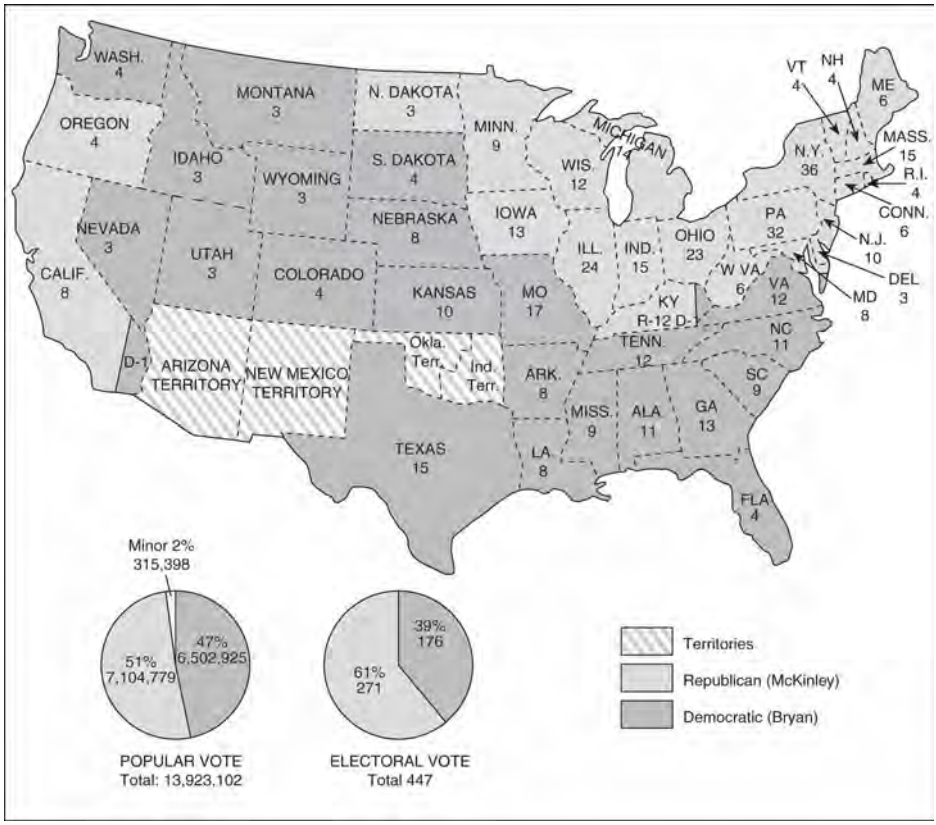
The Peoples Party took the bait, and "fused" with the Democrats. The GOP candidate was William McKinley, a centrist who had modestly spoken out for workers. He carried the Northeast; a core of states running through the Midwest; and California and Oregon. Bryan and the Democrats won the South; Missouri, Kansas, and Nebraska; and all the states of the West except California and Oregon. In the Electoral College, Bryan lost 271 to 176. While he got more votes than anyone else who had previously won the presidency, he received 600,000 fewer votes than McKinley. The deficit was greater than that of any other defeated candidate over the previous twenty years, when the parties had contested elections and blurred divides among the regions, with the glaring exception of the South.

The Republicans stayed a party of Protestants, some of them rural. The Democrats continued to have their more peculiar mixture of Northeastern Protestants and Catholics, and Protestants in the South. But unrest threatened both parties. In selecting McKinley in 1896, the Republicans showed that they were not anti-Catholic or anti-labor. The Republicans expanded their northern base and headed off metropolitan unrest. Respectable and educated Americans could not swallow Bryan when a moderate McKinley spoke for the Republicans.

The Democrats had a harder job. To defang Populism and save the South, they nominated an agriculturalist, and held rural areas. But this strategy drove urban Democrats away from Bryan to McKinley: Bryan alarmed northern Democrats; farming Republicans accepted McKinley. Put this analysis another way. At the end of Reconstruction, the GOP outflanked the Democrats. By abandoning the African Americans, the Republicans gave up the South but secured their dominance in the North. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Democrats were again checked. The Republicans kept their hold on the North, which the Democrats conceded to protect what they had in the South.

The Democrats may have had to select Bryan, but the electorate found him extreme. For them, Populism eventuated in disaster. Control of the South came at a great price. They would stay the minority party for another thirty-five years.

The political issues from Reconstruction to the end of the century clarified after the defeat of Bryan. Some scholars in the twentieth century emphasized the split between farm and city, and wrote about the inexorable but regrettable decline of social-democrat agriculturalists. Other investigators have found that populists looked in the direction of contemporary reform. The most important, if controversial, interpretation appeared in 1955 in the *Age of Reform* by Richard Hofstadter, one of the most famous twentieth-century historians. He argued that we should not regret the collapse of Populism. It was anti-modern, perhaps irrational in its dislike of cities and the Northeast. In the movements of the late nineteenth century, Hofstadter saw a "paranoid style" that he distinguished from later, more rational attempts to restrain capitalism. Historians after Hofstadter for a time preferred these underdogs, who—it was said—attended to real injustice. The agrarians nodded to a Black and white alliance, and one of rural farmers



Map 20 Election of 1896.

and urban "producers" that mimicked what some historians thought was true of Andrew Jackson's coalition. Populism made a courageous stab at using grassroots organization to move the United States to financial equality. On the other side, Hofstadter was looking for a way to interpret politics that went beyond economics to embrace social psychology. His views were very much alive in the twenty-first century when Populism came to have the negative connotation that Hofstadter intended: it meant a politics of imagined grievance.

* * *

In the aftermath of the Civil War new apprehensions confronted politicians. Republicans in the Northeast were foremost, and Democrats, though always competitive, were usually relegated to the South. As the nineteenth century ended, a younger and educated establishment that claimed to be unbiased was also coming of age. None of these groups, however, made a priority of the African Americans, who had been swapped for the Indians as the foremost US "problem."

CHAPTER 10
THE NEW EMPIRE, 1890–1917

From the Close of the Frontier to More Fights with Mexico

Frederick Jackson Turner got a BA at the University of Wisconsin and a PhD from Johns Hopkins University, and went on to teach at Harvard. In 1893 he lectured to the American Historical Association on "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." What became known as "the Turner Thesis" declared that the nation had acquired its personality through successive migrations across the country. The people had become "American" as they moved west, and the heritage from Europe decreased. A democratic character resulted. It prized self-reliance, achievement, and the ability to build community; and not the birth, family, and wealth of Europe. The heartland, and not the Atlantic seaboard, distinguished the United States. Turner dismissed scholars who fixated on the thirteen colonies, and especially New England, as the source of what made America. In emphasizing settlement that was always moving west, Turner gave priority to geography and population transfer, not ideas, religion, or economics.

"The Frontier in American History" took up the individualism and anti-Europeanism that existed earlier in American literature in Fenimore Cooper, who wrote about early pioneers; in New Englanders like Henry David Thoreau; and in Walt Whitman. Nonetheless, a fear balanced Turner's depiction of the backcountry as essential. By the 1890s, the states of the Pacific northwest were flourishing. In 1892, Americans began to recite a "Pledge of Allegiance" to a country that now spanned the continent as an industrial giant: "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." A song of 1895 had the same thought with lyrics about a county that spanned "From sea to shining sea." For Turner, however, this meant America had no more room, and he worried about the future. Virtue might decline without further worlds to conquer. Would the national character degenerate if the challenge of making new republics no longer tested Americans?

Turner was not alone. In 1890, the Census Bureau publicized the closing of the frontier, and the 1896 election between Bryan and McKinley resulted in a vote defeating the farmers who had defined independent communities. How would the country press forward? Some answers came with "foreign" policies. As these policies matured, we can see at work the same university impulse—the New Republicanism—that was building at home. The cooperation between educated soldiers and statesmen would also shepherd international politics as America increased its footprint outside "the continental United States."

Outward Bound

After the Civil War, external affairs centered on the Indians, and US assertion was just hinted at in Latin America, Asia, and Europe. Officials, editorialists, and other opinion leaders only speculated about how America should connect to the outside world. In 1867, the United States bought Alaska from Russia, a purchase joked about as "Seward's folly," after Secretary of State William Seward. Charles Sumner of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee commented:

> By the text of our Constitution, the United States are bound to guarantee "a republican form of government" to every state in the Union; but this obligation, which is applicable only at home, is an unquestionable indication of the national aspiration everywhere. The Republic is something more than a local policy; it is a general principle, not to be forgotten at any time, especially when the opportunity is presented of bringing an immense region within its influence.

Listen to Thomas Bayard, secretary of state in the late 1880s, meditate about the American connection with Mexico:

> Fate has permanently placed two very dissimilar peoples in contiguity, and great good sense, constant forbearance, and careful self-control are indispensable requisites to keep matters in pacific train between them. The overflow of our population and capital into the bordering states of Mexico must, sooner or later, saturate these regions with Americanism, and control their political action, but until they are prepared for our laws and institutions, we do not want them, and when they are fit, they will find their own way to us.

By the 1890s, continental growth had extinguished native America. The United States erupted with an aggressive diplomacy, seeking new horizons. Americans had contrasted their politics to Europe's colonialism, and in the late nineteenth century this colonialism continued as the English, French, and Germans jockeyed for rule in Africa and in Asia. Americans attended to these remote places with ideas different from those of the Europeans.

The economic troubles, on the farms and in the cities, led to overheated formulas to solve US problems. If leaders could secure markets for surplus agricultural and industrial products, the sales would lift farm prices and multiply urban jobs. Engagements abroad might also secure raw materials, while exotic exploits would take the people's minds off difficulties at home. But many of these formulas also hoped to plant American civilization in distant lands. Overseas affairs, however, could be a maze. At the end of the century, the possibility of non-white states confounded politicians, as did other means to enlarge the United States.

Programs of Expansion

Three overlapping movements proposed to go beyond North America. The first came out of Populism. The farmers would prosper through stepped-up trade outside the United

States. They wanted discounted transport to the northeast coast and more oversight of the railroads that carried their goods. Populists and their Democratic allies also wanted a strong shipping industry and a navy that would safeguard it. They fought to reduce tariffs on imports and thus to reduce levies on American goods. Farmers would then compete in Europe, although Republican industrialists wanting to protect a home market thwarted rural politicians. Moreover, the silver issue had an extraterritorial aspect. A monetary standard that included silver would not only inflate the currency for the debt-ridden farmers. A silver standard would also, they believed, ease sales to nations on a silver standard in Asia and Latin America. The silver standard of British India allowed England to control Asian trade. Bimetallism in the United States, using both silver and gold, would help commerce.

These agrarian ideas declined after Bryan's loss to McKinley. The rejected farmers did nonetheless contribute to agreement on building up trade abroad. The depressions toward the end of the nineteenth century made selling outside the country an attractive possibility for many anxious about domestic stability. A second movement that originated in the 1890s as an extreme factor in the GOP articulated this position. A young and combative Theodore (or Teddy) Roosevelt exemplified these opinions.

As he became known as a slightly older and more dignified president, "TR" saw himself as an heir to a "balance of power." It had brought Europe strength and peace since the early nineteenth century, after the Napoleonic wars ended and Britain and France negotiated their differences. Empire moved west. Now, as successors of the British, a group of Americans wanted to advance the civilization of "the West." The United States might take over other countries and rule them. Such a policy would damp down domestic turmoil. The Europeans had imperial positions in the Middle East. France, Germany, and England had colonies in Africa by the 1890s, and they were looking to divide China. The portrait of TR as a belligerent flag-waver is overdone. Yet Roosevelt, his friend and long-time Senator from Massachusetts, Henry Cabot Lodge (like Roosevelt also from Harvard), and diplomats Elihu Root (Hamilton College and NYU Law) and Henry Stimson (Yale and Harvard Law) put aside America's own revolutionary past. They argued for policy that might include colonization.

In *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Present Crisis* (1885), Josiah Strong (Western Reserve and Lane Theological Seminary) grasped this doctrine that equated might and right. Strong argued that Protestant Christianity and commerce succeeded together. If the United States worked its will on countries beyond its shores, the kingdom of man would become a reality:

> Mr. Darwin is not only disposed to see, in the superior vigor of our people, an illustration of his favorite theory of natural selection, but even intimates that the world's history thus far has been simply preparatory for our future and tributary to it … God, with infinite wisdom and skill, is training the Anglo-Saxon race for an hour sure to come in the world's future.

"This race of unequaled energy," said Strong, represented "the purest Christianity" and "will move down upon Mexico, down upon Central and South America, out upon the islands of the sea."

Alfred Thayer Mahan, a captain in the navy and teacher of international politics at the Naval War College, grounded this program in the past. *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783* (1890), directed Americans to a classic strategy. For "Mahanists" the United States would achieve greatness through tariffs that would protect its economy. But America also needed foreign markets, and colonies provided such markets. Colonies were debased polities, administered by a weightier nation, and adjusted their trade to its demand. The superiors also had military bases, coaling stations, and strong points, and their navy would also protect a colony:

> In these three things—production, with the necessity of exchanging products; shipping, whereby the exchange is carried on; and colonies, which facilitate and enlarge the operations of shipping and tend to promote it by multiplying points of safety—is to be found the key to much of the history, as well as of the policy, of nations bordering upon the sea … The policy has varied both with the spirit of the age and the character and clearsightedness of the rulers … Sea power … includes not only the military strength afloat … but also the peaceful commerce and shipping from which alone a military fleet naturally and healthfully springs, and on which it securely rests.

Theodore Roosevelt spoke more eloquently:

> No triumph of peace is quite so great as the supreme triumphs of war … There are higher things in this life than the soft and easy enjoyment of material comfort. It is through strife, or the readiness for strife, that a nation must win greatness. We ask for a great navy, partly because we feel that no national life is worth having if the nation is not willing, when the need shall arise, to stake everything on the supreme arbitrament of war, and to pour out its blood, its treasure, and its tears like water, rather than to submit to the loss of honor and renown.

The agrarians did not win. But neither did this colonialism built around a navy, with its desire to mimic Europe. Rather, victory went to a different though related third movement. Historians have over-formally, but accurately, labeled it "The New Empire." More moderate Democrats and Republicans made it their own. It looked back to Jefferson's "empire of liberty" but in the present included Roosevelt as president, charged with making decisions, and the two chief executives who followed him, William Howard Taft (Yale and the Cincinnati Law School) and Woodrow Wilson (Princeton and Johns Hopkins PhD).

Recalling its own heritage, the United States must not intervene militarily in the affairs of other nations. A consensus arose that America did not seek colonies; European-style expansion was out. Instead, the United States would strive for trade on equal terms with

other nations. America could beat other powers at their own game, if it had "a fair field and no favor." Moreover, such "free" commerce, which precluded the exclusive spheres associated with colonies, would promote anti-colonialism; this blueprint would foster representative governments. Almost as much as trade, impressing an American outlook on the globe motivated decision-makers. If Americans could have others accept their views, society at home would benefit. Moreover, Asia took priority. Americans dreamed of a market in China. Latin America was secondary. Statesmen took no notice of Africa and did not believe that further trade with Europe would help them. With a focus on Asia, in this new empire, the United States would build a republican order around the transmuting power of its products sold elsewhere. Yet practice proved less tidy than theory. The policies brought defensive bases and a great navy, some hallmarks of the Old World, although diplomats disliked taking over another state. Colonies came as a last resort when the Americans faced the issue of what to do with a lesser race that they had to bend in their direction.

Cuba

This understanding of US policies has first to make a place for the "Spanish–American War" of 1898. It focused on Spain's colony of Cuba just off Florida. What relation did China have to Cuba?

For some thirty years, Americans had disliked the inefficient and corrupt government of Spain in Cuba, one of Spain's possessions. The "misrule" of the Spanish had led to failed attempts to bring predictability and safety to their colony. Spain's inadequacy prompted a dim view of its direction in Cuba and, in any event, Americans had their eye on taking over the island. Irresponsible newspapers—using yellow ink, and thereby producing "yellow journalism"—inflamed opinion and showed the growing role of mass media. The newspaper owner William Randolph Hearst told an artist: You furnish the pictures, and I'll furnish the war. Inept Spanish diplomacy and the mysterious sinking of the American battleship *Maine* in the port of Cuba's capital of Havana made it easier for reporters. Headlines ran: Remember the *Maine*! To Hell with Spain! President McKinley could not resist the demands for war. It would unite the country after the divisive 1896 election. In addition to the miseries of Cuba were "the very serious injury to the commerce, trade, and business of our people" and "the constant menace to our peace."

Look at these issues in a context that gives Asia prominence. Bureaucrats were aroused less by Central America than China where they could not ignore Europe's scrambling for advantage. The squabbles reminded the United States of how Europeans had cut up Africa some years before. Recent German and Russian moves for spheres of influence in China could only complicate an Asia that already involved the French, English, and Japanese. If the powers sliced up China, America would lose the chance to move the twentieth century away from greedy imperialisms. Thus, diplomats had to deal quickly with Cuba, a diversion from "the Far East" of China. This context did not "cause" McKinley's decision for a Spanish war in April of 1898, but the context makes the decision more intelligible. Some expansionists had little enthusiasm for war but found

it worth the price, if it would take the United States toward peaceful leadership in Asia. Critics would call this reasoning "perpetual war for perpetual peace."

Three thousand miles from Cuba, Spain could not match the nearby Americans. Yet while the US navy outclassed the Spanish, the Americans performed only modestly. Scandal, confusion, and lack of military finesse marred the effort, although Spanish feebleness proved greater than American bungling. Teddy Roosevelt formed a volunteer regiment with Ivy League, Protestant, officers. In one glorious battle with his "Rough Riders," he charged up a hill near San Juan, Cuba. He called the war "a bully fight"—meaning excellent—and rejoiced that America was behaving like a warrior nation when he was young enough to get pleasure from it. As did Thomas Jefferson, Roosevelt felt that periodic bloodletting benefited the United States. Secretary of State John Hay (who had gone to Brown University) said that the conflict was "a splendid little war." National pride billowed. Both northerners and southerners beat up on Spain, and the joy of victory was a tonic in overturning the hatreds of the Civil War. The North must now return captured southern flags from 1865:

> Why cling to those moth-eaten banners? What glory or honor to gain
> While the nation is shouting hosannas uniting her sons to fight Spain?

In four months, the United States routed Spain from Cuba. Additionally, Americans stripped Spain of other properties. At the start, the navy defeated Spain's forces defending her colony of the Philippines in the South Pacific. The war served up not just Cuba, but also the island of Guam in the Pacific, and Puerto Rico off the northeast coast of South America. Finally, in the ripple of patriotism that war brought, the United States took over the islands of Hawaii, in the middle of the Pacific, a move that politicians had previously debated and rejected.

This outreach could frighten. A portion of the anthem of the US Corps, codified around this time, went:

> … Our flag's unfurled to every breeze/From dawn to setting sun.
> We have fought in ev'ry clime and place/Where we could take a gun.
> In the snow of far-off Northern lands/ And in sunny tropic scenes
> You will find us always on the job/The United States Marines.
> … If the Army and the Navy/ Ever look on Heaven's scenes,
> They will find the streets are guarded/ By United States Marines.

The New Empire in Action

To govern these places, Americans made arrangements that differed from European colonialism, but the differences were unclear. Reconstruction in the South had shown the difficulties in imposing values on people who did not want them. Nonetheless, many statesmen relished what would later be called nation-building and what other leaders would see as meddling.

The declaration of war prompted a proviso by Democratic Senator Henry Teller of Colorado. The "Teller Amendment" laid out the conditions for the fight and the rights of Cuba. An Amendment by GOP Senator Orville Platt of Connecticut to a military appropriations bill of 1901 spelled out the terms for the withdrawal of US troops from Cuba. The Cubans could govern themselves, so long as they did not build up a public debt or become the lackey of another foreign power, in which cases the United States could intercede. Cuba would rely on the United States but would not be a colony. America might from time-to-time disregard Cuba's independence, but common respect would usually permit Cubans to run their own show. Finally, America would keep naval bases, one at Guantanamo Bay—100 years later, jailed terrorists were tortured there.

The decision in Cuba did not stand alone. In Central and South America, the Yankees got more militant. To see how and why, we must go back in time and review how a minor document became a major policy statement.

In 1823, continued European intrusion in the New World inspired Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. He had President James Monroe issue "the Monroe Doctrine." Monroe warned the Europeans not to colonize the Americas; the United States would not tolerate European trespassing in a continent reserved for republics. The Doctrine was cited as if it could pressure Europeans to do as the United States wished in the New World. Yet over the next seventy years, it had negligible impact. The Americans could not enforce it, and the Europeans regularly overlooked the Doctrine. In 1895, however, Secretary of State Richard Olney strongly invoked Monroe in a dispute with the English over Venezuela. Then, the first years of the twentieth century infused substantial meaning into the Doctrine.

After Theodore Roosevelt became president in 1901, he acted more cautiously than his earlier rhetoric would suggest, though more assertively than prior leaders. "Speak softly and carry a big stick," said the president. This was TR's approach to equals, but with lesser nations he was more likely to be loud and use his bludgeon. At the end of 1904, the president announced "the Roosevelt Corollary" to the Doctrine. The United States would practice "preventive intervention" on Latin nations that could not look after their own houses; and America would ensure that Europe did not barge in. The Latins must be taught to "behave." Roosevelt would "do nothing but what a policeman has to do," and exercise "international police power."

Did the Corollary distort Monroe? It better boasted about America when the country could act from strength and not from nineteenth-century disadvantage. Over the next twenty years, leaders intruded in the Dominican Republic (for six years), Haiti, Honduras (five times), Nicaragua, and Panama. The Roosevelt Corollary worked in Latin America as the Platt Amendment worked in Cuba. Together they meant that in this fragment of the world the United States might not colonize but would straighten out anything crooked. Finally, Roosevelt helped the province of Panama to break from Colombia. Then the US Army built a seaway there from 1904 to 1914, most of the time under the guidance of West Pointer and Chief Military Engineer George Washington Goethals. The canal provided easier transit by boat between the east and west coasts of the United States, and shipping and naval access from northeastern ports to Asia.

In the Pacific, on the way to Asia, sugar growers of the Hawaiian Islands, largely American nationals, wanted US rule. American sailors, entrepreneurs, and missionaries had left their stamp on the islands for some seventy-five years. US citizens lived there. With the incorporation of Hawaii as a territory in 1900, America granted full citizenship to Hawaii's peoples. The United States got a military harbor and a fueling station midway across the Pacific, but the Islands also received satisfactory treatment because they were already "Americanized."

The Philippines off the coast of southern Asia had yet another story. With Spain defeated there, what sort of government should come into being? This archipelago invited dangerous intrigue. The Filipinos might fight among themselves, or great powers might fight over them. Yet the Philippines had a population of Asian hue and provoked a debate between "imperialists" and "anti-imperialists" that displayed American assumptions. Bryan, who had lost the 1896 election, lost for a second time in 1900. He was an anti-imperialist:

> Our opponents, conscious of the weakness, seek to confuse imperialism with expansion, and have even dared to claim Jefferson as a supporter … Jefferson … used language with such precision … that no one can be ignorant of his views: "If there be one principle more deeply rooted than any other in the mind of every American, it is that we should have nothing to do with conquest." The forcible annexation of territory to be governed by arbitrary power differs as much from the acquisition of territory to be built up into States as a monarchy differs from a democracy. The Democratic party does not oppose expansion when expansion enlarges the area of the Republic and incorporates land which can be settled by American citizens, or adds to our population people we are willing to become citizens and are capable of discharging their duties as such.

The head of the Anti-Imperialist League, George Boutwell, was a former Senator and secretary of the treasury. He argued that a republic did not take colonies:

> We must govern either with or without the consent of the people. If with their consent, it must be expressed through republican forms; that is, by suffrage. Is there a man in America who wished those seven millions of Malays, Negritos, and Chinamen [in the Philippines] for fellow-citizens and joint rulers of the Republic? But if we govern them without their consent, it must be by military occupation,—by force … What will be the effect on our domestic policy? How can we undertake to rule subject provinces in distant parts of the globe without trampling on the principles of free government? Once accepting this way of dealing with other people, how long will it be before some occasion will arise for applying it at home?

Everyone wanted to expand, but the anti-imperialists leaned to the belief that inhabitants of new lands must be able to evolve into citizens. Imperialists also wanted only worthy citizens but believed that the United States should take territories without

worrying about the quality of the denizens. Because anti-imperialists believed in expansion, they got themselves into a losing argument. On the way to China, the Philippines could also develop as a market. The imperialists asked the anti-imperialists what would happen to the Filipinos. Both sides agreed that the "mongrels" could not hope for citizenship, and so America could not admit the Philippines to statehood. Anti-imperialists had no compelling way to ward off colonization. Hear Albert Beveridge (De Pauw University), Republican Senator from Indiana and leading imperialist:

> We will not renounce our part in the mission of our race, trustee, under God, of the civilization of the world … This question is … elemental. It is racial. God … has made us the master organizers of the world to establish a system where chaos reigns … He has made us adept in government that we may administer government among savage and senile peoples. Were it not for such a force as this the world would relapse into barbarism and night. And of all our race He has marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the regeneration of the world. This is the divine mission of America.

President McKinley famously described the reasoning that led him to take the Philippines:

> When next I realized that the Philippines had dropped into our laps, I confess I did not know what to do … I went down on my hands and knees and prayed Almighty God for light and guidance … And one night late it came to me this way … That there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow men, for whom Christ also died. And then I went to bed and went to sleep, and slept soundly.

These examples from the Caribbean, Hawaii, and the Philippines illustrated complexity. Statesmen had catchphrases to describe what was going on. The United States had "annexed" "dependencies," "unincorporated territories," "protectorates," "colonies," "possessions." After the turn of the century, the Supreme Court ruled in the "Insular Cases" that the Constitution did not automatically extend to such areas. Previously, the United States had multiplied with territories that would automatically generate states. That old idea was now debatable. Americans showed how the Constitution could be revised through altered decisions of the Court.

Jurists and lawmakers created a space for the United States to have what some scholars called "informal" colonization. The occupation of the South, the management of Black Americans, and the obliteration of the Indians might uncomfortably remind citizens that the United States had its own imperium. Yet America never found the European sort of empire comfortable. On the other side, Americans feared granting independence to peoples who looked too different. The United States remained skeptical that some territories could govern themselves, but fretted about running the affairs of

others from Washington. Caught between racism and imperialism, diplomats thought narrowly about distant commerce. It would lead, without much effort, to the growth of proper values even in lesser ethnicities. Such expansion, however, did not continue without political-military involvement, as it was supposed to. Trading got tangled up with governance and brought about tampering with regions that would never rise to statehood.

Just as Cubans resented US high-handedness, rebels in the Philippines rose up and fought for a bloody and horrible three years. They wanted American colonialism as little as they wanted Spanish. Atrocities occurred on both sides, and the United States did not break the rebellion till 1901. McKinley had urged "benevolent assimilation" in the Philippines, and William Howard Taft, who represented Americans there, said they had to help their "little brown brothers." Rudyard Kipling, the famous English poet, called imperialism "the White Man's burden." A New York newspaper replied to Kipling:

> We've taken up the white man's burden of ebony and brown
> Now will you kindly tell us, Rudyard, how we may put it down?

Still, the United States did not obtain a system of colonies, and Philippines got its independence in 1946, before the Europeans gave up more extended belongings.

The Open Door Notes

American diplomats barely paused over these dilemmas as they focused on the connection to China, the ultimate consequence of the Spanish–American War. Two conditions determined American policy in Asia. First, the United States did not have the resources of the other powers. Second, in the long run, strategists were confident that America could produce more than its rivals and sell for less. In such circumstances, they believed, an electoral system would grow in China, and so would a valuable alliance between a genial "Uncle Sam" and the grateful Chinese. The Americans had arrived in Asia just in time. Not only were the Europeans dividing China economically. In addition, in 1894, Japan had won a war with China over Korea. In achieving recognition equal to the Europeans in Asia, the Japanese hoped to get a piece of China. Russia and Germany were more threatening. The United States did not want the Europeans and Japan to reach agreements, for such a situation would damage the prospects for an independent China. The Americans also lamented that bickering, especially by the Russians, might lead to a European war that could adversely involve the United States. In supporting trade and democracy in China, America would export its own institutions, and keep the peace.

In September of 1899, Secretary of State John Hay, after consulting with the English, issued the first of two "Open Door Notes." It called on the contending powers to treat each other equally within the ports or areas of China that they oversaw. The Europeans were asked to behave as gentlemen. They should respect Chinese sovereignty and not treat the country as a series of exclusive zones. Hay distributed a second, stronger, Note in the

spring of 1900. In addition to parity of treatment, the several countries should preserve the territorial and administrative integrity of China. Hay's language, some scholars say, revealed the "idealism" of Americans that people of goodwill would see eye to eye. And it was true that the United States lacked the ability to realize its concepts. Other countries greeted the Notes with hypocrisy, evasion, and even polite NOs. But in an expanse of the world in which Americans had little pull, Hay was laying out rules that might restrain action even if they were ignored more than they were followed. The Notes pointed to an involvement, mobilized opinion, and deferred to the Chinese. Moreover, even if the Notes expressed wishful thinking, they were self-serving. Hay believed that commercial expansion would help solve the domestic problem of uneven employment. If China remained whole and received help from contact with US businessmen, educators, and missionaries, they might gradually lead China on a US path. Hay revealed sophistication as well as naïveté.

The United States wanted to add to its commerce. It rejected "leaseholds" for itself, and fussed that colonies caused trouble and contradicted free government. Still, expansion was separated from the making of equal republican states and broke with the past. America would continue to grow and spread its institutions. Diplomats hoped teaching and example would work. Countries such as China would absorb American essentials, and their regimes would change.

The Open Door in Action

In the first decade of the twentieth century, the Open Door came to little. Good times returned after the election of 1896. In a few years, leaders no longer felt that their system verged on collapse. It was no longer necessary to look to China. Moreover, the United States could not enforce its will in Asia. From 1901 to 1909, under Theodore Roosevelt, policy had a harder edge than the new empire allowed. While he assisted Yankee traders within the spheres of influence, TR accepted these spheres. The second Note died. In accepting spheres, and thus a balance of power among the nations contesting China, the president hoped that US businessmen would have room to maneuver. If the United States refereed the claims of others, it might reserve some autonomy for itself. Roosevelt only indirectly followed the Open Door by trying to prevent any one country from dominating.

TR's chief trouble lay in figuring out whether the Russians or the Japanese posed the greater threat. When the two went to war in 1904, Roosevelt mediated the peace and checked Japan with Russia. He also accepted Japanese interests in Asia. In exchange the Japanese recognized the American connection to the Philippines, and at least in public did not resist America. Inclining to the Japanese at Russian expense, the United States gave Russia a mild grievance. At the same time, the Japanese knew that the United States had not befriended them. Through the century Americans would steer between Japan and Russia, no easy job. In 1906, TR received the Nobel Peace Prize for splitting the differences between the two.

Roosevelt's successor, William Howard Taft, was more committed to systemic problem-solving. Taft came to believe that working with Japan had failed or could not succeed in the long run. He proposed, instead, to strengthen China herself. Taft sponsored projects that American capitalists would underwrite. His "Dollar Diplomacy," another example of the Open Door at work, promised currency reform, railroad building, and governmental re-organization. Sometimes US businesses planned large investments. Taft wanted to lift China up and to make her self-governing. Yet the United States intended too much and could not raise the money necessary for these plans. Businessmen got cold feet, considering China too risky. China itself was too feeble to stand by American initiatives; her leaders could not afford to offend other nations. To put this another way, England, France, Russia, and Japan spoiled US schemes. By the time Taft left office in 1913, the American approach had not worked in Asia, and China itself was diminished.

The New Empire in Mexico

The final application of these ideas came in Mexico after the election of Woodrow Wilson at the end of 1912.

From 1876 to 1911, Porfirio Diaz's dictatorship stabilized Mexico. Diaz wished for US investments in railroads, mining, and oil, and laws aided the Americans who owned large ranches. His ruthless leadership, however, led to an uprising in 1910, to his downfall in 1911, and to a revolutionary struggle. His collapse did not entirely displease the United States because, to balance America, Diaz had encouraged the British. Yet Diaz's successor, Francisco Madero, a mystic unsuitable to politics, lost the esteem of the Taft administration as fighting continued. A crisis came in February 1913, just before Wilson took office. In a plot that implicated the American ambassador, conspirators assassinated Madero, and one of his generals, Victoriano Huerta, took over.

The murder shocked Wilson, who refused to recognize this government of "butchers." He wanted next door to the United States neither a romantic like Madero nor a militarist "brute" like Huerta. The president struggled to find a trail that would give him electoral and economic steadiness in Mexico. "I am going to teach the South American republics," he said, to vote for "good men." Wilson employed various strategies to push Huerta out. He tried cooperation with the British, a financial blockade, and a call for elections in which Huerta could not run. Finally, Wilson resorted to force. In complicated actions in the spring of 1914, the United States invaded Mexico to stop Huerta from getting supplies. This intervention proved brief, for in August of 1914, Huerta left office, and Don Venustiano Carranza took his place. Wilson perceived Carranza as a middle-class reformer who promised policies that Wilson supported.

As much as Huerta, however, Carranza despised America, and Carranza's response to his own internal conflicts put Wilson on the spot. The peasant revolutionary Pancho Villa tested both presidents. In 1916 Villa made raids on the US–Mexico border; killed US citizens; and burned Columbus, New Mexico. He wanted to lure "gringos" into his country to undermine Carranza and cast Carranza at odds with Wilson. With wary cooperation from Carranza, Wilson ordered his military to Mexico once more, this time

to go after Villa. Soon, some of these 12,000 troops skirmished with Carranza's army, and Carranza demanded the expedition's end. As Villa had intended, the United States was embroiled with Carranza, although Villa failed to get power himself. Nonetheless, when Villa provoked Carranza to stand up to Wilson, Villa showed that even Mexicans like Carranza disliked America.

In early 1917, the United States went to war with Germany. Wilson withdrew his soldiers from Mexico to take on the bigger enemy. The adventure ended for the moment but added to the heritage of ill will from the Mexican War of sixty-five years before. But the politics of Mexico were a scandal, and the country bordered America. Poor Mexico, it was said, so far from God, so close to the United States. The revolution continued into the 1920s, and Mexico's doubtful connection to America—beginning in the 1830s—would go on for more than one hundred years after the war with Germany.

Like others in the United States who had absorbed a new empire orientation, Wilson brought together conflicting aims. He believed that reform in Mexico would go with policy that tipped to the Americans, although they never wanted to make a colony of Mexico. In his own mind, Wilson—like TR—was not involved in Mexico's internal politics. He was rather getting rid of a gangster element and providing a framework in which the Mexicans could make their own decisions. Any law enforcer would arrest hoodlums like Huerta and Villa. These men represented not Mexicans, but only themselves; Carranza, a democrat, deserved both victory in his country and recognition from the United States. On the other side, America repelled Mexicans, but their hostility mixed with their own instability, shifting administrations, and tyranny. The democracy Americans wanted in Mexico would be volatile, and the reliability that Americans sometimes liked better often came from men whom the United States could not abide.

* * *

The new republicans, as I have called them, had designed their entrée into Asia to solve the crises of the now past 1890s. When the civil–military leaders strengthened their rule after 1896 and good times returned, Asia declined as a priority. Latin America had more weight than China, and problems with the European powers occupied the United States. Yet the diplomats did not get entirely wrong with the prospects of a billion Chinese eager to trade, although they expected the commerce a century too early.

CHAPTER 11
PROGRESSIVE AMERICA, 1900–20

The Educated Speak from Theodore Roosevelt to Woodrow Wilson

My New Republicanism was at high tide in the first twenty years of the new century, when it was known as "Progressivism." It was the last time that mass democracy might be checked. Like the Founding Fathers, the progressives were torn in standing between an undifferentiated people, who may or may not have been worthy of citizenship, and an undeserving aristocracy of wealth.

The Meaning of Progressivism

Politicians first used "Progressivism" in 1912. It signified a position between standpatters, the old guard, or regulars, who liked things the way they were; and socialists, the radicals who would overthrow the America that was home to great corporations with moneyed owners and masses of poorer workers. The progressives wanted to work out compromises between owners and masses. But progressives hardly ever identified themselves as such, and others really made the term familiar. The university graduates who succeeded in politics after 1900 disliked the scrappy nation into which the United States had developed. Threatening the educated were Catholic and Jewish refugees, on the one hand; and on the other, plutocrats who lacked a college degree—Carnegie, Rockefeller, and most recently automobile manufacturer Henry Ford. Large industries had taken the United States from its heritage, where community-minded leaders had thought of the general good and emphasized a middling people. America must regain some economic balance but also some appreciation of culture and deference. The problem was to tame the cities and to make the rich responsible.

Progressivism has been discussed for well over a century. Without much form, it took many turns. You won't find much consistency in its policies, which were often contradictory or paradoxical. Centralization competed with decentralization, democracy with elitism, equality with freedom. But the educated style stands out. Indebtedness to higher training with its heritage of advantaged Protestantism marked progressives. They would set the United States on a tonier course by removing its rough edges. Progressives loved expertise and claimed that facts and statistics proved their viewpoint. They recommended commissions and hearings, conducted surveys, and issued reports. Every person of goodwill open to evidence, progressives believed, would share their views.

Progressives thought of themselves as impartial authorities. They belonged to both the Democratic and Republican parties. Republican progressives prevailed, however,

and the GOP continued to lead national life. Democratic progressives put their old-time Liberalism to the side and downplayed laissez faire. For the first two decades of the twentieth century, their dispositions were central.

Progressives at Work—The City

Cities were often in the hands of non-nationals and "bosses," usually Irish Catholic. Progressives wanted to end the "boss system" and to install a better class in office to prevent the bribery, plundering, and vote stealing that disgraced built-up areas. America needed more decorous men in politics. Sometimes, reformers put "city managers" in place of elected officials. Always, progressives argued that citizens call on specialists to give disinterested solutions:

> Every city will be an experiment station, offering new experiences to the world … The amplitude of powers resident in the city … may solve not only the needs that now confront it but … the larger social problems of industry as well. What the final municipal program of the new city will be, one can only conjecture, but that it will be a program making for a better civilization, a larger life, and increased comfort and opportunity, the gradual progression of society gives assurance.
>
> Frederick Howe (PhD, Johns Hopkins), *The City: The Hope of Democracy* (1905)

When in power, progressives wanted laws that would protect women and the young at work, and that would better the wretched conditions of laborers. They campaigned against the poverty that especially harmed children:

> Years of careful study and investigation have convinced me that the evils inflicted upon children by poverty are responsible for many of the features of that hideous … Social Problem. I have tried to visualize some of the principal phases of the problem—… excessive infantile disease and mortality; the tragedy and folly of attempting to educate the hungry, ill-fed school children; the terrible burdens borne by the working child in our modern industrial system.
>
> John Spargo (Socialist from England), *The Bitter Cry of the Children* (1906)

The "settlement house" brought progressives, usually women, to live in slum districts and to organize better lives there. Making old mansions into public meeting rooms, these progressives taught poor young wives how to run a household, to discuss politics, and to spend leisure time:

> You must suffer from the dirty streets, the universal ugliness, the lack of oxygen in the air you daily breathe, the endless struggle with soot and dust and insufficient water supply … if you are to speak as one having authority … Nowhere is the individual so left to himself as in the cosmopolitan medley of a great working class

> district in an American city; and nowhere does the devil clutch more voraciously after the hindmost … The isolation, the apathy, the lack of initiative, the social downdraft … cannot be replaced with light and life by any spasmodic effort. Only when the whole community persistently does its part can the slum be outgrown and transformed.
>
> Florence Kelley (BA, Cornell University; LLB, Northwestern) on settlement houses, 1898

Well-off ladies had long-bewailed metropolitan life. Now, all over the United States, respectable men helped women. They had little success against prostitution and the saloon, more in beautifying the city. They did not just build parks but also made playgrounds accessible to the deserving and needy. Cleanliness played a part in Progressivism. An early expression of these drives came in Toledo, Ohio, where the people elected Sam "Golden Rule" Jones (a Welshman with little formal education) as mayor for four terms. Jones backed public spending for Toledo-wide projects; the city's ownership of the electric, gas, and water supply; jobs and housing for the unemployed; and free vocational education. In 1901, Galveston, Texas, appointed a commission of specialists who ran the town after a disastrous hurricane. Dayton, Ohio, followed a similar course, and Tom Johnson, a wealthy convert to reform with no formal education, ran Cleveland:

> The greatest movement in the world to-day may be characterized as the struggle of the people against Privilege … Privilege—always awake and quick to act, owning many of the newspapers, controlling the election and appointment of judges, dictating to city councils, influencing legislatures and writing our national laws … Our governments, local, State, and national, have precipitated the struggle of the people against … privilege and not men … The battle is not a battle against persons, but against unnatural conditions, against a wrong social order!
>
> Johnson, *My Story* (1911)

Chicago became another stronghold of Progressivism after Jane Addams (Rockford University) started the most prominent settlement house, Hull House, in 1889. In a lowdown district, Hull House offered counseling, childcare, arts and crafts, contact with doctors, and lessons in English. In a refined way, Hull House did the work of bosses. Addams describes one of her projects (1892):

> It is difficult to classify the Working People's Social Science Club, which meets weekly at Hull House. It is social, educational, and civic in character, the latter chiefly because it strongly connects the House with the labor problems in their political and social aspects … At eight o'clock every Wednesday evening the secretary calls to order from forty to one hundred people, and a speaker is introduced … It offers a cosmopolitan opportunity for discussion. The only possible danger from this commingling of many theories is incurred when there is an attempt at suppression

> … Nothing so disconcerts a social agitator as to find among his auditors men who have been through all that, and who are quite as radical as he in another direction.

Lillian Wald, who went to the New York Training School for Nurses, opened the Henry Street Settlement in New York City in 1893, working in parallel with Addams. In 1911, the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire took the lives of 146 women in New York where clothing was made. Investigating for the commission that reported on the fire was Frances Perkins (science degree from Mount Holyoke College, political science MA from Columbia University, and graduate work at the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania). Perkins pointed out the dangers to female workers, toured legislators in the clothing quarter, and lobbied for the legislation that improved safety regulations and reduced hours of employment; in the 1930s, she served as the US Secretary of Labor.

The settlement house made a success of the profession of social work. Educated females who otherwise might have had no careers took jobs in such houses. The women created positions for themselves and came to be regarded as full citizens.

Cleaning Up Politics

The progressives wanted to sanitize politics. Sometimes they showed faith in the electorate, but simultaneously wanted to control voters who might be untrustworthy. When fighting "privilege" or the "interests," progressives angled for devices that would enable people like themselves to take back the government. They pressed for the "primary" system, which would allow contests within parties for candidates before an election. This strategy might put reformers on the ballot and prevent "bosses" from nominating their own. The "initiative" permitted voters to propose laws and thus outwit standpatters on city councils and legislatures. The "referendum" gave the people the ability to revoke a law that special interests might have rammed through a legislature. And the "recall" allowed voters to remove dishonest politicians.

On the national level, two achievements showed this progressive inclination. In 1913, the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution made its way to law and changed how US senators were chosen. Previously, the legislatures of each state had selected senators. Now, the voters in each state elected senators directly, as citizens had voted for the House of Representatives for 125 years. The Nineteenth Amendment of 1920 gave women the vote after a struggle of almost a century. But another central idea implied that women would change politics because they lived on a loftier plane:

> The American revolutionists boldly proclaimed the heresies: "Taxation without representation is tyranny." "Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed." … How can our nation … den[y] that fundamental right of democracy to thousands of [female] public school teachers from whom … men learn all they know of citizenship and patriotism … to women who … serve in every uplifting moral and social enterprise?
>
> Carrie Chapman Catt (Iowa State University), 1917

Because progressives wanted to polish public life, they often vetoed democracy for refinement when they got power. Appointed "city commissioners" and "managers" did not receive the scrutiny of the voters, and these experts personified the idea that scientific authorities make policy. One saw this aspect of Progressivism most clearly in the South, where reformers wanted to end a system that embraced ignorant voters. Southern progressives came up with various ideas, among them literacy requirements and the "poll" (voting) tax, to disenfranchise African Americans. But progressives in the South also supported these ideas to prevent many whites from voting. A select cream would be more likely to choose suitable people.

Political Economy

Progressives were not militants. Large business interests sometimes collaborated with progressives. The progressives wanted to centralize power but at least said that they hoped to use this power to increase democracy. Hamilton's means could secure Jefferson's ends:

> The American idea is no longer to be propagated merely by multiplying the children of the West and by granting ignorant aliens the right to vote … [The idea] is to be fulfilled by a certain measure of discipline; not merely by the abundant satisfaction of individual desires, but by a large measure of individual subordination and self-denial … In becoming responsible for the subordination of the individual to the demand of a dominant and constructive national purpose, the American state will in effect be making itself responsible for morally and socially desirable distribution of wealth.
>
> Herbert Croly (Harvard), *The Promise of American Life* (1909)

The forward-looking took up a "search for order." Conscientious politicians would reduce inequality and give a stake in society for those who did not have one. Yet progressives never intended to undo the system in which they worked and did not want a democracy based solely on numbers. Many progressives were committed to the corporate capitalism that had grown in the United States since the Civil War. This did not necessarily make them like the standpatters. Progressives called on industrial executives to deliver rules on labor relations, banking, and agriculture; and progressives would use the same knowhow to administer funds for municipal services and projects. Were experts conservative?

