AP UNITED STATES HISTORY

UNIT 4 MATERIALS



THE AGE OF REFORM

MR. BAILEY

Unit 4 Terms

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| Chapter 11  The Peculiar Institution  The ''peculiar institution''  ''Cotton is King''  Lords of the Loom and Lords of the Lash  ''plain folk''  Southern paternalism  The proslavery argument  Slave religion  ''silent sabotage''  Underground Railroad  Runaways  Harriet Tubman  Denmark Vesey's conspiracy  Nat Turner's Rebellion | Chapter 12  An Age Of Reform, 1820-1840  Second Great Awakening  Charles G. Finney  Burned Over District  Revivalism  Arminianism  Abolitionism  William Lloyd Garrison  *The Liberator*  Emancipation  David Walker’s *Appeal*  Nat Turner’s Rebellion  Frederick Douglass  Solomon Northup  *Twelve Years a Slave*  Northern and Southern Reactions to Abolitionism  “Gag Rule”  African American Worship (North and South)  Temperance Movement  ''moral suasion''  Horace Mann  Public Education  Elizabeth Cady Stanton  Seneca Falls Convention  Seneca Falls *Declaration of Sentiments*  Dorothea Dix  Utopian communities  Secular communitarian  American Colonization Society  American Anti-Slavery Society |

**Editorials by William Lloyd Garrison in *The Liberator***

**“To The Public”** **Boston, January 1, 1831**

In the month of August, I issued proposals for publishing "THE LIBERATOR" in Washington city; but the enterprise, though hailed in different sections of the country, was palsied by public indifference…

During my recent tour for the purpose of exciting the minds of the people by a series of discourses on the subject of slavery, every place that I visited gave fresh evidence of the fact, that a greater revolution in public sentiment was to be effected in the free states—*and particularly in New-England*—than at the south. I found contempt more bitter, opposition more active, detraction more relentless, prejudice more stubborn, and apathy more frozen, than among slave owners themselves… I determined, at every hazard, to lift up the standard of emancipation in the eyes of the nation, *within sight of Bunker Hill and in the birth place of liberty.* That standard is now unfurled; and long may it float, unhurt by the spoliation of time or the missiles of a desperate foe—yea, till every chain be broken, and every bondman set free! Let southern oppressors tremble—let their secret abettors tremble—let their northern apologists tremble-let all the enemies of the persecuted blacks tremble.

I deem the publication of my original Prospectus unnecessary, as it has obtained a wide circulation. The principles therein inculcated will be steadily pursued in this paper, excepting that I shall not array myself as the political partisan of any man. In defending the great cause of human rights, I wish to derive the assistance of all religions and of all parties.

Assenting to the "self-evident truth" maintained in the American Declaration of Independence, "that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights—among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," I shall strenuously contend for the immediate enfranchisement of our slave population. In Park-street Church, on the Fourth of July, 1829, in an address on slavery, I unreflectingly assented to the popular but pernicious doctrine of gradual abolition. I seize this opportunity to make a full and unequivocal recantation, and thus publicly to ask pardon of my God, of my country, and of my brethren the poor slaves, for having uttered a sentiment so full of timidity, injustice and absurdity…

I am aware, that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. No! no! Tell a man whose house is on fire, to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen; —but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest—**I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—AND I WILL BE HEARD.** The apathy of the people is enough to make every statue leap from its pedestal, and to hasten the resurrection of the dead.

It is pretended, that I am retarding the cause of emancipation by the coarseness of my invective, and the precipitancy of my measures. *The charge is not true…* posterity will bear testimony that I was right. I desire to thank God, that he enables me to disregard "the fear of man which bringeth a snare," and to speak his truth in its simplicity and power. And here I close with this fresh dedication:

Oppression! I have seen thee, face to face,

And met thy cruel eye and cloudy brow;

But thy soul-withering glance I fear not now—

For dread to prouder feelings doth give place

Of deep abhorrence! Scorning the disgrace

Of slavish knees that at thy footstool bow,

I also kneel—but with far other vow

Do hail thee and thy hord of hirelings base:—

I swear, while life-blood warms my throbbing veins,

Still to oppose and thwart, with heart and hand,

Thy brutalising sway-till Afric’s chains

Are burst, and Freedom rules the rescued land,—

Trampling Oppression and his iron rod:

Such is the vow I take—SO HELP ME GOD!

