

SOCIETY, CULTURE, AND REFORM, 1820-1860

We would have every path laid open to Woman as freely as to Man As the friend of the Negro assumes that one man cannot by right hold another in bondage, so should the friend of Woman assume that Man cannot by right lay even well-meant restrictions on Woman.

Margaret Fuller, 1845

Several historic reform movements began during the Jacksonian era and in the following decades. This period before the Civil War started in 1861 is known as the *antebellum period*. During this time, a diverse mix of reformers dedicated themselves to such causes as establishing free (tax-supported) public schools, improving the treatment of the mentally ill, controlling or abolishing the sale of alcohol, winning equal rights for women, and abolishing slavery. The enthusiasm for reform had many historic sources: the Puritan sense of mission, the Enlightenment belief in human goodness, the politics of Jacksonian democracy, and changing relationships among men and women, among social classes, and among ethnic groups. The most important source may have been religious beliefs.

Religion: The Second Great Awakening

Religious revivals swept through the United States during the early decades of the 19th century. They were partly a reaction against the rationalism (belief in human reason) that had been the fashion during the Enlightenment and the American Revolution. Calvinist (Puritan) teachings of original sin and predestination had been rejected by believers in more liberal and forgiving doctrines, such as those of the Unitarian Church.

Calvinism began a counterattack against these liberal views in the 1790s. The Second Great Awakening began among educated people such as Reverend Timothy Dwight, president of Yale College in Connecticut. Dwight's campus revivals motivated a generation of young men to become evangelical preachers. In the revivals of the early 1800s, successful preachers were audience-centered and easily understood by the uneducated; they spoke about the opportunity for salvation to all. These populist movements seemed attuned to the democratization of American society.

Revivalism in New York In 1823, Presbyterian minister Charles G. Finney started a series of revivals in upstate New York, where many New Englanders had settled. Instead of delivering sermons based on rational argument, Finney appealed to people's emotions and fear of damnation. He prompted thousands to publicly declare their revived faith. He preached that every individual could be saved through faith and hard work—ideas that strongly appealed to the rising middle class. Because of Finney's influence, western New York became known as the "burned-over district" for its frequent "hell-and-brimstone" revivals.

Baptists and Methodists In the South and on the advancing western frontier, Baptist and Methodist circuit preachers, such as Peter Cartwright, would travel from one location to another and attract thousands to hear their dramatic preaching at outdoor revivals, or camp meetings. These preachers activated the faith of many people who had never belonged to a church. By 1850, the Baptists and the Methodists were the largest Protestant denominations in the country.

Millennialism Much of the religious enthusiasm of the time was based on the widespread belief that the world was about to end with the second coming of Jesus. One preacher, William Miller, gained tens of thousands of followers by predicting a specific date (October 21, 1844) for the second coming. Nothing happened on the appointed day, but the Millerites continued as a new Christian denomination, the Seventh-Day Adventists.

Mormons Another religious group, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, or Mormons, was founded by Joseph Smith in 1830. Smith based his religious thinking on a book of Scripture—the Book of Mormon—which traced a connection between the American Indians and the lost tribes of Israel. Smith gathered a following in New York and moved to Ohio, then Missouri, and finally, Illinois. There, the Mormon founder was murdered by a local mob. To escape persecution, the Mormons under the leadership of Brigham Young migrated to the far western frontier, where they established the New Zion (as they called their religious community) on the banks of the Great Salt Lake in Utah. Their cooperative social organization helped the Mormons to prosper in the wilderness. Their practice of polygamy (allowing a man to have more than one wife), however, aroused the hostility of the U.S. government.

The Second Great Awakening, like the first, caused new divisions in society between the newer, evangelical sects and the older Protestant churches. It affected all sections of the country. But in the northern states from Massachusetts to Ohio the Great Awakening also touched off social reform. Activist religious groups provided both the leadership and the well-organized voluntary societies that drove the reform movements of the antebellum era.

Culture: Ideas, the Arts, and Literature

In Europe, during the early years of the 19th century, artists and writers shifted away from the Enlightenment emphasis on balance, order, and reason and

toward intuition, feelings, individual ac
This new movement, known as roman
States by the transcendentalists, a small

The Transcendentalists

Writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson the doctrines of established churches and class. They argued for a mystical and for discovering one's inner self and loo Their views challenged the materialism. artistic expression was more important the transcendentalists valued individuali tutions as unimportant, they supported antislavery movement.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882)

Ralph Waldo Emerson, was a very popu lectures expressed the individualistic ar urging them not to imitate European cu can culture. He argued for self-reliance, of spiritual matters over material ones. Massachusetts, Emerson became a leac then an ardent supporter of the Union d

Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862)

friend of Emerson was Henry David philosophy, Thoreau conducted a two- cabin in the woods outside town. He u: essential truths about life and the uni years were published in the book for w Because of this book, Thoreau is remen conservationist.