> When science becomes its own critic, it assures its own future. It is able, then, to attack the source of error itself … If the scientific temper were as much a part of us as the faltering ethics we now absorb in our childhood, then we might hope to face our problems with something like assurance … The scientific spirit is the discipline of democracy, the escape from drift, the outlook of a free man.
>
> Walter Lippmann (Harvard) *Drift and Mastery*, 1914

Some progressives picked out the railroads as targets, but also the businesses that provided gas, electricity, water, and carriage within cities ("utility" companies), and this progressive activism had continuities with Populism. Of all such progressives Robert La Follette of Wisconsin is still the most famous. Chosen governor in 1901 after studying at its university in the capital in Madison, he consulted with professors from the institution. La Follette founded a reference bureau to help legislators prepare laws, and such bureaus across the country took the state's law library as a standard. This "Wisconsin idea" clarified how the new practical sciences could serve government. The state's title as the "laboratory of democracy" struck commentators as odd, however, since La Follette built up his own machine based on patronage. But Wisconsin introduced a primary system, campaign spending laws, and codes of ethics for politicians. La Follette brought the railroads under the regulation of a commission and used similar commissions to make policy on tax assessments, highway construction, and the environment. He fought the lumber industry, enterprises on the edge of the law, and utilities. Governors in many states took up his ideas: in the Northeast in New Jersey and New York; in the Midwest in Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and Minnesota; in the South in Arkansas, Georgia, and Mississippi; and in the West in California, Colorado, and Oregon.

La Follette went on to grace the US Senate. Other figures who had made reputations as reforming governors joined La Follette in Washington. Woodrow Wilson became president in 1912 after success as governor of New Jersey. As governor of California in 1910, Hiram Johnson (University of California) curbed his state's Southern Pacific Railroad, but in the late 1910s resigned as governor to adorn the Senate for over twenty-five years. Charles Evan Hughes (Brown University and Columbia Law School) of New York investigated gas and insurance companies and the coal trust. New York chose him as governor, and he then went on to the Supreme Court. Hughes left the Court to run unsuccessfully for the presidency as a Republican when Wilson won re-election in 1916, but later returned to the Court as the chief magistrate—in the company of other progressives.

In addition to placing some of its leading lights on the Court, progressives had earlier made an impact on the institution. The ideas of Louis D. Brandeis (Harvard Law) prove instructive. Brandeis was "the peoples' attorney" before the progressive period reached its high point. Then he pressed some of its principles on the Court. In 1908, the justices took up the right to limit the hours of women's work in *Muller v. Oregon*. Employers thought they could contract with workers without interference. Progressives wanted to make careless capitalists more answerable for laborer's health and welfare. A women's organization, the Consumers League, promoted itself with the slogan "investigate, agitate, legislate." It persuaded Brandeis to defend an Oregon law regulating female employment. Relying on the research of the League, he succeeded with "the Brandeis brief" in *Muller*. His argument centered around evidence from the social sciences about the damaging effect of long hours of work on women specifically, but consequently on the whole society. In accepting the law's constitutionality and deviating from the nineteenth-century love affair with "freedom of contract," the Court held that "It may not be amiss to notice … expressions of opinion from other than judicial sources." In acknowledging this "special

legislation" to protect women, the justices based their decision on scholarly findings. In 1910, Brandeis took up with progressives in "the Eastern [Railroad]Rate Case." He urged that the railroad charged too much. No revolutionary, however, Brandeis argued that the railroad leaders lacked knowledge of their costs and the basis of their pricing. Inept, the railroads passed their inefficiencies on to customers. Calling on notions of a well-run business, he gave the name "scientific management" to a system of fees that would have credibility. In 1915, Wilson appointed Brandeis to the Court. This was more than notable because he was Jewish.

Race

Few progressives had their minds on the plight of Negroes. Democratic progressives were hostile to Blacks. Only Booker Washington received praise from Republicans, and radicals called him an "Uncle Tom," the gentle and obedient slave in Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Yet among all the progressives, perhaps the most commendable was W. E. B. Du Bois, an African American born in Massachusetts shortly after the Civil War. Du Bois was unusually privileged for a Black, and graduated in 1888 from Fisk University in Tennessee, one of the earliest HBCUs. He then obtained another BA from Harvard in 1890; studied in Berlin on a fellowship; and finally gained a Harvard doctorate in 1895. Before he took a permanent position at Atlanta University, another HBCU in Georgia, Du Bois spent a year as a researcher at the University of Pennsylvania. This Ivy League institution would not have him for more than a year, but his scholarship in 1896–7 led to a major work published in 1899, *The Philadelphia Negro*.

In 1903, Du Bois issued *The Souls of Black Folks*, the most insightful book on race penned by an American national. Composed of thirteen essays, it allied aphoristic musings, poetry, and song with acute analyses. "The problem of the 20th Century," wrote Du Bois, "is the problem of the color line." In two related examinations, he spoke, first of the Negro's "double consciousness."

> Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question: … How does it feel to be a problem? … One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder … He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face.

The second examination revolved around his notion of "the veil," the African-American's grasp "that I was different from the others; or like [whites] in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil." The veil alluded to the literally

darker skin of Du Bois himself, a physical demarcation of difference from Caucasians. It also intimated that an African American allowed his still-masters to believe falsely in the superiority of their race. The connected idea of double consciousness was a cry of pain: despite centuries of torment and humiliation, Black people only wanted to be recognized as American, the equal of their fellows.

A young Du Bois took issue not only with the elderly Frederick Douglass but also with the middle-aged Booker Washington. However, Du Bois had a career that long over-spanned the progressive period. He became ever more critical of the United States and ever more convinced that a Marxist orientation best explained American civilization and its structural racism. When he died in 1963 in Africa, he was committed to another Revolution to salvage America. Back in the early part of the twentieth century, he was a progressive voice rarely heard.

The Progressive Presidency

We have already met the GOP and Democratic presidents of this era conducting diplomacy. They projected Progressivism overseas but also exemplified it at home.

Republican William McKinley (who never finished Allegheny College) served his first term from 1897 to 1901. Toward its end, his Vice President Garret Hobart (BA Rutgers College) died. In 1900, Theodore Roosevelt stood in for Hobart. Then a gunman assassinated McKinley after his victory at the start of his second term. In 1901, TR succeeded to the presidency, the beneficiary of two deaths. Very much a patrician, TR advertised himself as a popular leader and thought of the presidency as a lecturing platform, a "bully pulpit." He brought to the job Protestant self-righteousness and a desire for harmony between American social classes. In varied jobs, he had gotten a reputation for "good government," and was early interested in a professional civil service. His Progressivism initially amounted to the view that everyone should receive a "Square Deal," and that America should punish "malefactors of great wealth." He saw corporations as crucial—they must prosper but conduct themselves properly. To get his way, the president used the standard progressive technique of the expert commission but, additionally, personal accommodations with capitalists.

Early on, TR created a Department of Commerce and Labor, with a Bureau of Corporations to look at industrial combinations. Roosevelt settled the coal strike of 1902, and the commission that investigated it showed how government was trending. His Commissioner of Labor was Carroll Wright, a well-known statistician who taught at various universities, including Harvard. The other six commissioners included a mining engineer, a military engineer, a judge, an expert in the coal business, a Roman Catholic Bishop, and an "eminent sociologist" (who was a union leader). In 1903 the Elkins Railroad Act—named after West Virginia Republican senator Stephen Elkins—strengthened the Interstate Commerce Commission of the late nineteenth century in its dealing with the railroads. The Roosevelt administration sued various large businesses (the "trusts") and received standing as a "trustbuster." But TR never smashed large

concerns, and merely hinted at action to force corporations to change in suitable ways. Businessmen would voluntarily reform to avoid legal action. Roosevelt presided over a seemly balance between corporate responsibility and profit. With varying degrees of success this strategy worked with J. P. Morgan, the coal companies, US Steel, Standard Oil, and New York bankers. In his elected term won in 1904, the president sensed a shift in public feeling and inclined to more forward-looking positions. In 1906 the Hepburn Act—sponsored by Republican Iowa congressman William Hepburn—fortified the Interstate Commerce Commission and amended railroad regulation.

An outcry that year followed the publication by Upton Sinclair (City College of New York), of *The Jungle*, a novel that exposed the meat-packing industry:

> Of the butchers and floorsmen, the beef boners and trimmers, and all those who used knives, you could scarcely find a person who had the use of his thumb; time and time again the base of it had been slashed, till it was a mere lump of flesh against which the man pressed the knife to hold it … This is no fairy story and no joke; the meat would be shoveled into carts, and the man who did the shoveling would not trouble to lift out a rat even when he saw one—there were things that went into the sausage in comparison with which a poisoned rat was a tidbit.

Roosevelt gave the name "muckraker" to writers like Sinclair who looked at American dirt. TR took the designation from John Bunyan's famed Puritan tract, *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), which described a man scraping up garbage rather than searching for finer things. The president wanted to show that he differed from progressives who just made trouble. But after the outrage that followed *The Jungle*'s publication, Roosevelt supported a pure food and drug act, and meat inspection laws.

For the most part, a standpat Congress sidetracked TR. In 1908, disinclined even figuratively to break with the two terms that George Washington had started, Roosevelt handed the presidency over to the handpicked William Howard Taft. Taft dutifully followed Roosevelt but had no time for the personal use of power that had made Roosevelt's Square Deal appealing. Taft believed in legal remedies and ultimately served on the Supreme Court. The electorate perceived his administration as lethargic as Taft's own 300-pound slow-moving body. Nonetheless, the legislation he proposed was as powerful as Roosevelt's in inducing businesses to go as government wanted, and Taft's preferences, like TR's, were more advanced than the Congress. Then Roosevelt fell out with Republicans and defied Taft, seeking four more years in 1912. Democrat Woodrow Wilson opposed the two Republicans. The campaign, when the phrase "progressive movement" came into existence, had an unusual interest. The candidates codified Progressivism by articulating their own practical higher learning and their vaguely religious inspiration.

A Harvard man, Roosevelt was a fluent and intelligent writer of American history, and early on, took part in the rise of scientific but useful social study. In 1912 he had created the Progressive Party, a "third party" to win his own re-election. At its convention,

Roosevelt declared "we stand at Armageddon and battle for the Lord." The delegates sung the English hymn, "Onward Christian Soldiers":

> Onward, Christian Soldiers, marching as to war.
> With the cross of Jesus going on before!
> Christ the royal Master, leads against the foe;
> Forward into battle, see His banner go!

After his defeat in 1912, Taft returned to his Yale alma mater for eight years as a professor of law. Wilson came from a Virginian line of Presbyterian ministers, and the upward sweep of human history, he believed, revealed the nature of the divine. Advance, he thought, flowed through human events, from the Greeks and Romans to Western Europe, to Britain, and in the early twentieth century to the United States. Wilson saw God in His works—things such as the rise of elected governments. Wilson's career as an academic led to the presidency of Princeton. Like Roosevelt, he wrote on American history, though his scholarship was drearier. His most famous text, *Congressional Government* (1885), argued that the American system failed because it dispersed power, mostly to Congress. An effective regime would be something akin to the British Parliament. There, politicians were committed to realizing a program with a disciplined cabinet and a prime minister. Administrative science would help Wilson implement the best form of government. A fourth candidate, Eugene V. Debs, called himself a socialist, not a progressive. He had dropped out of high school at age fourteen and had renounced Christianity.

In the election Roosevelt dominated the Republicans, whose disaffected adherents were the source of TR's new party. Taft and the remains of the GOP, stamped as "the Old Guard," hardly had a chance. The major battle occurred between the "New Nationalism" of Roosevelt, and the "New Freedom" of Wilson and his Democratic Party converted to Progressivism. Roosevelt said that "The betterment we seek must be accomplished mainly through the National Government," but did not talk about his personal negotiations with business. Wilson too blurred issues about the authority of the president. He would restore competition but not impose top-down solutions. Yet Wilson wanted to centralize the government almost as much as Roosevelt, and additionally to do it through novel institutions.

With Taft and Roosevelt divided, Wilson won, briefly breaking Republican supremacy. With a preachy and authoritarian streak, and a scorn for African Americans that contrasted to the GOP's comparative tolerance, the learned Democrat worked hard, about as far away from cultural relativists as one can imagine. TR's daughter, Alice Roosevelt Longworth, remarked that Wilson was "weaned on a pickle." There was, as one of his associates said, Wilson's way and the wrong way. He was a consequential president but not just because of the First World War into which he led the United States. Wilson also took the Democrats from laissez-faire toward the acceptance of federal power. With Wilson, Democratic Liberalism began to mean the opposite of local communities doing what they wished.

The administration flooded the nation with legislation, the latest sign in the United States of a vital presidency. Wilson constructed expert agencies to bring about the changes he wanted. A tariff reduced rates for the first time since before the Civil War. More to the progressive point, the Federal Reserve Act created a banking system for the country,

Figure 7 Ungrudging Measure (this cartoon portrays Woodrow Wilson's attitude toward Congress in 1914). Courtesy of US Senate Collection, National Archives and Records Administration.

and a Federal Reserve Board made for modest control over the bankers. A Federal Trade Commission upgraded Roosevelt's Bureau of Corporations. An Antitrust Act did not break up trusts but formulated rules for their conduct. Wilson proved as vigorous as Roosevelt. While he lacked TR's impulsiveness, Wilson put together a structure of commissions that generated regulations for how men and their organizations should act in their economic dealings.

The First World War

In 1914, long-smoldering disputes among the Europeans came to a boil, and war broke out among them. Britain and France, the Western Allies but linked with Russia, collided with Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Central Powers. Long-time enemies, Britain and France put aside their disagreements as a new rival, Germany, bid for supremacy in Europe. The Germans frightened the French, and the English would not give up their place as number one colonial power. German hatred for the Slavs in Russia and elsewhere gave a deeper motive for the war. To thwart Germany, the English were prompted to join up with Russia, whom they otherwise disliked. Across the Atlantic, the war seemed like one of the never-ending European conflicts. The United States forgot its own Civil War, whose killing generated a template for what was happening overseas. Instead, Americans believed that 1914 displayed their virtues in contrast to the Europeans, who had never worked out reasonable governments.

The war, however, was not just another tiff. The Great War or the World War or the First World War, as it came to be known after a second period of mass destruction occurred from 1939 to 1945, still horrifies historians in its savagery. Along what was called "the Western Front," armies built opposing lines that included machine guns, artillery, and fortified ditches. This extended battlefield ran from Holland in the north, through France, to Switzerland in the south. The English and French on one side, and the Germans on the other, slaughtered one another without rest, victory, or regard for the survival of a common life. Soldiers battled over a few yards, each side taking enormous losses. For Americans, this "trench warfare" dramatized continuing horror. The Western Front, however, formed only part of the contest. Germans and Russians, among others, were similarly decimating one another on the other side of Europe, on the "Eastern Front," and lesser engagements occurred worldwide.

In the Northeast of the United States, which decided the nation's views, opinion makers agreed that colonial disputes had caused the war. Although both sides had faults, Germany had more. England and France by this time upheld democracy of a sort, while the Germans had anti-democratic compulsions. Yet consensus did not convince Americans that they should get involved. The consensus did prove that, after the Civil War, accord had arisen between the United States and England. Both countries put aside the antipathy that had driven relations after the Revolution. A new friendliness connected the interests of an English-speaking Protestant people. In addition, the United States supplied the Western Allies on credit with much that was necessary for fighting.

If Germany beat England, the debts would not be paid. Could the Americans tolerate Allied defeat if they could prevent it?

Initially, Woodrow Wilson recoiled from Europe, and determined to keep out. But within a year, the attacks of the new German submarines on shipping in the north Atlantic, which sometimes involved Americans, outraged the president. In May of 1915, the Germans torpedoed the British passenger liner *Lusitania*, drowning 128 US citizens. Wilson threatened the Germans unless they found a way of conquering the English without interfering with American trade or travelers. In March of 1916, after the Germans sank the French *Sussex*, they pledged different policies, and Wilson appeared to have found a way out of conflict. In 1916, he became less sure of a need for a British victory. The homicide in Europe put pressure on US–GB rapport. That year the German assault at Verdun in France claimed a million casualties between the Germans and the French defenders. At about the same time, the British attacked the Germans at the Somme River between June and November; the British took 400,000 casualties, 60,000 in one day. Americans came to doubt England, as selfishly invested in its triumph as were its enemies.

In the 1916 presidential race, Wilson promised that the country would not enter the fighting, his slogan: "He Kept Us Out Of War." "There is such a thing," the President said, "as a nation's being too proud to fight." He took the high ground as the most peace-oriented of America's leaders, including a belligerent Theodore Roosevelt, who once more itched for battle. Shortly after Wilson's re-election, the Germans, who had promised not to sink American ships, reneged and began "unrestricted" submarine warfare. The German military and its diplomats had disagreed over how to achieve victory. Could Germany overpower Britain if America remained hostilely neutral and continued to supply England? Perhaps the Germans should starve England by sinking American ships even if such attacks assured that the United States would enter the war on the Allied side. In the winter of 1916–17, the Germans fatefully decided to go all-out to defeat Britain and France. In the year it would take America to cross the Atlantic to help, the Germans reasoned, they would have crushed their debilitated foes. US mobilization for war would take too long to alter the outcome.

It was close. The Germans assaulted US ships. Wilson hesitated. Could he somehow stay out? "It would be a crime against civilization," he lamented, "if we went in." At the end of February 1917, the English intercepted a proposal by the German foreign secretary, Arthur Zimmerman, to have Mexico join up with his country. The plan would return to the Mexicans land they had lost in 1848. In the context of Wilson's intervention in Mexico, the publication of "the Zimmerman telegram" heightened the commotion. Although the telegram came to nothing, Wilson in anguish asked for and got a declaration of war in April of 1917.

A popular song of the era bragged:

> Over there, over there. Send the word, send the word over there
> That the Yanks are coming. The Yanks are coming,

The drums rum-tumming, Everywhere.
So prepare, say a prayer, Send the word, send the word to beware.
We'll be over, we're coming over
And we won't come back till It's over. Over there.

"Over There," George M. Cohan (1917)

A year went by before the United States made its presence felt in France. In the meantime, on the Eastern Front, resistance to the Germans collapsed. Revolution gripped the Russian Empire, and everywhere the Americans feared the collapse of the enfeebled old order. While the German navy sank American ships in the Atlantic, Russia capitulated to Germany. The Germans in the east turned west, launching a gigantic attack in March of 1918 to knock out the Allies. The offensive stalled east of Paris in the spring. In an exhibition of the efficiency of Progressivism, the United States had marshaled its industry and its manpower. Although Americans did not turn the battle, they had a place in the front by the time of the German offensive and had a psychological effect on both the Allies and Germans. The British and French knew that they could rely on inexhaustible numbers of soldiers from the United States, while the Germans recognized that their enemies now had superiority in men and materiel. In the fall of 1918, the Germans retreated across Europe and surrendered in November.

Progressive War

Some progressives displayed hostility to the early-twentieth-century diplomacy that they saw as colonialism. Nonetheless, from 1900 to 1915, domestic Progressivism and the New Empire melded. For the three presidents and like-minded leaders, America had progressive values in part because it could train other nations in suitable organization. "Every nation," said Wilson, "needs to be drawn into the tutelage of America." When he brought the United States into the World War, the President gave the progressive impulse a global and systematic fruition. His statesmanship made its mark on world politics.

Wilson entered Europe's bloodletting, believing in German wickedness. He thought that the ongoing battle menaced both the United States and Western culture. The president feared not just a German victory but the rise of barbarism over Europe in the wake of endless fighting. Mutinies among the troops on both sides told Wilson that the contest was undermining the societies from which the United States had derived. As a guardian of humanity, Wilson said, America entered the World War, "civilization itself seeming in the balance."

According to reports, the president worried that the war would end Progressivism at home. But in some ways Progressivism reached its high point when America came into the conflict. The War Revenue Act of 1917 called for taxes on the excess profits of corporations, and on personal incomes that went higher as the income increased ("progressive" taxes). Labor union membership increased, and some workers won an eight-hour day. Employers were forced to look to employee welfare.

Wilson only "associated" the United States with the Western Allies. All sides had to recognize that America had an unbiased stake in the outcome. From Wilson's perspective "a peace without victory" was in harmony with resolving problems through pragmatic academic knowledge. He created a group of scholars, "the Inquiry," who gave him advice. "Tell me what's right, and I'll do it," he said. "Give me a guaranteed position." He poured over maps of Europe himself, and he composed statements of principle on his own typewriter.

Wilson found transcendent meaning in the events of 1914–19. As a professor, he was used to having his wisdom, which he presumed to be scientific, prevail. Moreover, the president displayed the outlook of his family's Calvinist clergymen. One wag said that early in life Wilson had to decide between politics and the ministry, and chose the latter. Wilson now saw himself as an instrument of God. Universal leadership had passed to America. Abraham Lincoln had recast the country on behalf of a Protestant destiny. Wilson would effect this vision everywhere. Colorless and school-marmish in person, the president still had a gift for uplifting speeches, and captured the public imagination with his eloquence. He joined the reasoned and religious sentiments of Progressivism, purposing to bring stability to a world that needed regulated intelligence.

Wilsonianism

Wilson unveiled his program in January 1918, the "Fourteen Points" speech. The first five defined the peace for which the president had led the nation to war. (1) He would end secret diplomacy; "open covenants" would be "openly arrived at." After the war, the world political economy would have (2) freedom of the seas, (3) low tariffs and non-discriminatory trade, and (4) reduced armaments. (5) Colonialism à la the Europeans would end, and compromise would sort out opposing claims. Points (6)–(13) solved specific European disputes. The last point, (14), committed the world to "a general association of nations." This League of Nations, the forerunner of the present United Nations, was at the center of an international system that Wilson wanted to fabricate.

Wilson's plans were rooted in the past—his and the nation's. New Empire expansionism became universal. The plan for an international political entity showed how the United States might disseminate its values but would not worry about whether or how other places might enter the Union. Wilson's goals also developed from his agenda at home. The New Freedom rescued what he saw as a faltering political economy. The president had launched a series of administrative units that drew up rules for trade, manufacturing, banking and investments, employee relations, and agriculture. In the League of Nations, Wilson dreamed of something less than a planetary government, but he hoped for a framework in which all nations would operate. In the League, Wilson's domestic Progressivism got writ large.

The president expounded his ideas in the context of the disintegration in Russia. In March of 1917, just before the United States declared war on Germany, the Czar lost power. A group of social reformers, the "Mensheviks," took over. Their "provisional" government at once had to fight more radical politicians. Although the Mensheviks kept

the country in the war, the effort was anemic, and Wilson agonized that if Russia gave in to the Germans, they would win everywhere. Russia typified the debacle of the war. Then, in October of 1917, revolutionary followers of Marxism—"Bolsheviks," "Reds," or communists—overthrew the Mensheviks. The Germans had sent Vladimir Lenin, an exiled communist leader, back into Russia. He reviled European capitalism and "bourgeois democracy." Not least, the Reds denounced religion, denying the existence of God. The state was supreme and did not have to answer to anything above itself. Lenin despised Russian participation in the war. Each side, he said, was equally imperialistic. According to an apocryphal story, because many of the crowned heads had intermarried, Lenin was told this was only "a family quarrel." "That is the worst kind," he replied. The Bolsheviks exemplified the menace to civilization that the conflict spawned and that Wilson dreaded.

Communist Russia at once surrendered to the Germans; Lenin did not care which side won. He did want Russia out so that he could concentrate on building a communist regime. Because the Reds yielded, the Germans did not have to worry about the Eastern Front, and so almost overran France in the spring of 1918. The communists also killed the Czar and his family. The Bolshevik decision to quit proved to Wilson that Lenin had made the clash worse. For Wilson, the Germans had mainly caused the struggle, and when Lenin gave up, he breathed new life into the Germans. Wilson hardly reasoned alone to his conclusion that Germany and communism helped each other. After the Bolsheviks triumphed in the early 1920s, Russia would vex the Western powers for the next one hundred years, and more.

Wilson elaborated his peace program with the Bolsheviks in mind. He had initially wanted a peace that would keep Russia in. He bolstered the Mensheviks, while offering an alternative to revolution to people all over the world. Although his effort failed, Wilson stepped onto a grand stage, ushering in an era in world history. The unending battles had rightly discredited diplomacy. By the end of the war, empires in Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey were no more. Commentators in both Europe and the United States who criticized (and still criticize) Wilson's "idealism" and imperfect high-mindedness often overlook the carnage that made Wilsonianism and Leninism persuasive responses to catastrophe.

Both Wilson and Lenin believed that colonies triggered the war. For Lenin, colonialism or imperialism developed as the last stage of capitalism. The overthrow or collapse of the capitalist governments would repudiate this exploitation. Such a future panicked Wilson. This was throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Instead, he wanted no colonies, a reformed capitalism that would preserve democracy, religion, and the liberties that the communists discarded. The powers would be disarmed, and the League of Nations, as an organization with inclusive reach, would oversee these arrangements and negotiate serious disturbances.

Wilson versus Lenin: Whose side are you on? America posed this question not just to intellectuals, or to world leaders, or to the educated classes but to common people everywhere whose lives the war had upended. An earth without colonies might disproportionately benefit the United States. When it might not, America might turn its

principles aside as it often did in the twenty years preceding the World War. Nonetheless, Wilson and his defenders codified concepts—Wilsonianism—that often guided and justified foreign affairs in the United States for the next century. In diplomacy Wilson initiated the sanctimonious policymaking that would include future presidents Harry Truman, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden. The tradition would also take in high-ranking diplomats with Protestant roots, including secretaries of state Cordell Hull, Dean Acheson, John Foster Dulles, Dean Rusk, Condoleezza Rice, Hillary Clinton, and Michael Pompeo.

A detestation for communism at home went along with the choice between a progressive (Wilsonian) and a revolutionary (Bolshevik) settlement. In the United States a "red scare" occurred for which Wilson shared responsibility. Opinion leaders painted a terrifying picture of communism, and a fear of the Reds overseas blended with worries about homegrown radicals. In a frenzy about the safety of their institutions, politicians made scapegoats of Americans perceived as communists. Frightened citizens named much that lay just a little off the beaten track as Bolshevik. The Reds fomented all sorts of malign things—anarchism, free love, and Negro equality.

In the last third of the nineteenth century, a new federal agency, the Department of Justice had been created, with the executive branch's highest legal officer, the Attorney General. In 1919 and 1920 Wilson's Attorney General, A. Mitchell Palmer, conducted a hunt for American Reds. Palmer, an alumnus of Swarthmore College, had supported Wilson for the presidency. He took a progressive stand on tariff reform, women's suffrage, and the abolition of child labor. In the aftermath of the war, the "Fighting Quaker" rounded up, and in many cases deported, those he considered Bolsheviks. He directed an assault on citizens who might sympathize with communism. The red scare disturbed politics only briefly, but Palmer's enthusiasm for rooting out the un-American linked Progressivism and the virtues of native Protestants. Over the longer haul, Palmer mentored J. Edgar Hoover, with a BA and LLB from George Washington University. Hoover went on to a lengthy career as head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), which became the chief instrument of state surveillance over citizens.

The Failure of Global Progressivism

At the Versailles Conference, held outside of Paris in 1919, Wilson joined the British and the French in making peace. But his ideas did not match up to the world. Wilson existed in the abstract, and cynics discounted his sermons about the League of Nations. In disciplining the Germans, Wilson shared the anger of the British and French. Yet Wilson and the Allies had conflicting agendas. For Wilson, the League would rehabilitate the Germans after they were punished, and Germany would eventually become a member of the new Europe. The British and French joined the League, but to get them to go along Wilson gave in to demands that were unjust from his higher perspective: the assembled dignitaries asserted that the Germans bore entire responsibility for the conflict, the "war guilt" clause. In any event, Versailles forced the Germans to make cash payments,

reparations, to the victors. Wilson personally also dismissed the claims of lesser peoples; they were like US Blacks.

The president was not at his best at Versailles. He came down with influenza, the "flu," during a pandemic that took millions of lives around the globe and at least 500,000 in the United States; it was the only modern predecessor of the Covid-19 visitation 100 years later. We also have evidence that the president was suffering from minor strokes or even mental illness. But the Treaty, which the British and French endorsed, incorporated the League of Nations.

In 1919, at home, Wilson campaigned for this Treaty. It had to receive the approval of two-thirds of the Senate, which adversarial Republicans led. Many had signed a manifesto that had opposed Wilson's League. While Wilson may have been outsmarted in France, back in America he lost control. He did not appreciate that he would only get what he wanted by deal-making, and lost sight of realities. At work were personal bitterness; illusions of grandeur; and perhaps debility, physical or psychical. Wilson left damning remarks on the record. He would "crush" anyone opposing him. "The Senate must take its medicine," he said. He would "never" compromise. All this without the mastery to do what he wanted.

With a Harvard PhD, Republican Henry Cabot Lodge, chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, tormented Wilson. Lodge and Wilson hated one another, and private and political calculation led Lodge to attack the Treaty. In fact, he believed in a rough and ready internationalism, globalism with a free hand, and anticipated the views of later high Republican civil servants. Wilson's desire to make America a factor around the world did not disturb Lodge. Nonetheless, he would not have the United States committed everywhere no matter what the circumstances, and he did object to Wilson's hectoring. The president's know-it-all manner offended Lodge, and he found reasons for his distaste in Wilson's statements about what membership in the League would mean. Wilson said that joining the organization would not commit America in advance to any specific program. At the same time, he thought that membership in the League somehow limited the United States in the future—it promised to keep the peace everywhere. Wilson curiously believed that once he had given his moral say-so to the League, troubles could not arise. They would be prevented in the future by the very fact of the League's existence. According to Wilson, the United States would never have to act in ways that Lodge might find worrisome. Lodge had a more compelling sense of unforeseen events that might arise, and the need for greater independence.

In August of 1919, Wilson left by train across the country to win approval of his views, addressing the people directly to force a positive Senate vote. In September he collapsed in Pueblo, Colorado, and was rushed back to Washington. A stroke left him paralyzed. Had the president died, the Senate might have consented to the Treaty that gave life to the League, as homage to the dead president. But disability merely further damaged Wilson's effectiveness. At the end of 1919 and early 1920, the Senate voted three times on the Treaty (and thus the League). All three votes failed: the United States did not join and initialed a separate peace with Germany. In November of 1920, a sick and out-of-touch

Wilson looked on while the Democrats were overwhelmed in the presidential election, with the return of a traditional GOP majority.

* * *

In its emphasis on domestic politics, Progressives laid the groundwork for what in the twenty-first century was known as "the administrative state," or more negatively with a touch of the conspiratorial, "the deep state." Yet Progressivism reached its culmination overseas. The later impotence of international organization suggests that America's recusal from the League did not bring disaster to the world. But perhaps 1918 and 1919 constituted a singular moment. When the president failed, efforts to end war may have been mortally impaired. The great specialist on Wilson, Arthur Link, speculated that the defeat of the Treaty brought consequences as imperishable as the defeat of the American Constitution would have brought in 1787. On this view, membership might have prevented the Second World War and promoted a United States of the World. Even if we credit such speculation, it leaves questions. If a League with the United States would have had influence, could the idiosyncrasies of a single man have caused the collapse of US backing? If attachment to the League did not serve US interests, what interests did staying out serve? In the 1920s, the Republicans had a strategy that went hand-in-hand with that of the French and British, the key members of the League. This more limited internationalism was distinct from Wilson's grand and rejected notions. Domestically, too, a limited New Republicanism survived into the 1920s.

CHAPTER 12
MODERN CAPITALISM, 1919–33

From the Ban on Liquor to the Election of Franklin Roosevelt

Historians often study the period after the World War as a decade of reaction to Wilson. But the Republicans in the 1910s, 1920s, and early 1930s did not oppose a worldwide role. They did not sanction "isolationism." The anxieties of public policy in the 1920s echoed those earlier in the century, and progressives remained. Nonetheless, non-progressive Protestant made headlines. A new Ku Klux Klan arose, fights over evolution reached their high point with conflict between modernists and evangelicals, and the latter group got hold of the temperance issue. Still, another third-party progressive campaign for the presidency occurred in 1924, and at the end of the decade Herbert Hoover, a Republican progressive and a protégé of Woodrow Wilson, won the presidency. Progressive politics only disappeared when the Great Depression discredited Hoover and made for the conditions of a different order.

Prohibition, Immigration, and the Klan

From the early nineteenth century reformers had worked on the limitation or even outlawing of alcohol. The movement got a lift toward the end of the century when Frances Willard, the first Dean of Women at Northwestern University, led the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Progressives sponsored birth control believing that too many underfed, undereducated children ruined families. Similarly, activists worked to do away with the saloon that blighted lives and that provided the inebriated voters for inner-city bosses. Progressives also linked drink to prostitution among women and blamed alcohol for men's not showing up for work. Southern progressives would keep liquor out of the hands of African Americans.

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, "dry" forces triumphed in many states, where they made the sale of spirits illegal, or regulated drinking. By the World War these forces passed the Eighteenth Amendment. A law banning the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquor implemented the Amendment in 1919. Popular in the South and Midwest, "Prohibition" had less support in the Northeast with its foreign-born beer-drinking populations and a stylish upper-middle class committed to a "cocktail hour." Urban politicians did not like temperance or the moral certainty of its adherents, although "wets" often refused to attack a position connected with decency and sobriety. The Twenty-First Amendment of 1933 repealed the Eighteenth, and ambiguities ran through the era of fifteen years. On the one side, drinking did not

stop, and many saw Prohibition as a foolish experiment, forbidding a popular item, still easily obtainable. The rise of organized crime even connected to Prohibition. Mobsters or "bootleggers" made available a product that people wanted and did not think it wrong to have. On the other side, Prohibition contributed to the decline of the saloon and of employee absences because of drunkenness.

Sinclair Lewis wrote a series of best-selling novels in the 1920s and became the first US national to win the Nobel Prize for literature in 1930. His books relentlessly poked fun at conventions. The Pulitzer Prize-winning *Arrowsmith* (1925) is the story of a heroic medical researcher. One of Lewis's characters had this to say about the effect of Prohibition on the well-to-do:

> Remember that old scoundrel … that I introduced as a great pharmacologist at the medical banquet? He's running a sanatorium out of Long Island—slick idea, too—practically he's a bootlegger; gets a lot of high-rollers out there and let's 'em have all the hooch they want, on prescriptions, absolutely legal and water tight. The parties they throw at the joint, dames and everything! Believe me [I am] sore stricken with tootelus bootelus and [am] going to the … sanatorium for what ails [me].

Prohibition revealed the tension in Progressivism between its rural and urban values, but also imposed a dry Protestant morality on wet Catholics.

The movement for immigration restriction displayed exasperation with the foreign, also at issue in the Red Scare of 1919–20. At the end of the nineteenth century, Americans had worried about the unfamiliar peoples who came to their shores. In the west, Chinese had built railroads and stayed in the United States even when the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 made it clear America did not want them. California disliked Filipinos too. But after the Spanish–American War that took the Philippines as a colony, Filipinos got incentives to come to California. US agriculturalists fancied cheap labor. Filipinos joined Japanese. The Japanese, whom their home country chose more carefully, presented the hardest problem to forces opposed to immigration, because the Japanese had the greatest success. Since they often prospered, they were more a threat. In 1907–8, Theodore Roosevelt negotiated a secret "Gentlemen's Agreement" that voluntarily limited Japan's immigrants. Nonetheless, the Chinese, Filipinos, and Japanese mingled with both the Spanish "Californios" and, after 1910, with Mexicans moving to California and the southwest. The Spanish-speakers had long accepted the domination of the "Anglos," who still feared society contamination; California was a stew of races.

On the Atlantic shore, exotics also troubled the old stock. The "new immigration" had frightened many in the Northeast from the 1890s when Europe was no longer exporting people from England and Germany. From 1880 to 1920 close to 20 million refugees came from the Old World, an increasing number from south-central Europe, Italy, and Russia. The World War slowed immigration, but immediately after it ended, in 1920 and 1921, 800,000 more wanderers embarked, only one-third from northern Europe.

The failure of progressives to remake the globe intimated that they had miscarried at home too. On both coasts, the earlier progressives had tried to assimilate immigrants

and to teach them middle-class manners. But this attempt to smarten up the cities earlier had not transformed those with unsettling customs. Integration had not worked, and now politicians rejected it. They had one last solution: don't let the alien in. When progressives could not carry out their goals positively, lawmakers backtracked. Frightened that undesirables would overrun the country, Congress explained who could migrate in an Emergency Quota Act of 1921. A more comprehensive National Origins Act followed in 1924. Legislators restricted each year's immigrants from a European country to 2 percent of the people of that nationality in America. When? In a complex calculation, the law took as a benchmark dates—like 1890—when leaders believed the fewest southeastern Europeans had arrived. A special section of the Act banned Japanese immigrants. The law rewarded "Nordics." Congress would make sure that the population remained Protestant, and of British and northern European ancestry. From the mid-1920s to the late 1960s the National Origins Act limited diversity, while the immigrants from the period of the 1890s to 1914 became "Americanized."

In *It Can't Happen Here* (1935) Sinclair Lewis wrote about one political leader eager to keep the United States unpolluted:

> Louis was a jingo. He explained, and rather often, that it was not he nor his father who had been born in the ghetto in Prussian Poland, but his grandfather (whose name … had been something less stylish and Nordic than Rotenstern) … He was not only 100% American; he exacted 40% of chauvinist interest on top of the principal. He was on every occasion heard to say, "We ought to keep all these foreigners out of the country, and what I mean, the Kikes just as much as the Wops and Hunkies and Chinks."

The United States was a nation composed of those who came from elsewhere, but migration to North America had been contested from the early seventeenth century. The endearing words on the base of the Statue of Liberty were a *façon de parler* and would continue to be so well into the twenty-first century, as immigration enflamed public debate.

The rise of a new KKK displayed the wariest aspect of Protestant-based culture. The old Klan of the late nineteenth century originated in the South's effort to nullify Reconstruction, but the first KKK faded away when Jim Crow became law. Then, in 1915, D. W. Griffith produced the first long feature film, *Birth of a Nation*. The movie, about the Civil War and Reconstruction, was a blockbuster. It used new techniques like shifting from one scene to another (the cut), close-ups, and the fade-out, and showed great battles. *Birth of a Nation* also glorified the KKK for rescuing the South from an inferior race. Contemptuous of African Americans, President Woodrow Wilson called it "History with lightning." At the end of 1915, a new Klan arose. The organization grew slowly till 1920. Then in the context of the Red Scare and the refusal of the League of Nations, the reborn KKK took off, a phenomenon of the early 1920s.

Kluxers were not just anti-African American, but also struck out against foreigners, Jews, and Catholics. Robust in parts of the South, the refurbished Klan made inroads in

the Midwest and even the Northeast. It wanted to preserve small-town Protestantism and fought communism and pacifism. Although the Klan had little time for women's interests beyond the home and family, it did want to protect these institutions, and went after drunks, adulterers, and gamblers. Scandals discredited its headship after a few years, and the burning crosses, hoods, sheets, and terrorism disturbed even sympathetic politicians. By the late 1920s, the KKK had collapsed.

In 1926, however, the Klan's leader, Hiram Evans, explained why KKKers felt threatened. The last twenty-five years, he said, had left "Nordic Americans" "increasingly uncomfortable and finally deeply distressed." "Traditional moral standards" in religion, schooling, and marriage had gone by the boards. "Strangers" had taken over "our great cities." "We are a movement of the plain people, very weak in the matter of culture, intellectual support, and trained leadership." "This is undoubtedly a weakness," lamented Evans. "It lays us open to the charge of being 'hicks' and 'rubes'." Evans' complaints were evidence: the earlier hope that expertise would assist the Protestant struggle for control had come to nothing.

Sinclair Lewis could not have agreed more. His book of 1927, *Elmer Gantry*, was an attack on religion named after a hypocritical minister:

> Many of the most worthy Methodist and Baptist clergymen supported the new Ku Klux Klan, and were supported by it. Elmer admired its principles—to keep all foreigners, Jews, Catholics, and Negroes in their place, which was no place at all, and let the country be led by native Protestants like Elmer Gantry.

Modernists versus Fundamentalists

Rifts over belief and distinctions based on wealth and class had created tensions among Protestants from the early eighteenth century when respectable ministers denounced Jonathan Edwards's revivals. Although his sorts of Protestants multiplied in the nineteenth century, these evangelicals became associated not with Edwards's philosophy of Calvinism but only with the "anxious bench" of conversion. Protestants who accommodated the contemporary world, however, stood out in public life in the late nineteenth century. For example, they led the Social Gospel movement. While orthodox churchgoers would not face the contrast between Darwin and the Bible, the "modernists" among the Protestants accepted popular evolutionary thought and tried to show science compatible with religion. In the early part of the twentieth century, conservative Protestants rebelled over these compromises. If Darwin had it right, what happened to the old-time stories? A series of pamphlets called *The Fundamentals* outlined genuine Christianity. "Fundamentalists," who looked for support from evangelicals, now said that every word in the Bible was literally true—"inerrancy" was key.

This struggle among Protestants made the newspapers in 1925. Dayton, Tennessee, put on trial a high school teacher, John Scopes. He had taught evolution in his classroom, disregarding a fundamentalist-backed state law that prohibited teaching Darwin. The "monkey trial," named after Darwin's supposed idea that human beings

descended from the apes, gave unwanted attention to the lack of learning of evangelical Christians and their social marginality. Scopes lost his case but received only token punishment, and the national press ridiculed the fundamentalists. William Jennings Bryan, often the Democratic presidential candidate, prosecuted Scopes, and died just after the trial. While Bryan often spoke for rural and Protestant America, many thought his performance in Tennessee sadly concluded a long and praiseworthy career. His death symbolized, in sophisticated circles, the end of an old-fashioned way of life, and it showed that Protestantism had two wings, different in politics and culture.

In *Babbitt* (1922), Sinclair Lewis had one of his foolish ministers say:

> Now, let me tell you that the most unscientific thing in the world is science. Take the attacks on the established fundamentals of the Christian creed which [are] so popular with the "scientists." O yes, they [are] mighty fellows, and great poo-bahs of criticism. They [are] going to destroy the church; they [are] going to prove the world was created and has been brought to its extraordinary level of morality and civilization by blind chance. Yet the church stands just as firmly to-day as ever, and the only answer a Christian pastor need make to the long-haired opponents of his simple faith is just a pitying smile.

In *Elmer Gantry* Lewis spoke more in his own voice:

> America … in its laughter at the "monkey trial" at Dayton did not understand the veritable menace of the Fundamentalists' crusade … They were mild enough now; they spoke in the name of virtue; but give them enough rope, and there would be a new inquisition, a new hunting of witches. We might live to see men burned to death for refusing to attend Protestant churches.

Political Economy and the Elections of 1924 and 1928

In one area, progressives evinced more optimism than they had earlier. The 1920s, when the economy boomed after a short downturn in 1921–2, held less uncertainty than 1900–16. Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson worried about the abuses of business and the need for Washington to assure prosperity. The good times of the 1920s did not require intervention but more leeway for business. Nonetheless, politicians did not just react to dissimilar conditions. The war had again increased federal power, and thereafter Republicans saw the balance between business and government differently. They did not want to enlarge Washington's role. After the World War, the muscle of the national government declined, just as it had after the Civil War.

The Democratic loss in 1920 returned the United States to its seemingly permanent GOP majority, and the prosperity propped up presidents uninterested in forceful leadership. But the Republicans appointed strong figures to their cabinets. They streamlined the budget, reduced debt, cut taxes, and tried to get rid of waste. The GOP made fewer assaults on corporations, but regulatory agencies still exercised oversight.

Progressives could be stronger in Congress than in the first decades of the century. They sometimes even reversed the balance of power that had existed earlier, when standpat Congresses stymied TR and Taft. In the 1920s, the presidents undermined these congressmen. Farmers got increasingly into trouble in the latter part of the decade when the Old Guard defeated bills that would benefit them. Yet progressives supported laws for rural cooperatives to purchase goods, to give farmers credit, and to introduce a system that would pay them to grow certain things. Congress also worked for a national road system and government-owned dams that would create electricity, though with only modest success.

The lack of movement frustrated Bob La Follette, now the senior Republican Senator from Wisconsin. In 1924, he ran for the presidency as the nominee of a Progressive Party resurrected from Roosevelt's run in 1912. La Follette's voters came from the Midwest and from farmers who were not flourishing. La Follette called for government ownership of railroads and struck out at monopolies. He was for unions, wanting to build a workers-farmers alliance, yet another reformer who would bridge metropolitan and rural. La Follette did better in the Electoral College than Taft had done in 1912. Yet the progressives failed, and the Republicans won despite votes taken by La Follette.

Historians have called the ideas circulating at the time "Administrative Progressivism." The common heritage of Teddy Roosevelt and Wilson, these ideas had sponsors among both parties. Administrative progressives made the connection of businesses to government voluntary. Washington should not inhibit creativity. Corporations could regulate themselves if "the feds" provided a framework for activity. Politicians had already built such a framework, and now had only to encourage efficiency. Such encouragement would occur through the "trade association" movement. The government would foster sharing information, standardizing tools and parts, reducing destructive rivalry, and stabilizing markets. The executive might call groups together, publicize knowledge, and promote markets overseas. Administrative progressives assumed rationality in business, and so they did not have to coerce it. While leaders did not shy away from problems of welfare, they did divide the burden. States and city governments should keep community standards and basic public services. They should also care for the poor. The closer a political unit lay to a difficulty the more likely the unit would respond satisfactorily. Administrative progressives preferred the local; this dimension to Progressivism could or could not be at odds with its nationalizing emphasis.

Alfred E. "Al" Smith, a Democrat and a Roman Catholic, exuberantly embodied Administrative Progressivism and served four times as governor of New York. An Irishman with roots in New York City, Smith came to the national stage based on his electoral advantage in the largest city in the United States; he reflected the urban voters who first cast a majority of the vote in 1920. A wet, Smith did not hide his approval of alcohol and had a progressive record as governor. He also did not antagonize corporations, believing that the health of business guaranteed the good life.