**“Working Men”** **Boston, January 1, 1831**

An attempt has been made—it is still making—we regret to say, with considerable success—to inflame the minds of our working classes against the more opulent, and to persuade men that they are contemned and oppressed by a wealthy aristocracy. That public grievances exist, is unquestionably true; but they are not confined to any one class of society. Every profession is interested in their removal—the rich as well as the poor. It is in the highest degree criminal, therefore, to exasperate our mechanics to deeds of violence, or to array them under a party banner; for it is not true, that, at any time, they have been the objects of reproach. Labor is not dishonorable. The industrious artisan, in a government like ours, will always be held in better estimation than the wealthy idler.

Our limits will not allow us to enlarge on this subject: we may return to it another time. We are the friends of reform; but that is not reform, which, in curing one evil, threatens to inflict a thousand others.

**“On the Constitution and the Union”** **Boston, December 29, 1832**

There is much declamation about the sacredness of the compact which was formed between the free and slave states, on the adoption of the Constitution. A sacred compact, forsooth! We pronounce it the most bloody and heaven-daring arrangement ever made by men for the continuance and protection of a system of the most atrocious villainy ever exhibited on earth. Yes—we recognize the compact, but with feelings of shame and indignation; and it will be held in everlasting infamy by the friends of justice and humanity throughout the world. It was a compact formed at the sacrifice of the bodies and souls of millions of our race, for the sake of achieving a political object—an unblushing and monstrous coalition to do evil that good might come. Such a compact was, in the nature of things and according to the law of God, null and void from the beginning. No body of men ever had the right to guarantee the holding of human beings in bondage. Who or what were the framers of our government, that they should dare confirm and authorize such high-handed villainy—such a flagrant robbery of the inalienable rights of man-such a glaring violation of all the precepts and injunctions of the gospel-such a savage war upon a sixth part of our whole population? —They were men, like ourselves—as fallible, as sinful, as weak, as ourselves. By the infamous bargain which they made between themselves, they virtually dethroned the Most High God, and trampled beneath their feet their own solemn and heaven-attested Declaration, that all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights — among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. They had no lawful power to bind themselves, or their posterity, for one hour-for one moment — by such an unholy alliance. It was not valid then—it is not valid now. Still they persisted in maintaining it — and still do their successors, the people of Massachusetts, of New-England, and of the twelve free States, persist in maintaining it. A sacred compact! a sacred compact! What, then, is wicked and ignominious? ....

People of New-England, and of the free States! Is it true that slavery is no concern of yours? Have you no right even to protest against it, or to seek its removal? Are you not the main pillars of its support? How long do you mean to be answerable to God and the world, for spilling the blood of the poor innocents? Be not afraid to look the monster SLAVERY boldly in the face. He is your implacable foe—the vampyre who is sucking your life-blood—the ravager of a large portion of your country, and the enemy of God and man. Never hope to be a united, or happy, or prosperous people while he exists…

It is said that if you agitate this question, you will divide the Union. Believe it not; but should disunion follow, the fault will not be yours. You must perform your duty, faithfully, fearlessly and promptly, and leave the consequences to God: that duty clearly is, to cease from giving countenance and protection to southern kidnappers. Let them separate, if they can muster courage enough… Let the pillars thereof fall—let the superstructure crumble into dust—if it must be upheld by robbery and oppression.

**Identify Garrison’s Main Points…**

# Speech by Sen. John C. Calhoun February 6, 1837

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**“Slavery a Positive Good”**

I do not belong… to the school which holds that aggression is to be met by concession. Mine is the opposite creed, which teaches that encroachments must be met at the beginning, and that those who act on the opposite principle are prepared to become slaves. In this case, in particular I hold concession or compromise to be fatal. If we concede an inch, concession would follow concession—compromise would follow compromise, until our ranks would be so broken that effectual resistance would be impossible. We must meet the enemy on the frontier, with a fixed determination of maintaining our position at every hazard. Consent to receive these insulting petitions, and the next demand will be that they be referred to a committee in order that they may be deliberated and acted upon. At the last session we were modestly asked to receive them, simply to lay them on the table, without any view to ulterior action. . . . I then said, that the next step would be to refer the petition to a committee, and I already see indications that such is now the intention. If we yield, that will be followed by another, and we will thus proceed, step by step, to the final consummation of the object of these petitions. We are now told that the most effectual mode of arresting the progress of abolition is, to reason it down; and with this view it is urged that the petitions ought to be referred to a committee. That is the very ground which was taken at the last session in the other House, but instead of arresting its progress it has since advanced more rapidly than ever… The subject is beyond the jurisdiction of Congress - they have no right to touch it in any shape or form, or to make it the subject of deliberation or discussion. . . .