Through his essay "On Civil Disob as an early advocate of nonviolent prote: ment for disobeying unjust laws and ac own act of civil disobedience was to rel action he considered immoral—the U: breaking the tax law, Thoreau spent on century, Thoreau's essay and actions w of both Mohandas Gandhi in India and States.

Brook Farm Could a community ideal? In 1841, George Ripley, a Prot experiment at Brook Farm in Massachu natural union between intellectual and : times were some of the leading intelle

toward intuition, feelings, individual acts of heroism, and the study of nature. This new movement, known as romanticism, was expressed in the United States by the transcendentalists, a small group of New England thinkers.

The Transcendentalists

Writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau questioned the doctrines of established churches and the business practices of the merchant class. They argued for a mystical and intuitive way of thinking as a means for discovering one's inner self and looking for the essence of God in nature. Their views challenged the materialism of American society by suggesting that artistic expression was more important than the pursuit of wealth. Although the transcendentalists valued individualism highly and viewed organized institutions as unimportant, they supported a variety of reforms, especially the antislavery movement.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) The best-known transcendentalist, Ralph Waldo Emerson, was a very popular American speaker. His essays and lectures expressed the individualistic and nationalistic spirit of Americans by urging them not to imitate European culture but to create a distinctive *American* culture. He argued for self-reliance, independent thinking, and the primacy of spiritual matters over material ones. A northerner who lived in Concord, Massachusetts, Emerson became a leading critic of slavery in the 1850s and then an ardent supporter of the Union during the Civil War.

Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862) Also living in Concord and a close friend of Emerson was Henry David Thoreau. To test his transcendentalist philosophy, Thoreau conducted a two-year experiment of living simply in a cabin in the woods outside town. He used observations of nature to discover essential truths about life and the universe. Thoreau's writings from these years were published in the book for which he is best known, *Walden* (1854). Because of this book, Thoreau is remembered today as a pioneer ecologist and conservationist.

Through his essay "On Civil Disobedience," Thoreau established himself as an early advocate of nonviolent protest. The essay presented Thoreau's argument for disobeying unjust laws and accepting the penalty. The philosopher's own act of civil disobedience was to refuse to pay a tax that would support an action he considered immoral—the U.S. war with Mexico (1846–1848). For breaking the tax law, Thoreau spent one night in the Concord jail. In the next century, Thoreau's essay and actions would inspire the nonviolent movements of both Mohandas Gandhi in India and Martin Luther King Jr. in the United States.

Brook Farm Could a community of people live out the transcendentalist ideal? In 1841, George Ripley, a Protestant minister, launched a communal experiment at Brook Farm in Massachusetts. His goal was to achieve "a more natural union between intellectual and manual labor." Living at Brook Farm at times were some of the leading intellectuals of the period. Emerson went, as

did Margaret Fuller, a feminist (advocate of women's rights) writer and editor; Theodore Parker, a theologian and radical reformer; and Nathaniel Hawthorne, a novelist. A bad fire and heavy debts forced the end of the experiment in 1849. But Brook Farm was remembered for its atmosphere of artistic creativity, its innovative school, and its appeal to New England's intellectual elite and their children.

Communal Experiments

The idea of withdrawing from conventional society to create an ideal community, or utopia, in a fresh setting was not a new idea. But never before were social experiments so numerous as during the antebellum years. The open lands of the United States proved fertile ground for more than a hundred experimental communities. The early Mormons were an example of a religious communal effort and Brook Farm was an example of a humanistic or secular experiment. Although many of the communities were short-lived, these "backwoods utopias" reflect the diversity of the reform ideas of the time.

Shakers One of the earliest religious communal movements, the Shakers had about 6,000 members in various communities by the 1840s. Shakers held property in common and kept women and men strictly separate (forbidding marriage and sexual relations). For lack of new recruits, the Shaker communities virtually died out by the mid-1900s.

The Amana Colonies The settlers of the Amana colonies in Iowa were Germans who belonged to the religious reform movement known as Pietism. Like the Shakers, they emphasized simple, communal living. However, they allowed for marriage, and their communities continue to prosper, although they no longer practice their communal ways of living.