In 1928 Democrats nominated Smith, the first Catholic to run for the presidency. His campaign inherited problems that dated back to the late nineteenth century. In 1896, the Democrats had tried to break the hold of the Republicans by operating almost

exclusively from the South. Even fused with the Populists, the Democrats had lost. In 1928, the Democratic Party attempted to defeat Republicans from its strongholds in the cities. The results seemed even more disastrous than in 1896. Southerners hated the GOP, which sixty-five years later was still the party of the Civil War and of the post-Civil War rape of Dixie. Yet the Romanist Smith drank and frightened southerners. In the election, although Smith carried seven states in the deep South, he lost the Upper South. He did worse elsewhere. His attractiveness to city-dwellers did not go far enough to offset the Republican advantage in the North, another lingering consequence of the Civil War. Smith did not even carry his home state. The Democrats were stuck. If they addressed the South, they lost voters in the North. If they listed toward their Catholic north, some in the South would desert the Democrats.

Two things made the election momentous. First, it showed that the GOP might crack the "Solid South" if northern Democrats really offended southerners. Below the Mason–Dixon Line, the Civil War would go only so far in vanquishing Republicans. Second, the balloting intimated that an urban candidate did not mean suicide for Democrats. While Smith lost every state outside the Lower South, large municipalities voted Democratic. Progressivism had failed to make ethnics, many of them Catholics, respectable. Now they made their entrance as a national bloc and not merely as the machine-vote in cities. A growing constituency liked the tolerance of the Democratic Party. The election showed the shaky nature of the old categories. A progressive, Smith was a Catholic who did not want to pacify the cities but to embrace their diversity.

Herbert Hoover, a quintessential and impressive Republican progressive, won a landslide victory. A Quaker from Iowa, Hoover was orphaned as a child. He received an engineering degree from Stanford University in California. Through hard work and intelligence, he became a wealthy mining consultant. With little partisan affiliation, Hoover claimed the title "The Great Engineer," well known during the World War because he oversaw distributing food to starving Europeans. Woodrow Wilson had pushed Hoover, and much later Hoover wrote a sympathetic book, *The Ordeal of Woodrow Wilson* (1958). But Republicans also valued Hoover. From 1921 to 1928 he served as secretary of commerce in two GOP administrations, praised as resourceful and compassionate, the most able member of the cabinets. Hoover exuded Administrative Progressivism. Engineering exemplified applied science, which methodically solved problems. Neutral technique, Hoover believed, could cure the troubles of industry. No one equaled Hoover in sponsoring business at home and abroad. Dedicated to cultural learning to achieve a healthy economy, he fostered "cooperative individualism." Hoover appointed scholars of social science to report to him. The most famous group, the Committee on Recent Social Trends, wrote up sophisticated accounts in several volumes during his presidency.

Hoover's thoughtfulness unsuited him to politics. In 1909 he had written a textbook, *Principles of Mining*. Then he and his wife, Lou Henry Hoover, had collaborated in an effort that, as he later recalled, was the high point of his career. In 1912, they translated from Latin, annotated, and published Agricola's 1556 folio, *De Re Metallica* (*About Metals*). Was this just a youthful indiscretion, or did it disqualify Hoover from running

for office? In politics, Hoover had principles when the trade depended on flexibility, open-mindedness, and lack of dogma. He detested campaigns, exaggeration, and phony promises. Hoover felt himself to be "above politics." He did not "glad-hand." "I will not step out of character," he said; "This is not a showman's job." In 1929 the job was the presidency. The electorate thought of Hoover as a gifted and conscientious bureaucrat. This was a "New Era" of technocracy that needed management of a large and booming economy. A leading newspaper called the president "easily the most commanding figure in the modern science of 'engineering statesmanship.'" Six months after Hoover took office, in October of 1929, the stock market and then industry crashed. The United States plunged into the Great Depression.

The Depression

Several things contributed to the global contraction of money and jobs in the 1930s, which was most prolonged in the United States. Capitalism has its ups and downs, some of them dependent on entrepreneurs. In the first third of the century, the automobile continued the pursuit of fast transportation, which now would be tailored to individuals. The car developed a thriving consumerism. Spin-offs occurred in the growth of highways, of shops that did repairs or sold parts and accessories, of motels, and of advertising. But in the late 1920s the interest in automobiles peaked, and no exciting products, which might generate sales and jobs, were on the horizon.

The unequal distribution of income in the United States had gotten worse in the decade despite the prosperity. In 1920, 1 percent of the population controlled 12 percent of the wealth; in 1929 the same 1 percent had 20 percent. With the mass of people less able to buy, the demand for goods slowed at the end of the decade, and businesses invested less in manufacturing. Those with more wealth put it into the stock market, driving stock values up to the heights from which they fell in October 1929. The "Crash" meant that people would lose work, that industry would cut production, and that prices would fall. Millions lost jobs, and enterprises closed.

Had business sold abroad as Hoover had wanted, they could have shored up America. Committed to a high tariff, however, the Republicans had passed laws that made foreign trade less a solution than it otherwise might have been. The Republicans had also not wanted outlays for highways, dams, and subsidized housing. These large-scale "public works" might have increased demand and kindled the economy: accessible highways gave people an incentive to use their autos more; dams generated electric power and more use of it; and people with new houses might spend money on them.

We don't know that any, or all, of these conditions and policies caused the Depression. But we do know that when citizens got back to peacetime work in 1945 after the Second World War, the nation had altered. The United States had added items for shoppers, a more equal distribution of income, lower tariffs, and great public works.

Between 1929 and 1932 stock prices fell 90 percent, and the Gross National Product declined from $105 to $59 billion. Depending on whose figures we examine, we see that in 1932–3, 12.8–14 million were unemployed, between 25 percent and 33 percent of

those in the workforce. By the end of 1936, unemployment had fallen to 12–15 percent, but "the Depression within a Depression" of 1938 raised the number to 20 percent. Just fewer than 10 percent were still unemployed in 1939 when the war in Europe pulled the United States out of its long slump.

The Depression directly influenced one in four families, and hardships were severe for one-half of the population. Entire localities might have no more than 200–300 employed out of 1,000s. While people in the cities went hungry, farmers killed off animals they could not afford to feed. Jury duty, newspaper peddling, shoe-shining, and begging, as well as the much talked-about apple selling, all became acceptable ways of getting money.

We speculate on the consequences of the Depression on individuals. Used to independence, middle-class families might suffer the indignity of governmental charity or the "dole." "Relief" humiliated families even when overwhelmed localities could act effectively, which they often could not. The authority of fathers suffered when they lost their jobs, but just as often employment might lift women because they sometimes became the breadwinners, even in underpaid occupations. Teenagers registered the lesson that in tough times adulthood and its cares extended downward. Young men drifted from their birthplaces. But they may have experienced more exciting lives because they faced hardships. The Depression ruptured families but may just as often have brought others closer. What we cannot deny is that whether the misery of the Depression made you better or worse, it changed lives. For two generations the economic damage marked who Americans were, and their politics.

Hoover Attacks the Depression

Hoover tackled the problem systematically, the first president to act in such a way. At that time, governments did not get themselves into debt without good reason, and Hoover feared an unbalanced budget—spending more than the United States collected in taxes. He also did not want to anger business—by intimating its accountability. Yet he nudged business and dispersed more than the budget called for in the hope that "deficit spending" would fire up the economy. His efforts fell short in easing the Depression but were abnormal.

According to conventional wisdom, economic swings were inevitable. Hard times would just go away, although confidence-building statements might assist their exit. Hoover made such statements, even if unenthusiastically. As the economy worsened, his principles bent. Presuming business to be senior to government, the president first tried persuasion. For example, he urged banks not to close in 1931 and 1932. Hoover also used a government institution called the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) to help ailing businesses through loans, although he disliked what the emergency forced on him. Democrats attacked the president as spendthrift.

Hoover showed integrity: "Prosperity cannot be restored by raids on the public treasury." Afraid that his compromises would undercut personal responsibility, Hoover shrunk from a stronger government that might misuse executive power. The genius of America was the Constitution's checks and balances, which promoted "American

individualism." Even the measures that Hoover took, he worried, might overturn fundamentals. The United States might tend toward Bolshevism or dictatorship. The communists stood as a terrifying example of how matters might go wrong. Hoover would not take some actions. In 1932 the RFC expanded and gave loans to states and municipalities so that they might provide public works and relief. But Hoover was dead set against national public works, and direct payments from Washington to the unemployed. Just as he stayed away from threatening business, Hoover thought handouts and competition with private industry would debase democracy.

The restricted but activist policies foundered, and Hoover could not lead meritoriously. Throughout his public life, he had cultivated a certain personality that stood him in good stead until the Crash. The reserve that had communicated dignity and restraint now looked like arrogance, indifference, paralysis, and gloom. A common opinion was: "Engineers may be intelligent but poor Presidents." During the Depression, the people demanded reassurance as well as a fighting faith, and Hoover could give neither. Isolated and out of touch, he was callously unaware of citizens. Being "above politics" even took on a sinister aspect. Hoover made the GOP appear liable for the trials of the average Joe while simultaneously implying that he did not care about him. The *Literary Digest* editorialized that Hoover refused to be "humanized." As one associate put it, Hoover "didn't like the human element." An anonymous correspondent asked Hoover why "Every Thing" had "Exceptional Value … Except the Human being." If you stuck a rose in his hand, someone said, it would wilt. A reporter wrote that Hoover could "calculate wave lengths" but could not "see color." The president would not give press conferences or use the new mass medium, the radio, to get support for his recommendations. He noted that nobody was "actually starving," and commented on the well-fed hoboes. When he found unemployed men hawking apples, he explained that people left other jobs for this more profitable one.

The president had a gift for the heartless when circumstances required generosity. To lift the country's morale, he ate a seven-course dinner every evening, dressed in a tuxedo. The "Bonus Army" did the greatest damage to his reputation. In the summer of 1932, 20,000 veterans of the World War camped on the outskirts of Washington and demanded payment of a bonus Congress had promised for 1945. The current military marched on the Bonus Army with tanks, machine guns, and tear gas, tearing the camp down and driving the old soldiers out. The assault ignored Hoover's orders, but he accepted responsibility and defended it. The administration announced that the military had not been violent and had not burned the camp, but newsreels shown at movie theaters contradicted him. Furthermore, the Bonus Army, Hoover inaccurately said, included "mixed hoodlums, ex-convicts, communists, and a minority of veterans." "Thank God," exclaimed the president, "we still have a government that knows how to deal with mobs."

Jokes circulated about Hoover. When the most famous baseball player in history, Babe Ruth, had his salary raised to $80,000 despite the Depression, a friend reminded him that he made more than the president. The Babe replied, "I had a better year." When Hoover asked the secretary of the treasury for a nickel to telephone a friend, the secretary said, "Here are two—call them both."

The language of the Depression connected to Hoover. People called newspapers that the homeless used as a covering Hoover blankets; freight cars in which the poor traveled were Hoover Pullmans; a pocket turned inside out indicating that its owner had no money was a Hoover flag; unemployment was Hoover time; men waiting for food were a Hoover breadline; villages of tents and shacks built by the homeless were Hoovervilles. New York City's Park Department recognized "Hoover Valley," as the name of such a camp. "The 1932nd Psalm" went: "Hoover is my Shepherd, I am in want, /He maketh me to lie down on park benches, /He leadeth me by still factories, / … Surely poverty and hard times will follow me/All the days of the Republican administration."

Soon after Hoover took office, journalists recounted, his duties transformed him into "a harassed and peevish executive." His attempts to project confidence went with despondency and dejection. His secretary of state, Henry Stimson, remarked that consulting with Hoover was like bathing in ink. He became self-pitying, but in the election year of 1932, the president determined to prove he was right by forcing the voters to re-elect him. He presented himself as a lonely figure, fighting for the nation despite what he called "hideous misrepresentation and unjustified complaint" and "little public evidence" that recognized his efforts. He campaigned hopelessly. Speechmaking was an unfortunate duty. When he did use the radio, his voice, which citizens heard for the first time, sounded harsh and monotonous. He was the last president to write his own addresses—flat and uninspiring, filled with statistics. His secretary said that Hoover lectured as an engineer "would drive a mineshaft or construct a bridge"; the talks were "too correct in detail, too precise, for the casual listener or reader." The president thought he could prove that he was right, that his intelligence and fortitude would win the day.

The voters responded negatively. Hoover had taken credit for the prosperity, and people now vented their rage against his heartlessness. They jeered him as they had never jeered a president. When he campaigned in Detroit, however, crowds greeted him in silence. Signs read "Down with Hoover, slayer of veterans." When he spoke there, his face had no color and his hands trembled. By the end of his term, he appeared as a hermit in the White House. As Hoover later put it himself, he had become a "leper." Advisors told the Democratic candidate that he simply had to stay alive until election day. Hoover was swamped. The Democratic margin of 17 percent in the popular vote corresponded to the Republican margin of 1928. The reversal of party strength was the greatest in history. Hoover joined a select group of "one term" presidents defeated in attempting re-election. It included the two Adamses in the early nineteenth century, and later Jimmy Carter, and George Bush.

* * *

At the end of the World War, the Republicans reasserted their status as the majority party, and the Democrats could not speak to the electorate effectively. Then events took over. The people rejected Hoover in 1932 and linked him personally to the wretchedness of the early 1930s. His miserable guardianship and the Depression altered the credit of the GOP as a governing party for thirty-five years. For the first time since the Civil War

the Republicans took the defensive. The Democrats dominated from 1932 through 1968. They echoed the leadership they had previously shown in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s. From 1932 to 1968, the nation would vote against Herbert Hoover, just as in the South Democrats would continue to vote against the Civil War of the Republicans.

The new leader of the Democrats was a distant cousin of Teddy Roosevelt. But Franklin Roosevelt haled from upstate New York and not from New York City. One opponent called him the "country squire in the White House." Roosevelt rallied northern and southern wings of the party, in a way that Bryan in 1896 and Smith in 1928 had not. Real disaster, and not the personal quarrels between Republicans that had elected Woodrow Wilson, gave Roosevelt victory. A worldwide catastrophe and Hoover's persona combined with what was later called Roosevelt's *charisma*. This noun from the Greek word for divine favor described politicians with a special quality—Jack Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump. The election ended Progressivism. Instead, the United States placed its faith in a Democratic Party moving in new directions.

With a secure South, Roosevelt made the Democrats more than competitive in other parts of the country and swept the cities of the United States. He called the Republicans "economic royalists." Roosevelt's nod in the direction of the unemployed created a new coalition. It included the white working-class, southerners, intellectuals who formulated ideas, and Jews in a few crucial states. Finally, the migration of a large Black population from the South gave northern cities many African Americans. Those who were able to vote left the party of Lincoln for Democrats who helped the poor. Black citizens uneasily coexisted with Roman Catholics as part of a novel urban combination. In the 1930s, these diverse and ill-sorted interests put together "the New Deal." In the longer term, the emphasis was known as American Liberalism. It differed from that of Jefferson and Jackson and advanced on that of Wilson, giving great power to the national government.

PART V
THE RISE AND FALL OF AMERICAN LIBERALISM

CHAPTER 13
A COSMOPOLITAN NEW DEAL, 1933–45

Roosevelt's Authority from the Depression through the Second World War

The American people elected Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932, 1936, 1940, and 1944. His New Deal redefined the role of Washington. From taxes to social services to foreign affairs, Americans became more aware of national politics. Although Roosevelt may have only marginally mitigated the Depression, he became a beloved figure. Known as FDR, as his relative was TR, Franklin Roosevelt expressed a notable sympathy for the everyday troubles of common folks. The psychological lift he gave may have been more pronounced than the success or failure of his policies. The president lent to the era both stability and a positive feeling for experiments. In 1941, after the United States went to war with Japan and, for the second time, with Germany, Roosevelt added to his stature as a soldier of freedom. He made a new reputation for Democrats as the party of a hopeful internationalism, after Wilson had lost this reputation. The Democrats became associated not just with Washington's role in the economy but also with a global diplomacy.

Lincoln had increased the power of the state, yet also increased democracy. Scholars less surely think that Franklin Roosevelt turned the same trick. Did the explosion of the size of government advance little people? Enemies like Herbert Hoover thought that the New Deal brought the "statism" that existed in Russia. Wilson had extended "Liberalism" beyond the laissez faire, and Roosevelt "liberals" now employed power on behalf of the poor. Southern Democrats complicated Liberalism, which became identified with the northern wing of the party.

The New Deal

After going to Harvard and the Columbia Law School, Franklin Roosevelt entered politics in the first two decades of the century. A Democrat and supporter of Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt nonetheless used his relationship to Republican "Uncle Ted" to enhance his career. But as the Wilson administration collapsed, the GOP defeated Franklin, the Democratic VP candidate in 1920. Soon after, "infantile paralysis"—polio—struck Roosevelt and left him unable to walk. For the rest of his life, he was in a wheelchair, dependent on others, even to use a toilet. For most of the 1920s he looked on in politics. His sickness may have strengthened what had been a shallow personality and given him a depth of compassion. Character aside, Roosevelt revealed resilience and ambition. Picked as governor of New York in 1928 and 1930, he compiled

a forward-looking record. In 1932, he used his contacts in the South to be nominated for the presidency and won the election. While he used intellectual advisors as had Wilson and Hoover, college education had become more common, and the ambience of the 1930s transformed Progressivism into something different.

With the help of newsmen and photographers, Roosevelt disguised his handicap and portrayed himself as physically vigorous. During a time when a "crippled" leader would be impossible, cartoons pictured him as a sprinter, a boxer, a baseball slugger, and a football quarterback. His comeback and accomplishments astonished commentators, a tribute to his own fortitude, the goodwill of a great body of voters, the role of image, and the convention that some aspects of personal life were off limits, even for public figures.

Roosevelt had qualities opposite those of Hoover. Even after his illness, Roosevelt did not much reflect on governmental philosophy. He had as few principles as Aaron Burr, Richard Nixon, and Donald Trump. Rather than being "above politics," Roosevelt loved the backslapping connection to the average person, whose affection he craved. He developed into the model leader of the mass democracies in the twentieth century. His inaugural address of March 1933 calmed and lifted spirits:

> First of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance … The rulers of the exchange of mankind's goods have failed, through their own stubbornness and their own incompetence, have admitted their failure, and abdicated … They know only the rules of a generation of self-seekers. They have no vision, and when there is no vision the people perish. The money changers have fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilization. We may now restore that temple to the ancient truths … Happiness lies not in the mere possession of money; it lies in the joy of achievement, in the thrill of creative effort. The joy and moral stimulation of work no longer must be forgotten in the mad chase of evanescent profits. These dark days will be worth all they cost us if they teach us that our true destiny is not to be ministered unto but to minister to ourselves and to our fellow men … Restoration calls, however, not for changes in ethics alone. This Nation asks for action, and action now … We must act and act quickly … We must move as a trained and loyal army willing to sacrifice for the good of a common discipline, because without such discipline no progress is made, no leadership becomes effective …

The president's ability to promote his kind-heartedness anchored the policies of the Depression. Roosevelt supported relief and created jobs for the unemployed. Measures to promote recovery also had priority, although reform of the system came as a last resort.

Hoover needed only one person to answer his mail. FDR had fifty. The people wrote their "most Honorable President," "Your honor sir and your royalty. Majesty," and "Your Excellency." They referred to Roosevelt as "my dear Friend," "my personal friend," "our

beloved President," and "father of this great USA." The people told him of the intimate details of their lives and asked for his help. "God bless you always"; "I will never forget you and will always pray for you and your family"; "WE WISH YOU WERE DICTATOR." Religious motifs were striking. One New York businessman wrote in the *New Republic*, "I hope God will forgive me for voting for Hoover. Roosevelt is the greatest leader since Jesus Christ." For many he became "Saint Roosevelt." Noting the pictures of the president in American homes, one witness said, "The portrait holds the place of honor over the mantel. I can only compare this to the [Roman Catholic's] peasant's Madonna [Mary, mother of Jesus]."

In the first "100 Days" of his presidency, Roosevelt elaborated on joint hardships and put forth an agenda. At the center of his plans lay the idea of a national community derived from Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. The New Deal would never come close again to being unified. Laws promised financial assistance through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). FDR handed out jobs with new agencies. The most famous, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), gave outdoor occupations to young men. Other legislation strengthened directives for business or drew up new rules for the businesses that Roosevelt had pointed to as the cause of the Depression. The Congress passed an Emergency Banking Act (EBA) and a Federal Securities Act (for the stock market).

The showpiece was the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). The National Recovery Administration (NRA) supervised programs for the self-regulation of industry. Groups of businessmen drafted codes of competition that laws enforced. Guidelines encouraged the setting of wages, prices, and hours worked, and delimited conditions of employment. Somehow companies would put men back on the job, consumption would increase, and the economy recover. One section of the act gave unions the right to organize, and an Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA) sponsored a similar program for farmers. Cooperation between government and businesses would guide the production of goods and services. The NRA supported businesses, and Roosevelt's anti-business bark in his inaugural address looked worse than his bite.

The NRA had a slogan, "We Do Our Part," and a logo, a blue eagle. The NIRA and NRA joined the New Deal's "alphabet agencies." FERA, the AAA, the CCC, the EBA, and many more communicated dynamic activity.

The president used the radio to teach. His "fireside chats" explained his New Deal. One supporter said that it seemed "as though some Moses had come to alleviate us of our sufferings." Another admirer wrote that the president's "voice alone conveyed mastery over the tumult of human affairs." Roosevelt was presiding over a mass politics in which technology would give him an enormous audience.

From the Fireside Chat of July 1933:

> When Andrew Jackson, "Old Hickory," died, someone asked, "Will he go to Heaven?" and the answer was, "He will if he wants to." If I am asked whether the American people will pull themselves out of this depression, I answer, "They will if they want to." The essence of the [NRA] plan is a universal limitation of hours of work per week for any individual by common consent, and a universal

> payment of wages above a minimum, also by common consent. I cannot guarantee the success of this nationwide plan, but the people of this country can guarantee its success. I have no faith in "cure-alls," but I believe that we can greatly influence economic forces … I do have faith, and retain faith, in the strength of common purpose, and in the strength of unified action taken by the American people.

In 1934, in the off-year election, when the party in power almost always loses congressional supporters, the Democrats gained despite their margin of 1932. They controlled about two-thirds of the Senate, as well as three quarters of the House. A political opportunist, and mindful of his party's long minority status, FDR worried about how to build a lasting majority. The New Deal went further than Hoover, especially with relief, but Roosevelt constructed the NIRA with business in mind. He did not want to alienate corporations. Simultaneously, however, the Depression credited politicians who urged drastic measures. Roosevelt did not want to antagonize business, but also wanted to rope in those on respectability's edge.

Most of all there was Huey Long, a rabble-rousing senator from Louisiana. Millions loved him for his rhetoric about "sharing the wealth." Roosevelt feared him as a rival in 1936. A gunman shot and killed Long in 1935, but many other public figures took up his mantle. The "radio priest" Father Charles Coughlin had a Catholic following and initially cheered on FDR, but later turned on the New Deal. He urged his followers to join his National Union for Social Justice, which had a message more radical than Roosevelt's. Francis Townsend, a doctor from California, proposed that Washington pay $200 a month to everyone over sixty, and rallied the elderly to his "Townsend Plan." Around the same time, in California, Upton Sinclair, who had first come to the notice of reformers when he wrote *The Jungle*, some thirty years before, ran for governor in the EPIC campaign—End Poverty in California. Sinclair lost the election but scared the conventional. The 1930s were turning into an era of political trial and error. Would Roosevelt continue in a pro-business direction?

In May of 1935, the Supreme Court declared the NRA unconstitutional. The Schechter brothers—Joseph, Alex, Martin, and Aaron—ran a slaughterhouse in Brooklyn. They had distributed contaminated chicken, and the government took them to court for violating NRA codes, although the company did not sell across state lines. New Dealers argued that Schechter Brothers came under the Constitution's regulation of interstate commerce, one provision of which provided legal cover for the NRA. In *Schechter Poultry Corp. v. United States*—the "sick chicken" case—the Court unanimously held that the NRA delegated unwarranted authority to the president and overstretched clauses of the Constitution.

The NRA was not restoring prosperity, and so when it went down, it did not entirely disappoint Roosevelt. He could, moreover, accuse the court of "nine old men" who lived in "a horse and buggy age." FDR finally deemed it fruitless to build his party through polite relations with business. He might, however, co-opt voters attracted to Long, Coughlin, Townsend, and others. This explanation makes the departures of 1935 more purposeful than they were, but in the spring of that year, the president mounted what

has been called "the second New Deal." National and corporate recovery had demarcated "the first New Deal." The second New Deal concentrated more on reform. The policies pushed competition and even took a hostile attitude to some enterprises. Roosevelt had his eye on his re-election in 1936.

From the Fireside Chat of April 1935:

> The job of creating a program for the Nation's welfare is, in some respects, like the building of a ship. At different points on the coast where I often visit, they build great seagoing ships. When one of these ships is under construction and the steel frames have been set in the keel, it is difficult for a person who does not know ships to tell how it will finally look when it is sailing the high seas … It is that way with the making of a national policy. The objective of the Nation has greatly changed in three years. Before that time individual self-interest and group selfishness were paramount in public thinking. The general good was at a discount. Three years of hard thinking have changed the picture.

No overriding perspective shaped the second New Deal, and a general strategy eluded FDR. But four projects exemplified how the New Dealers divided the rich from everyone else and, to critics, illustrated demagoguery.

First, the Wealth Tax Act of 1935 was the most popular tax law in American history: the more money you made, the more taxes you paid on each dollar over a certain amount; as you reached the highest "brackets," most of the increase in income went to the government. An elevated percentage of the salaries of the most well-to-do Americans would be taken after their earnings had reached the top brackets.

Second, the Social Security Act of 1935 led to one of the icons of the "welfare state" that politicians had been creating since the turn of the century. Putting together a hodgepodge of national and local programs, this legislation for "social insurance" offered money to workers if they became unemployed and disabled. The Act also aided dependent children, and (most touted) it gave pensions to retired workers.

Third, Congress funded the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Roosevelt's confidant, Harry Hopkins, ran the WPA. A former social worker, Hopkins administered the earlier relief agency, FERA. Now he declared, "Boys, this is our hour. We've got to get everything we want … now or never." From its inception in 1935 until 1943, the WPA employed 8 million in various work-relief projects and spent some $11 billion.

Finally, the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) superseded a section of the defunct NRA. This "Wagner Act," named after its sponsor Senator Robert Wagner, Democrat of New York, had a decisive impact on labor. Before the Depression, employees only unclearly had the law on their side in forming unions, and employers certainly held all the cards. Under the NLRA, labor got a "charter," the right to organize. Over the next several years unions broke into several industries.

Yet the limits of what one historian has termed "symbolic reform" were displayed. The president had opposed the Wagner Act in 1934, and suspected "big labor." He made the bill a priority only when its attractiveness to his constituencies made its passage

inevitable, at which time he jumped on the bandwagon. The WPA had a psychic effect on people, who appreciated that the powers-that-be recognized their predicaments. But this relief prized by Harry Hopkins expended money frivolously if one wanted to end the Depression. The programs had few "trickle down" consequences that would put people back to work or energize business. The social security system did not apply to the unemployed or those at the bottom. In the 1930s, the plan took money out of the pockets of the employed who bought into the pensions; employers who contributed raised prices to do so. The Social Security Administration held the money for several years until the pensions became due. Thus, for the immediate future, social security depressed an already unsound economy. The pension fund increased costs and decreased the ability to spend. The Wealth Tax Act was also spiritually positive but raised little money, for it affected so few people. In reflecting on the legislation, the president said it necessary "to throw to the wolves the forty-six men … reported to have incomes … /over/one million dollars a year." In the first three years of the Act's existence, one person fell in the highest bracket—John D. Rockefeller. New Deal tax policies did not much contribute to recovery. Under Hoover only the upper classes paid the income tax, while in the 1930s the federal government taxed more people who made less money. The hidden taxes on gasoline, liquor, and cigarettes fell more heavily on the impoverished. These taxes went up. Nonetheless, whatever the consequences for ending the Depression, for reform, or for altering the nation through federal action, the New Deal undeniably roused Americans. Because of its anti-rich rhetoric, the legislation could not be beat.

Roosevelt listened to the people and spoke to their wishes. As he prepared for the election of 1936, FDR lashed out at the "privileged princes" who stood in the way of achieving social democracy in a time of common trial.

From the Fireside Chat of September 1936:

> There are those who fail to read both the signs of the times and American history. They would try to refuse the worker any effective power to bargain collectively, to earn a decent livelihood and to acquire security. It is those short-sighted ones, not labor, who threaten this country with that class dissension which in other countries has led to dictatorship and the establishment of fear and hatred as the dominant emotions in human life. All American workers, brain workers and manual workers alike, … know that our needs are one in building an orderly economic democracy … secure from the kind of faulty economic direction which brought us to the brink of common ruin seven years ago. There is no cleavage between white-collar workers and manual workers, between artists and artisans, musicians and mechanics, lawyers and accountants and architects and miners. Tomorrow, Labor Day [a national holiday], belongs to all of us. Tomorrow, Labor Day, symbolizes the hope of all Americans. Anyone who calls it a class holiday challenges the whole concept of American democracy.

One letter-writer to the president said, "I am in complete sympathy with your fight on greed and the favored classes." Another wrote, "At last we have a man in the White House

and not a puppet of organized wealth." A woman told Eleanor Roosevelt, FDR's wife, that she liked the president because "his most bitter opponents are the … Rich." At one rally in New England "the most amazing tidal wave of humanity" cried out: "Thank you Mr. President!" "God bless you!" "You saved my home!" "He gave me a job!" Whereas the electorate has regularly blamed presidents for its ills, the people in the 1930s blamed everyone but the president. He was "the only man we ever had in the White House," said one person, "who is not a son of a bitch." And, said another, only FDR would understand why "my boss" was a son of a bitch.

Roosevelt heartened the people with words of cheer, but he also knew about political ill will, grasping the insults people wanted to hear in the 1930s. He mobilized anger as well as Andrew Jackson in the 1830s; William Jennings Bryan in the 1890s; Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s; Richard Nixon in the 1970s; and Donald Trump in the 2010s–20s. The 1936 election resulted in one of the greatest sweeps in presidential history, especially convincing because Roosevelt lifted the number of Democratic Senators to seventy-six (of a possible ninety-eight) and Representatives to 331 (of 435). We "licked the big bosses," said one worker, "by our majority vote for Roosevelt."

The New Deal Stymied

In the late 1930s three issues spoiled the president's policies, exhausted New Dealers, and consolidated an opposition.

After his victory in 1936, Roosevelt overreached in respect to the Supreme Court, the first issue. If he got rid of the men on the Court who had declared the NRA unconstitutional, FDR supposed that his programs could succeed. Although the *Schechter* decision proved critical, the Democrats around FDR feared that the justices would veto all legislation that might fight the Depression. Elected reformers held the executive and the legislature, and they were angry that a group whom no one had voted for stood between the country and better times. In February of 1937, Roosevelt proposed a new law. The Constitution did not specify the number of judges on the Court; only convention made for nine. FDR's Court bill proposed to expand the number to a total of fifteen. FDR would appoint a new judge for every one over seventy who did not retire. There were then six. If the older ones did not stop working, Roosevelt appointees would swamp them. If the old ones did step down, Roosevelt would put New Dealers in their place.

From the Fireside Chat of March 1937:

> I want to talk with you very simply about the need to meet the unanswered challenge of one-third of a Nation ill-nourished, ill-clad, ill-housed. The American form of Government [is] a three-horse team provided by the Constitution to the American people so that their field might be ploughed. The three horses are, of course, the three branches of government—the Congress, the Executive, and the Courts. Two of the horses are pulling in unison today; the third is not. Those who have intimated that the President of the United

> States is trying to drive that team, overlook the simple fact that the President, as Chief Executive, is himself one of the three horses. It is the American people themselves who are in the driver's seat. … It is the American people themselves who want the furrow ploughed. It is the American people themselves who expect the third horse to pull in unison with the other two. I hope that you have re-read the Constitution of the United States in these past few weeks. Like the Bible, it ought to be read again and again.

"Court packing" was a bridge too far, even for FDR, and it went down after a long struggle. But at the same time, men left the job, and the court shifted its votes. While FDR lost the battle, he seemed to have won the war. Nonetheless, his victory was costly if we consider the sour legacy over Roosevelt's attempt to alter the Court. The legacy not only unsettled the president but set a precedent for hostility between the executive and the judiciary into the twenty-first century.

The second issue involved the big unions. The NLRA, which the president had hesitatingly helped, fortified labor through 1937. The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) organized untutored laborers at first within the old American Federation of Labor (AF of L). The heyday of militant activity for jobseekers, for example in the steel and automobile companies, came in the late 1930s. Many onlookers noted the violence and strikes. Unions foiled executives in businesses previously free from employee input over terms of work. While Roosevelt showed some distaste, he welcomed the labor leaders and courted the working class. Simultaneously, his detractors said that the Democrats coddled irresponsible unionism.

More moderate observers made a practical critique because the New Deal did not end the Depression, the third issue plain to see by the late 1930s. Six million, or about 12 percent, had no income, but Roosevelt still worried about a boom-and-bust cycle. His normal budget and a contrasting "emergency budget," which contained the deficit spending, exhibited this anxiety. The president never grasped the views of Englishman John Maynard Keynes and the "Keynesian" economics that came of age in the 1930s. Keynes stipulated that the government was obliged to spend more than it took in during downturns. Such spending when business contracted could pick up an economy. Roosevelt had few systematic ideas about anything, let alone fiscal policies. In 1937 the economy seemed better. The president not only wanted to meet the fears of believers in a balanced budget, but also regarded the dole as "a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit." Thinking handouts immoral, the president cut the WPA and other welfare measures. More unemployment followed. The downturn convinced many restrained New Dealers that their leader did not know what he was doing: the system had not been fixed.

Roosevelt increased funding for the WPA in 1938. The economy improved but limped along with 10 million still out of work. The GOP laid this "Depression within a depression" at the door of the Democrats. Although the politicians were slowly and semiconsciously transforming government to show more energy in relation to domestic issues, they were out of their depth in dealing with money and jobs.

Figure 8 Trying to Change the Umpiring (this cartoon depicts Franklin Roosevelt's battle with the Supreme Court). Columbus Ohio Dispatch, February 10 1937. Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

From the Fireside Chat of April 1938:

My Friends: This recession has not returned us to the disasters and suffering of the beginning of 1933. Your money in the bank is safe; farmers are no longer in deep distress … ; and government has an established and accepted responsibility for relief. But I know that many of you have lost your jobs or have seen your friends or members of your families lose their jobs, and I do not propose that the Government shall pretend not to see these things … I conceive the first duty of

government is to protect the economic welfare of all the people in all sections and in all groups.

The distress over the Court, the large unions, and the economy led to the growth of an opposition that brought together three antagonists. First were those who disliked what the New Deal had done to constitutional traditions. In the Congress, Republicans in the Midwest defined these traditionalists. A second group feared labor. These anti-radicals in Congress came from the upper and rural South. Usually members of the president's own party, these adversaries showed that the New Dealers comprised only a fraction of Democrats. A final group were pragmatists, moderate Republicans in the Northeast and Roosevelt followers outside the South who were not in urban areas; they held the balance of power and would only support realistic proposals.

Some historians believe that the New Deal received its greatest articulation in the late 1930s and early 1940s. But forces within FDR's party, particularly southern Democrats, undermined whatever innovative ideas were proposed for a "welfare state" or for "welfare liberalism." Over the next twenty-five years, the United States would be stalemated. The Democratic majority had grown too large and unwieldy to rule effectively. The divergence of its northern and southern wings made for trouble. Politics still entailed ideas—those of the New Dealers versus others—but you could not identify the New Deal with the Democratic Party. Most of the time, southerners allied with the GOP to defend a status quo contrary to the interests of northern Democrats. Even when Republicans got power, they did not have the strength to repudiate most of the New Deal. Movement in any direction required elements in both parties. Southern Democrats had to work with a united group of Republicans, or northern Democrats had to reach out to pragmatic Republicans.

America in a Dangerous World

The Depression was worldwide, even though longer and more acute in the United States. Germany, France, England, and Japan—as well as America—all turned to nationalism in putting their people back to work. Centralization attracted leaders everywhere. The attraction led many "advanced" New Dealers to sympathize with the Bolsheviks, who had prevailed in the civil war in Russia and formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the USSR) or the Soviet Union in 1922. In 1933, Americans recognized this government, which they had scorned for over a decade. Increased trade with the USSR interested Roosevelt. Democrats may have been naïve about Russia, although many worried about the dictatorship that had grown up with Lenin's successor, Joseph Stalin.

Moreover, a "National Socialist" government under Adolf Hitler had taken over Germany at the same time that Roosevelt was inaugurated. Often referred to by an unfriendly abbreviation, the "Nazis" gave rise to a new vocabulary with its keyword "Fascism," from the Italian government under Benito Mussolini, allied with Germany in the 1930s and 1940s.

After the Great War, Britain, France, and America had done little for a defeated Germany. The early 1920s had been calamitous for its economy, as had the Depression of the late 1920s. By the early 1930s the consequences of Versailles had brought about the rise of the reckless Nazis. They were partly responding to Lenin and Wilson: the ideas of both of these men stressed rationality and economic prosperity as the be-all and end-all of human society. On the contrary, Hitler believed, both offered only technocratic fixes to existential ordeals. Instead, the Germans underscored the purity of a racial *Volk* (people) and its devotion to a leader (a *Führer*). Life involved struggle as the *Volk* tried to overcome its enemies. Inherent in this vision was a hatred for Jews—although many were German nationals, they were outside the *Volk*. The *Reich* made anti-Semitism a domestic and international cornerstone. In addition to a nationalist appeal, the Nazis looked for revenge against their former foes, and militarism obtained a foothold. Hitler's greatest adversary was the USSR, which Germans believed was infected by Jews. Britain was next. Lastly, for the Nazis, Wilson and then FDR stepped toward communism, in the presumption that human beings should strive for a peaceful, egalitarian society.

The Nazis, according to America, adopted "totalitarian" techniques and submerged individuals to the state, while promoting violence and a cult of leadership. Germany glorified war and aimed to eliminate groups it reviled, Jews especially. In any case, Nazi politicians were misfits, although Hitler was larger than life, as were the other statesmen of this era, Roosevelt and Stalin, and by the late 1930s, Winston Churchill of Great Britain. Finally, like Roosevelt and Churchill, Hitler had an astounding public presence that the radio projected.

By the mid–late 1930s, Hitler was overturning the Treaty of Versailles that had placed Germany at a disadvantage. It was making another run to become the dominant continental power, expanding east, toward the USSR. Stalin, who felt most threatened, urged "collective security," the name given to a united effort that might defend all Europe from the Germans. But Russia was alone. Britain and France pursued competing strategies. The French thrashed about to keep their negligible authority over the Germans from the World War. England hoped to pacify the Nazis by directing them east toward Russia. In the United States, Hitler had few defenders, but even fewer Americans wanted to get into another conflict. Perhaps the Western nations should help Stalin, but they usually thought him as bad as Hitler. Alternatively, they might set Germany and Russia on each other.

Hitler moved aggressively in central Europe, annexing Austria in 1938. He was, he said, including all ethnic Germans in a greater *Reich* to give them *Lebensraum*—room to live. In September of 1938, he presented similar demands in Munich, Germany. The Western powers accepted his claims on parts of Czechoslovakia, a state created at the Versailles Conference out of the old Austro–Hungarian Empire; Hitler said he had no more territorial ambitions. Then, several months later in early 1939, he went back on his word and overran the rest of Czechoslovakia. In March of 1939, drawing a line to deter Hitler, Britain and France initialed an accord with Poland, sandwiched between an enlarged Germany and Russia. Should Hitler continue to gobble up countries and

strike Poland, he would have to fight the Western allies once more, or perhaps he would embroil himself with the Russians, who might come next on his list.

In response, Hitler made an agreement with Stalin in August of 1939. The "Nazi-Soviet Pact" showed genius. Hitler would not worry in the immediate future about the encirclement that had made the World War a disaster for the Central Powers who had fought on "two fronts." Even if Britain and France supported Poland, he could confront it without fear that he would have to battle the Russians. The Pact undercut the English who had hoped to secure an alliance with the USSR if they could not lure Hitler and Stalin into their own encounter. The Hitler–Stalin treaty also showed bottomless cynicism: in the blink of an eye the Russians had dismissed their hostility to the Nazis. The Soviet Union at least stalled, as Stalin could watch the destructive imperialism of all the capitalist–fascist powers.

Immediately after the Hitler–Stalin deal, Germany invaded Poland (and Russia took the opportunity to plunder its western neighbor). The British and French abided by their commitment and declared war on Germany on September 1, 1939.

The New Dealers detested the Germans and sympathized with their Allies from what was now known as the First World War. Roosevelt wanted to help Britain and France, and many politicians felt that the United States would fight once more for far-flung interests. Some of these "internationalists" were Wilsonians, like Roosevelt's long-serving secretary of state, Cordell Hull. Some northern Republicans also had interventionist sympathies, stubbornly believing in power politics and a future in which America would have a commanding global role. All these men worried about the Soviet Union.

From the Fireside Chat of September 1939:

> MY FELLOW AMERICANS AND MY FRIENDS: Tonight my single duty is to speak to the whole of America … You are, I believe, the most enlightened and the best-informed people in all the world at this moment … You must master at the outset a simple but unalterable fact in modern foreign relations between nations. When peace has been broken anywhere, the peace of all countries everywhere is in danger. It is easy for you and for me to shrug our shoulders and to say that conflicts taking place thousands of miles from the continental United States, and, indeed, thousands of miles from the whole American Hemisphere, do not seriously affect the Americas … Passionately though we may desire detachment, we are forced to realize that every word that comes through the air, every ship that sails the sea, every battle that is fought does affect the American future … I have said not once but many times that I have seen war and that I hate war. I say that again and again. I hope the United States will keep out of this war. I believe that it will. And I give you assurance and reassurance that every effort of your Government will be directed toward that end. As long as it remains within my power to prevent, there will be no blackout of peace in the United States.

Troubled and indecisive, most Americans did not embrace internationalism. Charles Lindbergh had flown the Atlantic alone from New York to Paris in 1927 and was a US legend. Although his kindly ideas about the Nazis had made him suspect, Lindbergh typified "isolationism." He had misgivings that moderate opinion-makers also voiced. The United States had a heritage of limited government but could not survive another war-inspired alliance with Europeans. National Socialist Germany and Russia were degraded states, offspring of the First World War. Wilson's ideals had not prevented their flowering. Some in Roosevelt's entourage saw Russia as the future, but by the later 1930s many informed people believed totalitarianism included communism and fascism. While the Soviets had said that they would stand up to Germany, they had quickly switched. Although having all the bad guys on one side made Britain and France look better by comparison, the caprice and craziness of Europe argued for aloofness. Never again!

Developments at home gave these arguments credit. Roosevelt had increased the role of Washington and arguably undercut American individualism, yet the Depression had not ended. Instead, some isolationist Republicans warned, the disruption that went with the CIO's unionism reminded them of events in Europe, maybe Nazi but more likely Communist class warfare. FDR had also tried to alter constitutional norms when he took on the Supreme Court. In 1940, as the war heated up, the president announced that he would run for a third term. He broke what Washington had begun, and that Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Jackson had accepted. Who did Roosevelt think he was? Was totalitarianism coming to America under the threat of foreign dramas? Roosevelt won the election of 1940, one of the nastiest on record.

The administration proclaimed that the United States would function as "the great arsenal of democracy." The Germans had defeated Poland, and then turned west, determined to crush France and England. By May of 1940, at the start of the US presidential campaign, Hitler had beaten France (and other Western European nations), and soon waged air war on England. FDR offered Britain, which stood alone against the Nazis, "all aid short of war." Roosevelt may have put out of his mind what the United States would do should the English face defeat, but many reasoned that Americans would endure combat.

The entry of the Soviet Union into the war in June of 1941 did not change this conclusion. In a surprise strike, Germany laid into its erstwhile ally, severed the Hitler–Stalin partnership, and sought its destiny in the east. This unexpected and even irrational strategy at least showed how much the Nazis hated the Russians. As Germany threw its army against the Soviet Union, the English under Churchill and the USSR under Stalin at once linked up as allies. If Hitler attacked Hell, said Churchill, he would at least make a pleasant reference to the Devil in Parliament. Still, the Germans drove into Russia, which suffered inhuman losses as its armies retreated. While these military moves convinced American isolationism of the decadence of Europe, they gave confidence to internationalists that they might bring the United States in on the side of Russia and Britain.

In August of 1941, Roosevelt met Churchill in Argentia Bay, off Newfoundland, at the "Atlantic Conference." They proposed an "Atlantic Charter" like Wilson's Fourteen Points:

> Their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other; … they desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned; … they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them; … after the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.

At the summit, FDR also pledged himself to the English. He told Churchill that he would wage war but not declare it. "If the Germans did not like it, they could attack American forces." On the Sunday of the meeting, FDR was ferried to Churchill's ship, and hoisted aboard. Then, with "great courage and strength of character," Roosevelt "propelled his lifeless legs" across the deck where a church service took place, the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes draped on the pulpit. The two leaders joined hands. Churchill selected two Protestant hymns, "Onward Christian Soldiers" and "O God Our Help In Ages Past," and the president a third, "Eternal Father Strong to Save." The English and American crews sung the songs, familiar to both, together. Back home, before Congress, the Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr called the Nazis a "metaphysical evil."

In the period from 1914 to 1945, when Germany surrendered for a second time, that country made one long campaign for dominance in Europe. In the Second World War, as in the First World War, we find the same principal actors. Britain and Russia—and later the United States—campaigned against the Germans. While this analysis ignores the war in the Pacific that the United States fought with Japan, it is roughly accurate.

The emergence of Japan complicated the problems of internationalists. Intending a new order in Asia comparable to the empires of the Europeans decades before, Japan worked for a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" in the 1930s. Still divided and helpless, China would shine as the jewel of Japanese imperialism. Throughout the 1930s the Japanese warred to subjugate China. The Chinese "Nationalists" fought back inadequately. A "Japanese Monroe Doctrine" told America to keep out, and some US diplomats thought that they should accommodate the Japanese, who would squash China's communists. On the other hand, since the Open Door, the United States had perceived itself as China's friend and expected profitable trade from its friendship. The Americans opposed Japan's challenge. Yet the United States did not act consistently or openly: diplomats did not believe China worth a war; Asia did not have top billing. Japan recognized the antagonism but did not want a fight either. Through 1939, both sides limited their reciprocal ill feelings.