As widely as this incendiary spirit has spread, it has not yet infected this body, or the great mass of the intelligent and business portion of the North; but unless it be speedily stopped, it will spread and work upwards till it brings the two great sections of the Union into deadly conflict….

They who imagine that the spirit now abroad in the North, will die away of itself without a shock or convulsion, have formed a very inadequate conception of its real character; it will continue to rise and spread, unless prompt and efficient measures to stay its progress be adopted. Already it has taken possession of the pulpit, of the schools, and, to a considerable extent, of the press; those great instruments by which the mind of the rising generation will be formed.

However sound the great body of the non-slaveholding States are at present, in the course of a few years they will be succeeded by those who will have been taught to hate the people and institutions of nearly one-half of this Union, with a hatred more deadly than one hostile nation ever entertained towards another. It is easy to see the end. By the necessary course of events, if left to themselves, we must become, finally, two people. It is impossible under the deadly hatred which must spring up between the two great nations, if the present causes are permitted to operate unchecked, that we should continue under the same political system. The conflicting elements would burst the Union asunder, powerful as are the links which hold it together. Abolition and the Union cannot coexist. As the friend of the Union I openly proclaim it—and the sooner it is known the better. The former may now be controlled, but in a short time it will be beyond the power of man to arrest the course of events. We of the South will not, cannot, surrender our institutions. To maintain the existing relations between the two races, inhabiting that section of the Union, is indispensable to the peace and happiness of both. It cannot be subverted without drenching the country or the other of the races. . . . But let me not be understood as admitting, even by implication, that the existing relations between the two races in the slaveholding States is an evil:—far otherwise; I hold it to be a good… I appeal to facts. Never before has the black race of Central Africa, from the dawn of history to the present day, attained a condition so civilized and so improved, not only physically, but morally and intellectually.

In the meantime, the white or European race, has not degenerated. It has kept pace with its brethren in other sections of the Union where slavery does not exist… I appeal to all sides whether the South is not equal in virtue, intelligence, patriotism, courage… and all the high qualities which adorn our nature…

**I hold that in the present state of civilization, where two races of different origin, and distinguished by color, and other physical differences, as well as intellectual, are brought together, the relation now existing in the slaveholding States between the two, is, instead of an evil, a good—a positive good.**  I feel myself called upon to speak freely upon the subject where the honor and interests of those I represent are involved. I hold then, that there never has yet existed a wealthy and civilized society in which one portion of the community did not, in point of fact, live on the labor of the other. Broad and general as is this assertion, it is fully borne out by history…. I may say with truth, that in few countries so much is left to the share of the laborer, and so little exacted from him, or where there is more kind attention paid to him in sickness or infirmities of age. Compare his condition with the tenants of the poor houses in the more civilized portions of Europe—look at the sick, and the old and infirm slave, on one hand, in the midst of his family and friends, under the kind superintending care of his master and mistress, and compare it with the forlorn and wretched condition of the pauper in the poorhouse…

I fearlessly assert that the existing relation between the two races in the South, against which these blind fanatics are waging war, forms the most solid and durable foundation on which to rear free and stable political institutions… There is and always has been in an advanced stage of wealth and civilization, a conflict between labor and capital. The condition of society in the South exempts us from the disorders and dangers resulting from this conflict; and which explains why it is that the political condition of the slaveholding States has been so much more stable and quiet than that of the North.

Surrounded as the slaveholding States are with such imminent perils, I rejoice to think that our means of defense are ample, if we shall prove to have the intelligence and spirit to see and apply them before it is too late. [Southern politicians need to work together], to lay aside all party differences and unite with zeal and energy in repelling approaching dangers. Let there be concert of action, and we shall find ample means of security without resorting to secession or disunion. I speak with full knowledge and a thorough examination of the subject, and for one see my way clearly. . . . I dare not hope that anything I can say will arouse the South to a due sense of danger; I fear it is beyond the power of mortal voice to awaken it in time from the fatal security into which it has fallen.