New Harmony The secular (nonreligious) experiment in New Harmony, Indiana, was the work of the Welsh industrialist and reformer Robert Owen. Owen hoped his utopian socialist community would provide an answer to the problems of inequity and alienation caused by the Industrial Revolution. The experiment failed, however, as a result of both financial problems and disagreements among members of the community.

Oneida Community After undergoing a religious conversion, John Humphrey Noyes in 1848 started a cooperative community in Oneida, New York. Dedicated to an ideal of perfect social and economic equality, community members shared property and, later, marriage partners. Critics attacked the Oneida system of planned reproduction and communal child-rearing as a sinful experiment in "free love." Despite the controversy, the community managed to prosper economically by producing and selling silverware of excellent quality.

Fourier Phalanxes In the 1840s, the theories of the French socialist Charles Fourier attracted the interest of many Americans. In response to the problems of a fiercely competitive society, Fourier advocated that people share work and housing in communities known as Fourier Phalanxes. This movement died out quickly as Americans proved too individualistic to live communally.

Arts and Literature

The democratic and reforming impulses of the 1830s found expression in painting, architecture, and literature.

Painting Genre painting—portraying people such as riding riverboats and voting—gained popularity among artists in the 1830s. For example, George Eastman's painting of people in various settings and carrying out daily activities won popularity for his lively rural compositions. The Hudson River School emphasized the heroic beauty of dramatic scenes along the Hudson River and the frontier wilderness. The Hudson River School's romantic age's fascination with the natural world.

Architecture Inspired by the democratic ideals of the 1830s, architects adapted Greek styles to glorify American democracy. Columned facades like those of ancient Greece were used in public buildings, banks, hotels, and even homes.

Literature In addition to the transcendentalists (such as Emerson and Thoreau), other writers helped to create a new American literature. Partly as a result of the War of 1812, Americans became more nationalistic and eager to read the vernacular. Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper wrote fiction using American settings. Cooper's novels, written from 1824 to 1841, glorified the American nobleman. *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) questioned the intolerance and conformity of the Puritan era. The innovative novel *Moby-Dick* (1851) reflected the conflicts of the era as it told the story of Captain Ahab's quest for the white whale.



Source: *Fur Traders Descending the Yukon*, Caleb Bingham, 1845. Wikimedia Commons, Metropolitan Museum of Art

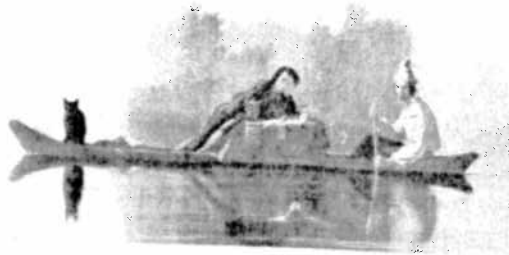
Arts and Literature

The democratic and reforming impulses of the Age of Jackson expressed themselves in painting, architecture, and literature.

Painting Genre painting—portraying the everyday life of ordinary people such as riding riverboats and voting on election day—became the vogue of artists in the 1830s. For example, George Caleb Bingham depicted common people in various settings and carrying out domestic chores. William S. Mount won popularity for his lively rural compositions. Thomas Cole and Frederick Church emphasized the heroic beauty of American landscapes, especially in dramatic scenes along the Hudson River in New York State and the western frontier wilderness. The Hudson River school, as it was called, expressed the romantic age's fascination with the natural world.

Architecture Inspired by the democracy of classical Athens, American architects adapted Greek styles to glorify the democratic spirit of the republic. Columned facades like those of ancient Greek temples graced the entryways to public buildings, banks, hotels, and even some private homes.

Literature In addition to the transcendentalist authors (notably Emerson and Thoreau), other writers helped to create a literature that was distinctively American. Partly as a result of the War of 1812, the American people became more nationalistic and eager to read the works of American writers about American themes. Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper, for example, wrote fiction using American settings. Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales* were a series of novels written from 1824 to 1841 that glorified the frontiersman as nature's nobleman. *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and other novels by Nathaniel Hawthorne questioned the intolerance and conformity in American life. Herman Melville's innovative novel *Moby-Dick* (1855) reflected the theological and cultural conflicts of the era as it told the story of Captain Ahab's pursuit of a white whale.



Source: *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri*, by George Caleb Bingham, 1845. Wikimedia Commons/The Yorck Project/Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

Reforming Society

Reform movements evolved during the antebellum era. At first, the leaders of reform hoped to improve people's behavior through moral persuasion. However, after they tried sermons and pamphlets, reformers often moved on to political action and to ideas for creating new institutions to replace the old.