The outbreak of the European war in September 1939 made the Roosevelt administration more apprehensive about the Far East. The United States might enter the war to quell Hitler, but officials also looked more systematically at global wickedness. They had at hand Wilsonian beliefs about the US role everywhere. Confrontation anywhere—now in China by Japan—might endanger America. Cordell Hull in the State Department fervently expounded these ideas from the First World War. We see this heightened moralism even in Roosevelt, who believed more in a balance of power. Hull emphasized that democracy depended on open economies. The same reasons that might force the United States into Europe justified Far Eastern intervention. The cruelty of the Japanese to other Asians legitimated Hull's outrage. In 1940 and 1941, as Roosevelt closed on battle in Europe, America stepped up pressure on Japan. The United States was easily the stronger of the two, and statesmen believed that they could manage Japan and keep China independent. Policy makers at first thought that the Japanese would not risk hostilities with the intimidating United States. Yet Hull believed that an agreement of 1940 among Japan, Germany, and Italy—the "Axis" Powers—corroborated his view of a universal peril. Angry at the militarism and imperialism of Japan, the government risked a fight there.

From the Fireside Chat of December 1940:

> MY FRIENDS: This is not a fireside chat on war. It is a talk on national security, because the nub of the whole purpose of your President is to keep you now, and your children later, and your grandchildren much later, out of a last-ditch war for the preservation of American independence and all of the things that American independence means to you and to me and to ours. We met the issue of 1933 with courage and realism. We face this new crisis—this new threat to the security of our nation—with the same courage and realism. Never before since Jamestown and Plymouth Rock has our American civilization been in such danger as now. For, on September 27th, 1940, this year, by an agreement signed in Berlin, three powerful nations, two in Europe and one in Asia, joined themselves together in the threat that if the United States of America interfered with or blocked the expansion program of these three nations—a program aimed at world control—they would unite in ultimate action against the United States.

In May of 1941, Roosevelt announced that "the whole world is divided between human slavery and human freedom—between pagan brutality and the Christian ideal." By the summer, at the time of the Atlantic Conference, FDR looked to involve the United States with Hitler. Even Roosevelt's ardent defenders wrote that he tried "to do good by stealth." Germany, he thought, threatened the United States, and the president would deceive the public until it came around to his way of thinking. When the Germans refused to be goaded by the United States, Roosevelt's enemies have claimed, FDR manipulated the country into war in Asia. History does not substantiate this accusation. Yet the continuous, if silent, demands on the Japanese in 1940 and 1941 left them with the choice of surrendering China to America and acquiescing to an Asia where the United States called the shots; or of fighting back.

In a surprise attack at the end of 1941, Japan's air force raided Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, headquarters of the US Pacific fleet. Japan badly wounded the US navy. Events found Americans sick and hating, and FDR said that December 7, 1941, would "live in infamy." In girding for a fight, the government told citizens to "remember Pearl Harbor." Although the Japanese may have considered Hitler an unreliable ally, Germany promptly leagued with Japan, perhaps believing that war on two fronts—the Atlantic and the Pacific—would vanquish America. As the German foreign minister shrieked to the American representative in Berlin, "Your president has wanted this war, now he has it." There is unanimous historical consensus that the end—the defeat of Germany—justified Roosevelt's means.

America at War

Although citizens would not see the result for a few years, the war ended the Depression and completed the economic transformation that the New Deal had begun. Roosevelt's "War Cabinet," a bipartisan group of internationalists, included Republicans Frank Knox (defeated vice-presidential candidate in 1936) as secretary of the navy, and Henry Stimson (secretary of war under TR and of state under Hoover) as secretary of war. Roosevelt also made Wendell Willkie, his losing GOP rival for the presidency in 1940, a roving ambassador.

Business and government cuddled. Roosevelt appointed big executives, denounced five years before, to manage the economy—among them Edward Stettinius of US Steel, William Knudsen of General Motors, and Donald Nelson of Sears Roebuck. Southern Democrat James Byrnes of South Carolina ended up as Roosevelt's "assistant president," head of the Office of War Mobilization. Byrnes negotiated agreements with businesses that guaranteed costs, profits, and write-offs. Laws gave rebates for investments that switched plants to war production. Byrnes placed government orders, oversaw the financing and construction of war factories, apportioned materials and manpower, and settled labor disputes.

In the spring of 1941, Congress had passed the Lend-Lease Act, permitting Washington to "lease or lend" war materiel to all nations whose defense the president found essential to the United States. The administration would not worry about being paid back, and designed Lend-Lease to supply England, but extended it to the USSR after the German attack in June. A year later, Congress approved the tax bill of 1942, which increased taxpayers from 13 to 50 million. Even people with low wages would pay. Congress followed up with "withholding" taxes in 1943: Washington would automatically take money from salaries to ensure that employees coughed up what they owed. New Dealers persuaded citizens to buy War Bonds, a form of saving that gave the administration more cash. Finally, the regime spent massively over budget. At the height of the deficit expenditures by "Dr. New Deal," as Roosevelt had styled himself, the United States paid out $3.9 billion more than it took in. In 1943, "Dr. Win the War" spent $57.4 billion more.

Although Americans saw more prosperity than they had seen for a decade, rationing and the scarcity of consumer goods checked the benefits of full employment. People put money away. Yet military research and development promised products after the war that customers might enjoy with dollars they had sequestered.

Strategists placed Europe before the Pacific: "Germany first!" Roosevelt made the career of Dwight "Ike" Eisenhower, who was appointed to lead the Allied forces in Europe and was given the simple order: "Seek out the German army and destroy it." Nonetheless, Americans continued prewar policies, overcoming the Nazis not with men but with supplies to the Allies. The United States outfitted the USSR in its struggle so that Russian bodies and American equipment would overpower Hitler.

In thinking about this "good war," we need to remember that the Soviet Union in the east fought the most grueling contests. In addition to taking millions more in casualties than the Western powers, the Soviets fought more savagely than the Americans or English. The Russians suffered losses deep in their own country, most famously at Moscow at the end of 1941 and at the start of 1942, and at Stalingrad in February of 1943. And then, finally, throughout western Russia in 1943 and 1944 as the USSR drove the Germans back to their borders and, with macabre success, repaid the Germans.

The link of England and America with the USSR was cynical. From the start of the uneasy coalition, Stalin had demanded a "second front." Fighting with the Germans in France, said Stalin, would relieve the USSR in the east. Yet Britain did not want to repeat the First World War and have millions of its soldiers slaughtered in France, and with the backing of the United States, England vetoed any substantial attack on French soil. Britain and America let the Russians soften up the Germans. In February of 1942, stores sold out of maps when the president announced the need for them in a Fireside Chat:

> MY FELLOW AMERICANS: This war is a new kind of war. It is different from all other wars of the past, not only in its methods and weapons but also in its geography. It is warfare in terms of every continent, every island, every sea, every air-lane in the world. That is the reason why I have asked you to take out and spread before you a map of the whole earth, and to follow with me in the references which I shall make to the world-encircling battle lines of this war. Many questions will, I fear, remain unanswered tonight, but I know you will realize that I cannot cover everything in any one short report to the people. The broad oceans which have been heralded in the past as our protection from attack have become endless battlefields on which we are constantly being challenged by our enemies. We must all understand and face the hard fact that our job now is to fight at distances which extend all the way around the globe.

In 1942, the United States and Britain campaigned only in North Africa. In 1943, Churchill sidetracked Eisenhower's interest in an invasion of France. Churchill wanted the war to drain his Red partner. However, it also took a long time to build up American

strength in Britain for a naval invasion from England across the English Channel. An offensive against Sicily and Italy, Germany's fragile collaborator, ousted Benito Mussolini, in 1943. Stalin did not respect the triumph, however, and Eisenhower knew that the Italians were not the principal enemy. Roosevelt in July 1943:

> Over a year and a half ago I said this to the Congress: "The militarists in Berlin, and Rome and Tokyo started this war, but the massed angered forces of common humanity will finish it." Today that prophecy is in the process of being fulfilled. The massed, angered forces of common humanity are on the march. They are going forward—on the Russian front, in the vast Pacific area, and into Europe—converging upon their ultimate objectives: Berlin and Tokyo. I think the first crack in the Axis has come. The criminal, corrupt Fascist regime in Italy is going to pieces.

A year later, in June of 1944, the United States and England oversaw the greatest operation by sea in the history of warfare when their armies captured Normandy, on the northern coast of France. The liberation of the French was vital to the defeat of Nazi-occupied "Fortress Europe."

Using the King James version of the Bible that he loved, FDR broadcast his own prayer the evening of June 6:

> My fellow Americans … in this poignant hour, I ask you to join with me in prayer. Almighty God: Our sons, pride of our Nation, this day have set upon a mighty endeavor, a struggle to preserve our Republic, our religion, and our civilization, and to set free a suffering humanity. Lead them straight and true; give strength to their arms, stoutness to their hearts, steadfastness in their faith. They will need Thy blessings. Their road will be long and hard. For the enemy is strong. He may hurl back our forces. Success may not come with rushing speed, but we shall return again and again; and we know that by Thy grace, and by the righteousness of our cause, our sons will triumph. They will be sore tried, by night and by day, without rest—until the victory is won. The darkness will be rent by noise and flame. Men's souls will be shaken with the violences of war. For these men are lately drawn from the ways of peace. They fight not for the lust of conquest. They fight to end conquest. They fight to liberate. They fight to let justice arise, and tolerance and good will among all Thy people. They yearn but for the end of battle, for their return to the haven of home. Some will never return. Embrace these, Father, and receive them, Thy heroic servants, into Thy kingdom.

The invasion succeeded, and Eisenhower put aside the note that he had written in case of disaster:

> Our landings … have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based upon the best

> information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that Bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt, it is mine alone.

The triumph gave America a claim on the conscience of Europeans for the next seventy years, whenever they questioned US purposes. Normandy also displayed a courageous feat of arms and sealed the German fate. From the Fireside Chat of June 1944:

> The hammer blow which struck the coast of France last Tuesday morning, less than a week ago, was the culmination of many months of careful planning and strenuous preparation … From the standpoint of our enemy we have achieved the impossible. We have broken through their supposedly impregnable wall in Northern France. But the assault has been costly in men and costly in materials. Some of our landings were desperate adventures; but from advices received so far, the losses were lower than our commanders had estimated would occur. We have established a firm foothold. We are now prepared to meet the inevitable counterattacks of the Germans—with power and with confidence.

The advance across France in the winter of 1944–5 shed more blood. Stalin had his second front, and Hitler, having three years of grace from the time of his attack on the Soviet Union, at last had to fight in both east and west. At the end of 1944, in a last-minute attempt to turn around the war, the Germans planned to break the western offense, retake the Atlantic seacoast, and drive their enemies back into the Atlantic. The Germans fell short when they failed at the weakest point in the allied line in Belgium in the Ardennes, the "Battle of the Bulge." In the early months of 1945, Great Britain and the United States, from the west, and the USSR, from the east, closed in on Germany. In May of 1945, Germany—on the abyss—surrendered after Hitler's suicide. Masters of the continent, the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union prepared for a new structure of states.

War in the Pacific

The United States had little time to contemplate peace in Europe. America still warred with Japan, the second priority. After Pearl Harbor, the Japanese thought they could hold a defensive position around their empire and the home islands. On the other side, Americans feared raids on the west coast. In California, citizens of Japanese ancestry were deprived of their rights and interred in detention camps. These camps deprived citizens of fundamental constitutional rights, and the administration's failure was condemned into the twenty-first century.

Back in the early 1940s, the US navy in Asia complained about shortages, because of "Europe First," and the United States received little help from the Chinese Nationalists for whom, in part, they were fighting. But despite Pearl Harbor, the United States quickly penetrated Japan's network. The first thrust occurred in June of 1942, at Midway

Island, when the Japanese lost a pivotal battle. The United States moved from one set of Japanese-controlled possessions to the next. America over and over constricted the Empire. In protecting its Asian superiority, Japan resorted to horrific tactics. The Americans matched their enemy, as they followed the Japanese in the bloodlust. By the end of 1944, inhuman contests tightened the noose. US rule of the skies resulted in obliterating attacks on Japan. In the hands of zealots in the army, the Japanese wanted a battle to the death—which they got. After the victory over Germany in May of 1945, the United States deployed troops for an invasion of Japan comparable to Normandy.

FDR had won his fourth term in 1944, but Vice President Harry Truman had acceded to the presidency in April of 1945 when Roosevelt died. Truman ordered the new "atom" bomb, thousands of times more destructive than prior weapons, dropped on Japan, and two of these "nuclear" devices were "laid on" the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August of 1945. Along with his compatriots, the new president "Remember[ed] Pearl Harbor," and called the success "the greatest thing in history." He promised further attacks, "the like of which has never been seen on this earth" until the "Japs" surrendered. They accepted the unbearable and capitulated within days. Believing that Truman had avoided the proposed invasion, most Americans did not find a problem with his decision to deploy the new weapon. While the explosions killed far more with a single warhead, the earlier "fire bombings" of the wooden buildings in Japan's urban centers had killed thousands in a single raid and had blunted American sensibilities. Later, Truman's choice made for much controversy, not least in the film *Oppenheimer* (2023) about Robert Oppenheimer, the lead scientist in the development of the bomb. The Japanese, on their last legs, might have given up anyway. The United States could have warned them or conducted a demonstration. The A-bombs might not have been necessary to end the conflict. Yet they could not be unexpected in what amounted to a "race war"—a conflict between what were regarded at the time as two antithetical peoples, Japanese and American.

* * *

By the late 1930s, a new political orientation existed. Instead of Progressivism, a distinctive Liberalism formed the perspective of industrial capitalism. It named the public life of the mid-twentieth-century cities of the Northeast and Midwest. Catholic and ethnic, they often had a large Black population. The cities overly stood for those who had come to the United States in the first decades of the twentieth century, and who were entering the mainstream of American life when the National Origins Act of 1924 was preventing more of them from migrating. Urban areas were often arrayed against Protestant ways of living that seemed to be more rooted in the past than the present.

Along with this Liberalism went an interpretation of US life. Liberals set the agenda. In an era when family loyalties and local customs were breaking down, the government came to the rescue. It provided social services, set up minimal standards of living, and saw to it that people were not left to the mercy of chance. Although the policy gains were not linear, some New Deal goals were realized and, as time went by, unfamiliar problems

would require schemes different from those associated with the Social Security Act of the 1930s, and liberals would devise these schemes. Later, fair employment practices, voting rights for Black Americans, subsidies for health care, opportunities for women, job retraining, programs for the disabled, the legalization of abortion, and anti-discrimination legislation for marginalized and vulnerable groups would all come to the fore.

In government-business relations, Washington intervened to regulate, to secure prosperity, and to make corporations responsible. The overall health of capitalism required coercion of its parts. As had happened in the Second World War, however, a leader would bring into politics large-minded executives to speak for the whole system, and they might have oversight of industry. The bipartisanship of the Second World War became the agreed upon solution to dealing with business.

The war made Liberalism international. After difficulties from 1946 to 1948, liberals dominated foreign policy. The US mission shifted the world in the direction America had moved at home. Domestic priorities leapt outward. In Europe, the defeat of Germany promised a clean slate for international politics. With peace, Asian interests rose in equality to those of Europe. Americans would expend more for arms and foreign aid, and committed themselves to a form of Wilsonianism. Make no mistake about it: the Second World War was the defining moment for the United States for the next century. Liberals situated their adversaries, conservatives, so that they had to challenge what Liberalism proposed. Finally, in the realm of rhetoric, US culture put Communism to the left of the liberals, and Fascism to the right of conservatives.

CHAPTER 14
COLD WAR AMERICA, 1945–63

The Communist Menace from Roosevelt to Kennedy

After the Second World War, the United States faced off against its former ally, the Soviet Union, in what became known as the Cold War. It dominated politics in both Democratic and Republican administrations and helped to make Liberalism central to domestic and foreign affairs. Despite contentious issues at home and overseas, in the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s, America led the world.

Harry Truman

Roosevelt was the premier politician of his age. His death just before the end of the Second World War in April of 1945 shocked the country. People wept in the streets. "Dear Mrs. Roosevelt," sang Woody Guthrie, the exemplar of a folksinger, "Don't hang your head and cry. His mortal clay is laid away, but his good work fills the sky." The *New York Times* declared: "Men will thank God on their knees 100 years from now, that Franklin D. Roosevelt was in the White House."

Most people did not know Harry Truman. The vice president who took FDR's place had little experience as a national leader, and his elevation exemplified the problematic nature of the vice presidency, first on display when Andrew Johnson replaced Lincoln. With some self-knowledge, Truman spoke diffidently about himself and displayed his insecurities. "I'm not big enough for this job," he told a friend. "You know," he would tell his staff during the early years, "I'm not an elected President." At the end of 1947, he blurted out about the disabled Roosevelt, "I'm not a superman like my predecessor." His narrow victory when he ran for the highest office in 1948 did make him more confident, but toward the end of this elected term he said that "a great many people," "maybe a million," could perform presidential duties better, and he regularly expressed reservations about the job. Americans took Truman at his word. After Roosevelt's death, Truman received their sympathetic and united approval, but his fortunes soon went downhill and stayed there. The president did muster a fragile popularity during his campaign of 1948. Yet the opinion polls always made him look bad, and after 1948 his ratings went south staying well below 50 percent. In 1951 and 1952, only about 25 percent of the people thought he was doing a respectable job.

Truman presided over the first period of "the Cold War." This contest with the Soviet Union occupied America for almost fifty years after the Second World War and engrossed leaders and the public in an anxious debate, and "hot" wars were fought at the

periphery. The Cold War also took in life at home. In their daily affairs citizens worried over the subversion of their institutions. The culture displayed a nervous patriotism, although the Cold War eventually extended American ideals. However one understands this history, Truman's inability to appeal to the public imagination compromised his stewardship in the early and formative part of this era. This accidental president also may have set in stone the hostility to Russia long after the Cold War ended.

Truman first displayed his lack of a sure touch domestically. He allowed conservatives the vocal upper hand, which put his own modest New Deal Liberalism on the defensive. The voters did not want further changes but had no interest in turning away from Roosevelt's welfare state. The Republicans had no hope of rolling back the New Deal that Truman defended, yet they clawed their way to power in Congress. The Republicans urged voters to turn on the Democrats, whose programs, Republicans said, stepped toward communism, "creeping socialism."

The Democrats responded convolutedly to these accusations. During the 1930s, a few New Dealers belonged to the American communist party; many others—"popular front liberals" or "pinks"—adhered to the positions of the Soviets. The Great Depression and then the cooperation during the Second World War made the alliance of convenience with the USSR look better than the reality. Perhaps the politics of citizens in a free society should not be subject to scrutiny, but the Roosevelt administration's attitude toward communist supporters was relaxed. Some of the New Deal's officials spied for the Soviet Union, and they could legitimately be called traitors. Yet during FDR's presidency people did not listen to the agitated Republicans. After Truman took office, these communists or "fellow travelers" were thrown out of government. Truman did so in a way to minimize damage to the Democrats, but his White House bristled with anti-communism. Nonetheless, by 1946, the supposed pro-communist leanings of Democrats made for controversy.

The Cold War Begins

At the beginning of 1945, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin planned for the world after the war at a resort on the Black Sea of Russia. This "Yalta Conference" agreed on a peace that would divide the earth among the victors, with the Soviet Union ruling those states that its army had taken from the Nazis as Russia had battled them across Europe. The US Department of State, the number-one believer in Woodrow Wilson's views, pushed Roosevelt and the Russians to more global ideas. These doctrines of open commerce assumed that democratic states would follow from free trade. Theoretically, Eastern Europe, dominated by Russia, would choose such commerce and develop representative governments. But the self-righteous State Department got nowhere. The "Big Three" at the Conference arranged a new League of Nations, the United Nations, but Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin constructed it so that it would not stand in the way of the great powers. Each country would predominate in those areas of the world that its armies had conquered—spheres of influence would exist. FDR spoke of "the Four Policemen" aspiring to include China, which Churchill called "the faggot puppet" of

the United States. At the same time, a public document issued at Yalta papered over the balance-of-power approach and vaguely declared democracy for a "Liberated Europe." The Russians signed even such weak documents with reservations. They made clear their fear about future attack from Germany. The USSR would control Eastern Europe. As a practical politician, Roosevelt dismissed long-range planning. As a statesman he saw that he had no ability to move the Soviet Union from where its armies had stopped.

An occupation would put the troops of Britain and the United States (and then France) in western zones of Germany, those of Russia in an eastern zone. The Yalta Conference also divided the capital of Berlin, itself located within the Soviet zone, into four sectors. From there the Allies ruled Germany. Together, the victors might re-create a unified Germany that did not have a military. In July and August of 1945, a new Big Three—with Truman replacing Roosevelt, and Clement Atlee the electorally defeated Churchill—met at Potsdam, outside of Berlin, mainly to validate Yalta. By the end of this conference two sides were developing. The United States and Britain led one, the USSR the other. Each side worried that the other side might dominate a strong and unified *Reich*. Moreover, with Roosevelt in the grave and an inexperienced Truman in place,

Figure 9 Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin at the Yalta Conference, February 1945. Courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

everyone heard the State Department view more plainly. Roosevelt had to recognize Soviet hegemony in Poland and other countries, but America need not endorse it. The State Department had some success in convincing Truman that he must confront Stalin about universal democracy.

At first the discovery of the German death camps and the well-nigh incomprehensible Nazi decision to murder all Jews held the Western allies and the Russians together against evil. Yet Truman soon sharpened US diplomacy. With each side holding on to its zone or zones, Potsdam divided Germany. Americans showed more distaste for the repressive Soviets. Who would speak for the oppressed of Eastern Europe if not the United States? Only an "open door" everywhere would make America safe. But Russian moves only distantly threatened. Moreover, days after the Potsdam Conference, to end the war against Japan, Truman would use the atom bombs. They also functioned in the onset of the Cold War: they demonstrated to the USSR the might of the United States. Truman often thought that the doomsday weapon would persuade the Russians to march to his tune.

Through 1946 the Russians consolidated rule in Eastern Europe, and excluded the United States with what Churchill called the "Iron Curtain." The United States perceived its interests there as real but modest. In the State Department one could see the Wilsonianism of the retired Cordell Hull, but it often surfaced only in speech-making: America selected where its global interests would lie. Diplomats premised Western Europe as critical, and the devastation of the Second World War posed unanticipated problems. The economic rehabilitation of Great Britain and France, as well as of the western parts of Germany, seemed slow. A totalitarian state commanded the east, and a Western Europe in disarray was subject to internal communist subversion, if not external Russian threat. Washington's responses to these circumstances and the actions of the Soviets constituted the first rounds in the Cold War.

The Truman administration reasoned that massive economic reconstruction would put Western Europe on its feet. Americans also feared a return to the Depression. Aid to Western Europe, with conditions, would not just rebuild Europe, but would make for profitable trade between the United States and its allies, building a group of strong industrial nations—the West. This reconstruction held the key to success, regardless of the Soviet Union. Policy focused on strengthening America's oldest allies, those that communism or Russia menaced least. They would form a barrier to Soviet expansion.

Although Truman adopted these ideas, he relied on capable advisors. The president named General George Marshall, chief of staff during the war, as secretary of state, and Marshall often associated his name with the era's foreign policy. Its practical architect was Dean Acheson, by the mid-1940s a strategic official, and secretary of state himself from 1949 to 1953.

These Democratic officials worked with difficult Congresses. Puffed up because of a lackluster Truman, budget-conscious and semi-isolationist Republicans directed the legislature and were not prepared to funnel money to foreigners. The United States had saved Europe in 1917 and 1918, Republicans reasoned, and then once more had to pull the chestnuts of Britain and France from the fire in the Second World War. Now an

interim president was telling the people they had to assist Europe again. Why should taxpayers throw good money after bad? Troubles overseas never ended, and America would better tend its own garden.

The administration conceived its problem to be public information: how to enlighten citizens and Congress. But Truman, a clumsy public speaker, could not take to the airwaves as had FDR. An arrogant, Yale-educated member of the northeastern establishment, Acheson detested a Congress that felt the same way about him and the State Department. The nature of Truman and his officials, and of the legislature, constrained Democrats. They had to school Republicans about anti-communist internationalism in Europe. To get their way, planners offered up what they believed was a skewed account of their program: they told the country not that it had to defend democratic capitalism in Western Europe but that the Soviet Union was engaging in a worldwide quasi-military contest.

At the end of 1946 and in 1947, Truman requested money to help Greece and Turkey in the first step in constructing a Western bloc. Complex circumstances surrounded the proposals of aid for both countries. A civil war disturbed Greece. The revolutionaries in it were receiving aid from Yugoslavia, a one-time communist state in central and southeastern Europe, independent of Stalin, and at odds with him. In Turkey, the USSR was demanding strategic concessions, and Russia could menace oil regions that the West looked upon as its own. But many knowledgeable individuals thought that the Turks could defend themselves. The president sold the joint aid package to Congress by emphasizing the need to fight a vague global terror—"Truman Doctrine":

> The peoples of a number of countries … have recently had totalitarian regimes forced upon them against their will … At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one. One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms. I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures … [O]ur help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.

Truman took a policy of regional political and economic aid and, at least in his less than effectual oratory, converted it into a global plan about an armed threat. He enlarged on Woodrow Wilson's ideas about how economics could transform other countries. Now the United States had defeated the Nazis and materialized as the world's great and benevolent power; it challenged the Soviets with nebulous armed action.

These ideas enlisted high-ranking Senate Republicans. Arthur Vandenberg from Michigan got on the bandwagon. He summarized the strategy as "scaring hell" out of the people. Acheson wanted to make matters "clearer than truth." Diplomats, he said, were not writing a doctoral dissertation where they dotted every i, and crossed every t. The administration was overselling the Cold War. A policy of selected financial aid appeared as universal militarization. Decision makers worried about the crude publicity but believed they had no alternative. For the Democrats a rough anti-communism would attract Republicans. They stressed an all-inclusive martial hazard, and not the needs of the Western economy.

In June of 1947, on the heels of the Truman Doctrine, Secretary of State Marshall announced the comprehensive aid Europe should receive. He made the case for the "Marshall Plan" through an analysis of international business. Marshall would earmark aid to selected European nations. In exchange they would introduce US products and negotiate over how the funds would alter their commerce. The United States would rebuild its old-time trading partners, and ultimately a West German state, in an American image.

At the same time, George Kennan, a planner in the Department of State who became famous for his formulations, conveyed to upscale readers the more vivid ideas of the administration. In "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" in *Foreign Affairs* in July of 1947, Kennan elaborated "containment." This high-class version of the Truman Doctrine had a doubtful connection to the Marshall Plan. Kennan wrote:

> The main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies … The Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the western world is something that can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counterforce … at every point where the [Russians] show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world … To avoid destruction the United States need only measure up to its own best traditions and prove itself worthy of preservation as a great nation … The thoughtful observer of Russian–American relations will find no cause for complaint in the Kremlin's challenge to American society. He will rather experience a certain gratitude to a Providence which, by providing the American people with this implacable challenge, has made their entire security as a nation dependent on their pulling themselves together and accepting the responsibilities of moral and political leadership that history plainly intended them to bear.

Words aside, in February 1948, Stalin consolidated his rule in Czechoslovakia to the east of Germany. The United States had already conceded this country to the Soviets, but a pitiless takeover warned of the danger of the Russians when unopposed by force. Democrats took advantage of this trouble. Congress passed the money for the Marshall Plan not to effect complicated trade policies but to counter a communist soldierly threat. In any event, "Stalinism" appalled Americans. Truman had to exaggerate to get his plans through Congress, and the Soviets aided him.

A new worldview was in the offing. According to Americans, the Russian government did not much differ from Hitler's. Stalin had stamped out the liberties of his own people and of Eastern Europe. The Reds moreover proclaimed atheism and repulsed religion. The United States responded to protect its own civilization and its spiritual basis, and others. The contest with communism accentuated a fundamental truth: God and not the state guaranteed rights. The Cold War diminished the relative, and relatively brief, secularism of the New Deal era, and brought back religious commitment. Grim days lay ahead. Citizens needed to understand that a huge military was demanded. They had to be ready for treason. They had to grasp the necessity for secrecy, for spies, and for "covert" activities. Over time the Cold War enveloped America.

The Cold War at Home

Leaders angled for advantage in this unfamiliar environment. To get back into power the Republicans had argued that the New Deal, "soft on communism," concealed disloyal officials. As New Dealers went on the defensive in 1946, Republicans had popularized their version of the past. To promote a third term for himself, FDR had taken the nation into the Second World War, weakening the institutions that he had sabotaged in the 1930s. Yalta gave Eastern Europe to the Russians and showed, said Republicans, the worrisome aspect of Democratic internationalism. Now in 1947 and 1948, Truman's mismanagement—or was it more?—compelled the United States to respond to Soviet belligerence further west.

Instead of refuting this story, Democrats confirmed some of its aspects in their talk about both foreign and domestic policy. In 1948, when the president ran for his own term in office, his advisors agreed that in addition to pursuing his anti-communist internationalism, Truman must show how much he hated Reds at home. He got his chance when Henry Wallace, Roosevelt's vice president from 1941 to 1945, broke with the Democrats to run a third-party campaign in yet another Progressive Party. While for many Wallace stood for the advanced New Deal, his campaign rested in the hands of the American Communist Party. Truman distinguished himself and the liberal New Deal from groups further left. He lambasted "Henry Wallace and his communists," and offered an alternative to the reactionary Republicans and the left-wing of Wallace. Yet Truman increased the significance of this new Progressive Party, a minor actor. The president put communist Progressivism on a par with Republican Conservatism.

Simultaneously, Truman defined his own Liberalism. In the 1930s, pointing out the inequality between the working class and those with more money had worked for Roosevelt. In his January 1941 State of the Union address, FDR spoke of "four freedoms"—of speech and religion, and from want and fear—for the planet. He also briefly set out a domestic program:

> Equality of opportunity for youth and for others. Jobs for those who can work. Security for those who need it. The ending of special privilege for the few. The preservation of civil liberties for all. The enjoyment of the fruits of scientific

> progress in a wider and constantly rising standard of living … We should bring more citizens under the coverage of old-age pensions and unemployment insurance. We should widen the opportunities for adequate medical care. We should plan a better system by which persons deserving or needing gainful employment may obtain it.

By the late 1940s, Republican speechmaking associated these sentiments with collectivism or communism. Democrats had to find another issue that might generate commitment. In the Second World War, the United States had defeated an enemy known for its foul racism, and Americans now fought communists who denied basic liberties to their citizens. Americans should forbid such practices at home: liberals found rights for Black Americans a more fruitful goal to emphasize than economic betterment for all. The Cold War turned northern Democrats away from the collective social goals of the 1930s toward issues of individual freedoms, especially for African Americans. Democratic self-interest and ideals came together.

Black militants originated the movement to end segregation, but the Cold War shaped domestic culture to assist the struggle. Liberals embraced fairness for citizens of color, while ruling out more spending on welfare that bordered on socialism.

Yet just as Truman lost the left wing to Henry Wallace, the president lost his right also: some southerners walked out of the Democratic Party because of race. These "Dixiecrats" ran their own candidate. Truman looked like a goner. Yet, in November of 1948, the president squeaked out a victory. The center of the Democratic Party, under attack, held. Nonetheless, the lowest voter turnout in twenty-five years hinted that Truman did not arouse much interest. The president had a greater popularity than at other times, but he still lacked a common touch, as he ran behind other Democrats across the country. Moreover, he could do no better than his tiny victory. The election results put Truman ahead of the Republicans in the accusations and counter-accusations about communism overseas and in the United States. Then, at once, affairs conspired to demoralize the newly elected man.

Foreign Policy Crises

After their takeover of Czechoslovakia, the Soviets exploded a nuclear device in 1949. A Russian weapon made it imprudent for the Americans to be limited to economic policy. If the Russians had "the bomb," maybe the United States should be preparing for war. The public relations agenda involved exaggeration, but a Soviet Union with atomic weapons justified a more rational suspicion that it would expand through force. Diplomats took a worldwide threat more seriously. Foreign policy would be more military than economic. Many people, though not Dean Acheson and the men around him, now believed the oratory about an armed danger. But the animosity between the USSR and the West existed, and Acheson wanted more assertiveness.

In 1948, the United States had formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It promoted a unified European stance to trade and security, in line with the Marshall Plan. Less than two years later Americans transformed it into the military

alliance that it remained. NATO would defend Western Europe from attack and, in the twenty-first century, would aid the expansion of democratic governance.

At the same time, problems in China had grown acute. The conflict between communists and the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek had been going on since the 1920s, but had been more or less in abeyance during the Second World War. The country was large, disunited, and economically primitive. But after August of 1945 the civil war intensified under the communists and their leader, Mao Tse Tung. Chiang Kai-shek had a following in the United States that had developed from the late 1930s, when America first involved itself on the side of China against the Japanese. But diplomats did not believe that the frail Nationalists could survive. Truman and Acheson did think that the Nationalists might hang on indefinitely, even though they should not receive a major commitment. The Democrats upheld the Nationalists, minimized moral and monetary promises to them, and wished for a compromise peace with Mao. Only the Soviet Union and the threat it created in Europe endangered the United States.

The hands-off outlook did not jell with what the administration had told the public. If the United States fought communism everywhere, no one deserved more help than the Nationalists. The Democrats awkwardly defended minimal aid to China and half-heartedly bestowed money on Chiang Kai-shek for what Truman considered a losing and marginal cause. By 1948 and 1949, the Nationalist position had deteriorated, and by the end of 1949 Chiang fled to the island Taiwan, off the Chinese mainland. Taiwan became the headquarters of the Nationalists whose successors would nurture something like a western-style regime for the next seventy-five years. Cozy with American conservatives, Chiang Kai-shek convinced many Republicans that the Democrats erred in giving Western Europe primacy. The fight with the Russians, some Republicans argued, should occur in Asia.

In the climate to which the Democrats had contributed, the "fall of [mainland] China" came as a cruel blow. A look at a world map showed, often in red, that communism had metastasized. Democrats had to prove their toughness, offset the collapse of China, and prove they were not soft on communism. Truman's victory in 1948 was the fifth straight presidential defeat for the Republicans and goaded them to extremes. They pointed to Asian communists, whom Democrats were not fighting, and to domestic communists, whom Democrats had not punished. Then the Republicans attacked Dean Acheson's Department of State itself.

In January of 1950, an investigation of spying brought about the conviction of Alger Hiss, who had a long-time connection to the New Deal. Occupying a series of prestigious positions in the State Department—he had sat behind FDR at Yalta—Hiss exemplified, according to the GOP, Roosevelt's disgraceful security policies. Eased out of his job after FDR's death because of Democratic suspicion of his loyalties, Hiss was pilloried by Republicans, especially Richard Nixon, an up-and-coming congressman from southern California who had gone to the local and obscure Whittier College. Nixon exuded intelligent opportunism, and essentially led an inquiry of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). It ended in a trial that put Hiss in jail for perjury—he was judged to have lied about passing documents to Russia in the late 1930s. This outcome,

in the headlines for almost two years, dismayed Democrats. The greatest Soviet asset, declared Robert Taft, Republican Senator of Ohio, "has been the pro-Communist group in the State Department who promoted … the Communist cause in China."

In February of 1950, in a speech at Wheeling, West Virginia, Senator Joseph McCarthy, Republican of Wisconsin, asserted that at least scores of communists were still holding State Department jobs:

> This is a time when all the world is split into two vast, increasingly hostile armed camps … Today, we are engaged in a final, all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity. The modern champions of communism have selected this as the time. And, ladies and gentlemen, the chips are down—they are truly down … The reason why we find ourselves in a position of impotency is not because our only powerful potential enemy has sent men to invade our shores, but rather because of the traitorous actions of those who have been treated so well by this Nation. It has not been the less fortunate or members of minority groups who have been selling this Nation out, but rather those who have had all the benefits that the wealthiest nation on earth has to offer—the finest homes, the finest college education, and the finest jobs in Government. This is glaringly true in the State Department. There the bright young men who are born with silver spoons in their mouths are the ones who have been the worst … In my opinion, the State Department, which is one of the most important government departments, is thoroughly infested with Communists.

Treason was now not confined, as in the Hiss case, to the 1930s and 1940s, or to people with minor connections to those currently in power. "How can we account for our present situation," asked McCarthy, "unless we believe that men high in the government [today] are concerting to deliver us to disaster?" "One communist among the American advisors at Yalta," the Senator declaimed later, "was one communist too many."

Truman's failings made the issue of treason irresistible. Determined to get the Democrats out of power, the Republicans had a great rallying point, although few positive programs. Americans were starting to dread evildoers in their midst and to wonder about the country's stability. McCarthy gave his name to an era of fear, of decay of political rights, and of headaches for Democrats. Historians have appraised this "second red scare" as more serious than the one after the First World War. Nonetheless, an armed victory briefly turned the tide for the White House.

Korea

Jutting out toward Japan, the peninsular nation of Korea in north Asia bordered both the USSR and China. After the Second World War, at the 38th parallel, the United States and the USSR had split Korea between them. By the late 1940s, the Americans had decided to evacuate South Korea—it was too costly and too trivial to defend. Then, in June of 1950, the communist north attacked the south. Stalin gave his OK, although he

refused to associate the USSR with the attack. Truman announced a "police action" that America led. He promised to repel the invaders and restore the dividing line between the two Koreas. Truman would halt Asian communism. Although few disagreed about the decision for war, the administration had positioned itself so that it could hardly refuse to fight. Because it had not fought for China, it had to fight for Korea. The stakes in Korea, said Acheson, were about prestige, "the shadow cast by power." The president's popularity went up for the first time since the beginning of 1949.

General Douglas MacArthur led the military. Recognized as brilliant, but also unpredictable and conceited, he believed that the future lay in Asia where he would free it from communism. Because MacArthur befriended Republicans, Democrats were relying on a dangerous man. After North Korean advances, MacArthur fought his way back north. After a victory in which he recaptured the South Korean capital of Seoul, MacArthur had the North Koreans on the run in the summer and early fall of 1950. His feats furthered his reputation—and coincidentally that of the Democrats.

So far, this splendid little war might even strengthen Western Europe. In April of 1950, the administration had completed a reappraisal of policy after the explosion of the Soviet nuclear device. A report by a new executive agency, the National Security Council, outlined the Russian menace to Western Europe. To defend Western Germany and the West, said NSC-68, the United States had to rebuild its military. The Democrats had come around to the Republican speech-making view of communism but wanted to meet the danger, though only in Western Europe. They called for a quadrupled armaments budget but fretted about how to obtain the appropriations. The Republicans condemned Truman for his weakness, although they did not want to spend on weapons and men. Republicans also noted the unwillingness of Europeans to allot sums themselves. In terms of allocating money, GOP anti-communism was mostly hot air. More serious about anti-communism in Europe, the Democrats faced an old problem: they had to extract cash from the Republicans. Acheson needed "to bludgeon" the Congress.

Democrats worried that Korea was a USSR feint, which perhaps forewarned of more serious trouble-making in Western Europe. Nonetheless, the strong response in Asia would not only express Democratic toughness, but also give Truman the opportunity to fund NSC-68. "We were sweating," about the money, said an Acheson aide, and then, "thank God, Korea came along."

Truman and Acheson had tied their fortunes to MacArthur, whose triumphs elated them. They knew that they would profit from such victories and went along with and even promoted MacArthur's request to fight in North Korea. In the latter part of 1950 Truman understood that a modest Democratic response would provoke Republicans to accuse him of weakness. The l tension justified what Truman wanted in Europe, and he could not resist thinking of a Korea unified under his auspices. The administration would show off its anti-communism and forgot the aim of restoring the boundary of the 38th parallel. As MacArthur's troops crossed it and rushed north in the fall of 1950, more victories rewarded boldness. Truman also looked the other way while MacArthur involved himself in Republican politics. The president backed the goal of freeing all

Korea, despite repeated Chinese warnings that they would not tolerate intimidation on their border. In November, the warnings ignored, China counter-attacked.

The war changed when the Chinese appeared. Through the late fall and early winter of 1950, Americans suffered humiliating defeats as China pushed US soldiers below the 38th parallel. Again, much of South Korea reverted to communist hands. Truman had gambled that he could get a great anti-communist triumph from a modest emergency. By early 1951, however, he looked forward, in Asia, to a long encounter with China and, at home, to renewed Republican cries that the communists were advancing. In April of 1951, Truman fired MacArthur. The uproar testified to the president's low status. MacArthur's replacement, Matthew Ridgeway, slowly advanced to around the 38th parallel where a bloody impasse continued. The damage, however, could not be repaired. Thousands of American troops were dying, and Korea was devastated.

Adventure in Asia was ruinous. But in the early 1950s, the "Cold" War had caused more than military trouble. Korea made an insecure public hysterical. Playing on resentment and frustration, McCarthy increased distrust. The Senator first targeted Democrats in the administration. He called Acheson a "pompous diplomat with striped pants and a phony British accent," who brought traitors into the State Department. McCarthy was furious at the "egg-sucking liberals … who sold China into atheistic slavery." He would drive out of government "the prancing mimics of the Moscow party line." With good reason McCarthy appeared to defend free inquiry against executive privilege and the Ivy Leaguers who had covered up Democratic disloyalty in the 1930s and 1940s. He drew strength from isolationists, often from the Midwest, who did not want Europe to pollute the United States. Supporters thought McCarthy stood for average people and, in his rough way, fought against northeastern snobs involved in secrecy and maybe subversion.

Historians have discredited McCarthy and McCarthyism, and in fact his shabby career did much to undermine criticism of assertive internationalists. After McCarthy's fall, few critics were willing to criticize Washington's pushy agendas. In 1952, however, McCarthy successfully lambasted Truman. The Democrats could not come to grips with real concerns in the United States or around the world. Exaggeration on all sides left the electorate with few realistic ideas to evaluate the Soviets. In 1952, the Republicans nominated for the presidency General Eisenhower. He saw the issue as "the heavy burden … of a party too long in power." "Ike" waltzed to victory, the last general-politician in the line of Washington, Jackson, and Grant.

The Eisenhower Years

Eisenhower ended the Korean War with a cease-fire—but no peace treaty—near the 38th parallel shortly after he was inaugurated in 1953, but South Korea was now a permanent hostage in an unstable part of the world. In respect to McCarthy, Ike moved with caution, some would say cowardice. But the Senator soon lost his effectiveness with Republicans back in office. In 1954, he self-destructed in hearings over communism on the mass medium replacing the radio, "television." Thereafter the Senate condemned him, and he died in 1957, drunk. Meanwhile, Eisenhower

restored the prestige of the presidency, and a measure of quiet in politics and social life. Of course, he continued the Cold War against the Soviet Union, but more cheaply than his predecessors. With its number of nuclear bombs, the United States dwarfed Russia. The president stressed that an air force delivering the weapons would deter the USSR. This was Eisenhower's "New Look." Bombs cost less than a large army and warded off conflict just as effectively. The president's long-serving secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, spoke of "massive retaliation" by the new H-bomb, a thousand times more destructive than the A-bomb. Reporters wrote of "more bang for the buck." Yet Eisenhower kept the peace in the 1950s, although an alarming arms race grew up between the United States and the USSR. Few could fault this general who had rescued Europe from the Nazis. Eisenhower also refused to dismantle the New Deal, and so made it palatable to everyone.

In one impressive piece of legislation passed during his eight years in office, the president pursued cooperation between business and government that the Second World War had begun on a gigantic scale, and that now pleased the Republicans. The Interstate Highway Act of 1956 built a road system across the country. The Act would aid mobilization in case of war. The legislation also helped the automobile and trucking businesses, the private car as opposed to mass transportation; it sped up the growth of the suburbs and the decline of northeastern cities. The Republicans now did not now shy from spending on public works. Directly and indirectly, the jobs fueled the prosperity of the Eisenhower years.

In 1944, Roosevelt had passed the "G I Bill" that provided college training for returning veterans. The Truman administration implemented the successful law and made universities prominent in the lives of ordinary individuals. By the 1950s, these new graduates—more aware of the wider world around them—would experience a "culture of conformity." McCarthy had launched what were called witch hunts. The term referred to the Puritans who, at the Salem trials, looked for an evil that did not exist, and HUAC had also pursued imaginary communists. But Richard Nixon had exposed a real danger in Alger Hiss. In a gentler form of McCarthyism, Republicans found "security risks" in many areas, humiliating victims in public hearings. Targets included elite universities, and constricted scholarship resulted. HUAC swept into cities to examine public schools, and bureaucrats dismissed teachers who had suspect politics, or who refused to sign "loyalty oaths." Hollywood came under scrutiny, and investigations ended the careers of some entertainers and screenwriters.

Teachers who kept their jobs conducted "air raid" drills. To save themselves from nuclear attack, children hid under their desks. A few years later the government recommended "fallout shelters" where families could hide in case Russians bombed the United States. On the new "TVs"—you could find them in fallout shelters—parents and children watched wacky comedies or shows about idealized marriage and family life. The entertainment industry sealed off America's moms and dads and kids from the world outside the home, from the dangerous politics. On the other hand, Hollywood movies hinted at American nightmares. *The Thing* (1951) showed a creature that lived on blood; *Them!* (1954) starred giant radioactive ants; *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956)

had soulless zombies replacing persons; and *The Blob* (1958) featured a huge amoeba engorging a town.

