

Lecture 12: *Antebellum Reform Part II*

Decades leading up to Civil War, discussing culture during this time

Turn attention to “us” with common solidarity

Antebellum Reform and Solidarities

- Reform and individualism
- Interplay between individual as moral agent and reform of society
- Formation of solidarities, imaging connections

Summary

Many people who are convinced they know God form solidarity with others and seek to change (reform) society.

Idea of people banding together for common grievances

Some of these groups included

1. Women band to seek the right to vote and reform for equality of the genders
2. Abolition

Reform and Public Institutions

- Education reform:
 - Largest effort at institution before Civil War
- Effort to build tax-supported state schools open to all children
- No existing system:
 - Local schools, private academies, charity schools, many with no access to education at all
- Reflects reform impulse and drive

Summary

Antebellum Reform effort created public institution meant to improve conditions and quality of life for the general public.

Modern public school is created in this period

“notion of all” remains limited to white students

Who is an American?

- “The people” in “we the people”

Schools in the north meant to train an individual in the now industrialized society created by the Market Revolution. People needed skills to thrive in the industrial economy.

Emphasize on change and reform and that the way things are is not the way they have to be

Sense of “us”

Feminism, Sisterhood, and the Public Woman

- Reform facilitated a public space for women, separate spheres doctrine
- Active in temperance movement, building of asylums, delivered public lectures, wrote and circulated petitions
- Dorothea Dix:
 - Human treatment for mentally ill

Summary

Wave of feminist efforts in this period

Idea develops in early 1800's known as the *Separate Spheres Doctrine*

Public domain/sphere and political sphere is for men

Private domain/sphere and home sphere is for women

Develops out of industrialization

Pre-industrial concerned with agriculture, your farm was your work. Industrialization involved factories and one leaving their home to go to work.

Separate Spheres Doctrines was an ideal not a lived reality among many Americans since women did work in the "public domain" in factories.

Women are active in workforce as well as the political realm

- Women are active but cannot
 - Vote
 - Earn wages (given to husband)
- But can
 - Persuade politicians and public opinion to achieve their goals

Dorothea Dix led effort to reform asylums that would offer a more humane treatment for mentally ill

- Individuals in asylums often were treated like prisoners and tortured

Dix offered solidarity for common humanity

Seneca Falls Convention

- Seneca Falls, NY – 1848
- Rooted in antislavery crusade
- Common language of aggrievement
- Organized by feminist leaders
- Call for suffrage
- Modeled on Declaration of Independence
- Reform ALL inequalities
- Equal rights for all as definition of freedom

Summary

1848 in Seneca Falls, New York

Important event in feminism and all of American history

Landmark event

Overlap between feminists and abolitionists

- ➔ Because both groups believed that ALL were equal and could be applied to both groups of people
- ➔ Similarities
- ➔ Equal similarities are not equal experiences (a slaves experience was much worse than a woman's experience)

Suffrage does not come to women until 1920's and women of color until 1960's

Declaration of Sentiments

- ➔ Modeled almost word for word on the Declaration of Independence
 - Universal language is used to apply to not just men but women and other groups too

Abolition as Reform

- Before 1830's, anti-slavery focused on colonization
- Religious basis:
 - Fueled by second great awakening
- Secular Basis:
 - Fueled by focus on individualism at heart of Market Revolution and new democratic age, ideas of freedom and liberties in Declaration of independence.
- Demand immediate abolition, slavery as evil, call for blacks to be equal citizens
- A new solidarity, sense of society

Summary

1. Abolish slavery
2. Create America where blacks and whites are equal

Colonization is opposite of abolition

- ➔ To colonize Africa and send slaves to that colony
- ➔ The free blacks in America would also be removed to retain an "all-white" America

Colonization never worked (in current country of Liberia and the Capital of Monrovia)

Religious basis

- ➔ God would hate slavery and it goes against the will of God

Absolutist way of thinking (you are either helping slaves or not helping slaves) (either helping the abolition movement or are not)

Secular basis

- ➔ Came from Declaration of Independence, and idea of universal humanity for all

Slavery says your labor is not valuable and this goes against the ideals of the Market Revolution of wage labor

Some argue that overtime slavery would end

Abolitionists wanted slavery to end now because every day means we are complicit

Garrison and The Liberator

- Permanent, institution-based movement with William Lloyd Garrison's newspaper, *The Liberator*, first published in 1831
- Call for immediate abolition, published accounts of slaves, represented slavery as a moral crusade for all
- Garrison burned copies of Constitution
 - Appealed to a higher law

Summary

One of the first times in American history where African Americans had a voice to represent themselves and their perspective to America

Expression and taking over their interject their own perspective

A bridge could develop when whites read an account of a slave escaping for freedom in *The Liberator*

Garrison's newspaper kept Abolitionists focused on the movement

Radical Notion of Freedom and Solidarity Stems from Reform

- White and blacks together as equal citizens, blacks recognized as humans
- New idea of freedom irreconcilable with ideas of freedom at heart of slave economy and culture



Summary

Civil War is clash between two notions of freedom

Slavery vs. Freedom

South cannot imagine freedom without slavery since their society of "King Cotton" was based entirely on slavery