Temperance

The high rate of alcohol consumption (five gallons of hard liquor per person in 1820) prompted reformers to target alcohol as the cause of social ills, and explains why temperance became the most popular of the reform movements.

The temperance movement began by using moral exhortation. In 1826, Protestant ministers and others concerned with drinking and its effects founded the American Temperance Society. The society tried to persuade drinkers to take a pledge of total abstinence. In 1840, a group of recovering alcoholics formed the Washingtonians and argued that alcoholism was a disease that needed practical, helpful treatment. By the 1840s, various temperance societies together had more than a million members.

German and Irish immigrants were largely opposed to the temperance campaign. But they lacked the political power to prevent state and city governments from passing reforms. Factory owners and politicians joined with the reformers when it became clear that temperance measures could reduce crime and poverty and increase workers' output on the job. In 1851, the state of Maine went beyond simply placing taxes on the sale of liquor and became the first state to prohibit the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors. Twelve states followed before the Civil War. In the 1850s, the issue of slavery came to overshadow the temperance movement. However, the movement would gain strength again in the late 1870s (with strong support from the Women's Christian Temperance Union) and achieve national success with the passage of the 18th Amendment in 1919.

Movement for Public Asylums

Humanitarian reformers of the 1820s and 1830s called attention to the increasing numbers of criminals, emotionally disturbed persons, and paupers. Often these people were forced to live in wretched conditions and were regularly either abused or neglected by their caretakers. To alleviate the suffering of these individuals, reformers proposed setting up new public institutions—state-supported prisons, mental hospitals, and poorhouses. Reformers hoped that inmates would be cured as a result of being withdrawn from squalid surroundings and treated to a disciplined pattern of life in some rural setting.

Mental Hospitals Dorothea Dix, a former schoolteacher from Massachusetts, was horrified to find mentally ill persons locked up with convicted criminals in unsanitary cells. She launched a cross-country crusade, publicizing the awful treatment she had witnessed. In the 1840s one state legislature after another built new mental hospitals or improved existing institutions and mental patients began receiving professional treatment.

Schools for Blind and Deaf Persons Special institutions to help people with physical disabilities were established in the 1800s. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet opened a school for the deaf, and Dr. Sarah Fuller opened a school for the blind. By the 1850s, special schools for the blind and deaf reformers had been established in many states.

Prisons Pennsylvania took the lead in calling penitentiaries to take the place of crowded jails. The experiment in solitary confinement to force them to work was dropped because of the expense. Prison reforms reflected a major doctrine: hard labor and discipline would bring about moral reform. The Auburn system in New York, enforced by the state, provided moral instruction and work projects.

Public Education

Another reform movement started in the 1820s for establishing free public schools for all children. Reformers were motivated in part by the problems posed by growing numbers of the urban population, especially native-born workers' groups in the cities. A campaign for free (tax-supported) schools was launched in 1826.

Free Common Schools Horace Mann led the common (public) school movement. As Massachusetts Board of Education, Mann worked for universal education, a longer school year, and increased funding for public schools spread to other states.

Moral Education Mann and other reformers wanted children to learn not only basic literacy, but also moral values. William Holmes McGuffey, a Pennsylvania school teacher, wrote elementary textbooks that became widely used. McGuffey readers extolled the virtues of hard work, honesty, and industry—the kind of behaviors needed in a free society.

Objecting to the Protestant tone of the common schools, some reformers founded private schools for the instruction of children.

Higher Education The religious revival of the 1800s helped fuel the growth of private colleges. Various Protestant denominations founded colleges, especially in the newer western states. At the same time, several new colleges in Massachusetts (founded by Mary Lyon) began to admit women. Adult education societies, which brought speakers such as Charles Sumner to audiences.

Schools for Blind and Deaf Persons Two other reformers founded special institutions to help people with physical disabilities. Thomas Gallaudet opened a school for the deaf, and Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe started a school for the blind. By the 1850s, special schools modeled after the work of these reformers had been established in many states of the Union.

Prisons Pennsylvania took the lead in prison reform, building new prisons called penitentiaries to take the place of crude jails. Reformers placed prisoners in solitary confinement to force them to reflect on their sins and repent. The experiment was dropped because of the high rate of prisoner suicides. These prison reforms reflected a major doctrine of the asylum movement: structure and discipline would bring about moral reform. A similar penal experiment, the Auburn system in New York, enforced rigid rules of discipline while also providing moral instruction and work programs.