In 1954, at the behest of a Catholic group, the Knights of Columbus, Congress added the words "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance, and in 1955 "In God We Trust" appeared on coins and paper money. Eisenhower talked of "godless communism." He said that America made "no sense" unless it was founded in "a deeply felt religious faith … And I don't care what that faith is." The Second World War and the Cold War brought goodwill between Protestants and Catholics, and between Christians and Jews. The Nazis had given anti-Semitism a permanent bad name. Faced with atheism in the USSR, Americans claimed a common spiritual heritage. Billy Graham and Norman Vincent Peale, both mainstream Protestant preachers, broadcast a message of anti-communism in book and sermon. Catholic Fulton J. Sheen had a smash TV show, "Life is Worth Living." He appealed to Catholics and non-Catholics alike with his love of country and hatred of the USSR.

McCarthy was a practicing Catholic, and the McCarthy period divided two periods in the history of American Catholicism. Before that time Catholics were suspect; after, they were first-class assimilated Americans. In 1955, Will Herberg wrote *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*. It intimated something made-up, Judeo–Christianity, and was the most regarded discussion of religiosity at mid-century. Herberg made even Jews American:

> In the life and death struggle with Communism … religion commends itself as our greatest resource and most powerful secret weapon. In the week in which I first wrote these words three outstanding clerical leaders of the three religious communities of the nation made eloquent pleas for religion on this ground: one called religion "the shield of the nation"; the other proclaimed it as "more powerful than the … bomb"; the third recommended it as "America's strongest weapon against atheistic communism."

The United States had more than religion going for it. In 1957, Richard Nixon, now vice president under Eisenhower, disputed at the American National Exhibit in Moscow with the Soviet First Secretary, Nikita Khrushchev, who had succeeded Stalin a short time after his death in 1953. The two men compared their nations in a "kitchen debate." They argued about music, bathing suits, suburbs, and data processing. In front of a US kitchen, Nixon sang the praises of labor-saving devices like washing machines for the housewife. Americans judged Nixon's performance a great victory. The VP made quality of life identical to the ability to buy products, especially televisions—historians would call it "consumerism." In the 1950s, unremitting materialism joined with Judeo–Christianity.

Nuclear Diplomacy

At the end of the Second World War, two spheres had arisen, mainly based on where the armies had ended up. Still afraid of a unified Germany and unable to decide cooperatively what to do about this suspect country, Russia and the United States broke it up along the

lines of occupation. Two new states, East Germany and West Germany, resulted. With the partition of Germany went the partition of Europe by the late 1940s and early 1950s. With good reason Eisenhower assumed that this settled with the Soviets. He shored up credible allies and backed away from dubious and high-risk areas. Ike wanted, for example, to pass up Asia where the Democrats had ineptly gotten themselves mixed up in Korea. There, each side had had its nose bloodied, and with luck no further testing would occur. Yet the hatred of each side for the other went along with the evolution of atomic weapons and an arms race that made the relaxation of tensions impossible.

The number of nuclear bombs and the astonishing growth of West Germany meant that it might acquire them. For the Russians any arrangement had to deny these bombs to West Germany, far more a success than East Germany. The USSR feared that even one nuke in the hands of a West German invited a clash with the United States. Yet Eisenhower never grasped the anxiety of the Russians. By the late 1950s, the complexities of the weaponry frustrated the president, who wanted the United States out of Europe. Western Europe might achieve safety, he thought, if his allies acted collectively, without US interference. Their joint strength would match the Soviet Union, and the US occupation of West Germany could end. Continued American supremacy in the alliance, the president worried, might make the Europeans incapable of action. He trusted them. Thus, he considered nuclear bombs for NATO and thus for West Germany. Old-school, Ike believed that America might return to some pre-Second World War condition and withdraw its soldiers to the United States.

As the two Germanys divided, western Berlin located behind Soviet lines in East Germany had also become a distinct city. As early as 1948, a reform of the money supply in the western zones of Germany had implied that the United States would form an independent West German government. The USSR responded by refusing to allow the Western powers to travel through eastern Germany to their part of Berlin. This first "Berlin Crisis" lasted for almost a year, while the Western powers supplied "West Berlin" using their air rights. Russians exuded their fear of independent German power but did not have enough muscle to sustain their position, and the crisis petered out in 1949. The troubles signaled a standard set of moves. To intimate to the Americans its worry about a fourth *Reich*, the USSR would threaten West Berlin when the United States granted West Germany too much leeway, though the Russians never had confidence enough to move much beyond bluff. The more they threatened West Berlin, the more it symbolized democratic liberties. Only a free West Berlin would make the world safe for America.

A pugnacious leader, Nikita Khrushchev vividly expressed the problem. West Berlin, he said, was the testicles of the West: every time he wanted a reaction, he gave them a yank. But Khrushchev also said the city was a "thorn," a "cancer," a "bone in my throat." To ensure that no West German nuclear force developed, the communists were willing somehow to trade their interest in West Berlin, but they would not say what they wanted. Although the Soviets lacked the clout to push their grievances, Eisenhower was also confused. He held on to his personal authority in the late 1950s, but the electorate fretted. When the Russians launched the first satellite, Sputnik, in 1957, some experts proclaimed that America was falling behind. The president struggled to look as if he had

matters in hand. Maybe, as the Democratic candidate for the presidency said, the time had arrived "to get the country moving again." The vague discomfort possibly allowed the untested Senator John Kennedy of Massachusetts narrowly to defeat VP Nixon in 1960. The public tied Nixon to a tired presidency.

A New Mood?

In his inaugural address, the forty-three-year-old Kennedy reaffirmed the centrality of the Cold War but also hearkened back to Puritanism and the American Enlightenment:

> Fellow citizens, we observe today not a victory of party, but a celebration of freedom—symbolizing an end, as well as a beginning—signifying renewal, as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three quarters ago. The world is very different now. For man holds in his mortal hands the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life. And yet the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe—the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God. We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution. … Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans—born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage—and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this Nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world. Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty. This much we pledge—and more … In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility—I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it—and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

Eisenhower had shillyshallied over Germany, and his mandate declined. Kennedy and his confidants saw European issues more clearly. The new secretary of state, Dean Rusk, repeatedly noted that the USSR might go to war over any non-conventional assets that West Germany got hold of. From the time of the inauguration, Kennedy wanted to secure "superpower" control of atomic weapons, and to prevent their getting into German hands. But the problem was daunting because of "nuclear plenty" and of the increasing strength of West Germany. Conventionally anti-communist, Kennedy still brooded about the human prospect that the bombs endangered.

Early in 1961, at a meeting in Vienna, Austria, Khrushchev warned of yet another Berlin Crisis. The Soviets could act thoughtlessly, but additionally responded to their fading prestige in East Germany. The East Germans were voting with their feet by moving to the West by way of Berlin. Later that year, to stop the migration, Khrushchev built a wall around West Berlin. Although this move bespoke Russian infirmity, it further isolated West Berlin, and heightened its symbolism for the United States. West Berlin itself was trivial, but as the Achilles heel of the West, it gained headlines. Although Kennedy could do little, the lack of response may have encouraged the USSR. The United States had no good reason to fight over West Berlin but calculated that the Russians would make trouble about the city only as a preliminary to an invasion of Western Europe, or as part of a long-term plan to undermine NATO. The United States needed to remove the cause of Soviet unease, the possibility of Germany's getting nuclear weapons. Should the USSR risk atomic war over this possibility?

Throughout 1962 the Kennedy administration raced against time. It struggled to persuade the Europeans, especially the Germans, to rely on conventional arms and to renounce the bomb. American nuclear superiority had always limited the Soviet response to West Germany. Yet a rough equality between the two superpowers was inevitable, and soon Russian rockets could face off with America in central Europe. In 1962, the United States worried that a showdown over Berlin would occur, and as Rusk negotiated with the USSR, he heard recurring complaints about "the number one problem" of a nuclear Germany.

Cuba

In the late 1950s and early 1960s the triumph of a revolution in Cuba under Fidel Castro obsessed Washington. Since the war with Spain in 1898, the United States had controlled the Caribbean, but now faced a hostile Cuba. In early 1961, the new Kennedy government sponsored an invasion at the island's Bay of Pigs. But disgruntled Cubans did not upend Castro, and Kennedy backed off. The failure embarrassed his administration and led the Cubans to expect another assault. By 1962, the United States found a rowdy Castro an outspoken ally of the USSR. Russia wanted to protect Castro from Americans. In Italy and Turkey, they had nuclear bombs, now implanted on missiles, aimed at the USSR. The missiles were outmoded, but the United States had scheduled substitutes launched from submarines. The Soviets could follow the American lead and use the territories of their allies as missile sites. By the spring and summer of 1962, Khrushchev plotted to base rockets in Cuba.

Soviet motives were complex, but the Berlin emergencies ended in the Caribbean. In 1898, alarm about Asia reverberated in Cuba and resulted in the Spanish-American War; in 1962, alarm about Europe had echoes in Cuba. Most simply, the Russians were set on trouble until the United States leashed the West Germans. Khrushchev may have thought Kennedy a youngster whom Russia could push around. The Soviets had built the wall around West Berlin, and the Bay of Pigs told Khrushchev that Kennedy could not act with fortitude. Khrushchev might shove harder.

Partly, the Russians wanted what they said they wanted, to force the Americans to agree not to invade Cuba. Khrushchev may also have wanted to trade the missiles he would install in Cuba for something in Germany or something related to West Berlin. Russia had to deal with West Germany, a dangerous ally of the United States, with a finger close to the nuclear button; this frightened Khrushchev. Kennedy would see what this was like when the USSR publicized that it had placed atomic weapons in Cuba. Castro was a Soviet ally whom the Americans considered irresponsible. Khrushchev told the story of the man who had to live with goats: he did not like them but got used to the smell. American missiles and West Berlin were Khrushchev's goats. Russian missiles in Cuba were to be America's. Khrushchev may have felt desperate. The "correlation of forces," as communists liked to say, favored the West, and would become irrevocable if West Germany obtained nuclear weapons. Missiles in Cuba achieved a more equal correlation. Why should Khrushchev not do it? What was good for one side was good for the other.

American statesmen did not see it that way. They learned about the missile construction in October 1962, and on October 22nd, the president announced the predicament on TV. The nukes would not be allowed to remain. Kennedy had advisors, the Ex[ecutive]Comm[ittee]. It decided that the Soviets could get nothing for retreating. The Russians must withdraw, or else. Indeed, Khrushchev's counsellors had said that USSR penetration of Cuba would provoke a firestorm in the United States. Americans presumed to dictate arrangements in Cuba—period. Their mentality did not much differ from their mentality in 1898. Kennedy did not want a holocaust, and the ExComm assessed how he could reach his goal without a fight. Yet an atomic exchange loomed unless the Russians backed down.

The ExComm discussed many responses. Each would result in the dismantling of the missiles: negotiations; various naval "quarantines" that would challenge ships taking materiel to Cuba; a stricter "blockade"; a limited air raid or "surgical strike"; a sustained air attack that would precede invasion; and an attack that would leap to nuclear war. Kennedy expressed his preference for what was least provocative. He rejected negotiations only because he thought they would be ineffective. In his first attempt to bulldoze the Russians, the president agreed on a loose naval embargo that became more liberal in its enforcement and that might not work. Hoping that he could persuade the USSR to bow out, Kennedy offered assurances that the United States would not invade the island. Then he made a further deal, which a small group in the ExComm kept secret. Through his brother, Robert Kennedy, he communicated that the United States would remove the Turkish rockets if the Russians dismantled Cuba's. But no one could disclose the deal, and it could not look like a trade. Finally, he prepared the most confidential plan. If everything else failed, Dean Rusk would have the United Nations invite a trade of Cuban for Turkish missiles, and the United States would respond positively.

John Kennedy did not need the last option, and many explanations of the Missile Crisis have credited Robert Kennedy's negotiations with ending the confrontation. But Khrushchev had an enormous missile deficit and was maybe alarmed that the president could not control his "hawks." The Soviet leader decided to dismantle the rockets before

he got the news of the Kennedys' proposal. The drama concluded without incident because of US nuclear superiority. The Russians reckoned that the United States would finish them, while the United States would minimally suffer. The Russians bluffed, but the nuclear strength of the United States prevailed. Kennedy had made an unnecessary concession with the secret deal because he, like Khrushchev, shrank from an atomic exchange. Soviet inferiority prompted the crisis and determined its outcome.

For both the president and the men around him, the two-week period was life-altering. The outcome buoyed Kennedy's "crisis managers." In their view the USSR had folded because of their leadership. They had figured out how to steer conflict. In contrast, Kennedy was sobered up. The world had come close to annihilation, and he felt the near miss more than his ExComm. Kennedy stepped up his efforts to get at the heart of the problem—Russian fear of Germany.

By August of 1963, the president had wrapped up a Limited Test Ban Treaty with the Russians. The two states could not prohibit nuclear weapons or reduce their number, but did restrict testing, and thus thwarted more states from getting them. The agreement created a structure that regulated the production of non-conventional arms. The Soviets maintained a "well known" view that the Treaty must deny the Germans an atomic force. The Germans unhappily signed the document, which required them to renounce such a force, and completed the division of Europe after the Second World War. The Germans could not experiment with fission and would not have nukes. The United States would remain in Europe to avert conflict between Germany and Russia. And the USSR would accept the status quo that left West Berlin "an island" behind the so-called Iron Curtain. This was the "NATO solution": Germany down, America in, Russia out.

Kennedy

"JFK," the third president often named by initials, was charismatic, in part because his physical disabilities and sexual predation were hidden. Handsome and in his early forties when elected, Kennedy did well on TV, more and more telling in politics. The first Roman Catholic president, he epitomized how Catholics had been brought into civic respectability. Communism united all Christians and Jews against it. Nonetheless, Kennedy's domestic performance was negligible, although the record reflected the deadlocked politics at home evident from the late 1930s.

In foreign affairs the president showed a growing surefootedness. The spring and summer of 1963 were a banner period. In a departure that displayed the moral force of the nation in the Cold War, he committed the United States to social justice for African Americans before an international television audience in June. Around the same time Kennedy gave a formidable homily at American University in Washington, DC. He revealed deliberations about the Test Ban Treaty and talked about "détente"—the relaxation of tensions—with the Soviet Union. "In the final analysis," said the president, "our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal." Two weeks later, in West Berlin, the president made one of the most famous speeches of the era. Taking

a different approach, he goaded the Russians near the wall they had built and noted its desperate strategy. Kennedy obligated the United States in the most outrageous way to protect the enclosed city. He said: "*Ich bin ein Berliner*"—I am a Berliner. Six weeks later, Kennedy's diplomacy was crowned when West Germany gave up nuclear weapons. The country relinquished the only items that might provoke the Russians and that would force Kennedy to redeem his pledge to fight for Berlin.

* * *

From 1947 onward, the Cold War had created tensions across the globe and distrust at home. Then, when the Missile Crisis ended quietly, it looked as if the Cold War might be winding down. Russia might be mellowing. The Eisenhower administration, at its end, had admitted Hawaii and Alaska to the Union, the only two states not part of "the continental United States." Their admission fulfilled the yearnings of some commentators that the country might transcend common nations based on geography and ethnicity. After his successes in mid-1963, Kennedy could nurture US values everywhere. America might realize the dream of a league of republics around the planet.

On November 22, 1963, a few months after his sunny triumphs, the president died of rifle wounds, the victim of assassin Lee Harvey Oswald. The dream had turned into a nightmare.

CHAPTER 15
THE SIXTIES, 1954–69

From the Supreme Court Ruling on Segregation to Vietnam

In the early 1960s, the country was poised for new errands, and it is impossible to recreate the horror over the assassination. The primacy of the United States was never so much accepted, its prestige around the world never higher. Human beings cried for Kennedy from Africa to the Aleutians. At home, poet Arnold Lee Greenberg wrote, "More than a president is dead;/and not ten thousand bullets/in ten thousand heads/could make the moment different." For many, the evils of the 1960s and 1970s—war, racism, domestic upheaval, and political deceit—stemmed from this one senseless act. But after Lee Harvey Oswald shot Kennedy, the collapse of American purpose had many sources in the nation's past. The most abiding was the unredeemed pledge to assure equality to Black Americans.

Civil Rights

The settlement with the South in the 1870s had left whites free to manage relations and had kept the African Americans close to slavery. By the 1890s, African Americans lived apart, "segregated." The South prevented their voting, and occupied them with menial work. The rudimentary education available had contributed to the inferiority that came with their lives. Despite resistance, the threat of violence and often its actuality enforced submissiveness. In the late nineteenth century, Blacks had supplied the labor for the South. In the twentieth century many had fled north where conditions marginally improved. They gathered in cities like Chicago, Detroit, and Philadelphia, but again had rudimentary jobs and a separate lifestyle. In New York they developed a thriving culture.

In the 1930s, African Americans who could vote in the North had turned from the Republicans to vote for the New Deal and its generosity to the underprivileged. But Franklin Roosevelt, dependent on the white Democratic votes of the South, had refused to touch "integration" as an issue. Advanced New Dealers, often subject to ridicule, sometimes took it up but without much luck. But the fight against a racist enemy in the Second World War and the rhetoric of the early Cold War had been transformational. Energized by local activism, white liberals in the late 1940s had turned to equality. Harry Truman's race of 1948 brought "civil rights" to national attention for the first time since 1876. At the Democratic convention, the liberal mayor of Minneapolis, Hubert Humphrey, animated the conscience of segments of his party. He told America to "get out of the shadow of states' rights and walk forthrightly into the bright sunshine of human rights." Ordinary Americans probably found what happened in baseball, the

country's "national pastime," more dispositive than Humphrey. The year before, in 1947, an African American, Jackie Robinson, had begun to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Northern Democrats did note racism in their part of the country, but more easily pointed to the South. Like Roosevelt, however, Truman did not want to alienate southern Democrats. The gains that took place might be described as token.

Through the late 1940s and early 1950s, Truman's Department of Justice assisted Black Americans in federal courts as they tested the "separate but equal" Supreme Court decision of 1896, *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Truman also desegregated the military, a considerable effort. More memorable than white support were African-American campaigns. Black lawyers and clergymen, often members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), attacked segregation in both south and north.

A turning point came in 1954 when a Court led by Earl Warren rendered a unanimous decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Again listening to social scientists, the unanimous justices held that you could not separate segregated from unequal schooling. The mere fact of segregation created a psychological sense of inferiority, inequality. Separate could never mean equal. Taking up themes from the progressive era, the Court deferred to university-based experts to make a point of law—"sociological jurisprudence"—and ordered desegregation of schools "with all deliberate speed." The decision, which overthrew a precedent of over fifty years, again revealed that the Court might directly intervene in politics. Nonetheless, desegregation barely occurred in grade schools. The South delayed, and the legal mandate did not touch the North where segregation often existed because of convention and geography, and not by law. Finally, one could doubt the outcome of desegregation in the South, for often African-American

Figure 10 Jackie Robinson Steals Home in 1954 World Series. Getty Images.

teachers and administrators lost their jobs if schools integrated, and in higher education HBCUs were damaged. Yet, in the long run, neither law nor morals could sustain Jim Crow. The Court encouraged further condemnation of the status quo.

My Feet's Tired but My Soul Is Rested

At the end of 1955 an incident in the Montgomery, Alabama, bus system ignited the Civil Rights "movement." A Black seamstress and long-time NAACP activist, Rosa Parks, refused to give up her seat in a crowded bus to a white man:

> I had had problems with bus drivers over the years, because I didn't see fit to pay my money into the front and then go around to the back. Sometimes bus drivers wouldn't permit me to get on the bus, and I had been evicted from the bus … [That day] when the driver saw that I was … sitting…, he said "If you don't stand up, I'm going to have you arrested." I told him to go on and have me arrested … They took me to jail and I was placed in a cell.

The arrest incited a boycott of the busses. A young minister, Martin Luther King, Jr., led the people, who walked instead of taking public conveyances. This resistance eventually ended the Jim Crow transport and featured in national and even international news.

King followed a line of eloquent African Americans who had fought white racism. During the Civil War era, Frederick Douglass had made fiery speeches. At the turn of the century W. E. B. Du Bois had articulated the African-American dilemma in moving writings. In the 1950s and 1960s, King was interested in theories of non-violent protest as an instrument of change. More than a philosopher or preacher, however, he became the leader of a nationwide movement. In 1957, he formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. The SCLC organized churches and middle-class Black Americans in peaceful civil disobedience. On show was the unmistakable strength of African-American Protestantism, which had evolved from other-worldly to this-worldly egalitarianism.

Both Black and white activists cherished respectability at the start and aimed at voting rights in the South and school integration, the first steps toward a society undivided by color. Yet militants also regarded these goals as continuous with achieving more visionary ends. By the Kennedy era, the pace quickened as vicious attempts to keep segregation collided with peaceful demonstrators. Jefferson's words in the Declaration—"all men are created equal"—haunted the South. Whites in both North and South had a harder time overlooking the long-ignored guarantees of the Constitution. Political ideals ran at odds with how Americans lived, and Black citizens pointed out the gap.

The "Freedom Riders" who integrated interstate busses sung:

> Stand up and rejoice! A great day is here!
> We're fighting Jim Crow and the victory's near.

Figure 11 Martin Luther King leading March in Selma, Alabama, 1965. Copyright Bettmann/ Corbis.

Hallelujah, I'm a travellin', Hallelujah, ain't it fine.
Hallelujah, I'm a travelin' down freedom's main line!

In the spring of 1963, again in Alabama, white mobs attacked dissenters. Police used electric cattle prods and dogs to break up protests. Night after night, television news showed what was going on. A post–Civil War African-American song "Oh! Freedom" gained renewed use:

No segregation! No segregation!
No segregation, over me, over me,
And before I be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave,
And go home to my Lord and be free—and be free!
No more dogs! No more dogs!
No more dogs, biting me, biting me,
Nothin' but freedom! Nothin' but freedom!
Nothin' but freedom, over me, over me,

Although Kennedy had little emotional sense of the issues, he had liberal views. The virulence of the South disturbed him. Although he measured his patronage for Civil Rights by the leverage it might have in his duel with the USSR, the president buoyed up the demonstrators. In June of 1963, he told a TV audience that America faced a "moral issue" and called for legislation. To press the administration, in August of that year, King

led a "March on Washington" of some 200,000. His speech implied that America would end racial strife with civility. The day would come when, "in the words of the old Negro spiritual," "black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics" would be "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last."

When Oswald killed Kennedy in November, his legislation had gone nowhere, and violence continued in the South. Yet it appeared that normal politics could contain the Civil Rights revolution, and peaceably achieve its goals.

LBJ Takes Over

Kennedy's VP, and now president, was Lyndon Baines Johnson, the last and least well-regarded of the presidents to be referred to with initials. He would never have gotten the top job, except for the peculiarities of the vice-presidential selection process. Born and reared in rural Texas, Johnson was painfully conscious of how regional differences confined the rewards a person received. Mindful of the poor and weak, Johnson had adhered to southern racism as a senate heavy-weight, but now took advantage of his new position, the country's mood, and his knowledge of Congress. Less cautious than Kennedy, LBJ pushed harder. He had had his start in the 1930s and determined to make a mark equal to that of his New Deal hero, FDR. That mark would include Civil Rights.

Between the assassination in November of 1963 and November 1964, Johnson built his own record for a presidential run. His legislative know-how surpassed Kennedy's, and Johnson combined energy with effort. A passion to reach racial equality coexisted with calculation. In 1964, he employed the memory of the fallen leader to have the legislature approve a Civil Rights Act as a tribute. It had more teeth than what Kennedy had planned, and the murdered president might not have been able to steer such a bill through Congress. The act, and a 1965 Voting Rights Act, outlawed discrimination in public places and guaranteed African Americans legal equality and the vote. The two Acts were consequential legislation. Laws at the national level took precedence over states and municipalities that were, at best, dragging their heels. As president, Johnson had matured into an enthusiastic liberal.

In 1964, the GOP was self-destructing. In an expansive time, it nominated for the presidency a right-wing senator from Arizona, Barry Goldwater. Johnson swept to victory and had large Democratic majorities in Congress. He lost only Arizona and the five states of the Deep South where, 100 years after the Civil War, racial liberalism was at last turning southerners from the Democrats.

Chosen in his own right, LBJ advertised his "Great Society" as the fruition of the welfare state begun by FDR. In addition to the Voting Rights Act, Johnson expanded the funding of his 1964 Office of Economic Opportunity. An umbrella agency, the OEO administered programs for the poor, elderly, and economically disenfranchised. Johnson created bureaucracies that would make "a war on poverty" and shepherded through Congress measures to help the cities. "Medicare" provided insurance for older Americans. For the first time in US history, with legislation for air quality and the disposal of rubbish, Washington went on record about the environment.

The 1960s were the time of "the big promise." In a 1964 speech outlining the Great Society, Johnson proposed the abolition of poverty and of racial discrimination as "just the beginning." His programs would alter "the meaning of our lives." The "best thought and the broadest knowledge from all over the world," said LBJ, would find the answers. "We have the power to shape the civilization that we want." The strength of the nation "is greater than the combined might of all the nations, in all the world, in all the history of this planet. And I report that our superiority is growing."

Johnson embellished for public consumption. However, even his more cautious expectations were often unrealized. The Great Society did not much alter the existing welfare state and left the problems of poverty and disadvantage unsolved. Conservatives complained that the Great Society was hastily started and wasteful. Skeptics added that Johnson's grasping for material progress was due for a comeuppance. On the other side, the program of medical insurance overcame doubters who argued that the federal government enriched hospitals and doctors and gave them an inexhaustible source of revenue when they treated the elderly. No commentators or historians, in addition, faulted the Civil Rights legislation. Finally, the Great Society did not go forward in an auspicious time. A triumphal war followed the New Deal. During the 1960s, a faraway conflict consumed intellectual energy, and overwhelmed the Great Society.

Vietnam

On the coast of Southeast Asia, communists in Vietnam, stronger in the north of the country, struggled over their nation and their future. From the end of the Second World War, they had battled the French who had colonized Vietnam and the surrounding lands in the nineteenth century. Under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, the northerners were increasingly effective. By 1954, they had defeated the French who nonetheless held southern Vietnam. George Kennan's doctrine of containment had mandated that America fight all communists, and indeed America had been underwriting the French from the late 1940s. Yet the Korean War, which had ended in the 1953 standoff, had shown the dangers of overvaluing a US global cop. In Vietnam, neither side looked for more bloodshed.

In 1954, when the French bowed out militarily, the Russians and the Chinese pressured the Vietnamese communists to go slow. They should consolidate their rule in the north, and wait and see about the south, where a Westernized culture—non-communist nationalists—motivated the Americans to draw a line. The United States saw to it that agreements unifying the country were not carried out and, in the south, re-enforced a group that became the government of South Vietnam. Ngo Dinh Diem, a militantly anti-communist and anti-French Roman Catholic who had lived in exile in America, led this regime. Through the 1950s, insurgents in the south sympathetic to the north, and under its control, grew into the National Liberation Front (NLF) and complicated politics even more and worked to destabilize Diem. Khrushchev had called for wars of national liberation and wished for revolutionary fires throughout the non-Western world.

US leaders felt harassed, as only the most powerful can feel. Democrats particularly feared accusations of weakness if they did not go into South Vietnam. Americans believed that financial assistance, military instruction, and coaching in government could prop up South Vietnam. It might hold the northern communists and their southern followers at bay for the foreseeable future. Yet little by little Americans involved themselves in Vietnam. By 1963, JFK had upped US advisors to 16,000 and compromised the distinction between counseling South Vietnam's military and fighting its foes.

This account, however, overemphasizes the US tendencies that only became clear in the future. No one was thinking of a land war in Asia. The showdown between Russia and the United States left little room for minor conflicts. Then, the Test Ban Treaty and the beginnings of détente in 1963 opened a window in other areas.

To the extent that a space existed, John Kennedy marched into it in the late summer of 1963, when he re-convened the ExComm from the Cuban Missile Crisis to consider Vietnam. Diem had shown himself inept in dealing with Buddhists who opposed his authoritarian government, dependent on a small minority of Catholics. The Kennedy administration fretted about Diem's incompetence and fragility, and his failure to mobilize his country to fight the communists. Yet the United States had no other options, and Diem had held power for almost ten years. One group of Kennedy's advisors shared the president's distaste for Vietnam, and pondered whether a new government in South Vietnam would put the Americans in a better position to leave. These diplomats seized an opportunity to have the generals around Diem depose him. The president had not come up with the idea, and it never had his attention for the two-month period in which it became a reality in the late summer and early fall of 1963. But in November, Diem fell victim to a coup in which the Americans had a hand and in which his military murdered him. The United States had nothing to supersede Diem, and the thoughtless way that American statesmen disposed of an allied government in September and October of 1963 makes for disquieting reading.

Three weeks after Diem's murder, Kennedy himself was dead. Johnson took over as South Vietnam degenerated. He wanted to limit the fighting in Vietnam without sacrificing his priorities, first his election in 1964, less than a year later, thereafter his Great Society. Nonetheless, more aggressive than Kennedy and more prone to take the recommendations of his inherited advisors, Johnson embraced a policy that did more than buy time. By early 1964, the new president was persuaded that the northerners, who never thought that they only had charge of a separate North Vietnam, were winning.

Secretary of State Rusk, National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy, and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara often had the Cuban victory in mind in Vietnam. They thought that Washington might cost-effectively handle Southeast Asia but were more worried and tentative than the media depicted them. Like Johnson himself, they only modestly believed in the efficacy of this anti-communist fight. As Bundy later put it, the United States needed to make a stand: "There had to be a war." Nonetheless, as with other bureaucrats who would regret their involvement, they later shifted the blame. Bundy thought the war "Johnsonian." "The conduct of the war—as distinct from the decision … [to make war] was … different from what any of … us would have wanted." JFK, Bundy

thought, would have done the job at lower cost, and his advisors would have shouldered less culpability.

No matter what Bundy hypothesized, these men—LBJ called them "the Harvards" in reference to their education—were later condemned as "the best and the brightest." This line was taken from an 1811 Protestant hymn that alluded to the story of the birth of Jesus and the three kings or wisemen and the star that led them to his birthplace: "Brightest and best of the sons of the morning, /Dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid." The late 1960s transformed this description into contempt for intellectuals in politics.

In 1964, before the United States was "waist deep in the big muddy," it had been harassing North Vietnam off its coast in the Gulf of Tonkin. In August, the North Vietnamese navy opened fire on American ships. Johnson did not respond. Then the US navy reported a second clash. This incident, it turned out, never took place. Nervous sailors in rough seas had erred. The administration, however, ignored indications that the second attack had not occurred. LBJ and the men around him spoiled for a fight. The president reported to Congress on the provocation, and the legislators authorized all necessary action to protect the United States. A bombing raid retaliated against the North.

Abroad, as at home, Johnson committed himself to large initiatives. His "hyper-liberalism" accommodated both domestic and foreign policy. LBJ wanted liberal change in the United States as well as democracy overseas. He would "leave the footprints of America" in Vietnam and believed that slowly increasing pressure on the North would intimidate it: the threat would force the communists to leave the South. The Second World War had come about because the West had not stopped Hitler in the 1930s. In the 1960s, the United States could prevent a third world war by halting communism in Vietnam; LBJ would turn back the red tide.

In the mid–late 1950s, Billy Graham, the Protestant evangelist, reached the height of his fame. His sincerity and sobriety made him attractive to several presidents who wanted spiritual approval, and Graham had entrée to the Johnson White House. A serious man, Graham deserved more credit for his soul-saving than intellectuals gave him. The preacher had latched on to a Swedish song that became a signature hymn of his revivals, "How Great Thou Art." The lyrics, for Graham, expressed human pettiness in the face of the divine, the smallness of man in contrast to the infinite. The hymn glorified God and turned eyes away from themselves. The first stanza and refrain go:

O Lord My God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds thy hands have made,
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder
Thy power throughout the universe displayed …
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee,
How great thou art, how great thou art.

Map 21 Vietnam War.

Johnson learned of the anthem from Graham. But LBJ did not exactly get its message, and—as with "The Best and the Brightest"—something was lost in translating "How Great Thou Art" into politics. In February of 1965, the president launched the systematic bombing war on the North of Vietnam. He called it "Operation Rolling Thunder." Soon after, the administration sent US men to South Vietnam, first to support the air war, then to fight. In the next three years forces increased in a frustrating attempt to compel North Vietnamese recognition of an independent South. In September of 1965, 50,000 soldiers arrived. By the end of that year 180,000; by the end of 1966, 380,000; by the end of 1967, 486,000. The numbers were highest in March of 1968–569,000. Johnson had prevented the fall of South Vietnam with a costly holding action, although the North Vietnamese infiltrated the South via a primitive highway, "the Ho Chi Minh trail." America showed would-be revolutionaries the ugly and expensive consequences of opposition to the United States. At home, too, ugly and expensive consequences occurred.

Trouble at Home

The Democratic coalition that Johnson had inherited from Roosevelt came undone in 1966. People interested in politics at first quietly and then more noisily, criticized the war. The center offered practical reasons for decreasing the effort, while the right wanted to enlarge it. On the left, vehement criticism came from several sources. Early on, protestors had a Quaker affiliation and proposed peaceful solutions to geo-political rivalries. Christian dissent gave opposition to Vietnam a utopian and spiritual dimension.

Student Peace Union, 1962:

> The Student Peace Union is an organization of young people who believe that neither war nor the threat of war can any longer be successfully used to settle international disputes and that neither human freedom nor the human race can long survive in a world committed to militarism … Because both East and West have pursued foreign policies which are not in the interests of their own people …, the Student Peace Union believes that the peace movement must act independently of both East and West.

A. J. Muste, pacifist leader, 1966:

> The resort to violence and slaughter on either side, as a pacifist, I must and do condemn … But to leave out of the account the political wickedness and stupidity of United States military intervention in Vietnam … seems to me wrong … Socialists or Progressives have to take account of the problem of United States interference with popular revolts and cannot deal with the problem of stopping the fighting in abstraction from this factor.

As the fighting continued, a "New Left" of young people determined to stop the war, grew with few religious misgivings. Frequently well-off college students, they analyzed the US role in Asia by way of Karl Marx. The Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) called for resistance to the war and to the capitalist order of LBJ.

Carl Oglesby of SDS, 1965:

> We must name the system that creates and sustains the war in Vietnam … This [system is] … fundamentally liberal. The original commitment in Vietnam was made by President Truman, a mainstream liberal. It was seconded by President Eisenhower, a moderate liberal. It was intensified by the late President Kennedy, a flaming liberal. Think of the men who now engineer that war—those who study the maps, give the commands, push the buttons and tally the dead … They are all liberals.

Phil Ochs, 1965 "I Ain't Marchin' Anymore":

> I marched to the battle of New Orleans … I was there at the Little Big Horn … I stole California from the Mexican land, fought in the bloody Civil War, but I ain't marchin' anymore.

Johnson could not sustain support for his domestic policies with turmoil abroad. The President could not spend on welfare while he paid for guns and bombs. The war soured Civil Rights. Moreover, African Americans now demanded economic and social power, not just the vote and formal equality. Marchers went north, and at once upset Democratic voters in the ethnic working class, desperate to protect their jobs and all-white localities. Blacks connected Vietnam to their own societal place. In the war, a white United States fought Asians, but Black soldiers suffered casualties in disproportion to their numbers in the population. The war in Vietnam, some theorists reasoned, confirmed a repugnant colonialism and displayed LBJ's unwillingness to restructure at home. Foreign affairs demonstrated racism because Blacks fought the yellow for the sake of whites.

Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC—"Snick"), 1966:

> We … have been involved in the black people's struggle for liberation and self-determination in this country for the past five years. Our work, particularly in the South, taught us that the United States government has never guaranteed the freedom of oppressed citizens, … We recall the numerous persons who have been murdered in the South because of their efforts to secure their civil and human rights. The murder [here] is no different from the murder of people in Vietnam … In each case the U.S. government bears a great part of the responsibility.

Stokely Carmichael, spokesman for what was known as Black Power, 1968:

> In order for this country to come about, the honky had to completely exterminate the red man, and he did it … Then the question we must ask ourselves is if he's

> capable of doing it to the red man, can he also do it to us? … Let us check World War II … Notice who dropped an atomic bomb on some helpless yellow people in Hiroshima … Check out what he is doing to our brothers in Vietnam … The white race … [w]herever they have gone, they have ruled, conquered, murdered, and plagued.

A final element in this mix of defiance was a youth movement with its own music, leisure, and fashions distinct from adults. This "counterculture" with its bodily ornamentation and personal style contrasted with the short-haired and buttoned-up appearance of the 1950s. The counterculture did not have a political agenda. Yet "hippies" joined left-wing undergraduates and Black activists in criticizing US society as war-oriented and repressive, and proclaimed that "the system" would collapse. Using various hallucinogenic drugs and ignoring prohibitions on sex, people should "drop out."

Youth International Party (Yippies) Manifesto for election day, November 5, 1968:

> Come all you rebels, freaks, toe worshippers, poets, street folk, liberated women, professors, and body snatchers … Let's vote for ourselves. Me for President … Can you dig it: in every metropolis and hamlet in America boycotts, strikes, sit-ins, pickets, lie-ins, pray-ins, feel-ins, piss-ins at the polling places … making the revolution by freeing [ourselves] and fucking up the system.

African-American revolutionaries and the various white groups sided together against "the establishment." LBJ's foreign and domestic commitments fell apart. A coarse climate oozed through both the United States and Vietnam. In 1967, Martin Luther King came out against the war. A put-upon LBJ recognized that he could not satisfy the demands of liberals about social programs. But he also grasped that northern white Democrats, not to mention white southern Democrats, wanted no more of his Civil Rights. Racism flowered as African Americans rioted in the cities of the United States where they lived in squalor, and as whites retaliated with calls for law and order. By the end of 1967, LBJ was a prisoner in the White House, "a jack rabbit hunkered down in a storm," as he put it. The Secret Service, an agency of the Department of Justice whose sole job was protecting the president, could not guarantee Johnson's safety from irate protesters. He spoke only at military bases.

Year of Violence, 1968

The North Vietnamese sensed that American domestic politics were crucial. At the end of January 1968, the North launched attacks in South Vietnam during the "Tet" holidays of the lunar New Year, the "Tet Offensive." The assault intended to display enemy strength and undermine America's will. The fighting, however, crippled the southern rebels, the NLF, for two years. Whatever the cost, the strategy triumphed in the United States. Army commander William C. Westmoreland thought he could

end the war with some 200,000 more troops in addition to the 500,000 already in Vietnam. Policymakers talked about "the light at the end of the tunnel." Yet on TV Americans saw the enemy in the South's capital of Saigon and even in the US Embassy. Concentrating on what they saw, Americans no longer believed their leaders. Revered newsman Walter Cronkite said that the United States must negotiate. The people believed TV. Of all his troubles, Johnson may have had the worst with broadcasting. The president complained: If I have lost Cronkite, I have lost Middle America.

In the wake of Tet, respect for Johnson collapsed, just as the 1968 campaign for the presidency was getting underway. Even though the country never accepted anti-war views, Americans rejected politicians who had brought a peaceful nation into such an angry era. Bumper stickers read: "LBJ, Pull Out Now Like Your Father Should Have"; "Lee Harvey Oswald, Where Are You Now That We Need You?" Demonstrators taunted the president: "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?" "Ho! Ho! Ho Chi Minh! The NLF is gonna' win!" "One, two, three, four. We don't want your fucking war."

In March of 1968, Eugene McCarthy, a Democratic senator from Minnesota and a romantic without much organizational backing, campaigned against Johnson in the New Hampshire primary. LBJ planned to run for re-election but support for McCarthy rocked the Democrats. John Kennedy's brother, Robert, had served as attorney general in the Kennedy administration and by 1968, as Senator from New York, had inherited the family mystique. Four days after the New Hampshire primary, "Bobby" Kennedy declared himself a candidate. Unlike Eugene McCarthy, Robert Kennedy had a magic name, a political presence, and organizers around him with money and management ability. In the eyes of the Democratic leaders, particularly Irish bosses in large cities, he could challenge Johnson. After Kennedy entered the race, LBJ could no longer dictate to his party. At the end of March, an agonized Johnson announced a modest peace move on evening television. He ended his speech by saying that he would not run for re-election. Irrespective of their positions on the war, the people cheered; they opened their windows and shouted with relief that LBJ would leave office.

By the end of his term ten months later, Johnson was slowly moving the United States from Vietnam. This turnaround, which coincided for the public with the March announcement, came too late. Dissent transformed into mayhem—1968's heartbreak.

In early April a white racist murdered Martin Luther King in Memphis, ending hope for a well-mannered resolution to issues of race. The most serious Black rioting in the country's history followed. As Washington burned, the president readied 350,000 troops and national guardsmen to restore order. Machine guns were implanted on the steps of The Capitol. Students seized Columbia University in New York, spectacularly displaying the mutiny of young people against their culture. Immediately thereafter, other colleges "went on strike." The disturbances exemplified a rebellion that took in schools everywhere and included notable earlier demonstrations at the University of California at Berkeley and later ones at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

Bobby Kennedy had been campaigning in Indiana on the day of King's murder. That evening his staff had scheduled the candidate to speak in Indianapolis's Black ghetto, but the chief of police warned that he could not take responsibility for the event. Kennedy

insisted, even after learning that the gathering did not know the news. He began his speech by telling the people that "white people" had shot and killed King. After a horrible collective gasp, he said: "I know how you feel. I had a member of my own family … killed by a white man." Kennedy had been reading the ancients, he told his audience. His cherished poet, Aeschylus, had written that only pain brought wisdom "through the awful grace of God." Let us, he went on, "dedicate ourselves to what the Greeks wrote of so many years ago: to tame the savageness of man." Let us "say a prayer for our country and for our people."

It is unbelievable that a white politician could quote Aeschylus to such a crowd. For four months in 1968 Robert Kennedy shone as a magnetic figure, perhaps even more attractive than his brother. In June, two months after King's death, he won the Democratic primary in California. But moments after he announced his victory, yet another gunman shot and killed him. The assassination especially devastated his followers, who were persuaded that he would win the nomination and the November election. All Americans thought the death a sign of the evil times that had come, as an eerie silence settled over the country for several days. The course of US history had RFK, as he was known in death, not been murdered constitutes one of the more intriguing might-have-beens in the nation's past.

The Democratic convention in Chicago in August displayed more lurid strains as protestors streamed into the town dominated by the prominent Irish-American mayor, Richard Daley. Demonstrators near the main hotel screamed for an end to war and racism and begged for a brawl. Daley prevented live televising of the demonstrations, but newsmen rushed to their studios with film. The TV audience, in part composed of the delegates, saw both convention drama and urban convulsion. In what an investigating commission later termed "a police riot," the "pigs," as the kids called the cops, clubbed and beat anti-war groups. "These are our children," said a *New York Times* correspondent.

At the convention itself, Hubert Humphrey, Johnson's vice president, was now the frontrunner for the nomination, although South Dakota Senator George McGovern crusaded for Kennedy's program, and Kennedy delegates rallied around McGovern. In a nominating speech for McGovern, Abraham Ribicoff, a Connecticut Senator of some self-assurance, condemned Nazi tactics "in the streets of Chicago." Then, in one of the many stunning performances of the year, Mayor Daley, who had uncontrollably wept at the funeral of his fellow Catholic Robert Kennedy, screamed to "the Jew bastard" Ribicoff to "fuck himself." In full view of the cameras. The protestors chanted, "The whole world is watching. The whole world is watching." It seemed as if the country was falling apart.

Some Meanings of the 1960s

In overstatement, the media at the time compared the turmoil of 1968 to the coming of the Civil War, but the political system was conspicuously stable. In November, two old pros, Richard Nixon and Hubert Humphrey, squared off. A prominent Republican for a long time, Nixon got a slim victory. Supporting the war had tarnished Humphrey, although he had a minor place in the Johnson White House. The third-party campaign

of Alabama's racist governor, George Wallace, first weakened the vice president by taking away Democrats. White southerners would not adhere to Democrats when the party pursued pro-Black politics in North and South. But Humphrey's "politics of joy" also fell victim to the rage of his New Deal constituencies in the North. The VP lost the election because African Americans and liberals vented their hostility. These two strategic groups blocs refused to go all out for Humphrey, for twenty years the most stalwart advocate of social-welfare and civil-rights liberalism, and a man less committed to the war than Nixon.

But the electorate did not vote for the Republican. The people rather repudiated the Democrats. In his overblown policies, LBJ had dealt a blow to New Deal Liberalism that would prove mortal. For many commentators, the war discredited the assertive foreign policy of Democrats, luminous from the time of Woodrow Wilson. But the 1960s also discredited attempts to administer the domestic world. The New Deal coalition ascendant from the early 1930s had always had peculiarities. Rural southerners were bound up with northern city-dwellers. In the North, white and Black workers awkwardly voted together. The 1960s compromised these alliances. LBJ debilitated FDR's party over war and race. But the success of the New Deal also played a role in its undoing. Roosevelt's Liberalism did not just mean material blessings. It meant inclusion in a more diverse nation. But when these Democrats no longer felt themselves outcasts, some of them would gravitate to the Republicans, the home of the insiders.

* * *

The 1960s unraveled America. After the assassination of John Kennedy, future citizens would come to believe that things had gone downhill in their own country and around the world. Indeed, as Johnson went out of office, vast numbers did wish for an older and seemingly more stable United States. Yet the younger protestors, Black and white, embraced the new world. At the end of the decade, a "values" clash was in the offing.

CHAPTER 16
LIBERALISM IN DECLINE, 1969–88

From the Destruction of Nixon to the Success of Reagan

The disintegration of the Roosevelt coalition was hardly apparent in 1968. Nixon had simply won a marginal victory. But over the next twenty years, the Democrats' supremacy vanished, and the strength of Republicans grew. Their power culminated with the election, in 1980, of Ronald Reagan. He lifted the country from a long psychosocial depression. At the end of his time in office, he showed genius—or luck as critics had it—in winning the Cold War and elevating the GOP.

