



# Notes

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## Chapter 15 - The Ferment of Reform and Culture, 1790-1860

### I. Reviving Religion

1. Church attendance was regular in 1850 (3/4 of population attended)
2. Many relied on **Deism** (reason rather revelation); Deism rejected original sin of man, denied Christ's divinity but believed in a supreme being that created universe with an order, similar to a clockmaker.
3. **Unitarian** faith begins (New England)
  - believed God existed in only 1 person, not in the orthodox trinity; stressed goodness of human nature
  - believed in free will and salvation through good works; pictured God as a loving father
  - appealed to intellectuals with rationalism and optimism
4. These perversions of Christianity ignited Christians to "take back their faith" and oppose these new beliefs
5. Liberalism in religion started in 1800 spawned the **2nd Great Awakening** a tidal wave of spiritual fervor that resulted in prison reform, church reform, temperance movement (no alcohol), women's rights movement, abolition of slavery in 1830s
  - it spread to the masses through huge "camp meetings"
  - the East went to the West to Christianize Indians
  - **Methodists** and **Baptists** stressed personal conversion, democracy in church affairs, emotionalism
  - **Peter Cartwright** – was best known of the "circuit riders" or traveling preachers
  - **Charles Grandison Finney** – the greatest revival preacher who led massive revivals in Rochester, NY

### II. Denominational Diversity

1. The revival furthered fragmentation of religious faiths
  - New York, with its Puritans, preached "hellfire" and was known as the "**Burned-Over District.**"
  - **Millerites (Adventists)** – predicted Christ to return to earth on Oct 22, 1844. When this prophesy failed to materialize, the movement lost credibility.
  - The Awakening widened lines between classes the region (like 1st Great Awakening)
  - conservatives were made up of: propertied Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Unitarians
  - the less-learned of the South the West (frontier areas) were usually Methodists or Baptists
2. Religion further split with the issue of slavery (i.e. the Methodists and Presbyterians split)

### III. A Desert Zion in Utah

1. **Joseph Smith** (1830) claimed to have found golden tablets in NY with the Book of Mormon inscribed on them. He came up with the **Mormon** faith, officially called the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
  - antagonism toward Mormons emerged due to their polygamy, drilling militia, and voting as a unit
  - Smith was killed, but was succeeded by **Brigham Young**, who led followers to Utah
  - they grew quickly by birth and immigration from Europe

- they had a federal governor and marched to Utah when Young became governor
- the issue of polygamy prevented Utah's entrance to U.S. until 1896

#### IV. Free School for a Free People

1. The idea of tax-supported, compulsory (mandatory), primary schools was opposed as a hand-out to paupers
  - Gradually, support rose because uneducated "brats" might grow up to be rabbles with voting rights
  - Free public education, triumphed in 1828 along with the voting power in the Jackson election
  - there were largely ill-taught and ill-trained teachers, however
  - **Horace Mann** fought for better schools and is the "Father of Public Education"
  - school was too expensive for many community; blacks were mostly left out from education
2. Important educators - **Noah Webster** (dictionary and Blueback Speller); **William H. McGuffey** — McGuffey's Readers)

#### V. Higher Goals for Higher Learning

1. The 2nd Great Awakening led to the building of small schools in the South the West (mainly for pride)
  - the curriculum focused mainly on Latin, Greek, Math, moral philosophy
2. The 1st state-supported university was founded in the Tar Heel state, the **Univ. of North Carolina**, in 1795; Jefferson started the University of Virginia shortly afterwards (UVA was to be independent of religion or politics)
3. women were thought to be corrupted if too educated and were therefore excluded
4. **Emma Willard** — established Troy Female Seminary (1821) and Mount Holyoke Seminary (1837) was established by **Mary Lyon**
5. Libraries, public lectures, and magazines flourished