Public Education

Another reform movement started in the Jacksonian era focused on the need for establishing free public schools for children of all classes. Middle-class reformers were motivated in part by their fears for the future of the republic posed by growing numbers of the uneducated poor—both immigrant and native-born. Workers' groups in the cities generally supported the reformers' campaign for free (tax-supported) schools.

Free Common Schools Horace Mann was the leading advocate of the common (public) school movement. As secretary of the newly founded Massachusetts Board of Education, Mann worked for compulsory attendance for all children, a longer school year, and increased teacher preparation. In the 1840s, the movement for public schools spread rapidly to other states.

Moral Education Mann and other educational reformers wanted children to learn not only basic literacy, but also moral principles. Toward this end, William Holmes McGuffey, a Pennsylvania teacher, created a series of elementary textbooks that became widely used to teach reading and morality. The McGuffey readers extolled the virtues of hard work, punctuality, and sobriety—the kind of behaviors needed in an emerging industrial society.

Objecting to the Protestant tone of the public schools, Roman Catholics founded private schools for the instruction of Catholic children.

Higher Education The religious enthusiasm of the Second Great Awakening helped fuel the growth of private colleges. Beginning in the 1830s, various Protestant denominations founded small denominational colleges, especially in the newer western states (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa). At the same time, several new colleges, including Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts (founded by Mary Lyon in 1837) and Oberlin College in Ohio, began to admit women. Adult education was furthered by lyceum lecture societies, which brought speakers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson to small-town audiences.

Changes in Families and Roles for Women

American society was still overwhelmingly rural in the mid-19th century. But in the growing cities, the impact of the Industrial Revolution was redefining the family. Industrialization reduced the economic value of children. In middle-class families, birth control was used to reduce average family size, which declined from 7.04 family members in 1800 to 5.42 in 1830. More affluent women now had the leisure time to devote to religious and moral uplift organizations. The New York Female Moral Reform Society, for example, worked to prevent impoverished young women from being forced into lives of prostitution.

Cult of Domesticity Industrialization also changed roles within families. In traditional farm families, men were the moral leaders. However, when men took jobs outside the home to work for salaries or wages in an office or a factory, they were absent most of the time. As a result, the women in these households who remained at home took charge of the household and children. The idealized view of women as moral leaders in the home is called the cult of domesticity.

Women's Rights Women reformers, especially those involved in the antislavery movement, resented the way men relegated them to secondary roles in the movement and prevented them from taking part fully in policy discussions. Two sisters, Sarah and Angelina Grimké, objected to male opposition to their antislavery activities. In protest, Sarah Grimké wrote her *Letter on the Condition of Women and the Equality of the Sexes* (1837). Another pair of reformers, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, began campaigning for women's rights after they had been barred from speaking at an antislavery convention.

Seneca Falls Convention (1848) The leading feminists met at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. At the conclusion of their convention—the first women's rights convention in American history—they issued a document closely modeled after the Declaration of Independence. Their "Declaration of Sentiments" declared that "all men and women are created equal" and listed women's grievances against laws and customs that discriminated against them.

Following the Seneca Falls Convention, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony led the campaign for equal voting, legal, and property rights for women. In the 1850s, however, the issue of women's rights was overshadowed by the crisis over slavery.

Antislavery Movement

Opponents of slavery ranged from moderates who proposed gradual abolition to radicals who demanded immediate abolition without compensating their owners. The Second Great Awakening led many Christians to view slavery as a sin. This moral view made compromise with defenders of slavery difficult.

American Colonization Society The American Colonization Society was first tried in 1817. This appealed to many politicians, in part because whites with racial prejudices wanted to remove blacks from U.S. society. In 1822, the society established an African-American settlement in Liberia. It never proved a practical course. Between 1820 and 1860, about 15,000 African Americans were settled in Africa, 2.5 million.

American Antislavery Society In 1833, the publication of an abolitionist newspaper, the beginning of the radical abolitionist movement, and the rise of Garrison advocated immediate abolition of slavery without compensating the slaveowners. In 1833, abolitionists founded the American Antislavery Society. Its members argued for "no Union with slaveholders" by condemning and burning the Constitution. They argued for "freeing their slaves."

Liberty Party Garrison's radicalism in the abolitionist movement. Believing that political action was more effective than Garrison's moral crusade, a group of abolitionists ran James Birney as their candidate in 1840. They ran James Birney as their candidate in 1844. The party's one campaign pledge was to achieve abolition by political and legal means.

Black Abolitionists Escaped slave Frederick Douglass was among the most outspoken and convincing abolitionists. Such as Frederick Douglass could speak from firsthand experience. A former slave, Douglass later advocated both political and direct action. In 1847, he started the antislavery newspaper *Frederick Douglass' Paper*. American leaders, such as Harriet Tubman and William Still, helped organize the movement to send freed slaves to free territory in the North or to Canada.