**Identify Calhoun’s Main Points…**

**From Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America***

**Volume II, Section III, Chapter IX**

**EDUCATION OF YOUNG WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES**

*No free communities ever existed without morals, and as I observed in the former part of this work, morals are the work of woman. Consequently, whatever affects the condition of women, their habits and their opinions, has great political importance in my eyes.*

Among almost all Protestant nations young women are far more the mistresses of their own actions than they are in Catholic countries. This independence is still greater in Protestant countries like England, which have retained or acquired the right of self-government; freedom is then infused into the domestic circle by political habits and by religious opinions. In the United States the doctrines of Protestantism are combined with great political liberty and a most democratic state of society, and nowhere are young women surrendered so early or so completely to their own guidance.

Long before an American girl arrives at the marriageable age, her emancipation from maternal control begins: she has scarcely ceased to be a child when she already thinks for herself, speaks with freedom, and acts on her own impulse. The great scene of the world is constantly open to her view, far from seeking to conceal it from her, it is every day disclosed more completely and she is taught to survey it with a firm and calm gaze. Thus the vices and dangers of society are early revealed to her; as she sees them clearly, she views them without illusion and braves them without fear, for she is full of reliance on her own strength, and her confidence seems to be shared by all around her.

An American girl scarcely ever displays that virginal softness in the midst of young desires or that innocent and ingenuous grace which usually attend the European woman in the transition from girlhood to youth. It is rare that an American woman, at any age displays childish timidity or ignorance. Like the young women Europe she seeks to please, but she knows precisely the cost of pleasing. If she does not abandon herself to evil, at least she knows that it exists; and she is remarkable rather for purity of manners than for chastity of mind….

In France, where traditions of every age are still so strangely mingled in the opinions and tastes of the people, women commonly receive a reserved, retired, and almost conventional education, as they did in aristocratic times; and then they are suddenly abandoned without a guide and without assistance in the midst of all the irregularities inseparable from democratic society. The Americans are more consistent. They have found out that in a democracy the independence of individuals cannot fail to be very great… Under these circumstances, believing that they had little chance of repressing in woman the most vehement passions of the human heart, they held that the surer way was to teach her the art of combating those passions for herself. As they could not prevent her virtue from being exposed to frequent danger, they determined that she should know how best to defend it, and more reliance was placed on the free vigor of her will than on safeguards which have been shaken or overthrown Instead, then, of inculcating mistrust of herself, they constantly seek to enhance her confidence in her own strength of character. As it is neither possible nor desirable to keep a young woman in perpetual and complete ignorance, they hasten to give her a precocious knowledge on all subjects. Far from hiding the corruptions of the world from her, they prefer that she should see them at once and train herself to shun them, and they hold it of more importance to protect her conduct than to be over-scrupulous of the innocence of her thoughts.

Although the Americans are a very religious people, they do not rely on religion alone to defend the virtue of woman; they seek to arm her reason also. In this respect they have followed the same method as in several others: they first make vigorous efforts to cause individual independence to control itself, and they do not call in the aid of religion until they have reached the utmost limits of human strength.

I am aware that an education of this kind is not without danger; I am sensible that it tends to invigorate the judgment at the expense of the imagination and to make cold and virtuous women instead of affectionate wives and agreeable companions to man. Society may be more tranquil and better regulated, but domestic life has often fewer charms. These, however, are secondary evils, which may be braved for the sake of higher interests. At the stage at which we are now arrived, the choice is no longer left to us; a democratic education is indispensable to protect women from the dangers with which democratic institutions and manners surround them.

**Volume II, Section III, Chapter X**

**THE YOUNG WOMAN IN THE CHARACTER OF A WIFE**

*IN America the independence of woman is irrecoverably lost in the bonds of matrimony. If an unmarried woman is less constrained there than elsewhere, a wife is subjected to stricter obligations. The former makes her father's house an abode of freedom and of pleasure; the latter lives in the home of her husband as if it were a cloister. Yet these two different conditions of life are perhaps not so contrary as may be supposed, and it is natural that the American women should pass through the one to arrive at the other.*

Religious communities and trading nations entertain peculiarly serious notions of marriage: the former consider the regularity of woman's life as the best pledge and most certain sign of the purity of her morals; the latter regard it as the highest security for the order and prosperity of the household. The Americans are at the same time a puritanical people and a commercial nation; their religious opinions as well as their trading habits consequently lead them to require much abnegation on the part of woman and a constant sacrifice of her pleasures to her duties, which is seldom demanded of her in Europe. Thus in the United States the inexorable opinion of the public carefully circumscribes woman within the narrow circle of domestic interests and duties and forbids her to step beyond it.