#### VI. An Age of Reform

1. reformers opposed tobacco, alcohol, profanity, and many other vices, and came out for women's rights
2. women were very important in motivating these reform movements
3. reformers were often optimists who sought a perfect society
  - some were naïve and ignored the problems of factories
  - they fought for no imprisonment for debt (the poor were sometimes locked in jail for less than \$1 debt); this was gradually abolished
  - reformers wanted criminal codes softened and reformatories created
  - the mentally insane were treated badly. **Dorothea Dix** fought for reform of the mentally insane in her classic petition of 1843
  - there was agitation for peace (i.e. the American Peace Society) - William Ladd had some impact until Civil War and Crimean war

#### VII. Demon Rum—The "Old Deluder"

1. drunkenness was widespread
2. The **American Temperance Society** was formed at Boston (1826) – the "Cold Water Army" (children), signed pledges, made pamphlets, and an anti-alcohol novel emerged called 10 nights in a Barroom and What I Saw There
3. Attack on the demon drink adopted 2 major lines attack...
  - stressed temperance (individual will to resist)
  - legislature-removed temptation - Neal S. Dow becomes the "Father of **Prohibition**"
  - sponsored Maine Law of 1851 which prohibited making and sale of liquor (followed by others)

## VIII. Women in Revolt

1. Women stayed home, without voting rights. Still, in the 19th century, American women were generally better off than in Europe.
2. many women avoided marriage altogether becoming “spinsters”
3. gender differences increased sharply with different economic roles
  - women were perceived as weak physically and emotionally, but fine for teaching
  - men were perceived as strong, but crude and barbaric, if not guided by the purity of women
4. home was the center of the female’s world (even for reformer **Catharine Beecher**) but many felt that was not enough
5. they joined the movement to abolish of slavery
6. the women’s movement was led by **Lucretia Mott**, **Susan B. Anthony** (Suzy Bs), **Elizabeth Cady Stanton**, **Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell** (1st female medical graduate), **Margaret Fuller**, the **Grimke sisters** (anti-slavery advocates), and **Amelia Bloomer** (semi-short skirts)
  - **The Seneca Falls Women’s Rights Convention** (1848) – held in NY, it was a major landmark in women’s rights
  - **Declaration of Sentiments** – was written in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence saying that “all Men and Women are created equal”
  - demanded ballot for women
  - launched modern women’s rights movement
7. the women’s rights movement was temporarily eclipsed by slavery when the Civil War heated up, but served as a foundation for later days

## IX. Wilderness Utopias

1. **Robert Owen** founded New Harmony, IN (1825) though it failed in confusion
2. **Brook Farm** – Massachusetts experiment (1841) where 20 intellectuals committed to Transcendentalism (it lasted until ‘46)
3. **Oneida Community** — practiced free love, birth control, eugenic selection of parents to produce superior offspring; it survived ironically as a capitalistic venture, selling baskets and then cutlery.
4. **Shakers** – a communistic community (led by Mother Ann Lee); they couldn’t marry so they became extinct

## X. The Dawn of Scientific Achievement

1. Early Americans were interested in practical science rather than pure science (i.e., Jefferson and his newly designed plow).
  - **Nathaniel Bowditch** – studied practical navigation and oceanography
  - **Matthew Maury** - ocean winds, currents
2. Writers were concerned with basic science.
3. The most influential U.S. scientists...
  - **Benjamin Silliman** (1779-1864) - pioneer in chemistry geologist (taught in Yale)
  - **Louis Agassiz** (1807-1873) - served at Harvard, insisted on original research
  - **Asa Gray** (1810-1888) Harvard, was the Columbus of botany
  - **John Audubon** (1785-1851) painted birds with exact detail
4. Medicine in the U.S. was primitive (i.e., bleeding used for cure; smallpox, yellow fever though it killed many).
5. Life expectancy was unsurprisingly low.
6. Self-prescribed patent medicines were common, they were usually were mostly alcohol and often as harmful as helpful.
7. The local surgeon was usually the local barber or butcher.