The 1960s Continue

Nixon's well-known and at least rhetorical anti-communism did not reveal his policies, for he brought complex feelings to diplomacy and domestic ills. A believer in the balance of power, Nixon appointed the "realist," Henry Kissinger, as national security advisor. Stability and not triumph over communism emerged as the aim of the two men. They thought, as had JFK, that nuclear war most threatened the planet. The ideological battle between the United States and Russia was second to consolidating spheres of influence without using atomic weapons. Nixon and Kissinger sought détente with the Soviet Union, and supervision of the arms race, continuing Kennedy's strategies. Nixon charged Kissinger with negotiating an heir to the Democrats' Test Ban Treaty. The first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) modestly set the standard for such arrangements with the USSR. During the second part of the Cold War, from the late 1960s to the late 1980s, the superpowers would monitor and manage their arsenals.

Kissinger also received credit for Nixon's "opening to China." After the collapse of the Nationalists in 1949 and 1950, the United States had had no dealings with "Communist" China, except to fight with her, directly in Korea, less directly in Vietnam. Now, after a secret Kissinger mission, Nixon visited "Mainland" China in 1972. In part, this trip undermined Nixon's enemies, who had no option but to applaud. But Nixon also tried to cajole the USSR into agreements. The Russians worried about an American connection to the Chinese, rivals with the Soviets for leadership in the communist world. Nixon wanted to frighten the Soviet Union with the prospects of the United States doing a deal with China, and to enforce an order among the three countries that would leave America *primus inter pares*.

While Soviet–American relations had priority, the president faced the daily problem of Vietnam. As an outsider to the decision-making of the 1960s, he argued that

Democrats had botched Southeast Asia, from which the United States had to free itself, just as Eisenhower believed that Truman had stumbled in North Asia—Korea. Nor did Nixon want this problem to end his administration. "I'm not going to wind up like LBJ," said Nixon, "holed up in the White House, afraid to show my face on the street." In 1969, according to "the Nixon Doctrine," the United States would not in the future commit soldiers to the Far East. America would rather prop up nations at risk through financial help and supplies. Soon "Vietnamization" began: US forces would withdraw, and South Vietnamese would take their place. But no one considered the South's army to equal America's, and so Nixon closed the gap with more bombing. The United States would not aim at civilians, the president determined, but "if some bombs slopped over, that was just too bad … We cannot lose this war." "The bastards have never been bombed," said Nixon, "like they're going to be bombed." At one point he told his air force generals that they need not restrain themselves, that he wanted no "more of this crap" about not being able to hit a target. "This is your chance to use military power effectively to win this war, and if you don't, I'll consider you responsible."

More bombs were not a tempting prospect, since by the end of his term LBJ had stopped blasting North Vietnam. But at first the policy pepped up Nixon and Kissinger. More air power, even if unpopular, would frustrate the North and enable the United States to get out of Vietnam with a victory. Yet by 1971 officials believed that airplanes could not save South Vietnam but only extend its life. However, the bombing, which took place not only in Vietnam, but also in close-by Laos and Cambodia, made Nixon and Kissinger look like callous bullies. Correspondents said the administration was "wag[ing] war by tantrum." A cry to disengage reinforced congressional efforts to ditch the sinking ally. From the perspective of the administration, the Democratic legislators who dictated to the congresses in 1969 and the next several years wanted to disgrace the United States. The lawmakers gave little thought to what might accompany a precipitous American collapse in Southeast Asia.

Nixon thrashed about to find a way out. Policy in Vietnam coalesced with management of great power rivalries, as Nixon and Kissinger wished that Russia and China might influence North Vietnam to permit a US retreat "with honor," though the Americans had little room to navigate. The United States, said the president, could not behave as "a pitiful, helpless giant." The North Vietnamese were testing "not our power but our will." The diplomats ultimately fixed on dragging out the war so that the United States could leave with some self-respect. They would create "a decent interval" of two years between the American exit and South Vietnam's fall. Nixon perhaps also wanted to ensure that even a disguised defeat would not lead to further upheavals: revolutionaries might calculate that even if they won, their nations would become deserts. Nixon and Kissinger were finally, as they knew, throwing the South to the wolves, as its leaders reminded them.

Although rage against the war had reached a high point in 1968, protests soon began again when the left saw that the president would not just give up. In August of 1969, over 400,000 attended a "Music and Art Fair" in Woodstock, New York. This three-day

festival was a "happening" of the counterculture and promoted songs, sex, and drugs. Did it signify a new age? Thousands cheered, stomped, and sang along with Country Joe and the Fish:

> And it's one, two, three, four what are we fighting for?
> Don't ask me, I don't give a damn, next stop is Vietnam;
> And it's five, six, seven, eight, open up the pearly gates, …
> Come on mothers throughout the land, pack your boys off to Vietnam.
> Come on fathers, and don't hesitate to send your sons off before it's too late.
> And you can be the first in your block to have your boy come home in a box.

Nixon still pursued the war. In April of 1970, when he had ordered American troops to join South Vietnamese in an "incursion" of enemy strongholds on the Cambodian border, colleges rioted everywhere. In May, at Kent State University in Ohio and at Jackson State University in Mississippi, soldiers sent to restore order killed six students, and wounded others.

Almost beyond reason, Americans wrestled with the passions unleashed by events on the other side of the world. Later in 1970, the nation was again cast down when the army disclosed that US troops two years before had massacred civilians in a village called My Lai. One mother lamented: I gave the army a good son, and it gave me back a murderer. Then, in June of 1971, the *New York Times* and other newspapers printed selections from

Figure 12 Confrontation at Kent State, May 1970. Copyright Kent University Libraries.

"The Pentagon Papers." The Department of Defense under Johnson had compiled this top-secret study of the war, colloquially named after the five-sided Defense Department building. The Papers, columnists thought, showed that Washington had deceived the public about Vietnam. The war contaminated public life, while persuading more and more people that politicians had shamed America.

The End of Reform and Watergate

In 1964 and 1965, LBJ's Great Society legislation had broken the impasse on domestic legislation that had lasted since the late 1930s. But by late 1966 the stand-off returned. Although Nixon did not endorse Liberalism, he did not overturn it. Indeed, in 1969, he proposed "The New American Revolution," which included a guaranteed income and work incentives for the poor. Congress rejected the plan. Nixon vetoed liberal measures in turn but judged that Democrats opposed him out of personal animosity and had no responsible alternative. In 1973, his wrath climaxed with "impounding." As widespread inflation faced the nation, legislators still formulated what to Nixon looked like a grossly unbalanced budget. He decided not to spend money the Congress allocated; this was called impounding. Only it, he thought, could make Democrats govern realistically. The deadlock exemplified Nixon's tribulations at home and his resentment at a Congress that would not grapple with national subjects.

The president had a peculiar personality. He had been raised as a Quaker in California but, like Lyndon Johnson, he befriended the evangelical Billy Graham. Recent evidence suggests that Graham's spirituality influenced Nixon. But after his election, the president's dark side took over.

Liberalism disgusted him, although his domestic policies did not oppose the New Deal, and his foreign programs were internationalist. The late 1940s and early 1950s had molded his views, when he helped to nab the spy Alger Hiss. According to one account, Hiss had introduced himself to Nixon: You went to Whittier, didn't you? I went to Harvard. That had done it for Nixon, who despised the liberals' arrogance and elitism. The 1960s corroborated Nixon's understanding. Although jealous of FDR and Kennedy, Nixon believed that eight years of Kennedy and Johnson fed the country promises to abolish poverty, end ancient racial attitudes, crush totalitarian evil, and improve capitalism. Instead, Americans got riot, discord, and a war from which Nixon was disentangling the United States. Grandiose Democratic notions led him to point out Republican traditionalism. The president called his supporters "the silent majority," for whom well-worn standards were essential.

Inner demons goaded Nixon. Liberal complaints about Vietnam made his blood boil. In his head, the complaints were joined to the New Left. Liberals and crazy kids had gotten the nation into the mess of the 1960s that he was trying to clean up. How could he undermine these impossible Democrats? In 1970, after the shootings at Kent State and Jackson State, the president's friend, Attorney General John Mitchell, led the offense. The AG started spying on liberals and radicals. With an overdeveloped sense of its own grievances, the White House composed an "enemies list."

Matters got out of hand when Nixon and Kissinger learned who had leaked The Pentagon Papers. Daniel Ellsberg, a liberal cold warrior who had helped assemble the Papers for the Department of Defense, had guiltily turned against the war. Later, he had seen to the release of the documents. A fuming Nixon created a clandestine group that raided the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist to obtain damaging information. The "plumbers" additionally undertook "black-bag" operations to "plug" leaks endangering the nation. They tapped the phones of reporters and officials who, the administration thought, were sharing classified information.

Running for re-election in 1972, Nixon led that summer but was insecure. In June, the plumbers broke into the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee to find out what liberals were planning. A guard caught the intruders. The Watergate Hotel, which housed the headquarters, gave its name to the scandals that would develop. Researchers still dispute Nixon's direct role, but the president quickly found out that the crime implicated the executive branch. No one could link the plumbers to the White House during the presidential race, and Kissinger announced that in Vietnam "peace is at hand." Nixon won in a landslide, and the United States signed an agreement extracting itself from Vietnam in early 1973. Then, things fell apart.

The president had hidden his contribution to the break-in. As newsmen and Congress investigated, lying compounded his eventual embarrassment. Nixon told Mitchell, "I want you all to stonewall it, let them plead the Fifth Amendment [which allowed people not to testify if they might incriminate themselves], cover-up, or anything else." The "cover-up" expanded. To prevent the public from learning of White House involvement, officials interfered with the FBI, the Justice Department, special prosecutors, and Congress. Public servants used "tricks"—they shredded evidence, blackmailed accomplices, and perjured themselves. In a book of 1973, *The Imperial Presidency*, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., argued that all these misdeeds had grown from the use of executive authority in the Cold War. Presidents applied foreign policy rules at home.

By the spring of 1973, Nixon lurched from crisis to crisis. The cover-up fell apart, and the president fired his closest aides to keep the law away from the presidency. Congressional hearings further weakened him: he had abused his power to conceal illegalities of his underlings. Yet it was if the punishment of one person would pay for all the wrong turns of the preceding ten years.

By the end of 1973, appointees in the executive branch refused to go along with Nixon's demands. An event not related to Watergate exemplified the seediness of the White House. Vice President Spiro Agnew resigned so as not to go to trial for tax evasion; he had accepted bribes when he governed Maryland. In May of 1974, events forced the administration to release incriminating transcripts of taped conversations, and in July the House of Representatives prepared impeachment articles—the Congress would accuse Nixon of high crimes and remove him from office. Learning that he had few votes in the Senate, which would act as a jury, he resigned in August. The former president said, "I gave [the liberals] a sword and they stuck it in, and they twisted it with relish."

The war in Vietnam started up again soon after the cease-fire that had allowed the United States to leave in January of 1973. In May of 1975, a little more than two years after America had left—the decent interval—South Vietnam surrendered to the North. By that time not only the South, but also Laos and Cambodia had "gone communist." No one seemed to care.

Decline?

Reflective Americans who lived through the Depression to the Civil Rights Movement often thought that their country was going somewhere. This exceptional place had somehow escaped the ups and downs of history. Looking back, these citizens believed that the revolutionary and constitutional period had brought forth a new and better form of government. The Civil War had removed slavery, its great imperfection. Then the New Deal gave the hope of a good life to all citizens, and in the Second World War the United States carried its commitments outward and defeated Hitler's Germany, the ghastliest menace to civilized life. After General Eisenhower led the Normandy invasion on behalf of a multitude of peoples, America held privileges in Europe. The Cold War continued the march to global democracy. Was the United States the kingdom of God on earth? In his presidential address of 1961, Kennedy had recalled the Pilgrims when he said that "the glow from [the American] fire can truly light the world." At home, the African-American effort to achieve equality showed that the nation could meet promises to its disadvantaged. As Kennedy put it in the spring of 1963, the issue was "as old as the scriptures, and as clear as the … Constitution." A few weeks later, near the wall the communists had built around West Berlin, he referred to civil rights: "Freedom has many difficulties and democracy is not perfect," he noted. "But we have never had to put up a wall to keep our people in."

Then the assassination, Vietnam, and Watergate ended the dream. Vietnam left US confidence in foreign policy in doubt; Americans dismissed the Democratic Party as an instrument for positive change. Watergate disgraced the Republicans and showed that politicians had sapped the Constitution itself. At home, people turned from politics as an area that could make their existence worthwhile, even though their private worlds did not offer satisfaction. Caught up in Watergate, one 29-year-old White House staffer was asked what guidance he would give to young people interested in service in Washington. Almost in tears, Gordon Strachan said, "My advice would be to stay away."

At first it seemed as if the Democrats had suffered less. When Nixon's VP Spiro Agnew resigned, Nixon appointed GOP stalwart Jerry Ford, speaker of the house, to the position. Then when Nixon himself resigned, Ford took over in 1974. He dished himself when he pardoned Nixon, and probably saved the former president from jail. In 1976, Ford lost his bid for election to Democrat Jimmy Carter, a moderate governor from Georgia. It looked like the Democrats were back in the majority with their southern wing intact. At the same time, as the 1960s and Watergate passed into history, the Democrats found a new America and faced a different electorate with a president who turned out to be a wet blanket.

Changes in Life and Work

The automobile and new highways had been taking the United States out of its northeastern and midwestern cities from the 1920s. But the Great Depression halted this trend and then, during the Second World War, automobile production was curtailed. Thereafter, the move from downtowns gathered speed, and had reshaped the United States by the 1970s. The suburb gave a different life, at least to white Americans. They resided in low-density housing and homogeneous communities that afforded education and recreation far from the congestion, dirt, and (increasingly) the poverty of cities. People had jobs in "business parks" and spent time in "shopping malls." Professional athletic teams had for more than a century linked up to cities, the Cincinnati Reds, the Boston Celtics, the Chicago Bears. Now teams might identify with larger regions to draw an audience that might not have much to do with an urban area: the New England Patriots, the Texas Rangers, the Golden State Warriors.

As white wage earners moved out of northeastern and midwestern cities, the elderly, the poor, and ethnic minorities, often Hispanic and African American, took over. Prosperous alumni from prestigious schools lived in still vital municipal centers and in upper-middle-class enclaves of specialized employment. But these quarters could not hide the troubles of many older metropolises, often described as "dying." Boston, New York, and Philadelphia were too significant to kill, but in the last one-third of the twentieth century, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Cleveland were endangered. Those strung out across the Midwest were the "rust belt."

A makeover of the economy that had won the Second World War went with this deterioration and the blossoming of urban outskirts. A rebuilt Europe and Japan triggered international competition. Companies left the cities for the suburbs, or for the South and West, with lower labor costs or more able personnel. Instead of durable goods, the economy delivered amenities and information, in some measure benefiting from the technical skills of Americans. The college-trained worked "in computers," for IBM, Hewlett Packard, Microsoft, Apple, or Dell. Medicine, scientific organizations, and universities employed those with diplomas. Corporate investment, real estate, and banking conglomerates that would lend their names to professional sports facilities—Citizens Bank Park, the Pepsi Center, the American Airlines Arena—hired other graduates. Small businesspeople did well when they offered services—food, landscaping, childcare, cleaning, and nail and hair salons. Those without an advanced degree found jobs that identified them with a "name brand," at Walmart or Kmart, giants in retail sales; or at fast-food chains like Burger King, McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken, or Pizza Hut; or at clothing stores like GAP, Nike, Tommy Hilfiger, or Polo Ralph Lauren. The skilled working class declined.

The South and West had fewer cities with fixed shapes and limits. These hubs had little of a center and minimal public transport. Atlanta in Georgia, Houston and Dallas in Texas, and Los Angeles in California had aspects of enormous suburbs. As people moved to the South and West looking for jobs and spacious living, these towns ceased to be of merely regional import. The South and West gained at the expense of the Northeast and Midwest.

We see this transfer of population shaping the "baby boomers," born between 1945 and 1964, as soldiers returned from the Second World War, went to college, and started families. The boomers had no experience of the Depression. Quite the reverse. They experienced prosperity. Americans were older when they were presumed to be adults and to supervise their own affairs. Individuals were more absorbed in the self, self-expression, and self-esteem. Essential to the social movements of the 1960s, the generation after the war demanded more of the world and showed less tolerance for hardship. The novelist Tom Wolfe spoke of "the Me decade," and one critic, Christopher Lasch, wrote about *The Culture of Narcissism* in 1978.

The inheritance of the 1960s was ambiguous—Americans were unbuttoned but lacked restraint. Consumption was lauded with expensive vacations, ostentatious housing, luxury automobiles, and high-priced gadgetry. The acquisition of clothing and accessories became major dimensions of people's lives. Shopping was both a necessity and an amusement. Divorce skyrocketed, and Americans puzzled over whether it stood for heartbreak or a chance for fulfilment.

President Jimmy Carter did not grasp his era. Preachy, he intimated that he did not like where the United States was heading, or what Americans had become. A widely noted 1979 TV address, Crisis of Confidence, spoke about troubles so bleakly that it was at once dubbed the "malaise speech":

> All the legislation in the world can't fix what's wrong with America … I want to talk to you right now about a fundamental threat to American democracy …. The threat is nearly invisible in ordinary ways. It is a crisis of confidence … that strikes at the very heart and soul and spirit of our national will. We can see this crisis in the growing doubt about the meaning of our own lives and in the loss of a unity of purpose for our nation. … Our people are losing … faith, not only in government itself but in the ability as citizens to serve as the ultimate rulers and shapers of our democracy … In a nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close-knit communities, and our faith in God, too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns. But we've discovered that owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning. We've learned that piling up material goods cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose.

What should be done? No one had answers that commanded agreement, but voters did not want a killjoy for president.

Enter the Republicans

In 1980, taking advantage of Carter's disapproving attitudes, Republican Ronald Reagan made the Democrat a one-term leader. The victory also reflected the way demographic shifts were translated into party politics to the benefit of the GOP. As the number of

voters coming into the world in the postwar period grew, they responded less to the economic issues of Depression America. The Democrats had fashioned majorities from southerners, Jews, Catholics, and African Americans, a coalition that was on the edge of the US mainstream, and that included the poorest. The victories of these groups altered and widened ideas of an "American." But once southerners, Catholics, and Jews became fuller participants in the nation, they might leave the Democrats, who still focused on those not yet assimilated, and on various militants. Politics based on bread-and-butter concerns started to break down, its place eventually taken by a system in which the related issues of race and religion need explaining.

Whatever the impact on Black life of the Acts of 1964 and 1965—and a further one of 1968—they had dramatic consequences for politics. Lyndon Johnson worried that the legislation might cost the Democratic Party its southern home: "We just delivered the South to the Republican Party for a long time to come." While some analysts thought that African-American voters would solidify Democrats in the South, Johnson saw that the white majority would turn elsewhere. The rejection happened more slowly than he thought, but more permanently. Johnson had become president in 1963, and his election in 1964 had invigorated southern Democrats. Yet in the last part of the twentieth century, they struggled to keep a Dixie foothold. Only southern moderates with down-home loyalties won campaigns. Jimmy Carter had once farmed peanuts, and Arkansan Bill Clinton, president from 1993 to 2001, had a "trailer-trash," "redneck" background. In 2000, the Democratic presidential nominee, Al Gore, could not even carry his family's state of Tennessee, and in 2004, John Edwards, the Democratic vice-presidential nominee from North Carolina, could not win his home state, or any other southern state, for the Democrats. By the early twenty-first century, Johnson's native Texas supplied two Republican presidents—George Bush (1989–93) and then his son, George W. Bush (2001–9). The Democrats became identified with their northern wing, and southern Republicans more than equaled centrist Republicans in other parts of the nation. The South's politics were racial, to the detriment of Democrats identified as pro-Black.

Putting aside the divide between North and South, we find racial concerns growing in higher education, after the G. I. Bill had increased the percentage of citizens going to college. In a 1978 case, *California v. Bakke*, the Supreme Court explicitly sanctioned the use of race as a criterion for admission. Liberals touted the decision, while conservatives writhed in anger. Much later, in 2023, the Justices ordered that race *not* be considered in *Students for Fair Admission v. Harvard*. Yet for almost 400 years, colleges and universities had figured out how to take the student they wanted, and from 1978 to 2023 refused to follow the Court, affirming their own institutional commitments.

In addition to race, the other matter disrupting old-time time politics was a more intense religiosity. It made the United States more Christian than any of the advanced industrial countries of the North Atlantic West.

The 1965 Immigration Act had ended the national origins concept of the 1920s. Instead, the country chose immigrants for their talents. From the 1970s on, the bulk came from East Asian countries, Korea, and Vietnam. Uncounted others from difficult governments in Cuba, Haiti, and Central America illegally crossed the southwestern

border with Mexico, and added to the Hispanic–Latino population. Roman Catholics in the United States became more Hispanic, and Protestants more Asian (and Haitian). Protestantism was pronounced in the South and West. Southern politics exhibited more religiosity than it had had for one hundred years. Families moving to new areas sought the stability that church affiliation brought. With labor unions discouraged in the South, Protestants and especially the growing and more respectable evangelical denominations helped to create social bonds, a "Populism of the altar."

Because of their long relation to the South, Democrats at first received help from its Protestant revitalization. Jimmy Carter claimed that he had been "born again," a colloquial way of describing evangelical Christianity. Evangelicals experienced receiving faith in Christ and developing a direct relationship with Him. Bill Clinton made the same claim, although less effectively with voters. Republicans also grasped the link between Protestant avowal and electoral victory. While Ronald Reagan had little interest in churchgoing, he too pledged himself as reborn. The sacred ingredient in politics touched more than white Protestantism. It also energized Blacks, although they were more interested in helping one's less well-off fellows than in propriety. Overall, however, Republicans benefited more. The United States contradicted those who believed that modern civilization would renounce sectarian spirituality.

The Cold War, finally, had set the United States against godless Soviets. Catholics and Jews, now part of the invented Judeo-Christianity, behaved much like Protestants. The views of evangelicals in the South, and conservative Catholics and Jews often in the North, converged. These groups, in conflict with some of their fellow baby boomers, worried about the decline of conventional norms.

Oblique hostility to African Americans and effusive theistic commitment stoked cultural conflict. Many US nationals, criticized as "narrowminded," yearned for a time of more than respectable churchgoing and Blacks who "knew their place." The critics, usually Democrats, were more ecumenical and were regularly disparaged as having "fake" religiosity. These Democrats, said the disparagers, were also inclined to give people of color undue consideration. By the late 1960s, "values questions" were altering politics. Additionally, Democrats sometimes took the opportunity to parade alternative or eccentric modes of living.

Future elections would hold many incongruities. Formed in opposition to the South, Republicans had their stronghold there. While the South under one-party Democratic rule had been a backwater, the South of the late twentieth century under the GOP came to the forefront—experts talked about the "southernization" of politics. The Party was originally Protestant and still was. Yet the concern for Blacks that had been at its heart had disappeared; in the contemporary world, Republicans had a lack of concern.

Reagan

Ronald Reagan made a career in Hollywood as a leading man in "B" movies in the 1930s and 1940s. He later used his theatrical training as a GOP spokesman, and then as governor of California in the 1960s, to formulate a new kind of Conservatism, just as

Democrats were remaking Liberalism. Reagan had begun his adult life as a Democrat; voted for FDR four times; and said he never wanted to repudiate the New Deal, but only its inflated successor, Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. Moreover, just as he claimed a strong Protestant orientation, Reagan allowed voters to infer that he would have nothing to do with the fringe people that Democrats were attracting. This became explicit when he refused to attend to an epidemic of the early 1980s in which human immunodeficiency viruses (HIV) began to cause an often deadly acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). It particularly afflicted male homosexuals. Simultaneously, Reagan's triumphs as "the great communicator" in some ways gave him a stature equal to Roosevelt. Spanning the twentieth century, both men embraced big, free-spending government. The new president, however, expressed old-style ideals. Just as FDR made speeches more reckless than the reality of his politics, Reagan sounded more revolutionary than he was. In early 1981, the president announced:

> We have strayed from first principles. We must alter our course. The taxing power of the government must be used to provide revenues for legitimate government purposes. It must not be used to regulate the economy or bring about social change. We've tried that and surely must be able to see that it doesn't work.

Reagan urged that the national government hand over many of its functions to the states. He rid business of regulations and tried to have the marketplace and individual initiative guide decisions. In his first years in office, he cut domestic projects. But the president also increased the military budget and never touched the chief welfare programs, Social Security and Medicare, which accounted for the lion's share of federal spending and assigned benefits to working- and middle-class voters. Reagan did not create a smaller government in the habitual conservative way. Expenditures shot up, as Washington ran big deficits.

The Republicans promulgated a foreign policy more assertive than that of Eisenhower, Nixon, and Democrats like Carter, paralyzed by anti-war attitudes left over from Vietnam. Vietnam had slowed the trend toward détente with the Soviets that Kennedy had begun, although Nixon and Kissinger picked up the idea and stressed balance of power policies involving the United States and the USSR. After Nixon's resignation, Kissinger, still the top diplomat in the brief administration of Gerald Ford, pushed for a "condominium" between the superpowers. But more anti-communist Republicans and Democrats attacked Kissinger. Americans should find no common ground between communism and democracy, and should not countenance Kissinger's balance-of-power notions. The United States had to contend with a mortal threat, not an adversary. The nation should not negotiate with but defeat Russia.

Despite Vietnam, the Cold War sometimes looked as if it were winding down in the 1960s and early 1970s, but it had become more dangerous by the late 1970s. Reagan's victory over Carter reflected a desire to continue battle, as Republicans discarded their old-fashioned diplomatic prudence and built up non-conventional weapons. Reagan's advisors also hoped that goading the USSR would strain that nation to its financial and

logistical limit. The president wanted confrontation. In noted broadcasts, he asked, "Must freedom wither in a quiet, deadening accommodation with totalitarian evil?" The Soviets, "the focus of evil in the modern world," were "prepared to commit any crime, to lie, [and] to cheat" to get what they wanted. In one radio appearance, when Reagan was "testing" equipment and thought he was "off mic," he said: "My fellow Americans, I'm pleased to tell you today that I've signed legislation that will outlaw Russia forever. We begin bombing in five minutes."

The Middle East in World Politics

After the Second World War, the United States had underwritten the new Jewish nation of Israel on the edge of the Middle East. Elections drove this policy: in New York and Florida, Democrats needed Jewish voters. By the 1960s, America was guaranteeing Israel's success among unwelcoming Arabs. Experts would cite the Middle East as one more venue of the Cold War. Fearing the USSR, America needed allies there, while Israel required support. The United States, however, also relied on oil from abroad, and the reliance made plans complex.

From the middle of the nineteenth century to the Second World War, America had extracted more oil than it consumed. But automobiles, petroleum in many products, and consumption for heat and electricity made Americans profligate users of energy. By the 1970s, the United States was importing one-third of its oil. Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait in the Middle East supplied America. For their own benefit Europeans had devised the boundaries of these Arab–Muslim nations after the First World War. In any case, the countries had explosive and unpredictable governments. Forceful leaders, religious cleavages, and ancient hatreds—both among and within the various states—beset the Middle East. The mix of peoples barely concealed their dislike of US intrusiveness. The Israeli connection to America worsened relations, for the Arab–Muslims hated the Jews. Americans bore Middle Eastern anger: the pro-American Israeli base was useful for the procurement of oil. Yet the United States had flexibility: Democrats wanted Jewish votes, while Republicans, with an aura of country-club anti-Semitism, pushed to keep US distance.

Overall, in the last part of the twentieth century, the United States had an effective policy. Although America saw the growth of belligerent anti-Western impulses, it manipulated the region's politics to its advantage and thwarted Russian designs. The United States shored up repressive governments, kept enemies at each other's throats, and all the while inspired moderates who might endorse its oil interest and tolerate Israel. Nonetheless, troubles cursed the region, and underscored the vulnerability of Americans because they worried about oil and the Soviets. A part of the world that the United States would otherwise have barely noticed slowly gained prominence.

In the first years of its existence, Israel had simply wanted recognition of its right to exist. In 1967, however, Israelis pulled off a stunning military victory over a combined Arab force that had tried to drive them into the sea. Building on the victory, they got more assertive, and hoped that expansion might guarantee their future. In the context

of the Cold War, Americans praised the tiny country as the home of the new Judeo-Christianity synonymous with the United States as a religious nation. In 1973, when war broke out again, Arabs and Muslims saw America as Israel's ally. To pressure the West, but particularly the United States, the Arab members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) threatened to reduce their sales to selected countries. Throughout 1973–4 Americans turned the heat down in their houses and drove their cars more slowly. They waited in lines for gas or found that they could only buy it every other day. They felt frantic about an item they thought they had every right to have, but that they now had trouble getting. Then and later, politicians pontificated about the craving and advanced plans for "energy-independence." No plans amounted to much, however, and no one took seriously the rhetoric of being "addicted" to oil. When the crisis lifted, supplies had been manipulated, and the price of oil had gone up almost four-fold. Yet America and the oil sheiks were tied together. They needed customers, and the United States wanted their petroleum. America was implicated in deadly and stubborn animosities.

In 1979 a revolution in Iran unseated Shah Reza Pahlavi, a client of the United States. A fiercely anti-American government with a strict Muslim faith replaced the Shah and introduced a new element into relations with the Middle East. The Iranians thought that the US blend of business and religion posed an iniquitous challenge. If America were a demonic and not just imperial force, one could make sense of the sponsorship of Israel, the introduction of culture distasteful to Muslims, and the devouring of their national resource. Iranian clergy denounced the United States as the "Great Satan," and oil supplies were again jeopardized. Moreover, some Iranians conjectured that the only way to deal with the United States was an alarming tactic known as *Terrorism*. It had been deployed against the Israelis—the murder of unsuspecting civilians. In the new Iran, in 1979, in a related tactic, the anti-Americanism led radicals to take hostages from the American Embassy. In exchange for their release, Iran wanted the United States to distance itself from the hated and now deposed Shah. The refusal to comply crippled Carter's last year, but his apparent softness was an element in Reagan's victory. The new GOP administration calculated how much time to give to the Middle East when its focus was the Soviet Union.

OPEC again raised its prices, but more was at stake than money. If prices went down, entrepreneurs in the American southwest, who profited from their own overpriced oil, complained to Washington. Banks suffered if unpredictable expenses compromised their loans to the energy industry. Moreover, when the costs fell, the OPEC nations reduced their spending on American goods. The core issue did not involve dollars. Rather, diplomats inferred, instability in the Middle East caused the difficulties, and dictators and theological dogmatists brought about the volatility. The cure had a long history in American thinking about the outside world: the Middle East should get middle-class democracies. A democratic Israel became more a "partner" to the Americans, and sustaining Israel became good politics for Republicans as well as Democrats. The United States was dragged into the Middle East, where rulers felt the menace of America, or wanted help against hostile neighbors.

The Israelis were always prepared for war, especially from the Palestinians who had inhabited the lands of Israel before the Western powers had created it. The Palestine Liberation Organization fought with the Israelis to set up their own country, which called for the destruction of Israel. By the early 1980s, the PLO had strongholds in nearby Lebanon, north of Israel. The Israelis invaded Lebanon. The United States sent troops as part of an international peacekeeping force, but another revolutionary group, originating in Lebanon but perhaps with ties to Iran, exploded a truck rigged with bombs at an airport that housed American marines; 241 were killed. Reagan removed the soldiers from Lebanon. Yet a fragile Lebanon that gave sanctuary to Israel's enemies remained a problem. In 1985, representatives of the PLO seized an Italian cruise ship and killed a Jewish-American tourist, but these men were captured before they got to Libya, at that time another haven for opponents of the United States and Israel. Then, when Libya—under the eccentric Muammar Gaddafi—detonated a bomb at a West German nightclub that American soldiers frequented, Reagan launched an air strike against the country.

Iran continued as the central troublemaker. Throughout the 1980s, Iran and Iraq, contiguous in the Middle East, warred, a testimony to the volatility of the region and the scuffle for advantage by any number of countries. Iraq had a more secular government

Map 22 The Greater Middle East.

and a pragmatic connection with the United States. Although leaning toward Iraq, the United States aimed primarily to preserve a balance of power between these rivals. After Iraq scored some victories using poison gas, the Iran–Iraq War ended inconclusively with a cease-fire in 1988.

Simultaneously, the United States held Iran responsible for extremist groups now holding American hostages in Lebanon. In a convoluted series of moves, the Republicans unsuccessfully negotiated with Iran. They tried to have that country secure the release of the hostages by offering Iran weapons to use against Iraq, which the United States was backing in the Iran–Iraq war. These events involved Reagan in a clownish scandal that spawned headlines. It looked like he would leave office in disgrace and would contribute to his party's loss in the election that year. But "Irangate" also obscured the fact that the Middle East was not front and center for the administration. The Republicans wanted to bring down the USSR, and in a series of surprise moves, Reagan rescued his presidency and the GOP.

The Cold War Ends

As budgets for battle soared in the early 1980s, the USSR and the United States broke off arms-control consultations. In a complication, three aged Soviet First Secretaries died between 1982 and 1985, one after the other. Then, in 1985, the younger, more imaginative, and attractive Mikhail Gorbachev took over. His policy of *Glasnost*, or openness, injected political liberty into the USSR. He urged *Perestroika*, or restructuring, to revive his bureaucratized economy. The communists' own failings more than US pressure caused problems. Gorbachev wanted to decentralize and reward individual enterprise. In any case, he faced a meltdown at home and retrenched. The First Secretary unilaterally jettisoned missiles, cut military spending, and reached out to Reagan.

Despite his flag-waving, Reagan was remarkably open. In a speech of 1984, the president genially explained Soviet–American relations:

> More than 20 years ago, President Kennedy defined an approach that is as valid today as when he announced it. "So let us not be blind to our differences," he said, "but let us also direct attention to our common interests." Well … the common interests have to do with the things of everyday life for people everywhere. Just suppose with me for a moment that an Ivan and an Anya could find themselves, oh, say, in a waiting room or sharing a shelter from the rain or a storm with a Jim and Sally. And there was no language barrier to keep them from getting acquainted. Would they then debate the differences between their respective Governments? Or would they find themselves comparing notes about their children and what each other did for a living? Before they parted company, they would probably have touched on ambitions and hobbies and what they wanted for the children and problems of making ends meet. And as they went their separate ways, maybe Anya would be saying to Ivan: "Wasn't she nice? She also teaches music." And Jim would be telling Sally what Ivan did or didn't like about his boss. They might even have

> decided they were all going to get together for dinner some evening soon. Above all they would have proven that people don't make wars. People want to raise their children in a world without fear and without war. They want to have some of the good things over and above bare subsistence that make life worth living. They want to work at some craft, trade, or profession that gives them satisfaction and a sense of worth. Their common interests cross all borders.

In his second term, from 1985 to 1989, Reagan admirably responded to Gorbachev. The two scrapped a part of their nuclear arsenals. When Reagan left office, both sides had welcomed something more than détente, an end to the Cold War. In an added benefit to the GOP, the president's goodwill had propelled his vice president, George Bush, to the presidency.

Gorbachev's policies set in motion forces that he could not handle. He announced that the USSR would not use force to keep Iron Curtain countries in line. In 1989, the governments imposed on Eastern Europe collapsed. The Berlin Wall, the great symbol of the Cold War, came down in November. East and West Germany reunited in 1990. A hard-liners' coup against Gorbachev failed in 1991, but the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics itself disintegrated into a confederation of states, although Russia remained central. Gorbachev's job vanished, and he disappeared from international politics. Initially, novice President Bush looked on, sometimes with amazement, and took time to develop a policy. Indeed, for many Americans, Reagan had done the trick when he accepted *Glasnost* in the late 1980s, and he got the credit for defeating the USSR. Reagan had achieved the goal of Woodrow Wilson's global diplomacy as the communism that had incited an American crusade for seventy years went into irretrievable decline.

Globalization

Just as he was leaving office, Reagan captured Americans' ideas about themselves. Quoting a letter that he received, the president said: "You can move to France to live, but you can't become a Frenchman. You can move to Japan to live; you can't become Japanese." Then, after naming several other countries, he said: "Anyone from any corner of the world can come to America and become an American." Reagan construed citizenship as commitment to transcendent principles. The experiment had a destiny, and with the end of the Cold War, America easily expanded its reach. Reagan asserted that this was not "cultural imperialism." Whatever it was, a complex interchange occurred between the United States and the countries that collaborated with it. The interchange resulted in "globalization"—the integration of world finances, economic competition around the planet, and great benefits to US businesses.

On the eve of the twenty-first century, a continuing "communications revolution"—satellite technology, enhanced computers, cable TV, and mobile or cellular phones—remodeled human relations. Enterprises connected to "the Internet"—eBay, Google, and Amazon—gave US businesspeople instant access to the planet. But this access also brought complexly made goods to the United States. For example, Brazil might

build transmissions and ship them to Ohio for use in Navistar trucks, an international corporation with its home in Mexico. There in Mexico, however, the Ford Motor Car Company, a paradigmatic US firm, manufactured engines for cars assembled in Detroit, Michigan. The Michigan-based Whirlpool Appliance Company sold in the United States its microwave ovens engineered in Sweden and fabricated in China. More than 40 percent of American imports came from subsidiaries of US firms in other countries.

Moreover, popular culture surged outward as American products got imitated abroad. US nationals and people overseas displayed American garments. The New York Yankees, the baseball team hated everywhere in the United States outside of New York City, could find people all over the globe wearing blue caps with the Yankees NY logo. The Chinese often made counterfeit goods like fake New Balance sneakers or North Face jackets much more cheaply and tried to pass them off as the real thing. Enraged at these practices and in front of the world press in the early twenty-first century, one US official ripped up an imitation Kate Spade bag that he had bought in China. But knock-off Yankee caps were sold in New York City and were popular, *because* they were Chinese imitations.

When retailers wished to cash in on branded clothing, they creatively addressed American tantrums. Faced with licensing restrictions on garments naming teams in the United States, Europeans manufactured comparable items that might have different colors, or identical colors with different logos. Europeans would wear a yellow and green cap of the Oakland A's but with a Detroit Tigers D, or a red hat with NY instead of the respected St L of the Saint Louis Cardinals. Then these mock hats became attractive items themselves in the United States, and Americans wore them, although the Philippines or Guatemala manufactured them. Similarly, individuals everywhere might have sweatshirts imprinted with Harvard, University of Wisconsin, or Bryn Mawr College, when they had never been near Cambridge, Massachusetts; Madison, Wisconsin; or Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A farmer growing poppies for opium in a distant region of South America might sport a Philadelphia Phillies cap. Or US citizens might wear blouses from the University of New York City or Texas College University, when no such institutions existed.

The Hollywood movie was a major US export. The Western made an imprint worldwide. Bad guys and good guys fought it out in mountain landscapes. Or white settlers, or the US Army, would predictably wipe out Indians. But in the 1960s and 1970s, Europeans created nearly 600 "cowboy" movies. Because Italians made the lion's share, the film industry called them "Spaghetti Westerns." Nonetheless, the companies filmed most of them in a part of Spain that resembled the American Southwest, and Spanish extras populated the cinema. Consequently, the location was defined as along the Mexican border with the United States. Flicks were also made, however, in the then-nation of Yugoslavia, the Italian Alps, South Africa, the Canary Islands, and Argentina. India's film industry was "Bollywood."

In the 1950s, Black singers like Chuck Berry and Fats Domino had fans in Europe, although no one had more than "The King" of rock 'n' roll, Elvis Presley. But Americans absorbed foreign popular music too. The Beatles, an English group, took the United States by storm in the early 1960s, and helped to spread an American-style celebrity

culture. It was later composed of many non-Americans—for example, Jackie Chan (from Hong Kong, a special administrative unit of China), Priyanka Chopra (Indian), Sean Connery (a Scot), Russell Crowe (Australian), Drake (Canadian), Selma Hayek (Mexican), and Lupita Nyong'o (Kenyan–Mexican).

Among many others, the French Club Med, purveyor of luxury vacations, sold at its boutiques tee shirts imprinted with the picture of Ernesto Che Guevara, the Cuban revolutionary killed in Bolivia in 1967. Thirty years after his death, well-to-do young men and women in the United States would buy such apparel without the slightest idea of whose picture was on their chests. Che Guevara had despised consumerism, but businesses that were part of the imperialist culture he fought sold his image. Commerce turned a revolutionary into a brand.

* * *

The 1970s had brought America low and resulted in the end of Rooseveltian Liberalism. Nonetheless, the United States rebounded under the rule of a Hollywood Republican. Reagan had conquered the Russians and, in a rare feat, had also secured the election of his VP, George Bush. The end of the Cold War proclaimed a new century of entrepreneurial heyday. American hegemony seemed assured.

PART VI
AMERICA AFTER THE COLD WAR

CHAPTER 17
CULTURAL CONQUEST AND CULTURAL DIVISION, 1988–2016

From the Collapse of the USSR to Barack Obama

Once the administration of George Bush absorbed the enormity of the rout of the Russians, triumphalism spilled across America, and continued through the succeeding administrations of Democrat Bill Clinton. Bush spoke of a "new world order," while one theorist announced "the end of history": US-style democracy would own the world. Ironically, troubles within the United States increased. The potential American flowering over the globe allowed for unconstrained and contradictory demands at home.

Vigorous Diplomacy

In the face of the Soviet debacle, what should happen to NATO, the anti-Soviet alliance centered in Western Europe? One might argue for its disbanding. Yet the victorious Americans expanded the alliance. East and West Germany had integrated, and in due course this Germany joined NATO. As they had in the 1960s, Russian officials appreciated that NATO, dominated by America, would hem in Germany but they decried more expansion. Critics later urged that the United States reneged on commitments not to go any further but, in any event, NATO was extended eastward to include a Poland eager for inclusion: Russia lost the buffer between it and Germany but, for a time, the United States was also strong enough to move Russia, the chief entity in the old Soviet Union, to the marginally democratic. Then, after 1989, exuberant diplomats turned not just to the failed USSR and Eastern Europe as arenas but also to the Middle East.

In 1990, in the middle of George Bush's administration, Iraq bid for more power. Its president, Saddam Hussein, used heartless tactics to keep together his religiously divided nation. Nonetheless, he had received the blessing of the United States in his war against Iran. Saddam Hussein represented practicality in a region where leaders resisted Americans on principle and were less cynical than he. He wanted to annex the adjacent southern country, Kuwait, according to Saddam Hussein a province of Iraq. With Kuwait's oil, he might force up prices to help his economy that the fight with Iran weakened. The US ambassador in Iraq gave mixed signals about the reaction to a take-over; overplaying his hand, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. As in most of the twists and turns in the Middle East, missteps on both sides caused discord.

With the end of the Cold War, President Bush calculated that the United States need not tolerate Iraq's decision. The president did not have to worry about the USSR, which

had exerted influence in Iraq. With a UN sanction and the ambivalent support of other Middle Eastern countries, Bush gave Iraq an ultimatum to leave Kuwait. A humbled Russia tried to broker a peace but, when Saddam Hussein refused terms, it stood aside. The United States and a coalition retook Kuwait in 1991, and "Operation Desert Storm" wiped out much of Iraq's army. "By God," declared Bush, "we've kicked the Vietnam syndrome"—America had recovered. At the same time, the president was prudent. He did not end Saddam Hussein's rule. The United States damaged but did not remove Iraq as an opponent of Iran.

The Roaring 1990s

With the election of Bush, Republican control of the White House lengthened to twenty of twenty-four years from 1968. And with a quick victorious war, Bush looked like a winner in 1992, when he ran for re-election. Things nonetheless came apart. A brief but serious downturn in the economy shadowed the president's last year in office. Democratic newcomer Bill Clinton, Governor of Arkansas, pulled off a narrow victory, playing on worries about the greed of Republicans. But in 1992 and in his second victory in 1996, Clinton did not get 50 percent of the ballot. The slim triumphs demonstrated that citizens were conflicted, sure of neither party. Moreover, the end of the Cold War had initially muted the cultural conflict that started in the 1960s, but that conflict had quickly returned, now more rancorous. It split the electorate and competed for attention with anger about the economy and disparities of income.

At home, diplomatic energy had partially masked the fact that Reagan and Bush had not protected the voters' wallets. The corporate supporters of the Republican Party enriched themselves at the expense of everyone else. A silent transfer of wealth to the rich had taken place under the GOP. In the 1980s, the per capita income of the top 1 percent went from $313,000 to $548,000, while that of the bottom 90 percent went from $27,000 to $29,000. Both the pre-tax and after-tax income of the poorest 20 percent fell by a few percentage points, while that of the top 1 percent increased by 75 percent and 87 percent, respectively. The effective tax rate on the bottom 20 percent rose to 16 percent, while that of the top 20 percent declined by 5 percent (14 percent for the top 1 percent). Workers' hourly compensation, according to the Consumer Price Index, went down by 8 percent, while the salary of corporate chief executives advanced by 76 percent. The income tax of the bottom 20 percent increased over the decade (by $137, on average), while that of the top 20 percent decreased (by $2,513, on average). While income tax receipts remained constant, taxes from Social Security, which disproportionately affected the less affluent, rose, as corporate taxes declined. All the statistics available showed that the moneyed were raking it in under the Republicans—"pigs at a trough," it was said—while the middle class marginally held its own, and the needy lost some of the little that they had. Tax cuts and increased military spending assured Republican deficits as large as those of the extravagant Democrats. Both parties had no trouble spending their constituents' dollars, issuing debt, or printing money. Yet the outlays also gave the Republicans an argument against Democratic welfare

programs: to balance the budget, the federal government should cut expenses to what was right for its sphere—national security.

The electorate suspected the GOP, but not only personal finances were at stake. Republicans rhetorically prized "family values" and said that Democrats did not respect the family. Democrats gave ammunition to critics when they supported "self-fulfilling" sexuality, which included non-heterosexuals and which queried narrowly conventional morality.