Violent Abolitionism David Walker was a two northern African Americans who argued for the slavery question. They argued that the only way to end slavery was by rising up in revolt against their oppressors. In 1831, Nat Turner led a revolt in which 55 whites were killed hundreds of African Americans. Before this event, there had been some support for abolition in the South. After the revolt, fear of violence and inflamed rhetoric put an end to antislavery efforts in the South.

American Colonization Society The idea of transporting freed slaves to an African colony was first tried in 1817 with the founding of the American Colonization Society. This appealed to moderate antislavery reformers and politicians, in part because whites with racist attitudes hoped to remove free blacks from U.S. society. In 1822, the American Colonization Society established an African-American settlement in Monrovia, Liberia. Colonization never proved a practical course. Between 1820 and 1860, only about 12,000 African Americans were settled in Africa, while the slave population grew by 2.5 million.

American Antislavery Society In 1831, William Lloyd Garrison began publication of an abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*, an event that marks the beginning of the radical abolitionist movement. The uncompromising Garrison advocated immediate abolition of slavery in every state and territory without compensating the slaveowners. In 1833, Garrison and other abolitionists founded the American Antislavery Society. Garrison stepped up his attacks by condemning and burning the Constitution as a proslavery document. He argued for "no Union with slaveholders" until they repented for their sins by freeing their slaves.

Liberty Party Garrison's radicalism soon led to a split in the abolitionist movement. Believing that political action was a more practical route to reform than Garrison's moral crusade, a group of northerners formed the Liberty party in 1840. They ran James Birney as their candidate for president in 1840 and 1844. The party's one campaign pledge was to bring about the end of slavery by political and legal means.

Black Abolitionists Escaped slaves and free African Americans were among the most outspoken and convincing critics of slavery. A former slave such as Frederick Douglass could speak about the brutality and degradation of slavery from firsthand experience. An early follower of Garrison, Douglass later advocated both political and direct action to end slavery and racial prejudice. In 1847, he started the antislavery journal *The North Star*. Other African American leaders, such as Harriet Tubman, David Ruggles, Sojourner Truth, and William Still, helped organize the effort to assist fugitive slaves escape to free territory in the North or to Canada, where slavery was prohibited.

Violent Abolitionism David Walker and Henry Highland Garnet were two northern African Americans who advocated the most radical solution to the slavery question. They argued that slaves should take action themselves by rising up in revolt against their owners. In 1831, a Virginia slave named Nat Turner led a revolt in which 55 whites were killed. In retaliation, whites killed hundreds of African Americans in brutal fashion and put down the revolt. Before this event, there had been some antislavery sentiment and discussion in the South. After the revolt, fear of future uprisings as well as Garrison's inflamed rhetoric put an end to antislavery talk in the South.

Other Reforms

Efforts to reform individuals and society during the antebellum era also included smaller movements such as:

- the American Peace Society, founded in 1828 with the objective of abolishing war, which actively protested the war with Mexico in 1846
- laws to protect sailors from being flogged
- dietary reforms, such as eating whole wheat bread or Sylvester Graham's crackers, to promote good digestion
- dress reform for women, particularly Amelia Bloomer's efforts to get women to wear pantalettes instead of long skirts
- phrenology, a pseudoscience that studied the bumps on an individual's skull to assess the person's character and ability

Southern Reaction to Reform

The antebellum reform movement was largely found in the northern and western states, with little impact in the South. While "modernizers" worked to perfect society in the North, southerners were more committed to tradition and slow to support public education and humanitarian reforms. They were alarmed to see northern reformers join forces to support the antislavery movement. Increasingly, they viewed social reform as a northern threat against the southern way of life.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: WHAT MOTIVATED REFORMERS?

In her history of antebellum reform, *Freedom's Ferment* (1944), Alice Tyler portrayed the reformers as idealistic humanitarians whose chief goal was to create a just and equitable society for all. Other historians generally accepted Tyler's interpretation.

However, in recent years, historians have questioned whether reformers were motivated by humanitarian concerns or by a desire of upper- and middle-class citizens to control the masses. According to their argument, the temperance movement was designed to control the drinking of the poor and recent immigrants. The chief purpose of penitentiaries was to control crime, of poorhouses to motivate the lower classes to pursue work, and of public schools to "Americanize" the immigrant population. Schools were supported by the wealthy, because they would teach the working class hard work, punctuality, and obedience. Revisionist historians also have noted that most of the reformers were Whigs, not Jacksonian Democrats.