Upon her entrance into the world a young American woman finds these notions firmly established; she sees the rules that are derived from them; she is not slow to perceive that she cannot depart for an instant from the established usages of her contemporaries without putting in jeopardy her peace of mind, her honor, nay, even her social existence; and she finds the energy required for such an act of submission… It may be said that she has learned by the use of her independence to surrender it without a struggle and without a murmur when the time comes for making the sacrifice.

But no American woman falls into the toils of matrimony as into a snare held out to her simplicity and ignorance. She has been taught beforehand what is expected of her and voluntarily and freely enters upon this engagement. She supports her new condition with courage because she chose it. As in America paternal discipline is very relaxed and the conjugal tie very strict, a young woman does not contract the latter without considerable circumspection and apprehension. Precocious marriages are rare. American women do not marry until their understandings are exercised and ripened, whereas in other countries most women generally begin to exercise and ripen their understandings only after marriage.

I by no means suppose, however, that the great change which takes place in all the habits of women in the United States as soon as they are married ought solely to be attributed to the constraint of public opinion; it is frequently imposed upon themselves by the sole effort of their own will. When the time for choosing a husband arrives, that cold and stern reasoning power which has been educated and invigorated by the free observation of the world teaches an American woman that a spirit of levity and independence in the bonds of marriage is a constant subject of annoyance, not of pleasure; it tells her that the amusements of the girl cannot become the recreations of the wife, and that the sources of a married woman's happiness are in the home of her husband…

**Identify Tocqueville’s main points…**

# Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments July 20, 1848

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When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it… When a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled. The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has never 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.

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men--both natives and foreigners.

Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns….

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes, and in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women--the law… and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single, and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration. He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her.

He allows her in church, as well as state, but a subordinate position, claiming apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry…

He has endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation--in view of the unjust laws above mentioned… we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.

**Identify the main points of the Declaration of Sentiments…**

**From T.S. Arthur, *Ten Nights in a Bar Room***

***and What I Saw There* (1854)**

**Characters and Setting:**

*This is a work of fiction. The narrator is an infrequent visitor of a tavern, the Sickle and Sheaf, operated by Simon Slade, a retired miller, and his son, Frank. During each successive visit, the narrator observes the Slades sinking further and further into moral depravity as a result of their involvement in the sinful business of tavern-keeping. The following selection is from the narrator’s ninth visit to the Sickle and Sheaf.*

**NIGHT THE NINTH.**

**A FEARFUL CONSUMMATION.**

Neither Slade nor his son was present at the breakfast-table on the next morning. As for myself, I did not eat with much appetite. Whether this defect arose from the state of my mind, or the state of the food set before me, I did not stop to inquire; but left the stifling, offensive atmosphere of the dining-room in a very few moments after entering that usually attractive place for a hungry man.

A few early drinkers were already in the bar-room--men with shattered nerves and cadaverous faces, who could not begin the day's work without the stimulus of brandy or whisky. They came in, with gliding footsteps, asked for what they wanted in low voices, drank in silence, and departed. It was a melancholy sight to look upon.

About nine o'clock the landlord made his appearance. He, too, came gliding into the bar-room, and his first act was to seize upon a brandy decanter, pour out nearly half a pint of the fiery liquid, and drink it off. How badly his hand shook--so badly that he spilled the brandy both in pouring it out and in lifting the glass to his lips! What a shattered wreck he was! He looked really worse now than he did on the day before, when drink gave an artificial vitality to his system, a tension to his muscles, and light to his countenance. The miller of ten years ago, and the tavern-keeper of today! Who could have identified them as one?

….

I saw but little of Slade or his son during the day. But both were in the bar-room at night, and both in a condition sorrowful to look upon. Their presence, together, in the bar-room, half intoxicated as they were, seemed to revive the unhappy temper of the previous evening, as freshly as if the sun had not risen and set upon their anger….

It was after nine o'clock, and there were not half a dozen persons in the room, when I noticed Frank Slade go behind the bar for the third or fourth time. He was just lifting a decanter of brandy, when his father, who was considerably under the influence of drink, started forward, and laid his hand upon that of his son. Instantly a fierce light gleamed from the eyes of the young man.

"Let go of my hand!" he exclaimed.

"No, I won't. Put up that brandy bottle--you're drunk now."

"Don't meddle with me, old man!" angrily retorted Frank. "I'm not in the mood to bear anything more from YOU."

"You're drunk as a fool now," returned Slade, who had seized the decanter. "Let go the bottle."