In June of 1969, in Greenwich Village, New York police had raided a homosexual bar, the Stonewall Inn. Fighting back, the patrons skirmished in the streets over a weekend. When the rioting ended, a Gay Liberation Front was born, and "gay people" had an emblematic moment in "Stonewall." In 1973, the Supreme Court had held in *Roe v. Wade* that women had a constitutional right to abortion in the early stages of pregnancy. Later cases refined certain limitations but forbid any "undue burden" being imposed on the woman seeking an abortion. Abortions were taken out of the back room, and citizens openly discussed sex. Repeatedly contested, *Roe v. Wade* was critical for many women, who for over 300 years had never been able to claim first-class citizenship. In 1990, supporters of the disabled passed the Americans with Disabilities Act. It prohibited employers from discriminating against any individual who fell under a "disability." The law required that businesses make facilities accessible to the "differently abled." Extended to schools, the Act ordered the restructuring of jobs; the modification of work schedules and equipment; the adjustment of examinations, training materials, or policies; and wide-ranging physical and mental support.

The Fourteenth Amendment of 1868 had originally been passed to assist former slaves in the South who were to have "equal treatment" and "due process" under the law. But the Amendment had then been interpreted in a restricted fashion to allow individual states to go their own way. The1896 case *Plessy v. Ferguson* had codified this interpretation when it dictated that southern states could offer a "separate but equal" life for African Americans. The about-face on *Plessy* in the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* reversed the meaning of this much-litigated Amendment. Now, at the end of the twentieth century, the Fourteenth was said to guarantee universal rights no matter what provincial yardsticks were. Following the lead of the New Deal and the 1960s Supreme Court, the later Court proclaimed that, after almost 200 years, the Bill of Rights applied not just to laws that the national government made, but also to the states. Local precepts had to yield to what Washington decided. For the man in the street, this meant that people had "rights" to do as they pleased; localities could enforce fewer prohibitions. In 2024, in *Trump v. United States*, the Court extended rights to presidents in carrying out official duties.

After the collapse of Russia, Clinton's Democratic Party took credit for this expansion of freedoms and for a time commanded the electorate. Yet while the changes made some voters happy, the new rules offended other citizens. Various members of the old Roosevelt coalition—Southerners, Jews, Catholics, and white workers—had come to consider themselves 100 percent American and opposed sympathy for out-groups. New concepts of "entitlement" and "empowerment" generated opposition. Conservative

commentators spoke of "the L[iberal]word," and the ideology of the "wine-drinking, Volvo-driving, and N[ational]P[ublic]R[adio]-listening" elite. "Disaffected white men" claimed that being labeled "politically incorrect" stifled the response to absurdities.

Each party ignored workers, but they got psychic gratification from (usually) Republicans officials who insinuated that "identity politics" was nonsense. One could see that these GOP insinuations were taking their toll when "liberals" changed their name to "progressives," a venerable title that went back to Teddy Roosevelt.

For older liberals, idols included the forgotten or common person—Rosie the Riveter and G. I. Joe. Harry Truman in the recent past, and Andy Jackson and Abraham Lincoln in history, showed how ordinary citizens could rise to the heroic. Now, for newer liberals, the everyday man transmuted into a clown or fool. Archie Bunker was a spiteful racist in a top-ranked TV show "All in the Family" (1971–83), and Al Bundy was a misogynist in another entertainment blockbuster, "Married with Children" (1987–97). An African-American domestic comedy, "The Cosby Show" (1984–92), was the one program that extolled family values. It featured a physician father, played by Bill Cosby and an attorney mother. By the end of the twentieth century, the novel Progressivism was about both economic fairness and how Washington might assist individuals in "personal growth."

Dolly Parton, the entertainer whose name became a household word, showed the complexity of cultural life. Parton was born in 1946 in Tennessee, one of twelve children, "dirt poor." Her father, an illiterate sharecropper, came to own a small tobacco farm in the Jim Crow South. The daughter's vocal endowments were displayed in her church. Then, Parton made her way on the music circuit in the 1960s and 1970s. Her success came after she co-starred with Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin, in the 1980 film *9 to 5*. The movie aimed at the harassment of working women, and their low status in a patriarchy. Parton sung the theme song, "9 to 5," which reached number one on the country, pop, and the adult-contemporary charts:

> … Workin' 9 to 5. What a way to make a livin'.
> Barely getting' by. It's all takin' and no givin'.
> They just use your mind, and they never give you credit.
> It's enough to drive you crazy if you let it …
> They let you dream just to watch 'em shatter.
> You're just a step on the boss man's ladder …

By the 1990s Parton was a worldwide celebrity, instantly recognized by her bleached-blond hair and enormous breasts. After having undergone plastic surgery, she joked about this "work," saying "It takes a lot of money to look this cheap." Fans adored Parton, her earthy style, and her frankness in talking about her background. Parton supported an assortment of destitute people and their causes. She founded charities, chief among them the Dollywood Foundation to bring education and money to East Tennessee. She also did not hesitate to express her Christianity.

Bill Clinton's career also illustrated the conundrums of popular culture as they infused politics. A poor boy who claimed born-again Protestantism, he had married an

outspoken and successful lawyer, Hillary Rodham, and they made their way up a slightly grubby political ladder. As president, Bill Clinton minimally emphasized the social democratic and hammered out a consensus in which the left-wing of his party did not publicly press for outré policies. At the same time, Hillary Clinton irritated some voters by proclaiming that she would not "bake cookies" as the first lady. She intruded on many decisions that, at least openly, were previously off-limits to the wives of politicians. For example, turning from Reagan-era sensibilities, Hillary Clinton brought together global leaders to take on HIV/AIDS. She advocated increased funding for US prevention and research efforts—especially for pediatric AIDS—and patronized scientists committed to research on AIDS. In 1994, roughly coordinating with the Clinton White House, Dolly Parton contributed through a not-for-profit, international association dedicated to fighting AIDS through entertainment.

President Clinton oversaw a thriving economy. His administration—as had the preceding Republican one—believed that the United States would have the lion's share of high-tech employment in exchange for having countries like Mexico and China do the "low-tech" manufacturing. With Russia vanquished, and Iraq defeated, foreign policy receded into the background. At the same time, in minor crises, Clinton showed that the United States was no paper tiger—over eight years he employed military force eighty-four times. It looked like the Democrats were once more on the rise.

Then, midway through his second term in the late 1990s, it was discovered that Bill Clinton had engaged in an affair in the White House with an intern, Monica Lewinsky, who was only a few years older than Clinton's daughter. Clinton lied about it in public, and the lies led to an unsuccessful impeachment trial, which Republicans staged for maximal effect. The mischief only convinced many citizens of what they dimly suspected: even if Democrats pledged themselves to economic justice more than the GOP, many traditional folks worried that the Democrats disdained standards of domestic life.

The Middle East and Terror

The Clinton outrage prevented the transfer of his popularity to a successor. In yet another close election, disputed because the winner received 500,000 fewer votes than the loser, George Bush's son, the George H. W. Bush, supplanted Clinton. It was said of "W"—as he was known—that "he was born on third base, but thinks he hit a triple." With his irregular mandate, the younger Bush entered the new millennium with no clear policy orientation. On September 11, 2001, terrorists made his administration.

After the first President Bush had defeated Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi remained defiant, though more a nuisance than a threat. He used the remains of his army to quash internal opposition and refused to follow the peace agreement. The opportunistic connection between Iraq and the United States transmuted to enmity. With air supremacy, the Americans under Clinton had "degraded" whatever significant military "assets" they could discover Iraq had. The United Nations sent in inspectors to check, although Saddam Hussein probably had no such assets. To keep the United States at bay, he came across as the meanest and least responsible leader imaginable. Because

Map 23 Election of 2000. Compare this map to Map 20, on the election of 1896.

the war and later harassment had devastated his military, he bluffed. Because he stifled sectarian violence, the United States credited his bluff and believed that he was more dangerous than he was. His strategy was having the opposite effect of what he wanted. The American desire to keep Iraq as a counter to Iran vanished.

While Americans brooded over Iraq, Islamic militants, smarting for decades about the US thumb on the Middle East in behalf of Israel, had tried to damage the United States. In 1993, a bomb in the World Trade Center in New York City had killed six and injured over 1,000. In 1998, trucks rigged with bombs had gone off simultaneously near the US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, murdering 224 and hurting about 4,500. In 2000, in waters off Aden in Yemen, a small boat with explosives had blown up alongside the Navy destroyer *USS Cole*, impairing the ship and slaying seventeen sailors. These attacks scarcely registered with Americans, although intelligence agencies had long since tracked terrorists known as al-Qaeda, who wanted to exterminate Israel and drive the United States from the oil fields. For al-Qaeda, US support for Israel and Westernization threatened Islam. The organization hated America's sexualized culture and insatiable consumption. Al-Qaeda's leader, Osama Bin Laden, also believed that

America kept bad governments in power in his part of the world, preventing Muslim renewal. Indeed, for Bin Laden, his native Saudi Arabia (a US ally of sorts) and Saddam Hussein's Iraq were two of these bad governments.

In 2001, Bin Laden became the embodiment of the forces opposing America. On September 11, al-Qaeda hijacked four US airliners, and turned them into weapons. The "suicide bombers" piloted two planes into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York and brought down these skyscrapers. Another jet hurtled into the Pentagon in Washington. A final one, aimed at the White House, crashed in Pennsylvania, after passengers and crew had fought it out with the hijackers in the sky. The total dead and missing numbered about 3,000, almost all civilians.

In the War of 1812, the English had burned Washington City. In the Civil War of 1861–5 Americans had slaughtered one another. Japan had attacked Hawaii in December of 1941. But the horrors of twentieth-century warfare spared the continental United States. The bombing of cities and of civilians in the First World War, the Second World War, Korea, and Vietnam had engaged the United States only from afar. Americans had no sense of how war embroiled non-combatants. Then, their TVs showed employees in the World Trade Center jumping to their doom as the buildings tumbled to the ground; the scenes prompted contemplation about the thin veneer of civilization and the fragility of order. Anxiety swept the country. US nationals responded to "9/11" by asking why "they hated us," and said that "the world had changed forever." September 11 also shaped the rage Arabs and Muslims felt toward the United States.

The attack made the new president, whose administration had struggled to find itself after the borderline win in 2000. Now Republicans, with Democratic sponsorship, launched a war against remote and undeveloped Afghanistan on the eastern border of Iran, south of Russia. Through the 1980s, attempting to shore up a communist government, the USSR had fought religious rebels there. The United States aided the insurgents; Americans preferred the disruption to Russia by spiritual militants rather than Soviet stability. As the USSR collapsed, it withdrew from Afghanistan. Muslim fundamentalists had taken over in 1992. By 1994, they had hardened around one notorious group. These Taliban later provided a home for Bin Laden and al-Qaeda. Once al-Qaeda had gotten its footing in Afghanistan, its plans came to fruition with the assault on the World Trade Center. America attacked Afghanistan in response. In late 2001, the United States upended the Taliban with little trouble and installed friendly, if shaky, officials. But the warring in Afghanistan continued. Bin Laden escaped somewhere in the mountains of Afghanistan or bordering Pakistan, though the United States disrupted his network.

On its side, the Bush administration, with its "global war on terror," found the mission for which the nation had been hunting. The United States had vanquished communism. What next? At the end of the nineteenth century, Frederick Jackson Turner had worried about the close of the geographic frontier. Now, a similar worry had arisen. Could the United States persist without an enemy? The nation did not just have a history; Americans needed to conceive their history as having a goal. After a running start with the first Bush

war against Iraq, the second Bush found the goal in defeating Terrorism. Speechmaking conflated the need for a limited response—to Al-Qaeda—with a planetary threat.

The younger Bush was yet another evangelical, "born again," helped by Billy Graham. The president formulated his wartime leadership to solidify his electoral support among Protestants in the South and Southwest. He labeled Bin Laden an "evildoer" and vowed a crusade of good against evil. For Bush, Afghanistan was a way station to wider commitments. "Non-state actors"—like Bin Laden—were worrisome. But the real dangers were hostile but unstable rulers who might blackmail with atomic weapons or their near equivalents—bio-chemical agents, "weapons of mass destruction." Bush the father had stated that the non-proliferation had to be a priority. Bush the son acted on the statement. Recalling the fascists of the Second World War, the president elaborated on a new "Axis of Evil"—Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. Iraq housed Saddam Hussein, who intimated that he had poison gas. An enemy since the Shah had been deposed in 1979, Iran was experimenting on missiles with atomic warheads. A hostile North Korea also had a nuclear program. Americans had forgotten North Korea since the armistice of the Korean War in 1953. Under US tutelage, South Korea was hardly a perfect democracy but, in the fifty years after the cease-fire, developed a tolerable electoral system and, more, a Western economy. The United States provided South Korea's "nuclear umbrella." North Korea had a rockier history. Supported on-and-off by the Chinese and USSR, North Korea at the onset did well, but suffered from the collapse of the Soviets. It then proved a troublesome ally for China, and evolved into an impoverished dictatorship. In the 1990s the Clinton administration had marginal success in buying off the North.

In 2002, Bush pointed to Iraq as the key member of the sinful trio. Saddam Hussein did not welcome revolutionary Islam and had nothing to do with 9/11, but this dictator impressed on the United States that he would use anything to defend himself and to hurt his enemies. As the president repeatedly said, freedom was a powerful idea. A democratic Iraq would change the whole Middle East—one candle would light many. Acting unilaterally, America launched another battle against Iraq in 2003, after Saddam Hussein repudiated overtures. Afghanistan proved to be a prelude to a broader conception of how to fight Terrorism. Crazed mullahs who espoused terror and used oil as a weapon would get the point of not messing with the United States. However, an ideology of global anti-Terrorism was not all that propelled this war of choice. The weaknesses of other states misled the administration.

Most of those with whom America dealt—Western Europeans, Middle Eastern powers, China, and Japan—variously countered the effort. In the background were the still debilitated Russians, who formerly held sway in this part of the world. Yet, after kowtowing to the United States in what was now known as the "the First Gulf War" of the 1990s, Russia had begun to recover from its swoon. Its democratic movement had come at a great cost for everyday Russians, and soon the country was back on an autocratic path. In 1999, after much turmoil, Vladimir Putin, a 37-year-old former Soviet intelligence officer, had taken control. Putin would dominate Russia for thirty years. He believed that the collapse of the USSR was the twentieth century's greatest geopolitical catastrophe, and that the West had nurtured the calamity. Initially, Russia

under Putin was too infirm to strike back but he bided his time, sensing that the US victory over the USSR in 1989–92 would breed "imperial overstretch." Still, he could do little to prevent American promotion of ill will to Russia even in its "near abroad." The best example was in The Ukraine, which had been a part of the old USSR. With Russia irresolute, Ukrainians had achieved a legal autonomy. Whether it was a fledging post-Soviet republic plagued by corruption and manipulated by Russia, or its semi-authoritarian dependency, the United States moved it toward NATO.

In 2003, ignoring Putin not just in Ukraine but also in the Middle East, America forsook the judicious and rushed ahead in Iraq. What was called "neo-liberal" economics would embrace the planet. Intellectual servants of the state taught US nationals about pre-emptive war, nation building, regime change, enhanced interrogation techniques (torture), and rendition (exporting suspected terrorists to US allies who had fewer scruples about torture). As one historian put it, "Wilsonians with bullets" comprised the Republican administration and its Democratic followers.

Saddam Hussein's regime fell apart, and many Iraqis welcomed events. He was captured at the end of 2003, and Bush received a second term in 2004, as a successful war-president. After a long show trial, Saddam Hussein was executed at the end of 2006; a sickening video of his hanging went "viral," worldwide. But despite approval of a constitution and elections in Iraq in 2005, rebels entangled the new government and US forces. Anti-American factions were not unified, but remnants of the old order, holy warriors, and al-Qaeda assembled to bloody the United States, which could not gain a victory. At the same time, the commitments in Iraq made it more difficult to secure Afghanistan. In time, Afghanistan and perhaps Iraq overtook Vietnam as "America's longest war," as US troops fought in both countries without an end in sight. Inevitably, the weakness of Iraq strengthened Iran, not having to worry about its adjacent foe. Iranians called for drastic solutions to America. Their sponsorship of Terrorism increased, and they pressured Iraq. Without Iraq to offset Iran, the United States embroiled itself even more in the Middle East. The United States could not see that it might contain *both* Iran and Iraq if each had a measure of power. Instead, America turned more to Saudi Arabia, another country that at times supported terror but was an enemy of Iran—Iraq would dissolve into anarchy.

No one knew what would have happened had the United States not gone after Afghanistan and Iraq, but the wars turned into a fiasco for Bush's standing at the end of his second term in 2009. In the spring of 2003, the president had stood in front of a huge banner, "Mission Accomplished"; five years later men and women were still coming home in coffins. And whatever the glory in promoting democracy overseas, the stakes had diminished. Even during the Cold War, America had only engaged in what one expert called "offshore balancing." Now, the need for Middle Eastern oil had decreased, but the United States had both feet planted in an area about which its policymakers and citizens had little knowledge—and smaller interests. In Russia, Putin took every opportunity to complicate American troubles. From time to time, Bush had the United States opposing radicals in fifty countries. When he left office, the electorate wanted his tangled anti-terrorist errand curtailed.

In the presidential campaign of 2008, foreign policy might have been enough to turn voters from the Republicans. But fate was crueler to the GOP, as a global financial catastrophe engulfed the country. Millions lost work, houses, and retirement pensions. The economic misery overshadowed the Middle East. Undermined by doubtful policies in the granting of home mortgages, the fiscal system imploded. Wealth as measured by the value of stocks plummeted through the second half of 2008, and consequences followed as prices of homes fell, banks closed, businesses folded, and employers cut jobs. Pundits with long memories talked about the most acute disaster since the 1930s. Forgetting the Clinton administrations' contribution, they also blamed Republican deregulation and avaricious conservatives. The president went out of office denied and shunned.

Bush was hardly answerable for a final set of issues that added to his tarnished image. After September 11, commentators had urged that the unified response to Terrorism would end the culture wars: Americans would come together. And, indeed, at first, they did. But as the troubles in Iraq and Afghanistan lingered, domestic trials escalated, and bickering between citizens resumed.

Much of the shouting was between younger people who expressed a new ethos in respect to gender and sex, and an older generation with contrasting views. After the 1960s, liberation from prudery betokened enlightenment. Mainstream movies featured scenes of various forms of intercourse, and by the twenty-first century television shows were devoted to sex, some of them strictly about women's pleasures—"Keeping up with the Kardashians," "The Bachelorette," "The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills," "Girls." Contributing to the accent on sensualism was the rise of what were called "social media." These brief but instantaneous forms of communication were transmitted on the now ubiquitous cell phones, which themselves could take video pictures—like the one that had shown the execution of Saddam Hussein. Young women, for example, posted sexually explicit photos of themselves. Teenage females wore tee shirts saying "Fuck Me Now," and on public beaches displayed tattoos on their exposed rear-ends saying "Boner Garage." At the same time, men still harassed women, and predators were active in schools and the workplace. The Catholic church topped everyone when journalists exposed legions of pedophile or rapist priests over many years.

Meanwhile, "heterosexual normativity" was questioned. First, at Stonewall, gay men demanded a seat at the table. Now, an "LGBTQ" movement—lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, and queer—arose. In the early going, the newest members of this coalition were the transgendered, those who rejected their birth "gender" and who sometimes had a surgically altered gender, challenging biological sexuality. The transgendered debated how sexuality could be expressed, now that body parts could be added or subtracted with the surgeon's knife, and hormones altered by a needle.

The young had a new boldness about their bodies—not just about sex but about clothing and ornamentation like tattoos—and bewildered older Americans. Baby boomers were even angry about the upheaval in mores. This was, they thought, not the United States they had grown up in. While the social change had spanned half a century, all this seemed to have happened on Bush's watch.

Dolly Parton was not confused. She earned her second Academy Award nomination for Best Original Song, "Travelin' Thru," which she wrote for a feature film that treated the transgendered with sympathy, *Transamerica* (2005):

> I'm just a weary pilgrim trying to find what feels like home …
> But holdin' to each other, we don't have to walk alone,
> When everything is broken, we can mend it if we try.
> We can make a world of difference, if we want to, we can fly.

Because of the song and film's acceptance of a transgender woman, Parton received death threats.

Who would run against the tainted Republicans? The struggle for the Democratic nomination in 2008 featured a fascinating contest. Hillary Clinton, wife of former President Bill Clinton and now senator from New York, faced off against Barack Obama, senator from Illinois. Obama's father was Kenyan and thus his ethnicity was—according to the American "one drop" belief—Black. Only forty-seven, Obama was the "mutt" son, as he put it, of a white mother from Kansas and his African father. Raised in Hawaii and Indonesia, he was educated in the continental United States, went to Harvard Law School, and made a home in Chicago. African Americans and feminists were now at the center of the Democratic Party. Obama was nominated.

His opponent was John McCain, long-time GOP senator from Arizona. Seventy-two years old, McCain was an old-fashioned patriot and war hero, having been captured and tortured for five years in North Vietnam. McCain lost, having the misfortune to defend the Bush presidency. For the first time in more than thirty years a Democrat received over 50 percent of the ballots, and Obama's 53 percent was the highest Democratic percentage since Lyndon Johnson's 61 percent of 1964. The first African-American in the White House was historic. Obama's victory convinced some that the Democrats had at last found the key to a new majority at a time when white Protestant America was on the defensive, and a younger, diverse population was ascendant. Although Obama identified as a Black Protestant, he stood for an inclusive United States that gave opportunity to everyone and that would enlighten the planet. A poster found everywhere featured Obama over the word HOPE, and a campaign slogan was "Yes, we can!"

Even with limited perspective, the election was as much a repudiation of the GOP as an embrace of Democrats. During the campaign, Republicans acted as if they had nothing to do with their President Bush and did not even mention to what party they belonged. Voters focused on the failures of the old administration—in foreign affairs, the economy, and Bush's inability to explain why the culture seemed so out of kilter. The voters punished the party in power, as they had punished Herbert Hoover and the Republicans in 1932 for the Great Depression, and Lyndon Johnson and the Democrats in 1968 for Vietnam. But in 2008 there was no underlying swing to the Democrats; they were momentarily just disliked less than the Republicans. From the 1990s on, neither party could count on a steadfast electorate; the voters were sour, captious, and fickle.

Social media amplified tensions. Americans had different "apps" on their phones—Facebook, TikTok, WeChat, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter (later X). All sorts of "influencers"—politicians, entertainers, and various self-promoters—had "followers." And if you wanted more than a short message ("tweet" was one name), a "podcast" gave longer doses of information. To call attention to your cause, you might create a "hashtag"—a keyword or phrase preceded by the symbol #. The old-fashioned publishing and newspaper businesses declined, even though it was possible to get reporters' news or an "e[lectronic]-book" or on any of your "devices." US nationals—and people all around the world—could send and receive reports about events in real time. Because cameras were everywhere, pictures and videos instantaneously circled the globe, as were distorted or altered items, as well as what was called "fake news." Later, by 2018, a reshuffled and unusually conservative Supreme Court exacerbated dilemmas: it paid limited heed to precedent and *stare decisis* and seemed intent on uprooting the settled. Finally, the cable news networks—MSNBC, CNN, and Fox News—all devoted as much time to disturbing the peace and gaining viewers as to reporting: the news was announced sanctimoniously or spitefully, with Fox on the right, CNN on the center-left, and MSNBC on the left.

Foreign Policy and Obama

Obama's considerable virtue was that he was gracious and dignified, popular as an individual, and scandal-free. Europeans saw him as the American who might bring harmony into world affairs. Some ten months into his presidency, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, a distinction of the Swedish. He delicately said the medal was a "call to action." Yet early in his presidency, there were some missteps, as he navigated the politics of color. More sure-footed by 2015, he showed humanity and leadership in conducting a singing of the hymn "Amazing Grace" with a group of African-American clergy at a funeral after a dreadful racially inspired massacre in South Carolina. Usually, he distanced himself from domestic politics, fearful that he might worsen the "culture wars." Indeed, his caution at home might have propelled him to chart a course in foreign policy where the Middle East caught him up.

The president tried to detach the United States from Israel, on the sensible presumption that not all of Israel's battles were America's. But because Israel had been an ally for both Republicans and Democrats, Obama made little headway, only irritating the rightist Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu. In a repudiation of Obama toward the end of his administration, the US legislature invited Netanyahu to speak, while Obama had to ignore the Israeli's welcome from Congress. Around far longer than Obama, Netanyahu would agitate US diplomats into the third decade of the century.

In the meantime, Americans continued to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan. In May of 2011, elite Navy Sea, Air, and Land (SEAL) teams, known as Navy SEALs, killed Bin Laden, who had been hiding in a Pakistani town, across the eastern border of Afghanistan. The assassination revealed to the electorate that Pakistan played a double game, sometimes sowing instability by backing al-Qaeda. With robust nuclear development, Pakistan set an example for other nations unwilling to bend a knee to America. Safe from life-or-death

threats from the United States because they had atom bombs, Pakistanis acceded to some US wishes, but also fomented anti-American sentiment when it was to their advantage. Americans added Pakistan to the list of worrisome countries in the greater Middle East.

The United States was neither in control there, nor responsible for the exploits of the players. But it was enmeshed, and fear of non-action and unease that "rogue" states would get nukes motivated policy makers. At the end of 2010 and into 2011—while the SEALs were planning their lethal strike—demonstrations and rebellions occurred in several Middle Eastern countries, apparently in the name of democracy. What should America do about this "Arab Spring"?

Libya was a case in point. It had been an enemy since Reagan's era because its leader, Muammar Gaddafi, had planted the bomb that killed US soldiers in a West Berlin nightclub. Gaddafi tyrannized his own people and belligerently rejected American instruction. Then, in the early part of the century, he agreed to forego nukes, or was arm-twisted to renounce them. Such an arsenal was the only tool adversaries had to discourage the United States from keeping its hands off them. Gaddafi fell in line, and in return controlled his own people. He was "our brute," and kept the peace in Libya. However, when the Arab Spring spread to Libya in 2011, upheavals occurred. Through NATO, Obama began a "humanitarian" intervention to spare some subjugated Libyans. Without nuclear weapons, Gaddafi could not prevent interference. His dictatorship collapsed and, in October 2011, his murder was the subject of another macabre video seen round the world. Successor governments could not hold the country together. They

Figure 13 Watching the Killing of Bin Laden, 2011. Courtesy of Obama Presidential Library. Biden and Obama are on left. Hilary Clinton on right.

also at times provided havens for terrorists—in 2012 one group killed the US ambassador. Unnerving visuals followed.

Smoother than Gaddafi, Bashar al-Assad ruled Syria, to Iraq's west. The Arab Spring also rocked Syria. Assad hideously struck back against his citizens, and the United States demanded that he step aside. In complex plots, which even diplomats could not figure out, Assad turned on factions that he originally thought manageable. As al-Qaeda declined, one of these factions, ISIS, arose to assail the United States with terrorism but also opposed Assad. He employed chemical agents against his enemies. Detesting Assad, Obama dithered: how could the United States attack ISIS in a way that would not help the Syrian dictator?

The Russians under Putin had somewhat recovered from the collapse of their empire and had no qualms about what to do. Making a comeback by asserting their mandate in Syria, Russians helped Assad with ISIS. For Putin, this policy had the beneficial consequence of fighting terror, high on his agenda, but also of poking his finger in American eyes by promoting Assad. Fearful of Russia's revival and wanting to assert US authority, Obama eventually embroiled Americans in Syria. Many commentators lamented his orders for air strikes and the deployment of small numbers of "boots on the ground" in attempts to succor "reformers" who hated Assad, ISIS, and pro-Russian groups. The United States found Assad's reliance on toxic gas repugnant, but Assad would not give it up. With the earlier examples of Saddam Hussein and the more recent one of Gaddafi in mind, why would he?

A principal reason for Obama to distance the United States from Israel had been his executive order in respect to Iran. The Arab Spring had also roiled Iran. The protestors in that country wanted little to do with the United States, but their holy rulers put them down. Nonetheless, American penalties still hurt Iran, an enemy because it underwrote terror from 1979 and had a nuclear program. To slow this program, Obama agreed to a multi-nation "deal" in 2015 that lifted sanctions and that would integrate Iran into the West in exchange for diverting the nuclear industry to peaceful channels. Israel opposed the deal as naïve, a concession to fanatics. Just as Obama's desire to dissociate the United States from Israel came to little, so his policies in Iran were condemned: he had agreed eventually to permit Iran disallowed weapons.

The Middle Eastern policies of the second Bush administration had been "a game changer," and Obama had been unable to extricate the United States from the region. Because Democrats accepted the idea that unfriendly nations could not have nuclear arms, Muslim lands further ensnared Obama. Would terrorists again attack the United States? Was Russia now strong enough to discomfit America?

* * *

The celebration of the end of the Cold War ended suddenly on September 11, 2001. For the next fifteen years terror overseas and disputes at home stymied the United States yet gave it a *raison d'ĕtre*. However, by the second decade of the twenty-first century, the hopes for Obama's Progressivism gave way to anguish about an unsteady future. If Americans looked back, the seeming stability of the Cold War did not appear so bad.

CHAPTER 18
THE AGE OF TRUMP, 2009–24

From Crisis to Crisis

Many Americans had looked for a new start with Obama. Yet while he was reassuring, equivocal actions in foreign policy typified his two administrations. At home, malice permeated culture as he went out of office in 2016. The GOP won back the White House after the Democrats nominated Hillary Clinton. The victor was the New York City real estate billionaire Donald Trump, who had become a public figure after Obama's rise. Joe Biden, Obama's VP, defeated Trump in 2020 in his attempt at re-election, but Trump overshadowed politics from 2015, when he announced his candidacy, until 2024, when he ran for a third time and won.

Internal Strife Continues

Obama had had a honeymoon after he defeated John McCain. However, once the short-memoried populace forgot how much it hated the second Bush, disputation returned, and grew during the terms of Trump and Biden. Moreover, the most extreme members of each party—"the base"– became crucial. Bluer (Democratic) or redder (Republican) candidates were pitted against each other. Each side attempted to win not by attracting fair-weather voters from the middle but by ginning up the fervent. The most dogmatic politicians shaped discussions.

Communities fought over four problems. Murderous rampages against fellow citizens, racial polarization, and immigration were easily connected. The continuing commotion over sex was relatively separate.

First, rampages. After 9/11, violence picked up. Most notably, there were demented strikes on large groups of people usually with "assault-weapons." Such "mass shootings" were defined as incidents with more than four victims, killed or wounded. The media publicized the most heinous instances, which had begun with a 1999 massacre at the Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, where fifteen people died, and another twenty-one injured. Nine people were killed and one injured in 2015 in the homicides that had prompted Barack Obama's appearance in South Carolina and his rendition of "Amazing Grace."

Carnage occurred everywhere, as problematic individuals went after their fellow citizens—in wealthy districts in northern cities, in African-American localities, in small western towns, in southern suburbs, in tiny communities in the fly-over Mid-West. Nowhere was safe—deaths occurred at convenience stores, upscale residences, dance

halls, shopping centers, hospitals, parades, demonstrations, bowling alleys, concerts, gas stations, night clubs, resorts, houses of worship, office locations, sports matches, public and private schools, colleges and universities. A mushroom farm, of all places. Murderers sought out Muslims, Jews, Protestants, and Catholics. Blacks, whites, Asian-Americans, and Hispanics. Children, police, the LBGTQ as well as the straight.

Any time was good—late at night, in the wee hours of the morning, at the start of the business day, at lunchtime. Holidays were not exempt. Gunsels could be teenagers, women, the quiet fellow next-store, a co-worker pushed over the edge by some triviality, a cleaning person. Some incidents were unusually weird. A liberal Democrat opened fire at a GOP congressional baseball practice in Washington, DC. A six-year-old took a revolver to school and shot a teacher in Newport News, Virginia, and a four-year-old was disarmed at a Beech Grove, Indiana, apartment complex. A 72-year-old Asian American ran amok against his compatriots in Los Angeles dance studios.

Security personnel could show bravery and acumen, or stupidity, cowardice, or incompetence; the besieged too displayed a range of behaviors but overall exhibited a modest heroism.

A primary cause in these shootings was the availability of firearms. But Americans did psychological jiu-jitsu to reach alternative conclusions. The mentally ill fostering havoc could not be allowed to fall through the cracks. "Loopholes" at gun shows had to be filled. Rifles had to be properly stored. Law enforcement, from local cops to the Secret Service, had failed.

The Second Amendment was recited: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." The National Rifle Association (NRA), one of the most successful lobbying groups, focused on the last four words of the Amendment. With less success, proponents of "gun control" talked about the faded role of state militias in the twenty-first century. After people lay dead, prayer vigils were held and community resilience proclaimed: "Buffalo Strong"; "Allen Strong"; "Chicago Strong." And on and on and on. Responsibility was announced and reforms promised. Again and again, proposed remedies went nowhere, and no effective action was taken. Then, another mass murder.

Politicians, constabularies, local elites, and media experts all denied that America was violent. Yet, just as the United States could not rein in imprudent nuclear powers, so it could not prevent its public from mortal riot. In a famous book of 2005, *Collapse*, Jared Diamond took up the breakdown of the culture of Easter Island, 2,200 miles west of Chile, in the Pacific. The island was known for its stone statues, part of ancient observances. According to Diamond, the society crumpled because, tending to these statues, the inhabitants denuded the landscape of trees and vegetation. Diamond wrote, "Why didn't they look around, realize what they were doing, and stop before it was too late? What were they thinking … ?" Many commentators used Diamond to hypothesize about the bankruptcy of Western nations' policies on climate, as unpredictable and dangerous weather faced Americans. But one could also reason that they were slaying their culture in making firearms sacrosanct.

US nationals attended to the second problem, racial polarization, when law enforcement ran up against minorities—mainly but not exclusively white on Black. From the 1960s, a portion of the African-American population had believed that the tactics of Martin Luther King could not obtain equality. By the second decade of the new century, marches sometimes led to the pillaging of shopping districts and malls. In 2013, in some ways mimicking the Black Power ethos of the 1960s and 1970s, a "Black Lives Matter" movement—#BlackLivesMatter—slowly matured, rallying against police brutality and hostility to African Americans. Yet, despite panicking many white Americans, BLM mainly operated without incident.

The munitions in the hands not only of Blacks but also of whites made the police, who managed municipal safety, defensive and panicky; they used their own arsenals. Time after time, nervous or poorly trained or bigoted officers put in hazardous or ambiguous circumstances killed young Black men. Equally questionable were instances of non-uniformed whites shooting Black Americans, cases that "stand your ground" laws sometimes excused. A list of male Black victims was nationally known: Trayvon Martin, George Floyd, Jayland Walker, Tyre Nichols. Less mentioned by Democrats was Black-on-Black criminality. With the same access to military hardware as mass murderers, inner-city African Americans routinely shot one another in poor Black urban districts. In major American municipalities—Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia—there were nightly volleys in what had previously been called "ghettoes," almost always resulting in the death or wounding of bystanders, as well as the "targeted." "Offing" usually involved drugs or women or turf wars. Locals frustrated efforts to apprehend culprits, and police gave up on apprehending assailants. Band-aids were offered in the way of church services, buying up of illegal revolvers, and outreach programs for those "at risk." But society ill-served this population.

The case of Jacob Blake, a 29-year-old Black man, astonishingly illustrated the mayhem over ordnance, cops, and race. In August of 2020, Blake lived in Kenosha, Wisconsin. There was a warrant for his arrest for battering, trespassing, and abuse. In a complicated attempt at intervening after Blake's girlfriend dialed 911, the emergency phone number, a policeman shot Blake seven times in the back and side, after he had pulled a knife. He was permanently injured. Rallies, marches, property damage, arson, and clashes with law enforcement followed, as various militants demonstrated in his behalf.

Kyle Rittenhouse, a seventeen-year-old school dropout, lived with his mother in Illinois, near Kenosha. A few days after the shooting, during one protest, he crossed the state line to join Kenosha counter-protesters guarding businesses. Rittenhouse had an "AR-15" style rifle, a favorite sort of military hardware becoming common on US streets. A man chased Rittenhouse and grabbed his long-gun. Rittenhouse fatally shot him, fled, and killed a second person who had struck him with a skateboard and tried to disarm him. Rittenhouse wounded a third when he was approached and had a pistol pointed at him. At his trial in November 2021, prosecutors argued that Rittenhouse was an "active shooter" and had provoked his victims. His lawyers replied that he had behaved in self-defense; he had used force necessary to prevent imminent death or grievous bodily

harm. A jury found Rittenhouse innocent. His legal triumph became a cause célèbre for right-wing organizations and media. He appeared on Fox News opinion shows.

One historian, using the Rittenhouse case as an example, said that thinking about race in the United States "could make you crazy." Meanwhile, Rittenhouse earned money from the disaster. A video game, "Kyle Rittenhouse's Turkey Shoot," aimed at liberal news organizations. His likeness sold products, especially T-shirts. One historian from outside the United States called the country "bizarre."

When critics accused cable news of stoking discord, journalists noted their First Amendment rights: "Congress shall make no law … abridging … speech, or … the press." Campaigners on every side also used the Amendment: the people could "assemble … and … petition the Government for a redress of grievances." No one cared much about "the right of the people *peaceably* to assemble."

Law enforcement that involved itself with Black citizens was also involved with the third problem, outrage over migration. The entry of newcomers had been a prickly thread of American history from the time the Euro-Americans came to the New World and confronted the indigenous. No matter proclamations about "our being a nation of immigrants" or what the Statue of Liberty said—"Give me your tired, your poor/Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, … Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me"—migrants were hardly welcomed. *Angst* over them, especially from countries to the south, roiled the first thirty years of the twenty-first century. Mexicans particularly had a friction-filled history with America, centered around its appropriation of their land. But now, Mexico's nationals traversed the wild crossings with Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona looking for a better life. Other Central Americans made their way through Mexico, as did refugees from all over the world. The Border Patrol and other cops were given the impossible task of sorting matters out at the boundaries or in the cities migrants inhabited.

Push-and-pull causes were complex. Employers wanted a low-income workforce, and indeed it performed duties many US nationals shunned. Democratic politicians thought the greenhorns might make up an enduring majority in "swing" or "battleground states"—those not reliably blue or red. On the other hand, many citizens found it easy to blame foreigners for crime, for taking social benefits, and for the lack of well-paying jobs. Republicans especially often responded with deportation or incarceration of "the illegals."

Should the country just embrace anyone? The United States could toughen entry laws. Could not America make the border journey impossibly difficult? Yet 1,000s still struggled to come. Should the government build a wall to keep the suspect out? The nation had something to offer; people from everywhere were desperate to get there.

The last, fourth, element in the ongoing cultural war was the fruition, in the first decades of the 2000s, of the sexual upheavals of the 1960s. Relatively disjoined from weapons, race, and immigration, a fixation on eros altered civic life.

In 2015, in a narrow 5–4 decision, the Supreme Court had held that the Constitution protected same-sex unions and did away bans in fourteen states. Around the same time,

LGBTQ became more assertive, and Republicans hoped that such assertiveness would destroy its Democratic supporters. Subsequently, a backlash did occur, best reflected in the alteration of the Supreme Court and an abrupt shift in its reasoning. In an atmosphere where a divided executive and legislature were stymied, new conservative Justices became more confident. As a collective, they overturned precedents, and often showed indifference to initiatives associated with gender, women's rights, and reproductive health. In June of 2022, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* overturned the pro-abortion decision of 1973 *Roe v. Wade*. Many women were infuriated. Frustrated legislators also protested with the Respect for Marriage Act of late 2022. It decreed the validity of same-sex and interracial marriages, and abortion became a serious topic in electoral politics. These issues were joined to the new mores of younger Americans.

Yet some things stayed the same, as hetero men did not yield on harassing women. But there were new wrinkles, as technology like the cell phone and video camera gave greater scope to male fantasies and to embarrassing publicity about them when women spoke out.

At the end of the twentieth century, the exposure of President Clinton's affair was only the most widely known instance of national politicians acting out. A prominent Senator from Colorado, Gary Hart, had dropped out of politics in the late 1980s after a photographed escapade with a young woman on a yacht, "Monkey Business." The previously mentioned John Edwards, Democratic Senator from North Carolina and a vice-presidential candidate, decided to run for the presidency himself in 2008, but his career tanked when it was divulged that he was having an affair and had fathered a child while his wife was dying of cancer. In 2009, Mark Sanford, Republican Governor of South Carolina, was disgraced when he left his wife and family for an assignation with an Argentinian "soul mate." He later rehabilitated himself as a respected GOP moderate. Anthony Wiener, a Democratic Congressman from New York, resigned in 2011 after dispatching, by phone, pictures of his penis to an underage woman. At the end of 2017, Trent Franks, Republican of Arizona associated with the Traditional Values Coalition, gave up his seat in the House of Representatives when staffers disclosed that he had offered $5 million to the one of them who would serve as a surrogate mother for his child. Senators accused Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh of assault, including attempted rape when he was in high school and college. In the wake of a contested confirmation, however, he took his place on the Court in 2018. The same year, Al Franken, liberal Senator from Minnesota, was in his second term when he resigned, after women testified that, over the years, he "snatched their asses," "felt up their tits," or gave them "big wet French kisses."

By the twenty-first century, prurience about the present went along with a popular interest in the shady lives of past luminaries. Scholarly books and DNA testing corroborated Thomas Jefferson's romance with Sally Hemings, who gave birth to five of his children. *Once Upon a Secret* (2011) by Mimi Alford gave a wonderful account of her eighteen-month affair with President Jack Kennedy who took her virginity

at age nineteen in his wife's bed. In 2013, the movie *Hyde Park on Hudson* depicted Franklin Roosevelt, who could not walk, making love to a cousin in his car. In 2018, another film, *The Front Runner*, reprised Gary Hart's humiliation. In 2024, the off-Broadway play, "Sally and Tom," yet again reminded Americans of the private life of their third president.

The media shed light on leaders' intimate lives. And not only prominent politicians, but also many well-known men in TV, journalism, movies and film production, and the music industry were credibly accused of non-consensual intimacy, as women "came forward" to report on their experiences.

In October 2017, after allegations dating back to the late 1970s, film producer Harvey Weinstein was dismissed from his company and expelled from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. More than eighty women accused him of harassment or rape. The accusations sparked the "#MeToo" campaign and subsequent claims against many powerful men; this phenomenon was referred to as the "Weinstein effect." He made palpable the magnitude of the problem, and was arrested for rape in New York in May 2018; was convicted of two felonies in February 2020; and sentenced to twenty-three years in prison. At subsequent hearings that went on into 2025, he was charged with even more crimes.

Jeffrey Epstein ran his own profitable banking and finance firm. He also developed an elite social circle and procured many women and children whom he and his associates exploited. In 2008, a Florida court convicted him of acquiring a child for prostitution and of soliciting a prostitute, but somehow he continued his depraved activities. Then, in July of 2019, he was jailed in New York. Just over a month later, awaiting trial on trafficking, he committed suicide in his cell—or so authorities ruled in a much-debated death.

Jeffrey Toobin had a career with the cable news organization, CNN, and as a writer for the *New Yorker*. In October 2020, he was suspended from the magazine after he masturbated on camera during a video conference between radio staffers and those on the periodical. This screwball incident led to the public's learning of several other "indiscretions." Toobin disappeared from the *New Yorker* although he never came near the lockup. In late 2020, the Attorney General opened an investigation into allegations that Florida Congressman Matt Gaetz had relations with a seventeen-year-old girl in trade for money in violation of laws. The House Ethics Committee investigated. Gaetz, a devious fellow who had been on the fringe in the House, became a star among extreme Republicans. Then there was Bill Cosby of *The Cosby Show*, "America's Dad." In a series of cases from 2014 to 2023, he went to jail for drugging an almost endless series of women before he cavorted with them. The most high-profile scandals occurred in 2023 and 2024. Acclaimed rapper Sean "Diddy" Combs was indicted for brutal acts of violation and, in a complicated litigation, ex-president Trump was convicted for covering up an affair with a porn star, Stormy Daniels.

Many men left the field in disgrace. Some went to jail. A few weathered the storm. Overall, Americans became more accepting of the problematic personal lives of their politicians when they did not veer into the unlawful.

The Election of 2016

By Obama's last year in office, prosperity had returned, and his major domestic legislative achievement, the Affordable Care Act, extended medical benefits. Although the Act survived, Democrats allowed it to receive the negative name "Obamacare," and Republicans chipped away at its more problematic aspects. Part of the problem had to do with the president's unwillingness to get into the fray. But he did not make the name-calling worse. Concurrently, Americans continued to be divided about what they valued. Their views about ethical standards and about who around them they hated—Black or white, straight or gay, Protestant, Catholic, or Jew, Christian or Muslim—were central to the campaign of 2016. Hillary Clinton opposed Donald Trump, who had announced as a Republican the year before.

Trump had a complex reputation as a dynamic person of wealth; as a philandering man-about-town; and as a not-too-bright and insecure buffoon with outlandish and ill-informed views. In the early twenty-first century, "The Donald" widened his interests to beauty pageants and a wildly successful "reality" show, *The Apprentice*, in which contestants vied to become his assistant. After his third marriage to a former model, Melania Knauss, Trump was a star. Nominally a Democrat, he enhanced his reputation among some groups when he falsely disputed President Obama's origins and title to the White House. Trump changed from Democratic blue to GOP red when he proclaimed his candidacy for the presidency in 2015 on the "MAGA" platform, Make America Great Again.