Some historians have argued that the reformers had multiple motivations for their work. They point out that, although some reasons for reform may have been self-serving and bigoted, most reformers sincerely

thought that their ideas for improving society were sound. For example, Dorothea Dix won support for her reform of the mentally ill by appealing to the public's sense of justice and were humane. Historians point out that reforms were ones that had broad support for a mix of reasons.

KEY TERMS BY THEME

<p>Alternative Groups (ID)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> utopian communities Shakers Amana Colonies Robert Owen New Harmony Joseph Henry Noyes Oneida community Charles Fourier phalanxes Horace Mann 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Anti-Society abolitionism Lloyd Garrison Liberator Liberty party Frederick Douglass North Star Harriet Tubman David Ruggles Sojourner Truth William Still David Walker Henry Highland Nat Turner
<p>Reforming Society (POL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> temperance American Temperance Society Washingtonians Women's Christian Temperance Union asylum movement Dorothea Dix Thomas Gallaudet Samuel Gridley Howe penitentiaries Auburn system Horace Mann public school movement McGuffey readers American Peace Society 	<p>New Ideas (ID)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> antebellum romantic movement transcendentalism Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Scholar" Henry David Thoreau, <i>Walden</i>, Disobedience Brook Farm George Ripley feminists Margaret Fuller Theodore Parker George C. Burdett William S. Burdett Thomas C. Burdett Frederick Hudson F.
<p>Abolition Efforts (POL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Colonization Society 	

thought that their ideas for improving society would truly help people. For example, Dorothea Dix won support for increased spending for treatment of the mentally ill by appealing to both self-interest and morality. She argued that reforms would save the public money in the long run and were humane. Historians point out further that the most successful reforms were ones that had broad support across society—often for a mix of reasons.

KEY TERMS BY THEME

Alternative Groups (ID)

utopian communities
Shakers
Amana Colonies
Robert Owen
New Harmony
Joseph Henry Noyes
Oneida community
Charles Fourier
phalanxes
Horace Mann

Reforming Society (POL)

temperance
American Temperance Society
Washingtonians
Women's Christian Temperance Union
asylum movement
Dorothea Dix
Thomas Gallaudet
Samuel Gridley Howe
penitentiaries
Auburn system
Horace Mann
public school movement
McGuffey readers
American Peace Society
Abolition Efforts (POL)
American Colonization Society

American Antislavery Society

abolitionism
William Lloyd Garrison; *The Liberator*
Liberty party
Frederick Douglass; *The North Star*
Harriet Tubman
David Ruggles
Sojourner Truth
William Still
David Walker
Henry Highland Garnet
Nat Turner

New Ideas (CUL)

antebellum period
romantic movement
transcendentalists
Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar"
Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, "On Civil Disobedience"
Brook Farm
George Ripley
feminists
Margaret Fuller
Theodore Parker
George Caleb Bingham
William S. Mount
Thomas Cole
Frederick Church
Hudson River school

Washington Irving
James Fenimore Cooper
Nathaniel Hawthorne
Sylvester Graham
Amelia Bloomer

Thoughts on Religion (CUL)

Second Great Awakening
Timothy Dwight
revivalism; revival (camp)
meetings
millennialism
Church of Latter-Day Saints; Mormons
Joseph Smith
Brigham Young
New Zion

Women's Rights (CUL)

women's rights movement
cult of domesticity
Sarah Grimké
Angelina Grimké
Letter on the Condition of Women and the Equality of the Sexes
Lucretia Mott
Elizabeth Cady Stanton
Seneca Falls Convention (1848)
Susan B. Anthony

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Questions 1–3 refer to the excerpt below.

"If, then education be of admitted importance to the people, under all forms of government, and of unquestioned necessity when they govern themselves, it follows, of course, that its cultivation and diffusion is a matter of public concern and a duty which every government owes to its people. . . .

"Many complain of this tax, not so much on account of its amount as because it is for the benefit of others and not themselves. This is a mistake; it is for their own benefit, inasmuch as it perpetuates the government. . . .

"He who would oppose it, either through inability to comprehend the advantages of general education, or from unwillingness to bestow them on all his fellow citizens, even to the lowest and the poorest, or from dread of popular vengeance, seems to me to want either the head of the philosopher, the heart of the philanthropist, or the nerve of the hero."