For only an instant did the young man hesitate. Then he drove his half-clenched hand against the breast of his father, who went staggering several paces from the counter. Recovering himself, and now almost furious, the landlord rushed forward upon his son, his hand raised to strike him.

"Keep off!" cried Frank. "Keep off! If you touch me, I'll strike you down!" At the same time raising the half-filled bottle threateningly.

But his father was in too maddened a state to fear any consequences, and so pressed forward upon his son, striking him in the face the moment he came near enough to do so.

Instantly, the young man, infuriated by drink and evil passions, threw the bottle at his father's head. The dangerous missile fell, crashing upon one of his temples, shivering it into a hundred pieces. A heavy, jarring fall too surely marked the fearful consequences of the blow. When we gathered around the fallen man, and made an effort to lift him from the floor, a thrill of horror went through every heart. A mortal paleness was already on his marred face, and the death-gurgle in his throat! In three minutes from the time the blow was struck, his spirit had gone upward to give an account of the deeds done in the body.

"Frank Slade! you have murdered your father!"

Sternly were these terrible words uttered. It was some time before the young man seemed to comprehend their meaning. But the moment he realized the awful truth, he uttered an exclamation of horror. Almost at the same instant, a pistol-shot came sharply on the ear. But the meditated self-destruction was not accomplished. The aim was not surely taken; and the ball struck harmlessly against the ceiling.

Half an hour afterward, and Frank Slade was a lonely prisoner in the county jail!

Does the reader need a word of comment on this fearful consummation? No; and we will offer none.

**Identify the main points of the excerpt…**

Education Reform in Antebellum America

*by Barbara Winslow*

*Detail from a Harper’s Weekly cartoon by Thomas Nast, February 26, 1870. (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)*

Education reform is often at the heart of all great reform struggles.[[1]](https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/first-age-reform/essays/education-reform-antebellum-america" \l "_ftn1" \o ")

By the 1820s Americans were experiencing exhilarating as well as unsettling social and economic changes. In the North, the familiar rural and agrarian life was slowly being transformed with the rise of factories, the emergence of a market economy, and the growth of towns and cities. The government—primarily state governments—and private individuals were investing in roads, turnpikes, bridges, canals, and railroads, linking the distant parts of the expanding republic. The new world of industry was transforming the rhythms of work, discipline, and social relations. Young men and women were leaving the farms for factory life, changing forever traditional family forms. Skilled craft workers were being replaced by machines and age-old crafts began to disappear.

The emergence of manufacturing and the growth of cities and towns led to new social problems: the deterioration of working and living conditions; the rise of poverty and indebtedness; and the increasing disparity between rich and poor. Meanwhile, periodic economic slumps created greater hardships and uncertainty. The Protestant ruling elite expressed alarm at these developing social conditions, concerned that poverty would lead to prostitution, gangs, drunkenness, crime, and other manifestations of social decline and disorder. Increased immigration after 1830, especially of the impoverished, unskilled, Catholic, and non-English-speaking Irish, further threatened the Protestant middle class.

Political changes accompanied the economic and social changes. In particular, suffrage was expanded to all white male citizens, which resulted in the emergence of new popular political activity. This increased political activity brought about labor strife and labor organization in response to the growth of waged labor and increasing social stratification. That, along with other changes brought about as a result of industrialization and the growing difference between the North and South over slavery, combined with a genuine concern for the plight of the poor, led to the development of reform movements in the areas of temperance, prison, mental health, land ownership and development, women’s rights, and abolition.

A desire to reform and expand education accompanied and informed many of the political, social, and economic impulses toward reform. Three particularly important core components of education reform developed in the antebellum period: education for the common man and woman, greater access to higher education for women, and schooling for free blacks.

At the heart of the common school movement was the belief that free common schooling dedicated to good citizenship and moral education would ensure the alleviation of problems facing the new republic. The “common school movement” was a description of a particular type of formal education, one that would become available to all citizens, developed and managed through increased governmental activity at the state level and supported by local property taxes. Common schooling was free and “universal”; that is, it was to be available to all children regardless of class (although African Americans or Irish Catholics were marginalized or excluded). The main purpose of the common school was to provide a more centralized and efficient school system, one that would assimilate, train, and discipline the emerging working classes and prepare them for a successful life in an industrial society.