## XI. Artistic Achievements

1. U.S. had traditionally imitated European styles of art (aristocratic subjects, dark portraits, stormy landscapes)

2. 1820-50 was a Greek revival, as they'd won independence from Turks; Gothic forms also gained popularity
3. Thomas Jefferson was the most able architect of his generation (Monticello and University of Virginia)
4. Artists were viewed as a wasters of time; they suffered from Puritan prejudice of art as sinful pride
5. **Gilbert Stuart** (1755-1828) - painted Washington and competed with English artists

**Charles Willson Peale** (1741-1827) painted 60 portraits of Washington

**John Trumbull** (1756-1843) - captured the Revolutionary War in paint in dramatic fashion

1. During the nationalism upsurge after War of 1812, U.S. painters portrayed human landscapes and Romanticism
  - **"darky" tunes** became popular
  - **Stephen Foster** wrote *Old Folks at Home* (AKA Suwannee River, his most famous) and *My Old Kentucky Home*.

## XII. The Blossoming of a National Literature

1. Literature was imported or plagiarized from England
2. Americans poured literature into practical outlets (i.e. The Federalist Papers, Common Sense (Paine), Ben Franklin's Autobiography, Poor Richard's Almanack)
3. literature was reborn after the War of Independence and especially after War of 1812
4. **The Knickerbocker group** in NY wrote the first truly American literature
  - **Washington Irving** (1783-1859) - 1st U.S. internationally recognized writings, *The Sketch Book*
  - **James Fenimore Cooper** (1789-1851) - 1st US novelist, *The Leatherstocking Tales* (which included *The Last of the Mohicans* which was popular in Europe)
  - **William Cullen Bryant** (1794-1878) – *Thanatopsis*, the 1st high quality poetry in U.S.

## XIII. Trumpeters of Transcendentalism

1. Literature dawned in the 2nd quarter of 19th century with the transcendentalist movement (circa 1830)
  - transcendentalism clashed with John Locke (who argued knowledge came from reason); for transcendentalists, truth came not by observation alone, from with inner light
  - it stressed individualism, self-reliance, and non-conformity
  - **Ralph Waldo Emerson** was popular since the ideal of the essay reflected the spirit of the U.S.
  - he lectured the Phi Beta Kappa Address "The American Scholar"
  - he urged U.S. writers throw off European tradition
  - influential as practical philosopher (stressed self-government, self-reliance, depending on self)
  - most famous for his work, *Self Reliance*
  - **Henry David Thoreau**
  - He condemned slavery and wrote *Walden: Or life in the Woods*
  - He also wrote *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*, which was idealistic in thought, and a forerunner of Gandhi and then Martin Luther King Jr., saying it is not wrong to disobey a wrong law
  - **Walt Whitman** wrote *Leaves of Grass* (poetry) and was "Poet Laureate of Democracy"

## XIV. Glowing Literary Lights (not associated with transcendentalism)

1. **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow** - wrote poems popular in Europe such as Evangeline
2. **John Greenleaf Whittier** - poems that cried against injustice, intolerance, inhumanity
3. **James Russell Lowell** - political satirist who wrote Biglow Papers
4. **Oliver Wendell Holmes** - The Last Leaf
5. Women writers

- **Louisa May Alcott** - with transcendentalism wrote *Little Women*
  - **Emily Dickinson** – wrote of the theme of nature in poems
6. Southern literary figure – William Gillmore Simms - “the cooper of the south”; wrote many books of life in frontier South during the Revolutionary War

## XV. Literary Individualists and Dissenters

1. **Edgar Allan Poe** - wrote “The Raven” and many short stories
  - invented modern detective novel and “psychological thriller”
  - he was fascinated by the supernatural and reflected a morbid sensibility (more prized by Europe)
2. reflections of Calvinist obsession with original sin and struggle between good & evil
  - **Nathaniel Hawthorne** - *The Scarlet Letter* (psychological effect of sin)
  - **Herman Melville** - *Moby Dick*, and allegory between good and evil told of a whaling captain

## XVI. Portrayers of the Past

1. **George Bancroft** – founded the naval academy; published U.S. history book and was known as the “Father of American History”
2. **William H. Prescott** - published on the conquest of Mexico, Peru
3. **Francis Parkman** - published on the struggle between France and England in colonial North America
4. Historians were all from New England because they had the most books. Therefore, there became an anti-South bias.

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