—Representative Thaddeus Stevens, Speech to the Pennsylvania Legislature, 1835

1. The first free public education system in the United States began in which of the following colonies?
(A) Massachusetts
(B) New York
(C) Pennsylvania
(D) Virginia
2. Stevens believes public education would provide support for
(A) the antislavery movement
(B) the growth of industry
(C) religious beliefs of all kinds
(D) democratic government
3. Stevens disagrees with those who oppose free public education because
(A) it is an example of government control
(B) it will result in increased taxes
(C) schools lack qualified teachers
(D) schools are under Protestant influences

Questions 4–6 refer to the excerpt below.

"Unlike those who call themselves non-government, but . . . a better government

"It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law of the government. The only obligation which I have a right to think right. . . .

"There are thousands who are in opposition [with Mexico] who yet in effect do nothing

"Under a government which imprisons just men is also a prison . . . If the alternative give up war and slavery, the state will rise and sand men were not to pay their tax bill and bloody measure . . . This is . . . the

—Henry David Thoreau

4. Thoreau challenged the government
(A) he rejected all forms of government
(B) he opposed war in all cases
(C) it engaged in a war to take land
(D) it taxed people without representation
5. Thoreau believed that a just man should do the following?
(A) Organize opposition
(B) Run for elected office
(C) Overthrow the government
(D) Go to jail for his beliefs
6. Which of the following groups held beliefs expressed in this excerpt?
(A) Revivalists
(B) Transcendentalists
(C) Phalanxes
(D) Millennialists

Questions 4–6 refer to the excerpt below.

“Unlike those who call themselves no-government men, I ask for, not . . . no-government, but . . . a better government. . . .

“It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right. . . .

“There are thousands who are in opinion opposed to slavery and to the war [with Mexico] who yet in effect do nothing to put an end to them. . . .

“Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison . . . If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison or give up war and slavery, the state will not hesitate which to choose. If a thousand men were not to pay their tax bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure . . . This is . . . the definition of a peaceable revolution.”

—Henry David Thoreau, lecturer and author, “Resistance to Civil Government,” (Civil Disobedience), 1849

4. Thoreau challenged the government because
 - (A) he rejected all forms of government
 - (B) he opposed war in all cases
 - (C) it engaged in a war to take land from Mexico
 - (D) it taxed people without representation
5. Thoreau believed that a just man should be prepared to do which of the following?
 - (A) Organize opposition
 - (B) Run for elected office
 - (C) Overthrow the government
 - (D) Go to jail for his beliefs
6. Which of the following groups held views most similar to the ideas expressed in this excerpt?
 - (A) Revivalists
 - (B) Transcendentalists
 - (C) Phalanxes
 - (D) Millennialists

Questions 7–8 refer to the excerpt below.

“I think that ’twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what’s all this here talk about?”

“That man over there says that women need to be helped . . . Nobody ever helps me. . . . And ain’t I a woman?”

“Then they talk about this thing in the head . . . intellect . . . What’s that got to do with women’s rights or negro’s rights? If my cup won’t hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn’t you be mean not to let me have my little half-measure full?”

“Then that little man in black there, he says women can’t have as much rights as men, ’cause Christ wasn’t a woman! Where did Christ come from? . . . From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.”

—Sojourner Truth, abolitionist and former slave, speech to a Women’s Convention in Ohio, 1851

7. Sojourner Truth strongly rejects criticisms of women that are based on which of the following?
- (A) The ideas of transcendentalism
 - (B) The cult of domesticity
 - (C) The teachings of religion
 - (D) The working status of women
8. Sojourner Truth saw connection between the women’s rights movement and
- (A) the Second Great Awakening
 - (B) the antislavery movement
 - (C) the cult of domesticity
 - (D) the Constitution

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS

Briefly answer the questions in context.

Question 1. Answer a, b, and c.

- a) Choose ONE of the reforms that demonstrates the influence of the 19th century.
- public education
 - temperance
 - women’s rights
- b) Contrast your choice against why that option is not as good.
- c) Briefly explain ONE governmental action during this period.

Question 2 is based on the following excerpt.

“America is beginning to assert herself, and Europe is receding.”

“Prudent men have begun to see that a view to the values of land . . . is ever false . . . in our culture. The code for our mind, as well as our body. . . .”

“Gentlemen, the development of the nation to the utmost of the commercial causes which are to modify the state of the future which the imagination fears to . . .”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, lecture

2. Using the excerpt, answer a, b, and c.
- a) Briefly explain the point of view of the speaker in the excerpt.
- nature
 - railroads
 - reform movements
- b) Briefly explain ONE way in which the mid-19th century led to the development of the United States.
- c) Briefly explain ONE way in which the mid-19th century challenged the status quo.