The person most identified with the common school movement was Horace Mann (1796–1859), a member of the Massachusetts state legislature, and then secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education. Mann’s ideology was based upon a strong sense of Protestant Republicanism that was rooted in a secular, non-sectarian morality. He believed that education was a child’s “natural right,” and that moral education should be the heart of the curriculum. In order to accomplish education reform, Mann advocated state-controlled boards of education, a more uniform curriculum, and greater state involvement in teacher training. Mann was firmly convinced that public education had the power to become a stabilizing as well as an equalizing force in American society—as he put it, “Education . . . is the great equalizer of the conditions of men—the balance-wheel of the social machinery.”[[2]](https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/first-age-reform/essays/education-reform-antebellum-america" \l "_ftn2" \o ")

Mann and the common school movement had critics then, as well as now. The common school movement failed to address the issue of racial exclusion and segregation. Only when African American parents and their political allies challenged the whites-only schools and school districts would there be partial, but not lasting reforms. Catholics in Massachusetts and New York opposed Mann’s Protestant Republicanism in the common schools. Fearing religious and anti-immigrant discrimination, Catholics set up their own system of parochial schools. Historians such as Michael Katz have challenged the widely held assumption that the common school movement was an enlightened liberal reform movement designed to ameliorate the social divisions in American society. Rather, Katz and others argue that the common school movement was a deliberate attempt by the Protestant elite to control the lower classes, force assimilation of immigrants and non-Protestants, and prepare the working classes to acquire the “virtues” necessary to factory life—in particular, respect for discipline and authority. All of the criticisms of Mann and the common school system—racial segregation, religious (or lack thereof) bias, centralized school boards, and a curriculum designed for conformity were left unresolved, and are recurrent themes in the history of education and the subsequent movements for meaningful educational reform.

The struggle for greater educational opportunities for women was clearly linked to the antebellum reform movement, and in particular the campaign for women’s rights. The demand for greater educational opportunities has always been a cornerstone demand of feminists. While young women were admitted into the public or common schools, the majority of women in the United States were denied educational opportunities at every level. In 1830, women’s literacy was but half of men’s. Just as Horace Mann defined the common school movement, Emma Willard (1787–1870), Catharine Beecher (1800–1878), and Mary Lyon (1797–1849) were three leading figures in the advancement of women’s education. However, unlike Mann and the common school movement, woman reformers themselves had to struggle for education as outsiders and as second-class citizens.

Emma Willard started teaching when she was seventeen; in 1814 she founded the Troy Female Seminary, the first recognized institution for educating young women. It was later renamed the Emma Willard School. An advocate of a rigorous curriculum for girls, she addressed the New York State legislature in 1819 and challenged Thomas Jefferson’s disparaging views about women’s mental capacities. Her entire life was devoted to women’s education, and many of the graduates of the Emma Willard School joined the ranks of the women’s rights movement.

Catharine Beecher was born into a prominent family; her father, Lyman Beecher, was the well-known religious reformer; her sister was Harriet Beecher Stowe, abolitionist and author of the anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin.* Dissatisfied with her limited education at private school, Beecher was determined to provide greater opportunities for women. In 1823 she founded the Hartford Female Seminary, and offered her students a rigorous academic curriculum with an emphasis on women’s physical education. Like Mann, Beecher believed that women were natural teachers; teaching was the extension of women’s domestic labor into the schools. Furthermore the purpose of women’s education was to prepare them to be better mothers and teachers. Not a feminist, Beecher opposed women’s suffrage.

A few women combined their passion for abolition, racial equality, and education. One of the most courageous of these reformers was Prudence Crandall (1803–1890), who in 1831 founded the Canterbury (Connecticut) Female Boarding School. The next year she admitted Sarah Harris, an African American student. Almost immediately white parents protested and took their daughters out of the school. In response Crandall reopened her school as an academy for African American girls. The town retaliated with racist laws and violence. In spite of support from prominent abolitionists, Crandall was forced to close the school in 1834.

The struggle for women’s education was also epitomized by the founding of Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary in South Hadley, Massachusetts, the first institution of higher education for women. It was established in 1837 by Mary Lyon, who served as its first president. Her vision for higher education included bringing in women from all socio-economic levels to study a demanding curriculum with a clear moral vision. Mt. Holyoke’s success was followed by the founding of other women’s colleges, such as Wellesley, Smith, and Vassar.