Trump had not served in the military, but he remarked about the defeated 2008 candidate John McCain: "He's not a war hero. He was a war hero because he was captured. I like people who weren't captured." Then he "retweeted" a posting: "Donald Trump: John McCain Is 'A Loser.'" After McCain died, flags were lowered. Trump remarked: 'What the fuck are we doing that for? Guy was a fucking loser." In the primaries of early 2016, it looked as if Ted Cruz, GOP senator from Texas, would be Trump's major adversary, and probably the nominee. Trump went all out against him: "This guy Ted Cruz is the single biggest liar I have ever dealt with in my life … holds up the Bible and he lies." After Cruz won the strategic Iowa primary in February: "Iowa should disqualify Ted Cruz … on the basis that he cheated—a total fraud!" In May of 2016, in ludicrous back-and-forths, Trump aimed at Cruz's wife, whom he thought unattractive: "Be careful, lyin' Ted, or I will spill the beans on your wife!" Instead, Trump retweeted a picture of Heidi Cruz alongside a glamor shot of Melania Trump. The caption read: "No need to 'spill the beans' the images are worth a thousand words." This grudge match ended after Trump implied that Heidi Cruz was the best Ted Cruz could do because of his small penis. A final row came about with John Kasich, the moderate Republican governor of Ohio. Trump attacked him—it is unclear to what effect—about his eating habits.

In the end, Trump's getting the GOP nomination was indeed food for thought. Orthodox, conservative Republicans did not know what to make of the man, but after he became the candidate and was redefining the GOP, his opponents were known as RINOs—Republicans in Name Only.

On the other side, Hillary Clinton emerged as the first woman to run for the office as a major-party candidate. New York had elected her to the Senate after she left the White House. Then, after Obama defeated her in the Democratic campaign of 2008, Hillary Clinton had served as secretary of state in the first Obama administration, hardworking, intelligent, and knowledgeable. But Hillary Clinton was disliked. One dimension of the dislike stemmed from the assumption that she had only opportunistically "stood by her man." She had endured her husband's infidelities and had even denounced his many women as "bimbos." Another dimension was that Americans questioned any women ambitious enough to want the job—the campaign was "Hillary" against "Trump." Finally, she was disliked because of her scorn for some average Americans. They had been titled populists in the late 1800s—marginally educated and less affluent whites; Hillary Clinton called them "a basket of deplorables."

In the election, Democrats embraced inclusion, pledging to combat disparities of race, class, and gender; they placed equity for communities like that of LGBTQ people on a par with concern for the economy. Expanded, this program became DEI—diversity, equity, and inclusion—and cost Democrats as many votes as it garnered. The Republicans stressed that they were not Democrats. Trump branded the Democratic candidate Crazy Hillary, Crooked Hillary, Heartless Hillary, and Lyin' Hillary. He made up policy and allegations as he went along, and displayed women whom Bill Clinton had harassed. Hillary Clinton reproached Trump as other women reported that he had groped, molested, and verbally mistreated them. Credible narratives bombarded the public. Some referred to the time when Melania Trump was pregnant—her husband had been spanked by an "adult" movie star or had engaged in the "golden shower" with a hooker. It was one of these charges for which Trump was successfully tried in 2024.

In 2016, Trump won. He survived the last-minute release of an audio tape in which he said "When you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything. Grab 'em by the pussy. You can do anything." Although he received some 3 million ballots less than Hillary Clinton, he had a base of some 45 percent of the voters who delighted in his vulgar berating of the establishment. Trump received the votes of the populists whom the Democrats had abandoned. Evangelicals were so disgusted with Hillary Clinton's party that they too gave their franchise to a man they considered unethical. The votes of many born-again Christians, who became one of Trump's core constituencies, were curious, "transactional," as one critic said. Conservative Protestants (and Catholics) looked away from Trump's immorality because they thought he could advance their vision of a moral America. Religion continued to be intertwined with politics, and people of faith were a significant bloc. Voting was such that the Electoral College gave Trump a victory. The vote intimated more disapproval of Hillary Clinton than of the new president. Congress, too, went Republican, and Trump appointed the Supreme Court justices who overthrew *Dobbs*.

In one sense the election simply mirrored the importance of the media: in the modern period, immediate communication had rewarded FDR, Kennedy, Reagan, and now Trump. In another sense, Trump's victory intimated that a line had been crossed, as politics became entertainment, or distinctions between the two blurred. The online

encyclopedia, Wikipedia, had a Donald Trump "Filmography." Since the 1980s, he had made dozens of cameo appearances in advertisements, TV series, and films including soft-core pornography. One reporter commented, "Americans had treated politics as a circus for a generation, and then acted surprised when the clown arrived." Another cynic compared the election of Trump to the eruption of a pimple on the face of a teenager. Should "the zit" be squeezed; should it be let alone; should some lotion be applied? No one asked about the systemic causes of the acne. What could not be denied was that Trump, a consequential political personality, was redefining affairs.

Trump and Policy

The new president had few coherent ideas about events overseas but did want to cut US commitments, which he sensed were unprofitable. To get his way, with the world and with the GOP Congress, he combined belligerence and browbeating. He did no worse than his predecessors. Like them, he was drawn into the Middle East and found its problems insoluble. Obama had tried to disconnect the United States from Israel. Trump refused to distance himself and, indeed, moved the US embassy to Jerusalem from a less unsafe Tel Aviv. Nonetheless, to get leverage over Israel, Trump wanted to break bread with Russia and Putin's Middle Eastern ally, Assad in Syria. But as American support for Israel had stymied Obama, the hostility of the Congress and the voters thwarted Trump in respect to Putin.

One upshot of this hostility was that the nation struck out against Assad's chemical weapons: the priority was to stop America's antagonists from having such armaments. Trump also decided that Obama's throttling of Iran's nuclear program was insufficient. He denounced the agreement and pulled the United States out of the accord that had the patronage of various powers. Instead, America would pursue its own sanctions.

The disintegration of this deal occurred while North Korea made the headlines. Bush had named it as a member of the Axis of Evil in 2001 and had briefly introduced this abnormal regime into America's consciousness. North Korea's ruling dynasty—Kim Il-sung, his son Kim Jong-Il, grandson Kim Jong-un, and designated successor, great-granddaughter Kim Ju-ae—took the same route as many American opponents: you could only impede the United States with an arsenal. By the early twenty-first century, US demands and North Korea's deviousness brought incessant hostility—and nukes in North Korea. From its perspective, the lesson over twenty-five years from Iraq, Libya, and Syria was plain—rockets alone would allow disruptors to survive America.

In 2017, Trump threatened North Korea with annihilation if it did not renounce its bombs and instead accept US assistance. The North Koreans were mindful of Iran. Its leaders had made a bargain with Obama, but Trump later broke the bargain. After a striking visit to North Korea by Trump, intimidation proved futile. Instead, America hoped—as it had with Iran—that financial sanctions would compel acceptable conduct. The United States was at odds with Iran, Syria, and North Korea through the third decade of the century.

At home, Trump did not befriend diversity, "the woke." He wanted to curb immigration—from scattered Muslim nations to Spanish-speaking countries near the southern border. There, he pledged a massive wall. This seemed to many a mean idea but was not unworkable, and some Democrats later took it up. Moreover, Trump's rhetoric and the invocation of inhumane procedures may have made migrants turn away. Whatever the strategies—abroad or stateside—Trump's misogynous, bellicose, and unpredictable persona worried many voters, despite a flourishing economy. One historian called him "a blowhard." In the mid-term elections at the end of 2018, command of the House of Representatives passed to Democrats. Government was split, and Americans hunkered down for more acrimony.

Trump's Pandemic

With sway over the House, Democrats claimed that Trump had abused his power and, at the end of 2019, conducted an impeachment inquiry. It could be said to have been undertaken for show, because the party did not have enough votes in the Senate to do damage. Aside from contributing to the unpleasantness, the impulse to impeach was historically troubling. Up until 1974, America had resorted to impeachment once, in the case of Andrew Johnson in 1867–8. Since 1974, it had endangered Nixon, Clinton, and now Trump.

A world-altering series of events that had begun in China, "The Pandemic," at once overshadowed these deliberations. At the end of December 2019, the Chinese announced pneumonia cases, apparently spread from bats. Soon the disease was known as "Covid," for "coronavirus." It had flu-like symptoms but often proved deadly, and there was no vaccine. The first American occurrence was reported in January 2020, and the president declared a public health danger on January 31. To no avail, restrictions were placed on flights from China. The first known American deaths occurred in February. By mid-April, the states and territories declared a disaster because they all had numbers of sick or dying.

In May of 2020, Dolly Parton wrote a Pandemic song, "When Life Is Good Again":

> We've been brought to our knees; … There are no guarantees,
> But you know life goes on, This too shall pass away,
> We've all got knees to bend, and we'll just pray 'til then.
> Ask God's forgiveness when life is good again.

Various levels of government dispensed edicts. Mask-wearing became common, and "social distancing" was required, as volunteers disinfected surfaces that hands had touched. Large gatherings—"super spreader events"—were canceled or prohibited. Most "non-essential" businesses shut down or collapsed; those still open often functioned remotely through a newish computer technology, "Zoom." Schools closed or went into make-shift non-contact sessions. Workers were furloughed or fired. Hospitals were overwhelmed. Many turned away patients with life-threatening diseases, and nurses and

doctors risked their lives, as did public employees. Travel ceased, although the wealthy withdrew to vacation retreats and had food delivered. The economy plummeted, while municipalities circulated conflicting regulations. Variations of the disease resulted in ups and downs of infections—not easing up until the end of 2022. Over 100 million cases were documented in the United States, and one million deaths.

In the election year of 2020, the Pandemic dominated the Trump presidency to its detriment. Trump first responded with support: "Keep calm"; "It will go away"; "It's going to disappear." Such conventional pep-talks showed that the administration was stymied. At the same time, no one offered sure advice, although the GOP was pro-active. In March, Trump distributed $8.3 billion to fight the pestilence and affirmed a national crisis. The government purchased medical equipment, invoking the Defense Production Act of 1950. At the end of April, the Republicans created "Operation Warp Speed," a public–private partnership originally funded with $10 billion to accelerate the development, manufacture, and distribution of vaccines. By the end of December, Warp Speed had resulted in two shots, which were responsible for the slow but steady emergence from the Pandemic. Even critics called it Trump's "legacy," when he was criticized as a do-nothing. Yet Trump hardly took credit for his intervention. He promoted silly remedies, and was prone to ignorant outbursts—despite getting a serious case of Covid in October. Part of his inexplicable performance was playing to his backers, who suspected public health: they promulgated irrational tales and conspiracy theories about "the deep state" that had supposedly spread the disease.

> Trump: March 6: People are surprised that I understand it … Every one of these doctors said, "How do you know so much about this?" … Maybe I should have done that instead of running for president.
>
> April 23: I see the disinfectant that knocks it out in … one minute. And is there a way we can do something like that by injection inside or almost a cleaning? … So, supposing we hit the body with a tremendous, whether its ultraviolet or just very powerful light.
>
> September 21: This is nobody's fault but China.
>
> October 12 [after being hospitalized with the virus]: I went through it. Now, they say I'm immune …. I feel so powerful.

As the election approached, Covid burdened the President, and the prospect of losing seemed to unhinge him. He ran against Obama's Vice President, Joe Biden, a long-time Delaware Senator who had failed on three occasions to get the Democratic nomination for the highest office. Doubts were raised about Biden because of his age—seventy-seven—and mental acuity. While valiantly enduring a multitude of personal losses, Biden also had a record as an injudicious babbler.

Trump continued his prowess at name-calling: Beijing Biden, Corrupt Joe, Crazy Joe Biden, Joe Hiden, Sleepy Creepy Joe, and Slow Joe. He focused on Biden and Covid.

> October18: [Biden]'ll listen to the scientists … If I listened totally to the scientists, we would right now have a country that would be in a massive depression instead—we're like a rocket ship.
>
> October 19: They are getting tired of the Pandemic, aren't they? You turn on CNN, that's all they cover. "Covid, Covid, Pandemic, Covid, Covid." … People aren't buying it, CNN, you dumb bastards.
>
> October 26: Cases up because we TEST, TEST, TEST. A Fake News Media Conspiracy. … We have made tremendous progress with the China Virus, but the Fake News refuses to talk about it this close to the Election. … Should be an election law violation!
>
> November 2: Joe Biden is promising to … turn America into a prison state—locking you in your home while letting far-left rioters roam free. The Biden Lockdown will mean no school, no graduations, no weddings, no Thanksgiving, no Christmas, no Fourth of July.

The actual balloting displayed Pandemic-related idiosyncrasies because so many citizens voted by mail; because so many states implemented special measures to cope with nightmares about catching the disease when people went to the polls; and because the number of mail ballots and Pandemic restrictions complicated the vote-count. Biden won with a large mandate, probably due to two factors. First, the electorate blamed Trump for the Pandemic; as usual, it censured the party in power for what happened on its watch. Second, citizens worried not so much about Trump's policies but about his erratic personality—what Democrats called his "fitness" for the office. Simultaneously, political scientists noted that Trump's support always peaked at about 45 percent. A final unusual aspect of the election was that Biden's devout Roman Catholicism did not garner him the votes of faithful Christians.

Trump did not take his loss graciously. Because each state has primary responsibility for its elections and how its Electoral College votes are processed, he tried to alter the results in wobbling states. The most desperate occurred on January 2, in a phone call to a Georgia bureaucrat. Trump said: "All I want to do is this: I just want to find 11,780 votes," the number of ballots he would need to overtake President-elect Biden in the state. "There's nothing wrong with saying, you know, that you've recalculated." However, most of the president's politicking occurred at the expense of Vice President Mike Pence, who on January 6 would have the ceremonial job of confirming the results. According to Trump, Pence's certification was substantive. Should he not certify, he would resurrect Trump's candidacy: "You can be a historic figure, but if you wimp out, you're just another somebody."

Some evidence suggests that Trump believed he had lost, but he tweeted his voters that the election was stolen, urging a demonstration at the Capital where the vote would be validated:

Figure 14 Count Every Vote, Philadelphia, November 5, 2020. Author's collection.

December 18: We won the Presidential Election, by a lot. FIGHT FOR IT.

December 19: Statistically impossible to have lost the 2020 Election. Big Protest in D.C. on January 6. Be there, will be wild!

December 26: See everyone in D.C. on January 6.

On New Year's Day, Trump lobbied Pence. They discussed a lawsuit, asking a judge to declare the vice president had "exclusive authority and sole discretion to decide which electoral votes should count." Trump said that if the suit "gives you the power, why would you oppose it?" Pence: "I told him, as I had many times, that I didn't believe I possessed that power under the constitution." "You're too honest," Trump replied. "Hundreds of thousands are gonna hate your guts … People are gonna think you're stupid."

At his 11 A.M. rally on January 6, bloodshed was to be discouraged. Nonetheless, Trump said to aides: "I don't fucking care that they have weapons. They're not here to hurt me." To some 10,000 juiced-up MAGA people he said: "We're going to have to fight much harder." He invited the crowd to go to the Capitol: "I'll be there with you," although he didn't walk.

Figure 15 January 6, 2021. Getty Images.

Some 2,000 to 2,500 overwrought Trumpers flooded into the Capitol in an ugly riot, while many others congregated outside. They screamed "Hang Mike Pence," interrupted the proceedings, and drove the Congress, including Pence, into hiding. At 2:24 P.M., Trump tweeted: "Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution." At some point in the melee, Trump called Pence a "prick" who "deserve[d]" to be hanged. At 2:38, finally, he tweeted: "Please support our Capitol Police and Law Enforcement. They are truly on the side of our Country. Stay peaceful!" By that point, the mob had already shattered windows as they pushed inside the building. Authorities attributed the deaths of ten people to the disturbance. Later that evening, the Congress confirmed the results.

Trump then committed himself to "the peaceful transition of power," though he refused to attend Biden's inauguration. Leaving the White House, for some reason Trump took with him 100s of boxes of classified material to which he had no right. His role on January 6 led at once to a second impeachment. This proceeding attracted some Republican YES votes in the Senate, although esoteric constitutional interpretation gave some lawmakers a way to vote NO. Trump slipped past impeachment for a second time. Over two years later, many of the stormers of the Capitol received prison sentences.

Meanwhile, Biden escaped blame for the Pandemic that Trump had supposedly dealt with ineffectually. Those around the new man carefully staged his presidency to disguise an evolving debility. Biden and his staff saw the United States through the worst parts of the outbreak. He signed a $1.9 trillion Covid bill early in 2021. It stimulated the economy, supplied relief, and made vaccines available. The president restored sobriety

to a tarnished White House. While he had a reassuring effect, his popularity remained low, with a consistent 40–45 percent approval. Biden's ratings were similar to Trump's, even though they drew adherents from different segments of the populace. That is, the cultural cleavages persisted, and politicians remained rhetorically at one another's throats—liberals versus populists. Later in Biden's term, however, the administration got feuding legislators to agree on another spending package for "infrastructure"—a mammoth law that gave almost every district money. The results were inflationary, but the nation swallowed higher prices as it rebounded from three years of masking, social distancing, and dread of death. Overall, the administration did a credible job in a difficult period, even as its members deceived the electorate about Biden.

Proxy Wars

As the United States emerged from the Pandemic, foreign policy occupied center stage. The dispute with Russia over its attempts to thwart NATO heated up. The heart of the issue was a sovereign Ukraine, as it was known in the West, or The Ukraine, a Russian province, as Vladimir Putin conceived it. The international community had worried this problem from the beginning of the twenty-first century. Complications had increased in 2013–14, when "The Revolution of Dignity" ousted the pro-Russian Ukrainian president. Another setback was intolerable to Putin, obsessed with respect. In 2014, Russia annexed the Ukrainian Crimean Peninsula, an enclave of Putin's; and his military intervened to safeguard interests in zones identifying with Russia. The pot only simmered, but Putin seethed, waiting to score points against the West. Raking in profits from Ukrainian energy and grain production, various dishonest authorities skirmished for influence. US officialdom was embroiled.

From 2017 to 2021, during the GOP administration, matters had cooled down with Putin. The administration did think about how China would challenge US primacy. In the early twenty-first century, diplomats had surrounded China with unfriendly states. From Australia, to Indonesia, to the Philippines, and to Japan. And on the mainland: South Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, and India. The missing link was Russia and the long China-Russian boundary. If the United States wished to deter China, advisors around Trump argued, it would be senseless to push Russia into Chinese arms. Why not, for Trump, who had a fascination and admiration for Putin, give Ukrainian regions to Russia? He curried favor with Putin. But the 100-year history of animosity between America and Russia prevented a Putin-Trump rapprochement. Trump also wanted to downgrade NATO, which upset not only Western Europeans but the many Americans who revered the democracy that spanned the Atlantic. Moreover, it was not clear that encircling China was wise. Trump's critics denounced his overtures to Putin as appeasement. Democrats and a fair share of Republicans believed a despotic Russia to be the chief impediment to world harmony.

In 2019, Trump had made use of a scandal involving the troubled son of Joe Biden. It was discovered that beginning in 2014—when Joe Biden was VP—Hunter Biden had been linked to a Ukrainian gas company. Burisma was crooked, and critics alleged that

it had placed the grown-up boy on its board to obtain goodwill from the United States. In a presidential phone call, Trump had pressured the new Ukrainian leader, Volodymyr Zelensky, to probe Hunter Biden's role in Burisma. Zelensky was pro-Western, but also tip-toed between the United States and Russia. Trump pledged foreign aid to Zelensky if he would go after Hunter Biden. But Trump's assurances were tactical only: he made the offer to Zelensky to discredit adversaries at home. Trump was an opportunist, and no friend of Ukrainians. Democrats learned of the message and offered up the bribe as part of the evidence in the first failed impeachment exercise of 2019–20. Most Americans who knew about these shenanigans shook their heads uncomprehendingly about wrangling in faraway places with strange-sounding names. But now Ukraine had become not only an international but also a domestic item.

When Biden won the election, he set out to distinguish his foreign policy from Trump's. "For seventy years, the United States, under Democratic and Republican presidents, played a leading role in writing the rules … that guide relations …—until Trump." "The Kremlin fears a strong NATO," and "we must impose real costs on … Putin's kleptocratic authoritarian system."

Biden's team still tried to avoid a clash. Yet in early 2022, just a little more than a year after the president took office, Russia launched an attack to incorporate Ukrainians into Russia. While Zelensky did seem poised to turn to the West, "realist" commentators on foreign policy cited Putin's rage about NATO's enlargement. For skeptics, wisdom would allow Russia leeway in a part of the planet more relevant to it than the West. But Russian borders were more secure where NATO members or western-inclined countries existed, than in Russia's south, especially in respect to China. Realists did not care that many in the Ukrainian west hated Russia. The realists ignored human rights, and ordinary wishes.

In any case, the United States backed Zelensky in 2022. He spoke to Congress, and *Time* magazine named him *Person of the Year*. While America did not send soldiers and no direct US–Russia confrontation occurred, the nation supplied Ukrainians with military hardware and intelligence. The United States also pushed Western Europeans, initially less eager to oppose Russia because they relied on its oil and gas. Less zealous than Democrats, the GOP urged that Biden helped Ukrainians in order to make citizens forget the ignominious retreats from Iraq and Afghanistan at the start of his presidency.

In Ukraine, enormous destruction occurred, and soldiers and civilians died. Millions of refugees left. Ukrainians loathed the Russians more than ever, although Russian supporters lurked in Ukraine, and vice versa. Putin earned a reputation as a gangster, and not just in democracies. On the other side, US relations with Russia were at a nadir. In the United States, the price of oil, over which Putin had some influence, and increases in the military budget, fired up the inflation that the Pandemic had ignited.

Then, in a foreign policy surprise, the Middle East erupted when Palestinian zealots made a shocking assault against repressive Israelis, who fought two groups that received sustenance from Iran, Hamas and Hezbollah. The war threatened to embroil the United States, with its Israeli alliance. It also endangered support for Ukraine. Republicans, especially, became uncertain about how much to support Zelensky. Moreover, Israel's

punishing tactics shaved Democratic backing for the Jewish state, while the GOP was more steadfastly committed. Each party engaged in a delicate dance as attempts to rein in events overseas escaped America. Indeed, these two wars would endanger world affairs after the election year of 2024.

As the presidential contest whipped up voters, civility was hard to find. Anyone could direct everyone on what to believe or how to behave or for whom to vote. If you didn't like what you were told, you had a *prima facie* right to defend yourself with a gun. The nation was undergoing what one onlooker called a "carnival" in the sense of saturnalia, where many people acted out their fantasies.

The House of Representatives paraded "knuckle heads," the most irresponsible of the governing class. These individuals displayed psychological maladies on a grand stage and, along with cable news, exacerbated American phobias. On the other hand, the Senate was in the hands of eighty-year-olds. In 2023, the geriatric group included Senate majority head Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and minority head Mitch McConnell (R-KY); and then Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD); Dick Durbin (D-IL); Diane Feinstein (D-CA), Chuck Grassley (R-IO); Angus King (I-ME); Patrick Leahy (D-VT); Jim Risch (R-ID); and Bernie Sanders (I-VT).

The determination of oldsters to hang on was not limited to the legislature. In 2024, former President Trump, then seventy-seven, became the Republican nominee for the presidency. This was not unprecedented. Grover Cleveland had been president from 1884 to 1888, had lost when he ran for another four years, and then was re-elected in 1892. Trump's opponent would again be an even older and more diminished Biden, who also declared for a second term. He would be eighty-two when he started in 2025. Even not so privately, Democrats were distressed. A further problem was Biden's Vice President, Kamala Harris. A woman of both African- and Asian-American heritage, and former Senator from California, Harris had initially looked like a winner. But in office, she was a non-entity, whom both Republicans and Democrats disregarded. Voters were aware that if they elected Biden, the insignificant Harris might become president. On the other side, even many Trumpers wanted his era ended. While his own physical and mental handicaps were not as newsworthy as Biden's, Trump often sounded as "cognitively impaired" as the president. The former leader waged a trademark campaign, making incendiary accusations. His enemies called him an "existential threat" to democracy. Trump might be the best thing the Democrats had going for them—any other Republican, some argued, could beat Biden. Trump had resolute MAGAs but perhaps not enough to triumph, and had never had a popular majority. The trick for those who wanted to displace Trump was to move him off the political stage without alienating his voters. While the GOP wanted Trump gone, Democrats puzzled: if not Biden, who?

Democrats scrutinized Trump's misdeeds. Lawsuits emerged about his finances; his private conduct; his January 6th activities; and his removal of the executive-branch documents. The GOP stressed Biden's mental decline, and went after Hunter Biden. Not only his role in Ukraine but also a cocaine addiction, tax evasion, and the possession of an illegal firearm. The obvious point here was the father's attempts to tilt matters to his offspring. Observers wished that "both Biden and Trump would leave the scene."

In the summer of 2024, four months before the election, unpredictable events transmuted messy politics into the chaotic. In June and early July, Biden's physical and mental health precipitously deteriorated and could no longer be covered up. Calls came for him to "step down." Next, assassination attempts were made on Trump. In the most important one, in mid-July, an obscure twenty-year-old, using a semi-automatic rifle, wounded the ex-president, campaigning in Butler Pennsylvania. This mass shooting killed two and injured three; the Secret Service was inept in protecting Trump, who bravely lifted a fist in triumph after a bullet grazed his bloodied head. He at once took a commanding lead over Biden. After the president made a sympathy call to Trump, Biden addressed the nation: violence was "not who we are." But the salvoes in Butler had demonstrated the opposite. Shortly thereafter, under pressure, Biden dropped out. His platitudinous explanation did not mask the true reasons: the coercion of prominent members of his party, his legitimate worries about losing, and his own disability.

Biden backed VP Harris, who became the Democrats' candidate at their August convention. Suddenly, the mediocre vice president, invigorated by her elevation, became the champion of her party. "Kamala," whom the Republicans now accused of having been a force in the Biden White House, contested with "Trump," cast as frenzied and out-of-touch.

On November 5th, there was a surprise Republican sweep. As usual, the electorate evaluated the party in power in respect to the state of the country: inflation, fears about the border, and the uncertainties of an assertive foreign policy damned the Democrats. But the nation also evidenced an unusual distaste for them, especially their DEI agenda. In a telling conquest, Donald Trump became the forty-seventh president of the United States.

CONCLUSION

America in History

What kind of guide can history be for grasping contemporary politics as a citizen of The Republic? Or as a person concerned about the power of the United States or loving its popular culture? Even minimally to answer these questions is difficult.

The Reformation of northwest Europe in the faraway sixteenth century still permeates US life. Protestant values still convince Americans that their duty is to set others on a straighter path. Across the globe, sovereign countries should learn "to play the game by the rules"; others might be rewarded for "good behavior"; and "bad actors" could be punished. What some might see as intrusive or belligerent, the United States sees as what righteousness demands. At home, within the in-group, a parallel sense of privilege exists, a product not just of the religious heritage but also of the non-sectarian Enlightenment of eighteenth-century America. Everyone who is not an outsider has rights, not just those protected by the Bill of Rights, but in varied claims "to do what I want."

Yet … at the southern border, thousands from across the planet hungered to become US citizens. How bad is the rest of the world?

These realities will frame an eventful future, no matter what partisan shifts occur in the United States in the second quarter of the twenty-first century. Americans were in the middle of something the full significance of which they did not know. They were in for a wild ride.

SUGGESTIONS FOR READING AND STUDY

Use Wikipedia carefully. The bibliographies in Harry Watson and Jane Daily, *Building the American Republic*, 2 vols. (2018) and in Eric Foner, *Story of American Freedom* (1998) are useful. My own list of suggested reading directs students to traditions of scholarship, and some enduring works.

The text puts politics in the context of **Protestant expansion**. Other texts have theses that contrast with mine and that students need to consider. Several shorter older works are worth reading: Charles and Mary Beard, *Rise of American Civilization* (1927); Thomas Cochran and William Miller, *Age of Enterprise* (1942); Richard Hofstadter, *American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (1948); Carl Degler, *Out of Our Past* (1959); William Appleman Williams, *Contours of American History* (1961); and Howard Zinn, *People's History of the United States* (1979). More recently: Susan-Mary Grant, *Concise History of the United States of America* (2012); Gary Gerstle, *Liberty and Coercion* (2016); and Foner, *Give Me Liberty,* 2 vols. (2019). An excellent addition to any of these is D. W. Meinig's four-volume geographical and demographic exploration, *Shaping of America* (1986, 1993, 1998, 2004).

On the **European discovery of America**: William Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (1983); Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Voyages, the Columbian Exchange, and Their Historians* (1987); Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World* (1995); James Axtell, *Natives and Newcomers* (2001); Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (2001); Charles C. Mann, *1491* (2005); Thomas Bender, *Nation among Nations* (2006); Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation* (2007); James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth* (2009); and Dan Flores, *Wild New World* (2023). **Indians**: Francis Jennings, *Invasion of America* (1975); James Merrell, *Indians' New World* (1989); Karen Kupperman, *Indians and English* (2000); Joyce E. Chaplin, *Subject Matter* (2001); and Pekka Hämäläinen, *Indigenous Continent* (2022). On **early slavery** where I have straddled many different views: Winthrop Jordan, *White over Black* (1968); Philip Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade* (1970); Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves* (1972); Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom* (1975); David Galenson, *White Servitude in Colonial America* (1981); Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone* (1998); David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (2000); and Alan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade* (2002).

The overriding importance of **New England and its religion**: Perry Miller, *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts, 1630–1650* (1933); *Jonathan Edwards* (1949); and *Errand into the Wilderness* (1956); Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints* (1963); Sacvan Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad* (1978); Andrew Delbanco, *Puritan Ordeal* (1989); Harry S. Stout, *New England Soul* (1986); Nathan O. Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity* (1989); Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith* (1990); Stephen Foster, *Long Argument* (1991); Mark A. Noll, *Rise of Evangelicalism* (2004); Michael P. Winship, *Hot Protestants* (2018); and David Hall, *Puritans* (2021). A corrective is Hall's, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment* (1989).

On the **ideology of expansion**: For the eighteenth century, Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind* (1966); Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War* (2000); and Neil Longley York, *Turning the World Upside Down* (2003). Then: Albert K. Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny* (1935); Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation* (1968); Conrad Cherry, *God's New Israel* (1971); and Walter McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State* (1997).

The **Revolution and Constitution**: Carl Becker, *Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (1932); Robert R. Palmer, *Age of the Democratic Revolution*, 2 vols. (1959, 1964); Bernard Bailyn, *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (1967) and *Origins of American Politics* (1968); Gordon Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, 2nd ed. (1998) and *Radicalism of the American Revolution* (1992); Pauline Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution* (1972) and *American Scripture* (1997); Henry May, *Enlightenment in America* (1976); Edmund Morgan, *Birth of the Republic, 1763–89,* rev. ed. (1977) and *Inventing the People* (1988); Charles Royster, *Revolutionary People at War* (1979); Stephen Conway, *War of American Independence, 1775–1783* (1995); Gary Wills (on the Federalist Papers), *Explaining America* (1981); Richard R. Beeman, *Varieties of Political Experience in Eighteenth-Century America* (2004) and (on the Constitution) *Plain, Honest Men* (2009); Michael J. Klarman, *The Framers' Coup* (2016); Holger Hoock, *Scars of Independence* (2017); George William Van Cleve, *We Have Not a Government* (2017); and Michael J. Faber, *The Development of Dissent in the Ratification Debates* (2019).

The Founders, a hardy perennial: Carl J. Richard, *Founders and the Classics* (1994); Caroline Winterer, *Culture of Classicism* (2002); Gore Vidal (brilliant fiction), *Burr* (1973); Douglass Adair, *Fame and the Founding Fathers* (1974); Joseph J. Ellis, *Founding Brothers* (2000); and Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor* (2001). **Individuals**: Marcus Cunliffe, *George Washington* (1958); Gerald Stourzh, *Alexander Hamilton and the Idea of Republican Government* (1970); Peter Shaw, *Character of John Adams* (1976); John C. Miller (on Jefferson) *Wolf by the Ears* (1977); Alan Taylor, *Thomas Jefferson's Education* (2019); Jack N. Rakove, *James Madison and the Creation of the American Republic* (1990); Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (2004); Gordon S. Wood, *Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (2004); Annette Gordon-Reed, *Hemingses of Monticello* (2008); James E. Lewis, *Burr Conspiracy* (2017); and Cassandra Good, *First Family* (2023).

Early Republic: Richard Buel, *Securing the Revolution* (1972); Alexander DeConde, *This Affair of Louisiana* (1976); J. C. A. Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War* (1978); Peter Onuf, *Statehood and Union* (1987); Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick, *Age of Federalism* (1993); Roger G. Kennedy, *Mr. Jefferson's Lost Cause* (2003); James Roger Sharp, *Deadlocked Election of 1800* (2010).

Jacksonian America where scholars are still arguing. Start with Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Age of Jackson* (1945); then Lee Benson, *Concept of Jacksonian Democracy* (1961); and move on to Sean Wilentz, *Rise of American Democracy* (2005) and Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought* (2007). For **pre-Civil War** politics, expansion, and economics, see: Richard McCormick, *Second American Party System* (1966); David Pletcher, *Diplomacy of Annexation* (1973); Robert Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire* (1977); William R. Brock, *Parties and Political Conscience* (1979); Ronald Formisano, *Transformation of Political Culture* (1983); Robert Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas* (1985); Alexander Saxton, *Rise and Fall of the White Republic* (1990); R. E. Shaw, *Canals for a Nation* (1990); Harry Watson, *Liberty and Power* (1990); Charles Sellers, *Market Revolution* (1991); Joel Silbey, *American Political Nation, 1838–1893* (1991); Pekka Hämäläinen, *Commanche Empire* (2008); and Steve Inskeep, *Jacksonland* (2015). On DeTocqueville: Olivier Zunz, *Man Who Understood Democracy* (2022); and on the Mexican War: Peter Guardino, *Dead March* (2017) and Peter Cozzens, *Brutal Reckoning* (2023).

Slavery: Eugene Genovese, *Political Economy of Slavery* (1965), *World the Slaveholders Made* (1969), and *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (1974); William J. Cooper, *South and the Politics of Slavery* (1978); Gavin Wright, *Political Economy of the Cotton South* (1978); Peter J. Parish, *Slavery* (1989); William R. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*, rev. ed. (1993); Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul* (1999); David Brion Davis, *Challenging the Boundaries of Slavery* (2004); Edward E. Baptist,

Half Has Never Been Told (2014); and Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton* (2015). A **recent debate** on the extent to which the Constitution supported slavery is difficult but worth following Sean Wilentz, *No Property in Man* (2018); Van Gosse, *First Reconstruction* (2021); Alan Taylor, *American Republics* (2021); Woody Holton, *Liberty Is Sweet* (2022); Kris Manjapra, *Black Ghost of Empire* (2022); and James Oakes, *Crooked Path to Abolition* (2023).

On the **sectional crisis** my own views hover between the idea that the conflict was repressible and my regard for Lincoln. For the critique of the inevitability of the war, see David M. Potter, *Lincoln and His Party in the Secession Crisis*, 2nd ed. (1962) and *Impending Crisis, 1848–1861* (1976); and Edward Ayers, "Worrying about the Civil War," in Karen Halttunen and Lewis Perry, eds., *Moral Problems in American Life* (1998). Russell McClintock, *Lincoln and the Decision for War* (2008) looks at the historiography of the issue. Also: Roy F. Nichols, *Disruption of American Democracy* (1948); Kenneth M. Stampp, *And the War Came* (1950); Avery O. Craven, *Growth of Southern Nationalism, 1848–1861* (1953); Harry V. Jaffa, *Crisis of the House Divided* (1959); Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men* (1970); Kenneth Stampp, *Imperiled Union* (1980); William Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party* (1987); Drew Faust, *Creation of Confederate Nationalism* (1988); William Freehling, *Road to Disunion* (1990); Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery* (1992); Bruce Levine, *Half Slave and Half Free* (1992); Michael F. Holt, *Fate of Their Country* (2004); and Erik Larson, *Demon of Unrest* (2024).

The **Civil War**: Allan Nevins, *Ordeal of the Union*, 8 vols. (1947–71); William McFeeley, *Grant* (1981); James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (1988), *Ordeal by Fire*, 2nd ed. (1992), and *This Mighty Scourge* (2007); Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning* (2010); and Don H. Doyle, *Cause of All Nations* (2015). More doubtful is Heather Cox Richardson, *How the South Won the Civil War* (2020).

On **Lincoln**: Allen Guelzo, *Abraham Lincoln* (1999) and *Lincoln and Douglas* (2008). Also: Gary Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg* (1992); David Donald, *Lincoln* (1995); William Miller, *Lincoln's Virtues* (2001); David S. Reynolds, *Abe* (2021); and Jon Mecham, *And There Was Light* (2022).

Republican ascendency: The text tries to bring a different unity to the period from 1865 to 1896, but this is not a standard move. Lawrence Veysey, *Emergence of the American University* (1965); Frank Tariello, Jr., *Reconstruction of American Political Ideology, 1865–1917* (1982); Nancy Cohen, *Reconstruction of American Liberalism, 1865–1914* (2002); and Richard White, *Republic for Which It Stands* (2017) are not easy but helpful. On **Reconstruction**: W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935); John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom* (1947), and *Reconstruction* (1961); C. Vann Woodward, *Reunion and Reaction* (1951); Robert Sharkey, *Money, Class, and Party* (1959); Joel Williamson, *Crucible of Race* (1984), and Eric Foner, *Reconstruction* (1988). On **the South**: W. E. B. Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk* (1903); C. Vann Woodard, *Burden of Southern History* (1960), and *Strange Career of Jim Crow*, commemorative ed. (2002); Edward L. Ayers, *Promise of the New South* (1992); Michael Perman, *Struggle for Mastery* (2001); Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage* (2008); Drew Faust, *This Republic of Suffering* (2008). On **the West**: William Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire* (1966); Howard Lamar, *Far Southwest* (1966); Robert Wooster, *Military and United States Indian Policy* (1988); Patricia Nelson Limerick, Clyde Milner II, and Charles E. Rankin, eds., *Trails: Toward a New Western History* (1991); Gregory Nobles, *American Frontiers* (1997); David S. Brown, *Beyond the Frontier* (on Midwestern historians) (2009); and Elliott West, *Continental Reckoning* (2023). Difficult to classify but of huge interest is David Grann, *Killers of the Flower Moon* (2017)—on Native Americans and expansion. On **railroads**: Thomas C. Cochran, *Railroad Leaders* (1953); Robert William Fogel, *Railroads and American Economic Growth* (1964); Alfred. D. Chandler, Jr., *Railroads* (1965); Gabriel Kolko, *Railroads and Regulation* (1965); William J. Novak, *People's Welfare* (1998); and Steven W.

Usselman, *Regulating Railroad Innovation* (2002). On **immigration and the cities**: Henry F. May, *Protestant Churches and Industrial America* (1949); Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted* (1951); John Higham, *Strangers in the Land* (1955); John Teaford, *Unheralded Triumph* (1984); John Bodnar, *Transplanted* (1985); Richard L. McCormick, *Party Period and Public Policy* (1986); Joel Silbey, *American Political Nation* (1991); Robert F. Zeidel, *Immigrants, Progressives, and Exclusion Politics* (2004).

Populism and the election of 1896: Richard Hofstadter, *Age of Reform* (1955); Paul Glad, *McKinley, Bryan, & the People* (1964); Richard Jensen, *Winning of the Midwest* (1971); Samuel T. McSeveney, *Politics of Depression* (1972); Lawrence Goodwyn (on Populism), *Democratic Promise* (1976); Paul Kleppner, *Third Electoral System* (1979); Steven Hahn, *Roots of Southern Populism* (1983); Peter Argersinger, *Limits of Agrarian Radicalism* (1995); Elizabeth Sanders, *Roots of Reform* (1999); Michael Kazin (on Bryan) *Godly Hero* (2006); Charles Postel, *Populist Vision* (2007).

The text treats **late-nineteenth century expansion** with greater prominence than most accounts: Ernest R. May, *Imperial Democracy* (1961); Walter LaFeber, *New Empire* (1963); Merze Tate, *United States and the Hawaiian Kingdom* (1965); John Offner, *An Unwanted War* (1992); Louis Perez, Jr., *War of 1898* (1998); Eric Love, *Race over Empire* (2004). On the contrary: James A. Field, Jr., "American Imperialism: The Worst Chapter in Almost Any Book," *American Historical Review* 83 (1978): 644–68, and Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line* (2008).

The **progressives**, John Morton Blum, *Republican Roosevelt*, 2nd ed. (1977); Gabriel Kolko, *Triumph of Conservatism* (1963); and Michael McGerr, *Decline of Popular Politics* (1986), and *Fierce Discontent* (2003). Also: Samuel Hays, *Response to Industrialism* (1957); Robert Wiebe, *Businessmen and Reform* (1962) and *Search for Order* (1967); John Buenker, *Urban Liberalism and Progressive Reform* (1973); J. Morgan Kousser, *Shaping of Southern Politics* (1974); John Milton Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest* (1983); Dewey Grantham, *Southern Progressivism* (1983).

On **Woodrow Wilson and the First World War**: Alexander and Juliette George, *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House* (1956); Ernest May, *World War and American Isolation* (1959); Arno J. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking* (1967); Gordon Levin, *Woodrow Wilson and World Politics* (1968); Arthur Link, *Woodrow Wilson* (1979); David Kennedy, *Over Here* (1980); Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars* (1992); Erez Manela, *Wilsonian Moment* (2007); J. Adam Tooze, *Deluge* (2014); Michael Neiberg, *Path to War* (2016); and Patrick Weil, *Madman in the White House* (2023).

Readers will not find in secondary sources my view of a Progressivism dominating **the 1920s** but look at William Leuchtenberg, *Perils of Prosperity* (1958); Maldwyn Jones, *American Immigration* (1960); David Burner, *Politics of Provincialism* (1968); Joan Hoff Wilson, *Herbert Hoover* (1975); Ellis Hawley, *Great War and the Search for a Modern Order* (1979); Geoffrey Parret, *America in the Twenties* (1982); Michael Parrish, *Anxious Decades* (1992); Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door* (2004); Glen Jeansonne, *Herbert Hoover* (2016); and Felix Harcourt, *Ku Klux Kulture* (2017).

New Deal America: Begin with Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Age of Roosevelt*, 3 vols. (1957, 1958, 1960); James M. Burns, *Roosevelt*, 2 vols. (1956, 1970); William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal* (1963); Mark Leff, *Limits of Symbolic Reform* (1984); David Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear* (1999); Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself* (2013); Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt* (2017); and Jonathan O'Neill, *Conservative Thought and American Constitutionalism since the New Deal* (2022).

The Second World War and its origins: Gaddis Smith, *American Diplomacy during the Second World War* (1965); Robert Divine, *Reluctant Belligerent*, 2nd ed. (1979); Akira Iriye, *Power and Culture* (1981); John Dower, *War without Mercy* (1986); Michael C. C. Adams, *Best War Ever* (1994); and Thomas Zeiler, *Unconditional Defeat* (2004). Joseph Lelyveld, *His Final Battle* (2016) is an outstanding summary on scholarship on FDR.

Politics and diplomacy of Cold War America: Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy*, 2nd expanded ed. (1994); Marc Trachtenberg, *Constructed Peace* (1999); Alonzo Hamby, *Beyond the New Deal* (1973); Richard Freeland, *Truman Doctrine and the Origins of McCarthyism*, 2nd ed. (1985); William Chafe, *Unfinished Journey* (1986); Michael Hogan, *Marshall Plan* (1987); H. W. Brands, *Devil We Knew* (1993); James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations* (1996); Melvin Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind* (2007); Lawrence Freedman, *Command* (2022).

The **political culture of the Cold War**: John Diggins, *Up from Communism* (1975); Allen Weinstein (on Alger Hiss), *Perjury* (1978); Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound* (1988); Karal Ann Marling, *As Seen on TV* (1994); John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr (on USSR spies), *Venona* (1999); Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights* (2000); Lizabeth Cohen, *Consumer's Republic* (2003); William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945–1960* (2008); Maurice Isserman, *Reds* (2024).

Formulating **"the Sixties"** as running from 1954 to 1969, should remind students that "periodization" ever changes. Consult: William I. Hitchcock, *Age of Eisenhower* (2018). On JFK: the synthetic Stephen F. Knott, *Coming to Terms with John F. Kennedy* (2022); Marc J. Selverstone, *Kennedy Withdrawal*; and Robert Dallek, *Unfinished Life* (2003). Doris Goodwin, *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream* (1976); and Deborah Shapley (on Robert McNamara), *Promise and Power* (1993). On **Vietnam**: David Halberstam, *Best and the Brightest* (1972); George C. Herring, *America's Longest War*, 6th ed. (2020); Frederik Logevall, *Embers of War* (2012). On **1960s politics**: Godfrey Hodgson, *America in Our Time* (1976); Allen Matusow, *Unraveling of America* (1984); Havard Sitkoff, *Struggle for Black Equality* (1993); Mark Tushnet, *Making Civil Rights Law* (1994); Thomas Borstelmann, *Cold War and the Color Line* (2001); Luke Nichter, *Year That Broke Politics* (2023); Stanley Kutler, *Wars of Watergate* (1990).

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On the **twenty-first century**: Samuel P. Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order (*1996); Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (2003); Jim Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans* (2004); Byron Shafer, *American*

Political Pattern (2016); Sam Rosenfeld, *Polarizers* (2017); Anne Case and Angus Deaton, *Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism* (2020); M. E. Sarotte, *Not One Inch* (2022); Steven Simon, *Grand Delusion* (2023); Steve Coll, *Achilles Trap* (2024). Of the multitude of works about Donald Trump: Maggie Haberman, *Confidence Man* (2022).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This third edition has been completely rewritten. There are supplementary sections on the Constitution, race, and gender; a reconsideration of post-Cold War America; and additional material on politics from 2016 to 2024. New illustrations have been integrated into the text. The Suggestions for Reading and Study have been updated. I have cautiously adopted some but not all of the most recent turns in interpretation and, similarly, the novel word-usages of contemporary historians. I have tried not to judge the dead by present moral standards, but have presumed that, like us, they were fallible. For help on all these improvements, I thank Richard Freeland, Darryl Hart, Cameron Kuklick, Cory Kuklick, Edward Mannino, Adam Miller, Mark Noll, and Jaap Verheul. The book would not have been published without the efficient, careful, and tireless work of Maddie Smith and her team at Bloomsbury Press. Anonymous reviewers at the Press were of unusual assistance.

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