Feminist and educational reformers also struggled for coeducation in higher education. Oberlin College in Ohio was the first to admit women; Antioch College (founded by Horace Mann) was the first college to allow women to publicly accept their graduation diplomas as well as the first college to hire woman professors and pay them equally with men. Both colleges were “stations” on the Underground Railroad and graduated generations of leading education reformers as well as social justice activists throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Reform struggles did not sweep through the American South as they did in the North. The institution of slavery militated against the emergence of manufacturing and urbanization, two critical factors that led to educational reform in the North. White southerners relied primarily on voluntary, parental, and church schooling. Wealthy planters sent their sons (and sometimes their daughters) to private academies in the North and South and to England. Education for poor white southerners was provided by charity schools and some religious institutions.

Education for black slaves was forbidden, especially after Nat Turner’s slave insurrection in 1831. The abolitionist movement provided educational opportunities for African Americans. Quakers were in the forefront of this movement, establishing racially integrated schools in cities like New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. There were a tiny handful of schools for African Americans in the South. One exceptional effort to educate free blacks in the South involved the work of John Chavis, a well-educated free African American. In 1831 he conducted classes in a school in Raleigh, North Carolina, for whites during the day and for free blacks in the evenings. Sunday Schools, which were founded in part to provide literary, religious, and moral instruction to working class and poor rural children, also educated some slaves. Whatever limited educational progress existed in the slave south, it was not connected to the larger movements for social reform.

The struggle to expand educational opportunities continued after the Civil War. Freedom Schools were created by abolitionists to educate the newly emancipated slaves; historic black colleges, such as Howard University were founded. Not all efforts were benign; in particular the Indian schools such as Carlisle were racist attempts to destroy Native American cultures. In the early years of the twentieth century, Chinese Americans successfully sued to desegregate the public school system; women’s educational opportunities continued to flourish, and finally the influx of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean, as well as African Americans from the south, changed the face of public education in America. The issues of the purpose of public education as well as its accessibility and curriculum originally faced by Mann, Crandall, Beecher, and Chavis, continue to be a part of the national debate.

[[1]](https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/first-age-reform/essays/education-reform-antebellum-america" \l "_ftnref1" \o ") I would like to thank my dear colleague Sonia Murrow, Secondary Education Department, School of Education, Brooklyn College, CUNY, for her guidance. And of course Carol Berkin, Presidential Professor, Baruch College and the CUNY Graduate Center, who thinks of everything.

[[2]](https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/first-age-reform/essays/education-reform-antebellum-america" \l "_ftnref2" \o ") Massachusetts Board of Education, *Twelfth Annual Report of the Secretary* [Horace Mann] (Boston, 1848).

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**Discussion Questions…**

1. Give 3 examples of change in America during the 1820s.

1.

2.

3.

2. Give 3 examples of social problems that emerged due to urbanization and industrialization.

1.

2.

3.

3. What did the Protestant ruling elite believe would manifest from poverty?

4. What political changes occurred during this time period?

5. What were the consequences of increased political participation?

6. What were the three core components of educational reform during the antebellum period?

1.

2.

3.

7. What was the main purpose of free public education?

8. What did Horace Mann advocate for in an attempt to reform education?

9. What were some of the criticisms of the common school movement?

10. What does historian Michael Katz believe about the common school movement?

11. Describe women’s struggles for greater educational opportunities.

12. Describe Emma Willard’s accomplishments.

13. Describe Catharine Beecher’s accomplishments.

14. Describe Prudence Crandall’s accomplishments.

15. Describe Mary Lyon’s accomplishments.

16. Compare the education system in the South to attempts at reform in the North.

17. What efforts were made to educate free blacks and slaves?

**AGE OF REFORM*: GRAPHIC ORGANIZER***

*Fill in the chart with the appropriate information.*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Reform Area** | **Issues Before Reform** | **Major Ideas, People, Events, Places** | **Future Changes** |
| **Temperance** |  | American Society for the Promotion of Temperance | Prohibition Amendment: |
| **Education** |  | Horace Mann  Growth of Public Education  Social Values |  |
| **American Writing & Transcendentalism** |  | Romanticism  Transcendentalist |  |
| **Care of the Physically & Mentally Disabled** |  | Dorthea Dix  Asylum Movement |  |
| **Prison Reform** |  | Work Crews  Solitary Confinement |  |
| **Women’s Rights** |  | Seneca Falls | Suffrage Amendment: |
| **Religious Reforms** |  | Second Great Awakening  Charles Finney  Burned Over District  New Religious Denominations |  |
| **Abolitionism** |  | American Colonization Society  William Lloyd Garrison |  |

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**PERIODIZATION: *Era of Reform***

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| **Defining Characteristics** | **Contradictory Characteristics** |
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